

and whatever they may be up to, using their own initiative, their own power, having been pushed around all day, bossed about, put down maybe all their lives. Many of them come from violent homes and act out what has been done to them. But now they are in this hostel and have their tea and this group meeting after tea. How was the day, they are asked, how did you get on? Oh, this bloody sister, this charge nurse (he is a hospital porter), she keeps telling me to do this and that, and never a word of appreciation. Very well, be the charge nurse, and you be the head porter, and you can be me, in charge here, and may be a policeman and a magistrate. Let's act it all out together. Well, says the new chargehand, get on with the job, no smoking here, get a move on, no slacking. Piss off, says his former self, under his breath. What did you say? Call the police, call the magistrates. Put him in the punishment cell, and they know exactly how to punish and degrade and insult each other. But what startles me is that they are much harder on each other than anyone else in authority is likely to be. They take delight in making the punishments more severe, out of all proportion to the crime. So what's going on? A taste of power before the revolution?

One of the LINK men, that is those who had gone through this course for six months and are now helping new young men through the same experience, comes over to me and sits by me. He can hardly be more than eighteen. He has spotted the difficulty I have understanding their language. He translates for me. I look at him and I cry.

Just one last word about jobs and work and young people. At meetings of parents teachers, local groups, young people, I am often asked, aggressively, why doesn't the government do something about it? Why doesn't the local council spend more money on this or that, why isn't something done about it? And all I can do is throw it right back at them. Why don't you do something about it? Form a local pressure group, find out who makes what decisions, form local co-ownership and co-operative work groups. Only jobs are scarce. There is plenty of work to be done, derelict houses, dirty streets, bad and slow services, overgrown gardens, and much more. Who has the power? What power? How do I exercise my power? How do I find my power? Effectively? Ah, here is the rub. Do I want to know about your power? Do I want to share with you on an equal basis? Who has ever heard of parents, teachers or bosses, sharing their own fears and joys on an equal basis with their children, pupils or employees?

June Posey

Travels with Morgana

Infrequently I do fantasy trips with Morgana acting as my guide. It is perhaps unusual that apart from doing a relaxation exercise and leading me into the fantasy, Morgana does not intervene in any way but lets the fantasy unfold. Sometimes this embodies some universal truth which at that time I need to understand. Such seems to be the story of

The Boabob Tree

High above the world like a satellite I travelled, but always in a south westerly direction. I found myself confused when I landed. "why am I here?" I asked, for all around me stretched desolate red desert. The pitiless sun scorched down and there was a haze of heat and dust. Feelings of misery and fear swept over me. I felt terrified and wished to be away from this place. Evidently, anything green and tender would wither and die, without a chance of life. This was a place of relentless death. Pity and horror shook me.

I felt quite taken aback. But the Tree was near at hand, and the tree had water in it. I could tap the Tree. Feeling rather brutal, I cut the Tree. Clear water flowed out. The desert underwent a Walt Disney 'Living Desert' transformation. The dormant seeds germinated and flowers sprang everywhere, a beautiful sea of foliage and colour and scent. The Tree had changed too. He was glad to be used, to be taken seriously. Now he stood upright with a sort of pride. Down below, the Tribal Ancestors stirred and began to dance and sing.

(Oh. "It is necessary to *act on* belief; to use it; to take it seriously. Then it is no longer ridiculous." And "Without Belief, there is no life, no produce, no achievement.")

Months later, I realised that I'd missed a point (perhaps *the* point) about Belief. Be Lief. It is a verb, too. A way, an attitude. Lief = Willing. Ready to lend my energy to. Prepared to go along with cheerfully. Saying "YES".

But there were some objects in the landscape. Dotted around, a mile or two apart, stood these strange Australian trees. They had wide trunks which produced only stumpy little branches. I knew they had evolved, like cactuses, to survive the arid desert. They were called boabob trees.

(Within me, I knew that this pitiless place of death represented ordinary consciousness; and that the sun was 'rationality' - the socially approved necessity for appearing logical, 'having reasons', being sensible).

My heart cried out for water; and I became aware that the desert lay above wonderful underground caverns, blue and mauve and green, filled with the sound of running water. But I could see no way of linking the underground water with the red desert. So I went down into the caverns.

In the half light, they were a place of beauty. The running water echoed, tinkling and gurgling; and there were great quiet lakes. I walked along beside a running river and soon came to a wide open area where light streamed down in a great circle. There, sitting around the edge of this circle were men: warriors. They had great cohesion as a group, and yet each was vividly individual. They were strong and alive. They were the 'Tribal Ancestors'.

Now I looked up the round column of light to see where it came from and realised I was looking up inside the Boabob Tree. The Tree reached down into the caverns and so survived the desert!

I talked to the Tree and, to my astonishment, it answered me in a rich Zummerzet accent. It was doing a comedy act. "Oi be the Tree. Oi be Belief. Oi be be-lief. See de leaf!" and it waggled one of its stumpy branches in a merry fashion. It chuckled and bent itself to and fro in a great paroxysm of mirth. I felt rather cool towards this behaviour. I felt the Tree wasn't sufficiently serious for me, and breaking off the conversation looked out over the desert through its little branches. There, in the distance were other boabob trees, chuckling and bending to and fro as though they found their very existence a huge joke.

But I could see that the only way I was surviving in this desert was by being within the shelter of the Tree. Indeed nothing could survive in this desert of normal consciousness without the shelter, however comical, of the Tree called Belief. Down below the Tribal Ancestors had disappeared and out of where they had been grew the roots of the Tree.

("Belief is rooted in the traditions of the past, and in the Collective Unconscious"? That seems to be right. But "Any belief is wildly ridiculous in itself but essential for surviving in the howling desert of rational consciousness"? That seemed harder to accept.)

The fantasy ended. But later I realised that I hadn't talked to the desert.

"Ah, Woe is me!" it exclaimed with great feeling. "Blown hither and thither by the parching wind! Alack! I can grow nothing, I can produce nothing. Everything dies for lack of water. And **you**" it turned accusingly to me, "could remedy this sad state. Why do you do nothing?"

