

## **“I found [H.D.’s poetry] totally, totally intoxicating” (3)**

The Bethlehem Gadfly Arts, the, Fun Stuff, H.D. (Hilda Doolittle) February 13, 2019

*(3rd in a series of posts on H.D.)*

*“H.D.’s poetry said to me that we could bring patriarchal dominance to an end,*

*it was a poetry that insisted that we could bring war to an end.”*

*Seth Moglen*

### **Finding H.D.: A Community Exploration of the Life and Work of Hilda Doolittle**

*The next event is “H.D.’s Moravian Roots in Bethlehem” by Moravian’s Craig Atwood, February 26, 6:30-8 at the Bethlehem Area Public Library.*

Here is the third slice of Prof Seth Moglen’s January 30 “How I Fell in Love with H.D.” lecture at the BAPL in the FINDING H.D. series. Seth recounts his personal discovery of H.D. in college as a 19-yr.-old in 1983, how her work speaks to perpetual cycles of intergender and international war, and how she has influenced his own scholarly work.



You need to hear Seth’s personal account in his own words, but here’s a taste of what you will find:

“I picked up this book *Trilogy*, and I started to read it, and it was like doing drugs, I just couldn’t believe it, that a human being had written this. The musicality of the verse was so immediately powerful.”

“This feeling of the bottom opening up and this . . . sense of both a beauty and a mysteriousness about the poetry that I found totally, totally intoxicating.”

“H.D. felt that she had to get to the heart of the Hebrew Bible and the New Testament and Greek mythology and the Roman mythological tradition in order to explain how it could be that these extraordinarily gifted women that she had grown up with had been deprived of the opportunity to lead the full lives of the kind that her male relatives had.”

“H.D. is deeply concerned with misogyny . . . which is to say male fear and aggression towards women. H.D. was convinced that you could stop this, that it could be confronted, and overcome.”

“What is it in men that produced this fear, and how might we create a culture in which men could change.”

“H.D. was worried about war and absolutely committed that the scourge of modern warfare, this endless cycle of one war leading to another and the next was rooted in these painful fantasies of dominance.”

“H.D.’s poetry said to me that we could bring patriarchal dominance to an end, it was a poetry that insisted that we could bring war to an end.”

“I didn’t want to risk my life in Grenada, and like a lot of men of my generation, I was genuinely alarmed about this, and I was trying to understand why this was happening. And there was nothing that I read that year in college that seemed to me to have more to say about this question of why generation after generation we were engaged in futile war.”

“One of the things that literature could do was alter how we feel and think about the world in ways that might enable us to be less actively engaged in the perpetuation of violence.”

“H.D. herself was trying to figure out . . . how the Bethlehem Steel plant which was producing the munitions for global warfare, how that had grown out of a pacifist communitarianism.”

Next time we’ll talk about some specific poems.

Remember: the next event in the year-long series is “H.D.’s Moravian Roots in Bethlehem” by Moravian’s Craig Atwood, February 26, 6:30-8 at the Bethlehem Area Public Library.

Gadfly will remind you.

*Lecture photo by Jennie Gilrain.*