

Structural Dream Analysis: A narrative research method for investigating the meaning of dream series in analytical psychotherapies

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Summary. Patient dreams in psychotherapy can be seen as narratives pointing to underlying conflicts as well as to potential solutions for overcoming mental health problems. Conceptualizations of the dream and its potential in the psychoanalytic tradition meanwhile are well supported by empirical dream research, which has moved dream interpretation from a Freudian perspective towards CG Jung's theory of dreaming. Nevertheless there is a strong need for more research connecting the meaning conveyed by the dream with the psychopathology of the patient and with process in psychotherapy. Structural Dream Analysis (SDA) as a method to investigate the meaning conveyed in dream series from analytical psychotherapies is introduced. It combines earlier methods of narrative analysis with psychoanalytic ways of interpreting symbols into a coherent and manualised interpretive method; the application of the method is demonstrated with a case example.

Keywords: Dream interpretation, Freudian and Jungian Psychoanalysis, Psychotherapy Process, Narrative Analysis, Empirical Dream Research

Introduction

From its very beginning psychoanalysis has seen the dream as the royal road to the unconscious. Even though in the different psychoanalytic schools quite different approaches to the interpretation of dreams have developed, there is general agreement that dreams give access to an understanding of the unconscious roots of psychological problems as well as to therapeutic pathways. The dream can be seen as a subtext which points to the core conflicts underlying neurosis and it also contains constructive impulses for overcoming the problems. Nevertheless there is a strong lack of systematic investigations into the meaning of dreams and their connection to process in psychotherapy. Structural Dream Analysis (SDA) is presented here as a narratological method for analyzing the meaning of dream series in analytical psychotherapies.

Psychoanalytic dream theory and empirical dream research

In the last decades there has been a development of reconceptualizations of psychoanalytic dream theories influenced by insights from empirical dream research (e.g. no differ-

ence between manifest and latent meaning, the dream is not "the keeper of the sleep" etc., see overview in Fiss, 1995). This has led to a convergence of contemporary Freudian theories of the dream towards CG Jung's understanding of the dream (e.g. Fosshage 1987, Levin 1990). As a result of this process contemporary Freudian dream theories have incorporated a number of aspects of Jungian dream theory (Werner & Langenmeyer, 2005, Fisher & Greenberg, 1977, 1996). An example of this convergence can be found in the dream theory of J. Fosshage (1987, 1997), which focuses on the functions of the dream as a regulator of emotions and integrating factor of psychological organization; the author explicitly refers to the strong analogies with Jung's theory.

Referring to Barrett (2007) the results of empirical dream research can be summarized in the following theory of dreaming: 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 focuses especially on experiences in waking life that have emotional meaning for the dreamer. The dreaming mind can find solutions for problems more easily compared to waking consciousness because it is able to connect different areas and functions of the brain. This supports the viewpoint taken by CG Jung (1925/1971) which sees the psyche as a self-regulating system. Generally speaking there are two different theories of the dream to be found in Jung's works: The first sees the dream as a spontaneously produced picture of the current situation of the psyche in the form of symbols (Jung 1925/1971, § 505), the second emphasizes the compensation of conscious attitudes. The two theories can easily be merged into one general theory of the dream. Via dreams the unconscious brings new information to consciousness. This process is more compensating the stronger the tension is between conscious orientation and the unconscious process of individuation. In this

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Submitted for publication: September 2017

Accepted for publication: March 2018

sense the unconscious contains a broader and more holistic knowledge about the development of personality. Regarding the meaning conveyed by the dream Jung differentiates between a "subjective" level and an "objective" level. In the first perspective the figures and objects of the dream are interpreted as being representatives for 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 tries to support ego consciousness by pointing to parts of the psyche not yet integrated into the whole of the personality or to unresolved conflicts. Via dreams the unconscious, because it contains a more holistic knowledge about the development and integration of personality, brings new information to consciousness, which then can be integrated if a conscious understanding of the information is possible. This is the aim of dream interpretation in psychotherapy. As the information in dreams has the form of symbols and images it needs translation to be understood by the conscious ego. For this aim Jung developed the method of "amplification": the symbolic form is enriched with information coming from cultural parallels, the meaning the symbol has in different cultures, mythologies, religious traditions and spiritual belief systems. Through amplification a network of meaning is constructed around the symbol; the aim is not so much to give a precise interpretation of the symbol but more to stimulate processes in the dreamer to become more conscious of potential solutions offered by the dream.

In his overview of experimental dream research Schredl (2007) points to the strong connections between experiences, especially emotional and stressful ones, in waking life and the dream. There is extensive evidence that dreams have an influence on emotion regulation in waking life, e.g. nightmares have a positive effect on coping (Picchioni & Hicks, 2009). In recovering from trauma dreams can even have a therapeutic effect (Hartmann 1998); 'In sum, evidence from a variety of types of studies supports the notion of an emotion regulation function of dreaming and the more specific suggestion that dream characters and their emotion-laden interactions with the dream self may mediate this regulatory effect.' (Nielsen & Lara-Carrasco, 2007, p. 274) Dreams also seem to have a strong influence on creativity just in the way Jung postulated. There is a systematic collection by the dream researcher Barrett (2001) of a large number of artists and scientists stimulated by their dreams. The influence of dreams on creativity was also investigated in experimental studies (Schredl, 2007). Dreaming plays a central role in the consolidation of memory content (Hallschmid & Born, 2006), and promotes insight, learning processes and problem-solving (Wagner et al., 2004, Fiss, 1979). Therefore contemporary theories of dreaming based on empirical research see the dream as an information processing activity which is task oriented, adaptive and has a regulating function for emotion, stress and memory (Moffitt et al., 1993, Kramer, 1993, Hartmann, 1996). These findings support the view that dreaming is part of the self-regulating function of the psyche.

Even more interesting is the research on the content of dreams initiated by Hall and Van de Castle (1966) who could show that it is possible to draw a personality profile based only on the dreams of the person. In a study on dreams of people with multiple personality disorder, Barrett (1996) could show that the split-off parts of the personality ap-

peared personified in the dreams, which would support Jung's approach in dream interpretation. In this research tradition it also became obvious that there is a high continuity of the themes in the dreams of a person over a long period of time (Levin, 1990). Cartwright (1977) found that the themes in dreams change when a person goes through psychotherapy. These findings support the view that the unconscious tries to communicate with ego consciousness via dreams to initiate changes in the attitude of the ego.

There is also systematic research on the use of dreams in psychotherapy and their effects. In part this research was conducted by psychoanalysts. Greenberg and Pearlman (1978) compared the content of dreams of patients currently in psychoanalysis with the protocols of therapy sessions from the time of the dream and found a strong connection between the themes in the dreams and in psychotherapy, especially those connected with strong emotions. An interesting point here is that these authors point out that there is no latent meaning in the dream to be deciphered but the dream can be read directly as a report about the current conflictual themes in the waking life of the dreamer. In a similar way Palombo (1982) could show that analysands reprocess contents from the last analytical session in the following dreams. Popp et al. (1990) investigated dreams and narratives from therapy sessions with the methodology of the Core Conflictual Relationship Theme; they found that both narratives and dreams were structured by the same unconscious relationship patterns.

Even more interesting is the research conducted by the group around Clara Hill (1996) who investigated the effects of the use of dream work in psychotherapy. They developed a model of psychotherapeutic work with dreams which is very close to the Jungian approach in many aspects. In the overview of her research Hill (2007) gives the following summary of her findings: clients in psychotherapy regard working with dreams as more helpful than sessions without dream work and they receive fundamental insights through this work; insight is focused on specific problems from the life of the clients and effects from the dream work focusing on a specific problem can be found even after just one session of dream work; this insight is not just on the cognitive level but leads to significant changes in the everyday life of the clients e.g. better coping with the problem worked on; dream work leads directly to a reduction of depressive symptoms and improves subjective well-being. In one study the research group (Bradlow & Bender, 1997) even found that the initial dream from an analytical psychotherapy contains information on the central topics of the client which had to be dealt with in the course of psychotherapy.

There are only a small number of empirical studies from Analytical Psychology focusing on the use of dreams in psychotherapy and these findings have to be interpreted with care due to strong limitations of the research design (Faber, 1983; Kluger, 1955). In the Jungian approach there is also a certain tradition of studies investigating the unconscious influence of the orientation of the therapist on the dreams of the patient. Both Kron & Avny (2003) and Fischer (1978) found evidence for a strong unconscious communication or reciprocal influence between therapist and patient which shows up in the contents of the dream.

So there is some evidence which supports Jung's view of dreaming and its role in psychotherapy. Nevertheless there is a strong need for more systematic studies on the relationship between the content of the dreams of a person, namely

the development of recurrent themes and figures in a series of dreams, and the course of psychotherapy, namely the development of core conflictual themes of the patient and the overall development of the personality. In Germany there is a certain tradition in psychoanalysis for developing elaborate coding systems for dream content and their use in studies investigating processes in psychotherapy (e.g. Moser & von Zeppelin, 1996, for the Freudian tradition). To understand the meaning conveyed by the dream it has to be interpreted. In the psychodynamic schools of psychotherapy this interpretation of dreams takes place in an interaction between therapist and client. For a systematic research on the meaning of dreams it would be necessary to have a method of interpretation which produces more objective and reliable results and the method of "Structural Dream Analysis" presented here is an attempt in this direction.

Structural Dream Analysis (SDA)

In psychotherapeutic processes dreams point to the core problems/conflicts, but they also contain elements to solve these problems. During the course of a psychotherapy the analyst assumes that the series of dreams follows an inner structure of meaning. SDA aims at identifying this inner structure of meaning from the series of dreams alone without referring to additional information about the dreamer, the psychodynamics or the course of psychotherapy. The meaning conveyed by the dream is analyzed in a systematic series of interpretive steps. SDA treats the dream reports as narratives and makes use of analytic tools developed in narratology (Gülich & Quasthoff, 1985); especially two earlier methods of narrative analysis were incorporated into the SDA study:

1. The Russian researcher Vladimir Propp (1974) developed a method called Structural analysis/Functional analysis and applied it to fairytales. Each fairytale 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 fairytale can be written as an abstract formula of symbols and then different fairytales can be compared regarding their structure.
2. Brigitte Boothe et al. (1994) of the University of Zürich developed the narrative method, JAKOB, for the analysis of patient narratives from analytical psychotherapies and their development over the course of psychotherapy. An important element in this method is to analyze the role that the narrator (the dream ego) takes in the narrative in terms of agency and his/her relation to other protagonists in the narrative.

SDA also makes use of amplification, which was systematized in the form of a manual.

The interpreters, who are blinded regarding all other information about the case, receive a series of 10 to 20 dreams covering the whole course of a psychotherapy. After the therapy is completed, the therapist who conducted the treatment asks for an informed consent from the patient, and then selects a series of dreams, ideally marking core points and topics. Usually in Jungian treatment patients are asked to keep a dream diary and often in each session at least one dream is discussed, so usually there is a large number of dreams available after completion of therapy. Based on the dream diary, the dreams then usually follow the original narration of the patient. There has been a long-

standing discussion in Analytical Psychology on how to select dreams from a larger series which mark core points and topics regarding the psychodynamics of the person and the process in therapy (e.g. Diekmann, 1974), and this is used to provide the therapist with selection criteria. The therapist also provides 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.

Exemplary dream series

To illustrate the application of the method, the steps described below are taken to analyze the following dream series (originally written down by the dreamer in German and handed over to the therapist; the translation follows the original style of the client):

1. I walked down the street in the darkness, on both sides small houses behind fences. Lots of barking dogs jumped against the fences. I was frightened but then I became brave. I barked like a dog myself aggressively and the dogs immediately fell silent.

2. I am on my way with my bicycle up a hill. It is demanding. Around me are large trees, it's like in the mountains. Arriving on top there is a little white poodle, it barks, it is on a leash. I'm driving home downhill in sharp curves. Doberman dogs are behind me, I cannot get rid of them because of the curves. They run at my side and bark at me. Then it is light and sunny, arriving on the pass it's beautiful. There is a restaurant, like in Italy, beautiful houses. On top of the pass the black dogs are coming.

3. There is a stillwater, a river? There is a little bridge, somebody on the other side. He falls into the water, he somehow slipped as if under a log. I pull him out, but first I hesitate. He is like dead. But that guy has a sharp knife and he cuts the other helper's throat. I flee.

4. In black and white: at a nearby train station. A girl and another person, who seems to be masochistic, and a very energetic black dog. The dog pulls the other person into the little pond, then pulls the person out of the water and up the hill. The person gives himself a blow job, then to the dog. Then I am at the foot of a tall building. I say: the dog must be put on a leash. The masochistic person says: you have to stroke the dog. I say: no, it must be put on a leash and then removed. The masochistic person is angry and goes into the tall building. The other person says: you have to follow him, he is sad. The dog smells, I put him on a leash but it is disgusting.

5. An elderly, badly smelling dog is with me and my girlfriend in Paris. It just found us. We get on the bus, the badly smelling dog could not go with us, we left it outside. We are already outside of the city limits, but will return to the city on the highway. The dog would not have been able to come along behind us.

6. I was the manager of a café in the house. I was promoted like Joseph in the house of Potifar. Everybody says goodbye to a father with his little son, he's in the backyard. There is an elderly man with a Pitbull. He says: I can show you how evil the dog is. But I just had to go. I walked into a vineyard. The dog runs from its leash and goes behind me, but I jump over fences and walls. The

path goes uphill through the yard and back down on the other side.

7. In a country restaurant. Two Romanians come in and start begging. I remember: the last time the two of them were masked and committed a robbery. I drive away with the motorcycle. I want to report to the police, because now I know their faces.

8. A little baby is in danger. I cover it with newspaper and carry it with me through a sewerage system. Then I forget about it and leave it somewhere. But then I realize that the baby is missing and go back and find it again. I carry it with me and feed it. I think: the baby is so small, it should get mother's milk, but I can just feed him solid food.

9. I'm sitting on the couch in the garden. A man with two bottles of beer is by my side and offers one to me, maybe my father? I get the feeling of being unfair to the other person. We are having a beer together.

10. My father dies at the age of 49 years. I'm not moved at all. It was strange that he died so young. We don't have such a long life as my grandma with her 102 years of age.

11. I saw a giant toe and found it is my toe. The skin on the nail was grown very wide. I thought: this has to be removed. It could be moved back easily. There was another level of skin below, this one could be taken off easily, too. I was surprised that it did not hurt. Below the skin were very small black worms, everything was rotten, but you could remove it without difficulty. Below that everything was new.

Step 1: Segmentation

Each dream is separated into its narrative segments before further steps of analysis are applied. This is a linguistic procedure, meant to identify and separate the smallest section in the text which still carries meaning, a segment; also a narrative has a characteristic structure and in this step the functional value of the segment in the structure is identified, e.g. introduction, complication, climax etc. (Lucius-Hoene & Deppermann 2004).

Step 2: Episodic models

A narrative consists of a starting point, a development and a conclusion; this basic structure can be differentiated into different dynamic models. In SDA 10 different episodic models (Boothe 1994) are used to describe the dynamic of the development in the dream narrative.

1. Continuity: a static image, no destabilizing momentum
2. Climax: a process of growth and optimization
3. Anticlimax: a process of decline
4. Restitutio ad integrum (after deintegration): after deintegration a return to normal conditions
5. Restitutio ad integrum (after climax): after climax a return to normal conditions
6. Approbation: validation after denigration, by successfully passing an examination or test
7. Frustration: after a short gradation there is strong degradation
8. Chance: positive development; the protagonist adapts to conditions and stabilizes

9. Anti-Chance: negative development; the protagonist adapts to negative conditions and stabilizes
10. Unexplainable changes: the normal course of the narrative is disrupted, something unexpected happens

Step 3: Fate of the protagonist - Analysis of the position the ego takes in the narrative

1. Only ego initiative: in all phases of the narrative the ego has the initiative; the ego is always in the subject position
2. Only other's initiative: only other agents have the initiative throughout the narrative; the ego is never in the subject position
3. Loss of initiative: initially the ego has the initiative, also parallel to other figures, but at the end is in a passive position
4. Regain the initiative: the ego is at the beginning and at the end in the initiating position; during the course of the narrative the ego loses the initiative to other actors
5. Embedded in others' initiative: the ego is from time to time in the course of the development in the initiative position, but not at the beginning and not at the end.

Applying these systematic steps to the above dream series leads to the following structure (see Table 1)

After this step of analysis a first summarizing interpretation of the development over the course of the dream series is possible. On both levels of analysis there is a certain development from patterns of decline in the first half of therapy to patterns of approbation or chance which could be called more optimistic. Regarding ego initiative there is a development from patterns of loss of initiative or the ego being subjected to others' initiative to patterns dominated by ego initiative. Psychologically speaking there is a certain development from a situation in which the ego is more of a victim of conditions or others' initiative to a situation where ego consciousness is more capable of taking over initiative and controlling the situation.

Step 4: Functional analysis (following Propp)

In this step each dream is segmented into its functional parts and each part receives an abstract symbol. Here, the

Table 1. Episodic models and fate of the protagonist for total dream series

	Episodic Model	Fate of the protagonist
Dream 1	Restitutio ad integrum (after Deintegration)	Regain the initiative
Dream 2	Anticlimax	Loss of initiative
Dream 3	Anticlimax	Regain initiative
Dream 4	Not definable	Embedded in others' initiative
Dream 5	Continuity	Embedded in others' initiative
Dream 6	Frustration	Regain initiative
Dream 7	Approbation	Regain initiative
Dream 8	Chance	Only ego initiative
Dream 9	Antichance	Loss of initiative
Dream 10	Continuity	Not definable
Dream 11	Approbation	Only ego initiative

interpreter has to decide how far the abstraction of the narrative segment should go. The aim here is to reduce the dream narrative down to its structural elements so that they become comparable. In the current state of the development of SDA the definition of structural elements has two to be developed for each new series of dreams - in the long run the aim is to build up a corpus of analyzed cases which will allow for a generalization of structural elements across cases.

Table 2 shows the functional analysis for all the dreams of the above dream series. Recurrent structural elements are marked.

Repetitive structures that were marked are now extracted:

Dream 1: threat, constructive strategy

Dream 2: threat, pursue, flight, threat

Dream 3: help/support, threat, flight

Dream 4: disgust

Dream 5: pursue, disgust, pursue

Dream 6: threat, pursue, flight, end pursue

Dream 7: pledge for help/support, threat, constructive strategy

Dream 8: pledge for help/support, help/support, inadequate measures

Dream 11: wish for modification, modification, renewal/regeneration

Step 5: Interpretation of major symbols

To combine the above structural elements of the dreams with content in the next step, the meaning of central symbols of the dreams will be analyzed. In analytical psychotherapy for this step usually Jung's original method of amplification is

used. As SDA attempts to use as little interpretation from a psychoanalytic background as possible, in the manual this step was clearly defined without referring to psychoanalytic concepts, so as to arrive at a scientific approach to the interpretation of symbols. Interpretation of symbols is restricted to the use of a set of symbol dictionaries (e.g. Cooper, 1978) which give information about the cultural background of symbols in the sense of their use and understanding in religious traditions, mythology, cultural beliefs etc. This is to certify that interpretation of the symbols is done in a way as objective as possible. This step of interpretation is applied only to a very restricted number of symbols, ideally those which appear repeatedly in the dreams or seem to be especially important to the series of dreams (see Table 3).

Step 6: Integration of symbol interpretation into dream structure

The above findings just give information about the field or context of meaning of the symbols. In the next step this has to be integrated in the structure of the dream series. This is clearly the more psychological step in the interpretation which makes use of psychological/psychodynamic concepts. Still this step of interpretation attempts to stay as objective as possible, therefore the aim here is not to formulate definite interpretations of the dreams but to translate the above structures into a psychological language. As was mentioned earlier dreams do not represent a linear structure of development but usually take up symbols and patterns repeatedly which undergo a process of transformation. In this step of interpretation it should be attempted to reconstruct this repetitive use of symbols and patterns in the

Table 2. Functional analysis for total dream series

	Function I	Function II	Function III	Function IV	Function V	Function VI	Function VII	Function VIII
Dream 1	0 Initial situation	BD Threat	S Constructive strategy					
Dream 2	0 Initial situation Situation	↑ Way up	BD Threat	↓ Way down	V Pursue	F Flight	↑ Way up	BD Threat
Dream 3	0 Initial situation	W Water	WT Death/damage	H Help/support	BD Threat	F Flight		
Dream 4	0 Initial situation	VSCH deference	& sexual act	KS conflict	KL Conflict solution	EK Disgust		
Dream 5	0 Initial situation	V Pursue	EK Disgust	O Change of place	V- end Pursue			
Dream 6	0 Initial situation	 Gradation	VE goodbye	BD Threat	V Pursue	F Flight	V- end Pursue	
Dream 7	0 Initial situation	BH Pledge for help/support	BD Threat	S Constructive strategy				
Dream 8	BH Pledge for help/support	H Help/support	VG Neglect	HW Taking up action	IH Inadequate measures			
Dream 9	0 Initial situation	UH Unjust act						
Dream 10	WT Death/Damage							
Dream 11	GM Wish for modification	M Modification	RE Renewal/Regeneration					

Table 3. Interpretation of symbols

Symbol	Dreams	Interpretation
Dog	1, 2, 4, 5, 6	In a number of cultures the dog is related to death. In old Egypt and Greece the dog guards the underworld and is a mediator between the worlds of the living and the dead. Those gods either living in the dark or being ambiguous figures often appear in the form of dogs. The dog clearly has ambiguous meaning: on the one side it is connected with wisdom, grace and religion, especially the white dog, on the other hand the dog is connected with primitive affects, impurity, vice and envy, especially dark dogs. Also the dog is related to sexuality, because dogs in the streets are promiscuous. In some cultures the dog appears as ancestor and creator of man and of civilization because of the wisdom and the sexual power that is related to it.
Child	8	The child is a symbol for impeccably clean purity and innocence because it is so close to birth. It also represents the original and therefore is related to an abundance of possibilities.
Foot/toe	11	The foot/toe is that part of the body which is closest to the earth. Therefore symbolically as an organ of movement it is in a strong relation to the will. In the context of psychoanalysis the foot is also seen as phallic. Related to this aspect of the symbol naked feet can have a decisive role in rituals of initiation and generativity.
Worm	11	The worm is a being that lives below the earth and in the dirt. Therefore in several cultures this animal is connected with the snake and the devil. Also the worm is related to darkness and death and the rebirth of life from death.

dreams and the transformative process, if there is any. The focus here is on more general topics appearing repetitively in the dreams. This is illustrated in the table below where the structural elements are combined with a psychological interpretation of symbols and their meanings and included in an overall description of the dreams series (see Table 4)

Step 8: Integration into a general description of the dream series

The last step is to integrate all the findings from the above steps are integrated into a general description or summary of the series of dreams from a psychological point of view: In the first half of the process the ego is confronted with threatening aspects; by analyzing the symbol of the dog these aspects can be characterized as having an aggressive and destructive, even murderous character, also they seem to be connected with sexuality. Finally they carry a certain ambiguity, changing between aggressiveness and helpless neediness. In the beginning the ego is threatened and experiences strong fear, it is not capable of coping with these aspects but flees from them. In the beginning even flight is not always successful but the ego gets caught and overwhelmed by these destructive aspects.

In the further course of the dream series the shadow aspects begin to lose their threatening character. The ego now experiences disgust regarding these parts of the psyche and rejects them. Now a new thematic field is introduced. It is centered around situations where the ego is asked to act in a helpful and supportive way and to be active. Some pledges for help appear to be dangerous, because these parts of the psyche that ask for help are also destructive powers. The ego therefore is in danger of supporting destructive energies and being destroyed itself in the process. It can be assumed that in this change the original ambiguity of the shadow aspects is contained and they move towards the helpless and needy side.

In the image of the infant needing help these parts have finally lost their destructive aspects and the ego meets a pure, positive part of the psyche which points to a new beginning. These parts of the psyche need support but the ego has some difficulty in overcoming disgust and rejection and finding a supportive attitude towards these parts. Then the ego realizes more and more how these parts have to be cared for, even though some of the necessary means and strategies are still missing. Towards the end of the dream series the ego actively takes part in a process where some parts of the psyche experience a process of death and re-

newal. These aspects of the psyche can be associated with willpower and intention.

Case description (delivered by the analyst)

The client is a young man (30 years). Before starting psychotherapy the client was imprisoned having committed physical violence in more than 100 cases. Being not openly violent any more after imprisonment he suffered from feelings of strong tension, unrest and emptiness that were almost unbearable, against the background of a severe depression. The only means to deal with these depressive states was a strong compulsion to consume pornographic media, especially those containing physical violence towards women.

The client came from a broken home. The father suffered from severe alcoholism and tended to be violent against his wife and children. In several occasions the client experienced fear of death and was almost killed by his father. The father also seems to have been suffering from a sexual obsession: he collected pornographic videos in large numbers and stored them in his bedroom. This aspect of the father's life was always fascinating for the client. The mother grew up in the former Yugoslavia and was never able to speak German properly; it might be that the mother was slightly mentally disabled. The client stated that "she was too dumb to understand what I needed." In adolescence the client was taken out of his family by the welfare authorities because of the difficult situation and was given into custody. Later he joined a group of hooligans and committed a large number of violent crimes. In prison the client experienced a religious conversion and became member of a fundamentalist Christian sect. He came into psychotherapy with the explicit intention of overcoming his aggressive impulses. His intimate relationships often followed a sado-masochistic pattern.

Psychodynamics: The client seems to have experienced severe abandonment, helplessness and anxiety in childhood. The frustration of his basic needs has the client led to compensatory aggression. From the psychodynamic viewpoint the client suffers from severe depression based on a narcissistic disorder connected with a strong sexual drivenness towards violent contact with women. There is a deep contempt in the client towards women, originating on the one hand from the frustration experienced with the mother, but also influenced by the father's sexual obsession. The denigration of women also seems to have the function of defense against depression. The religious conversion has equipped the client with a strong superego which helps him

Table 4. Integration of symbol interpretation into dream structure

1	Threat <i>The ego is threatened by shadow aspects</i>		Constructive strategy <i>The ego takes over forms of expression of shadow aspects and by doing that, succeeds in making these aspects give up their threatening position</i>
1	The ego is threatened by shadow aspects in the form of dogs. By taking over the act of barking from the shadow aspects, the ego succeeds in making the shadow aspects stopping their threatening behavior.		
2	Threat <i>The ego is threatened by shadow aspects</i>	Pursue <i>and pursued by them</i>	Flight <i>and flees from them</i>
2	Threat <i>but the threat persists</i>		
2	In reaction to the confrontation and pursue by shadow aspects in form of dogs the ego flees. But the ego does not succeed and gets caught by the shadow aspects.		
3	Help/support <i>The ego starts actions to give help/ support to other aspects of the psyche.</i>	Threat <i>The ego is threatened by shadow aspects</i>	Flight <i>The ego flees from threatening shadow aspects</i>
3	The ego tries to take a supportive stance towards a helpless aspect of the psyche. But this part of the psyche comes out to be threatening and destructive. In reaction to the threat the ego flees into an area in which it is not longer threatened by shadow aspects.		
4	Disgust <i>The ego feels disgust towards shadow aspects</i>		
4	The ego is confronted with shadow aspects in the form of dogs. The ego denies and pushes away these aspects out of disgust.		
5	Pursue <i>The ego is pursued by shadow aspects</i>	Disgust <i>The ego feels disgusted by shadow aspects</i>	End Pursue <i>The pursue is successfully brought to an end</i>
5	The ego tries to flee from the confrontation with shadow aspects in the form of dogs. This is the fact because the ego feels strong denial and disgust towards the shadow aspects. The ego succeeds in getting away from the confrontation.		
6	Threat <i>The ego is threatened by shadow aspects</i>	Pursue <i>The ego is pursued by shadow aspects</i>	Flight <i>The ego flees from threatening shadow aspects</i>
6	Interruption Pursue <i>A pursue through shadow aspects is interrupted</i>		
6	In reaction to being threatened by shadow aspects in the form of dogs, the ego flees. The ego succeeds in getting away from the shadow aspects.		
7	Pledge for help/support <i>The ego becomes aware of aspects of the psyche that need help/support</i>	Threat <i>The ego is threatened by shadow aspects</i>	Constructive strategy <i>The ego is able to recognize in time a danger that comes from shadow aspects. It starts out to activate forces of order and security.</i>
7	The ego tries to give support to a part of the psyche that needs help. But this part of the psyche comes out to be threatening and destructive. The ego is able to recognize the approaching danger in time and activates components of the psyche that are able to reestablish order and security.		
8	Pledge for help/support <i>The ego recognizes aspects of the psyche that need help/support</i>	Help/support <i>The ego goes into action to give help/ support to other parts of the psyche.</i>	Inadequate forms of help <i>The ego is missing adequate forms to give help to other parts of the psyche.</i>
8	The ego recognizes a part of the psyche in form of an infant which needs help and support. The ego already has an idea how to give support. But still it is missing the adequate measures to realize this support.		
11	Wish for modification <i>The ego realizes the necessity to modify a part of the psyche</i>	Modification <i>The ego begins to modify a part of the psyche</i>	Renewal/regeneration <i>Through activity of the ego a process of regeneration and renewal becomes visible on a part of the psyche</i>
11	The ego realizes the necessity to modify a part of the psyche. This is a part connected with willpower and movement. Through activity of the ego a process of renewal and regeneration on this part of the psyche comes about.		

to control himself in social life, nevertheless this does not solve the inner conflicts. There is a very strong and violent destructive complex in the psyche which formerly was dealt with by directing it outwards to other people, now it goes up against the ego.

Course of therapy: In the first years of therapy the focus was on helping the client to formulate his needs and feelings and communicate them in social relationships, which helped to decrease the pressure of frustration aggression. In the transference the therapist came into the position of the threatening father. The experience of security in the therapeutic relationship which also included a certain control over the analyst helped to integrate these experiences and strengthen ego functions. In the course of therapy the relationships with women changed and the client became capable of building a marriage and family. When his first son was born the client experienced such panic that he felt aggressive impulses towards the infant. By working through these impulses and their connection to early experiences in life, the inner pressure of frustration and aggression slowly receded. At the end of therapy the client was living in a very

solid social, family and job situation. From time to time the client still needs to use violent pornographic videos to control his inner states of emptiness and frustration. In social life the client is now fully adapted. The low-frequency therapy took six years with two minor interruptions and 206 hours.

Comparison between the results of structural dream analysis and the course of therapy

The parallels between the structure of the dream series and the psychodynamics and course of therapy are apparent. The negative complex leading to aggression and sexual compulsiveness can easily be identified in the symbol of the threatening dogs, also because the dog symbolically is connected with sexuality; on the other hand the image of the pursuing dogs is a very direct expression of the experience of the violent father. In the course of therapy the dreamer becomes more and more conscious of the neediness and helplessness behind the destructive complex, which culminates in the image of the helpless infant. To the extent that the client can accept these needs and take care of them

the ego gains control over the complex and the destructive aspects become integrated. In the end with the symbol of renewal a new state of ego strength and willfull control over the personality is established.

Conclusion

SDA is currently applied by research teams in Switzerland, Germany, Japan, and USA. The aim of the joint international project is to build up a corpus of at least 30 cases which will allow for identifying structures across cases. The following questions will be 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?

An interesting preliminary result is that in successfully completed therapies a general structure can be found: Initially the dream ego is threatened by a dream figure representing a complex – the ego applies inadequate measures (flight, paralysis) and the threat persists. This pattern changes over the course of therapy to a pattern where the dream ego can manage the threatening figure with a constructive strategy and the threat vanishes or is incorporated. Threatening animal figures become human (like in the exemplary case above). In all cases strong parallels between the symbolism of the dreams and the themes in therapy were found. The overall aim is to formulate an empirically grounded theory of the meaning of dreams and their development in the course of psychotherapies.

The application of SDA was exemplified with a case from analytical psychotherapy, and the method was developed to investigate the connections of dream content and process in psychotherapy. Nevertheless SDA is a method which can be applied also to dream series from other psychotherapeutic schools, as well as to dream series documented outside of psychotherapy contexts. In the development of SDA it was attempted to create an interpretive method as free as possible from any theoretical perspective on the meaning of dreams. Of course, though, it cannot be denied that the perspective on dreams as circling around the relationship of ego to other parts of the psyche is informed by Jungian thinking. Nevertheless the author would argue that the method is capable of identifying the meaning of dreams in a series without necessarily applying any kind of psychoanalytic thinking. In this first test of the capability of the method dreams from psychotherapies were chosen also because in these cases additional information on the personality and psychological themes of the dreamer were easily available from the therapists conducting the treatment. If SDA is applied to dream series stemming from other contexts it would be necessary to provide ways to receive this kind of additional information.

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