

## Fractures

### A Lifescape Work in Progress – July 2005

We live in a fractured world and many of us feel fractured in ourselves. Others of us are fractured on behalf of the world.

The world has long been a place where humans could live, but we have not always lived upon it – we have evolved to be the creatures that we are; creatures that can (perhaps uniquely) communicate using words, but perhaps even more uniquely can imagine and articulate the soul of the world. We do this in metaphor and language and in creative expression; in the ways in which we live our lives; in the ways we are mad and we are sane; in the stories we tell and the meanings we make. We are biology plus... we are theology plus... we are psyche.

According to James Hillman, everything that humans do, are, say and mean is psychological in nature, and psyche is not just of the mind, but of the body and the world too. Psychology is the filter through which all experience passes – it colours each and every moment, each sense, each happening for each human being. It frames objectivity through inevitable subjectivity. No matter how much we try to explain and prove, or to be rational or sane, the unpredictability, panic and joy of psychological experience seeps through - floods through - and we have no right or ability to deny or push it away, for it does not depend on our approval, permission or proof. This is what we call soul.

Soul bubbles up in everything we do, like it or not; deny it and it comes back in its myriad archetypal forms to enact murder and rape, celebration and cruel ritual. Accept it too literally and it is fixed in the form of theories, dogmas and systems that we enthusiastically (yet ultimately hopelessly) wrap round the human experience. In one way, therefore, it does not matter whether we accept, deny, care or are indifferent to psychological experience; soul will have its way in the world, and our destinies and callings will push their way into our lives some way and some day.

The nature of this fractured world – its personality if you will - is that of a searcher who is no longer willing to spend a lifetime searching. The destination must be reached, the secret known, the task completed, the goal achieved. Each of us as individuals must be happy, fulfilled and reach Maslow's dizzy heights – and reach them now! Ambiguity, the searching that takes forever, a life's work, a lasting marriage, a society that has a long-term vision, a society that has an imagination – none of these seem acceptable (or even understandable) in the modern version of soul.

The modern soul is sick and gets sicker with each tragedy we witness or read about from our computer or TV screens, and with each new 'star' that flickers in our fickle cultural firmament, only then to be brutally extinguished. In the way of the roman amphitheatre we put to death our souls and the soul of the world - putting our thumbs down to imagination and what the empiricist compulsion in western culture has labelled the unconscious, whilst paradoxically yearning for its vast, wonderful world.

It is, of course, only unconscious because we choose it to be so – in reality it is as accessible to us as the grass beneath our feet, and a good deal more accessible than the self fulfilment, personal growth and lasting happiness that we painfully hope and grope for.

A fractured world demands a recognition of and love for our fractured souls. No other way is possible or necessary.