

An Adlerian Introduction to Shakespeare's Opening Sonnet and Use of Allegory and Metaphor



Beauty's Rose and Fairest Creatures

by

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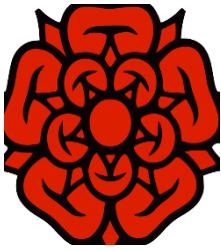
Adlerian Introduction

Adler viewed the poet and artist as the leaders of humankind on the path to an absolute truth and linked this to the poet's successful use of the gift of intuition in discerning an individual's style of life as an indivisible whole. Adler observed that intuition is quite common in people and a thoroughly human gift, which Einstein and other great scientists experienced and acknowledged (Eriksson, 2022, 78; Bohm, 2004, 46). Adler tells us that Shakespeare was one of the poetic works of art that led him to the insights of Adlerian Psychology (Adler, 1964, 329; 1979, 87). If we link this successful use of intuition to the creative power attributed by Adler to every child and individual which casts into movement all the influences and potentialities towards a chosen goal, we end up with a potential picture of the creative process of a great poet and playwright such as Shakespeare. Equally important, it helps us to begin to understand Shakespeare's sonnets and the widespread use of allegory in Shakespeare's time as Goethe recognized, being another great poet and playwright himself who was an avid reader and admirer of Shakespeare's works. (Goethe, 1986, 2006). Goethe writes:

"Shakespeare is rich in wonderful allegories which arise from personified concepts, and would not suit us at all, but for him are entirely in place, because in his time all art was dominated by allegory." (Goethe, 2006, 759; Bloom, 1994, 190-219).

"When I had reached the end of the first play, I stood like one who, blind from birth, finds himself suddenly blessed with sight... I realized that my existence had been infinitely expanded." (Goethe, 1986)

Shakespeare's Allegories and Interpretation - Sonnet #1



Beauty's Rose is likely the metaphor chosen by Shakespeare for the Soul, personal experience of which seems to come and go like a young rose bud that opens and closes with the changing weather, offering a range of new creative ideas for the ageing poet to work on. He wants to keep these coming, so he says that Beauty's Rose, the source of his new creativity must not die. It has been the inspiration for the glorious plays.

These creative ideas for him to work on are first felt as vague, unclear stirrings, as the world's most creative scientists have experienced and recorded for themselves. These unclear, undifferentiated stirrings are likely what Shakespeare calls *fairest creatures* that the poet wants more of, becoming his inspiration and muse that he mentions in sonnet 78. (Eriksson, 2022, 15-17; Bohm, 2004, 46). Bohm writes:



“And some of the most creative scientists (such as Einstein and Poincaré), have indicated that in their work they are often moved profoundly, in a way that the general public tends to believe happens only to artists and other people engaged in what are regarded as “humanistic” pursuits. Long before the scientist is aware of the details of a new idea, he/she may “feel” it stirring in him/her in ways that are difficult or impossible to verbalize. These feelings are like very deep and sensitive probes reaching into the unknown, while the intellect ultimately makes possible a more detailed perception of what these probes have come into contact with.”

Sonnet #1

*From fairest creatures we desire increase,
That thereby beauty's rose might never die,
But as the ripper should by time decease,
His tender heir might bear his memory:
But thou contracted to thine own bright eyes,
Feed'st thy light's flame with self-substantial fuel,
Making a famine where abundance lies,
Thy self thy foe, to thy sweet self too cruel:
Thou that art now the world's fresh ornament,
And only herald to the gaudy spring,
Within thine own bud buriest thy content,
And, tender churl, mak'st waste in niggarding:
Pity the world, or else this glutton be,
To eat the world's due, by the grave and thee.*

Allegories and Metaphors Mediate Meaning

“In Adlerian therapy, using mindfulness and metaphors can bring a client to that fuller, more holistic, optimistic activation of *Gemeinschaftsgefühl* to a full transformation, a metamorphosis.” (Bluvshstein et al. JIP, 77(4), 422).

Before Adler and the modern era of psychology, it was the poets and artists who used their intuition and creativity to discern an individual’s character and style of life as an indivisible whole. That Shakespeare did this *par excellence*, Dr Semple illustrates below.



“And though Shakespeare himself were a shadow or a myth, yet *Othello* and *Shylock*, and *Lear*, and *Macbeth*, and *Falstaff*, are the living and breathing representative types of human character, of which the faithfulness to nature is universally conceded, the pictures of which are impressed upon the minds of all, and their language familiar in every mouth “as household words.” (Semple, 1881, 207).

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