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Differences in dream content and structure between Japanese and Western dreams

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Summary. This qualitative study of patients' dreams in analytical psychotherapy using the method of Structural Dream Analysis investigated whether culture and culturally shaped mentalities have an influence on the content and structure of dreams. To investigate whether there are systematic differences between Western and Japanese dreams a German sample of 11 cases with 140 dreams was compared with a sample of 13 Japanese cases with 168 dreams. There were statistically significant differences found in the distribution of dream patterns as well as typical motifs characteristic for the two samples. These differences in the dreams reflect the typical differences in the mentalities of Germany (emphasizing individuality, autonomy and a strong ego identity) versus Japan (emphasizing sociality, harmony and cooperation with others). This is interpreted as speaking for an influence of culture and mentalities on the content and structure of dreams, as well as providing additional support for the continuity hypothesis of dreaming and waking life.

Keywords: Cultural differences, mentalities, dreams in psychotherapy, Structural Dream Analysis, continuity hypothesis

1. Introduction

Even though differences in the content of dreams connected with different cultural backgrounds of the dreamers are a topic of high interest for dream research, there have been only few attempts to investigate these differences empirically. DeCicco, Donati, & Pini (2012) point out: "After a thorough literature re-view, few studies comparing dreams between cultures were found and no studies comparing discovery or meaning of dreams between cultures were found to date". The few studies existing which systematically investigated content and meaning of dreams in different cultures usually found no significant differences (e.g. Prasad 1982). Hsu & Yu (2016) investigated the differences in the content of dreams of Chinese and Western dreamers using the Hall and Van de Castle (1966) coding system. The study was based on the hypothesis that dreams of Westerners are dominated by unpleasant dream content, whereas Chinese people's dreams seem to display more pleasant affect and content. They could not find any significant differences and found that the results of previous similar research in other countries of a negativity bias in dreaming were confirmed. No significant differences between ethnic groups were also reported by other researchers (see below). An exception from this rule is a recent study examining nightmares and coping between Asians and Caucasians (Picchioni & Hicks, 2009), one of the first studies to report a difference in nightmares between these ethnic groups. The authors investigated the hypothesis that nightmares may serve a beneficial function as there is a positive relationship between night-

mares and "waking" coping strategies. They found that the relationship between nightmares and one measure of coping was only significant for those who identified themselves as Asian when compared to those who identified themselves as Caucasian. These results represent one of the first differences in nightmares between ethnic groups.

These studies were based on coding systems which attempt to classify dreams by content analysis (Domhoff, 2000). There have been many attempts to develop classification systems of dreams, as for example the famous system built on content analysis of over 50,000 dreams by Hall & Nordby (1972). Typical dreams reported in this classification involved aggression, predatory animals, flying, falling, being persecuted by hostile strangers, landscapes, dreams of misfortune, sex, getting married and having children, taking examinations or undergoing some similar ordeal, traveling, swimming or being in the water, watching fires, and being confined in an underground place. "These typical dreams express the shared concerns, preoccupations, and interests of all dreamers. They may be said to constitute the universal constants of the human psyche" (Hall & Nordby, 1972, p.35). From our point of view, the problem with this kind of classification becomes apparent when considering that the typical dream motifs reported above describe very different entities, from objects and beings to action patterns and story structures. There is no theoretical model behind such a classification which could connect the dream motifs with a meaning for the dreamer. This was already criticized by Stevens (1995), who gives the following example: "Simple content analyses reveal that agonistic dreams are more common among males of all ages and hedonic dreams more common among females, but both types of dreams occur in both sexes. A more significant variable than gender in determining the relative incidence of such dreams is the kind of family the individual grew up in" (p. 249).

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Content or structure?

Therefore Structural Dream Analysis (SDA) was developed as a method which investigates dreams from a structuralist

point of view (Roesler 2018a, 2018b, 2020). It is assumed that the meaning of a dream consists not so much in containing certain symbols or elements, but more in the relationship between the elements, and in the course of action which the dream takes, i.e. its structure. Therefore coding systems, which count the appearance of certain elements and symbols, from our point of view are not able to identify the meaning of the dream, as meaning is the result of interpretation. SDA is a qualitative, interpretive research method, but attempts to formalize the process of interpretation of the dream to an extent that the results are independent from the interpreter. A reliability test found an interpreter agreement for the results of the same case of $k = .70 - .82$ (Roesler 2018b). SDA sees the dream as a narrative. In narratology a narrative is defined as a development from a starting point, which often is a problem that needs repair or solution; the narrative goes through ups and downs generally to the solution of the problem or the valued endpoint of the story (Gülich & Quasthoff, 1985).

The dream, so to say, is a short story about how the protagonist, in most cases the dream ego, processes a problem. SDA makes use of analytic tools developed in narratology; especially two earlier methods of narrative analysis were incorporated: a) Vladimir Propp (1974) developed the structuralist method Functional Analysis to investigate the structure of fairytales. Each fairytale is divided into its functional parts (e.g. "The King is ill and needs healing"; "The hero fights the Dragon") and each functional part receives an abstract symbol, e.g. a letter or number. As a result each fairytale can be written as an abstract formula of symbols and then different fairytales can be compared regarding their structure. b) Boothe (2002) developed the narratological method JAKOB for the analysis of patient narratives from analytical psychotherapies and their development over the course of psychotherapy. The method focuses on the role the narrator takes in the narrative in terms of activity vs. passivity and his/her relation to other protagonists in the narrative, as well as on different episodic models, which describe the course the narrative takes.

The analysis of dreams focuses on the relationship of the dream ego to other figures in the dream and on the extent of agency of the dream ego, i.e. its capacity to act, follow plans and deal with challenges. The conceptual framework underlying this approach to dreams is based in the psychology of C.G. Jung and his theory of dreaming and dream interpretation (Roesler 2018c). Here dreams are seen as providing a picture of the current situation of the psyche including also unconscious aspects. Also in dreams unconscious or conflictual parts of the psyche can appear personified, and the dream will then describe the relationship of the dream ego and these other parts of the psyche; e.g. when the dream ego is threatened or chased by an aggressive person or animal this can be understood as picturing an unresolved complex threatening ego functioning (Roesler 2018b). So Jungian dream interpretation focuses on the relationship of the dream ego (i.e. the figure in the dream which experiences the dreamer as "myself", psychoanalytically representing ego consciousness) to the other figures in the dream, which gives an indication through the imagery of the capability of the ego to cope with emotions, impulses and complexes (being represented in this symbolic form in the dream), and the strength of ego consciousness.

Dreaming in the perspective of different cultures

In studies of dreams from different cultures by anthropologists such an understanding of dreams is quite common. Hollan (2003) describes what he calls selfscape dreams: "To summarize briefly, selfscape dreams involve complex, developmentally sensitive imaginal, emotional, and cognitive processes that reflect back to the dreamer how his or her current organization of self relates various parts of itself to itself, its body, and to other people and objects in the world" (p. 65). Comparing dreams from the United States and Indonesia he found that dreamers from both cultures had the same kinds of dreams dealing with conflicts of the self with others and with their personal life situation; also individuals from both cultures interpreted the meaning of the dreams in a similar way referring to the above mentioned theoretical framework, that is seeing their current personal situation reflected in the dreams. He also found, similar to the results of Hsu & Yo (2016), that there are no differences between these two cultures in the frequency of pleasant versus unpleasant dreams. In the same way, Mageo (2003) found high similarities in different cultures in their understanding of dreams as confronting the conscious ego with unresolved topics or conflictual parts not yet integrated into the whole of personality: "Westerners are not alone in alienating an affective and embodied self. Cultures tend to highlight either subjectivity or sociality, and to associate the other with body and emotion" (p. 37).

Griffith, Miyagi & Tago (1958) examined the differences in the typical dreams of Japanese and Americans. They found that there were no differences between the two cultures regarding the variety of typical dreams. However, when looking at the manifest dream content or dream situation in typical dreams, they found some discrepancies in the percentages between the two cultures – unfortunately, as this is an old study, the authors did not conduct any statistical analyses. Nevertheless they hypothesized that the similarity in typical dreams reflects the universality in "fundamental human nature", whereas "cultural attitudes and behaviors" are also reflected in some details of typical dreams (p.1178).

Differences in culture and mentality between Western countries and East Asia

In this study we focus on dreams from German and Japanese psychotherapy clients (as examples for a Western and an East Asian culture) and the differences in mentality expressed in them, which means their current psychological situation and the relationship of the person to itself. We would like to present a few reflections on the differences in mentality between these two cultures, as premature and reduced these may be considering the complexity of the matter, as these differences are crucial for the study presented below and its findings.

Generally speaking, the West tends to emphasize subjectivity and a strong and autonomous self, whereas Asian cultures emphasize sociality, cooperation and the person being part of the collective. Tuan (1982) points out that, parallel to the development of a differentiation between private and public space in European countries in the 18th century, there is a growing usage of I in literatures, together with expressions like self love, self recognition and self-pity, and a growing attention to self reflection. In German culture and thought, this may have reached a climax in Nietzsche's philosophy and his "will to expand the ego". There was no

such development in Asian countries, at least not before the end of World War II and the growing influence of American culture in Japan. Today, from a psychological point of view, there are various types of consciousness in Japan, a wide spectrum from premodern to modern, even to postmodern (Kawai, 2010). Traditionally, Japanese consciousness is centered not on the ego and selfish needs, but is focused on the needs of others and obeying to collective values. An important school of modern philosophy in Japan, called the “Kyoto School” (e.g. Nishitani), even opposed the characteristic modern philosophy of the West, as found for example in Nietzsche, by suggesting a Zen Buddhist-informed approach to transcend the egotistic strive of the modern individual in direction of an “empty self” (Davis, Schroeder, & Wirth, 2010). In contrast to this, in psychoanalysis, as it developed in Western Europe, the goal of individual development is a movement from interpersonal dependence to independence and individuality (Winnicott 1965).

With reference to the above mentioned cultural differences, Konakawa (2020) points out that they “... may reflect the difference in self between the two cultures. Cultural psychology has been dealing with non-clinical situations and suggesting that there are cultural differences in human relationships or values between Western and East Asian people. ... An independent construal of the self with Western people needs to control over the surrounding situation, to express one’s own thoughts, feelings, and actions to others, and to stand out; whereas an interdependent self with East Asian people includes attentiveness and responsiveness to others, the willful management of one’s other focused feelings and desires, and further the reciprocal interpersonal relationship” (p. 164). Nisbett (2003) also suggested that Western people (in that case American) use an either/or approach, and value individuality and self-aggrandizement; in contrast, Japanese people use an ‘awase’ (harmonious, fitting in) style, and value maintaining social relations and coordinated action. Kawai (2003) describes Chuku Kouzou, the hollow center structure, as a characteristic form of Japanese narratives, e.g. in mythology, in which the main character is at the center of happenings but without acting on anything, and in that sense not being a “protagonist”, but more of just a being. Based on these observations, he argues that this is a characteristic way of how Japanese people establish an identity, which is fundamentally different from Western styles. Marks and Kitayama (1991) pointed out that with a (typically Western) independent construal of the self, others are less centrally implicated in one’s current self-definition or identity and self-esteem depends on one’s abilities, attributes and achievements; in contrast, with an interdependent self (e.g. in Japan, as pointed out above), acts of fitting in give rise to pleasant, other-focused emotions, e.g. feelings of connection, while diminishing unpleasant ones, e.g. shame.

2. Study

The study presented here investigated whether such cultural differences could also be identified in dreams of persons from Germany and Japan being in psychotherapy. The dreams were reported and documented by the clients and were subject to discussion and interpretation in the context of psychotherapy; the therapists had all been trained in the Jungian school of psychoanalysis and frequently used dream interpretation as a means of psychotherapy (Roesler 2018c).

2.1. Method: Structural Dream Analysis

Structural Dream Analysis (SDA), as described above, investigates series of dreams from psychotherapies from a structuralist point of view using a set of analytical tools stemming from narrative research. SDA aims at identifying the inner structure of meaning from the series of dreams alone without referring to additional information about the dreamer, the psychodynamics or the course of psychotherapy. The meaning conveyed by the dream is analyzed in a systematic series of interpretive steps, a formalized manual is available (for details see Roesler, 2018a). A study of 15 cases and 202 dreams using SDA found a typology of dream patterns which describe the structure of the majority of the dreams and which could also link the structure of the dreams with the psychopathology of the dreamers and the development over the course of psychotherapy (Roesler, 2018b). This typology of dream patterns is now used in the sense of a coding, which means that for each dream the structural pattern which the dream follows is identified from the list. A reliability test found an interpreter agreement for the results coming from the same case of $k = .70 - .82$ (Roesler, 2018b).

SDA dream patterns

Pattern 1: No dream ego present

In the dream there is no dream ego present, the dreamer just observes a scene as if watching a movie and does not actively take part in the dream. In some cases the dream ego flies above and looks down on the happenings in the dream.

Pattern 2: The dream ego is threatened

In dreams of this kind the dream ego is threatened, e.g. attacked or injured and usually tries to escape or protect itself against the threatening figures. In b) to d) below, the dream ego very often reacts with panic and either feels powerless or tries to escape from the threat. Often this results in the dream ego being chased by the threatening figures. The dreams in this pattern can be differentiated depending on the severity of the threat.

- a) the dream ego is damaged, e.g. severely wounded, or even killed. In some cases the killing has already happened and the dream ego is found as a dead body.
- b) the threat to the dream ego comes from a force in nature, e.g. a natural disaster, earthquake, fire, flooding, storm etc.
- c) the dream ego is threatened by (dangerous) animals.
- d) the dream ego is threatened by human beings, e.g. criminals, murderers or “evil people”, or human-like figures, e.g. ghosts, shadows etc.

Pattern 3: The dream ego is confronted with a performance requirement

The dream ego is confronted with a performance requirement, which is set by another figure or agency in the dream. The dream ego is confronted with a task which it has to fulfil, or is required to find something or to give something to another person in the dream so that they can fulfil a task etc. The most common form of this pattern is the examination dream. An important part of this pattern is that the initiative is not with the dream ego but with other figures confronting the dream ego with a requirement. The dream ego is subjected to their control and power.

- a) Examination in a school or university setting.

b) The dream ego is subject to an inspection by an official person, e.g. a ticket inspection on the train where the right of the dream ego is questioned.

c) the dream ego has the task to find something (which was lost before), get something, produce something etc.

A very typical pattern in these kind of dreams is that the dream ego does not feel capable of performing the task, does not possess the right tools or capabilities, or has failed to bring these devices, has lost them on the way etc. For example, the dream ego is not prepared for the examination, or arrives too late for it.

Pattern 4: Mobility dream

The dream ego is moving towards a specified or unclear destination, e.g. traveling and making use of different forms of transportation like bicycle, car, bus, train, airplane, ship etc. An interesting differentiation is the question whether these transportation devices are public or individual. Again this form of dream can be differentiated depending on the extent of the dream ego's agency which shows in the extent to which the dream ego determines its own movement.

a) disorientation: the dream ego has no idea where to go, even where it is and there are no signs of direction etc.

b) the dream ego is locked up in a closed space, imprisoned etc., and is looking for a way to get out.

c) the dream ego wants to move, travel etc. but has no means to do so, e.g. it misses the train

d) the dream ego attempts to move and has some means of transportation but cannot control the movement, e.g. it cannot steer a car

e) the dream ego is moving but the way is blocked or the means of transport breaks down or crashes and movement cannot be continued

f) the dream ego is moving, making use of some means of transportation but it is going the wrong way, is in the wrong train or bus, or is not authorized to use it (e.g. has no ticket) and therefore cannot continue the journey

g) in the positive form, the dream ego succeeds in moving towards and reaching the desired destination.

Pattern 5: Social interaction dream

The dream ego is occupied with making contact or communicating with another person or figure in the dream. The dream ego wants to get in contact with another person, or is in communication and attempts to communicate something to the other person, or is more generally occupied with creating a desired contact with the other person which can include sexual contact. This dream pattern can be differentiated depending on the dream ego's activity and how successful it is in reaching its desired contact.

a) the dream ego wants to get into contact but is ignored by others

b) the dream ego is criticized, devalued or made ridiculous by others and feels shame

c) the dream ego is successful in creating the desired contact

d) a special case: the dream ego is aggressive towards others (even kills others) which expresses the will of the dream ego to be separated and autonomous.

2.2. Sample

A German sample of 11 cases with 140 dreams was compared with a sample of 13 Japanese cases with 168 dreams. It has to be noted that the two samples did not differ sig-

nificantly in basic characteristics. The overall sample consisted of six male and 18 female patients. Age ranged from 16 to 55, with the majority of the patients between 30 and 45. The psychological problems treated included anxieties and phobias, depression and self worth disorders, obsessive-compulsive disorder, psychosomatic disorders and insomnia. The few adolescents in the sample were treated because of school refusal and aggressive impulses. All of the patients had actively asked for therapy; in the German cases the therapy was financed by public insurances, as is generally the case in the German healthcare system. In general the treatment took place in an outpatient setting, only in two cases there was an additional inpatient treatment for a limited period. The usual treatment frequency was once a week, with a broad range of treatment length ranging from short-term interventions (3 to 6 months) to long-term treatments covering several years. It has to be assumed that these differences in treatment parameters also had an influence on the structure and content of the dreams, but for the question investigated here this can be neglected.

2.3. Data/Statistical analyses

All of the cases were analyzed using the original extensive form of SDA, and additionally all of the dreams in the sample were pooled and coded using the typology of five dream patterns described above. The members of the research team who conducted the interpretive analysis (extended form of SDA) as well as the coding were native speakers for the language in which the dreams were documented, so no translation procedure was necessary. Statistically significant differences in the distribution of the five dream patterns in the two different samples were analyzed using the χ^2 -Test.

3. Results: Dream Data and Discussion

Distribution of dream patterns in German and Japanese samples. German sample (11 cases, 140 dreams): Pattern 1 with no dream ego was found only once (case 11) (0.7%). Pattern 2 (the dream ego is threatened) was the pattern most often found in the sample (38.6%), followed by pattern 4 (mobility) (34.3%), pattern 5 (social interaction) (20.0%), and pattern 3 (performance requirement) (10.0%). The total is higher than 100% since some dreams include two patterns. Japanese sample (13 cases, 168 dreams): Pattern 3 (performance requirement) is the pattern most often to be found in the sample (36.9%), followed by pattern 2 (the dream ego is threatened) (33.9%), pattern 5 (social interaction) (17.9%), pattern 4 (mobility) (15.5%), and pattern 1 (no dream ego) (3.57%) (see also table 1). The statistical analysis found significant differences in the distribution of the patterns in the two samples ($\chi^2(4) = 37.054, p < .01$).

Apart from these systematical differences in the distribution of dream patterns in the two samples, differences were found in three fields: 1) Japanese dreamers have pattern 1 - dreams (no dream ego present) to a much higher extent than German dreamers; in fact, in the German sample of 140 dreams this pattern appears just once. 2) In Japanese dreams the dream ego is often accompanied by others, whereas in German dreams the dream ego is usually acting on its own, without receiving support from others, or is even alone. 3) This difference is even heightened in final dreams from dream series covering the course of psychotherapy: in Japanese dreams the initial tensions in the dreams from the initial phase of therapy is resolved by the dream ego

Table 1. Distribution of patterns in the two samples and χ^2 -Test

	Pattern 1	Pattern 2	Pattern 3	Pattern 4	Pattern 5
German sample	1 (0.7%)	54 (38.6%)	14 (10.0%)**	48 (34.3%)**	28 (20.0%)
Japanese sample	6 (3.57%)	57 (33.9%)	62 (36.9%)**	26 (15.5%)**	30 (17.9%)

Notes. ** = $p < .01$; $\chi^2(4) = 37.054$, $p < .01$; the number of cases in pattern 1 is too small for statistical analyses.

receiving support from others and enjoying peaceful company with others, whereas in German dreams improvement in psychotherapy is typically reflected in the dream ego appearing autonomous, even separating from others. These findings will be discussed in more detail below.

1. Dreams without dream ego in Japanese dreams. As was pointed out above, apart from one dream in the German sample, all of the pattern 1 - dreams were found in the Japanese sample. Here are some typical examples:

“A girl (four or five years old) accidentally jumped off the roof of a three story apartment building. She wore yellow and blue clothes. She was hanging around the roof top where no handrail was. She looked down from there. There was a gap. She leaned on it, but when she bent down, she fell off the roof top. Her screaming echoed while she was falling. Shortly afterward there was a dull sound from below.”

“A pupa has transformed into a silver and black butterfly.”

“People crowded. Prime Minister Tanaka came there. He said that people must be tough in their life.”

The therapists in these cases noted that the clients' personality was characterized by a low sense of self, expressing a lack of subjectivity and self relationship, which manifests in a consistent refusal to participate in school or occupational activities, withdrawal from social relationships etc. Typically in these cases clients are below or around 20 years of age, and the reason why they are referred to psychotherapy is non-attendance at school for a long period of time, in some cases for several years, such as in the following example:

“My elementary-school classmate’s father was being confined. The structure where her father was confined looks like a castle. The castle was burning as if under siege. Then her father was burnt to death. Then the scene changed as if switching the TV channel. The baseball game between Kyojin and Hanshin (Japanese baseball teams) is about to start.”

“I dreamed about a scene from the movie “Shi no Tani”, which I had seen last night.”

“I was watching TV. It was a quiz show,” “There are bees, about 10, around a tree. I was watching them from the bellow.”

These clients in therapy are characterized by having problems to point out their problems to the therapist and identifying their aims for therapy as well as for their professional life; they even seem to be indifferent towards their own suffering. They also have difficulties to refer to the relationship with the therapist, in some cases even to consider the ther-

apist as another person - in short: they seem to have severe problems in mentalizing self as well as other.

2. Sociality and cooperation in Japanese dreams versus autonomy and individuality in German dreams. In the analysis of the Japanese cases and dreams, even though they could be coded using the typology described above, it became apparent that there is an additional pattern of dreams which could only be found in the Japanese sample. This pattern can be described as “others act in a positive way towards the dream ego”, which means that the dream ego receives help or support from others (without having asked for it), is cared for by others, receives guidance from others which leads to solutions, or others play, talk, go out for dining with the dream ego or share some other form of positive sociality, as in the following examples:

“I choose glasses in a store. I want to buy glasses without flames which is in fashion among young people. But when I wear it, my vision becomes vague. A young male shop assistant gives me another type of glasses with blackish flames, which seems to be designed for old ladies. He advises me that it will fit me better than the first one. I wear it, then my vision is clear. I am told that it looks good on me.”

“I want to escape from the earthquake. An old calm man advises me that I will be safe if I go under trees. I turn right, then there is a big tree on the footway. I stand around the tree with other people. We turn our back on the tree and look around.”

35 out of the 168 dreams in the Japanese sample (20.8%) corresponded to this pattern, partly in addition to fitting some of the other original five patterns. In the German sample, no dream at all could be found which corresponded to this pattern.

3. Differences in final dreams from psychotherapies in Japanese and Western clients. In psychoanalysis in general, the final dream to be discussed at the end of a psychotherapeutic treatment is usually considered to provide information on the status of psychological health the client has gained over the course of therapy. In this study, characteristic differences between the two samples in the structure of these final dreams were found. In Japanese psychotherapy clients dreams from the final phase of successful psychotherapies show a dream ego acting successfully, but being connected with others, receiving support from others or even acting in cooperation with others (corresponding to the additional pattern described above), e.g.

“I engaged in a life-and-death struggle on an island and escaped from there. I walked through an underground passage under the sea and came into a room of the big

hotel. At the entrance I killed someone using a pistol. In the room long tables and chairs were arranged looking like a classroom. My junior high-school friends sat around. M and S were there. Tea and cakes were placed. Everyone did not feel like sitting to eat, so we walked around in the room and opened windows to look at the view. There was the sea and it was beautiful. There were a harbor and a factory nearby, which looked like the view in Osaka or Kobe."

In contrast, in the German sample the dreams from the final phase of successful psychotherapies usually show a separated, even isolated dream ego with a high extent of agency, which acts on its own successfully.

"I had a giant toe. The skin on the nail was grown very wide. I thought: this has to be cut off. It could be moved back easily. There was another level of skin below, this one could be taken off easily, too. I was surprised that it did not hurt. Below the skin were very small black worms, everything was rotten, but I could remove it without difficulty. Below that everything was new."

"I am going by car to Italy for holidays together with my family and a few friends. There is bright sunshine and the nature is just wonderful. In Italy there are mountains, but also the sea. I am standing at the sea and, looking out over the water, suddenly become aware that my husband has not come with me and will never come again. I feel a great pain and despair. The waves of the sea are becoming larger and hit the beach. Even though there is no danger for me, my feet become wet. So I go away from the water, up the hill. It is not easy to climb the mountain, because the soil has become swampy."

"I say goodbye to my analyst, climb a motorbike and drive away."

4. General Discussion

The results of the statistical analysis have demonstrated that there are statistically significant differences in the distribution of dream patterns in the two samples. In a more detailed analysis of the content of the dreams characteristic differences between the two samples can be identified. Pattern 1 - dreams with no dream ego present are found almost exclusively in the Japanese sample. In an earlier study (Roesler, 2018b) we have demonstrated that pattern 1 - dreams are associated with a psychological status of the client which can be described with the psychoanalytical concept of low ego strength. From a viewpoint of Western psychology, this means that there is a low level of functional integration of the personality, which manifests in difficulties of the person to act willfully, reflect on their inner world and understand others, and a lack of a differentiated identity. In a certain sense, this status can be characterized as the opposite of an individualized, differentiated personality with a strong identity.

We believe that this is paralleled by the second finding, that there is an additional pattern in the Japanese dreams which can be characterized as giving an image of sociality and cooperation with others, which cannot be found in the German sample. This tendency is even heightened when looking at the final dreams of dream series in psychotherapies. From a psychoanalytic point of view, these final dreams give an image of the development the client has ex-

perienced over the course of therapy and the status of psychological health and integration the person has reached at the end of therapy. It becomes clear that for Japanese clients psychological well-being and maturation of the ego is reflected in the dreams by being related and in community with valued others, whereas for German clients it means to be individualized, to be able to act autonomously, and to have separated from (unhealthy) dependency on others. We believe that these differences between the two ethnic groups reflect fundamental differences in the mentality of the two cultures, with Japanese culture - at least traditionally - emphasizing sociality, harmony and cooperation and minimizing individuality, whereas in the German culture autonomy and agency of the individual and separation from dependency on others are highly valued.

In his investigation of children's dreams David Foulkes (1999) found that the agency of the dream ego in the dream reflects ego strength and the ego's capacity for reflection and self regulation. According to his findings, it takes up to 13 years, parallel to cognitive and emotional development, until the human capacity to dream is fully developed. Children below the age of seven years, he found, have only short, emotionally neutral dreams, without complicated story plots. In these dreams, usually no dream ego is present, an active dream ego appears only above the age of seven years. In combination with our findings in the present study, this could be interpreted as speaking for the fact that dreams with no dream ego reflect an immature state of personality development with no clearly defined identity. The fact that this dream pattern can be found more often in adults in the Japanese sample could reflect the general tendency in Japanese (and other East Asian societies) not to put so much emphasis on the development of an individualized and strong ego, but more on community, sociality and harmony with others. The same applies to the differences found in the structure of the final dreams. In Germany, maybe even more than in other Western countries, the development of an individualized and autonomous personality with a strong, willful ego and identity is highly valued. In pedagogical handbooks, for example, great emphasis is put on how to support children in quickly developing autonomy, self-regulation and independence from support from parents and other educators. Also in psychotherapy, not only in the psychoanalytic school, a general aim is to support the client in becoming independent from (unhealthy) relationships, to become autonomous and to reach a high level of self-regulation and functioning. This can well be demonstrated with the so-called specimen case, Amalia X, from psychoanalytic psychotherapy research (Kaechele & Leuzinger-Bohleber, 2006). Amalia X could be called the best investigated case in the history of psychotherapy research. A 400-session long-term psychoanalysis was fully videographed and the videos transcribed and documented in the so-called "Ulmer Textbank" at Ulm University in Germany, which made the videos and transcripts available for researchers all over the world. In the transcripts 130 dreams could be identified, which were subject to a number of studies in the context of clinical dream research (Roesler 2020). In the final dream of this dream series, discussed in one of the last sessions of the therapy, the female dream ego has grown very long hairs, which have become like roots, which enable the dream ego to walk out of the consultation room and leave the analyst behind. In the literature on the case this was generally considered as speaking for a very good

outcome of this psychoanalytic psychotherapy.

In so far as the results of this study speak for the fact that characteristics of mentality - here: Germany versus Japan - are reflected in the structure and imagery of dreams, these findings again, as in our earlier study (Roesler, 2018b), support the continuity hypothesis of dreaming and waking life (Schredl & Hofmann 2003). Domhoff points out that continuity does not mean a correspondence between dreams and banal events of the day, but rather, the intensity of personal concerns and interests shape dream content, and "in particular, the frequency of characters or activities reveals the intensity of various concerns" (Domhoff, 2017, p. 14). This is strongly demonstrated by the structure of the final dreams, which follows what is highly valued in the respective societies: independence, autonomy and strong identity in Germany versus community, sociality and harmony with others in Japan. In so far, we would like to suggest that the continuity hypothesis could be extended in the sense that not only personal concerns and interests have an influence on dream content, but also the cultural context of the dreamer seems to have a clear influence on the structure and content of dreams.

In this study, as the method for analyzing dreams and understanding the meaning of dream series Structural Dream Analysis was applied. Again, as demonstrated in earlier publications (Roesler, 2018a, 2018b), a structural approach in the analysis of dreams has provided meaningful and significant results. Therefore we suggest to use this structural approach in future research, instead of applying content analysis methods, which, as we believe, are not capable of catching the core of meaning of dreams and dream series. Even though this study produced significant results, it could be criticized that the two samples and the number of cases involved are still too small to derive at universally valid statements. More research is needed to support the hypothesis that culture has an influence on the content and structure of dreams. More studies should be conducted on the comparison of Western and East Asian dream samples as well as on the comparison of other cultures to solidify the results found in this study.

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