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ABSTRACT

Both Fyodor Dostoevsky and Hermann Hesse belong to an artist-philosopher tradition not identifiable with a particular school of thought; both concern themselves with the individual's search for freedom and for consistent terms to express values and reality. Through the characters of Ivan Karamazov in *The Brothers Karamazov* and Harry Haller in *Steppenwolf*, both authors exhibit striking similarities—and divergences—of opinion on this problem. Haller and Karamazov, having common knowledge of the paradoxical problems of human values and empirical knowledge, realize that the quest for positive values involves achieving a balance between good and evil, a balance which will allow them to function in truth and untruth at the same time, to compound love and hate into understanding. Karamazov and Haller submit themselves to despair and as a result discover the self-deceit of their intellectualism. Ivan succumbs to despair; Haller thrives on it and gains the insight he needs to maintain his sanity. Ivan's search for order forces him to deny the freedom he has found in reason; Haller's solace lies in his defiance of universal disorder and in the Nietzschean exaltation and pain his freedom allows him. (RBM)

In the later part of the nineteenth century, probably beginning with the writings of Fyodor Dostoevsky, philosophy took a new turn toward a previously unfamiliar and seemingly incompatible genre: the novel. The novel as a medium for defining man's purpose in the universe and as a method of speculative explication served to unfold philosophical problems through use of the conventions of

fiction. Philosophy, in turn, has largely relegated itself to the study of social and political ethics, etymology, rhetoric, semantics, syntax, and logical analysis; it has attained the rarefied sophistication and tangibility of a science, at the expense of such matters as metaphysics and aesthetics. This significant reshuffling illustrates what Geoffrey Clive describes as the "daemonic rift between insensitive knowing and wayward feeling." [1] The philosophers have often gained "objective fixity" through analysis, but a surprising number of writers of fiction have continued to analyze the motives of man from such various points of view as humanism, theology, atheism, and existentialism (and combinations of these systems) with a depth of perception that follows the philosophical tradition as the academic discipline of philosophy no longer does. While philosophy has relegated itself to the status of a quasi science, fiction remains unscientific, intangible, flexible, ironic, irreverent, and impossible to categorize, and for that reason, ideally suited to exploring the eternal questions of man's spiritual destiny in a universe of mysterious and indeterminate signs.

According to Clive, in his important book *The Romantic Enlightenment,* the writer of fiction may still investigate matters such as human freedom and the meaning of reality without cluttering his concepts with the trivia of scientific verification: "The artist or philosopher-artist has special insight into those aspects of reality which elude objectification and causal representation. Where ordinary language fails and symbolic logic is completely irrelevant his works confront us with unique cognition. . . . These glimpses into the hidden recesses of Being will always transcend a philosophy that sets out to reduce knowledge to explanation." [2]

The diversity and seeming lack of discipline of such artist-philosophers as Nietzsche and Kierkegaard have been the bane of the academic philosopher, who, until recently, has left discussions of their ideas to literature classes. Though Hermann Hesse and Fyodor Dostoevsky are part of this artist-philosopher tradition, they both exhibit a quality of not being identifiable with any particular school of thought; they both have striking similarities (and differences) of opinion concerning the individual's search for freedom and for consistent terms that can express values and serve as dependable guideposts to reality.

There are many philosophical similarities in the ideas of Nietzsche, Dostoevsky, Kierkegaard, and the Hermann Hesse of *Steppen-*

wolf,[3] as is shown in Hesse's two essays on Dostoevsky published in pamphlet form as *In Sight of Chaos*. In the essay entitled "A Prophet of Catastrophe," which is devoted to *The Brothers Karamazov*, Hesse points out that the Karamazov family itself, in its "comprehensive laissez-faire," represents every facet of human feeling and the rejection of ethical and moral values in favor "of a new holiness, of a new morality, of a new mankind." [4] The new "Russian man" is a combination of God and the Devil, the outward and the inward, good and evil, and he cannot be understood by the dogmatic ethical and moral values of the West, but only in the mind of the East.[5] The "downfall of the West" will be catastrophic only to those who attempt to retain the traditions of the Western world by believing the change is also the apocalyptic "end" of the West.[6] For Hesse, it will be, rather, a catastrophic change for the better: "The Asiatic, the chaotic, the savage, the dangerous, the amoral, in fact the Karamazoff elements can, like everything else in the world, just as well be regarded from a positive as from a negative point of view. Those who, from a fear to which they give no name, curse this Dostoevsky, these Karamazoffs, these Russians, this Asia, the Demiurge-fantasy, and all their implications, have a hard time before them. . . . But there is no solace for the apprehensive, in that these incalculable people may just as well bring about a good as an evil future, that they are just as likely to found a new Kingdom of God as one of Satan. What stands or falls on earth concerns the Karamazoffs little." [7]

Hesse says that the Karamazovs are obstinately opposed to conventions of any kind and that they express this opposition through perverse license and caprice, a practice which is reminiscent of the Underground Man. The effects of this perverseness and contrariness can result in new moral ideals, and Hesse exemplifies the idea of the will to power in a particularly Nietzschean manner of *amor fati*, which suggests the eternal progression and reincarnation of the superman: "And before the old, dying culture and morality can be dissolved into a new one, in that fearful, dangerous, painful stage, mankind must look again into its own soul, must see the beast arise in itself again, must again recognize the overlordship of the primeval forces in itself, forces which are super-moral. Those who are foreordained, prepared and ripe for this event, are Karamazoffs. They are hysterical and dangerous, they are as ready to be malefactors as ascetics, they believe in nothing except the utter dubiousness of

every belief." [8] Dostoevsky has prophesied the "new life," and Hesse goes on to say that the West is crossing the threshold in a "dangerous movement of hovering between the Void and the All," [9] a movement which is rich in possibilities and filled with dangers.[10] Ivan Karamazov is the personification of the new life, according to Hesse.

The problems of Ivan and Harry Haller are remarkably similar, though their solutions to such problems as ethical choice and the "void and the all" are different. Hesse's statement concerning Ivan's character can easily be applied to the character of Harry Haller, who, like Ivan, writes a tract concerning his disorder, commits "murder," and is finally forced to reject his earlier ethical dialectic and to accept its exact opposite as a greater truth:

> The figure of Ivan is astonishing. We learn to know him as a modern, accommodating, cultivated individual, somewhat cool, somewhat disappointed, somewhat skeptical, somewhat tired. But he gets younger, more ardent, more significant, more Karamazoff-like. It is he who wrote the poem of the "Great Inquisitor." It is he who, after coolly ignoring the murderer whom he believes his brother to be, is driven in the end to the deep sense of his own culpability and even to his self-denouncement. And it is he too who experiences the most clearly and the most significantly the spiritual explanation of the unconscious. (On that indeed everything turns. That is the whole meaning of the Downfall, the whole new birth arises from it.)[11]

Hesse's very important essay establishes his belief in a new resurgence of ideas. It is an expression of the attitude that the negation of those traditions and dogmatic ideals which society holds dear is not simple nihilism but a profound new approach to reality, built from rejection of convention. To Hesse, this resurgence does not necessarily involve self-destruction, revolution, a millenial auto-da-fé, physical violence, or willful indoctrination, but will more likely take place in the indwelling discovery of the individual consciousness: "It is possible that the whole 'Downfall of Europe' will play itself out 'only' inwardly, 'only' in the souls of a generation, 'only' in changing the meaning of worn-out symbols, in the dis-valuation of spiritual values." [12]

Dostoevsky's best example of the man of reason and self-consciousness, whose will is bent only to the verifiable and the rational, is Ivan Karamazov. Harry Haller, Ivan's counterpart in Hesse's *Steppenwolf,* carries reason out of bounds and returns from the "hallucination" of objectivity and reason to an understanding of the meaning of the truly demonic. He comes to realize the para-

doxical nature of being and the fact that constant tensions of ethical responsibility and faith in a chaos of opposites are perhaps the only absolutes a man can have. Ivan denies God, rationally excluding Him from having any value for the individual who demands personal freedom. He then rejects "the ticket" to the eternal by denying everything but his own freedom to determine his own values under his own conditions. He accepts only the verifiable and excludes the metaphysical; he practices abstention from the values of the crowd and becomes a celibate rationalist. Haller finds only disillusion and self-torture as a result of his attempt to maintain a life separate from the absurd, and as a result finally understands that knowledge and reason are essentially self-deception and impotence. To compensate for this unbalance, Harry discovers the freedom of the irrational. The points of view of the two men evolve inversely. As Ivan reaches the purity of his freedom, Harry succumbs to the bondage of human values and empirical knowledge, literally to the point of denying those values that have been most sacred and of elevating to the highest order those ideals that have previously meant the least.

Ivan Karamazov and Harry Haller have common knowledge of the paradox of the intellectual. Both realize that the quest for positive values and absolute denominators involves achieving a balance between good and evil, a balance which would allow them to function in truth and untruth at the same time, with love and hate compounded into an amalgam of understanding. It is impossible to become a god; the best alternative can be only in a kind of Dostoevskian sainthood—a combination of corruption and earthly love. Neither Ivan nor Harry hopes for or wants sainthood; each is controlled by the truth of his own individual terms of reason. They are both what Dostoevsky referred to as "lackeys of the intellect," Ivan the product of nineteenth-century enlightenment and Harry Haller of twentieth-century neuroticism. Ivan Karamazov's path of reason is based upon rationalism, euclidian geometry, and Hegelian idealism. Harry Haller is a composite; his metaphysic ranges the spectrum of knowledge—mysticism, music, theology, philosophy, and literature—along with a close identification with the middle-class morality of the contemporary society to which, in his weaker moments, he longs to return. But Harry is older than Ivan and comes from a tradition insistent upon one's saturating oneself in

zeitgeist—the Faustian drive for "comprehensive knowledge." He accepts chaos as a value theory.

In his excellent book *The Novels of Hermann Hesse,* Theodore Ziolkowski discusses Hesse's essays on Dostoevsky and their relationship to Hesse's concept of reality in disorder. Hesse's "Thoughts on Dostoevsky's *Idiot*" explains his triadic theory, which places the individual in the center of opposite poles of spirit and nature. "Man must accept this polarity positively," writes Ziolkowski, "and the process of spiritual reevaluation through which this takes place is 'magical thinking' . . . —the search for a new totality through the acceptance of chaos." [13] Magical thinking involves the power of the individual to live within eternal chaos but to find in it a harmony both external (in nature) and internal (in his soul). Hesse's threefold concept is based upon the idea of eternal change and chaos as being desperately confusing but intellectually rewarding. His concept of a Third Kingdom of pure spirit is the ability to find happiness and order with despair in a kind of peace. It is, according to Ziolkowski, "an eternal realm of spiritual values that exists independently of the everyday world, a realm that occupies modally the same position as the Christian millennium: that is, it represents a return to grace after the fall from innocence. Instead of being a third stage in the future, it exists simultaneously with the second stage of despair, but on a totally different level of being. In other words, the chiliastic world has been internalized, and it can thus exist in the present." [14]

In essence, Hesse's triadic theory is like Kierkegaard's threefold concept of the aesthetic, ethical, and religious, though Kierkegaard's differentiations are much more comprehensive and explicit. (They occupied many volumes of his total output.) The idea of eternal tension, the interplay between the spheres, is common to both concepts; it combines the negative force of despair with the positive force of spiritual transcendence. On a purely moral plane, Hesse believes that the third level is a forcing back into the world and a responsibility to communicate the spiritual values of the level for the betterment of society. This is the implication in his *Demian, Siddhartha,* and *Magister Ludi.* In *Steppenwolf,* the stages on the way are illustrated in metaphoric illuminations, but the concept of responsibility is not. Kierkegaard's third stage of faith concerns not a humanistic love for man, but a religious love for God on a personal level that denies responsibility for the whole of society and

emphasizes the loneliness of the "knight of faith." Hesse believes that one can return from the third stage to humanistic explanation and practice of it; Kierkegaard finds the third stage so personal, so irrational, that it is wholly individual and beyond explanation. The difference is an important one: either belief in one's fellow man gives reasonable justification to the spiritually elevated moral life, or belief in immortality and God gives justification to that life. This irreconcilable problem is illustrated in Ivan Karamazov's discussion with the Elder Zosima when Ivan says, "There is no virtue if there is no immortality," to which Zosima replies, "You are blessed in believing that, or else most unhappy." [15]

In the cases of Harry Haller and Ivan Karamazov, both men receive the significant message of the third sphere. At the end of their existences, both men have been shattered by the knowledge that in the third sphere all the experience and feeling of their aesthetic and ethical awareness serve more as negation than as verification. The two characters illustrate the complexity of going beyond the ethical and accepting the third stage as the consummation devoutly desired. They are men who have realized the doubtful "grace" of transcendence.

In the search for the third sphere, Harry is constantly aware of the frustrations and dead ends of pure rationality, while Ivan is aware only of the fact that human reason can and will be the only absolute, because the alternative to reason is irrationality, even insanity. Their dilemma is common for the intellectual. Both men approach the third sphere burdened with their own past values—Harry from a bourgeois life of diversity, Ivan convinced that pure reason is the final end. Neither is prepared to find the opposite of his dialectic in the indeterminacy and doubt of the "goal"; they are shattered to find that their value systems are mockeries.

Ivan Karamazov is one of four brothers whose father, Fyodor, is sensuality incarnate. Ivan denies the sensuality of his heritage, and yet even his pride and his quest for self-knowledge and lucidity contain elements of sensuality. Alyosha, the youngest brother, is his opposite and so, not unreasonably, the one brother who can understand Ivan most readily. He is a young priest of simple faith, a youth yet unborn to the possibilities of man's degradation, and yet he is as intuitive of the feelings of others on an emotional plane as his brother is aware of human suffering on an intellectual plane.

Dmitri, the eldest brother, is uninhibited, passionate, and violent—an image of his father, whose sensuality has degenerated into vice. Smerdyakov is the fifth member of the family: illegitimate, mentally deficient, a nonentity until the destructive logic of Ivan's mind makes him the physical instrument of Ivan's dialectic. He is literally Ivan's jaundiced and distorted alter ego.

When Ivan shows denial of God to be the ultimate freedom, wherein man can take the law into his own hands, he formulates the motive for Smerdyakov's murder of their father and opens the doors to a vision of brute lawlessness and immorality, the consequences of which he does not understand until they are given substance in action. Ivan, like Smerdyakov, and like Raskolnikov in *Crime and Punishment,* is the fool of reason. Ivan is a free agent through his denial of the existence of God, and he is capable of his own action without control by the laws of society. But the apes of reason tend to destroy rational concepts, and Smerdyakov is Ivan's ape; he personifies the uncomprehending herd instinct. He is a beast who destroys Ivan's carefully worked-out concept of the freedom to act beyond accepted human standards and values. The atheistic standard of Ivan's doctrine of freedom without God is dangerous enough even in wise hands, but in the hands of a madman, the result can be fatal. The man-god is free as no other creature in the universe, yet ultimately he is not free. In establishing himself as both judge and jury, he is also assuming responsibility for his acts and must pay for their consequences. As judge and jury, he is capable of self-destruction or revolution. He can impose his will on others as a god would upon its own subjects. His freedom as a man-god is the freedom to create or destroy, the freedom to act and to effect change by exerting his authority upon others; and it can also be the freedom not to act, to become celibate and estranged from a world of constant demand for decision.

A motif of Dionysian passion hangs over *The Brothers Karamazov.* Each time a character acts through uncontrollable passion, sorrow and self-laceration occur. And yet each knows that irrational acts prove individuality and freedom. Like the Underground Man they flaunt reason to deny convention and illustrate contempt for absolute goals; they extol "absence of reason as the greatest of reasons." [16] Ivan knows the dangers of indulgence in the passions at the expense of empiricism and logic; consequently he is aloof from Katerina, a woman he loves, and who for that very fact is suspect and an object

of his intellectual contempt. He realizes the danger of the consummation of his passion, just as does Myshkin in the Natasha-Rogozhin relationship in *The Idiot*. Ivan's contempt is logical, for he knows that passionate physical love is unreason and that fulfillment is impossible in a love which lies beyond human reason. He covers himself with an armor of imperiousness, speaks in irony and with constant dialectical complexity, and abstracts himself from Katerina, from his family, and from society. But strangely enough, Ivan's passion beyond reason is the cause of his father's destruction as well as his own. Passion wrought of hatred and desire for the death of his father eventually lead Ivan into the limbo of a self-made underworld where reason is cynically profaned and where any sort of faith is made to appear ludicrous.

Ivan comes to recognize the value of compassion. His whole dialectic is based on hatred for the fact that innocent children suffer needlessly, a view which his brother Alyosha shares in his "real" world of people. To illustrate his concept of compassion, Ivan creates the hypothetical Grand Inquisitor, whose belief is that there is only one law in a world devoid of a significant God and immortality: that of self-interest bounded by pity for the downtrodden and contempt for explanations of human suffering. The message of Christ is the message of passion and of suffering in freedom. Ethically, Ivan cannot accept this concept of irrational freedom; he is interested only in virtuous and enlightened self-interest. It has taken centuries to overcome the damage of Christ's message of freedom, for man prefers peace to the agony of choice. When confronted with the problem of free choice, man looks for someone to relieve him of his burden; he wants miracles, bondage, and bread, and the Inquisitor tells Jesus that He is a menace to man's quest for security.

> "Didst Thou forget that man prefers peace, and even death, to freedom of choice in the knowledge of good and evil? Nothing is more seductive for man than his freedom of conscience, but nothing is more painful. And behold, instead of furnishing a firm foundation for setting the conscience of man at rest for ever, Thou didst choose all that is extraordinary, vague, and conjectural; Thou didst choose what was utterly beyond the strength of men, acting as though Thou didst not love them at all—Thou who didst come to give Thy life for them! Instead of taking possession of men's freedom, Thou didst increase it, and burdened the spiritual kingdom of mankind with its sufferings for ever." [17]

The silence of Jesus in the presence of the withering rationale of the Grand Inquisitor is the silence of compassion for undeniable

reason. And Christ's kiss is the kiss of love. How can He justify unreason and faith as an alternative to the Grand Inquisitor's persuasion? Mihajlo Mihajlov points out the answer, the paradox that Ivan and the Grand Inquisitor cannot accept, "that only faith in the immortality of the soul gives rational justification to life. Hence, faith in the immortality of the soul does not exclude the struggle for the 'kingdom of liberty.' On the contrary, faith justifies the struggle, and it is reason, which does not believe in immortality, that negates struggle." [18]

Ivan knows the truth and the value of Christ's love but is unable to accept it, because it has illogical and harmful foundations. Ivan's concept of compassion is that it is necessary to kill love, in its purest sense, to obtain the virtue of enlightenment and to create a new order which will disallow the deaths of innocent children and the atrocities of humanity. If compassion were to enter Ivan's universe, his fragile edifice of reason would topple. Compassion is acceptance of suffering; it is finding goodness in evil; it is the consolation of the eternal paradox of a world governed by a God of "goodness" who condones the presence of evil.

Compassion is a resolution in faith. For Ivan, this is unacceptable. Having achieved the summit of rationality and having destroyed the concept of God and the principles associated with Christian voluntarism, Ivan bungles, through his disciple Smerdyakov, and so must submit himself, in turn, to his own conscience in recognition of the fact that his Crystal Palace of reason and human freedom was as absurd as any of those standards his rationalism denied. Compassion *does* enter Ivan's hermetic existence, beginning with an encounter with a drunken peasant who is staggering and singing "Ah, Vanka's gone to Petersburg, I won't wait till he comes back," a song whose overtones inform Ivan of his cowardice in the face of the murder of his father by the puppet Smerdyakov. Ivan feels revulsion for the peasant, pushes him to the ground, and leaves him in the snow, reflecting that the man will probably freeze to death. During his final interview with Smerdyakov, Ivan remembers the lines of the song and he realizes that they prophesied the murder, for when Ivan left for Saint Petersburg, Smerdyakov assumed that he was to kill old Karamazov while Ivan was provided with an obvious alibi. Ivan relents and sees that the peasant is cared for, but it is then, upon hearing of Smerdyakov's suicide, that his reason completely disintegrates.

In a nightmare Ivan is confronted by a self-created, down-at-the-heels devil, who parrots Ivan's "closed system" of reason and ethics. The seedy Satan is the self-labeled "indispensable minus" whose dialectic contains the same rhetorical patterns and the same destructive reason-unreason of Ivan's carefully manipulated metaphysics. Ivan asks him whether there is a God (for surely Satan would know) and his question is met with typically exclamatory, friendly humor and condescension: " 'Is there a God or no?' Ivan cried with the same savage persistence. 'Ah, then you are in earnest! My dear fellow, upon my word I don't know. There! I've said it now!' " [19] But he completes his virtuoso annihilation of Ivan by mocking the ideas of Ivan's Grand Inquisitor, whose views Ivan has accepted as necessary. Compassion is a soothing opiate that will subdue man's beastly freedom and will negate the purposes of Christ *and* Satan, who are both, paradoxically, emissaries of freedom:

> "Man will be lifted up with a spirit of divine Titanic pride and the man-god will appear. From hour to hour extending his conquest of nature infinitely by his will and his science, man will feel such lofty joy from hour to hour in doing it that it will make up for all his old hopes of attaining the joys of heaven. Every one will know that he is wholly mortal, that there is no resurrection, and will accept death proudly and serenely like a god. His pride will teach him that it's useless for him to murmur because life is but a moment, and he will love his brother without need of reward. Love will be sufficient unto the moment of life, but the very consciousness of its momentariness will intensify its fire, which now is dissipated in dreams of eternal love beyond the grave . . . and so on and so on in the same style. Very charming!"
>
> Ivan sat with his eyes on the floor and his hands pressed to his ears, but he began trembling all over.[20]

Ivan finally realizes that his all-pervasive insistence on the primacy of the lucid mind envisioning a utopian world of reason has turned into a shabby and sickening farce. The final blow has fallen upon his delicate dialectic of pure reason and of the hero in a world in which "everything is permitted." Although Ivan had felt an abnormal happiness, after his next-to-last interview with Smerdyakov, because he believed that he would serve the punishment for his father's death, the ultimate penalty is not to be served Ivan under the law of man but, rather, on Ivan's own intellectual terms. The court will see only a mumbling caricature of the man of reason.

The dialectician has fallen from grace—his own. He faces a reconstruction of cosmic proportion due to the schism in his singular perspective; his vision has been corrupted and split by the revolting

mirror image of his bastard brother, Smerdyakov, and by the double logician, Satan in shabby clothes. Ivan lies at the outskirts of the graveyard of the Age of Reason. His idealism is subverted on its own principles, and his methodical search for consistency leaves him on the brink of the abyss—literally in a state of "brain fever" (the sentimental catch-all disease, the structural deus ex machina of so many other idealistic tales of fiction of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries).

Ivan's quest for a single vision has led him to an "eternal" fever of nightmares and dualities. He has chosen the verifiable, the consistent, and the logical in the face of the inconsistent and irrational possibility of boundless faith. According to Edward Wasiolek, Dostoevsky's legend of the Inquisitor "has dramatized [the choice] between the truth of the Grand Inquisitor and the truth of Christ, between the craving of man for certitude and the terrible anxiety of a free and conditionless faith. . . . We know on which side Dostoevsky wanted to be, and there is nothing more we can prove. He too, I am sure, suffered the anguish of the choice which he dramatized so brilliantly, so convincingly, and so clearly that we too as readers must, as we admire the drama, give assent to one or the other: Christ or the Imitation of Christ." [21]

Harry Haller comes from a middle-class German family. He lives on an inheritance and, like Ivan Karamazov, is guilty because of this easy money. Haller, like Ivan Karamazov, is a sensualist who has sublimated his sensuality by immersing himself in countless cerebral pursuits. He is a product of the Germanic cultural tradition; Ivan Karamazov is anticultural in his insistence on doing away with extraneous matters. (And so, to an extent, was Dostoevsky, who found a curious irrelevancy in the arts.) The two men present a wide difference in background, but their motives are identical. Haller has had the tradition of mysticism firmly implanted in his philosophy, and he has a firm and abiding knowledge of the constant tensions between the rational and the irrational, between good and evil. Harry Haller fully realizes the futility of pure rationality. Ivan is faced with it only at the time of disaster.

Harry Haller is approaching fifty; he is a little over twice the age of Ivan Karamazov, and his experience encompasses a much more diversified range of empirical knowledge. He begins his narrative where Ivan leaves off—in a state of frustrating duality. Haller the scholar, the bourgeois student of humanities, pits himself against

Haller the Steppenwolf, the ravenous, howling beast whose only solace is destruction and vicious hatred. Haller faces physical death daily in an overwhelming desire for self-destruction; suicide is the only consolation he can conceive for his life of suffering. His "capacity for pain," for self-hatred, and for world-hatred seemingly has no bounds. His "editor," the landlady's nephew, refers to him as a man whose self-laceration has led him to new awareness: "I saw that Haller was a genius of suffering and that in the meaning of many sayings of Nietzsche he had created within himself with positive genius a boundless and frightful capacity for pain. I saw at the same time that the root of his pessimism was not world-contempt but self-contempt; for however mercilessly he might annihilate institutions and persons in his talk he never spared himself. It was always at himself first and foremost that he aimed the shaft, himself first and foremost whom he hated and despised." [22]

Haller has the ability to abstract himself from the depths of his intense suffering through self-induced "schizomania," a state of mystical hallucination in which he confronts his alter ego, the Steppenwolf, and in which he experiences the contrasts to his logical, spiritual self in an illogical state of being intensified through the carnal and the physical. He already knows the hideous consequences of reasoned and unbending intellect, and he has gained an awareness that knowledge based on reason alone will serve no purpose in understanding reality. He has not accepted such concepts as Christian grace or altruistic love, but rather has found solace in the most spiritually satisfying art—music—and in the philosophy that can most clearly express the impossibilities of pure rationality—dualistic mysticism.

But even with his consolations, Haller is in despair. The editor states that Haller has left his lodgings and disappeared, either in a final state of transformation and transcendence as a result of one of his schizomanic adventures, or as a consequence of his desire to commit suicide. The editor finds significance, however, in the fact that Haller's journals and his life are representative of the vices of his generation, the same idea which is found in the editors' notes to *A Hero of Our Time, Notes from Underground,* or in Camus' *La Chute.* "I see them as a document of the times, for Haller's sickness of the soul, as I now know, is not the eccentricity of the single individual, but the sickness of the times themselves, the neurosis of that generation to which Haller belongs, a sickness, it seems, that

by no means attacks the weak and worthless only but, rather, precisely those who are strongest in spirit and richest in gifts." [23]

Haller constantly reads the works of Nietzsche and Novalis, and his "few volumes of Dostoievski bristled with penciled slips." [24] It is no accident that Haller's initials are the same as Hermann Hesse's, for the notebooks of the Steppenwolf contain historical parallels to Hesse's own life. As Ivan Karamazov portrays one aspect of Dostoevsky, so Haller is two aspects of Hesse, whose self-appraisal leads always to self-hatred and contempt.

Though both Haller and Ivan Karamazov are prototypes of slaves bound by reason, Haller is also a product of the middle class and is unwillingly chained to the security of the bourgeoisie, which Ivan considers a seething and inferior mass of unthinkers, comparable to Kierkegaard's concept of the crowd or Nietzsche's concept of the herd. But while Haller is cognizant of the necessity for rationality, he is also aware that his outlet from the restrictions of rationality lies in irrationality. He finds balance in the antitheses between the rational and the irrational, and he understands that the interior world of the self must seek balance with the exterior world of signs and symbolic values. Each individual contains thousands of separate souls, or masks, seeking reflection and intersection. The more cognizant of multiplicity the individual becomes, the more corrupted and at the same time the more elevated his mind can be. "If Harry, as a man, had a beautiful thought, felt a fine and noble emotion, or performed a so-called good act, then the wolf bared his teeth at him and laughed and showed him with bitter scorn how laughable this whole pantomime was in the eyes of a beast, of a wolf who knew well enough in his heart what suited him, namely to trot alone over the Steppes and now and then to gorge himself with blood or to pursue a female wolf. Then, wolfishly seen, all human activities became horribly absurd and misplaced, stupid and vain." [25]

The more he steeps himself in vice, the greater is his desire for beauty; and the greater the realization of the necessity for nobility and virtue, the more insistent is the fact of guilt and human stupidity. This maddening duality seems beyond resolution, and Haller constantly contemplates suicide as his only recourse. Suicide does not have to be the literal physical act, as Haller points out, for that act in itself is an admission of sin. In a much more subtle way, suicide can be unconsciously committed when one finds release from life by accepting death as the intellectual deliverer. The idea of

acceptance of the fact of death lies at the base of Heidegger's concept of being as the ultimate virtue; it also lies at the base of Ivan Karamazov's fever in his surrender to his self-inflicted disease. Haller's vice is compounded by his insistence on self, on the bourgeois pleasure of self-indulgence and comfort, rather than on individual responsibility and despair in freedom, which always lie beyond bourgeois respectability. In the first stage of his three-part illumination, Haller emulates all those middle-class pleasures in his egocentric existence, but as the novel moves from his aesthetic state of the immediate and the pleasurable, to the ethical, and finally to knowledge of the sphere of faith, he learns the emptiness of accepted formulas and the value of freedom.

The structure of *Steppenwolf* illustrates the theory of multiple forms in the narrative point of view, which in turn indicates Haller's new perspectives as he moves through the three stages. There are three narrators: the editor in the introduction, Haller through his notebooks and poems, and Haller through the "Steppenwolf Tract." As Ziolkowski has pointed out, there seems to have been a conscious effort on the part of Hesse to make the threefold structure analogous to the three-part sonata form. Perhaps more important is the development of intellectual awareness through the three stages; for this, Hesse has created experimental metaphors that carefully point the way from the early to the late stages. He has created intellectual events, conditions, and characters to illustrate the situations in each stage.

The first sphere is contained in statements of the young editor of the notebooks, who treats Haller with proper distance, as an object of historical interest and as an example of his generation. The notebooks and the poems reflect the striving toward an ethical understanding through the diverse patterns of Haller's experience and through his artistic creations. The third sphere, the "Steppenwolf Tract," explores the realm of pure theory and is concerned with intellectual probing of the highest and most diverse plane of cognition. Haller suggests that fictions are fundamental to the creation of ideas and that oversimplifications often result from metaphoric representations.

It is important that the Steppenwolf's ventures into sexual awareness, the mysteries of the dance, and into opium smoking be understood as explicit metaphors. Hesse does not suggest that readers should collectively indulge themselves in opium, frantic dancing,

or hermaphroditic adventures, for doing this would give the lie to his theoretical creations. All the experiences related in the novel are concerned with one individual attempting to find his destiny in his own way; they are not intended for the collective use of less informed and literal readers who interpret his experiences historically, as if they were a handbook of events and places.[26] The essential fiction of the metaphor is clearly pointed out by Haller (Hesse) and a proper reading of *Steppenwolf* must follow these statements.

> For a close of our study there is left one last fiction, a fundamental delusion to make clear. All interpretation, all psychology, all attempts to make things comprehensible, require the medium of theories, mythologies, and lies; and a self-respecting author should not omit, at the close of an exposition, to dissipate these lies so far as may be in his power. If I say "above" or "below," that is already a statement that requires explanation, since an above and a below exist only in thought, only as abstractions. . . . So too, to come to the point, is the Steppenwolf a fiction. When Harry feels himself to be a were-wolf, and chooses to consist of two hostile and opposed beings, he is merely availing himself of a mythological simplification.[27]

Haller never deludes himself into accepting his metaphors as realities, because like all of his predecessors of negative sensibility, he realizes that change occurs so rapidly that any previous state or any symbol of that state is in itself a delusion.

Harry Haller's release from the world of responsibility, anxiety, and suffering is discovered down a side street on the door, in an old wall, marked "The Magic Theater, for Madmen Only." On the edge of suicide, beyond himself in abject self-hatred, he possesses the credentials for entry into the theater, and his previously matter-of-fact chronological journal of events turns into a series of vast, surrealistically described hallucinations (or self-revelations), which form the bulk of his narrative. Haller finds in this new world that there are three possible paths for the enlightened intellectual to follow in a world of "magic dreams": the path of cosmic elevation from the matters of earth by conversion of self into pure spirit; the earth-bound path, of self unable to rise above the physical world, of self that must become resigned to life among the bourgeois mentality though living in constant rejection of all those values society holds high; and the path leading to the realm of unreason and indeterminacy, on which the absurd and irrational are principles for action, freedom, and self-fulfillment.

When Haller first enters the Magic Theater, his mind is inextricably split and fluctuates among the three choices. Eventually

his confusion will be solidified in cosmic elevation, however short, with hope for permanent transport "beyond good and evil" in a mystical oneness of the soul. But this transport is not achieved through wishes: it is the result of an apprenticeship Harry must serve in the Magic Theater, an apprenticeship which will lead him to his goal of self-awareness and to his own particular concept of an aesthetic continuum. The theater serves to exhibit his apprenticeship as he learns about his past and his future. It will serve to explain ontologically Haller's concepts, according to Ziolkowski. Thus, "Harry Haller learns that his previous way of life, the arbitrary rejection of many aspects of reality, was false. He sees that he is actually capable of doing precisely the opposite in every case, whether it involves his attitudes toward sex or toward war. He finds in the Magic Theatre that his polar conception of reality can easily give way to a view that embraces all manifestations of life. The first step is merely to acknowledge the chaos of our souls in the world; the second is to transcend the chaos by realizing that it is all a natural part of life." [28]

In the theater the beautiful Hermine serves as guide and spiritual advisor and represents Haller's ideal combination of eros and agape, the juncture of physical and spiritual love. Hermine's friend Pablo, a jazz musician on one level, a master of divine laughter on another, submits Haller to all those physical experiences that he as an intellectual has found distasteful, even obnoxious; Pablo will eventually form a bridge between the male and female principles as a sensual and spiritual bearer of the hermaphroditic, on a level of sexuality and of intellectual diversity of experience leading to fulfillment and self-knowledge. Maria, the prostitute who is given to Haller, trains him in the subtleties of love of the flesh. The three characters introduce him to delights and depths of the Dionysian nature, which provides the counterbalance to his lofty Apollonian intellectuality.

Mozart, Haller's god of music, is countered by the gooey phrasings of Pablo's band; Haller's mind is benumbed by drugs; moral concepts are submerged and strangely reversed in a potpourri of perversity, killing, and constant countervalues. Hallucinations become vastations. Haller is taught to dance and gains an awareness thereby of sensuality and of Sufi mystical elevation. He is initiated into virtually all of the manifestations of sexuality and sensuality, and in this fog of hallucinations and schizophrenia, in this total reversal of his "normal" ethical world of intellectual values, he

paradoxically receives illumination of the meaning of the third stage of faith. Ziolkowski has referred to Hesse's essay "A Bit of Theology," in which this evolution is explained. " 'The course of humanization,' [Hesse] writes, 'begins with innocence (paradise, childhood, a pre-stage without a sense of responsibility). From there it leads to guilt, into the knowledge of good and evil, into the behests of culture, morality, religion, human ideals.' But the realization that these various ideals are unattainable in reality plunges the individual into despair. 'This despair, now, leads either to downfall, or, on the other hand, to the Third Kingdom of the Spirit, to the experience of a condition beyond morality and law, an advance to grace and redemption, to a new and higher kind of irresponsibility, or in short: to faith.' " [29]

Ivan Karamazov and Harry Haller submit themselves to the depths of despair, and as a result discover the self-deceit of their intellectualism. Ivan succumbs to despair; Haller thrives on it and gains the insight he needs to maintain his sanity in the mire of existence. Haller revels in his knowledge of the infinity of opposites and reflections, and rather than seeking resolutions for the infinite dualities, he extends them in ever-increasing experimental multiples. Though it is doubtful that Dostoevsky would abide by Hesse's answer to the problem of "the one and the many" and of the terror of the soul in freedom, the escape to unreason for redemption of suffering without end is Haller's solution to the necessary balance of pure intellect.

Dostoevsky's consolation of philosophy is found in the lives of his "great sinners," doubters who have found an inner balance through sin and grace and who have achieved a kind of negative sainthood through awareness of the demonic relationship between good and evil. His characters are ultimately beyond ego; they have escaped themselves and have found their salvation in compassion—Dostoevsky's ultimate value and Ivan Karamazov's ultimate destroyer. Both Harry and Ivan place too much emphasis on self and neither has learned the value of humor; that is, a kind of cosmic relativism which comes not from mockery but from consolation. Ivan's devil illustrates his dark humor by negating Ivan's principles with detached and highly ironic humor, and Mozart personifies humor in his music and in his condemnation of the serious Haller.

The sublimity of the arts is one of the principal aids to Haller's

understanding of the beauty of multiplicity. In his experiences with Mozart, Haller finds the meaning of eternal laughter through the example of a man who suffered more than most men and who, ironically, has created possibly more beauty than any other man. Initially, Haller stands in relation to Mozart in much the same way as Salieri to Mozart in Pushkin's "Mozart and Salieri"; he is in wonderment because of Mozart's evident disinterestedness in his own art and because of his realization of the artifice it contains, but mostly because of Mozart's ability to laugh at his poverty and his own suffering, and even at his stupendous creations. "His tendency is to explain Mozart's perfected being, just as a schoolmaster would, as a supreme and special gift rather than as the outcome of his immense powers of surrender and suffering, of his indifference to the ideals of the bourgeois, and of his patience under that last extremity of loneliness which rarefies the atmosphere of the bourgeois world to an ice-cold ether, around those who suffer to become men, that loneliness of the Garden of Gethsemane." [30]

Salieri is eventually forced to kill Mozart, just as Haller kills his beloved Hermine, because her unearthly perfection is beyond his human understanding. Mozart represents virility, freedom, sovereignty, and according to Karl Barth, he even represents theology and is a coherence system unto himself:

> Why can one maintain that he has a place in theology (especially in eschatology and cosmology) although he was no church father and not even a particularly devout Christian—and beyond that Catholic!—and, when not busy composing, according to our notions leading a somewhat fickle life. . . . He has heard the harmony of creation as providence in coherent form of which darkness is also a part, but in which darkness is not an eclipse, also the deficiency which is no flaw, the sadness that cannot lead to despair, also the gloomy that is not transformed into the tragic, the infinite sorrow that nevertheless remains unconstrained to posit itself absolutely—precisely therefore also joyousness, but also its limits, the light that is so radiant precisely because it breaks through the shadows, sweetness that is also pungent and therefore does not carry satiety in its wake, life that is not afraid of death but knows it well. . . . In the music of Mozart . . . we are dealing with an illuminating, I should like to say with a compelling, proof that it is a slander of creation to ascribe participation in chaos to her because she includes a Yes and a No within herself, because one side of her is turned toward Nothingness and the other toward God. Mozart makes audible that creation praises the Lord also in its negative aspect and thus in its totality.[31]

In the end Ivan Karamazov is left mired in the depths of insanity; Harry Haller has begun once again his journey toward self-

knowledge. Both men have realized the hopelessness of gaining fixity on any simple dimension of reality. Perhaps it is the will to laugh that will sustain Haller in his journey through purgatory and heaven. Mozart tells Harry he is pathetic because he lacks humor. "But you will learn humor yet, Harry. Humor is always gallows-humor, and it is on the gallows you are constrained to learn it." [32]

Both Haller and Karamazov have forced themselves to suffer the consequences of the fact that they would not accept roles as passive participants in a world of disorder. Ivan's search for order forces him to deny his freedom; Harry Haller's solace lies in his defiance of universal disorder and in the Nietzschean exaltation and pain his freedom allows him. Whether Haller's laughter denotes heretical contempt or the extreme elevation of his personal faith, it is dependent upon his ability to attain an inner balance of good and evil, of beauty and ugliness, qualities which will be consummated in his spiritual universe in the recognition that the real consolation of philosophy lies after dialectic, in the pure perfection of the unresolvable ambiguities and paradoxes most magically expressed in music.

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NOTES

1. Geoffrey Clive, *The Romantic Enlightenment: Ambiguity and Paradox in the Western Mind (1750–1920)* (New York: Meridian Books, 1960), p. 29.
2. Clive, *Romantic Enlightenment,* p. 30.
3. Much of Hesse is obscure and misted by his penchant for mystical ambiguities and abstractions, which are illusory at best. However, this is not the case with *Steppenwolf,* which is a clear representation of specific problems with few of Hesse's normal obscurities.
4. Hermann Hesse, *In Sight of Chaos,* trans. Stephen Hudson (Zurich: Verlag Seldwyla, 1923), p. 15.
5. Hesse, *In Sight of Chaos,* pp. 17–20.
6. It is interesting to consider Yeats's "Second Coming" in this context. To Yeats, the new man would be a grotesque monster composed of all the sins of the ages; to Hesse, the second coming would represent a change from a world of mutability and foreordination to a world of freedom and constant change.
7. Hesse, *In Sight of Chaos,* pp. 26–27.
8. Hesse, *In Sight of Chaos,* pp. 31–32.
9. Hesse, *In Sight of Chaos,* pp. 33–34.
10. Ernest Rose, *Faith from the Abyss: Hermann Hesse's Way from Romanticism to Modernity* (London: Peter Owen, 1966), pp. 58–59. According to Rose, "Hesse warned against the Russian idol in the essay *The Brothers Karamasoff or the End of Europe (Die Bruder Karamasoff oder der Untergang Europas),* 1920; VI, 161–178. For this Russian man was a chaotic drifter without clear orientation. . . . Naturally Hesse was thinking of the Russian revolution, which

had broken out in 1917, but he knew also that its cruelties were only the most radical expression of a general phenomenon. There were numerous people who led an irreproachable family life while at the same time forming efficient parts of an unfeeling technical civilization. (It is worthy of notice that the essay on Dostoevsky was written before the publication of Oswald Spengler's *Decline of the West,* which was also skeptical of the moral tenor of the age.)" It is difficult to understand the basis for Rose's statement concerning this essay, for there is no proof that Hesse had the Revolution in mind when he wrote this piece; rather, he was suggesting a new era, the philosophical idea for which came from Eastern philosophy and from Nietzsche. The date Rose gives for Hesse's essay is 1920; the date of Spengler's book is 1918. Hesse's essay was not published before Spengler's book.

11. Hesse, *In Sight of Chaos,* p. 34.
12. Hesse, *In Sight of Chaos,* p. 39.
13. Theodore Ziolkowski, *The Novels of Hermann Hesse: A Study in Theme and Structure* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1965), p. 23.
14. Ziolkowski, *Novels,* p. 37.
15. Fyodor Dostoevsky, *The Brothers Karamazov,* trans. Constance Garnett (New York: Heritage Press, 1949), p. 50.
16. Mihajlo Mihajlov, *Russian Themes,* trans. Marija Mihajlov (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1968), p. 154.
17. Dostoevsky, *The Brothers Karamazov,* p. 193.
18. Mihajlov, *Russian Themes,* p. 168.
19. Dostoevsky, *The Brothers Karamazov,* p. 498.
20. Dostoevsky, *The Brothers Karamazov,* p. 503.
21. Edward Wasiolek, *Dostoevsky: The Major Fiction* (Cambridge, Mass.: The M.I.T. Press, 1964), p. 187.
22. Hermann Hesse, *Steppenwolf,* trans. Basil Creighton (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1965), pp. 10–11.
23. Hesse, *Steppenwolf,* p. 21.
24. Hesse, *Steppenwolf,* p. 12.
25. Hesse, *Steppenwolf,* p. 42.
26. Unsigned article in *Time,* 18 October 1968, pp. 111–112. The recent popularity of *Steppenwolf* in the American universities, according to the article ("The Outsider"), has elevated Hesse to the venerated company of Dostoevsky, Tolkien, and William Golding in the hierarchy of the college student. The *Time* interviewer was told that Hesse was the first "hippie" and that Haller's experiences in *Steppenwolf* were "gut," therefore good. The *Time* writer goes on to say that Hesse's later novels "anticipated the existential fiction of Sartre," a statement difficult to accept; that at the end of *Steppenwolf* "Hesse leaves Haller there in the Magic Theater, stumbling through the hallucinatory visions of his subconscious mind"; and, further, that Hesse's importance to the youth of America is due to the "zeal and fire with which he asked the questions [making] him a symbol for the disaffected youths who feel that salvation lies within themselves—if only they dream hard enough."
27. Hesse, *Steppenwolf,* pp. 56–57.
28. Ziolkowski, *Novels,* pp. 25–26.
29. Ziolkowski, *Novels,* p. 54.
30. Hesse, *Steppenwolf,* pp. 62–63.
31. Quoted in Clive, *Romantic Enlightenment,* pp. 39–40.
32. Hesse, *Steppenwolf,* p. 214.