**Hermann Hesse (1877-1962)**

* Received the Nobel Prize and Goethe Prize of Frankfurt in 1946 and the Peace Prize of the German Booksellers in 1955
* German-Swiss; son of missionaries to India; influenced by philosophies in India
* Attended theological seminary; wanted to be a poet; worked as bookseller; became an acclaimed author
* Protested Hitler and Holocaust; Nazis suppressed and partially destroyed his works; he resigned his German citizenship.
* Was always a seeker; thus, the task of overcoming personal crises is one of the defining elements of his work.
* Underwent psychoanalysis to overcome an existential crisis; used painting as therapy
* Generally considered to be the most translated German author since the Brothers Grimm. *The Glass Bead Game* is *his magnum opus*. Other novels: *Demian, Narcissus and Goldmund*
* His book ***Siddhartha: (***NOT the story of the first Buddha whose name was Prince Siddhartha)
  + Genre: allegory—everything is a symbol, even the title; Hesse said anyone’s name can be the title because we are all seeking personal peace/fulfillment—and a quest story
  + Combines the precepts of Hinduism, Buddhism, and Christianity to conclude that one can find true spiritual peace only through unconditional love (agape)
  + The name “Siddhartha”— “he who has found his goal” or “he who has found peace”
  + “Buddha”--- “the awakened or enlightened one”
  + “Govinda” is another name for the Hindu god Krishna; it means” protector of life”
  + “Kama” means “desire”; Kamala is the object of desire; Kamaswami is the master of material desires (He is a master businessman.)
  + Vasudeva—I will let you discover the meaning of his name.
  + Other important symbols: falling leaf, stars, river, Samsara (worldly trap), birds, Om, gambling, the Buddha’s smile, monk’s yellow robe, snake (double symbolism—both East and West), sleep of transformation, light and other words associated with light such as “radiant”; shadow, chain, nausea, icy chill/shiver
* **Themes**: (1) One can only find peace through agape love; (2) One must constantly seek true spiritual fulfillment; (3) One must transcend the desires of this world; (4) Time does not exist (past, present, & future all flow together); (5) Each person must find his own path; (6) “Gentle-ness is stronger than severity; water is stronger than rock, and love is stronger than force;

(7) Knowledge can be communicated but wisdom is gained through experience; (8) A true friend is faithful through time and trials; (9) Immersing oneself in the pursuit and pleasures of the world is folly; (10) Everyone and everything in the world is a part of God’s creative unity.

* **Four Types of Love:** (1) *philia*: friendship; love & loyalty to friends, community, our fellowman; a “warm” feeling but expects a reward; (2) *storge:* a natural bond; less selfish than *philia* but must be rewarded to keep on loving; acceptance, kindness, comfort; love for family; (3) *eros*: love of beauty, sensual love, passionate love; can be physical or non-physical; based on emotions; self-serving; expects reward; (4) *agape*: unconditional love, sacrificial love; based on obedience & commitment, not on feelings; God’s love; without *agape,* the other three loves are not pure but corrupted.