

Jane Cicchetti

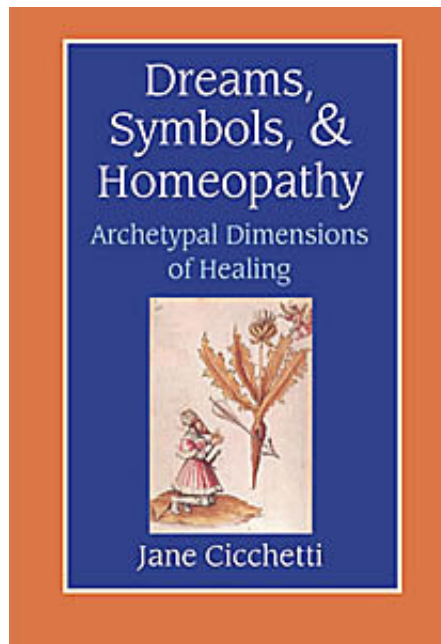
Dreams, Symbols, & Homeopathy

Reading excerpt

[Dreams, Symbols, & Homeopathy](#)

of [Jane Cicchetti](#)

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CHAPTER EIGHT **Dreams and**

the Mind-Body Relationship

The Use of Dreams in Homeopathic Practice

TV/hri a brief outline of homeopathy and concepts of Jungian thought, W it is now possible to discuss integrating the use of dreams and symbolism into homeopathic practice. The wisdom of the ancients, combined with Jung's study of the unconscious, can help the practitioner understand the nature of what needs to be healed and what is required to stimulate that healing.

Homeopaths have used dreams since Hahnemann's time. Our repertoires and provings contain many references to dreams, yet many questions remain about how to use dreams effectively in homeopathic practice.

One huge change that has taken place since Hahnemann's time has been the birth of the field of psychology and the development of our understanding of the unconscious. Although Hahnemann was ahead of his time in the treatment of mental illness, very little understanding of what came to be called the psyche was available to him. Most studies of the mind were limited to the physiology of the brain and various theories about how the mind might actually work.

Franz Anton Mesmer (1734-1815), a contemporary of Hahnemann, was a controversial German physician who developed methods of hands-on healing and hypnotherapy (the term *mesmerized* derived from his practices). He recognized the role that the mind played in disease. Although Hahnemann thought very highly of Mesmer's work, which he called "a wonderful, priceless gift of God, granted to humanity," he interpreted mesmerism as transmission of the mesmerist's life force to the patient.¹

It was not until several years after Hahnemann's death that Freud developed his seminal works on psychotherapy, the unconscious, and dream analysis.

The rationalist ideas of the eighteenth-century Age of Reason caused medical practitioners, along with people in other professions, to regard the wisdom from the past as superstition. And so, while dreams have had a role in medicine for thousands of years, very little medical use of dreams survived into the early nineteenth century.

In a way, dreams have never had a more important potential role in homeopathic case taking than they have in the present era. When homeopaths in earlier times asked about food desires, physical modalities, and sensations, they could usually depend on clear, straightforward answers. Today, it is rare to find individuals who have not had most of their mental, general, and physical symptoms suppressed. We now live in a very complex and overmedicated society that is reluctant to allow any symptom to go untreated or untrained—or to allow any desire to go uncensored and uninfluenced by advertising and media. Most people live a life that is so removed from nature that symptoms become intellectualized and therefore unreliable, making it very difficult to picture who the individual really is. Fortunately, dreams lie outside our conscious ability to manipulate them. We cannot create a false reality in our dreams or influence them with our will. Material that is suppressed from the conscious state moves into the subconscious and is frequently expressed in dreams. Because the dream is a deep expression of the workings of the psyche, material from dreams, when used and analyzed accurately, can lead to some of the most reliable symptoms in a case. Although they seem ephemeral, dreams are actually objective facts about a person's mental and physical state.

Carl Jung said that there was most likely no difference between body and mind. Rather, they are what he called "the same life," subject to the same laws. What happens in the body is reflected in the mind, and vice versa. Dreams are proof that this unbreakable connection still exists, even though we often operate under the delusion that the mind and body are separate.

All homeopaths are aware of the connection between mind and body—although using a dream as if it were a separate symptom and not an integral part of the entire case misses the importance of this connection. Because homeopathic practice was formed before the understanding of the relationship between the body and psyche was fully developed, dreams are often used without a deep understanding of their true role in the case.

Exploring the messages the unconscious sends in the dream state will help us use dreams to enrich what is commonly called the "red thread that runs throughout the case." It is also possible to get a clear picture of pathology

from a dream, and to use symbolic information from the dream state to understand the process that is about to unfold.

Dreams are also our primary connection to the inherited wisdom of the psyche. They help us reconnect with a level that has been largely ignored in rationally focused Western societies and afford an opportunity to integrate the symbolic with the rational.

For millennia, the symbolic world ruled: ultimately; it overwhelmed the individual and society, causing them to fall prey to fear and superstition. The Enlightenment, with its more rational, mind-centered view of the world, was a necessary corrective, a vital evolutionary step; now, however, humanity's move toward the rational has developed into a technical and scientific world that has all but obscured the connection to the symbolic realm. Another evolutionary step is now needed—the integration of the rational and the symbolic. The symbolic language of dreams allows us to go beyond our limited and contained view of reality and move into a more universal and expanded understanding, giving us access to connections that would be difficult or impossible to make through rational thought.

Rational thought, as useful and necessary as it is, remains ego bound and, as such, does not allow for the unknown. It tends to tie itself up in its own concepts. Jung, who devoted his life to studying the imagery of the psyche, used dreams as a primary method of investigation and felt that dreams were one of the most important ways of understanding the deepest aspect of an individual. In the following passage from *Civilization in Transition*, he speaks of the dream as a portal to a more universal reality:

A dream is a little hidden door in the deepest and most intimate sanctum of the soul, which opens into that primeval cosmic night that was psyche long before there was any ego-consciousness and which will remain psyche no matter how far our ego-consciousness extends. For all ego-consciousness is isolated; because it separates and discriminates, it knows only particulars, and it sees only those that can be related to the ego. Its essence is limitation, even though it reach to the farthest nebulae among the stars. All consciousness separates; but in dreams we put on the likeness of that more universal, truer, more eternal man dwelling in the darkness of primordial night.²

Dreams appear as images, which are a more primary way of thinking than language. In addition, these images are often symbols. A symbol is an image that points to a larger picture: it is an experience that extends beyond

itself to a greater reality than can be reached through the limitation of human thought. Although a symbol is filtered through human consciousness and is therefore only partly valid, it is still the best possible expression of the mystery that it attempts to describe.

Healers who live in touch with the mystery of the symbolic world in its purest form have traditionally been called shamans. They have existed in all times and places, and continue to exist today. A look at their experience reveals that many of the symbols shamans encounter also exist in the myths of cultures far removed from them and, indeed, in the dreams of city dwellers today.

CHAPTER NINE

Case Taking

Perceiving What Needs to Be Healed

The purpose of the homeopathic interview is to perceive what needs to be healed in an individual and to gather enough information to divine the unique complex of characteristic signs and symptoms underlying the obvious and common symptoms of the patient's disease. The information leading to the correct remedy, or simillimum, is often hidden underneath massive amounts of a disease's common symptoms, side effects of medication, and ideas and attitudes that the patient has assimilated from others. In some patients, the key to the case will be found in symptoms that lie in the realm of consciousness, and in others, it is hidden in the unconscious.

The goal of dream analysis in case taking is to enrich symptoms that are reported by the patient and those observed by the homeopath with material from the symbolic realm of the unconscious. Dreams and symbols are connections to the ancient realm of the collective unconscious and must be linked with more conscious information in order to be useful. No dream or symbol has meaning outside the context of the whole person. Dreams are not shortcuts to understanding an individual; they are a rich and complex way to delve deeply into the underlying structures of the individual psyche as it is connected with the timeless region of the collective unconscious. Since one of the most common ways for the unconscious to communicate is through dreams and symbols, it is for homeopaths to have ears to hear and eyes to see the language of the dream state.

The intelligence of the psyche has access to more information and activity than can be held by the individual consciously. The psyche knows with whom to communicate and in what way. So, only if the homeopath has the ability to understand will the patient's psyche bother to send messages through dreams that are relevant to the therapy. For this reason, it is

Case Taking O loj

important for homeopaths to develop a relationship to the dream state and their own psyches through dream journaling and sharing dreams with a partner.

The initial part of case taking with dreams is a process that one prepares for by developing receptivity toward and respect for the psyche. This receptive attitude coupled with active listening becomes an invitation, an opportunity, for the psyche of the patient to communicate with the homeopath. It opens up a stream of psychic flow between the psyche of the patient and the psyche of the homeopath that is the essence of the healing relationship.

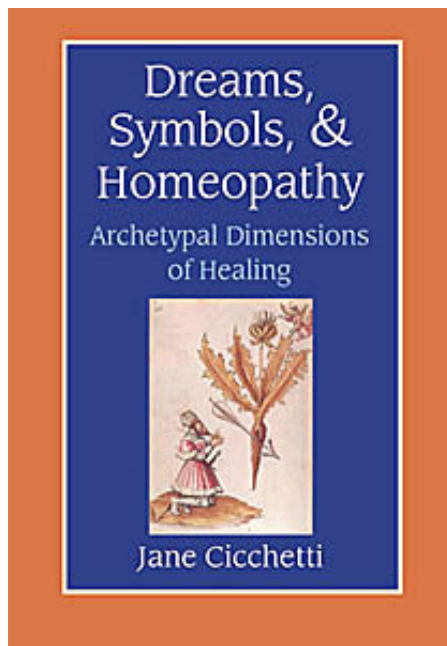
Within this healing relationship, an individual will produce dreams that can be understood by the therapist. Homeopathic patients often tell dreams that point to the remedy they need. Even if the dream was dreamt years ago, it is one of thousands of dreams a patient has had in the past. The fact that a particular dream is remembered during the interview is of special significance. The dream often contains a clue to the remedy and is a tool the patient's vital force uses to point to meaning in what may appear to be chaos.

Although the timing will, of course, vary from situation to situation, it is preferable to ask about dreams after a complete case has been taken. In other words, after the person has given all of the information he or she is going to volunteer—including modalities, generals, and family history—then comes the time to ask about dreams. The homeopath might ask, "What dreams did you have in your childhood that you still remember today?" Or, "What dreams do you have that repeat over and over?" "What did you dream last night?" and "Tell me about the most significant dream you have ever had."

The information revealed in dream analysis is often a second story that is symbolic but parallel to the information in the initial case taking. After telling a dream, patients may begin to speak on another level, one that is much more personal and intimate. It is here that they may tell their deepest desires, especially if the dream is one that has been remembered from childhood. Frequently, the synchronicity between the dream and the contents of the rest of the case will be revealed at this time, and the revelation is often profound and delightful.

The Psychological Types

Another important factor that nurtures the possibility for communication on this deep and healing level is the rapport that is established between the homeopath and the patient. No homeopath, no matter how



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