

Sue Patman

THE LOWER UNCONSCIOUS

If I had been asked to give my fantasy of what I would receive as a symbol for the lower unconscious I would undoubtedly have described something like this:

There is a dark place, in a jungle possibly, or a large cave, and in the centre is a swamp, thick and putrid, definitely smelling not too nice, and in this pond/swamp lives a terrible monster that surfaces occasionally to show its ugliness and strength and frighten with its terrible roar/scream only to submerge again having seen and been seen and taken breath. The essence would be a feeling of nightmare, fear, decay and ugliness and threat of death.

Imagine my surprise when I went into imagery to receive a symbol for my lower unconscious and it appeared as a wine glass two thirds full of clear effervescent liquid like tonic water. The bubbles rising were full of life, energy and creative life-giving force - literally "TONIC WATER". There was a feeling of great vitality and vibrancy and subliminal colour in its upward movement and flux. I was drawn to drink this water of life and it tasted clear and cool and sharp like spa water, cleansing and purging and vital. It tasted of Life, slightly bitter - it tasted good. To say I was surprised is an understatement. Amazed would be better.

Had I been asked to fantasise what my relationship was to my lower unconscious I would probably have described a small, powerless spectator in the face of a monster, something like King Kong and the maiden!

Again, imagine my surprise when I went into imagery to find a symbol for my relationship to my lower unconscious and received this:

I see two fine, strong, hunter-build type black horses pulling a two to three share plough and I am walking behind this plough holding the handle, balancing it and guiding the horses. They have shiny black coats and each has a tall golden plume coming up from the centre

of the forehead, with a red patch at the base, a red rosette. It is daytime and the field is big and half ploughed, the furrows are deep and straight and true and lots of grubs are being turned up with the turning of the black soil and seagulls wheel above, calling, and swoop to eat the grubs lying white in the sun on the black soil. The feeling is of great teamwork and understanding between me and the plough and the two horses. Then I feel a strong presence around us of a greater purpose. The two horses know this purpose and are linked to it. I feel small and inferior behind the plough. I know our immediate purpose, to plough the field. But the feeling of this greater purpose with which the horses are linked is awesome and includes destiny and a global perspective of which our field being ploughed is but a tiny part. I am jealous of the collective purpose of the horses and want to be in on that too. I want to be up front with them, not behind balancing the plough. Here I begin to feel spaced out and am told the Greater Purpose is not my business to carry out; it is not even my business to understand it; it is the horses' business, and I have just been allowed to witness the connection with the collective. My place is behind the plough guiding and balancing it, my purpose is the ploughing of the field. The horses have the dual purpose - micro-cosmic and macrocosmic - and they need me to carry out the micro-cosmic purpose which is then reflected in the macrocosm. I feel better integrated, comfortable and content now with my smaller vision participation. I no longer wish to compete with the horses. The three of us are one again as a team ploughing the field, each needing the other with the plough between us tilling the soil. I then think it would be good to stroke the horses and love them. I leave the plough and go up front - but their coats are electric and big blue sparks crackle and arc across towards my hands as I stretch out to touch them. They are surrounded by an incredibly highly charged energy field. They are not for touching in the earthly sense; they are simply to be worked with in carrying out our purpose. There is a slightly funereal feel to them, and pageantry and royalty and magnificence - they are 'DREADFUL' in the archetypal sense. One cannot get too close to them; intimacy is not the aim of the game, co-operation is.

The mind blowing realisation for me here was that the lower unconscious is TRANSPERSONAL TOO !! I realised that until that point I had equated transpersonal with superconscious! But archetypes hunt in pairs! Transpersonal is the lower unconscious as well as the superconscious; ☯, ☸ and ☹ are in the lower unconscious as well as the superconscious and both these symbolic levels are transpersonal, archetypal and creative; the universe needs God and the Devil; the

purpose of the game is not to reduce the Dark but co-operate with it; Yin and Yang; the two great lines of force. The universe manifests out of the polarities; without the polarities it would disintegrate, and we manifest in form these polarities that act through us in daily events, and co-operation with these forces in our daily tasks (ploughing the field) is all that is required of us.

There is no doubt the lower unconscious gets a very bad press, probably stemming from the time of Freud, and there is a lot of prejudice and bad conditioning to be lived down. To some it is thought of as a dustbin - a very limited description for half the Universe! Ian Gordon-Brown gives a better perspective when he describes it as a compost heap!

The lower unconscious is our past; where we have come from; where we can be dragged back to; our childhood; our experience of being indistinguishable from our mother's unconscious; our memories; our basic foundationing experience of mother and father, feminine and masculine archetypes, love and will; and of course pain. We can only do two things with pain. 1. Experience it in the present; 2. Block it in the present and repress it into the unconscious - and we usually do a mixture of both in different proportions. So unworked - through pain must lie in the lower unconscious because that is our past, the framework from which we come. It cannot live in the future, the superconscious, because that has not yet been born, that is the realm of potential. It is true we can anticipate pain in the future on an abstract level, but that is not the same as actually experiencing it and so this is one reason why the lower unconscious has such a bad name - it is the half that holds the pain. whilst the 'good guy', the superconscious, holds the promise of the relief of pain!

The lower unconscious is night, darkness, earth, chaos, feminine, moon, soul, mouth, cats and witches and all psychological 'luggage not wanted on journey' for one reason or another. It is our memory of our experience of living; what has been reality tested.

The superconscious is day, golden light, heaven, creation, masculine, sun, spirit, eyes, horses and gods and all the fabric of our hopes, goals, wishes, dreams and ideals that have yet to be reality tested.

So it is easy to see why the lower unconscious, if not understood properly, can appear as something we would rather do without, it holds all our broken hopes, and can be seen from the personality level as Pandora's box, or the Hydra. When seen in its right perspective however it is the other half of the universe and when viewed with

this larger vision it appears as the fertile void; pregnant fullness; a breeding ground; a germinating ground holding within it the promise of harvest; a rich fertile field full of movement, colour and potential growth.

*Last night I had a dream.
All I can remember is the most almighty SCREAM.
This Scream was all I heard
or was it the Word?*

*Isn't life a joke.
Isn't life a scream.*

AN EXPERIENCE OF THE LOWER UNCONSCIOUS

What I would like to do now is to describe a very recent journey I took down into the depths of my lower unconscious, and I hope to be able to convey both sides to this image of the lower unconscious - the monster and the horses, the pain and the purpose, the childhood and the collective, the destruction and the potential creation held within destruction. For there is a difference between wanton destruction and creative destruction that is as real in psychological terms as physical terms.

Triggers are essential to a journey like this - perfectly, fiendishly/fashioned triggers - that can only be manifested in their utmost precision by the Self. One day I would like to do some research on triggers - they are an art the Self perfects as exquisite in psychological terms as any finely balanced trigger on a master craftsman's gun. With a gun, the trigger that releases the energy can be a long way away from the actual point of impact, especially with something like a rifle, and nothing actually happens between pulling the trigger and the point of impact - energy moves through space, but nothing is changed or noticeable until the point of impact. In psychological terms the trigger is felt, the energy is released, and travels backwards in time until it makes contact with a target - and it does not have to stop at one target, but can ricochet again and again hitting memories in our own history that are **directly connected to the triggering event by quality**. On a gun, the trigger is a small piece of machinery that is harmless in itself, but when the gun is loaded, it is responsible for releasing enormous energy and destruction quite out of proportion to its small size and anything it can do on its own. It is the same in psychological terms - we are all loaded guns in certain areas, unless we have the safety catches of valium well locked on, and the trigger can be a small event going almost unnoticed. In this case I was quite

unprepared for both the trigger and the almost instantaneous impact, and this very unpreparedness was itself essential to the memories of shock that were the targets.

I had had an enjoyable Wednesday evening at Psychosynthesis and had done an exercise on a current problem I felt difficult only to be told by my wise old man that all was well; and I drove home in high spirits. As I walked into the dining room, which was being decorated, I saw on a newspaper on the floor in large black headline type "WHY DO WE KEEP COMING BACK FOR MORE?" I did not even have time to see what it was about - an article or an advertisement, and I still don't know - I couldn't take my eyes off it. "Yes, why do we keep coming back for more?" I thought, "More and more pain. We incarnate again and again, and what for? Pain, pain, and pain again. What's the point of it all, all this pain. Why do we keep coming back for more?" Pain welled up in me in a great tidal wave, unspecified pain and emptiness that engulfed me and blotted everything out. I had entered the front door a balanced, happy and normal person - by the time I got to the top of the stairs I was transformed into a barely walking wreck. What was happening I had no idea; I only knew it was total and overwhelming.

I got to bed and went into the night in a daze of confused pain and darkness. And there I stayed for three nights and two days. Luckily, as can happen at a time like this, my clients had both cancelled for the following day, and I had nothing planned for the Friday. Also, David my partner had arranged to work at home the next day and there is no doubt the feeling of his loving support and acceptance in the house kept much destructive fear at bay.

At one point, quite early on, I faced a choice to fight to control it or surrender. The confusion was so great that to choose to control it seemed as great a task as stopping the world turning, and so I surrendered. I went down into a jumbled, turbulent, darkness at the bottom of the ocean. There were strong currents that seemed to be tearing pieces off me and it was so murky I couldn't see what was churning around in the water with me. Things kept hitting me as they went past and I didn't know if they were bits of me or just general flotsam. I continued to sink, being sucked further and further down, caught in a vortex like an underwater whirlpool. I couldn't feel all my body and soon I daren't identify with my body any more because I didn't know how much of it was left. I concentrated instead on keeping a spot of consciousness going, a speck of awareness alive in these murky waters like a little light. The fear was that that would

go out and I would disappear, be lost forever, forever being churned around in these dark waters like an old handkerchief in a great cosmic washing machine. I would like to be able to say I kept a presence of Self and was fortified with the trust and knowledge that my Self would aid me in good time. But I can't. It was sheer fear of that little light going out that produced the pure desperation necessary to keep it going.

Two friends visited me down there, to whom I am ever grateful. Roger came first. I had been going I don't know how long keeping this light alive - a day and a night? - and it had dawned on me that perhaps there was no end to it. Perhaps I would be here forever doing this. I had no track of time. Perhaps I had already been here for years. My ordinary life seemed to be a dream of another world to which there seemed no way to return. What had happened to Rebecca (my daughter), and David? I had the thought that I might have to be institutionalised; the awful thought that perhaps I was already lying in a hospital bed and I would take so long to return that they would be old when I got back - Rebecca growing up without me whilst I kept this light alive. I began to lose hold. Then I saw Roger, just his top half, firm as a rock, *grey eyes steady. Roger, dear Roger, stay with me. I swam to him, filled with relief and just held on tight, gathering strength and then blanked out.

At this point I stopped falling. The downward movement that had seemed intent on pulling me to the centre of the earth ended and I had only cross currents to deal with. Also I seemed, in the more peaceful water, to have something of a body again; and if I had stopped falling, perhaps it would be possible to rise. But which was up and which was down and which was sideways? I tried to go up but there were no landmarks in this place to tell me which way was up. I thrashed about in one direction through jumbled debris and then another. After going some time it occurred to me that I could be going round in circles or even further down still. I stopped. The whole place was directionless. Panic set in. Here the second person, Simona, visited me. I only saw her head with her blonde hair shining. Her face was vibrant and alive, and her sparkling *blue eyes and broad smile exuded encouragement and a sort of enthusiasm that said "Come on, you're doing fine, keep going, keep going, it's wonderful".

* In actual fact, both these people's eyes are brown! which I find a very interesting thing. The clear grey and bright blue of their eyes on the inner has something to do with the quality and type of integrative energy they were offering me, I think.

After this, things came and went in patches. I had no continuity of consciousness. I entered one dream after another that had no connection; separated by periods of oblivion. At one time I was supervising enormous metal containers coming up from the depths of the ocean floor on chains. Inside were molten furnaces, hot as volcanoes, glowing red, that reached the surface of the ocean and tipped diamonds onto the beach. Another time I was helping salvage from the bottom of the sea the rusting, sunken hulk of a P & O liner. This was a very dangerous and tricky operation and had to be carried out with great care and awareness for, if the hawsers slipped, the ship would fall sideways in the water and many would be killed. This period involved great concentration and an awareness of ever present danger. I went from one dream to another, usually under water, but always now involving other people and there was a connection with the land in the work we were doing - bringing things up to the surface I was no longer lost and confused and alone in the darkness; there was always purpose and action. Gradually the things I had been doing in the imagery and dreams moved from fear and confusion to purposeful action; from deep oceanic waters, to the waters of seas, to operations on beaches and landing things; I started alone, was visited briefly by Roger and Simona at points of greatest desperation, then began to have people around me with whom I was working; the water during the descent was dark, sucking, destructive, debris filled; when the downward pull had ceased it was debris filled mud colour, and during the ascent it got progressively cleaner and clearer with more light until, towards the end of the dream period, the water was merely an element we happened to be working in as clear and unobstructed as air. My consciousness started this journey in great, unspecified pain; was shaken, thrown around and broken up by the descent until only the barest essential part of me could remain; this part was, through many dangerous underwater machinations, safely raised again to the surface and beached; but how small it was now, how strange a shape, and how filled with pain - this time the specified pain of archetypal betrayal.

(Sue Patman writes on Chaos and Rebirth in the next issue)
