

H.D.: “the challenge to create new narratives” (10)

The Bethlehem Gadfly Arts, the, Fun Stuff, H.D. (Hilda Doolittle) March 11, 2019

(10th in a series of posts on H.D.)

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

The next event in this year-long series is a panel discussion on “H.D. and the Natural World,” Tuesday, April 16, 6:30-8:00pm at the Bethlehem Area Public Library.

Gadfly is following this wonderful program on Bethlehem-born world-renown author H.D. (1866-1961), the Lehigh Valley’s most important literary figure – who most of us, Gadfly included, know very little about.



Here is the full recording of Prof. Mary Foltz’s lecture on “Challenging Limited Understandings of Gender and Sexuality” last Wednesday.

After the intro by Jennie Gilrain, Mary introduces the overarching questions we should think about during her talk (min. 2:30), introduces H.D.’s *The Gift* (min. 5:01), discusses and interacts with the audience about two poems by Rosa Lane for context (min. 8:04

and min. 20:54), and concludes this context by showing how the Lane poems set up four themes that characterize H.D.’s work (min. 30:25). Mary turns to H.D.’s autobiographical narrative *The Gift* for the main focus of her talk (min. 32:18) and the Q’n A follows (min. 1:14:50).

AUDIO RECORDINGS UNAVAILABLE IN THIS ARCHIVE

As we’ve done with the lectures by Profs Moglen and Atwood, we’ll ration out Mary’s presentation in blog-worthy-size slices between here and the next event in the series — the panel discussion April 16. But you do have the full event on audio above for immediate reference.

In her intro, Jennie Gilrain spoke of her past experience with Mary's "Whoa!" and "Wow!" questions. And Mary served us up a heap of 'em with her first breath of introduction.

Listen (above, the first 5 minutes of the lecture on audio) and look (below). And do your Whoa! and Wow!

"What does it mean for us here tonight and for our city to rethink the history of our community and the central values of our community through engagement with a bisexual feminist poet? How would placing a woman poet at the center of our civic identity change the historical narratives that we share about Bethlehem and our visions for the future as we imagine the city we want to become? How might H.D.'s criticism of the damages of sexism and patriarchy (societies in which men hold positions of power within and outside of the family) challenge us to see our city—our history and our present-day institutions—with fresh eyes, awake to the legacy of devaluing women's lives, voices, and contributions and the persistence of sexism? How does this poet's work call us as readers, as her newest 'kin' in the city that she once called home and that haunted her throughout her life, to engage with the hopes and promises of Moravian ancestors that imagined egalitarian communities in which multi-ethnic, multi-racial citizens created a shared economy to support the well-being of all members and valued the intellectual, spiritual, and physical contributions of women and men?"

Prepare to think new.

The new and used editions of H.D.'s *The Gift* on Amazon are kinda pricey unfortunately, though there is an inexpensive Kindle version, looks like, but even if you can't follow along in the text, you will learn a lot from Mary's presentation.

We'll take up another slice next time.

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