

**Healing Trauma: The Lost and Recovered Soul in Depth Psychotherapy**  
**A Conference with Donald Kalsched on the Subject of his New Book:**  
***Trauma and the Soul: A Psycho-Spiritual Approach to Human Development and its Interruption***

**A 4-Day Conference for practicing psychotherapists in Santa Fe New Mexico**  
**Sponsored by the Santa Fe Center for Alchemical Studies**  
**December 11-15, 2013**

**Donald E. Kalsched, Ph.D.**

Assisted by Monika Wikman, Ph.D., Thomas Elsner, J.D., M.A., and Robin van Loben Sels, Ph.D.

According to C. G. Jung, the human personality has a transpersonal origin and essence. With the birth of each person, a spark of the Divine enters time-and-space-reality and through relationships that involve both joy and suffering, becomes embodied as a human soul (Winnicott's "personalization;" Jung's "individuation").

However when severe trauma strikes the developing psyche of a child, there is too little joy and too much suffering. The descent into ensouled personhood is unbearably painful for the immature ego, and an innocent core of the self splits off, retreating into "God's world," i.e., into a deep layer of the unconscious that Jung referred to as the "collective" unconscious. There it continues to exist as a lost soul in suspended animation under a spell cast by the powers of the psyche's survival system. With the self thus divided, the trauma survivor feels "broken" or "unreal" and may even lose sight of the lost parts of the self, living a joyless, one-dimensional outer existence concerned more with survival than with true-self living.

Depth Psychotherapy offers the opportunity for renewed contact with the lost core of the self, and hence for renewed feeling-life, creativity, and relatedness. But the forces of repression resist this healing and are ready to wage a fierce battle for possession of the soul (see Blake's image of the Good and Evil Angels fighting for possession of a child). How this dramatic struggle between life- and anti-life forces comes out in the end often depends on the strength of connection between the analytic partners and whether their relationship can weather the many storms and stresses that threaten to de-rail the therapy venture or end it prematurely.

In this four day workshop we will explore these themes with the help of clinical examples, dreams, and illustrations from literature, art and contemporary film. Experiential process-groups will help ground the material.

**Schedule**

**Wednesday Afternoon Lecture: Images of the Lost Soul-Child in the Psychotherapy of Early Trauma**

In this slide-illustrated lecture, Dr. Kalsched will describe a series of dramatic moments in the psychotherapy of trauma survivors where a breakthrough occurred in the client's access to dissociated feelings. These moments usually occurred when "transitional space"--long since foreclosed by trauma--was re-opened between therapist and patient, and the psyche's mytho-poetic matrix re-potentiated. One sign of this "re-potentiation" is the vivid dreams that often occur at such

moments--dreams in which a lost or abandoned "child" appears--often menaced by the psyche's repressive powers. The speaker will then show the parallels between these dreams and those ancient myths that describe the birth and trials of the archetypal Hero--the one who always carries a *dual destiny*--part human, part divine.

#### **Thursday Lecture and Workshop: The Soul in Hell and its Liberation: Reflections on Clinical Depression in Light of Dante's *Divine Comedy*.**

Trauma survivors often report that their lives are a "living Hell." This pathological situation is created by the psyche's archetypal defenses and their depressive power over what one psychoanalyst called "the lost heart of the self," with its desire for love and intimate relationship. Psychotherapy of this condition involves what the medieval theologians called a "*Descendit ad Inferos*"--a harrowing descent into all the hellish un-remembered pain of the patient's early life. Dante's *Divine Comedy* gives us a beautiful literary example of such a companioned descent, as Virgil and Dante descend into the nether regions in order to heal the poet's mid-life depression. Following Dante and his guide down to their confrontation with the "dark Lord" of Hades, Dr. Kalsched will show in this slide-illustrated lecture how depth psychotherapy in conjunction with affective neuro-science, and the findings of attachment theory and relational theory all lead toward answers of the central question posed by both the clinical and literary material, *vis. how can the otherwise sealed crypt of Hell be opened and its occupants liberated?*

#### **Friday Lecture, Film and Workshop: Innocence and its Violation in Childhood and in our American Culture:**

In this film viewing and lecture, Dr. Kalsched will utilize a different literary analogy to portray the lost soul, namely that of Antoine de Saint-Exupery's *The Little Prince*, one of the favorite adult fairy tales of all time. Using the little prince on his planet as an image of the lost and soul-ful innocence of the trauma survivor, he will describe the slow, incremental processes through which this sacred content is coaxed down into "this world" and, through a process of manageable suffering--within a loving relationship with the story's crashed airplane pilot--becomes an ensouled person. He will also explore how our contemporary American culture seems both obsessed with its own innocence and unable to allow this innocence to "descend" into suffering and hence transformation.

#### **Saturday Lecture and Workshop: Trauma, Synchronicity and Paranormal Experiences in Analysis.**

In this lecture, the speaker will relate a series of strange and fascinating stories of encounters by psychoanalysts (including Jung) with anomalous phenomena--all carrying "spiritual" implications. Trauma survivors are especially open to such phenomena. These encounters give hints and intimations of a second world of "non-ordinary reality." They defy explanation by the normal physical laws that organize our world and so they open to a realm that seems to lie "beyond" this world. These stories bring the two worlds back into communion and they are therefore good for the soul.

## Conference Details and Arrangements

**Participants:** Limited to 35 practicing psychotherapists.

**Place:** Academy for the Love of Learning; 133 Seton Village Rd, Santa Fe, NM 87508

**Times:** Conference begins Wednesday, Dec. 11th with 1:00 p.m. checkin and afternoon lecture; 9:30-4:30 Thursday through Saturday; Sunday 9:30 - 12:30 followed by a catered lunch

**Tuition Fees:** \$750 per person payable in advance

**Accommodations:** None on site. Participants are urged to stay in Santa Fe or surrounding area. A list of local B&B's and hotels will be provided to registrants. A catered light lunch will be served at the Academy site Thursday through Sunday.

**Registration:** Contact Susan Steffy <[sgsteffy@gmail.com](mailto:sgsteffy@gmail.com)>

### Faculty:

**Donald Kalsched, Ph.D.**, is a Jungian analyst and clinical psychologist who practices in Albuquerque New Mexico. He is a member of the C. G. Jung Institute of Santa Fe, a senior faculty member and supervisor with the Inter-Regional Society of Jungian Analysts and lectures nationally and internationally on the subject of trauma and its treatment. His celebrated book *The Inner World of Trauma: Archetypal Defenses of the Personal Spirit* (Routledge 1996) explores the interface between contemporary psychoanalytic theory and Jungian thought as it relates to practical clinical work with the survivors of early childhood trauma. His new book, *Trauma and the Soul: A Psycho-spiritual Approach to Human Development and its Interruption* (Routledge, 2013) explores the “spiritual” dimensions of clinical work with trauma-survivors. He and his wife Robin live in Albuquerque, New Mexico during the winter, and summer in Newfoundland, Canada.

**Thomas Elsner, J.D., M.A.**, is a Jungian analyst on the faculty at Pacifica Graduate Institute in Santa Barbara California where he also has a private practice. A former attorney, he left the practice of law and trained at the Jung-Von Franz Center for Depth Psychology in Zurich. A member of the Jung Study Center of Southern California, his areas of special interest include alchemy and the depth psychology of folklore and literature. He is currently completing a book titled *Coleridge and the Rime of the Ancient Mariner*.

**Robin van Loben Sels, Ph.D.** is a Jungian analyst in private practice in Albuquerque, New Mexico. She is a senior training analyst with the Inter-Regional Society of Jungian Analysts and teaches and supervises nationally and internationally. She is the author of *A Dream in the World: Poetics of Soul in Two Women, Modern and Medieval* (Routledge, 2003) a book of poetry, *Wanting a Country for this Weather and other Poems* (Mellon Press, 1994) and a small primer on working with dreams, *Dream Work(ing): a Primer* (Trout and Mountain press, 2010), as well as many articles in journals.

**Monika Wikman, Ph.D.**, is a Jungian analyst and astrologer. Author of *Pregnant Darkness: Alchemy and the Rebirth of Consciousness* (Nicolas-Hays, 2004), she has contributed articles and poems to numerous journals. Internationally, she leads retreats for inner renewal through the activation of the subtle body realms and lectures on mythology, dreams, wellness, alchemy, and creativity. A graduate of the Jung-Von Franz Center for Depth Psychology in Zurich, she has taught in the graduate department at California State University and currently has a private practice in Tesuque, New Mexico.