

Psychotherapy Guidebook

ANALYTICAL PSYCHOLOGY

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Analytical Psychology

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DEFINITION

Analytical Psychology is the name given to the psychological-therapeutic system founded and developed by the Swiss psychiatrist Carl Gustav Jung (1875- 1961). It views the psyche as consisting of two complementary and interacting systems: consciousness and the unconscious. The two systems are motivated and guided by a powerful thrust of the psyche to become whole. This thrust finds its expression in communication between the systems via an imaginal process using symbolic language, as in dreams, fantasies, etc. Increased awareness, and thus symptomatic relief, is brought about by translation and interpretation of this language.

HISTORY

While a young psychiatric resident, Jung read the just-published book by Freud on the interpretation of dreams. Freud's revolutionary idea of attributing unconscious motivation to human behavior resonated with similar thoughts Jung was entertaining at the time, and Jung proceeded to devise an experimental method, called the Word Association Test, that could be seen as

providing an objective, scientific basis for some of Freud's ideas. The two started a warm correspondence, and struck up a friendship that lasted for many years. Jung became Freud's pupil, then colleague. The two agreed on the most basic hypothesis: in addition to the rational, conscious aspect of the personality, there is another realm of the psyche of which man is normally not aware, which they called the unconscious. But they soon disagreed as to what the contents of the unconscious is. This may have been the result of the different settings in which Freud and Jung were observing unconscious phenomena. Freud was initially dealing with middle-class women suffering from neurotic hysteria while Jung was primarily involved with mental patients in psychotic states. Jung was also, at the same time, exposed to parapsychological phenomena via a medium and her trance states. So Jung and Freud were exposed to different kinds of unconscious material. Perhaps as a result, Freud maintained that the unconscious was composed of repressed, traumatic childhood experiences that involved the clash of emerging instinctual needs and the oppressive reality of the family and society. Psychoanalysis was then developed as a technique, consisting of free associations, designed to bring the clashes ("conflicts") into awareness and thus deal with them from an adult vantage point. Jung employed this technique successfully for a while, but gradually became dissatisfied with it. Although it certainly seemed correct as far as it went, it did not go far enough. Jung found he could not, in good conscience, reduce all of a person's current

life situation to repressed childhood instinctuality, especially if instinctuality primarily meant sexuality. Jung understood and acknowledged the enormous importance of sexuality in the development of the personality, but he perceived the unconscious as encompassing much more. To be sure, in his patients' material, instinctual conflicts came to the surface, but in addition he saw in their unconscious material, especially dreams and fantasies, an unfolding of a process. This process was uniquely expressed in each person, but it had nevertheless a common structure. Jung called it the "individuation process." Underlying the concept of an individuation process is the idea that a person's psyche contains a potential, is seeking its fulfillment. In other words, the unconscious is goal-oriented, it has a teleological facet. It does not just relate a person's behavior to past experiences, but, more importantly, it orients it toward the future. This differed fundamentally from Freud's point of view, and the inevitable rift occurred. Jung then established his own psychology.

TECHNIQUE

Modern Jungian psychotherapy investigates the following four processes:

1. *Projection and its ramifications.* The basic rule of the psyche is that what is unconscious is projected: that is, attributed to other people or external situations. The projection may lead to an erroneous perception (as when you think your friend is sad while he himself feels quite happy), or to a correct one (your

friend is very stingy and it makes you very angry). Projection is always accompanied by a strong affectivity (emotions or moods). In an analysis, the patient is made aware of the extent to which he is projecting, and how his behavior is affected by it. He is then called upon to withdraw his projections and recognize that they are aspects of his own psyche, and to take responsibility for them.

2. *Encounter with one's shadow.* A person's shadow is that side of his psyche to which he is unrelated. It consists of those qualities that one would rather not see in oneself, as well as unrealized potentials. Facing the shadow is mostly very painful, and theoretically endless. The analyst has to carefully guide this encounter so that the patient will assimilate only as much of his shadow as he needs to change maladaptive patterns. Care is taken that he not be thrown into more of an individuation process than he is temperamentally suited for.

3. *Complexes.* A complex is an energy system. It is to the psyche what a mine is in a field. At its core it has an idea that acts like a vortex, draining energy from the conscious personality. Examples are: an inferiority or superiority complex, a mother or father complex, and so on. The analyst helps the patient to identify his complexes and to gradually defuse them and return the deflected energies back to the conscious ego.

4. *Encounter with the "Collective Unconscious."* The Collective Unconscious, also called the "Objective Psyche," is the name

given by Jung to the underlying structure that he found common to all people. Jung found parallels to this structure in mythologies, fairy tales, and various esoteric traditions, such as alchemy. All of them, if translated into psychological terms, were composed of similar elements. These building blocks of the underlying structure Jung called archetypes. One does not encounter the archetypes directly, but through their archetypal imagery or symbolism. Some examples of archetypes are: God, the Wise Old Man, and the Hero on a journey to find a treasure. Not everyone has experienced the Collective Unconscious directly, but most of us do so at least indirectly. The analyst guides the person in such an encounter by amplifying it with parallels in mythology, literature, and so on.

APPLICATIONS

Analytical Psychology started as a healing technique in the medical model to relieve incapacitating symptoms, but it has become a way of viewing the world and man's place in it. It is essentially a viewpoint that endows the human condition with meaning. Toward the end of his days, Jung thought of his work more as a process of reeducation, a way of understanding psychic phenomena, than as a psychotherapeutic process per se. Although acknowledged as one of the great thinkers of our age, his work is considered controversial, and does not as yet form part of the psychological establishment. His work is most often taught in the departments of religion

and literature.