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Jungian Theory of Dreaming and Contemporary Dream Research - Findings from the Research Project 'Structural Dream Analysis'

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The research method 'Structural Dream Analysis' (SDA) is described which allows for systematic and objective analysis of the meaning of dreams produced by patients in Jungian psychotherapies. The method focuses especially on the relationship between the dream ego and other figures in the dream and the extent of activity of the dream ego. Five major dream patterns were identified which accounted for the majority of the dreams. The clients' dream series were dominated by one or two repetitive patterns which were closely connected to the psychological problems of the dreamers. Additionally, typical changes in the dream series' patterns could be identified which corresponded with therapeutic change. These findings support Jung's theory of dreams as providing a holistic image of the dreamer's psyche, including unconscious aspects. The implications for different psychoanalytic theories of dreaming and dream interpretation are discussed as well as implications for the continuity hypothesis.

To provide empirical support for analytical psychology's main concepts is difficult in some fields, namely archetype theory, but regarding Jung's theory of dreaming there is a surprisingly large amount of support coming from empirical dream research. I have been investigating the connection between dreams and the course of psychotherapy in Jungian analysis, and I have found that there is strong empirical support for our Jungian perspective on the role of dreams.

We know that Freud's and Jung's perspectives differ in many aspects, and so they do regarding dreaming and dream interpretation. Whereas Freud (1900) was convinced that dreaming serves the function of protecting sleep by distorting the unconscious meaning of the dream, Jung saw the dream as a total picture of the current situation of the psyche including unconscious

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aspects; later he added that the dream compensates the attitude of ego consciousness. So in a certain sense Freud sees the dream as covering its

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meaning, whereas Jung believes that the dream uncovers the unconscious. A specific contribution which Jung made to the theory of dreaming is that, in dreams, parts of the personality which are not yet integrated or even being manifest through conflict (in the sense of complexes), can appear personified. From the Jungian point of view the interesting question is: what is the relationship of dream ego, as representing the ego complex and the strength of consciousness, and these other parts of the psyche? Is the ego in the dream capable of dealing with these parts or even integrating them or will they appear as a threat to the ego?

Parallel to these psychoanalytic approaches to dreaming, an independent tradition of empirical dream research has developed following the discovery of rapid eye movement (REM) (Aserinsky & Kleitman 1953), which has produced a large corpus of empirical findings on the functions of dreaming and its connection to waking life. I will first give an overview of these findings of empirical dream research and describe how they support or contradict psychoanalytic theories of dreaming, and will then present findings from my own research on dreams in psychotherapy using the method of Structural Dream Analysis.

Empirical Dream Research

Hall and Van De Castle (1966), who developed a coding system for the content of dreams, argued that it is possible to draw a personality profile based only on a person's dreams. Furthermore, there is substantial continuity in the themes in a person's dreams over a long period of time (Levin 1990). And Cartwright (1977), found that the themes in the dreams change when a person goes

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through psychotherapy. In a study on the dreams of persons with multiple personality disorder, Barrett (1996) was able to demonstrate that the split-off parts of their personalities appeared personified in their dreams. Greenberg and Pearlman (1978) compared the content of dreams of patients currently in psychoanalysis with the protocols of their therapy sessions that coincided with the time of the dream, and found a strong connection between the themes in the dreams and their psychotherapy. The dream could be read as a report about the current conflictual themes in the waking life of the dreamer. Palombo (1982) could show that clients reprocess contents from their last analytical session in their subsequent dreams and Popp, Luborsky and Crits-Christoph (1990) found that both therapy narratives and dreams were structured using the same unconscious relationship patterns. Therefore, today's most prominent theory of dreaming derived from empirical research is the so-called continuity hypothesis, which says that there is a continuity in mental functioning from waking life to sleep (for a more detailed discussion see Roesler 2018a).

According to Barrett and McNamara (2007), the results of empirical dream research can be summarized in the following way: in the dream, the brain is

in a mode where it does not have to process new input but can use larger capacities for working on problems and finding creative solutions. The dream especially focuses on experiences in waking life that have emotional meaning for the dreamer. The dreaming mind can find solutions for problems more readily compared to waking consciousness because it is able to connect different areas and functions of the brain. This supports the view taken by Jung (1971), which sees the psyche as a self-regulating system and the dream as a spontaneously produced picture of the current situation of the psyche in the form of symbols. It seems that empirical dream research, though not having any intention of testing Jungian theory, has become quite supportive of Jung's theory of the dream.

Jung differentiates between a ‘subjective’ level and an ‘objective’ level to dreams. In the first perspective, the figures and elements of the dream are interpreted as representing parts or qualities of the dreamer's personality (especially conflictual parts, i.e. complexes), whereas in the objective perspective, they are seen as representing persons or entities existing in reality. In dreams, the unconscious psyche attempts to support ego consciousness and foster a process of personality integration by pointing to parts of the psyche not yet integrated into the whole of personality, or to indicate unresolved conflicts. Through dreams, the unconscious, because it contains a more holistic

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knowledge about the development and integration of personality, brings new information to consciousness, which can then be integrated, if a conscious understanding of the information is possible. This is the aim of dream interpretation in psychotherapy. So Jungian dream interpretation focuses on the relationship of the dream ego (i.e. the figure in the dream which experiences the dreamer as ‘myself’, psychoanalytically representing ego consciousness) to the other figures in the dream, which gives an indication, through the imagery, of the ability of the ego to cope with emotions, impulses and complexes (being represented in this symbolic form in the dream), and the strength of ego consciousness. Since the information in dreams comes in the form of symbols and images, it needs translation to be understood by the conscious ego.

Contemporary conceptualizations of dreaming based on empirical research strongly question the assumptions in Freud's classic theory on dreaming and dream interpretation: there is no evidence for a process of distortion which leads to a difference between manifest and latent meaning and also the dream is not ‘the keeper of the sleep’ etc. (Fiss 1995). In the last decades, there has been development in the reconceptualization of psychoanalytic dream theories influenced by insights from empirical dream research. This has led to a convergence of contemporary Freudian dream theories, moving towards Jung's understanding of the dream (e.g. Fosshage 1987; Levin 1990). As a result of this research, some contemporary Freudian dream theories have incorporated a number of aspects of Jungian dream theory. An example of this convergence can be found in the dream theory of Fosshage (1987, 1997), which focuses on the functions of the dream as a regulator of emotions and integrator of

psychological organization. On the other hand, scholars and researchers from the Freudian tradition (even though quoting the empirical evidence speaking against Freudian assumptions), still argue for a process of censorship in dreaming - which results in a distortion of the latent content - and also for the theory of wish fulfilment of dreams. The overall function of dreaming is still supposed to be protecting the sleeper from being alarmed by repressed impulses (Werner & Langenmeyer 2005; Fisher & Greenberg 1977, 1996).

The Research Project ‘Structural Dream Analysis’

There is also a long tradition of clinical research on dreams in psychoanalysis (Fonagy et al. 2012). A problem with these approaches is that they often include

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assumptions taken from psychoanalytic theories, e.g. that the dream serves as a guardian of sleep.

The usual research approaches investigating the meaning of dream content make use of coding systems, e.g. the well-known coding system of Hall and Van De Castle (1966). Furthermore, in psychoanalytic dream research, elaborated coding systems for dream content have been developed and used in studies investigating the process of psychotherapy (e.g. Moser & von Zeppelin, 1991). In psychoanalytic research on dreams (see Fonagy et al. 2012, for a current overview), there is often the problem that basic assumptions about the function of dreams are taken for granted. For example, the Moser and von Zeppelin coding system is based on the assumption that the function of dreaming is to protect sleep and so investigates the changing positions of elements in the dream which 'evidences' this function. But as it is, this coding system is not able to falsify any Freudian assumptions.

In our study, we attempted to prevent the research method from implicitly including any theoretical psychodynamic assumptions about the dream. Consequently, Structural Dream Analysis (SDA) was developed as a method to investigate dreams from a structuralist point of view. The assumption is that the meaning of a dream consists not so much in it containing certain symbols or elements but more in the relationship between the elements and in the course of action which the dream takes, i.e. its structure. The aforementioned coding systems, which count the appearance of certain elements and symbols in dreams, from our point of view, are not able to identify the meaning of dreams, since meaning is the result of interpretation. An example is the famous system built on content analysis of over 50,000 dreams by Hall and Nordby (1972). Typical dreams reported in this classification involved aggression, predatory animals, flying, falling, being persecuted by hostile strangers, landscapes, dreams of misfortune, sex, getting married and having children, taking examinations or undergoing some similar ordeals, travelling, swimming or being in the water, watching fires, and being

confined in an underground place. The problem with this kind of classification, from my point of view, is that these typical dream motifs describe very different entities, from objects and beings to action patterns and story structures. There is no theoretical model behind such a classification which could connect the dream motifs with a meaning for the dreamer. This position has already been criticized by Stevens (1995), who gives the following example: 'Simple content analyses reveal that agonistic dreams are more common among males of all

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ages and hedonic dreams more common among females, but both types of dreams occur in both sexes. A more significant variable than gender in determining the relative incidence of such dreams is the kind of family the individual grew up in' (p. 249).

Structural Dream Analysis is a qualitative, interpretive research method that attempts to formalize the process of interpretation of the dream in a way that the conclusions are independent of the interpreter. In our study, a reliability test found an interpreter agreement for the results coming from the same case of *k* = .70 - .82. Structural Dream Analysis sees the dream as a narrative. In narratology, a narrative is defined as a development from a starting point, which often is a problem that needs repair or solution. The narrative goes through ups and downs leading to the solution of the problem or a valued endpoint to the story (Gülich & Quasthoff 1985). Similarly, the dream is a short story about how the protagonist, in most cases the dream ego, processes a problem. Structural Dream Analysis thus makes use of analytic tools developed in narratology. Two earlier methods of narrative analysis were incorporated: a) Vladimir Propp's (1975) structuralist method of Functional Analysis used to investigate the structure of fairy tales. Each fairy-tale is divided into its functional parts (e.g. 'The King is ill and needs healing'; 'The hero fights the Dragon') and each functional part receives an abstract symbol, e.g. a letter or number. As a result, each fairy-tale can be written as an abstract formula of symbols and then different fairy-tales can be compared regarding their structure. b) Boothe's (2002) narratological method JAKOB, used in analytical psychotherapies for the analysis of patient narratives and their development over the course of the psychotherapy. This method focuses on the role the narrator takes in the narrative in terms of activity vs. passivity and his/her relation to other protagonists in the narrative, as well as on different episodic models which describe the course the narrative takes.

The meaning of symbols in the dreams we investigated was analysed by a systematized form of amplification. In psychotherapy, the analyst assumes that the series of dreams presented by the analysand follows an inner structure of meaning. Structural Dream Analysis aims at identifying this inner structure of meaning from the series of dreams alone, without referring to additional information about the dreamer, their psychodynamics or the course of psychotherapy. The meaning conveyed by the dream is analysed in a systematic series of interpretive steps for which a formalized manual is

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available (for more details see Roesler 2018b). The interpreters, who have no information about the dreamer, are given a series of 10 to 20 dreams covering the whole course of the psychotherapy and which ideally mark the core points and topics of it. The dreams are provided by practising analysts who also write a case report about the psychopathology and psychodynamics of the patient involved, as well as about the development of core conflicts and themes in the course of the therapy. Only when the dream series are completely analysed using Structural Dream Analysis are the results compared to the reports by the therapists.

Structural Dream Analysis allows for systematic and objective analysis of the meaning of dreams produced by patients in psychotherapies. The method focuses especially on the relationship between the dream ego and other figures in the dream and the extent of activity of the dream ego. The following questions are investigated: Are generalized structures to be found in the development of dreams in successful psychotherapies compared to failed ones? Are there connections between type of psychopathology, e.g. depression, and the symbols and structures in the dreams?

Results

A major finding is that a high percentage of all dreams from all cases can be categorized by a very limited number of structural patterns. The most general pattern can be described as: the ego is confronted with a requirement, has to cope with a challenge, has to fulfil a plan or task. This general pattern can be differentiated into five more specific patterns regarding the extent of agency of the dream ego:

Whereas in Pattern 1 there is no ego present at all, in Patterns 2 and 3 the dream ego is present but under pressure from other forces in the dream and the initiative is not with the ego but with others. The ego is subjected to their activity, power and control. In Patterns 4 and 5 the ego has taken over the initiative and attempts to follow a personal plan but may be confronted with difficulties. In Pattern 5 this activity focuses on a social relationship.

Pattern 1: No dream ego present

In the dream there is no dream ego present, the dreamer just observes a scene as if watching a movie and does not actively take part in the dream. In some cases, the dream ego flies above and looks down on a scene or happenings in the dream.

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Pattern 2: The dream ego is threatened

In dreams of this kind the dream ego is threatened, e.g. attacked or injured, and usually tries to escape or protect itself against the threatening figures. In b) to d) below, the dream ego very often reacts with panic and either feels powerless or tries to escape from the threat. Often this results in the dream ego being chased

by the threatening figures. The dreams in this pattern can be differentiated depending on the severity of the threat.

the dream ego is damaged, e.g. severely wounded, or even killed. In some cases, the killing has already happened and the dream ego is found as a dead body.

the threat to the dream ego comes from a force in nature, e.g. a natural disaster, earthquake, fire, flooding, storm etc.

the dream ego is threatened by (dangerous) animals.

the dream ego is threatened by human beings, e.g. criminals, murderers or ‘evil people’, or human-like figures, e.g. ghosts, shadows etc.

Pattern 3: The dream ego is confronted with a performance requirement The dream ego is confronted with a performance requirement, which is set by another figure or agency in the dream. The dream ego is confronted with a task which it has to fulfil, or is required to find something or to give something to another person in the dream so that they can fulfil a task etc. The most common form of this pattern is the examination dream. An important part of this pattern is that the initiative is not with the dream ego but with other figures confronting the dream ego with a requirement. The dream ego is subjected to their control and power.

Examination in a school or university setting.

The dream ego is subject to an inspection by an official person, e.g. a ticket inspection on the train where the right of the dream ego is questioned.

the dream ego has the task to find something (which was lost before), get something, produce something etc.

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A very typical pattern in these kinds of dreams is that the dream ego does not feel capable of performing the task, does not possess the right tools or capabilities, or has failed to bring these devices, has lost them on the way etc. For example, the dream ego is not prepared for the examination, or arrives too late for it.

Pattern 4: Mobility dream

The dream ego is moving towards a specified or unclear destination, e.g. travelling and making use of different forms of transportation, like a bicycle, car, bus, train, airplane, ship etc. An interesting differentiation is the question of whether these transportation devices are public or individual. Again, this form of dream can be differentiated depending on the extent of the dream ego's agency, which shows in the extent to which the dream ego determines its own movement.

disorientation: the dream ego has no idea where to go, even where it is and there are no signs of direction etc.

the dream ego is locked up in a closed space, imprisoned etc., and is looking for a way to get out.

the dream ego wants to move, travel etc. but has no means to do so, e.g. it misses the train.

the dream ego attempts to move and has some means of transportation but cannot control the movement, e.g. it cannot steer a car.

the dream ego is moving but the way is blocked or the means of transport breaks down or crashes and movement cannot be continued.

the dream ego is moving, making use of some means of transportation but it is going the wrong way, is in the wrong train or bus, or is not authorized to use it (e.g. has no ticket) and therefore cannot continue the journey.

in the positive form, the dream ego succeeds in moving towards and reaching the desired destination.

Pattern 5: Social interaction dream

The dream ego is occupied with making contact or communicating with another person or figure in the dream. The dream ego wants to get in contact

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with another person, or is in communication and attempts to communicate something to the other person, or is more generally occupied with creating a desired contact with the other person which can include sexual contact. This dream pattern can be differentiated depending on the dream ego's activity and how successful it is in reaching its desired contact.

the dream ego wants to get into contact but is ignored by others.

the dream ego is criticized, devalued or made ridiculous by others and feels shame.

the dream ego is successful in creating the desired contact.

a special case: the dream ego is aggressive towards others (even kills others) which expresses the will of the dream ego to be separated and autonomous.

There is a strong correlation between dream content and repetitive patterns in dream series on the one side and the dreamer's personality structure and psychological problems on the other. Additionally, changes in the course of psychotherapy are paralleled by a transformation in the dream patterns of the patient. The five patterns detected can be interpreted psychologically as an expression of the capacity of the dreamer's ego, on different levels, to cope with and/or control emotions, motivations and complexes. The extent of agency of the dream ego is equivalent to that which psychoanalysis calls ego strength or maturity of the personality, as well as the degree of integration of ego and other parts of the psyche into the whole of the personality and the capacity of ego functioning.

Patterns of Change in the Structure of Dreams over the Course of Therapy

In this study we not only found typical patterns in the structure of the dreams but also across the whole series of dreams. A general finding was that in those cases where the psychotherapeutic intervention was successful such that

there was an improvement in symptoms, psychological well-being, regulation of emotion and, from a psychoanalytic point of view, a gain in psychological structure and ego strength, we found a typical pattern of transformation in the structure of the dreams. Typically, the first half of the psychotherapeutic process was dominated by a repetitive pattern in the dreams, which was

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connected with the psychological problems of the dreamer, in the sense as described above. Generally, in the middle of the dream series there appears a dream or dream symbol which marks a change in the pattern (see more details below). The second half of the dream series is then typically characterized by a change in the repetitive pattern:

In Pattern 2 (the dream ego is threatened), the dream ego changes its reaction to the threat. Instead of escaping, it confronts the threatening figures, fights actively, finds constructive strategies to cope with the threat and, towards the end of the dream series, succeeds in overcoming the threat.

Example: In case 7, the dream ego in the first half of the series is threatened by water in the form of giant waves, flooding etc. and usually drowns in the flood. In the second half of the series, however, the dream ego more and more succeeds in moving to a safe place on dry land. Furthermore, a transformative pattern emerges in which the dream ego realizes that the seemingly threatening figures are not as dangerous and even makes friends with these figures.

Typical examples of the second transformative pattern are seen in cases 5 and 6: in case 5, in the first half of the series, the dream ego is threatened by snakes. Then in the midst of the dream series, a golden snake appears which is not dangerous. In the next dream the threatening figure changes into a salamander, then into a dark man. In case 6, the dream ego in the first half of the series is chased by dogs and tries to escape, then in the midst of the series there appear helpless and wounded dogs which need the dream ego's support but the dream ego reacts with disgust. Finally, the dream ego finds a helpless baby which needs care and support.

To summarize, in the dream series dominated by Pattern 2, the threatening figures tend to change from natural disasters or threatening wild animals to less dangerous animals and then into human beings. A similar pattern of transformation in the series of dreams can be found for those cases which are dominated by Patterns 3 and 4.

In Pattern 3 (performance requirement), the first half of the series is typically dominated by the dream ego failing to fulfil the required task. This is seen in cases where the dream ego is repeatedly confronted with an examination, is not prepared, is too late or even forgets about the examination, thereby fails and escapes etc. Change in this pattern is characterized typically by the disappearance of examination dreams in the second half of the series.

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Pattern 4 (mobility): typically, in the first half of the series, the dream ego is not able to reach the desired aim, is on the wrong bus or train or has no ticket etc., the road is blocked, or the dream ego is not capable of controlling the car. In some cases, the dream ego is even walled-in and not able to escape.

In the second half of the series this typically changes into the dream ego succeeding in reaching the desired aim and controlling the means of transportation.

Pattern 5 (social interaction): the cases dominated by this pattern are usually characterized by failed attempts (or passivity) of the dream ego to get into a desired contact or communication with others in the first half of the series - the dream ego is ignored by others, others forget about the ego's birthday, or the dream ego is even criticized and devalued by others. Towards the end of the dream series, the dream ego is more and more capable of creating satisfying interactions with others or it experiences care and support from others. In those cases with successful therapeutic change, the second half of their dream series is dominated more and more by Pattern 5, that is, the dream ego becomes occupied with creating a desired social interaction. And this occurs after the dream ego has succeeded in overcoming a repetitive negative pattern of being threatened or having failed mobility or negative examination dreams.

These transformative patterns were only found in cases where the therapists reported improvement on the symptom level as well as positive changes in personality structure. By contrast, there are two cases in the sample where the therapists delivered dream series to the researchers even though the therapy was not yet completed (and this information was not given to the interpreters). In these cases, repetitive patterns can also be found but with no change in the repetitive pattern in the way described above: e.g. the dream ego in most of the dreams is in a movement, usually by public transport but fails again and again to reach the desired aim because has it no ticket, or the train or tram breaks down etc.

These transformative patterns in the dream series are interpreted from a psychodynamic perspective and are seen as speaking to the fact that an initially weak ego structure, which fails to regulate and integrate threatening emotions, impulses and complexes, gains in ego strength over the course of the therapy and increasingly succeeds in coping with initially suppressed or split-off parts of the psyche and integrating these into constructive interactions with others. As a result of such gains in ego strength, the dream ego is increasingly capable of executing willpower, conducting its plans, reaching aims and expressing its

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needs in social interactions. This interpretation is supported by the findings from the two cases where there is no therapeutic change and where there is also no transformation of the repetitive dream pattern.

Dream Patterns and Symbols are Connected with Psychological Problems of the Dreamer

As a result of our study we not only found a clear correlation between therapeutic change and a transformation of patterns in the dream series, but

also a clear connection between the patterns that dominate the dream series (or at least the first half of the series) on the one hand and the psychological problems and the personality structure of the dreamer on the other. The five patterns can be interpreted psychologically as imaging the capacity of the ego to cope with and/or control emotions, motivations and complexes (as unintegrated parts of the psyche). The extent of agency of the dream ego is equivalent to that which in psychoanalysis is called ego strength or maturity of the personality, that is, the degree of integration of the ego and other parts of the psyche into the whole of the personality, thus enabling positive ego functioning.

There is only one case in the sample in which Pattern 1 (no dream ego present) is found in its full form. In the first five dreams of the series, this dreamer just observes a scene as if watching a movie. This case is a Japanese male student, 18 years of age, who was treated because of severe school refusal over several years. The patient had retreated into total passivity and several attempts of psychotherapy, including in an inpatient setting, had failed to change the situation. This storyline in his dreams can be interpreted as an imaging of a deeply regressed personality structure and lack of a clear identity, where ego strength is at a very low level. There is an interesting parallel to another case, again a male student 18 years of age with the diagnosis of school refusal and where ego strength and identity structure are at a comparably low level. In this latter case, in several of his dreams there is a dream ego but it is hovering above the actual happenings in the dream and does not participate or is not active in any way.

Pattern 2 (the dream ego is threatened) is found in those cases diagnosed with a narcissistic disorder, connected with a very weak ego structure, where there is an unclear personal identity or blocked identity development and low self-

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esteem. Often such patients have developed a compensatory ‘false self’ whilst splitting-off unaccepted parts of their psyche. Dream images of an injury or damage to the dream ego, the dream ego being murdered or found as a dead corpse seem to be connected on the psychological level with more severe cases of low self-esteem, a ‘narcissistic wound’ or even traumatization. From a psychodynamic point of view, such motifs in the dreams can be interpreted as a weak ego struggling with overwhelming forces derived from split-off emotions, impulses and complexes, as well as devaluing introjects that continually threaten the functioning of ego consciousness. Development in psychotherapy - and in the dreams - is characterized by a growth in ego strength, which becomes more and more capable of coping with the threatening parts of the psyche and accepting them as integral parts of the personality.

Pattern 3, especially examination dreams, and Pattern 4, where the dream ego attempts to move in a desired direction, is found to occur in those cases with a more stable ego structure (as diagnosed by the therapist), but where the patient has problems with making decisions and taking progressive steps in life, such as completing exams and deciding on a professional career.

Pattern 5, where the dream ego is involved in social interactions, characterizes those cases where a stable ego is diagnosed by the therapist but where the patient struggles with neurotic problems around interpersonal relationships, such as finding an intimate partner and creating a satisfying, intimate and erotic relationship. This pattern can be interpreted as imaging a more mature personality structure, which is not so much struggling for integrity of the ego but rather more with interpersonal relationships. This interpretation is supported by the finding that in positively developing psychotherapies/dream series, often a repetitive pattern on a lower level is overcome and replaced by dreams following Pattern 5 in the second half of the therapy.

It is also found in a number of cases that a dominating symbol, which appears repeatedly as part of a repetitive pattern, usually of Pattern 2 (where the dream ego is threatened by this symbol), is strongly connected with the psychological situation or problem of the dreamer, e.g. in one case, the female dreamer is repeatedly threatened by snakes. In this case, the therapist diagnosed a strong tension in the personality between a very moralistic superego, on the one hand, and very lively erotic and sexual desires, on the other. The snake can clearly be interpreted as a sexual, phallic symbol, which appears threatening to an ego under the pressure of the moralistic superego. But there is also clear evidence from the dreams in this study that the meaning of a symbol can be totally

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different in other cases; e.g. the snake in case 8 has the role of a helper. In the case described above, the threatening dogs are symbolically summarizing the unresolved problems of the dreamer concerning violence, sadism, sexual obsessions and a deeply wounded self-esteem. In summary, symbols appearing repeatedly in dream series can often be interpreted as symbolic images for parts of the psyche, its impulses and complexes, which are not yet integrated into the personality as a whole and which therefore appear threatening to ego integrity.

Transformative Dreams

In those cases which were considered as successful therapies from the viewpoint of the therapist, that is, with improvement or even fundamental changes in the personality structure of the patient, certain changes in the dream stories coincided with positive shifts in the therapy. Usually such transformative dreams were found in the middle of the dream series following a series of dreams with a repetitive pattern, e.g. threat and escape imagery which was not continued after the transformative dream. These transformative dreams stand out as they show a great variety of images and structures and are usually experienced with positive emotions in the dreamer.

Nevertheless, a similar motif was found in about half of the cases who had transformative dreams: a baby or young child, which needed help and support, played a major role in these dreams. The dream ego was asked to

care for and give support to the child but had initial difficulties in turning towards and taking appropriate care of the child (see case example above). This motif is interesting insofar as Jung pointed out that the archetype of the child is connected with transformation in psychotherapeutic processes (Jung 1981) and, further, a number of models of psychotherapy focus on supporting the patient to turn towards and take care of his or her ‘inner wounded child’. Other motifs in these transformative dreams included: the appearance of helpers who support the dream ego in coping with threatening figures; the dream ego succeeding in working its way through narrow tubes or tunnels and the dream ego celebrating freedom with a dance.

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Discussion

As a result of our findings we form this hypothesis: the relationship between the dream ego and threatening figures, and the reaction of the dream ego to the threat, is imaging the relationship between actual ego strength and unintegrated or conflicted parts of the psyche, unconscious and repressed needs, motivations and complexes. The special form the threatening figure takes in the dream can be seen as symbolizing the psychological problem, the complex or repressed impulse with which the dreamer is struggling, especially if the dream pattern is repetitive. Patients whose dreams are shaped mainly by the threat/escape pattern, usually struggle with structural problems around an unstable ego and personality with unclear boundaries, whereas patients with dreams of mobility and interpersonal relationships seem to have more integrated personalities and higher ego strength and are preoccupied with more neurotic and interpersonal problems.

We would also hypothesize that there is a typical change in dream patterns over the course of successful therapies. Typically, the first half of the psychotherapeutic process was dominated by a repetitive pattern in the dreams, which was connected with the psychological problems of the dreamer. Generally, in the middle of the dream series, there appears a dream or dream symbol which marks a change in the pattern. The second half of the dream series is then typically characterized by a change in the repetitive pattern: dreams move from Patterns 1, 2 and 3 in the first half of a successful therapy process, where there are failed attempts by the dream ego to move and create relationships in a desirable way, to Patterns 4 and 5 where successful activities and control by the dream ego are seen.

These transformative patterns in the dream series are interpreted from a psychodynamic perspective and are seen as speaking to the fact that an initially weak ego structure, which fails to regulate and integrate threatening emotions, impulses and complexes, gains in ego strength over the course of the therapy and increasingly succeeds in coping with initially suppressed or split off parts of the psyche and integrating these into constructive interactions with others (see also fig. 1). As a result of such gains in ego

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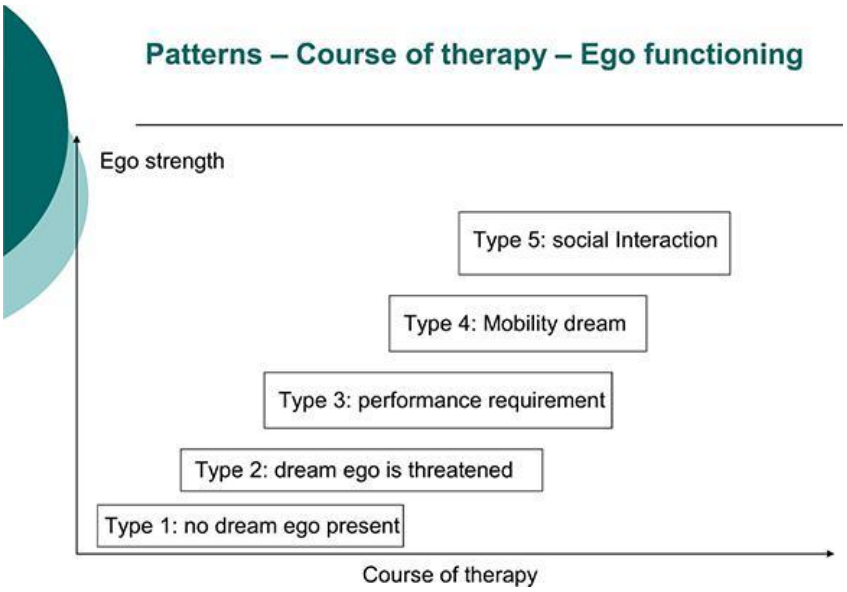

strength, the dream ego is capable of increasingly executing willpower, conducting its plans, reaching aims and expressing its needs in social interactions. This interpretation is supported by the findings from two cases where there is no therapeutic change and where there is also no transformation of the repetitive dream pattern.

Since these findings are based on cases from Jungian psychotherapies, we attempted to test the hypothesis with a classical Freudian case, the so-called specimen case Amalia X. This is a Freudian psychoanalysis of more than 500 sessions, which was fully documented on video and was the subject of more than 100 scientific investigations (Kächele 2012; Kächele et al. 1999, 2006). This case included 93 dreams which were discussed over the course of therapy. As it is considered to be a very successful therapy, we assumed that we would find a movement from patterns 1 and 2 to patterns 4 and 5 over the course of therapy. This hypothesis could be empirically confirmed.

The findings of this study also support the hypothesis that dreams can be understood as an image of the current situation of the dreamer's psyche as a whole, including aspects and processes which are unconscious and not accessible to waking life consciousness. The findings of this study show no evidence of a process of censorship in the sense of Freud. Even though psychological problems and the state of ego integrity of the dreamer were symbolized in the dreams in the form of images as well as in the form of patterns, no distortion could be found. Instead, the manifest content of the dream was clearly picturing the psychological situation of the dreamer, in most cases even dramatically. Our findings also refute the hypothesis of wish fulfilment of dreams. Instead, most of the dreams, especially in the first half of

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the psychotherapy process, were putting the strongest fears of the dreamer into clear images.

Insofar as the extent of ego functioning and the psychological problems of the dreamers are mirrored in the dream patterns and symbols, these findings support the continuity hypothesis (Domhoff 2017).

The Jungian view of dreams could also provide a synthesis for the debate around continuity versus discontinuity of dream content and waking life experience. As Hobson and Schredl (2011), in their discussion of the continuity hypothesis point out, dreams actually contain elements of waking life on a thematic level but this does not explain the occurrence of elements in dreams which dreamers have never experienced in their waking life. As they say, 'This raises the intriguing question: If dreaming is not entirely derived from waking experience, then just what is the source of the anomalous content and what is its function?' (p. 3). Hoss (2011) in his commentary on the debate, argues, following Jung, that the distortions of waking content are not misrepresentations but are rather the 'unconscious aspect' of the waking event expressed in the dream not as a rational thought but as a symbolic image.

Based on my own findings and those from earlier studies, I would say that there is no real evidence for a compensating activity in dreams, as Jung claims. There is more evidence for Jung's first theory, that the dream presents a more holistic picture of the total situation of the psyche, including unconscious aspects. In this sense, the function of dreams could be called not so much compensating, but more of completing the picture by adding aspects that are not accessible for waking life consciousness. Of course, in a case where there is a strong split between the conscious attitude of the ego and unconscious processes, this can lead to a compensating effect. Nevertheless, in our study, the function of the dreams, e.g. in Pattern 2 (threat and escape), seems more to be to present the full reality of the inner world to ego consciousness.

In the future, we will try to strengthen our hypothesis regarding the five patterns and their connection with psychopathology and the development of psychotherapy. We will do so by analysing 150 cases we received from the Jung Institute Stüttgart. We will also investigate the appearance of the child symbol and whether it has a transformative character for the whole series of dreams. I believe that this kind of research is capable of providing support for one of the most important concepts of analytical psychology, the theory of dreaming.

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Translations of Abstract

La méthode de recherche SDA, Analyse Structurelle des Rêves, est décrite. Elle permet une analyse systématique et objective du sens des rêves produits par des patients dans des psychothérapies jungiennes. La méthode se concentre particulièrement sur la relation entre le moi du rêve et les autres personnages du rêve et le degré d'activité du moi du rêve. Cinq principaux schémas de rêve furent identifiés, qui rendent comptent de la majorité des rêves. La série de rêves des patients étaient dominée par un ou deux schémas répétitifs, rattachés de près aux problèmes psychologiques des rêveurs. De plus, il a pu être montré que les changements typiques dans les schémas de la série de rêves étaient en correspondance avec le changement thérapeutique. Ces découvertes soutiennent la théorie jungienne des rêves comme fournissant une image holistique de la psyché du rêveur, qui inclue les aspects inconscients. Les implications pour les différentes théories des rêves et de l'interprétation des rêves sont discutées ainsi que les implications concernant l'hypothèse de la continuité.

Mots clés: rêves en psychothérapie, recherche empirique sur le rêve, théories psychanalytiques sur le rêve, schémas typiques des rêves, processus psychothérapeutique

Es wird die Forschungsmethode der Structural Dream Analysis (SDA) beschrieben, die eine systematische und objektive Analyse der Traumbedeutung von Patienten in

Jungianischen Psychotherapien ermöglicht. Die Methode konzentriert sich insbesondere auf die Beziehung zwischen dem Traum-Ich und anderen Figuren im Traum sowie das Ausmaß der Aktivität des Traum-Ichs. Fünf Haupttraummuster wurden identifiziert, die die Mehrheit der Träume bestimmten. Die Traumserien der Klienten wurden von ein oder zwei sich wiederholenden Mustern dominiert, die eng mit den psychologischen Problemen der Träumer verbunden waren. Zusätzlich konnten typische Veränderungen in den Mustern der Traumserien identifiziert werden, die mit therapeutischen Veränderungen korrespondierten. Diese Befunde stützen Jungs Traumtheorie dahingehend, daß sie ein ganzheitliches Bild der Psyche des Träumers liefert, einschließlich unbewußter Aspekte. Die Implikationen für verschiedene psychoanalytische Theorien des Traums und der Trauminterpretation werden diskutiert, wie auch Implikationen für die Kontinuitätshypothese.

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Schlüsselwörter: Träume in der Psychotherapie, empirische Traumforschung, psychoanalytische Traumtheorien, typische Traummuster, Psychotherapieprozeß

Viene descritto il metodo di ricerca Structural Dream Analysis (SDA) che consente un'analisi sistematica e obiettiva del significato dei sogni prodotti dai pazienti nelle psicoterapie junghiane. Il metodo si concentra soprattutto sulla relazione tra l'Io onirico e altre figure nel sogno e la portata dell'attività dell'Io del sogno. Sono stati identificati cinque principali pattern che rappresentano la maggior parte dei sogni. Le serie di sogni dei pazienti sono dominate da uno o due pattern ripetitivi, strettamente collegati ai problemi psicologici dei sognatori. Inoltre, possono essere identificati cambiamenti tipici nei pattern della serie di sogni che corrispondono al cambiamento terapeutico. Queste scoperte supportano la teoria dei sogni di Jung in quanto forniscono un'immagine olistica della psiche del sognatore, compresi gli aspetti inconsci. Vengono discusse le implicazioni per le diverse teorie psicoanalitiche del sogno e l'interpretazione dei sogni, nonché le implicazioni per l'ipotesi della continuità.

Parole chiave: sogni in psicoterapia, ricerca empirica dei sogni, teorie psicoanalitiche dei sogni, pattern tipici dei sogni, processo psicoterapeutico

В статье описан применяемый в исследованиях метод «структурный анализ сновидений», который позволяет проводить систематический и объективный анализ смыслов сновидений, которые снятся пациентам в процессе юнгианской психотерапии. Метод фокусируется в частности на отношениях между сновидческим эго и другими фигурами сновидениями, а также на степени активности сновидческого эго. Были идентифицированы пять главных паттернов сновидения, которые встречаются в большинстве сновидений. В серийных сновидениях доминировали один или два повторяющихся паттерна, которые были тесно связаны с психологическими проблемами сновидца. Также было показано, что типичные изменения в сюжетах серийных сновидений соответствовали терапевтическим изменениям. Данные результаты подтверждают теорию сновидений Юнга: психика сновидца целостна и включает разноообразные бессознательные аспекты. В статье обсуждаются практические применения различных психоаналитических теорий сновидений и их

интерпретации, а также возможное развитие предложенных гипотез.

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Ключевые слова: сновидения в психотерапии, эмпирическое исследование сновидений, психоаналиические теории сновидений, паттерны сновидений, психотерапевтический процесс

Se describe el método de investigación Análisis Estructural de los Sueños (Structural Dream Análisis/SDA), el cual permite un análisis sistemático y objetivo de los sueños producidos por pacientes en psicoterapias Junguianas. El método se focaliza especialmente en la relación entre el ego soñante y otras figuras en el sueño, y el espectro de actividad del ego soñante. Se han identificado cinco patrones mayores, los cuales responden para la mayoría de los sueños. La serie de sueños del cliente estaban dominadas por uno o dos patrones repetitivos, los cuales estaban conectados íntimamente a los problemas psicológicos de los soñantes. A su vez, cambios típicos en los patrones de las series de sueños pudieron identificarse en correspondencia a cambios terapéuticos. Estos hallazgos fundamentan la teoría de los sueños de Jung en cuanto a proveer una imagen holística de la psique del soñante que incluye los aspectos inconscientes. Se discuten implicancias para diferentes teorías psicoanalíticas acerca de los sueños y de la interpretación de los sueños, así como también implicancias para la continuidad de dicha hipótesis.

Palabras clave: sueños en psicoterapia, investigación empírica de los sueños, teorías psicoanalíticas de los sueños, patrones típicos de los sueños, proceso psicoterapéutico

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