

SYLLABUS FOR DP II

PACIFICA GRADUATE INSTITUTE

Ph.D. Depth Psychology II
Fall 2004

Depth Psychology & The Mythic Tradition (DP-921)
Instructor: Christine Downing, Ph.D.

Office Hours: By appointment

E-Mail: chris@pacifica.edu

COURSE SYLLABUS

A. Course Description

In Thomas Mann's essay "Freud and the Future" he wrote:

The mythical interest is native to psychoanalysis. . . Its penetration into the childhood of the individual soul is at the same time a penetration into the childhood of mankind, into the primitive and mythical. . . The word *Tiefenpsychologie* ("deep" psychology) has a temporal significance; the primitive foundations of the human soul are likewise primitive time, they are those profound time-sources where the myth has its home and shapes the primeval norms and forms of life. For the myth is the foundation of life. . . While in the life of the human race the mythical is an early and primitive stage, in the life of the individual it is a late and mature one. What is gained is an insight into the higher truth depicted in the actual; a smiling knowledge of the eternal.

This accords with my own conviction that depth psychology is grounded in myth—although paradoxically I also agree with James Hillman that "myths do not ground, they open." It is that "opening" I hope to explore in this course.

I want from the beginning to acknowledge that our focus will be on the relation between depth psychology and *Greek* mythology-- both because it is this mythology that provides depth psychology with what Hillman calls its "primary rhetoric" and because it is the mythology that I know best and love.

Freud's deep immersion in classical culture shaped his discovery of an unconscious dimension of the human soul whose most compelling analogue is Hades, the underworld. Thus we will begin by looking at Greek myths about underworld experience. This will lead very naturally into a focus on the myth of **Demeter and Persephone**. We will look at the Homeric Hymn to Demeter, an early cultic poem which will enable us to explore the connections between myth and ritual. My book *The Long Journey Home* is an exploration of the many different ways contemporary women, especially Jungians, have understood and revised this tradition.

During our second session we will turn toward the revisioning of myth characteristic of Greek tragedy. Because of my conviction that depth psychology really begins with Sigmund Freud's waking realization "I am Oedipus," We will look at Sophocles' Oedipus plays and at how Freud (and Jung and Hillman) understood the ways in which the **Oedipus** myth lives in our psyches.

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We, will also consider the mythic figure, **Electra** (seen by Jung as the female counterpart to Oedipus) – an especially interesting choice because she appears in plays by each of the major Athenian tragedians.

During our final session we will look at Ovid's version of the **Narcissus** myth and at how "narcissism" has been understood and misunderstood ever since Freud, in response to the urging of Lou Andreas-Salomé, first introduced it into depth psychology. We will wonder along with Hillman whether depth psychology is inherently narcissistic and whether that's bad or good!

* * * *

The Long Journey Home includes a rather scholarly translation of the "Homeric Hymn to Demeter"; I urge those of you who love poetry to splurge (it's not really that expensive) on Charles Boer's translation of *The Homeric Hymns*. (Dallas: Spring Publications, 1987.) It includes some other wonderful poems, particularly the ones addressed to Hermes and to Aphrodite.

I didn't dare require you to buy Allen Mandelbaum's wonderful translation of *The Metamorphoses of Ovid* when I was only going to assign 25 pages, but I was tempted to – its full of so many wonderful stories, so gloriously and humorously retold. (Both Boer and Mandelbaum are available at the Pacifica bookstore, since I *do* assign them for my course on Greek and Roman Mythology in the Myth program.)

B. Required Reading

Carson, A. (trans.) (2001). Sophocles: Electra. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Fagles, Robert, trans. (1984). The Three Theban Plays. New York: Penguin Books, 1984.

Downing, C. (Ed.). (1994). The long journey home: Re-visioning the myth of Demeter and Persephone for our time. Boston: Shambhala.

DP-921 Reader:

Downing, C. Journeys to the underworld," MythoSphere 1:2, pp. 175-193..

Downing, Christine. Sigmund Freud and the Greek mythological tradition. Journal of the American academy of religion. 43/1., pp. 1-14.

Downing, C. (2004 Looking back at Orpheus. The luxury of afterwards (pp. 126-148.). New York: iUniverse

Downing, C. (2004). Greek tragedy in its historical hour—and in ours. The luxury of afterwards (pp. 93-106.). New York: iUniverse.

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- Freud, S. (1953-1974). Typical dreams. In J. Strachey (Ed.), The standard Edition of the complete psychological works of Sigmund Freud (Vol. 4, pp. 260-266). London: Hogarth Press.
- Mandelbaum, A. (1993). The metamorphoses of Ovid (pp. 81-106). San Diego: Harcourt Brace.
- Freud, S. (1953-1974). On narcissism. In J. Strachey (Ed.), The standard Edition of the complete psychological works of Sigmund Freud (Vol. 14, pp. 69-102). London: Hogarth Press.
- Andreas-Salome, L. (1921). The dual orientation of narcissism. Psychoanalytic Quarterly XXXI, 1962, pp. 1-30.
- Slattery, D.P. (2002). Narcissus, Echo, and irony's resonance. In Slattery, D.P. and L. Corbett (Eds.), Psychology at the threshold. Carpinteria, CA; Pacifica Graduate Institute Publications.

C. Class Schedule and Readings

Session 1: UNDERWORLD MYTHOLOGY

REQUIRED READING:

Downing, C. (Ed.). (1994). The long journey home: Re-visioning the myth of

From the Reader:

Downing, C. Journeys to the underworld, MythoSphere 1:2, pp. 175-193..

Downing, Christine. Sigmund Freud and the Greek mythological tradition. Journal of the American academy of religion. 43/1., pp. 1-14.

Downing, C. (2004) Looking back at Orpheus. The luxury of afterwards (pp. 126-148.). New York: iUniverse

Supplementary

Foley, H. ed. (1994). The Homeric Hymn to Demeter. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Jung, C.G. & Kerényi, C. (1969). Essays on a science of mythology (pp. 101-177). Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Session 2: OEDIPUS AND ELECTRA: MYTHS AND COMPLEXES

REQUIRED READING:

Fagles, Robert, trans. The Three Theban Plays. New York: Penguin Books, 1984.
(Read "Oedipus the King")

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Carson, A. (trans.) (2001). Sophocles: Electra. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

From the Reader:

Freud, S. (1953-1974). Typical dreams. In J. Strachey (Ed.), The standard Edition of the complete psychological works of Sigmund Freud (Vol. 4, pp. 260-266). London: Hogarth Press.

Downing, C. (2004). Greek tragedy in its historical hour—and in ours. The luxury of afterwards (pp. 93-106). New York: iUniverse.

Supplementary

Hillman, J. (1991). Oedipus revisited. In C. Kerényi & J. Hillman (Eds.), Oedipus variations (pp. 87-169). Dallas, Texas: Spring Publications.

Fagles, R. (trans.). (1979.) Aeschylus: The Oresteia. New York: Penguin Books.
Read "The Libation Bearers"

Roche, P. (trans.) (1998). Euripides: Ten plays. New York: Signet.
Read "Electra"

Foley, H. (2001). Female acts in Greek tragedy. Princeton: Princeton University Press, ch. III.2

Cater, N. (2003). Electra: Tracing a feminine myth through the western imagination. New Orleans: Spring Journal Books.

Session 3: THE MYTH OF NARCISSUS – AND NARCISSISM

REQUIRED READING:

From the Reader:

Mandelbaum, A. (1993). The metamorphoses of Ovid (pp. 81-106). San Diego: Harcourt Brace.

Freud, S. (1953-1974). On narcissism. In J. Strachey (Ed.), The standard Edition of the complete psychological works of Sigmund Freud (Vol. 14, pp. 69-102). London: Hogarth Press.

Andreas-Salome, L. (1921). The dual orientation of narcissism. Psychoanalytic Quarterly XXXI, 1962, pp. 1-30.

Slattery, D.P. (2002). Narcissus, Echo, and irony's resonance. In Slattery, D.P. and Corbett, L. (Eds.), Psychology at the threshold. Carpinteria, CA; Pacifica Graduate Institute Publications.

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Supplementary

Hillman, J. (1989). From mirror to window: Curing psychoanalysis of its narcissism. Spring 49, 62-75.

Stein, M. (1976). Narcissism. Spring, 32-53.

Berry, P. (1982). Echo's passion. In Echo's subtle body (pp. 113-126). Dallas: Spring Publications.

D. Course Requirements

A well-written 10-15 page paper relating to a theme exploring the connection between myth and depth psychology; it need not focus on one of the myths studied in the course. You may discuss your proposed topic with the instructor on campus or by e-mail (chris@pacific.edu).

Please include the course and group number on the paper *and* on the outside of the envelope (DP 730 PhD J-III or K-III).

Paper (or Request for Incomplete Form) is due postmarked four weeks after the last meeting (**J track**: December 12, 2002; **K track**: January 2, 2003) and should be sent to Christine Downing at Pacifica Graduate Institute.

Incompletes

Students are allowed four Incompletes per academic year and must be submitted *on or before the assignment due date*. Incomplete work for this class is due postmarked on or before March 12, 2003 (**K track**) or April 2, 2003 (**J track**). When you complete the paper send it directly to the faculty and include a Grade Change Form.