

Carl Jung's Psychology of Dreams and His View on Freud

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Carl Jung (1875-1961) was a well-known Swiss psychiatrist and founder of analytical psychology. He made significant contributions in psychiatry, psychology, anthropology, and religious studies. He was a prolific writer throughout his long career and some of his books were only published posthumously. He was a world traveller and gave many interviews and lectures that were well received. He carried out a voluminous correspondence with various people and most of these were published after his death [1]. Today there are millions of people who study Jung's works and practice Jungian counseling, depth psychology therapy, and self-realization efforts.

Jung was a longtime psychiatrist by profession and in his lectures, letters, and writings he frequently discusses the personality [2] problems of his many patients, attempting to illustrate empirically the existence of particular psychic phenomena acting in the mind of the patient. Both Freud and Jung saw themselves as scientists practicing a scientific approach to psychology and medicine. Early in his career during the period he was associated with Freud, Jung came to fundamentally reject Freud's work on neuroses and dream interpretation. Jung concluded after various interactions with Freud that he could not walk in the same steps as Freud.

Jung wrote:

We met in 1906. The first day I met him it was at one o'clock in the afternoon, and we talked steadily for thirteen hours. He was the first man of real importance I had seen; no one else could compare with him. I found him extremely shrewd, intelligent, and altogether remarkable.

But my first impressions of him were somewhat confused; I could not quite make him out. I found him, though, absolutely serious about his sex theory, and in his attitude there was nothing trivial to be found. It made a great impression on me, but still I had grave doubts. I told him this, and whenever I did, he always said it was because I had not had enough experience. ~Carl Jung, 1925 Seminar, pp: 15-26.

Jung was 31 when he met Freud and was very impressed by the forcefulness of his personality. Later Jung realized that this was related to Freud's inflexibility and total inability to change and reverse course when new information would require it. Freud committed to the idea that sexuality is the basis of all psychological forces in the human mind. Jung wrote:

"He invariably sneered at spirituality as being nothing but repressed sexuality, and so I said if one were committed fully to the logic of that position, then one must say that our whole

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civilization is farcical, nothing but a morbid creation due to repressed sexuality. He said, "Yes, so it is, and its being so is just a curse of fate we cannot help." My mind was quite unwilling to settle there, but still I could not argue it out with him."

Despite the admiration the early Jung had felt for Freud he was unwilling to follow Freud in his desolate intellectuality where spirituality is nothing but a morbid interest, and civilization's investment in religion is nothing but a farce. Freud talked about sexuality with religious fervor, like it was his God (see Jung quote). To Freud sexuality was omnipresent, powerful, and the source of everything in the human mind. All life came from sexuality.

As soon as he got to know Freud a little better Jung came to fully realize the dead-end impasse that divided their thinking and perspective on the most basic idea of what is a human being. Jung wrote about his conversations with Freud when Freud was talking about sexuality:

"A peculiar emotional quality would come into his face" ... "as a man would talk who had undergone a conversion".

Freud did not wish to look and therefore he did not see. Jung put it clearly:

"Freud is blind to the dualism of the unconscious. He does not know that the thing that wells up has an inside and an outside, and that if you talk only of the latter you speak of the shell alone."

Jung and Swedenborg overcame where Freud drew back. One must be willing to put pride aside and to admit to oneself that

our ego is but a “shell” and our real self exists in a world that is beneath, inside, or above that shell. All of Freudian psychology is about that shell.

Freud and Jung on Dreams

Freud had a perspective on dreams that saw them from the outside after the fact, as reported or remembered later by the patient. In his 1900 book, *The Interpretation of Dreams*, Freud described his approach to dream analysis that introduced psychological meaning in terms of hidden symbolism that was motivated by the patient’s psychodynamics of emotional repression. This psychological approach to dream interpretation was guided by pre-established concepts from Freud’s psychoanalytic system of thinking. Psychoanalytic dream interpretation was highly successful and widely accepted by psychiatrists and introduced as themes into novels, film, and stage. It was also acclaimed by many dedicated followers and has continued the life and use of psychoanalysis for more than a century.

Jung’s perspective on dreams was of an entirely different sort. The two approaches stand in sharp and opposite relation to dualism. Freud’s approach to dreams is a materialistic application, while Jung’s definition of dreams is dualist. Jung’s idea of what are dreams is deeper and more objective since the archetypes that caused dreams were collective, universal, and anatomical or biological, and therefore objective and empirical, unlike Freud’s dream analysis that may be called subjective and hypothetical. Freud looked at the consequent effects in dreaming, which were merely so many detailed external appearances in which dreams were cast, while Jung looked at the cause of the dream, which is its interior objective psychic origin.

Freud also discussed dreams as being psychological expressions caused by the dreamer’s desire to hide elements of the self that were too threatening to conscious awareness. Wrapping dreams into layers of distractions was viewed as a defense mechanism that the patient was using to repress certain emotions and feelings that were simply unacceptable to the conscious ego. These emotions and feelings were real and were part of everyone’s biological system of needs. Hence repressing them from the conscious ego resulted in displacement and neurotic or inappropriate ways of expressing them. Freudian therapy involved bringing these repressed or “unconscious” realities about oneself into the conscious and integrating them into the personality.

Jung added a totally independent dimension to dreams that gave them objective existence in another world called the “psychic” world. Freud denied the independent existence of a psychic world since he was a scientific materialist in which mind is purely physical and is part of the biology of the *physical* brain. This monistic view of the mind is still in effect today in neuroscience and materialistic psychology. There is discussion today in neuroscience that mind and consciousness may be “emergent” phenomena but these are still physical and have no independent existence from the physical brain. Hence at death or in a coma the mind does not emerge or exist.

Jung’s Dualism and Spirituality

But Jung was a scientific dualist who formulated psychological theory in terms of the mind’s own nature that was independent of

the physical brain. The laws of biology in the psychic world were not the same as those in the physical world. Hence all mental activity existed not from or in the physical brain, but from and in the psychic world where nothing physical could exist. Therefore ordinary cause-effect relations operating in the physical world were entirely different in the psychic world.

Jung held that the unconscious is informing the individual through the dream. The personality always progresses towards greater individuation and potential fulfillment. The unconscious helps this process in various ways, and one is to present a dream that informs the individual of some important inner element that is part of the future state of the personality. We can then incorporate these new elements into our changing personality. The dream is the larger Self that is talking to the narrower ego. Unlike Freud who held that dreams are hidden or have latent meaning, Jung states that dreams do not “disguise or distort”, nor “deceive or lie”, but present the unvarnished truth about the individual.

Jung’s Depth Psychology

To reveal and understand the psychology of the real human person that lies beneath the shell we must give ourselves permission to discover the depth within. Freud’s cure and success could have been Jung’s psychology, but Freud chose to reject it. Jung concluded therefore:

“But there is nothing to be done about this conflict in him [Freud]; the only chance would be if he could have an experience that would make him see spirituality working inside the shell. However, his intellect would then inevitably strip it to “mere” sexuality.”

As Jung asserted frequently, don’t ignore the unconscious or it will bite you. Freud was attacked by his unconscious and this reduced him to inability to motivate himself to look within. Jung’s compassion as well as frustration with Freud’s recalcitrance can be seen in this remark by Jung:

“Freud does not know that the unconscious produces a factor to counteract the monistic principle to which he has given himself over. I find him a tragic figure, for he is a great man, but it is a fact that he runs away from himself”.

But there is a difficulty in hearing clearly the voice of the dream because it is complex and speaks in symbolic images of universal arche types. Dreams are applied simultaneously to several levels of the personality and can present difficulty of interpretation. The lower or external level of the dream is merely a dramatic event that we recall as the dream. This is the “objective level”. A second level called the “subjective level” applies the dream content to the individual who has the dream. The various characters in the dream become representatives of the individual’s particular characteristics. A third level is the application to the individual of some archetype that is operative in the individual’s unconscious.

Dreams pave the way for life, and they determine you without your understanding their language. ~Carl Jung, The Red Book, p: 233.

Dreams are natural biological objects that are wrapped in multiple anatomical layers that can be gradually unfolded and comprehended over a period of years. A dream develops and deepens as we interact with it on a long-term basis.

Dreams are impartial, spontaneous products of the unconscious psyche, outside the control of the will. They are pure nature; they show us the unvarnished, natural truth, and are therefore fitted, as nothing else is, to give us back an attitude that accords with our basic human nature when our consciousness has strayed too far from its foundations and run into an impasse. ~Carl Jung, C.W., 10, p: 317.

Jung and Freud on the Unconscious

The basis of Jungian analysis is the psychodynamic by which portions of the collective unconscious become conscious to one's ego. This process goes on throughout one's life but accelerates as we get older and closer to making our transition to our next life. Viewed superficially this statement sounds like it is as true of Freud as it is of Jung. The only difference seems to be that Freud recognized the "unconscious" but denied the "collective unconscious" as being really different. This seemingly little difference between "unconscious" and "collective unconscious" is however similar to the difference between earth and sky.

Entirely different and opposed conclusions are involved. Jung explored and discovered the objects and properties of the independent psychic world such as the collective unconscious and archetypes. These formed a biological part of every human being since the beginning of the race. Jungian depth psychology was therefore defined as the interaction between the independent collective unconscious and the individual mind and personality. Every psychological phenomenon involved this connection. Nothing psychological could exist separately from this interconnection.

The Activity of the Collective Unconscious

I predict that in the next few decades' science will begin to incorporate more and more concepts from scientific dualism. It will thereby greatly enlarge its ability to help meet the spiritual [3] needs of humanity. One of these is to assist people in regeneration or individuation, which not only makes them happier and more productive individuals, but also equips their personality with traits that can thrive in the afterlife.

According to Jung the human psyche existed before the individual ego was born.

The meaning of events is the way of salvation that you create. The meaning of events comes from the possibility of life in this world

that you create. It is the mastery of this world and the assertion of your soul in this world. ~Carl Jung, The Red Book, p: 239

All of humanity's memories and secrets are located in the collective unconscious.

Our mental health requires that we recover and garner from this dark expanse of mental forces, that which is our Self. The pieces of our ego belonging to the Self are scattered in the mysterious unfathomable expanse of the dark psyche.

Our task in this world is to individuate, which is to find and collect the pieces of our self-found in the collective unconscious, and to introduce them to our conscious, in order that we may know them and integrate them into our personality for the sake of achieving wholeness.

Analyzing our dreams is a form of self-analysis [4]. It helps us in this task of reconstructing the scattered self into a coherent whole again.

The dream is a little hidden door in the innermost and most secret recesses of the soul, opening into that cosmic night which was psyche long before there was any ego-consciousness, and which will remain psyche no matter how far our ego-consciousness extends. ~Carl Jung, Memories Dreams and Reflections.

According to Jung the characters that we read about in literary works may be viewed as "representatives of relatively autonomous functional complexes in the psyche of the author" (Jung, *Definitions*). Historical and mythical characters in the literature of the world represent some psychological complex in human beings who are undergoing the process of individuation through regeneration or character reformation.

The unraveling of symbolic representations helps us to know our psychic context. This is a necessary psychological growth task that we must perform. As Jung says, "By understanding the unconscious we free ourselves from its domination".

Jung says that knowing our dreams is the way God speaks to us. Without this knowledge, our consciousness "strays too far from its foundations and runs into an impasse".

According to Jung the unconscious "contains everything that is lacking in the conscious" and therefore it has a "compensatory" function of essential function in the growth process of becoming whole and well.

It is impossible to live as an ego forever, it is too childish. Of course, many people often make the mistake of taking the ego for the Self. The ego is nothing but the artificial self. ~Carl Jung, Visions Seminar, p: 369.

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