Friends of the Institute Present

Dante and the Sacred Feminine

Beverley Allen, PhD

Professor Allen takes us to aspects of Dante’s Commedia that traditional scholarship often overlooks. The transformative significance of the sacred feminine in the poem encourages not only a deep metaphorical and psychological reading but also an engagement with the role of heresy and a possible link to the teachings of Mary Magdalene. Combining a scholarly and a mystical, wisdom-tradition approach, Professor Allen suggests that the Sacred Feminine, missing in Western culture, is, in fact, Dante’s key to bliss.

Beverly Allen, Ph.D., is William P. Tolley Distinguished Teaching Professor in the Humanities, Emerita, at Syracuse University, and Visiting Lecturer at Stanford and the Graduate Theological Union and the author of Andrea Zanzotto: The Language of Beauty’s Apprentice, and Rape Warfare: The Hidden Genocide in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Croatia.

VOLUNTEERS POTLUCK at the home of Deborah O’Grady and John Adams. This event is being given to thank new and continuing volunteers who assist with our programs. Date to be announced. Those interested in becoming a volunteer please contact Phyllis Stowell (ptstowell@gmail.com).
This talk will deal with the globally widespread traditions of representing transformations between human beings and animals, often in the context of shamanic rituals. It will also consider recent scholarship on the way in which prehistoric human artists might have identified with the particular powers and capacities of animals. In the past it had been thought that prehistoric people hunted the animals and that prehistoric art served as a means of gaining magical control over them. Now, however, a variety of different hypotheses have arisen. The talk will present the visual evidence and some of the recent interpretations.

Whitney Davis, PhD is Professor of History & Theory of Ancient & Modern Art at UC Berkeley. He is the author of seven books on prehistoric, ancient, and modern arts and on gender and sexuality in the arts. He has recently been working on prehistoric pictures and climate change, and on representations of shamanic visions in prehistoric rock art in Africa and elsewhere.
ARAS

Dynamic and alive with potential, ARAS has many wonderful plans for this coming year. 2014 brought the riches of a stunningly redesigned website. 2015 promises to bring fresh and unique studies of archetypal themes through our quarterly, free online newsletter, ARAS Connections, and the infusion of new images into our collection, especially from The Book of Symbols, which remains on the top of the list for Taschen’s world-wide sales, although ARAS itself does not profit substantially from this success in terms of royalties. Plans are in place to grow the collection with new files of images, cultural and archetypal commentary from China, Japan and Korea as well as Australia and MesoAmerica. To fund the new records and the addition of images, we are finding creative ways to support the work through grants and donations. Look for our Kickstarter program in the spring in order to make a difference by way of an online donation.

Friends’ Reading Groups

The Friend’s reading groups are unlike most reading groups because the focus is on content from a Jungian slant. Each group selects its own books. Some recent choices have been Donald Kalshed’s Trauma and the Soul, James Hillman’s The Souls Code, and Martin Prechtel’s Secrets of the Talking Jaguar.

The groups in Marin and on the Peninsula are seeking new hosts and additional members. A new group is beginning in Oakland (Montclair), Tuesday evenings or on weekends. The reading groups in San Francisco, Berkeley and Walnut Creek continue to be near capacity. If you are a member of Friends of the Institute and wish to join one of our groups or would like to host a new group in your area, please contact Phyllis Stowell (ptstowell@gmail.com).

Library News

The Library recently added the digital edition of The Collected Works of Jung for our library patrons and members, and look forward to adding more Jungian e-Books this year to our growing collection of electronic resources. Friends who wish to make use of these, or have book circulating privileges, should contact the Library (library@sfjung.org or 415-771-8055 x207) to get their login and password. If you are new to the Library, please contact for user orientation.

We are planning a big book sale for late February or March — to be announced to the community when we have a firm date scheduled. There will be many classic Jungian books available. We accept used and new books for our book sale to support the library and community literacy projects around the world. Digitization of our own circulating and archival materials — a big job — continues, so that in future many of them will be available for reading online. If you would like to volunteer for projects in the library, please contact Marianne Morgan (mmorgan@sfjung.org)
All conscious psychic processes may well be causally explicable; but the creative act, being rooted in the immensity of the unconscious, will forever elude our attempt at understanding. It describes itself only in its manifestations; it can be guessed at, but never wholly grasped. Psychology and aesthetics will always have to turn to one another for help, and the one will not invalidate the other.

— C.G. Jung, Collected Works, Volume 15, The Spirit in Man, Art and Literature ¶ 135

THE BENEFITS OF MEMBERSHIP

Membership in Friends of the Institute remains at $100 for 2015. Your benefits include free admission to all Friends-sponsored events as well as invitations to certain Institute events such as book signings and donor events. Members also receive library privileges, discounts to most Extended Education events and Institute publications, and use of the ARAS online website at the Institute’s computer terminal. In addition, members also receive the newsletter Rhizome and invitations to join the book groups. But most of all, your membership offers another way to be a part of the Jungian community in our region.

Life has always seemed to me like a plant that lives on its rhizome. Its true life is invisible, hidden in the rhizome. The part that appears above ground lasts only a single summer. Then it withers away—an ephemeral appari-tion. When we think of the unending growth and decay of life and civilizations, we cannot escape the impression of absolute nullity. Yet I have never lost a sense of something that lives and endures underneath the eternal flux. What we see is the blossom, which passes. The rhizome remains.

— from the Prologue to Memories, Dreams, Reflections by C.G. Jung, 1961

Rhizome image from “Scandinavian Ferns” by Benjamin Ollgaard and Kirsten Tind, Rhodos, 1993