

# ***Taking heart in dark times: ecopsychology and stories of change***

With Mary-Jayne Rust



*Two great myths, diametrically opposed in character.....profoundly inform our cultural psyche and shape our beliefs. They invisibly constellate our vision. They permeate our ways of knowing and acting. Richard Tarnas,*

The experience of therapy reveals that when old stories are re-told and explored, new stories can be found; this can lead to new ways of seeing and being in the present. This day will begin by offering a space to re-tell and explore the two potent myths which underlie western culture: The Myth of Progress and The Myth of the Fall. The first story is about an onwards and upwards drive towards modernity, in the hope of conquering nature. The second story links nature and woman in temptation of the senses, and the harsh punishment of being exiled from The Garden forever.

Both these stories still underpin consumer culture and affect our values, our relationship to body, self and other; they infiltrate our internal worlds as well as child development. Their influence has led us to function in the world in ways that contribute to the current global crisis.

Re-telling and exploring these stories invites new ways of seeing. We will spend the best part of the day hearing some inspiring stories of change about transforming the way we live with the earth as well as how we work (and think about our work) as therapists.

The stories of change, which embody heroes, tricksters and fools, will hopefully help us all connect and take heart in dark times.

**Mary-Jayne Rust** is an art therapist and Jungian analyst of over 30 years experience. Alongside her private practice she writes, lectures and facilitates workshops in the field of ecopsychology. Eating problems has been one thread of her work, which has led to a wider interest in what drives us to consume the earth. As a feminist psychotherapist she is interested in how culture shapes our development and ways of seeing. She grew up beside the sea and is wild about swimming. Now she lives and works beside ancient woodland in Nth London. She has published a number of papers, as well as co-editing *Vital Signs: Psychological Responses to Ecological Crisis* (Karnac). See [www.mjrust.net](http://www.mjrust.net)

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