Ana Mrovlje[1]

Dream maps: Dream analysis using psychoanalytic and gestalt methods

Zemljevidi sanj: Analiza sanj po psihoanalitični in geštalt metodi

Abstract

Dream maps allude to four prolific analytical and psychotherapeutic approaches of interpreting and working with dream content: Freud's, Bion's, Jung's and Perls'. From the theoretical onset the research proceeds with the series of dreams of a young African man. The paper presents qualitative interpretative research of a series of anxious dreams, dreamt by the research subject shortly after undergoing a months-long immigration journey from the Gambia, Africa, to Empoli, Italy. Each of the dreams puts an emphasis on the emotional connotations and all the dreams were interpreted and worked on by using psychoanalytic and gestalt psychotherapy methodology. The research focuses on the interviews conducted to observe the emotional effects that the two different dream methodologies have on the research subject and to understand if one causes less emotional reactivity than the other. The results show slight differences in the variety of emotions expressed after the interviews.

Keywords: dream-work, dream interpretation, nightmare, psychoanalysis, gestalt, analytical psychology

Povzetek

Zemljevidi sanj se navezujejo na štiri analitične in psihoterapevtske pristope k obravnavi sanjskih vsebin: Freudovega, Bionovega, Jungovega in Perlsovega. Iz teoretičnega izhodišča raziskava preide v analizo serije sanj mladega Afričana, sanjanih kmalu po večmesečnem migracijskem potovanju iz Gambije v Empoli v Italiji. Raziskava predstavlja kvalitativno interpretativno analizo tesnobnih sanj, ki jih je udeleženec doživel v omenjenem obdobju. Serija sanj je bila interpretirana z metodologijo psihoanalitične in geštalt psihoterapije, s posebnim poudarkom na čustvenih konotacijah v sanjskih vsebinah. Analiza intervjujev

1 Ana Mrovlje, Mag. pth., psihoanalitična psihoterapevtka, ana.mrovlje@gmail.com

je bila izvedena z namenom opazovanja čustvenih odzivov na obe metodi dela s sanjami. Rezultati kažejo na manjše razlike v intenziteti in raznolikosti izraženih čustev po izvedenih intervjujih.

Ključne besede: delo s sanjami, interpretacija sanj, nočna mora, psihoanaliza, geštalt, analitična psihologija

1. Introduction

From a Bionian viewpoint, dreaming occurs continuously while we are awake and asleep. Understanding reverie as the continuous unconscious process like dreaming can be attended to by an analyst in a psychoanalytic situation in helping the patient dream their undreamt or interrupted dreams. It allows the analyst to unconsciously perceive the patient's unprocessed or not yet mentalized experience and aids in restoration of psychological integrity and ability of the patient to dream themselves fully to life. Dreams are laconic and highly personal, an uninhabited territory, a space seemingly without a limit and material borders. The inhabitation of our own memories and phantasies are evident and a common subject of dreams (Bion, 1962; Ogden, 2004, 2009).

Although dreams are closely connected to past experiences and memory, they are considered as the novel subconscious constructs that continuously undertake new forms (Singer, 1966; Wamsley, 2014). Dream material is uniquely structured in connection to several memory fragments which present themselves in a new way. The research focuses on established dream methodologies of the two authors in the field of psychotherapy, Freud and Perls. Freud saw dreams as symbolic expressions of unconscious wish fulfillment that is interpretated in order to reveal the latent meaning while Perls viewed dream images as parts of the Self, to be explored and integrated by the dreamer through active reenactment. For Perls the Self is a process, it is what happens at the contact boundary between the person and the environment while in psychoanalysis we speak about the Self as an inner structure that develops through time. In Jungian terms the Self includes the ego plus unconscious instincts, archetypes, shadow, anima and animus.

As the two authors see the cause and resolution of traumatic events in a different manner, the research includes and compares their views on elements in the dreams of the subject of the research (Freud, 1923; Perls, 1969)

With the qualitative interpretative method, the paper focuses on comparing the methods of working with dreams in praxis (Freud, Perls) in order to evaluate the subject's emotional state after each of the dream interpretations and to present the similarities or differences in emotional state of the dreamer

after conducting psychoanalytic and gestalt work with the dream content. The interpretation of dreams and the analysis of data from half-structured interviews were conducted using the qualitative analysis software Atlas TI. An interpretive comparison of the participants' perceptions was undertaken, followed by an interpretation and discussion. In addition, Jung's important contribution to dreams is touched upon and furthermore the overlooked Bion's perspective on dreams is taken into account.

The article emphasises on the following questions:

- How do the four psychotherapeutic approaches (Freudian, Bionian, Jungian, and Perls) conceptualize dreaming and dream work?
- How do the dreamer's emotional responses differ after the interpretation of dreams using a psychoanalytic method compared to a Gestalt dream--work approach?
- Which interview, conducted after each of the dream interpretations contains more disturbing emotions such as anxiety, fear and anger?

Interpretive research is expected to elucidate how Freudian, Bionian, Jungian, and Perls' approaches conceptualize dreaming in distinct but partially overlapping ways. Furthermore, it is expected that psychoanalytic dream interpretation is associated with increased insight and deepening of understanding connected to dreams, whereas Gestalt dream work is expected to offer more immediate emotional regulation ot emotional shifts in the dreamer linked to identification with dream imagery.

The research paves its way to the mind of the dreamer that will lead with his unconscious material being the red thread. The story of a young African man who immigrated to Italy during the European refugee crisis in will be told through his dream images. Recent imprints, traumatic events, social representations as well as early object relations representations internalized in the dreamer are shown in the dream content. Dream Maps are therefore qualitative research of unconscious territory of a chosen subject, through which it tried to address the larger picture of the individual and perhaps also collective occurrence.

2. Four perspectives on working with dreams

The presented psychotherapeutic modalities work with dreams is meant to elucidate different approaches with deeper emphasis given on Freud's and Perls' works in the empirical part of the research. Synthesis of different modalities and their overlapping is made in the discussion.

2.1. Freud's approach

The unconscious mind often has its own will, meaning that it can direct differently to a person's conscious motives. Freud described two complementary psychological processes, the primary process derives directly from Id, and it is connected to the pleasure principle. In the primary process, the individual satisfies the drive in the imaginary. Representations as dreams, hallucinations or wishful thinking are a substitution for the fulfilment of a wish. The secondary process, connected to the reality principle is a cognitive process in which a human in reality plans and satisfies their wishes (Žvelc et al., 2011). After some consideration, he proposed that dreams are actually an attempt to fulfill a wish. "The attempt may succeed more or less completely; it may also fail" (Freud, 1900, p. 171).

The remembered dream impressions stand for the fulfilment of a repressed wish. The latent content of dreams consists of unconscious wishes that could not get past the censorship, and that is why a person needs to undergo the dream work (Galison, 2012). To understand the latent content of dreams, Freud used the term dreamwork as a technique of disguising the latent dream content to the manifest dream content (Boag, 2008; Freud, 1961). He elaborated four following stages of dreamwork: condensation, displacement, consideration of representability and secondary revision, while assigning the function of censorship in dreams to a watchman who has the power to transform the unconscious wishes to preconscious ones, which sooner or later, tend to become conscious.

Now that analysts have become reconciled to replacing the manifest dream by the meaning revealed by its interpretation, many of them have become guilty of falling into another confusion which they cling to with equal obstinacy. They seek to find the essence of dreams in their latent content and in so doing, they overlook the distinction between the latent dream-thoughts and the dream--work. At bottom, dreams are nothing other than a particular form of thinking, made possible by the conditions of the state of sleep. It is the dream- work that creates that form, and it alone is the essence of dreaming—the explanation of its peculiar nature. (Freud, 1900, pp. 649-650)

Dreams are shortened under the function of condensation, if we compare the actual, descriptive content of dreams with all the associations that are applied to the manifest content of dreams, it becomes obvious that the length becomes much longer. Dreams content is laconic, they are condensed to highlighted parts, and in praxis, it is hard to say that certain dream content was fully analyzed since associations can rarely come to the natural stop.

Next to the condensation, dream material is also affected by displacement. In the mechanism of displacement, the process of censorship is at work,

and the function of censorship is to distort the manifest content of dreams and in this way displace the content that may generate anxiety in the psyche in the dreamer. Displacement occurs in the process of dream formation in order to place the anxious or perhaps the central topic or conflict in the acceptable distance to the obvious, manifest dream content.

Secondary revision [*sekundäre Bearbeitung*] is one of the actions that is undergone in dreams (Freud, 1900, p. 488). Even if dreams seem connected in a strange way, there is still a certain amount of coherence binding them together as a whole. A good question, whether dream meaning is decoded or created is not just a theoretical controversy, in a specific article is not new but undoubtfully relevant (Blechne, 1988, p. 183). According to Blechne (1988), this opens an old question and debate between Freud and Jung regarding how dream meaning is constructed. What existed before, the dream meaning or the associations constructed based on the dream images.

2.2. Bion's approach to dreams

Known for the theory of thinking, including alpha and beta elements and container and contained, Bion's perspective on dreams is perhaps in the shadow of other contributions to psychoanalysis. As Ogden (2004) puts it, Bion's conception of working with dreams is different to Freud's. If Freud understands dreams as revealing the unconscious material in dreams, which are later available to consciousness, Bion describes dreams as mental operations that make the wake and conscious experiences available to the unconscious, dreaming experience. To quote Ogden (2004, p. 1355):

> "Freud's dream-work allows derivatives of the unconscious to become conscious, while Bion's work of dreaming allows conscious lived experience to become unconscious (i.e. available to the unconscious for the psychological work of generating dream-thoughts and for the dreaming of those thoughts)".

Bion explains that dreaming happens during both, waking life and sleep. According to Bion, dreams are unconscious thoughts corresponding to waking emotional experiences. If Freud's dreamwork refers to reveal the unconscious thoughts by different operations such as displacement or condensation, Bion describes dreaming as a mental operation that makes conscious – waking experiences of life accessible to the unconsciousness for psychological work of dreaming (Ogden, 2004).

Freud's dream-work allows derivatives of the unconscious to become conscious, while Bion's work of dreaming allows the conscious lived experience to become unconscious (Ogden, 2004, p. 1356). Bion connects the process of containing to dreaming and underlines that container is not a static fact but

rather a continuous process. It is mind's function that involves unconscious dreaming, preconscious experience as well as conscious reflection. His views on the mentioned three states of mind are equal in its importance; he even describes the unconscious dreaming state as one of the central for growth and development (Ogden, 2004).

Nevertheless, Bion puts an emphasis on the close linkage between the unconscious state of dreaming and the contained. The contained largely holds what Bion calls beta-elements that are synonymous to sensual impressions or so-called raw emotional experiences. Ogden (2004) cites Edgar Alan Poe to describe what Bion means by beta-elements when he says that beta-elements are "Unthought-like thoughts that are the souls of thought" (Poe, 1848, p. 80). Waking life depends on dreams, and the sensory stimulus proceeds from the conscious experience towards the unconsciousness and that linkage shows the simultaneity of the conscious-unconscious process Grotstein (2007).

2.3. Jung's approach to dreams

If Freud examined dreams as a consequence of waking events, Jung searched for the dream cause, which has an inner and objective psychological beginning. The other distinctions between Jung's and Freud's approach to dreams is that Freud claimed that the dreams' function is to hide the psychological elements that were too threatening to be embraced by the consciousness (James, 2016). If in waking life, we use word combinations to communicate, in dreams the communication is done by image constellations. Symbolism in dreams are the creation of ideas that were not yet constructed, while Freud saw symbols as symptomatic signs (James, 2016; Khodarahimi, 2009). In Analytic Psychology, dream analysis in a clinical setting involves three steps; identifying the details of dreams, the amplification of dream images and assimilation phase. In the first phase, applied right after waking, the dreamer writes down the dreams as quickly as possible, before the memory of dreams becomes distorted by associations of waking events. This first step serves for the creation of the context of dreams, the sequence of events and the emotions that accompany the dream imagery.

According to the written description of dreams, it can also be declared what a strong value the dreams have for the dreamer and whether the dreams had already repeated before. The stronger the effect of the dreams is to the dreamer, the stronger the attempt of the dreams to reveal certain information to the conscious ego (Khodarahimi, 2009). The step that follows is the amplification of the dream images and associations that can proceed from personal to collective and towards archetypical levels. Khodarahimi (2009) describes

that amplification is similar to the peeling of an onion, as the multi-layers of the images reveal. The third and final step is the phase of assimilation, which is a phase where the dreamer constructs and makes sense of the dream content. The aim is achiving the point where the dreamer feels comfortable with the answers they produced regarding the meaning of dreams, a phase where dream thoughts become more or less consciously assimilated.

The compensation theory on dreams is one that stands out the most in Jung's work on dreams. The psyche strives for equilibrium, and dreams are a way for the unconscious mind to correct one-sidedness of the waking thoughts, behaviors, or emotions. Unlike Freud, who emphasized wish-fulfillment and repressed desires, Jung viewed dreams as messages from the unconscious aimed at personal growth and self-understanding and not just symptoms of unresolved conflict.

2.4. Perls' approach to dreams

In gestalt psychotherapy dreams are the representative of the dreamer, meaning that everything in the dreams is the dreamer themselves. For Perls dreams form a hierarchy of unfinished gestalts, meaning that at this moment in every individual, there are many open psychological gestalts that aim to be resolved and united. An interesting phenomenon described by Perls is that we usually recall the situations that remained unresolved or in such matter unclosed rather than the situations already done. This occurrence is also called the Zeigarnik effect and particularly stands for tasks that are ego- involving and especially meaningful to one at the present moment. Perls stated that these unfinished tasks form a hierarchy, from the most important ones on the top of the hierarchy to the less important unfinished tasks at the bottom. And to connect this division with dreams, the most important unfinished tasks are to appear in the dreams repeatedly. For Perls there is no need to dig deep into the unconscious mind like in psychoanalysis, it is enough to become aware of the obvious, immediate situation that is causing an imbalance. He elaborates that if you see the obvious, everything is there:

> "...the different parts of the dream are fragments of our personalities. Since our aim is to make every one of us a wholesome person, which means a unified person, without conflicts, what we have to do is put the different fragments of the dream together. We have to re-own these projected, fragmented parts of our personality, and re-own the hidden potential." (Perls, 1969, p. 67)

Pearls viewed dreams as a message of existential value. To understand his approach to dreams we need to understand the use of the projection in a sense that whatever the dreamer dreams is a projection of themselves. The main

methodology of dream work is working with patient's projections. This means to suggest the patient to speak in the first person from the various perspectives of the dream and encourage them to possibly create a dialogue with different aspects or projections that the dream presents. A good example of this process is presented in the next lines of dreamwork by Polster and Polster (1973).

A commonality in all dream work approaches is that the meaning needs to come from the dreamer themselves. The therapist work is to facilitate this process of awareness on various parts of the dream for the patient and withdraw from interpreting them but rather speak in the first-person point of view, as if you would be this part or image that appeared in a dream. The main goal is that the patient integrates these disowned parts back to themselves. A starting point of the integration is to encourage the patient to tell the dream in the first person and from the present point of view.

Mann captures gestaltistic guidelines for working with dream content:

"- Check out the immediate post-dream feeling.

- Give the dreamer the choice of where to start.

- Stay with the process of the dream and the telling of the dream rather than the content. Note the mood and flavor of the dream and the reactions it evokes in you.

- Begin where there is most energy, but note where there are fluctuations in energy. High energy does not always equate to the most important/relevant.

- Powerful material can be evoked, so it is important that adequate time is left at the end of the session to ground the client and debrief". (Mann, 2010, p. 171)

3. Research methodology

The research involved a single participant under a pseudonym Omari, a 28-year--old male immigrant from Africa who had moved to Italy in early 2016. Omari speaks his native language and is fluent in English which allowed the dream analysis to take place. He was recruited through a prior contact while the author was organizing a workshop project in Italy at Gallery Fornace Pasquinucci titled "The Constant State of Emergency" on an art festival, and he agreed to participate voluntarily. His personal experiences with migration, including exposure to several traumatic events, as well as his recurrent vivid dreams, made him an ideal subject for a detailed qualitative and interpretative study.

Ethical considerations were carefully considered throughout the research process. Omari provided informed consent prior to the study and was fully informed on the research aims, the procedures involved, and his right to withdraw at any time. Particular attention was given to maintaining his

anonymity and wellbeing, given the potentially distressing nature of some dreams. Confidentiality was ensured, and the original information changed for ensuring his anonymity.

3.1. Interviews

The dream analysis was conducted in a quiet, controlled environment in English language and lasted around 45 minutes and transcripts was made afterwards. After each interpretation in this time period, the questions from the half-structured interview were answered by the subject of the research. This process is repeated three times, for three different dreams that were reoccurring in a period of one year after the dreamer's immigration from the Gambia. To control any order effects, the sequence in which psychoanalytic and gestalt methods were applied was balanced across sessions.

Immediately following each dream session, Omari participated in a semi-structured interview lasting approximately 20–30 minutes which were conducted by the author. These interviews focused particularly on the emotionally intense or anxiety-related elements of the dreams. All interviews were conducted in English, audio-recorded, and later transcribed to preserve the integrity and detail of the participant's responses. The questions were tailored to each dream, emphasizing the parts of the narrative that held the strongest emotional connotation.

The research was done using the qualitative interpretative method of research by interpreting the dreams through the two above mentioned dream interpretation methods, the psychoanalytic and the gestalt one. The questions in the interview are focused specifically on the anxious element of dreams and the other elements with strong emotional connotation. The codes were emergent. By qualitatively comparing different methods of dream interpretation and the dreamer's response to this method, the aim was to get a broader view of the discussed dream material. The goal of the research was to get a comparison on how two different methods of dream work and interpretation make the dreamer perceive the anxious elements once working with dream was over. The main concern of the research is the question whether two modalities of working with dreams effect the subject differently, specifically on their emotional state, focusing on anxiety, sadness and anger.

3.2. Coding

Analysis of the interview material was conducted using ATLAS.ti 9. The coding of the interview followed an emergent approach and was conducted after the dream interpretation. The coding framework was emergent with the coding unit being defined based on individual statements in the transcript of the interviews

where certain emotional states were clearly expressed. Code reliability was established through the consistent identification of expressed emotional states articulated in the transcript interviews by the subject, which formed the basis of the coding system. The focus was on identifying dream elements described by the participant as anxious or as carrying other strong emotional connotations, particularly those closely linked to littterarly expressed fear, anxiety, homesickness, and feeling of loss.

3.3. Psychoanalytic method of dream work

The following approaches and guidelines are used in the research. Regarding the psychoanalytical methodology I used Freud's works (Freud, 1923; Freud 1900) and others (Žvelc et al., 2011).

The process of dream interpretation originating from psychoanalytic approach to dreams encompasses the following steps:

- The subject is encouraged to tell their dreams in their own narrative, giving importance to parts that they find central.
- The dreamer is encouraged to freely associate on the dream elements.
- The manifest content can be put aside, and the patient can be encouraged to directly investigate the latent content of dreams.
- The association process and links between them should be as much as possible in the domain of the dreamer.
- Recent experience, events and sensation from the patient's everyday life should be considered.
- The interpretation of dreams after the previous steps can be given by the analyst.

3.4. Perls and the gestalt work with dreams

The methodology of working with dreams that I have described in the pages on gestalt therapy and dreams is linked to the basic assumptions that I gathered accordingly to Perls (1969) and Mann (2010):

- The dreamer is invited to narrate the dream in their own words, emphasizing personally significant elements.
- Attention is given to post-dream sensations, emotional fluctuations, and the manner of storytelling.
- The client is encouraged to identify with dream elements, exploring them through dialogue or monologue.
- These experiences are processed in the here-and-now therapeutic relationship. Interpretation arises from the client, fostering reintegration of projected aspects.

4. Dream analysis and comparison of two methodologies

4.1. Dream number 1: Wave dreams

"My dream last night took me back to my country, the Gambia. In my dreams, I was sitting with my friends chatting as usual in the same place we used to meet. I saw a dog barking at me from my right side and biting my ankle. When the time for prayers came, we all got up and started to take absolution and perform our prayers. Together we did the whole prayer ceremony. I was wearing a white African outfit. After the prayer, I surprisingly saw my uncle, who passed away four years ago. We met eye to eye and greeted each other. He was wearing a red African outfit. He asked me who the man that was with me was. I told him that man was a very good friend of mine and I told him he was like a brother to me since he helped me a lot in my life. At one moment when we were talking, we saw a large wave of water coming to us. The water was growing and filling up the bar. We were all wet".

Table 1
Comparison of code categories: Wave dream.

Codes	Psychoanalysis	Gestalt	Total
Feeling of being trapped	3 (9,7 %)	2 (6,5 %)	5 (16,1 %)
Fear	10 (32,3 %)	9 (29 %)	19 (61,3 %)
Feelings of loss	4 (12,9 %)	0	4 (12,9 %)
Homesickness	2 (6,5 %)	1 (3,2 %)	3 (9,7 %)
Totals	19 (61,3 %)	12 (38,7 %)	31 (100 %)

4.1.1. Comperative interpretation of wave dream

The semi-structured interview following the psychoanalytic (PA) dream interpretation revealed 19 unpleasant emotional codes, compared to 12 in the gestalt (GA) interview. The PA interview included categories of loss (4), fear (10), being trapped (3), and homesickness (2). The GA interview showed fear (9), being trapped (2), and homesickness (1), but no loss. Fear had the highest number of codes in both. Emotional codes in the GA interview showed a 50% decrease in homesickness and a 33% decrease in feeling trapped. Since the PA approach was applied first, dream intensity may have been affected; future analysis will reverse the order.

4.2. Dream number 2: Fire dream

"I saw the light coming from the house. It was a fire next to our guest house, where I was working. It started to burn a lot; I remember it was morning. I was there, I was sleeping next to it in the guest house. Because of alcohol, everything was exploding. The fire service and the police were there. They could not put the fire down. Because of electric cables in the house and around it was dangerous to put it down with water. Finally, they had to put some particular chemical powder in the water to extinguish the fire safely and avoid the explosion (O.)".

Table 2
Comparison of codes categories: Fire dream.

Codes	Gestalt	Psychoanalysis	Totals
Anger	1 (3,7 %)	3 (11,1 %)	4 (14,8 %)
Lossing control	3 (11,1 %)	3 (11,1 %)	6 (22,2 %)
Feeling helpless	2 (7,4 %)	0	2 (7,4 %)
Feelings of being in danger	1 (3,7 %)	2 (7,4 %)	3 (11,1 %)
Feelings of concern and worries	3 (11,1 %)	4 (14,8 %)	7 (25,9 %)
Feelings of fear	2 (7,4 %)	3 (11,1 %)	5 (18,5 %)
Total	12 (44,4 %)	15 (55,6 %)	27 (100 %)

4.2.1. Comperative interpretation of fire dream

The findings indicate that the GA interview was associated with a slight reduction in anxious and unpleasant emotional content compared to the PA interview. Both interviews contained the same five overlapping categories, with Control issues showing an equal number of codes (3) in each. In the GA interview, there was a decrease of one code in the categories Feelings of concern and worries, Feelings of fear, and Feelings of being in danger, as well as a more notable decrease in Anger, with two fewer codes compared to the PA interview. Overall, the PA interview included a higher total number of codes (15) than the GA interview (12), suggesting a stronger and more anxious emotional expression following the PA method. An additional category, Feeling helpless, emerged only in the GA interview. Despite the reversed order of methods in the Fire dreams to minimize desensitization effects, the results consistently show more intense emotional content after the PA interview.

4.3. Dream number 3: Travel through Libya

"In my dreams, I was going to the Gambia to visit my friends and family. When I was coming back from the Gambia, I came back through Libya with a lot of young people like me. But when we were about to go to the sea with the boat, we were arrested. Then I woke up".

Table 3
Comparison of codes categories: Travel to Libya dream.

Codes	Psychoanalysis	Gestalt	Total
Feeling nervous	3 (10,7 %)	3 (10,7 %)	6 (21,4 %)
Feeling of emptiness	1 (3,6 %)	0	1 (3,6 %)
Feeling stuck	0	1 (3,6 %)	1 (3,6 %)
Feeling unsecure	0	2 (7,1 %)	2 (7,1 %)
Feelings of fear – generalized and specific	7 (25 %)	5 (17,9 %)	12 (42,9 %)
Not feeling ready	0	3 (10,7 %)	3 (10,7 %)
Tiredness	3 (10,7 %)	0	3 (10,7 %)
Totals	14 (50 %)	14 (50 %)	28 (100 %)

4.3.1. Comparative interpretation of travel through Libya dream

Both the GA and PA interviews produced the same number of codes (14), but GA had five categories compared to PA's four. GA's categories included feeling nervous, stuck, insecure, fear, and not feeling ready. PA's categories were feeling nervous, emptiness, fear, and tiredness. Both interviews shared the categories of nervousness and fear, with nervousness equally coded (3 each) and slightly fewer fear codes in GA. Notably, PA lacked the categories of feeling stuck, insecure, and not ready, but showed unique increases in tiredness and emptiness. This suggests fewer direct sensations of insecurity or being stuck in PA but more feelings of tiredness and emptiness. While both interviews showed similar anxiety levels, the ways these emotions were expressed differed, likely due to the different therapeutic approaches and identification with dream elements.

5. Limitations and implications for practice with immigrants

The research is limited to its single-case study, with a sample of only three dreams. As such it is interpretatory and exploratory while taking in consideration

that research subject is coming from a specific cultural context. Given the exploratory nature and single-case study, a larger-scale with multiple participants and a broader range of dreams would be needed to more reliably examine the results. The sequencing of therapeutic approaches of dream analysis of the same dream may also have a certain influence on the subject's emotional responses. A certain level of emotional desensitization after the first dream analysis should be taken in consideration even though in working with different dreams the order of dream interpretations was changed.

While working with trauma caused by immigration, therapists should consider a more flexible stance toward dream analysis, attuned to the patient's affect and overall emotional state, trauma history and therapeutic needs. Gestalt dream work may be particularly useful with emotional containment and grounding, whereas psychoanalytic approaches can be used for deeper exploration of unconscious material. While working with immigrants, therapist should prioritize affect regulation and psychological safety, introducing interpretation gradually. A flexible approach to dream work, responsive to the individual's emotional capacity and therapeutic containment supports emotional integration when dealing with topics of loss and anxiety.

6. Results and discussion

Freud's, Bion's, Jung's, and Perls' approaches share the view that dreams are meaningful psychological processes of the dreamer's and that their significance emerges from the dreamer's own life and experience. They differ however, in how their meaning is understood. Freud viewed dreams as wish-fulfilments disguised by dream-work mechanisms, Bion understands dreaming as a mental function that can transforms emotional experience in waking life. While Jung conceived dreams as symbolically important and connected to collective unconsciousness, Perls treated them as an immediate projections of the Self that can be integrated through awareness and identification with each of the dream elements.

An analysis of the three dreams and the corresponding coded interviews reveals a higher number of emotionally disturbing codes in the psychoanalytic (PA) interpretations (48) compared to the gestalt (GA) interpretations (38). This indicates that the participant expressed greater emotional activation, particularly anxiety, following the psychoanalytic dream work. The use of free association in the PA method may have facilitated access to unconscious material, potentially allowing the projection of latent fears not directly linked to the manifest dream content. Despite this difference in emotional intensity, the range of emotional categories was similar across both modalities: 14 in the GA interviews and 13

in the PA. Notably, there was a substantial overlap in emotional themes. In the "Wave" dreams, three of four categories were present in both modalities; in the "Fire" dreams, five of six categories aligned. This suggests that while the emotional types remained largely consistent, the intensity and quantity of emotional expression were greater following PA interventions.

One possible explanation is that the PA approach, through free associative processes, encouraged broader emotional exploration. In contrast, the GA method's emphasis on identification with dream elements may have contributed to reduced emotional intensity by internalizing those elements and reframing them as personal, rather than external.

It is important to note the methodological consideration that one modality was always applied before the other. To lower the potential desensitization effect, the order of interpretations was alternated across dreams.

For future research, a larger sample of participants and dreams would enhance the validity of reported findings. Further exploration could also involve applying multiple psychotherapeutic approaches to the same dream to compare the range and quality of emotional responses elicited. This study contributes to ongoing discussions regarding the comparative efficacy of psychotherapeutic modalities. While differences in technique are meaningful, a widely acknowledged factor in effective therapy is the therapeutic relationship itself. In the context of dream work, the capacity to express emotion and construct a coherent narrative emerges as a central therapeutic mechanism. Accordingly, the most effective modality may be the one that best enables the transformation of unconscious material into meaningful narrative experience.

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