THE RED PLACE: Transforming Past Traumas Through Relationships
Speaker: Cynthia Anne Hale, PhD

“For psychotherapy to be effective, a close rapport is needed, so close that the doctor cannot shut his eyes to the heights and depths of human suffering. This rapport consists, after all, in a constant comparison and mutual comprehension, in the dialectical confrontation of two opposing psychic realities. If for some reason their mutual impressions do not impinge on each other, the psychotherapeutic process remains ineffective, and no change is produced. Unless both doctor and patient become a problem for each other, no solution is found” (Jung, Memories, Dreams, Reflections, p. 166).

In this seminar, I will discuss two opposing psychic realities of traumatic experience through the Greek myth of Heralkes and Geryon. We will explore how therapeutic work that is rooted in traumatic violations, in particular, evokes a mutual emotional landscape that is potent and often polarized in personal as well as professional relationships. By identifying the mythic aspects of these polarized dynamics, as I detail in The Red Place, we will envision the complex ways that past traumas shape the context of our present day relationships.
The psychological dimensions of the rarely examined Greek story of Herakles’ Labor provide a mythic view of psychological realities that include theft, battle, and conquest. Retold in different ways across time, it illustrates our human tendency to split and sometimes project such unbearable emotional realities onto one extreme or another as either hero or monster. Working to resolve the impacts of traumatic violations often means that we must come to terms with the heroic and the monstrous aspects within each of us. I will share examples and clinical insights about how the empathetic engagement that Jung describes can move us beyond painful memories toward a more transformative integration of the past and the present.

Because working with trauma is an arduous journey, those of us who offer emotional connection in our work continually benefit from sharing insights, support, and inspiration. It is my hope that this conversation provides such an opportunity.

Cynthia Anne Hale, Ph.D. explores the connections between inner and outer experiences as an educator, writer, and psychotherapist. Along with presentations to Jungian groups in England and the United States, she taught archetypal and depth psychologies, including clinical practice and qualitative research, and led institutional learning initiatives as a professor at Pacifica Graduate Institute for nine years. Based in California, she is in private practice and facilitates dream groups that utilize embodied imagination. The Red Place (Muswell Hill Press, 2014) is her first book. Written for the lay public as well as seasoned professionals, it incorporates myth with practical insights from her work with trauma over twenty-five years.

Her publications reflect a range of interests within the field of depth psychology and include: “What About Being Red? Encounters With the Color of Jung’s Red Book” in Psychological Perspectives (2010); “Institutional Learning: Transcending Two Distinct Approaches By Integrating Core Values into Inquiry” in International Journal of Multiple Research Approaches (2013); and “What is it Like? Being Touched by the Arts and Humanities in Depth Psychology” in The Soul Does Not Specialize: Revaluing the Humanities and the Polyvalent Imagination (Mandorla Books, 2012).

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The book, The Red Place: Transforming Past Traumas through Relationships, is available for cash purchase of £15 at the talk. It can also be ordered from local bookstores or Amazon.