

The significance of homosexual desire in modern German literature¹

by

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"Coming Out" and the Androgynous Inversion of Homosociality and Heterosexuality in Hermann Hesse's *Der Steppenwolf* (1927)

Like the protagonists in the previous works, Harry Haller does not fit comfortably into the social expectations of a middle-class, masculine identity. Because he conceives of himself as both man and wolf, he cannot feel synonymous with either image, cannot possess a single identity, masculine or otherwise. Like Törleß, Harry perceives more than one level of reality and in order to relieve his self-torment, he needs to discover the relationship between them. In order to do this, however, he must recognize that a middle-class, masculine identity is only one among innumerable possible identities.

Several scholars have attempted to analyze Hesse's *Der Steppenwolf* in terms of depth psychology and recognized that Hesse viewed the work as a kind of cathartic self-therapy. However, the novel's abrupt and unexpected conclusion has left many bewildered as to whether the text actually represents a picture of healing to the reader.² Harry's murder of Hermine is not a clear sign of Harry's emotional recovery; indeed, it suggests that he learned nothing from his experience in the Magic Theatre.³ Nonetheless, Hesse vehemently argued that he intended to portray Haller's journey to health, not to sickness.⁴ If this is so, then the reader must also identify the emotional crisis that necessitates such a drastic form of therapy.

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² Lewis W. Tusken, "The Question of Perspective in Hesse's *Steppenwolf*." *Journal of Evolutionary Psychology* 9 (1989) 157.

³ Tusken 158.

⁴ Hermann Hesse, "Nachwort zum *Steppenwolf* (1941)"; cited according to *Materialien zu Hermann Hesses 'Der Steppenwolf'*, ed. Volker Michel's (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1972) 160. Hereafter cited in the text in parentheses as "MzS" followed by the page number.

There are indeed many tense dichotomies in the text: between bourgeois and intellectual; human and beast; intellect and sensuality; emotional intensity and mediocrity. Harry is clearly caught in the matrix of these diads, but previous interpretive models have failed to explain how Hermine's particular kind of tutelage and the Magic Theatre help Harry to liberate himself from this matrix. The dichotomies seem mismatched with their solution since, for example, neither the bourgeois nor the intellectual is either embraced or discarded but simply subverted. However, if the matrix is viewed as social inhibitions and the solution is viewed as an attempt to live both inside and outside of society, then the model of "coming out" suggests itself as a means of comprehending the novel.

Although René Breugelmans correctly asserts that Hesse's work has a great affinity towards Jungian psychoanalysis,⁵ those interpretations that take Jungian theories as their basis are not as productive to the understanding of *Steppenwolf* as they might be because they overlook the homosexual aspects of the text. In their book, *Coming Out of Shame*, Gershen Kaufman and Lev Raphael employ, like Jung, a narrative model of analysis and therapy, but target this approach at the particular shame associated with homosexual desire.⁶ By applying this approach to *Steppenwolf*, and without discounting the insights yielded by Jungian analysis, both the origin and the therapy of Harry's divided self can be brought into sharper focus than heretofore.

The intersection of heterosexual and homosocial desires in this novel is homosexual. *Steppenwolf*, in fact, radicalizes the convergence of homosocial and heterosexual relationships that the author had previously portrayed in *Demian* (1917). Sinclair, Demian, and Demian's mother represent a triangulation of homosocial and heterosexual desires: the troubled male protagonist meets his ideal, wiser self in another man, and is brought closer to him through a female who shares many traits with the ideal man. Sinclair's homosocial desire for Demian is mediated by Demian's manly mother, whom Sinclair desires heterosexually. In the end, the characters and the desires collapse into one: the mother, the object of Sinclair's heterosexual desire, disappears from the narrative, but not before she sends Sinclair a kiss via Demian, the object of his homosocial desire. While the kiss is symbolically heterosexual, it is homosexual in terms of the gendered bodies performing it.

In *Steppenwolf* the fusion and confusion of homosocial and heterosexual desires is even queerer because both Hermine and Pablo attract Harry on one more level of desire than they, according to their gender, should. For example, instead of falling in love with Hermine as a woman, Harry falls in love with her dressed as a man; While, on the other hand, Hermine represents Harry's ideal companion, not as a man, but as a woman. In other words, homosociality becomes "heterosociality", and heterosexuality becomes homosexuality. Similarly, while Harry attempts to connect with Pablo intellectually and thus court him according to normal homosocial practice, Pablo responds to him sensually and suggests a sexual threesome in which Harry

⁵ René Breugelmans, "Hermann Hesse and Depth Psychology," *Canadian Review of Comparative Literature* 8 (1981) 45-6.

⁶ Gershen Kaufman & Lev Raphael. *Coming Out of Shame: Transforming Gay and Lesbian Lives* (New York: Doubleday, 1996). Hereafter cited in the text in parentheses as "KR" followed by the page number.

can make love to a man and a woman simultaneously. Analyzing this proposal in Jungian terms, Lewis Tusken states: “In Jungian terms the ‘orgy’ would mean no more than a joining of hands by component parts of the psyche (for which Harry is not yet ready), but on the objective level the scene would be, in fact, a morally and socially unacceptable orgy.”⁷ Tusken’s disquietude in attempting to pursue the meaning of this orgy to its logical conclusion explains by analogy why he is also unable to fathom the significance of Hermine’s androgyny. He maintains: “What has been lacking in Steppenwolf research, however, is a coherent statement on Hermine; especially two questions need clarification. Why does she appear as a boy? And why is her “death“ not a more tangible concept?”⁸ As in *Demian* the androgynous Hermine, like the manly mother, leads the protagonist ostensibly by heterosexual means, to the object of his homosocial desire, and thus unites them homosexually. Upon completing this task, both Hermine and the manly mother can and must disappear so that the protagonist can realize the unified desire that he could previously only imagine by dividing it and attributing it to two genders.

Was Hermann Hesse homosexual? It is impossible either to prove or to refute conclusively.⁹ While Hesse was married three times, only the third marriage, to Ninon Ausländer, was successful, and she was the most independent and conformed least of all his wives to the image of the homebound female, that is, she was most his equal.¹⁰ Commenting on Hesse’s intense friendships to other men, his hand-picked biographer Hugo Ball writes: “Die Freundschaft gehört zu den Grundzügen von Hesses Wesen; zu seinem Kern, zu seinen Lebensbedingungen. Darin besonders ist er Romantiker und noch aus jener Garde, zu der Jean Paul, Grillparzer, Mörike und andere zählen. Darin ist er am wenigsten modern. Die Freundschaft spielt in allen seinen Romanen die größte Rolle.”¹¹ This statement seems merely to describe Hesse as an especially true friend and to situate this attribute in relation to the romantic cult of friendship, an antiquated, yet charming ideal. Precisely on account of the intensified debate on homosexuality in the middle of the nineteenth century in Germany, however, this cult became suspect and subsequently lost its positive hold on the popular imagination.¹² Ball’s description then is not as innocent as it first appears: whether Hesse identified with the homosocial or the homosexual aspects of the romantic friendship

⁷ Tusken 161.

⁸ Tusken, 162.

⁹ [cf. Hesse letter to Mia Engel, 1931; *Ausgew. Briefe*, Ffm: Suhrkamp, 1976, 49-51. ED]

¹⁰ Ralph Freedman, *Hermann Hesse, Pilgrim of Crisis: A Biography* (New York: Pantheon, 1978) 318. Freedman identifies Ninon with the androgynous Hermine in *Steppenwolf*: “As even her photographs show, she was a perfect embodiment of Hesse’s antipodes: male and female, Occident and Orient. Her almond eyes and sensuous mouth in the earlier pictures contrast with the almost mannish severity of her later photographs ... and both elements were clearly present in the more mature woman with whom Hesse had now allied himself.” Hereafter cited in the text in parentheses as “Freedman” followed by the page number.

¹¹ Hugo Ball, *Hermann Hesse: Sein Leben und Sein Werk* (Frankfurt a..M.: Suhrkamp, 1967) 114. Originally published in 1927, the same year as *Steppenwolf*. Hereafter cited in the text in parentheses as “Ball” followed by the page number.

¹² George Mosse dates this phenomenon with the homosexual scandals that occurred around the turn of the century involving Oscar Wilde in England, and Krupp and Eulenberg in Germany. George L. Mosse. *Nationalism and Sexuality: Middle-Class Morality and Sexual Norms in Modern Europe* (Madison, WI & London: U of Wisc. P, 1985) 87-8.

cult, it was clearly a concept that he refused to discard on account of its untimeliness. This chapter concerns itself primarily with asserting that homosexuality is more important to the understanding of *Steppenwolf* than has previously been recognized; since Hesse was a highly autobiographical author, it is inevitable that this thesis raise questions about his person that, unfortunately, cannot be answered with the available evidence. Nonetheless, there is sufficient biographical material to suggest that Hesse's homosocial desire exceeded what was then considered the normal measure. Thus it can be productively analyzed as a "queer" desire.

Coming Out of Shame

Like Jungian psychoanalysis, the model that Kaufman and Raphael use de-emphasizes the role of sexuality.¹³ Based on the work of Silvan Tomkins, they view emotion or affect as the primary motivating factor in human behavior (KR 17). Instead of instinctive sexual drives, they name seven fundamental emotional needs: the need for relationship (to be loved as a separate person); the need for physical contact (to touch and to be held); the need for identification (to feel one with another person); the need for differentiation (to define ourselves as different); the need for nurture (to feel needed by others); the need for affirmation (to be valued by others); and the need for power (to have control over one's own life) (KR 34-5). In comparison to the Freudian model, this one has the therapeutic advantage in that, instead of telling the oedipal male patient that he wants to have sex with his mother and to kill his father, it is possible simply to state that he needs to touch and to be held by his mother and he needs his father to allow him to have control over his own life. Clearly, the common patient can accept the latter formulation more easily, even if it lacks the mythological resonance of the Freudian model. According to Tomkins, sexuality constitutes a behavior that fulfills various combinations of fundamental emotional needs that vary in relation to the individual and to the individual's needs at any particular moment. Analogously, sexual orientation does not simply indicate the relative (same or different) gender of the person fulfilling one's sexual desire, but one's emotional needs. In this context, homosocial desire also fulfills emotional needs, but the social construction of masculinity restricts the ways in which they can be fulfilled.

The individual's psyche is formed, according to Tomkins, by a double emotional reflection in the process of pursuing one's emotional needs. In other words, others respond emotionally to an individual's expression of need and then the individual responds emotionally to that response. In the particular case of shame, the focus of Kaufman and Raphael's book, others respond negatively to an expression of need and the individual feels emotionally exposed and vulnerable. As a function of the back-and-forth of emotional responses, it is also possible for a shame situation to be triggered by an emotional response, for example, in the United States, women's expressions of anger or excitement are typically discouraged by the negative responses of others, thus producing shame (KR 68). However, anger and ex-

¹³ Robert H. Hopcke. *Jung, Jungians. and Homosexuality* (Boston & Shaftesbury: Shambhala, 1989) 13.

citement are in themselves reactions to some preceding event, but the shame response only refers to the expression of these emotions, not to the action that caused them.

Tomkins refers to the response and its activator as a single phenomenon, affect, since every emotional response represents a case of cause-and-effect. The sequence of expression of need or emotion, response of other, and the individual's reaction to the response create a scene. A shame-scene, then, represents a situation in which the expression of need or emotion meets with the negative response of others and, consequently, the individual feels exposed and self-conscious.

Similar scenes are grouped together in the psyche and eventually form the basis of a script, which helps the individual recognize the signs of an oncoming scene, and sets a pattern of response, to and interpretation of the scene (KR 19). As scripts develop, certain originary affects and needs become psychologically linked to a resultant response. In the example cited above, the originary affects of anger and excitement become linked to the resultant response of shame so that according to the script the onset of either of these affects triggers the shame response, whether the negative reaction of others occurs or not (the reaction of others has become internalized in the script). In internalizing the responses of others in the script, the language and imagery of the scene are also incorporated. According to Kaufman and Raphael, "imagery includes any people who were present, their facial expressions, or actions they performed, and language includes spoken words, sounds, or smells" (KR 29). Any of these particulars of the original or prototypical scene can re-activate the linked response. When this occurs, it is as if the original scene were recurring because its particulars are incorporated in the script..

The scripts not only record the details of the original scene, but they also supply defensive strategies. These strategies can be directed at either the other(s) or the self. In the case of scripts dealing with shame, the strategies are often directed at the self so as to avoid the confrontation with an other. These reflexive defensive strategies are ultimately destructive for the psyche, however, because they internalize the shame. Kaufman and Raphael write on this point "While for many people only self-shaming scripts develop, for some the level of magnification jumps, initiating disowning. For others this process of inner strife waged relentlessly against disowned parts of the self culminates in an actual splitting of the self. The whole self now fractures into two or more partial selves or even caricatures of the self" (KR 66). In order to satisfy the need for relationship (to belong to a group), these defensive strategies disown parts of the self that come under attack by others. In this way, the need for relationship is fulfilled in that the individual attempts to meet the expectations of others, but this occurs at the expense of other needs. Since the self represents the composite of all needs and emotions, to disown certain ones amounts to splitting an essential unit, like an atom, that ceases to be itself when it is divided.¹⁴

¹⁴ Of course, Kaufman and Raphael point out that shame is a necessary emotion in certain quantities because it alerts the individual to ruptures in relationships to others, and helps to develop a sense of conscience, dignity, identity and intimacy (KR 49, 51.)

The shame associated with being gay or lesbian is rooted in the cultural shaming of certain needs experienced by everyone, although the cultural rules of shaming are different for men and women.¹⁵ For men the need for physical contact, for identification, and for affirmation is particularly shamed (in U.S. culture, but also observable in many others including German culture) On account of shaming, these needs cannot be expressed positively and, as a result, they are expressed negatively, that is, through adversarial contests (KR 70). (Football would be the paradigmatic example in U.S. culture because it legitimates physical contact, hero worship, and overt displays of affirmation. War would be another example in which these needs would be legitimated for men.) However much such adversarial contests might fulfill those particular shamed needs for men in general, they still are inadequate in fulfilling those needs for gay men.¹⁶ Moreover, the persistent desire to have those needs fulfilled means that the shame response is triggered frequently so that it becomes amplified into a central part of the gay person's identity. For this reason, gay men and women are especially likely to disown parts of their self and to develop split personalities.

To "come out of shame" as gay or lesbian means to reclaim disowned parts of the self and thereby to transform one's sense of self. In order to accomplish this, it is necessary to recover the original shame scene (or scenes) and to re-write the script that governs the mental re-enactment of it (or them). The first step toward this goal is scrutinizing the shame and the shamed need so as to objectify what has become an internalized, automatic response. Once the shamed need has been identified, it must also be affirmed and acknowledged as a part of the self. Next, one must attempt to bypass the script and to remember the particulars of the original scene in terms of language and imagery (that is what was said by whom in what tone of voice with what facial expressions and body gestures in what location). At this point, it is necessary to recognize one's powerlessness to change what has already happened and to learn to refocus one's attention. By recognizing one's powerlessness in a given situation, it is possible to develop realistic strategies for regaining self-control. One option that Kaufman and Raphael suggest is refocusing attention outward. Since shame is characterized by feeling vulnerably exposed to the critical gaze of others and the shame script internalizes this hostile gaze, focusing attention outward interrupts the internalization of the gaze and alleviates the shame.

Once the scene has been recovered, it is then possible to begin to develop a new script. In the new script the previously disowned needs must be actively embraced. Kaufman and Raphael recommend the following procedure:

We must have new self-affirming words to say to ourselves to replace the, old shaming words, thereby engaging language. Then we must actually experience new feelings of love and respect for our essential self. That step engages affect. Finally we must actually create a new scene by actively

¹⁵ The authors recognize that culture is not a monolith and that other societies may shame different needs... Therefore, they limit their observations of culture to mainstream American culture.

¹⁶ Kaufman and Raphael offer no etiology for homosexuality, but simply accept as a given that gay men and women need to have their emotional needs fulfilled by same-sex partners.

visualizing someone else speaking the new words inside of us. It should be someone with whom we currently have a mutually respecting relationship or someone in the past like that. (KR 165)

In other words, it is necessary to create a script in which one's needs meet with the approval and blessing of others, and are thereby disassociated from shame. According to this model, the first shame scenes are normally experienced within the context of the nuclear family unit, so that, in order to transform shame scenes, it is necessary to imagine other parent-figures making non-shaming, indeed affirming statements. Reparenting imagery lends itself to a comparison with Jung's concept of archetypes. While Kaufman and Raphael envision a familiar person as a model for reparenting, in Jungian theory such a person could also represent an archetype. The Androgyne constitutes one particular archetype in *Steppenwolf*, which, according to Jung, combines anima and animus and represents the undivided self.¹⁷ As Robert Hopcke states, to play out an androgynous self can "be an embodied sign of psychological and emotional integration, evidence that one has indeed acquired a true and constant inner self, an ability to respond to men or to women on any level, emotionally, spiritually, sexually, without threat to or damage or loss of one's soul."¹⁸ In terms of reparenting imagery for re-scripting scenes that divide the self by shame, the Androgyne, then, can serve as a positive model for re-integration of the self.

Kaufman and Raphael provide a useful model that can aid the reader in understanding the development of split personalities and particular methods for re-integrating disowned parts of the self. Since the model itself utilizes literary terms like scene and script, it also lends itself well to investigating the metaphor of the Magic Theater.

Hesse's Homosocial Desire

As noted above, Hugo Ball described friendship as central to Hesse's existence. Joseph Mileck suggests the same in his biography of Hesse by locating an appropriate friend as proto-type for each of the idealized intimate friends whom the author portrays in most of his novels. Hesse admitted his high estimation of friendship in a letter to his estranged second wife, Ruth Wenger: "Das gehört zu meiner Art und meinem Leben, daß ich ein sehr schlechter und ungeeigneter Verwandter, dagegen ein guter und treuer Freund bin. In meinem ganzen Leben hat die Familie keine gute und glückliche Rolle gespielt, während die Freundschaft an erster Stelle stand" (MzS 102-3). Viewed in terms of Tomkins's system of emotional needs, this statement indicates that Hesse clearly felt that his most important needs were not met in the family, but among his friends. Furthermore, he viewed these friendships not in relation to the contemporary, bourgeois definition of friendship, but according to the literary examples he knew from German Classical and Romantic authors which demonstrated a greater range of emotional expression. The link to this "romantic" tradition enabled Hugo Ball to heterosexualize the

¹⁷ Hopcke 64-5.

¹⁸ Hopcke 65.

apparent homoeroticism of Hesse's intense friendships: "Der Freund steht der hellen Welt, der Lichtseele und aller Seelensehnsucht nahe. Er ist der Geliebte fast; denn die Seele des Romantikers ist selbst eine Frau; sie ist besessen vom Bilde der Mutter, von allen Anfängen" (Ball 116). Ball used the ambiguity between literary "Romanticism" and emotional "romanticism" to imply that Hesse's friendships were primarily concerned with literature (Romantic), instead of emotion (romantic). Hence, since the "soul" of Romanticism is a woman, the idealized mother, according to Ball, "romantic" friendship is not about men's desire for each other, but their common desire for a feminine ideal. However, as Ball stated later in the biography in reference to Hesse's images of mother and father, woman as the idealized mother does not belong to the world of light, with which the friend is identified, but to the world of darkness (Ball 151). For Hesse, the world of light was represented by the father. The interpreter must conclude, then, that his intimate friendships were not mediated by a common desire for a feminine ideal, but by a common desire for a paternal, male ideal.

Hesse's understanding of romantic friendship from the German Classical and Romantic authors not only provides a clue to understanding his position on friendship, but also on war and, eventually, on "Eigensinn," or the sense and importance of being oneself. Each of these topics represents a different expression of Hesse's homosocial desire and derives from his understanding of the ideals of Romanticism. Before the First World War, Hesse believed in an expansive concept of friendship that could transcend barriers, whether social, political, or national. During the war, however, he was forced to take sides, which destroyed much of his faith in the bonds of friendship, or rather in his ability to satisfy both his own needs and the needs of the disparate homosocial communities with which he identified (German soldiers versus international intellectuals and artists). Torn between his loyalty to himself and to others, he chose with much hesitation and reluctance to attempt to satisfy his own needs first. As a consequence, Hesse became ever more isolated and hermit-like because he had relieved himself of all social obligations, but he was still not happy because his emotional needs could not be fulfilled in isolation. Hesse portrayed exactly this problem in *Steppenwolf*.

Hesse's pre-war friendship with Ludwig Finckh is well documented and can serve as a paradigmatic example of Hesse's concept of friendship in this period. Hesse met Finckh while he was a bookseller's apprentice in Tübingen. Finckh, who fancied himself a writer, was drawn to Hesse's nascent talent and actively pursued their friendship. Together the two young writers formed the center of a circle of literary friends in Tübingen, which Finckh clearly linked to a "romantic" tradition: "Wir waren beide Romantiker, Nachfahren Eichendorffs, Novalis' und Mörikes."¹⁹ Finckh also elides the meaning of literary Romanticism and emotional romanticism in order to explain the excessive pathos of his friendship with Hesse. The two men spent much of their leisure time together and Hesse often spent vacations with Finckh, either with Finckh's family or on a trip. On one such trip, both men

¹⁹ Michael Limberg, "Hermann Hesse und Ludwig Finckh," *Hermann Hesse und seine literarischen Zeitgenossen*, eds. Friedrich Bran & Martin Pfeifer (Bad Liebenzell: Gengenbach, 1982) 39. Hereafter cited in the text in parentheses as "Limberg" followed by the page number. Limberg cites Ludwig Finckh, *Himmel und Erde* (Stuttgart: Silberburg, 1961) n.p.

fell hopelessly in love with different women and sought consolation from one another. Michael Limberg recounts Finckh's depiction of this situation: "Sie litten zwar entsetzlich, gleichzeitig genossen sie aber auch ihren Zustand, denn welcher Romaniker wäre nicht in erster Linie in die Liebe verliebt. Das gemeinsame 'Herzeleid' kräftigte ihre Freundschaft, so daß Finckh sogar 'schrieb: 'Frauenliebe ist schön über alle Maßen, Männerfreundschaft ist schöner, beglückender'" (Limberg 41)."²⁰ Although Finckh recognized that heterosexuality and homosociality were both "beautiful," it appears that, in terms of emotional needs, he judged homosociality to be more fulfilling.

While there is no record of Hesse's response to Finckh's declaration, there is no need to doubt, that he shared the sentiment. Shortly after Hesse married Maria Bernoulli and moved to the small town of Gaienhofen on Lake Constance, he demonstrated his reciprocal feelings for Finckh. When Maria became ill and had to be hospitalized in Basel for a number of weeks in 1905, Hesse asked Finckh to come to keep him company, to which Finckh immediately agreed (Limberg 42). Not only did he come while Hesse's wife was hospitalized, but he relocated to Gaienhofen permanently in order to be near Hesse. According to Limberg, the two became inseparable and spent all of their time together. Joseph Mileck comments on their particularly "queer" lifestyle: "Their odd dress, playful escapades, and irregular way of life startled and then began to amuse staid Gaienhofen."²¹ Ball confirms this depiction when he comments on this relationship with classic understatement: "Auch die Freundschaft mit Ludwig Finckh kann man nicht eben bürgerlich nennen" (Ball 113). Not surprisingly then, Hesse identified his time in Gaienhofen not with his wife, who had accompanied him there, but with Finckh, with whom he had spent most of his time there (Ball 106). As if to underscore how this homosocial relationship competed with heterosexual relationships, Hesse's friendship to Finckh began to deteriorate as soon as Finckh himself married and had children (Limberg 43-4). Reflecting on the situation several years later, Hesse wrote: "Ball [in his biography] sah klar, obwohl ich mich äußerst zurückhaltend ausdrückte, daß Finckh zwar als Freund eine Zeitlang in meinem Leben eine große Rolle spielte; daß er in meinem geistigen Leben und meiner Entwicklung aber schon sehr früh aufhörte, eine Rolle irgendwelcher Art zu spielen, und daß sein Stehenbleiben von der Zeit seiner Heirat an mit zu den großen Enttäuschungen meiner Gaienhofener Periode gehörte" (Limberg 47-8).²² Despite his ultimate disappointment in Finckh, friendship remained such an important ideal for Hesse that he in no way attempted to make Ball revise the following pathos-laden statement from his biography, although he had full access to the drafts before they were published: "[Hesse] ist der Dichter an die ritterliche Kumpanei, den festlichen Enthusiasmus der Ideale; er ist an die männliche, heroische, erzieherische Freundesliebe so sehr gebunden. daß er dazu neigt, die hohen Seelenbünde bis zum 'Stummen' und zum 'Bruder Tod' zu fingieren, wenn sie [sic] das Leben ihm versagt" (Ball 115). If Hesse were concerned that his homosocial desire might be misconstrued as homosexual desire, he made no attempt to encourage Ball to reign

²⁰ Limberg cites Ludwig Finckh, *Verzauberung* (Ulm: Hess, 1950) 67.

²¹ Joseph Mileck, *Hermann Hesse: Life and Art* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: UCalP, 1978) 38. Hereafter cited in the text in parentheses as "Mileck" followed by the page number.

²² Limberg cites Hermann Hesse, *Gesammelte Briefe 2* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1979) 299-300.

in his flowery language to describe it in this passage. In particular, Ball's use of "Freundesliebe" instead of "Freundschaft" represents a special emphasis on the emotional side of homosocial desire that could be construed as homosexual.

In light of Hesse's verifiable devotion to the concept of intimate male friendships and indeed, to such friends themselves, it seems appropriate to reverse the trend in Hesse-scholarship to de-essentialize the portrayal of such friendships in his work. For example, although Mileck attempts to find a biographical proto-type for each of the friend-characters in Hesse's work, he refers to the constellation of the protagonist and his friend as "double self-projections [of the author] in the guise of intimate friends" (Mileck 36). Mileck's approach is self-contradictory, that is, if the friend-characters are essentially portrayals of Hesse's actual friends, then how can they also be self-projections of what "Hesse had to become if he was to make anything of his life" (Mileck 36). By changing his analytical vocabulary in mid-stream, Mileck (and others who proceed in the same manner) are able to convert homoeroticism into narcissism. Since both protagonist and friend are two-sides of a single whole personality, according to this reasoning, the desire of one for the other is not homoerotic, because they do not exist as autonomous individuals, but rather it is narcissistic and self-reflexive. But what is the value of trying to locate a biographical prototype for each of the friend-characters, if it is not possible to discuss Hesse's desire for these friends also as proto-typical? While maintaining the distinction between life and art, which is extremely tenuous in Hesse's case, it should be possible to discuss the literary portrayal of homoerotic desire as such without having to prove that the author himself is homosexual. From the viewpoint of a literary scholar, it is important first to try to understand a text in its own terms before attempting to understand its relationship to the author. Mileck implies, however, that an interpreter must prove Hesse's homosexuality before one can discuss homoeroticism in his work. Following this line of thinking to its logical conclusion reveals the basic assumption that only homosexual authors can portray homoerotic desire and, conversely, only heterosexual authors can portray hetero-erotic desire. Hence, to discuss homoeroticism in a certain author's work means to label not just the portrayal, but the author homosexual. In terms of Hesse as an individual, there is only sufficient evidence to state that his male friends were extremely important to him and that his first two marriages were unhappy; nothing can be concluded from that about his sexuality. However, in terms of his work, there can be no question that he portrayed homoerotic desire between friends [quite explicitly in *Narziss und Goldmund* (1928)]. One can infer what one will about the author from his texts, but one should not limit one's understanding of the text by what one can prove about the author (especially since many are notoriously elusive in divulging their relationship to their fiction).

Shortly after the deterioration of his relationship with Ludwig Finckh, Hesse's high ideal of friendship was put to the test during the First World War. When the war broke out, Hesse reacted ambivalently: on the one hand, he sympathized with the Germans, especially the front line soldiers; on the other, he had serious reservations about the patriotic fervor on the home front that attempted to vilify everything non-German (Freedman 177). His

contribution to the German war effort²³ seemed the ideal compromise between these two positions: he organized (with Richard Woltereck) a book-distributing center for German prisoners of war. Eventually, he also founded a weekly journal for prisoners of war of which Joseph Mileck writes: “These slim journals were neither intent upon news nor concerned with political matters. Their scattering of poems, short stories, and anecdotes was primarily to remind the prisoners of war that they were not forgotten and to afford them some diversion” (Mileck 70). In this capacity, Hesse was able to express his desire for homosocial community with the soldiers without becoming embroiled in the defamation of the Allied countries.

Maintaining this position became more difficult, however, after he published a feuilleton-article in the *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* (November 3, 1914) that admonished artists, intellectuals, and journalists to stay out of the business of agitating peoples’ hatred for the enemy-countries and to concentrate on working for peace and humanity. Significantly, Hesse entitled this article “O Freunde, nicht diese Töne!” after Beethoven’s introductory comment to Schiller’s “An die Freude,” which constitutes the final chorus of Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony which goes on to rejoice, “Alle Menschen werden Brüder” (Freedman 166). By addressing the article to “friends” and making an allusion to Schiller’s vision of a united humanity, Hesse expressed an expansive homosocial desire that sought to combine his sense of community with other international intellectuals and with the front line German soldiers. The public reaction was swift and vicious, as Freedman reports: “Newspapers were indignant, and old friends, as Hesse said wryly in his ‘Kurzgefaßter Lebenslauf,’ decided that they had ‘nurtured a viper in their breasts.’ He was deluged with angry anonymous letters, an experience that was then relatively new to him, but which was to repeat itself in ever increasing volume for the rest of his life” (Freedman 166). In light of Kaufman and Raphael’s model of shaming, this series of events amount to a scene associated with the affect of shame; that is, Hesse expressed his need for homosocial community – both nationally and internationally – and was rebuffed not privately, but publicly in many newspapers. For obvious reasons, he felt exposed in a negative light. The problem of mixed allegiances (eg., between wife and friend) was not a new one for Hesse, but the war pushed his ability to incorporate divergent desires to its limit. Freedman characterizes the typical manner in which Hesse dealt with such problems before the war: “As he had done when he was a schoolboy, he made a point of his subversive convictions, but at the same time he wanted to be accepted by those in authority, whether they were parents, or school, or the government. There was always the misdeed and the need for forgiveness, for the saving goodnight kiss” (Freedman 166). In other words, Hesse would have expected some confrontation – because he actively pursued it –, but, he did not expect to be soundly denounced for particular statements, while others that clarified and equivocated his position were completely ignored.

²³ He lived in Bern, Switzerland at the time and was never called into active military service on account of poor health.

While this incident constituted a shame scene it did not develop into a script until the actions of the original scene repeated themselves a year later when he published an article entitled “Wieder in Deutschland,”²⁴ in which he again confirmed his allegiance to the German people, but also admitted that he preferred his peaceful war-time activity in neutral Switzerland and was happy not to be on the front line. Although less obviously than “O Freunde, nicht diese Töne!”, this article can also be understood as an expression of need for homosocial community. From Hesse’s viewpoint, his residence in Switzerland allowed him most nearly to fulfill his homosocial desires. In terms of intellectual and international community, for example, he was able to meet and „become friends with the French author, Romain Rolland, whose attention he had attracted with his first article and whom he could not have met anywhere else. At the same time, his work for the German prisoners of war kept him in contact with the soldiers whose community he desired, even if he did not want to join them in the trenches. The public outcry against Hesse’s article was even more swift and vicious than before because he had unwittingly opened himself up to accusations of draft-dodging and not sharing the burden of the German people at war. As if to compensate for this *faux pas*, Hesse soon thereafter published an article, “Den Pazifisten,”²⁵ in which he accused pacifists of being out of touch with reality and only interested in static ideals, and of talking instead of doing. In trying to satisfy his conflicting desires for community, he eventually alienated himself from both groups. Furthermore, these repeated incidents of shame developed into a script that had a lasting impact upon him.

Hesse failed to realize or did not choose to accept that the war changed the rules for male-bonding. According to Kaufman and Raphael, war (also team sports) creates a situation in which men can express, albeit negatively, homosocial desires that are normally shamed: the need to be touched, the need to identify, and the need for affirmation. In other words, intense male bonding is possible on the war front, but only because one group of men is locked in combat with another group of men. It is impossible to participate in this special expression of homosocial needs if one attempts to belong to both groups. This is, however, exactly what Hesse attempted.²⁶ Echoing Freedman’s characterization of Hesse’s need for approval, even when he is consciously provoking disapproval, Hesse’s actions in these incidents indicate a deep desire to belong to both groups (to win their approval) in competition with a similar desire not to betray his own convictions (which consequently elicited disapproval).

Faced with this flood of disapproval and with no prospect for reconciliation, Hesse withdrew from public life around 1916 (Mileck 77-8). Along with the emotional crisis involved with the public censure of his ideas he also had to contend with the further deterioration of his already unstable marriage

²⁴ Hermann Hesse, “Wieder in Deutschland,” *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* (10 October 1915; cited according to Mileck 74.

²⁵ Hermann Hesse, “Den Pazifisten,” *Die Zeit* (Vienna) (7 November 1915); cited according to Mileck 76.

²⁶ Hesse wrote to Romain Rolland that “the attempt to apply love to matters political has failed” (Freedman 189). In light of the present analysis of Hesse’s position on war as an expression of homosocial desire, this statement underlines the fact that Hesse applied intimate interpersonal sentiment to the wider realm of politics.

(which effectively ended with his wife's severe mental breakdown) and with the death of his father. The emotional stress manifested itself physically and Hesse entered a private clinic, "Kurhaus Sonnmatt," near Lucerne to recover. At the clinic, he met and received psychotherapy from Dr. Josef B. Lang, a student of C.G. Jung. This marks the beginning of Hesse's exposure to psychoanalytic theory, but, according to Freedman, the therapeutic aspect of this encounter had more to do with the friendship that developed between Lang and Hesse "These early, therapeutic meetings sometimes lasted up to three hours. They helped Hesse, though perhaps less because of the new psychoanalytic doctrine per se than because of the salutary presence of a friend who shared his inner life intimately and entered into his dream world" (Freedman 185). While this experience had a great impact upon Hesse's work, very little is known about the actual therapeutic sessions, since Lang's daughter burned his notebooks after his death and Hesse's journals are inaccessible and, even so, do not cover the entire period that he was in treatment (Mileck 113).²⁷ From the few citations that Hugo Ball was able to preserve as a result of his research for his Hesse biography, it is clear that Lang employed images of penetration in order to reach his patient's psyche. Such images are also suggestively homoerotic; Freedman portrays this as follows: "... (Lang projected an image of himself, the therapist, as a laborer within Hesse's psyche, hammering to break the crust that prevents him from penetrating the ice of his patient's soul. 'I seek to approach you in order to touch,' ends this strange entry – a new means of breaking down the barriers between men" (Freedman 187).²⁸ In another entry that Ball cited, Lang extended the metaphor to compare Hesse's psyche to a mineshaft. As Freedman notes, this is strikingly physical imagery, both in terms of the doctor-patient relationship and of the friendship that developed between the two men. From a homosocial perspective, the penetration of one man's psyche by another man is barely more compromising than actual anal sexual penetration since both psyche and rectum represent particular spots of vulnerability for men.²⁹ If friendship could make psychic penetration bearable, could it also make anal penetration so? It is impossible to be certain about this and about whether Hesse's journals would in any way clarify the question, but it is indeed curious that such a confessional author as Hesse would feel the need to, make his journals inaccessible since he seems to have divulged most compromising aspects of his life already in his literature. Be that as it may, Hesse's homosocial desire is both the instigator of his emotional crisis and a central component of his recovery from it.

As a result of his therapy with Lang, Hesse came to the realization that he needed to be true to himself without trying to meet the demands of contradictory homosocial communities. Although friendship was still important to him, he no longer allowed it to lead him away from his basic convictions. Hesse remarked in his "Kurzgefaßter Lebenslauf" (1925) "Wenn Freunde mir untreu wurden, empfand ich manchmal Wehmut, doch kein Unbehagen, ich empfand es mehr als Bestätigung auf meinem Wege. Diese früheren Freunde

²⁷ Mileck does not explain why Hesse's journals are inaccessible, and this is the only source that even comments on their existence. Possibly they have been kept inaccessible due to his wishes or the wishes of his family.

²⁸ Freedman cites Ball 142-5.

²⁹ Women, by comparison, are, at least in this socio-historical context, expected to be more emotionally aware and whose primary physical location of sexual vulnerability is not the rectum, but the vagina.

hatten ja ganz recht, wenn sie sagten, ich sei früher ein so sympathischer Mensch und Dichter gewesen, während meine jetzige Problematik einfach ungenießbar sei" (MzS 19). Nonetheless, in a passage from the letter cited above to his second wife, Ruth Wenger, he still maintained that he was "ein guter und treuer Freund." Hesse referred to the sense of loyalty to oneself as "Eigensinn,," and thus he attempted to rehabilitate it from its negative meaning of "selfishness." In light of his disappointment at trying to maintain a humanizing, public voice in the midst of war, Hesse came to believe that society could only be changed through the transformation of the self, by the striving of every individual to realize his or her destiny, whatever that might be. As René Breugelmans has noted Hesse had been concerned with self-development even before the emotional crisis brought on by war, but the war intensified his longing for it. Self-development was, in fact, intimately connected with the literary tradition from which Hesse also derived his idea of friendship: German Romanticism.³⁰ In his parable-essay, "Zarathustras Wiederkehr (1919)," he combined the two concepts of friendship and self-development using the Nietzschean idiom of Zarathustra to exhort (specifically male) German youth to become themselves and thus be in a position to join a community of men: "Dann werdet ihr aus der Einsamkeit wiederkehren in eine Gemeinschaft, welche nicht mehr Stall und Brutstätte ist, in eine Gemeinschaft von Männern, in ein Reich ohne Grenzen, in das Reich Gottes, wie es eure Väter nannten."³¹ In this passage, Hesse envisioned a homosocial community; based on each individual's personal development, as opposed to his earlier attempt to seek personal development in homosocial community. Later in the essay, Hesse, speaking through Zarathustra justified his reprimand against blind nationalism by confessing his love for these young men: "Denn dies, ihr Freunde, muß euch doch durch all mein Schelten und Bösereden hindurchgeklungen und -geleuchtet haben: daß ich euch liebe, daß ich ein gewisses Vertrauen zu euch habe, daß ich Zukunft bei euch wittere. ..."³² As with his earlier political statements, his later ones are motivated by homosocial desire. Using Kaufman and Raphael's terminology, Hesse clearly recognized at this point the difference between the need for identification and the need for differentiation vis-à-vis homosocial community. The statements quoted above, however, suggest that he viewed differentiation as a prerequisite for a higher level of identification. That is, for Hesse, to be true to himself meant to be true to his concept of friendship even if it exceeded the contemporary possibilities of friendship. From this perspective, the years of isolation that followed. this period do not represent so much a need to be alone as a need to preserve an ideal from practical reality. In other words, if he could not hope to fulfill his ideal, he did not want to participate in imperfect approximations of it.

³⁰ Breugelmans 11, 15; he notes that "Hesse's emphasis on self-will, 'Eigensinn,' recalls Novalis's concept of inborn 'Gewissen' in part 2 of *Heinrich von Ofterdingen*." However, when discussing the various literary and philosophical sources for Hesses *Demian* that obviously exceed a narrow definition of German Romanticism, he instead chooses "German Idealism" as the umbrella-term for these sources. Parenthetically, "Eigensinn" also recalls the title of one of the major gay publications of the time, 'Der Eigene,' which featured articles by Ewald Tischek who viewed the artistic ideals of German Romanticism as favorable to homoeroticism. See Ewald Tischek, "Der mann-männliche Eros in der deutschen Romantik," intro. Manfred Herzer, *Forum Homosexualität und Literatur* 26 (1996) 83-98.

³¹ Hermann Hesse, "Zarathustras Wiederkehr," *Politische Betrachtungen*, ed. Siegfried Unseld (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1970) 77.

³² "Zarathustras Wiederkehr" 81.

Androgynous Re-Parenting and Homosocial “Coming Out”

In *Der Steppenwolf*, the reader receives three explanations of the genesis of Harry Haller’s condition from three different viewpoints: that of the fictional editor, of Haller himself, and of the metatextual analyst of the Treatise. Although the explanations differ slightly, each suggests a scene of shame that corresponds to Kaufman and Raphael’s model. The editor attributes Harry’s condition to his strict upbringing, with which his parents attempted to break his will:

*“Dieses Vernichten der Persönlichkeit und Brechen des Willens nun war bei diesem Schüler nicht gelungen, dazu war er viel zu stark und hart, viel zu stolz und geistig. Statt seine Persönlichkeit zu vernichten, war es nur gelungen, ihn sich selbst hassen zu lehren.”*³³

This analysis corresponds to Kaufman and Raphael’s description of the shaming of the need for differentiation and affirmation that results in the subsequent association of these needs with the feeling of shame or self-hatred. The metatextual analyst, however, is more sceptical about the origins of Harry’s split personality:

“Es mögen sich kluge Menschen darüber streiten, ob er nun wirklich ein Wolf war, ob er einmal, vielleicht schon vor seiner Geburt, aus einem Wolf in einen Menschen verzaubert war oder ob er als Mensch geboren, aber mit der Seele eines Steppenwolfes begabt und von ihr besessen war oder aber ob dieser Glaube, daß er eigentlich ein Wolf sei, bloß eine Einbildung oder Krankheit von ihm war” (S 54).

The various theories that the analyst describes parody the contemporary theories on homosexuality: that a homosexual male is a biological man with the soul of a woman (and a lesbian vice versa); that homosexuality was in-born, or conversely a result of one’s environment; or that homosexuality was a mental illness that could be cured with medical treatment.³⁴ The analyst, however, dismisses all attempts to explain the origin of Harry’s condition and, furthermore, asserts that the concept of a “split personality” is merely a useful simplification of a much more complex reality. Instead of locating the origin of Harry’s problem, he explains the nature of his problem: that Harry is unable to allow the various aspects of his personality to co-exist on account of his lingering attachment to a middle-class lifestyle that limits his self-development. Although the analyst makes no reference to a shame scene, the way in which he describes the human side of Harry reacting to the wolf side corresponds to the internalized gaze of the other which reprimands the self even when no other person is present. Harry himself does not try to analyze

³³ Hermann Hesse, *Der Steppenwolf* (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1974) 17. Hereafter cited in the text in parentheses as “S” followed by the page number.

³⁴ James Jones, *“We of the Third Sex”*: *Literary Representations of Homosexuality in Wilhelmine Germany* (New York: Peter Lang, 1990) 80; for greater detail, read the entire chapter “The Creation of the Third Sex.” 43-91. Harry’s status as a “Mischwesen” is closely parallel to the “sexuelle Zwischenstufen-” theory of homosexuality.

his own condition, but nonetheless explains how he arrived at his current situation:

“Das eine Mal hatte ich meinen bürgerlichen Ruf samt meinem Vermögen verloren und hatte lernen müssen, auf die Achtung derer zu verzichten, die bisher vor mir den Hut gezogen hatten. Das andre Mal war über Nacht mein Familienleben zusammengebrochen; meine geisteskrank gewordene Frau hatte mich aus Haus und Behagen vertrieben. Liebe und Vertrauen hatte sich plötzlich in Hass und tödlichen Kampf verwandelt, mitleidig and verächtlich blickten die Nachbarn mir nach.” (S 88-9).

Both cases that Harry describes constitute clear examples of shame scenes, although the shamed need or emotion is not mentioned. Instead of emphasizing what is shamed, Harry concentrates on the social context of the shame: the first is homosocial, the second is heterosexual. The shame scenes occur, furthermore, in the particular framework of middle-class expectations: reputation, wealth, wife and marriage are the cornerstones of a respectable middle-class existence. On account of these scenes, Harry becomes estranged from society. Yet society continues to exist within him so that he is also estranged from himself.

While all three narrators identify a tension between society and the multi-faceted individual as the heart of Harry’s condition and describe situations that correspond to various aspects of shame scenes, none of them directly comments on the various shamed needs or emotions. Nonetheless, there are clues that indicate that homosocial desire, or the need to identify and to be affirmed by other men, has been shamed. According to the editor, Harry is extraordinarily “ungesellig” and shy (S 7-8); yet Harry himself clearly articulates the sort of companionship that he desires:

“Oh, wenn ich jetzt einen Freund gehabt hätte, einen Freund in irgendeiner Dachkammer, der bei einer Kerze grübelt und die Violine danebenliegen hat! Wie hätte ich ihn in seiner Nachtstille beschlichen, wäre lautlos durchs winklige Treppenhaus emporgeklettert und hätte ihn überrascht, und wir hätten mit Gespräch und Musik ein paar überirdische Nachtstunden gefeiert! Oft hatte ich dies Glück gekostet, einst, in vergangenen Jahren, aber auch dies hatte sich mit der Zeit von mir entfernt und losgelöst, verwelkte Jahre lagen zwischen hier und dort” (S 48).

Although Harry emphasizes that talk and music are the objects that unite him to his hypothetical friend, the language he uses to illustrate his fantasy is sensual and would be obviously erotic to any reader if the gender of the friend were female. The imagined friend also resembles Harry who lives in a mansard apartment and dwells upon his pain. In Harry’s fantasy and in his memory of bygone days only such a friend could fulfill his need for identification and for affirmation because they share so much in common. However Harry is cut off from both the memory and the fantasy by a shame scene that is only indirectly communicated to the reader.

In contrast to his fantasy of companionship, his real companions are in fact non-companions that is they are only united by their disappointment at the loss of an earlier, happier time of homosocial community:

“Jeden von ihnen [in the pub that Harry frequents] zog ein Heimweh, eine Enttäuschung, ein Bedürfnis nach Ersatz hieher, der Verheiratete suchte hier die Atmosphäre seiner Junggesellenzeit, der alte Beamte die Anklänge seiner Studentenjahre, alle waren sie ziemlich schweigsam und alle waren sie Trinker und saßen gleich mir lieber vor einem halben Liter Elsässer als vor einer Damenkapelle” (S 44-5)

As with Harry, the desires and realities of the other pub patrons conflict. They differ not only in terms of homosocial desires and heterosexual realities (nostalgia for bachelorhood versus dissatisfaction in marriage), but also in terms of loosely and strictly structured homosociality (egalitarian university camaraderie versus hierarchical, institutional allegiances). Heterosexuality in either its social form (marriage) or its erotic form (chorus girls) does not interest this group of men. Paradoxically, these men who desire an earlier era of uninhibited male bonding do not bond with each other, but remain silent and drink. Time and age has separated them so thoroughly from this past that they cannot act uninhibitedly even when they recognize the common desire for homosocial community. Ultimately, they share their common estrangement instead of overcoming it. The community of the pub is a non-community because they are all equally alienated from one another.

Although the text does not reveal the original shame scene (or scenes), based on Kaufman and Raphael's explanation of how similar scenes coalesce into a single script that helps the individual predict, react, and interpret such scenes as they recur, it is possible to deduce the nature of the original scene from an obvious scene of shame in the text. Harry's conduct before, during, and after his visit with a professorial acquaintance and his wife indicates the presence of a pre-formed script in Harry's psyche that is based on previous such scenes. When he arrives at the professor's house and a maid takes his hat and coat, he pays careful attention to where they are put "aus irgendeiner Ahnung" (S 103). When Harry becomes irritated by a stylized picture of Goethe that portrays him as a respectable professor, he again senses "daß ich hier nicht am richtigen Orte sei. Hier waren schön stilisierte Altmeister und nationale Größen zu Hause, keine Steppenwölfe" (S 104). Thus, even before Harry meets his host, the script of a shame scene is triggered by his estimation of the professor's nationalistic, middle-class ideals. When the professor's wife enters, the first of the incremental shame scenes occurs: "Ja, und dann fragte sie, wie es denn meiner lieben Frau gehe, und ich mußte ihr sagen, daß meine Frau mich verlassen habe und unsre Ehe geschieden sei" (S 105). The content of this scene is heterosexual, that is, Harry alienates the wife in this social context by admitting his divorce to his own wife. Although the wife's question was intended as a harmless demonstration of interest in the guest's well-being and as an attempt to establish a basis of commonality in a shared culture, it immediately reminds Harry of his loss and his estrangement from his wife and from society in general. This interaction represents a shame scene because Harry is forced by the question to expose his psychic wounds. The second incremental scene occurs when the professor begins to talk about

and to berate an article on the war guilt of the “Vaterland” without realizing that Harry had written it:

“Ich lachte in mich hinein, gab aber jetzt die Hoffnung verloren, an diesem Abend noch etwas Angenehmes zu erleben. Ich habe den Augenblick deutlich in Erinnerung. In diesem Augenblick nämlich, während der Professor vom Vaterlandsverräter Haller sprach, verdichtete sich in mir das schlimmste Gefühl von Depression und Verzweiflung, ...” (S 105-6).

The climactic scene of shame occurs, however, around the picture of Goethe, which Harry insults with bitter irony (S 107). This scene represents a culmination of the alienation that Harry experienced in the previous two scenes. This particular image of Goethe symbolizes simultaneously the professor’s nationalistic prejudices and his wife’s sense of middle-class domesticity. By insulting the picture, Harry ruptures his homosocial relationship to the professor and his heterosexual relationship to the professor’s wife, as he had done separately in the first two scenes. Because Harry experiences this scene in terms of a pre-existing script, it signifies not only his failure to establish community with these two individuals, but also with the entire society that they represent. Harry recognizes exactly this point “... für mich aber war sie [die Stunde beim Professor] ein letztes Mißlingen und Davonlaufen, war mein Abschied von der bürgerlichen, der moralischen, der gelehrten Welt, war ein vollkommener Sieg des Steppenwolfs” (S 109). Of course, the Steppenwolf is not simply identical with the opinion of society because, in fact, he also represents Harry’s desire to be a loner. However, since Harry and the Steppenwolf are antagonistic principles of a single self, the one witnesses the failure of the other, in the other’s respective milieu and, therefore, creates the sense of being inwardly exposed. In this case, the Steppenwolf witnesses and ridicules Harry’s inability to function in civilized society which is his supposed domain. In the midst of this crescendo of despair and shame the voice of the Steppenwolf tells Harry to commit suicide: “Geh heim, Harry, und schneide dir die Kehle durch! Lang genug hast du damit gewartet” (S 109). The internalized voice of the Steppenwolf is an amplified mimicry of the reaction of the professor and his wife, as well as those of others in earlier scenes, to Harry’s demonstration of non-commonality. Although no real person ever tells Harry to commit suicide, the sum “of disapproving voices and reactions amounts to an exclusion from a middle-class social existence. When combined with the affect of shame, this social “exclusion becomes more urgent so that it seems to the individual that no life is possible outside of society, that is, social exclusion equals death. From this perspective the scene with the picture of Goethe is not only a culmination of the previous scenes with the professor and his wife, but a culmination of all such previous scenes in Harry’s entire life. Thus, Harry’s decision to commit suicide is not a reaction to this particular incident alone, but to this incident as he interprets it through the script of similar, earlier incidents.

The utter humiliation of the civilized aspect of Harry’s self allows other aspects of Harry to emerge, and thus presents an opportunity for him to reconfigure his concept of self in a healthier manner. This process begins when Harry meets Hermine. Hermine’s introduction into the narrative appears to be coincidental, and yet, predicted. Because Harry ends up at this bar without

looking for it or trying to find it, the fact that he meets Hermine seems coincidental. On the other hand, this is the same bar to which the man who reminded Harry of the man who gave him the Steppenwolf Treatise told him to go (S 97), so that it also appears as if a secret society (as in Goethe's *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre*) has led him to Hermine. On account of this paradox, many interpreters have not known whether to view Hermine as an incredibly insightful callgirl or a symbolic projection of Harry's imagination. However, instead of attempting to resolve the paradox, viewing Hermine as both produces greater possibilities for understanding the text, that is, Hermine is an insightful callgirl who represents Harry's psychic complement. This is important because she could not influence Harry so strongly if she were merely one, or the other. Because of her ability both to be herself and to intuit Harry's thoughts, Hermine can confront Harry on both the level of an individual scene (authentic interpersonal interaction) and on the level of the script (symbolic interpersonal interaction), and thus interrupt the vicious amplification of the scene at the professor's by the script of similar scenes.

Not only does she interrupt the amplification, but she also counteracts it by re-enacting essentially the same scene with Harry, but with positive consequences. Like the professor's wife, she asks him a question in order to initiate a conversation. Unlike the professor's wife's question, however, it does not deal with a heterosexual marker of his place in middle-class society (that is, his wife), but rather with him directly and only in relation to him: "wer bist du denn?" (S 112). Also, she immediately addresses him informally with "du," instead of the formal "Sie." In this way, she establishes a sense of community with Harry, which he lacked with the wife. Just as the professor alienates Harry indirectly by referring to an article that he had written, Hermine indirectly provides a sense of familiarity by reminding him of someone from his youth. Although he does not recognize until later (S 139-40) that she reminds him of Hermann, his best friend from childhood, he acknowledges her boyishness in her haircut: "Das schöne Mädchen lächelte mit seinen blutroten Lippen und schüttelte den festen, knabenhaft frisierten Kopf" (S 114). In contrast to the professor, Hermine reminds Harry of a positive case of male bonding in his past. In addition to being both real and symbolic, Hermine is also simultaneously male and female and thus can bond with Harry on both the homosocial and heterosexual level. In this way, she is able to replace both the professor and his wife in this new scene:

"Es tat ungeheuer wohl, jemand zu gehorchen, neben jemand zu sitzen, der einen ausfragte, einem befahl, einen ausschalt. Hätte der Professor oder seine Frau das vor ein paar Stunden getan, es wäre mir viel erspart geblieben. Aber nein, es war gut so, es wäre mir viel entgangen!"
(S 116-7).

Like the wife, Hermine makes sure that Harry has something to eat and to drink, while like the professor, she attempts to engage him intellectually. She surpasses both of their attempts to create community not only because she addresses him more directly and caringly, but also because she combines elements of both male and female personae. After Harry retells what happened at the professor's house, he concludes that, because they did not share the same vision of Goethe, he felt alienated and misunderstood, by them, and thereafter completely alone and misunderstood by everyone (S 118-9). In

response, Hermine demonstrates her understanding and helps him put his feelings into a more reasonable perspective:

“Wenn er klug wäre, so würde er über den Maler und den Professor einfach lachen. Wenn er verrückt wäre, würde er ihnen ihren Goethe ins Gesicht schmeißen. Da er bloß ein kleiner Bub ist, läuft er heim und will sich aufhängen ...“
(S 119).

By calling Harry “a little boy,” she makes fun of his exaggerations at the same time as she consoles him as a mother would a young child. In this way, Goethe again triggers pre-existing scripts, but this time the script deals with scenes of comfort and understanding associated with his mother and with his best friend, Hermann. Once Hermine has de-activated the shame script, she can now begin a process of reparenting to help Harry accept all the various aspects of his self.

Hermine’s androgyny brings about a peculiar form of male bonding; in other words, Harry expresses desire for her that corresponds to the homosocial desire that he had expressed earlier, yet he does not desire her heterosexually: “Ich dachte nur an sie, ich erwartete alles von ihr, ich war bereit, ihr alles zu opfern und zu Füßen zu legen, ohne doch im mindesten in sie verliebt zu sein” (S 136). By fulfilling Harry’s homosocial needs in her female persona, she is able to bypass the shame associated with those needs by men. Alternately, by reminding Harry of his boyhood friend Hermann, she transports Harry back to a time in his life in which his homosocial desire had not yet been shamed. Furthermore, because of her androgyny, Harry does not view her in terms of the other women whom he has known, like his wife and the wife of the professor, and with whom he has had unhappy relationships. On account of her ability to fulfill Harry’s homosocial and heterosexual desires without being a man or his wife, Hermine is able to help him to reconfigure his relationship to those desires.

Once Harry recognizes it as such, he realizes that he finds precisely her androgyny, her boyishness attractive (S 143). On the other hand, because Harry bonds with Hermine quasi-homosocially, he is unable to relate to her sexually when they dance together for the first time. Harry explains his hesitation: “Hermine stand mir allzu nah, sie war mein Kamerad, meine Schwester, war meinesgleichen, sie glich mir selbst und gleich meinem Jugendfreund Hermann, dem Schwärmer, dem Dichter, dem glühenden Genossen meiner geistigen Übungen und Ausschweifungen” (S 161-2). The paradox of this explanation is, however, that, while Hermine reminds him too much of his friend Hermann for him to desire her sexually, his recollection of Hermann is thoroughly passionate. This paradox; reveals that Harry’s desire for Hermann has an erotic component that he fears to accept. In order to bypass his quasi-homophobic resistance and to connect with Harry sexually, Hermine employs a typical trick of male bonding: she couples him with a woman (Maria) with whom she also has a relationship. When Harry realizes that Hermine has made love to this same woman, he is fascinated by the erotic possibilities that it reveals to him (S 189). Not only is lesbianism possible, but Harry is able to imagine himself as Hermine making love to Maria and as Maria making love to Hermine, as well as himself making love to Hermine through Maria. The complexity of these possibilities is increased when one

considers Hermine's androgynous status, so that Harry can also imagine making love to his friend Hermann through Maria and Hermine. In this way, he begins to learn to let go of the middle-class expectation of a single, unified identity that has, in part, made his awareness of his double personality so painful. At the Masked Ball, Harry is finally able to fall in love with Hermann, when Hermine comes dressed as him. Homosocial desire and heterosexual desire coincide and amplify each other in Hermine.

Through his relationship to Maria, Harry learns to experience sexuality innocently and free of guilt. Harry contrasts this with his earlier understanding of sexuality: "Sinnenleben und Geschlecht hatten für mich fast immer den bitteren Beigeschmack von Schuld gehabt, den süßen, aber bängigen Geschmack der verbotenen Frucht, vor der ein geistiger Mensch auf der Hut sein muß" (S 202). In other words, not only has his homosocial desire been shamed, but also his heterosexual desire. From a middle-class perspective, of course, sex with a prostitute, which both Maria and Hermine are by profession, is still shameful. However, Maria comes to Harry not as a prostitute, but simply as a woman who offers him her sexuality gladly and without being paid. Maria's uncomplicated sexuality liberates Harry's heterosexual desire from all social context, either positive (marriage) or negative (prostitution). That Hermine and Maria do not consider their lifestyle to be shameful further aids in this process. Indeed, Hesse portrayed Hermine and Maria's lifestyle as much more honest and profound than the bourgeois lifestyle of the professor and his wife. Because of Maria's naturalness and lack of pretense in her sexuality, Harry can abandon his own inhibitions and experience it as would a child who has yet not learned the social restrictions that surround sexuality. By creating a situation in which Harry can be a child again, Maria makes it possible for him to go through, a reparenting process which disassociates sexuality from shame, and actively affirms sensual expression.

Just as Hermine and Maria help Harry to imagine new ways of bonding homosocially and heterosexually, the saxophone player Pablo presents the possibility of bonding homosexually. In fact, the first time Harry meets Pablo, he primarily notices how homoerotically attractive he is and then decides that there is not much to like about him: "Mir aber, gestehe ich, wollte bei jenem ersten Zusammensein dieser Herr durchaus nicht gefallen. Schön war er, das war nicht zu leugnen, schön von Wuchs und schön von Gesicht, weitere Vorzüge aber konnte ich an ihm nicht entdecken" (S 159-60). According to the rules of homosocial interaction with which Harry is familiar, the beauty of another man cannot serve as a basis for bonding. Instead of simply enjoying Pablo's physical beauty, he tries to engage him in a theoretical discussion about music, that is, to express his homosocial desire through the conduit of music theory. Pablo simply looks at him blankly and smiles, from which Harry concludes that they could not possibly have anything in common (S 160-1). He later finds out from Hermine that Pablo, instead of listening to his words, had been looking into his eyes and trying to make him smile. Harry acts towards Pablo in a typical homosocial manner by trying to engage him intellectually, while Pablo attempts to relate to him sensually, homoerotically. After Harry's later, equally unsuccessful attempt to engage Pablo in a conversation, Pablo is even more direct in responding sensually by looking into his eyes and stroking his hand (S 169). Clearly, Harry has no script for understanding how to relate to Pablo homoerotically,

because even with Hermann and the friend he imagines for himself, there is always some intellectual intermediary for their shared passion. With Pablo, however, a new script is required for communicating desire directly without intellectual intermediation. Anticipating Harry's resistance, Pablo attempts to organize an orgy with Harry, Maria, and himself (S 186) so that he and Harry can relate sexually, but not exclusively because Maria is also part of the love-making. Nonetheless, the contact is too direct for Harry and he rejects Pablo's offer as "impossible for him." A few minutes later, however, under the pretext of sleep and, therefore, helplessness, Harry allows Pablo to kiss him on his eyelids: "... als ich für einige Minuten die Augen schloß, spürte ich auf jedem Augenlid einen ganz flüchtigen, gehauchten Kuß. Ich nahm ihn bin, als sei ich der Meinung, er komme von Maria. Aber ich wußte wohl, daß er von ihm war" (S 187). Harry is not indifferent to Pablo's beauty and sensuality, but he cannot imagine, how to react to it without shame. Just as his homo-social desires were shamed in mid-life, his homosexual desire was shamed at an even earlier age. Pablo's offer activates a shame script that prescribes immediate rejection so as not to give the impression that one would even take the time to consider the possibility. Because shame scenes are directly connected to the sensation of being observed, however, Harry looks to Maria and Pablo to read their reactions. That they are both understanding of him and disappointed at his inability simply to enjoy himself makes it possible for him to entertain the thought of making love to Pablo, which he could not have done beforehand. Maria and Pablo's reparenting in this scene partially deactivates the shame script associated with homosexual desire thus preparing the way for the development of a new, affirming script dealing with homosexual desire. The three kinds of reparenting that he has received from Hermine, Maria, and Pablo prepare Harry fundamentally to revise the shame scripts that prevent him from being at peace with the different aspects of himself. By revising these scripts, Harry becomes able to find ways to fulfill his interpersonal emotional needs without shame. From all three mentors he has learned how to live in the moment and to enjoy simple pleasures as they present themselves. In this way, Harry can refocus his attention outward when he begins to sense the involuntary activation of his shame scripts. Dancing, sex, and jazz divert him from his internal emotional pain and enable him to invest his emotional energy in the sensual play of bodies and music. Furthermore, they blur the line between social and sexual interactions, and between intellectual and sensual discourse so that the one appears to flow without interruption into the other. One passage illustrates this erotic fluidity especially well:

Jetzt, vom Eros zauberhaft erschlossen, sprang die Quelle der Bilder tief und reich, ... Es schaute Kindheit und Mutter zart und verklärt wie ein fernes, unendlich blau entrücktes Stück Gebirge herüber, es klang ehern und klar der Chor meiner Freundschaften, mit dem sagenhaften Hermann beginnend, dem Seelenbruder Herminens; duftend und unirdisch, wie feucht aus dem Wasser heraufblühende Seeb Blumen, schwammen die Bildnisse vieler Frauen heran, die ich geliebt, die ich begehrt und besungen, von denen ich nur wenige erreicht und zu eigen zu haben versucht hatte.
(S 181)

Here Harry realizes that both his friendships with men and love affairs with women derive from the same source, namely erotic desire, and therefore do

not belong to distinct social and sexual realms of experience. The images that eros produces are simultaneously sensual and meaningful, and thus bridge the gap between “Sinnenleben” and “Geistesleben.” By creating a fluid transition between the antithetical aspects of Harry’s life, the reparenting of Hermine, Maria, and Pablo helps him to reconcile the conflicting halves of his personality (the civilized scholar versus the wild loner).

In the Magic Theatre Harry revises his shame scripts and his understanding of himself. In the room labelled “Hochjagd auf Autos,” for example, he gains a new perspective on war that allows him to see its liberating side, but nonetheless to judge it as ultimately useless and stupid. In contrast to his actual experience, in the fantasy world of the Magic Theatre it does not matter which side he takes. Instead of being an occasion of homosocial exclusion and alienation, like at the professor’s, this war brings him together with a childhood friend, Gustav, with whom he not only has a common past, but shared intellectual pursuits. Harry lets down his resistance to the concept of war in general and enjoys the power that comes with destruction. He experiences the homosocial euphoria of war and at the same time recognizes that war cannot be justified. In the revised script, Harry acknowledges that the base instincts towards war and destruction exist in his soul next to high ideals of humanity. In his fantasy life, he can embrace both sides.

In the next room, “Einleitung zum Aufbau der Persönlichkeit,” he learns to play contradictory aspects of his self against each other, but also to rehabilitate them at the end of the game and let them play different roles in the next. This does not revise a particular script as much as it revises the way in which scripts are formed. The trouble with the script that was triggered during the visit at the professor’s was that Harry could not interpret the individual scene apart from all the similar scenes that preceded it and formed the script. Therefore, it became endlessly amplified and horrific in his mind. Through the model of the game, in which the figures change position and importance every time it is played and in which every outcome is different, Harry can learn how to take every incident for itself and to accept each outcome because each player is an aspect of himself that is worth having.

In witnessing the “Dressur des Steppenwolfs,” Harry’s internalized conflict becomes externalized and objectified. When he sees how cruelly the human and the wolf treat each other and how they force one another to act against their natures, he is filled with embarrassment. While this is an unpleasant experience for Harry, it also represents an improvement because it allows him to view his inner conflict as an observer. In the circus routine between the human and the wolf, each tries to make the other act like himself, that is, the human wants the wolf to act human, the wolf wants the human to act like a wolf. In this scene, Harry can see how ridiculous and pathetic both attempts are: perhaps he can learn to let the two aspects simply co-exist, as the first two rooms suggested.

In the next room, “Alle Mädchen sind dein,” Harry learns to take advantage of all the erotic opportunities that he had experienced in his life. Having learned from Maria to accept his sensual side, he is now ready to recapture the scenes in which he denied himself sensual pleasure because of his inhibitions. Not only does he meet all the women in this room that he had

loved or merely desired, but he also relives Pablo's offer for a three-way orgy and this time he accepts it: "Auch jene Verführung kehrte wieder, die mir Pablo einst angeboten hatte, und andre, frühere, die ich zu ihrer Zeit nicht einmal ganz begriffen hatte, phantastische Spiele zu dreien und vieren, lächelnd nahmen sie mich in ihren Reigen mit. Viele Dinge geschahen, viele Spiele wurden gespielt, nicht mit Worten zu sagen" (S 259). In this room, he experiences the full spectrum of erotic pleasure and sexual fulfillment and all without shame (although the specific sexual "games" are left unnamed, which may indicate wise discretion as much as prudish omission.) The scene revises the script that had led Harry to be sceptical and mistrustful of the sensual life. By doing this, he is able to recognize how rich and full of pleasure his life could have been if only he had allowed himself to follow his emotions.

Once Harry emerges from the rooms of, the Magic Theatre, a final re-scripting takes place which transforms the earlier scene when Harry decided he needed to commit suicide to escape the shame that he had brought on himself at the professor's. Mozart instead of Goethe triggers this new scene. Mozart represents for Harry the perfect expression of music and gives him hope for human perfection; he also functions as a re-parenting figure in this scene. Mozart, in contrast to Harry, views perfection or any human achievement as the result of working through the guilt of creation. To do anything, even to be born, one must enter into guilt. Once one learns to accept the guilt and to make light of it, it is possible to grow and to strive for higher levels of achievement and development. When Harry hears this, he is not yet able to make light of his guilt and so is burdened by it. When he awakens from his encounter with Mozart, he is reminded of his pact with Hermine to kill her once she has made him fall in love with her. Looking in the mirror, he recognizes himself from the night after the dinner at the professor's, when he was also weighed down with guilt and shame. The impetus to kill Hermine is the same impetus that led him to thoughts of suicide. When Harry fell in love with Hermine, she became a part of himself so that killing her is the same as killing a part of himself. He cannot live with the guilt dredged up by his encounter with Mozart and he therefore commits a kind of suicide by killing Hermine. By killing her, of course, he really does make himself guilty, as opposed to the less serious self-pitying guilt that he had experienced before. The original impetus for suicide was the shame of exclusion from homosocial and heterosexual community. Indeed, Harry finds Hermine naked and asleep in the arms of Pablo, but instead of feeling excluded and jealous, he simply notices how beautiful they both are. This simply makes the inappropriateness of his actions even more obvious. Now, however, a new shame scene emerges: Mozart returns to berate and ridicule Harry for killing Hermine, for committing a symbolic suicide. In this new scene, Mozart shames Harry's sense of shame itself:

Natürlich! Für jede dumme und humorlose Veranstaltung sind Sie zu haben, Sie großzügiger Herr, für alles, was pathetisch und witzlos ist! Nun, ich aber bin dafür nicht zu haben, ich gebe Ihnen für Ihre ganze romantische Buße keinen Groschen. Sie wollen hingerichtet werden, Sie wollen den Kopf abgehackt kriegen, Sie Berserker! Für dieses blöde Ideal würden Sie noch zehn Totschläge begehen. Sie wollen sterben, Sie Feigling, aber nicht leben. Zum Teufel, aber leben sollen Sie ja gerade! (S 276)

By shaming the shame script in this way, Mozart revises the ending of the script so that Harry can pull himself out of the downward spiral of depression and shame, that the original script triggers.

When Mozart turns into Pablo, Harry's original desire for a friend has become a reality, although not exactly in the way in which he had expected it. Earlier, Harry had wished for a melancholy friend in a mansard with a violin with whom he could spend the night making music and talking. Now, he does have a friend, but Pablo is not melancholy and does not play violin. Instead of sharing his sorrow with Harry, he shares his endless ability to laugh at life and to be happy. At the end, the Magic Theatre not only fulfills Harry's need to reconcile the conflicting aspects of his self, but also his need for homosocial companionship. Hermine's murder and transformation into a chess piece in the Magic Theatre indicates that she symbolically functions as an intermediary between Harry and Pablo, and thus she helps Harry to overcome his shamed homosocial desire. Once she completes her symbolic function, she again becomes a part of Pablo. Her significance to Harry outside of the Magic Theatre, however, remains unresolved but the narrative suggests that she represents the object of both Harry's homosocial and heterosexual desire. For example, when he emerges from the room "Alle Mädchen sind dein," Harry declares: "Oh, ich würde nun mein Figurenspiel so umbauen, daß alles sich auf sie bezog und zur Erfüllung führte" (S 260). Perhaps once Harry has mastered Pablo's Magic Theatre and learned to laugh at himself, Hermine will become his ideal companion in life because she has already achieved the level of spiritual enlightenment that Harry seeks. Yet again, following the example in *Demian*, Hermine's integration into Pablo might also indicate that the path of Harry's homosocial and heterosexual desires lead him to a single homosexual object. The ending allows the reader to consider all of these possibilities which reparenting and the Magic Theatre have revealed to Harry.

Kaufman and Raphael's therapeutic model for assisting gays and lesbians to overcome the shame associated with their homosexual desire has provided a way to understand the genesis, crisis, and reintegration of Harry's split personality. By viewing first Hesse's and then Harry's desire for community and bonding with other men as "queer" and therefore potentially erotic, this reading has shown how the erotic destruction of social barriers helps Harry to understand the diverse wholeness of his emotional needs. The lense of homosociality has illuminated connections between friendship, politics, and spiritual development in Hesse's life, which affects how the reader understands his portrayal of Harry's dilemma in *Steppenwolf*. Just as the ending of the story refuses to tie up the loose threads and explain the sense of Hermine's symbolic murder, a comparison of Hesse's life and work also does not reveal a simple unity. Shortly after the completion of this novel, Hesse married Ninon Ausländer with whom he lived happily until his death, whose reported androgyny suggests that he found his need for homosocial companionship and heterosexual love fulfilled in a woman. On the other hand, in *Narziss und Goldmund*, he portrayed the title characters explicitly in love with each other and in *Das Glasperlenspiel*, no women appear at all. This indicates Hesse's continued and even intensified intellectual interest in romantic friendship that borders on homosexuality. By bringing a "queer" perspective

to the material, that is, one that appreciates the complex interaction of public appearance and private experience, this reading suggests that the resolution of Harry's dilemma lies in his acceptance of the non-unity between a person's supposedly stable, middle-class persona and the multiple Selves which exist in a person's psyche.³⁵

³⁵ [Posted by HHP as an educational service. The copyright remains with the author Craig Bernard Palmer who received his doctorate from Washington University, St. Louis, Missouri, in 1997. His present address is unknown as of this posting date - Aug. 8, 1999. HHP]