

Examine your Life Through the Carpet Weaver of the Night

Luc De Schepper

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Reviewer: Ann Manning

I approached this book with some excitement. I've had a fascination with Jungian psychology since my twenties, with the nature of dreams even longer. Weaving these two threads into homoeopathic understanding is an ambitious task. 'Examine your Life Through the Carpet Weaver of the Night' is the fifth and final of a series by Dr Luc De Schepper offering 'a full education in the art and science of classical homoeopathy'. De Schepper tells us that this is:

'... a book about the other half of humankind, unknown to Hahnemann and to most homoeopaths around the world: the actions of the unconscious communicated by dreams.' (cover notes)

In the introductory chapter, Dr Schepper goes to great lengths to convince the reader of the importance of the role of dreams. I would imagine that anyone who is reading this book is already on 'team dream', and that this chapter could have benefited from some heavy editing.

The body of the book is divided into four sections. The first discusses general aspects of dream psychology. De Schepper writes:

The main dream purpose is an unconscious compensatory act towards and individual conscious situation. (p 36)

He warns against a generalised application of dream analysis stating:

No dream symbol can be separated from the individual who dreams it. (p.28)

and

It is of utmost importance to know what an image or symbol really means for the patient. (p 54)

In terms of analysis of dreams, Dr De Schepper advises taking note of four aspects. First is the setting, which includes place, time, and characters. Next, the theme can be ascertained by inquiring into the question that the unconscious is posing. The third stage is the path by which the dream proceeds and

finally there is the response to the conflict depicted in the dream; the resolution, or its opposite, the catastrophe.

An extensive exploration of the language of dreams follows, detailing the meaning of different dream symbols such as human and animal characters, numbers, and colours. He explores the dreams that might appear at different stages of a person's life and the common themes that occur in dreams. These include dreams of flying, dreams of being naked and dreams of being pursued. In most instances examples from cases are provided: a brief background to the case, a description of the dream and then De Schepper's analysis of that dream. This pattern is repeated throughout the book.

Sections two and three explore key concepts of Jungian psychology. Section two, with the title 'Elements of the Conscious', covers aspects of ego formation and the persona, that is, the mask we present to the world. Then there are the four conscious functions: thinking, feeling, sensing, and intuiting. While all are present in every individual, one function is usually dominant. Dreams can reveal the need and the means to develop the complementary and suppressed functions. The conscious function combines with the two attitude types, introversion and extroversion, forming eight different psychological types. In most instances, the description of each state is illustrated by a brief dream description and analysis.

The third section, 'Elements of the Personal and Collective Unconscious', delves further into the concepts of Jungian psychology. As well as the personal and collective unconscious De Schepper examines the archetypal figures: the shadow, the anima and animus and the syzygy. The shadow is understood to refer to the 'negative' side of the personality, the unpleasant qualities that we tend to hide from ourselves or project onto others.

By bringing the shadow into consciousness, we reduce its power, therefore gaining a degree of freedom. (p 397)

The shadow appears in dreams as a person of the same sex as the dreamer and usually as someone whom they dislike. Understanding the nature of the shadow can give a clue to the areas where the dreamer needs to pursue inner work.

According to Jung, the anima represents the unconscious feminine aspect of a man and the animus the unconscious masculine aspect of a woman. These days, with our more fluid understanding of gender identity, it is understood that we can all have an animus and an anima figure in our unconscious. Nevertheless, the anima and animus figures will usually appear in a dream as a character of the opposite gender to the dreamer.

Each archetype is said to be represented by a combination of four different types, which form pairs of opposites. The anima can take on the personal aspect of the mother or her

opposite, the daughter. On a more impersonal level she can be expressed as the medium or the Amazon. De Schepper likens the mother aspect to a *Calcareo carbonica* personality, the daughter to *Phosphorus*, the Amazon to *Sepia*, and then the medium to both *Calcareo carbonica* and *Phosphorus*. An unbalanced connection to the anima can be either one of identification, inflation or projection. The animus can also be represented by four different types: the personal father and son and the impersonal hero and wise old man. De Schepper only provides one homoeopathic medicine equivalent: *Medorrhinum* for the son archetype.

The final chapters of this section focus on the 'syzygy', a term used by Jung to denote a union of opposites, in this case, the anima and animus. In many relationships one person will project their undeveloped anima or animus onto their partner, 'falling in love' with this projection rather than seeing the whole person. This can work both ways, either becoming a source of conflict or an opportunity to grow and mature psychologically. The information provided in dreams, if properly understood, can serve as an invaluable guide to this growth. Here again, De Schepper provides case examples to illustrate this process. The syzygy is also brought into play looking at issues of mid-life crisis and the approach of death when a person's activities have been largely focussed on external engagement at the expense of inner exploration.

'Birth of the Cyber Delusion and Collective Unconscious' is the title given to the fourth and final section of the book. Here the term 'cyber' is not referring to our online activity, rather it derives from the Greek *cybernetes*, which means the helmsman, the one who steers the ship. The cyber delusion (CD) then refers to a common belief (delusion) that we are in command of our being, the sum of the personal unconscious and conscious.

De Schepper explains how the CD arises and gives guidance as to how to identify it in the *Materia Medica* and in the clinic setting.

The final chapter is 'Determining the Direction of Healing through Dream Analysis'. The first step De Schepper advises is coming into relationship with the persona. This is to be followed by integrating the contents of the shadow, and then coming to terms with the anima and/or animus. But we are warned:

When these symbols appear in our dreams (shadow, anima, animus ...), they don't necessarily always tell us where we are, but where we should be going. (p 619)

There follows a final series of dream descriptions and analysis to illustrate this point.

Overall, the intention of this book is to deepen homoeopaths' understanding and appreciation of the role of dream symbolism, especially from the Jungian perspective. In terms of immediate practical application, I believe, understanding the messages contained in a dream can help determine how successful a prescription has been.

Remedies are mentioned occasionally, usually polycrest portraits to illustrate some of the concepts described.

At times it seemed the flow of ideas has a dream-like quality rather than flowing logically. This perhaps is appropriate, given the subject matter. After finishing the book, I found myself paying more attention to my dreams and appreciating the messages provided there. If you are open to learning more about Jungian psychology, especially as it relates to dream imagery, then 'Examine your Life Through the Carpet Weaver of the Night' will be an invaluable tool.