

Using of Carl Gustav Jung's dream analysis as a psychotherapeutic method

**Zastosowanie analizy snu według psychologii analitycznej Karola Gustawa Junga
jako metody psychoterapeutycznej**

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Summary

The aim of the paper is a short summary the theory of Carl Gustav Jung related to dream analysis as it can be used in practice in psychotherapeutic work with patients.

Besides the original thesis of this author, some views of his more contemporary successors are also used.

Jung thinks about psyche as a wholeness which is organized to realize the goal of full human development (called by him the process of individuation). The conscious and unconscious part of psyche complement each other. So the unconsciousness is (or at least can be) constructive, creative and active. Jung understood dreams as a way of communication of some important contents from unconsciousness to consciousness. Dreams have three main functions: regulating, therapeutic (compensation) and integrating (progressive).

The first stage of work relates to free associations to every element of a dream. Then an active imagination is supposed to be used. The last stage is called amplification – it is trying to put the experience of an individual into more universal frames. Jung discovered that a dream is constructed similarly to the classic Greek drama with its typical stages.

Streszczenie

Celem pracy jest skrótowe przedstawienie teorii Karola Gustawa Junga w powiązaniu z analizą snów, która może być stosowana jako praktyczna metoda psychoterapeutycznej pracy z pacjentami. Obok jego oryginalnych poglądów przedstawia ona również niektóre twierdzenia jego współczesnych następców.

Jung rozumiał psychikę jako dynamiczną całość ukierunkowaną na realizację celu pełnego ludzkiego rozwoju (określał to jako proces indywiduacji). Świadoma i nieświadoma jej część uzupełniają się wzajemnie. Nieświadomość jest więc – albo przynajmniej może być konstruktywna, aktywna i twórcza. Sny rozumiał Jung jako sposób przekazywania przez nią ważnych treści do świadomości. Spełniają one trzy główne funkcje: regulacyjną, terapeutyczną (kompensacyjną) i integracyjną (rozwojową).

Pierwszym etapem pracy ze snem są wolne skojarzenia do każdego z jego elementów. Następnie używa się aktywnej wyobraźni. Ostatni etap zwany amplifikacją polega na umieszczeniu doświadczenia jednostki w bardziej uniwersalnych ramach. Jung odkrył, że sens konstruowany jest podobnie jak klasyczny dramat grecki z jego charakterystycznymi stadiami.

Słowa kluczowe: analiza snu, psychoterapia

Key words: dream analysis, psychotherapy

The paper aims at a brief summary of Carl Gustav Jung's theory of dream analysis as psychotherapeutic practice used with patients.

Besides the original thesis of the author, some views of his more contemporary successors are used as well.

Carl Gustav Jung was born on July the 26th 1875 in Switzerland as a pastor's son. He studied at the University of Basle and decided to become a psychiatrist. From 1900 he worked in Zurich, where in 1905 he became the head of Psychiatric Clinic. In 1907 he went to Vienna to meet Sigmund Freud. It was the beginning of some years of intensive cooperation and friendship which finished in 1913 because Freud did not accept his

book „Wandlungen und Symbole der Libido”. Then he withdrew from public activity and didactic work to develop his own theory and private practice.

Since 1921 he travelled a lot to understand more deeply the common unconsciousness and symbols used in other cultures. He was giving many lectures, published a lot and exchanged his views with scientists from many countries. The universities in Harvard, Oxford, Benares, Calcutta, Allahabad awarded him with the title of a *honoris causa doctor*.

Since 1947 an Institut after his name in Zurich has been giving training in his theory and psychotherapeutic method.

Carl Gustav Jung died in Zurich on June the 6th 1961. His more contemporary successors are Erich Neumann, Michael Fordham, Jolande Jacobi, Hans Dieckman, Marie-Luise von Franz, Pia Skogemann, Ole Vedfelt.

Understanding of unconsciousness

Sigmund Freud, who introduced the concept of unconsciousness into psychiatry and psychotherapy, understood it mainly as opposition to consciousness; a dark reservoir of blind instincts; chaos full of childish sexual imagination without any constructivism nor creativity. It is mainly a part of personality called „Id” guided by the principle of pleasure. It can be only limited by more conscious part called „Ego” which can recognize reality.

Jung thinks about psyche as a wholeness which is organized to realize the goal of complete human development (called by him the process of individuation). The conscious and unconscious part of psyche complement each other. The consciousness is always incomplete and needs help of the unconsciousness. So the unconsciousness is (or at least can be) constructive, creative and active. It is divided into individual and common part. The latter contains archetypes – patterns and symbols the same in all cultures all over the world.

The function and meanings of dreams

Freud and Jung agreed that in our dreams we can get closer to our unconsciousness. Freud even called them „the royal way” to it. They are a product of a compromise between consciousness and unconsciousness. They are a way of realisation of wishes and help to continue sleeping. The important contents are covered by defending mechanisms: condensation, displacement and secondary revision.

Jung understood dreams rather as a way of communication of some important contents from unconsciousness to consciousness. It is a kind of dialogue with our inner „universal man”. Dreams rather show than cover something. Their source is our everyday life and they can be a kind of comment to life on a conscious or unconscious level (perception under threshold of consciousness). They can also show the process of development in our unconsciousness, using the level of archetypes.

Dreams have three main functions: regulating, therapeutic (compensation) and integrating (progressive).

Understanding of the reasons of disturbances and the essence of therapeutic process

In psychoanalysis disturbances are perceived as the result of not proper relationships with parenting figures in the childhood which cause fixation or

regression in psychosexual development. They are reflected and can be worked through in transference in relationship with psychoanalyst. It is important to bring the unconscious material to the consciousness.

Jung understood psyche as developing like an oak from an acorn in the natural process of individuation. The disturbances are the result of obstacles which stopped somehow this process. The lack of sufficient balance and fullness, the one-way development, make the individual weak and susceptible to many disturbances. For example – people with extreme extravert or introvert orientation or with the developed and using only one of four psychic functions (perceiving, intuition, thinking and feeling). At about half-way of our life we should complete the lacking functions or orientation. The individuation needs also meeting and absorbing deep symbols and archetypes in our psyche: Shadow, Anima or Animus, The Old Sage, The Big Mother and Self. The analytic is accompanying his patient trying to help him understand the language his unconsciousness is using to communicate him the proper way of behaviour. He is also supporting the process of development, overcoming obstacles, but still the therapeutic process is based on own energy and direction of the patient (especially in contact with his unconsciousness). So the dream analysis is here very important.

The levels of the meanings of dreams

There are four categories of dreams:

1. Unconscious reaction to a conscious situation – reactive dreams. An example given by Jung is a dream of a businessman who received a proposal of a transaction – his hands were dirty. Later on he realised that this transaction was dishonest.
2. Dreams showing a situation of conflict between consciousness and unconsciousness.
3. Dreams showing a tendency of unconsciousness to change a conscious attitude.
4. Dreams showing processes in unconsciousness without any visible connections with conscious level. They are mostly connected with archetypes.

Important dreams

Jung paid his attention especially to some groups of dreams which he recognized as especially important:

1. Dreams from childhood, especially when remembered still by an adult person – they are connected with deep levels of personality.
2. Dreams from important moments of change: half-way of life, beginning of the analysis, confrontation with death.
3. Dreams about „vocation” – social aspect of life.

4. Series of dreams – as reflecting of some process in unconsciousness.
5. Big dreams with archetypic symbols (mother, father, God, nature...).

Methods of working of dreams

The psychotherapist working in this orientation is usually encouraging his patient to write down his everyday dreams – it can be a kind of diary which is always placed close to bed because it is not easy to remember the dream exactly after longer time. The first stage of work can be free associations to every element of a dream – what does it mean for this particular person in the context of his or her individual story (even individual myth).

Then an active imagination is supposed to be used – the dream can be drawn or painted, patient can be asked about possible continuation of it, it can also take form of a psychodrama. Jung discovered that active imagination is supporting an individuation process: if there are too many dreams, he used it instead; if they were too rare, it stimulated the unconsciousness to produce more of them. Active imagination helps to bring out feelings and to work with them. The last stage is called amplification – it attempts to put the experience of an individual into more universal frames. The universal symbols are to be found by reference to mythology, literature, culture and arts.

Jung discovered that a dream is constructed similarly to the classic Greek drama with its typical stages:

1. Exposition – the beginning of action – time, place and persons are defined. If the place is unknown – it symbolises the unconsciousness.
2. Complication – presenting of a problem, the obstacle, difficulties.
3. Vicissitudes (climax) – the problem can be changed into positive direction or a catastrophe.
4. Ending (lysis) is the conclusion of action.

The first two stages are showing the possible inner situation of a dreaming person, his or her actual problem. The second two – the possibilities of resolving and overcoming the problem. There are two aspects of a dream to be taken into account:

1. Objective – persons and roles represent the real world – it helps to understand and improve the relationships with people and the way of dealing with real situations.
2. Subjective – every element of dream is representing a part of a dreaming person's psyche – the drama is inside it.

According to Jung, the objective interpretation is more proper when the figure of a dream is an important person for the dreamer: a close family member or a very close friend, or a person important for this moment, for example because of

the situation of conflict. It is good also if a person is seen „photographically”.

The subjective interpretation is better when the dream is about collateral friends and relatives, unknown persons, historical figures or persons somehow „changed”.

The successors of Jung underline that an objective access as more superficial is more proper at the beginning of a therapy and with younger persons, and the subjective one as leading to the changes in somebody's personality – after longer time of work on inner development.

The same dream can be understood and interpreted on both levels – first objective, than subjective.

At the last stage the interpretation of a dream is to be verified. Jung advised to compare the dream with other ones trying to understand if they show the same process. The other important sign is the reaction of the patient who can receive the interpretation with a kind of “aha-feeling”. And finally during longer time we can perceive changes in the life of patient as consequences of this understanding.

The symbols of archetypes dreams

The process of individuation has its own structure and through understanding symbols imagined in dreams we can recognize the stage of development of a person and main problems to overcome.

The first figure we meet in our unconsciousness is Shadow – it can be personalized as the person of the same sex as dreamer but representing the opposite characteristics, often the dark side of the personality. Presence of the Shadow is to be recognised by such elements of a dream like darkness, the evil, hell, death, abyss. The characteristic feelings are fear, helplessness, powerlessness, shame, sin, guilt, destruction, condemnation. Here are also individual complexes: inferiority, guilt, origin. The goal of this stage is to recognize the content of Shadow as part of ourselves and try to integrate it.

The next step is getting into contact with the representation and image of other sex in our unconsciousness: Anima by men and Animus by women. This meeting can be very inspiring, enriching, creative, giving new ideas, but can be also the reason of disturbances if there is not sufficient distance to it. A man can be overwhelmed by his Anima and so irrational, too emotional, sentimental, embittered, with difficulties in realising his goals. A woman overwhelmed by his Animus is too despotic, knowing better, thinking like a man. The negative Animus can be very destructive as inner voice telling her constantly: you are not usable to anything, nobody would love you and so on.

The development task is to get into contact with positive and creative part of Animus or Anima and limitating its destruction by keeping more distance to it. This theme is usually present at about half-way of the life.

Further archetypes are The Old Sage (representing the spirit, spiritual truth, wisdom) and The Big Mother (life, nature, immortality). Then there is a very important stage of a contact with Self– it means transcendation of an ego. It symbolises the unity and wholeness of psyche and its functions, the sense of inner identity and full integration. There are no oppositions any more. The symbols of this stage are a circle, square, mandala. The state of unity with this archetype, called inflation, gives deep and important feelings of loftiness, inspiration, even omnipotence. But if the psyche is not mature enough and prepared for it, it can easily identify ego with this omnipotence (negative inflation). So it is very important to learn the difference between ego and Self, which remains as a frame of reference bigger than individual ego.

The criteria of archetypic character of a dream are (according to Kluger):

1. similarity to some motif of myths;
2. high intensity of positive and negative feelings;

3. irrational, unpredictable and improbable events, often inconsistent with rights of nature;
4. difference and distance to everyday reality.

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