

DP 925 SOUL and POESIS

Winter 2001

Christine Downing

The course explores the relation between soul-making and poetic insight and creation. We will begin by looking at psyche-poesis in archaic and classical Greece, at how self-awareness, the conscious recognition of having a soul, emerges in the context of lyric and tragic poetry. Particular attention will be paid to the work of Sappho and Euripides. We will then look at poetry which clearly anticipated and to some degree explicitly influenced the depth psychological understandings of Freud and Jung. Here the emphasis will fall on Goethe's *Faust*. At our third meeting we will begin by considering poetry written at the same time that depth psychology was being developed and in response to the same cultural impulses. This will entail a focus on the work of Rilke and H.D. Finally we will look at the work of contemporary poets whose work has been significantly influenced by depth psychological perspectives.

In the case of the many translated works I have chosen translations I particularly like. However, our discussion will be enriched by our being able to take account of alternate versions of the same poems, so if you have editions you prefer, feel free to rely on them--better yet, bring them along to class!

Assignments

Session I THE CO-CREATION OF POETRY AND SOUL

- Willis Barnstone, trans., *Sappho - Poems, A New Version*, Consortium, 1999.
- Paul Roche, trans., *Three Plays of Euripides: Alcestis, Medea, The Bacchae*, Norton, 1974. (Read "Medea" and "The Bacchae.")
- Bruno Snell, "The Rise of the Individual in the Early Greek Lyric," *The Discovery of the Mind*, Dover, 1982, pp. 43-70.
- Christine Downing, "Sappho," *Myths and Mysteries of Same-Sex Love*, Continuum, 1996, pp. 216-236.
- Deborah Boedeker, "Becoming Medea: Assimilation in Euripides." in James J. Clauss and Sarah Iles Johnston, *Medea*, Princeton University Press, 1997, pp. 127-148.
- Charles Segal, "Euripides' *Bacchae*: The Language of the Self and the Language of the Mysteries," *Interpreting Greek Tragedy: Myth, Poetry, Text*, Cornell University Press, 1986, pp. 294-312.

Session II THE POETS KNEW IT LONG AGO

- Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *FAUST: A Tragedy*,: Norton Critical Edition trans by Walter Arndt, W.W. Norton, 1976. Read at least all of Part One and Act V of Part II. I have found the scholarly material in the second half of the book extraordinarily useful.
- Sigmund Freud, "Creative Writers and Daydreaming," *Standard Edition*, Hogarth Press, Vol. IX, pp. 143-153.
- Carl Jung, "Psychology and Literature," *Collected Works*, Princeton University Press, Vol. XV, pp. 84-105.

Supplementary:

Edward F. Edinger, *Goethe's Faust: Notes for a Jungian Commentary*, Inner City Books, 1990

You may also want to look at the Indexes to Jung's *Collected Works* and to the *Standard Edition* of Freud's Complete Works and note the MANY references to Goethe. An account of Jung's identification with a Goethe-like figure appears in *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, pp. 33-35. Something similar occurs in Freud's 1917 paper, "A Childhood Memory from *Dichtung und Wahrheit*" (*SE XVII*, pp. 147-156.)

Session III POETRY RESPONDS TO DEPTH PSYCHOLOGY

Rainer Maria Rilke, *Letters To a Young Poet*, Vintage: Random House, 1987.

Stephen Mitchell, trans., *The Selected Poetry of Rainer Maria Rilke*:. Random House, 1982. Read at least the Duino Elegies" and "The Sonnets to Orpheus." The introductory essay by Robert Hass is excellent.

H.D. [Hilda Doolittle], *Selected Poems*, ed by Louis Martz. New Directions, 1988.

H.D., *Tribute to Freud*, New Directions, 1984.

Naomi Ruth Lowinsky, "Our Lady of the Pomegranate," *The San Francisco Jung Institute Library Journal* 16.3, 1997, pp. 5-36.

For our final evening session, we will consider the work of contemporary poets whose writing has clearly been influenced by depth psychology. Students will be asked to choose a poem to read to the class and to talk about. Poets whose work might be considered include Sylvia Plath, Anne Sexton, Sharon Olds, Galway Kinnell, Robert Bly, Adrienne Rich, Jane Kenyon, Rita Dove, Lucille Clifton, Diane DiPrima, Audre Lorde, Alma Luz Villanueva, River Malcolm. Well, obviously, this is just *my* list and even *it* could go on and on . . .

Course Requirement and Evaluation

A well-written 7-10 page paper discussing how *a* poem (which may but need not be a poem discussed in the course) illumines your own understanding of depth psychology. Papers should be mailed by _____ to: Christine Downing, 11 Discovery Way, Eastsound WA 98245. PLEASE DO NOT SEND BY EXPRESS OR CERTIFIED MAIL.

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REQUIRED BOOKS:

Willis Barnstone, trans., *Sappho - Poems, A New Version*, Consortium, 1999. ISBN: 189 229 513 X

Paul Roche, trans., *Three Plays of Euripides: Alcestis, Medea, The Bacchae*, Norton, 1974.
Read "Medea" and "The Bacchae." ISBN: 0 393 04382 7

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *FAUST: A Tragedy*,: *Norton Critical Edition* trans by
Walter Arndt, W.W. Norton, 1976.

Rainer Maria Rilke, *Letters To a Young Poet*, Vintage: Random House, 1987.

Stephen Mitchell, trans., *The Selected Poetry of Rainer Maria Rilke*:. Random House, 1982
- paperback edition probably has a different date

H.D. [Hilda Doolittle], *Selected Poems*, ed by Louis Martz. New Directions, 1988.

H.D., *Tribute to Freud*, New Directions, 1984.

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SUGGESTED BOOKS:

James J. Clauss and Sarah Iles Johnston, *Medea*, Princeton University Press, 1997.
ISBN: 0 691 04376 0

Edward F. Edinger, *Goethe's Faust: Notes for a Jungian Commentary*, Inner City Books,
1990

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PHOTOCOPIED MATERIALS

- Bruno Snell, "The Rise of the Individual in the Early Greek Lyric," *The Discovery of the Mind*, Dover, 1982, pp. 43-70.
- Christine Downing, "Sappho," *Myths and Mysteries of Same-Sex Love*, Continuum, 1996, pp. 216-236. ISBN: 0 8264 0918 0
- Deborah Boedeker, "Becoming Medea: Assimilation in Euripides." in James J. Clauss and Sarah Iles Johnston, *Medea*, Princeton University Press, 1997, pp. 127-148. ISBN: 0 691 04376 0
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- Naomi Ruth Lowinsky, "Our Lady of the Pomegranate," *The San Francisco Jung Institute Library Journal*, 16.3, 1997, pp. 5-36.
- Sigmund Freud, "Creative Writers and Daydreaming," *Standard Edition*, Hogarth Press, Vol. IX, pp. 143-153.
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