

Mr. Francis
E4-EL

Meditation, 16

In Hermann Hesse's Steppenwolf (1927), the nephew of Harry Haller's former landlady and narrator of the preface describes Harry's records as follows:

It was not in my power to verify the truth of the experiences related in Haller's manuscript. I have no doubt that they are for the most part fictitious, not, however, in the sense of arbitrary invention. They are rather the deeply lived spiritual events which he has attempted to express by giving them the form of tangible experiences. The partly fantastic occurrences in Haller's fiction come presumably from the later period of his stay here, and I have no doubt that even they have some basis in real occurrence. (22)

Although the nephew's world is clearly intended to be the same as Hesse's and our own, many of the experiences included in Haller's records are impossible or exceedingly improbable in that world. But as the nephew states, the experiences detailed in the records are not arbitrary--just as all good art is never arbitrary or random. Instead, the events and characters in the records are tangible analogs for elements of Haller's own spiritual state. While none of these events occurred and none of these characters existed as described, they each represent real experiences from the world shared by Harry and the narrator.

Steppenwolf is a novel with few narrative or plot elements. Instead, the novel is primarily concerned with the development of spiritual and metaphysical ideas through dialogue, metaphor, and symbolism, as well as the internal monologue of Harry. You will create a fictitious record of your own, in which the tangible experiences represent your own deeply lived spiritual events. Model your own text after the novel, to explore your own take on these spiritual and metaphysical matters.

Ultimately, the content of the assignment should explore your own version of the outsider v. insider dichotomy. Your text should reflect mastery of the novel, including elements of style, structure, and theme. In completing this assignment, you must make use of at least one element from each of the following lists:

Structure	Thematic	Characters	Setting
▪ verisimilitude	▪ duality/multiplicity	▪ the Immortals	▪ Harry's apartment
▪ meta-fiction	▪ the arts	▪ a guide	▪ the Black Eagle
▪ dreams	▪ academics	▪ a foil	▪ the Globe Rooms
▪ trial & sentencing	▪ the social order	▪ the bourgeoisie	▪ the Magic Theater

Alternatively, you may propose a substitute element for any of the headings above. Your proposal should be typed using MLA style and may not exceed one page. It should include a brief synopsis for your meditation and briefly identify how you will incorporate each of your four required elements. While it is impossible to set a qualitative requirement for the use of these elements, my expectations are high. A complete rough draft will be due in class for peer editing. The final draft must be stapled and accompanied by your peer-edited rough draft.

This assignment must be typed, with a 12-point, Times New Roman font. Use one-inch margins all around and double space. The length guideline is 3-5 pages.

Finally, you must design a coversheet for this assignment, which will include your name and a creative, appropriate, original title. The coversheet must feature original--not computer-generated--artwork. It should also acknowledge that the assignment has been inspired by Hermann Hesse's Steppenwolf. The cover should be 8.5" x 11". It should appear on top of the manuscript, stapled once in the top left corner. Failure to include an appropriate cover will result in a ten-point penalty.

Your bibliography must include the correct edition of the novel and any Web-sites or other resources you used during our unit on Steppenwolf. Your bibliography should appear on the reverse side of your coversheet. Here you must also clearly identify the four elements that you feel have been most effectively incorporated into the manuscript. You may only choose one from each category.

The cover will be assessed based upon appropriateness of content, composition and color, and creativity. The meditation will be assessed based on appropriateness of content, use of required elements, composition, and creativity.