

Lac caninum

by David Lilley

For thousands of years, dogs and humans have walked the same path as intimate companions, in love and devotion, in kindness and cruelty, in work and play, in adoration and contempt and, oft times, in suffering and death. Their entwined destinies have etched shared emotions, experiences and images into the universal memory of the collective, canine unconscious, which reflects these parallels and are dynamically imprinted in the milk of the dog. Ancient medical tradition recognised the healing potential of bitch's milk: Pliny and Dioscorides recommended it for the removal of the dead foetus and Pliny further claimed that it could cure ulceration of the uterine cervix and ease and quicken the birth process; it was also considered an antidote to deadly poisons, including snakebite. But, it is only a homeopathic potency of the milk, given for purposes of proving or cure, that can plumb the depths and play upon the keyboard of the deep unconscious of the human psyche to fathom all that lies in the heart of "man's best friend".

A portrait of inferiority and corruption In a medicine derived from the milk of the domestic dog, we would expect a portrait of loyalty, courage, self-sacrifice, obedience, forgiveness and unconditional love to emerge from the provings: all those admirable and even heroic qualities that dog-lovers revere and extol. Instead we are faced by a testimony of degradation, ignominy and abuse, resulting in retaliatory resentment, rage and hatred. Yes, the nobler traits are there, but so recessive they constitute a mere glimmer in the surrounding gloom. The picture is threaded through with evidence of abject humility, a pervasive sense of inferiority, failure, guilt and shame and a feeling of being diminished and degraded. The self-denigration can reach such a pitch that it becomes revulsion, disgust and intense self-loathing. This was experienced by a female trialist who graphically reported the feeling as follows: "She woke at daylight feeling that she was a loathsome, horrible mass of disease; could not bear to look at any part of her body, not even her hands, as it intensified the feeling of disgust and horror; could not bear to have any one part of her body touch another, had to keep even her fingers apart; felt that if she could not in some way get out of her body, she should soon become crazy." Such abhorrence can only be matched by the Thuja archetype, which experiences itself as soiled, tainted and defiled. Both archetypes may need to wash their hands compulsively to cleanse themselves ritualistically or to absolve themselves of some unconscious shame. This form of self-revulsion indicates that the syctic miasm is dominant in the constitution, which may externalise in the pathological symbol of self-rejection: an autoimmune disease (the production of antibodies against one's own tissues, for example rheumatoid arthritis).

A distorted hybrid Prompted by the stimulus of the potentised milk, from the abyss of the canine unconscious comes the anguished cry of the abused, a cry that stills protestations of reciprocal love and companionship and asserts the truth of accumulated violation, humiliation and suffering experienced by a

species, now far removed from its wild, ancestral mould and exposed to the manipulation and exploitation of humanity. The collective imprinting is not an image of friend-ship and sharing, but one of domina-tion, deprivation and bondage. The free, proud and fiercely independent grey-wolf, the superbly efficient and far-ranging progenitor of all dog breeds, has been largely transformed by the Frankenstein-like manipulations of breeders into an unnatural species – a distorted hybrid – a mutant wolf! Due to disadvantaging, anatomical changes, some breeds are scarcely able to breathe, others to conceive, give natural birth or care for their young, natural instincts are blunted or lost, and most are beset by diseases as diverse and as destructive as those of the masters who warped them. The genetic destinies of two species, that have escaped the purify-ing and ennobling influence of natural selection and survival of the fittest, are forever bonded. It is not surprising that we find mirrored in the remedy picture of *Lac caninum* so much that reflects human suffering, deprivation and abuse in a “dog-eats-dog” world; a world of harsh and extreme polarities where afflu-ence and want exist “cheek by jowl”.

A disfigured identity Bearing in mind the transformations required to change from wolf to dog, while still possessing the same DNA, one can imagine the shock and horror of a wolf, wishing to admire itself in a mirror, being confronted by the visage and physique of a chihuahua or a bull-dog. Significantly provings of bitch’s milk reveal: “aversion to herself”; “contemptuous of self” and, most telling, “feels she has somebody else’s nose”. *Lac caninum* subjects are known for “errors of personal identity”, often, like Thuja, seeing themselves in a distorted way. In practice, both medi-cines have proved valuable in the treat-ment of anorexia nervosa and bulimia (the individual perceives herself as fat even when dangerously emaciated), especially when there is a history of abuse or victimisation. When the physical identity has been traumatised by severe injuries to the face, by multiple operations (often orthopaedic), or by procedures involving the reproductive organs, which leave the patient feeling disfigured, mutilated or diminished, especially after mastectomy and hyster -ectomy, *Lac caninum*, or *Staphysagria*, may be indicated for the emotional consequences, even many years later. Likewise, we always need to bear *Lac caninum* in mind when a person is obsessively dissatisfied with some body part, often the nose or breasts, and needs to “improve” their looks by cosmetic surgery.

A metaphor of contempt Contrary to our personal experience with our canine friends, and in conflict with our love and esteem, it is startling that inherent in our unconscious, archetypal evaluation of the dog, invariably expressed in our idiomatic, language patterns, is the same image that emerges from the provings: an image of inferiority – something to be scorned, disparaged and vilified. Habitually, in our day-to-day vocabulary, we link the dog to negative connotations. We speak of “a dog’s life”, of being treated, feel-ing and working “like a dog”, of food “not fit for a dog”, of being in “the dog-house”, a worn book is “dog-eared”, a place that has fallen upon bad times has “gone to the dogs”, we are “dog-tired”, and, indeed, who has ever heard of being “dogged by good

fortune” or “hounded by success”? We are also inclined to associate inferior human qualities with dog-like characteristics: “hangdog” describes someone who is downcast and despondent or furtive and guilty in appearance or manner; the craven coward cringes and cowers, crawls on his belly, ears down, tail between his legs; the fawning sycophant “licks the hand that beats him” but may also turn on his master and “bites the hand that feeds him”. Even “puppy-fat” and “puppy-love” are often derisory expressions, and who can doubt that “dog” and “bitch” become extreme forms of insult, particularly when barbed with a sexual expletive.

Despised and rejected It is not surprising to find in Lac caninum symptoms which evidence terrible feelings of inferiority: “feels despised, diminished, smaller”; “feels insulted; as if she is being looked down upon by everyone” (unique to Lac caninum); “he is dirt”; “he is dirty”; “despondent, hopeless, thinks her disease incurable, has not a friend living, could weep at any moment”; that they feel incapable and incompetent: “everything is doomed to fail”; “he is a failure”; “doubts her ability and success”; “want of confidence”; that they fear life and those in it: fear of violence, abuse and rape; “fear and mistrust of people”(humanity); certain people, men, authority figures, strangers; “fear of ridicule and humiliation” and “fear of rejection, abandonment and separation”. What a sad litany coming from the deep repository of canine heartache and what a sad commentary on the distorted pattern of human thinking, both unfortunately stemming from life experience. From constantly entertaining such ideas of mediocrity and powerlessness, depression and despair are never far away, and are vividly portrayed: “chronic, ‘blue’ condition, everything seems so dark that it can grow no darker” and “heavy dark clouds seem to envelop her”. It is a heaviness of spirit; even “the clothing seems too heavy”. This despondency is increased by the short days of winter and by grey, dismal, overcast weather, especially if it appears interminable.

A symbol of duality In myth and symbolism, the dog is also portrayed as a metaphor of extreme duality. Christian and Celtic traditions revere the dog as the embodiment of fidelity, unswerving devotion, companionship, protective vigilance, nobility of spirit and love that survives death. In Semitic iconography, however, it accompanies the scorpion, serpent and other baleful reptiles, and is evil and demonic; in Judaism the dog was held in contempt as an unclean scavenger, an eater of vomit, associated with “whoremongers, sorcerers, fornicators and idolaters”. Islam sees in the dog all that is vile in creation, a term of opprobrium for unbelievers, the very symbol of uncleanness, greed, gluttony, and gross materialism – the sole exceptions being the saluki and the greyhound, which were used for hunting. On a profounder level, the dog shares in the ambivalent symbolism of its ancestor, the wolf. Its image in the human psyche is essentially dark. It is equated with the devil – fierce, insatiable and evil. As incarnating all the dark, destructive aspects of nature, the wolf, when worshipped, becomes one of the dread deities, embodying ferocity, cunning, greed, cruelty, and wickedness. However, its fierce, noble qualities can also be protective, loyal, courageous, and victorious, and therefore venerated. Lac

caninum, the remedy, covers the entire spectrum of these great contradictions and opposites, all of which lie within the sphere of sycosis. This duality, or double-sidedness, is symbolised in the wagging tail, hallmark of both the wolf and dog, which is carried forward in the cardinal modality of Lac caninum: symptoms and signs move from one side of the body to another (often commencing on the left – the side of the emotions, creativity and imagination). But, the starkest paradox and duality of all lies in the capacity of the dog to either heal or kill. In Hellenic times, the ill and infirm would travel, in search of a cure, to the shrine of Asklepios, the God of Medicine, at Epidauros. At the sanctuary, sacred snakes and dogs were used to lick the wounds and ailing parts of the sick and many instances of healing were recorded. Yet, it is the domestic dog and its near relatives that are particularly responsible for propagating the dread disease rabies.

Wotan – the god of wolves and dogs In Norse and Teutonic mythology, the wolf is sacred to Wotan (Odin), the king of the gods. Two ravens and two wolves, Skoll and Hati, repulsion and hatred, always accompanied Wotan into battle. He is often depicted riding a huge wolf. It was believed that these wolves persistently pursued the sun and the moon attempting to swallow them so that the world might be plunged into primordial darkness. They achieve partial success at the eclipses and it is said that they will finally succeed at Ragnarok, the Norse Doomsday, when Wotan will close in mortal combat with the monstrous wolf Fenrir, his own dark aspect, and die.

Although primarily a god of war, Wotan was a multifaceted deity with a rich diversity of roles. He displays multiple personalities and was capable of seemingly endless transformations, revealing a complex and often contradictory nature. In keeping with its ruling deity, Lac caninum can be indeterminate and fluctuating in behaviour, emotions and character, showing a lack of fixed identity; a tendency surely due to the selective breeding methods that have produced such glaringly different breeds that they could easily be confused as different species. Certain Lac caninum types are able to don different personas to suit the company and circumstances they find themselves in – people of many faces and many masks, human chameleons – able to be whatever and whoever the other person would like them to be, or what would ingratiate and profit them best. They are often troubled by an inability to sense who they truly are. Others are very susceptible and over-impressionable, easily influenced by dominant individuals, even to the point of adopting their identity, personality traits and mannerisms (Pulsatilla). These role models may be idealised even when intrinsically wicked or evil. This resonance is an important quality of the archetype, further evidenced in the frequency with which a breed is unconsciously and preferentially selected as a projection of some dominant trait of the owner, so that owner and dog look alike.

God of wisdom and frenzy Most important in the mythology of Wotan was his great initiation, when, pierced through his side by a spear, he hung suspended on Yggdrasill, the World Ash Tree (the Norse Cosmic Tree – like Thuja, an *arbor*

vitae) for nine days and nights without bread or water.

He was rewarded with a vision and understanding of the runes, which embody the esoteric knowledge of the northern tradition, enabling him to access the wisdom of the underworld (the Shadow) and travel freely through the dimensions of spirit. He became a necromancer capable of summoning the shades of the dead in order to obtain arcane knowledge. Myth also relates that on another occasion he sacrificed an eye (the eye of intellect) in order to attain wisdom. Wotan's sacrifice on the tree echoes the passion of Christ on the cross. He, like Jesus, became a fount of all wisdom, which he sourced from the realm of the dead. But, at the opposite extreme, swinging from the sacred to the profane, Wotan was also God of Frenzy and Lord of Ecstasy. In 1936, Carl Jung wrote an essay *Wotan* in which he prophesied the return of the ancient god, re-activated "like a dormant volcano" from the collective unconscious of the German nation under the Nazi party, which was soon to lead it to a disastrous war. He saw the frenzy of Wotan manifest in the rabid ravings of Hitler, delivered whilst seemingly in a state of possession.

Artistic, religious and hedonistic rapture It seems impossible to reconcile these contradictions of the god and the arche-type, either morally or logically, unless one understands the contrasting energies of the psychotic miasm and of Lac caninum. The "frenzy" of Wotan, and therefore of Lac caninum, is not just the battle fury of the Viking Berserks, which rendered them invincible, it is also the passion of the creative mind: of the poet, the artist and the musician. In the pagan world, myths, heroic exploits and noble deeds were extolled by bards at the courts of kings and chieftains through the medium of poetry and song and re-enacted through dance. These were as important vehicles of communication and knowledge as the media are today. Religious and magical fervour was also connected to Wotan, often assisted by chanting and dancing and the use of psychotropic substances and alcohol. The priests of Wotan were known to carry a leather pouch that contained hallucinogenic herbs used in the rituals associated with the god to induce psychic states and vision of other dimensions. Chief amongst these was black henbane (*Hyoscyamus*), the anti-rabies acute of Lac caninum. Both recreational drugs and alcohol can lead to licentiousness, promiscuity and sexual frenzy, none of which are foreign to either Wotan or Lac caninum. The Lac caninum subject is hypersensitive to touch, especially to the throat, breasts and pelvic region, all of which are powerful, erotic zones. They are very sensual and easily aroused, even to excessive levels of sexual transport and rapture: "hysteria and madness during sex – worse at the height of orgasm".

Heightened senses; intense emotions; powerful urges Lac caninum is hypersensitive and over-reactive on all levels. Their desires and impulses can be canine and therefore inordinate in a human being. Like the wolf, all their faculties are keen. They are intensely alert to their environment and the people in it, gifted to pick up instinctively on "vibes" and atmosphere, their sixth sense enabling them to apprehend thoughts, emotions and motives. They are intensely passionate and the emotions they experience are excessive and extreme, out of

proportion to circumstances and context and too prolonged, lasting even a lifetime. Their fear is terror, their dislike is detestation, their anger is rage and their love is adoration. They can hate with an alarming intensity and a vengeance that is dogged, vicious and frightening. They gnaw at their grievances, their hatred and their desire for revenge, like a dog gnaws at a bone, never satisfied until they have destroyed the object of their enmity or vented the energy transpersonally on society or by scape-goating others (Hitler). Their fears and phobias are intense, often dominating their lives. Snakes, spiders and dogs, particularly large dogs, terrify them and they are haunted by fear of disease, especially cancer, and the dread of dying. Thunderstorms petrify them, the flash of lightning and the crash of thunder causing them to cringe with fear. They are so imaginative that the images born out of their fantasy assume reality, appearing before them, threatening and terrifying. They have only to think of their ailments for them to be intensified. Even their natural urges tend to excess: insatiable thirst, often for milk; craving for salt and spices; an appetite that cannot be appeased; and an insistent, sexual hunger.

Repressed traumatic memories Sometimes a history of sexual abuse is responsible for their fears and phobias. In both Thuja and Lac caninum, this may have been suffered repetitively and over an extended time, often at the hands of those who should have been protective care-givers. In some Lac caninum victims, the memory of the abuse may have been repressed in amnesic response to experiences too terrible for the young mind to hold in the light of consciousness. Only dreams and imaginings remain: “visions of creeping things”; “horrible visions; afraid they will take objective form”; “dreams of snakes in her bed” and most significantly – “feels she is lying on a large snake” and “sees faces in the dark; the face that haunts most is the one she has really seen”. This unconscious repression of unwanted memory may impair normal recall, causing them to make mistakes when speaking or writing, and to become absent minded: leaving behind items they have bought in a shop, or forgetting to retrieve their credit card after a purchase.

The homeopathic guide dog Lac caninum is a remedy of indispensable value to the practitioner of “depth homeopathy”. The ancients quite rightly understood the dog to be guardian of the underworld (Cerberus), guide of souls from one realm to another, and the intermediary between different levels of consciousness. When a patient’s emotions and feelings are deeply repressed, when dreams have ceased or never been, when the personal shadow is heavily burdened with unresolved emotions and experiences, it is often the dog that leads the physician into the deepest realms of the unconscious and releases the pains of the past. Lac caninum can rescue the wounded child in the depressed adult. When in doubt, give Sulphur we are taught, but more frequently, when we stand non-plussed, before a complex, emotional state due to past or present trauma, a severely repressed state, a paucity of symptoms, an ever shifting presentation, or a constitutional picture simulating various polychrests and revealing the influence of more than one miasm, Lac caninum is often the remedy which, true

to its canine nature, will open up the case and guide the physician with devotion and fidelity out of the darkness into the light.

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