

LESSON PLAN SUGGESTIONS

FOR *LOVERS' LEGENDS: THE GAY GREEK MYTHS*
AND *LOVERS' LEGENDS UNBOUND*

The material in *Lovers' Legends: The Gay Greek Myths* has been judged appropriate for high school and adult audiences by *School Library Journal* as well as many educators (See the academic endorsements on www.haidukpress.com). The stories in *Lovers' Legends Unbound* are distilled and dramatized from that material.

The concepts outlined below are offered as suggested talking points, and must be expanded upon, organized and set up as lesson plans by the individual instructor, in accordance with the needs and capabilities of each class.

I. Types and functions of myth

- A. Heroic / Exemplary - Role model / Life pattern
(Hercules and Hylas)
- B. Cautionary / Warning - Admonishment
(Laius and Chrysippus/Goldenhorse)
- C. Spiritual / Shamanic - Transformation / transcendence
(Tantalus and the Olympians)

II. Values taught by these myths: The myths militate for honor, truth, love, humility, and the fundamental rightness of the world:

- A. Violence, betrayal, and arrogance are to be despised.
 - 1. Pelops, beloved of Poseidon, breaks a sacred oath and is punished.
 - 2. Narcissus is "proud" and the gods punish him for it.
 - 3. Achilles and Laius pervert love into murder and rape, and pay the ultimate price.
- B. Love is the highest good - it comes from the gods and by raising us to their level, makes us fully human.
 - 1. Apollo's love taught Orpheus to play the harp.
 - 2. Poseidon's love taught Pelops chariot driving.
 - 3. Hercules' love taught Hylas to be a warrior and a man.
 - 4. Zeus' love raised Ganymede to Heaven.
 - 5. Apollo's love taught Hyacinthus arts and skills.

**III. Compare the male love in the myths to modern practices. What is the same?
What is different?**

- A. Lawful vs. unlawful
- B. Open vs. secret (What is open, being or action?)
- C. Hedonistic vs. pedagogic love
- D. Integrated vs. marginalized
- E. Egalitarian vs. age-structured
- F. Consecrated vs. tainted

IV. How do you think myth censorship affects us?

- A. Makes same-sex love appear abnormal
- B. Deprives people of self-understanding
- C. Deprives people of role models / life patterns
- D. Invalidates the totality of our existence
- E. Ghetto-izes gay love and polarizes society
- F. Politicizes history / Turns history into a tool of repression
- G. Makes us afraid of ourselves
- H. Makes us afraid of each other
- I. Makes us vulnerable to being controlled by authority

V. Can you think of the results of learning about these myths?

- A. For GLBT-identified individuals
 - 1. Self-worth: The discovery of an honorable ancestry.
 - 2. Self-understanding: Gaining a wider perspective.
 - 3. Self-discovery: Stepping out of modern paradigms, other possibilities open up.
 - 4. Self-respect: Out of a sense of rightness and belonging, feeling good about oneself arises.
- B. For “straight”-identified individuals
 - 1. Recognition of common heritage: The example of our ancestors, a world in which everyone was both gay and straight, and neither.
 - 2. Identification with alternative sexualities: Creates room for everyone to recognize their own divergent desires.
 - 3. Tolerance and self-understanding: Since in the past same-sex love was natural and universal, the barriers we have put up now can be seen as arbitrary.
- C. For all individuals, regardless of sexual inclination.
 - 1. Alternative to homophobic world-view.
 - 2. Compatibility of spirituality and same-sex love.
 - 3. Sense of humor.