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## The Psychoanalytical Interpretations of the Myth

### Abstract

Psychoanalysis founded some kind of unique perspective in myth research; there is a lot of contemporary classifications that contain it as meaningful and specific frame of references. Its main assumption is the close relation between myth and unconsciousness; myth is its language. These statements are limitations and advantages of psychoanalytical perspective in the same time: 1. they are called “naturalism”, “reductionism”, “reductive hermeneutic”, “oedipal-ism” (the understanding of myth is reduced to the unconscious processes and to the scenario of Oedipal triangle); 2. psychoanalysis shows the relation between myth and us, the depth of human experiences patterns; myth becomes a true language of human mind. That patterns of experiences and its language were not characteristic of some archaic stages of human mind development but they are always present and form a source of our creativity.

### 1. General characteristic of unconscious-myth relation in psychoanalysis.

Psychoanalysis was founded on two pillars: hermeneutic (or humanistic) and clinical (Z. Rosińska<sup>1</sup>, P. Dybel<sup>2</sup>) and exists between nomothetical and idiographical sciences (P. Kutter<sup>3</sup>); however the value of these divisions is sometimes denied (A. Grünbaum<sup>4</sup>). The hermeneutic pillar consists of its trials to grasp the meaning of symbols and images active in individual and collective mental processes. One of the most important factors in the area of meaning understanding are multiple ways of myth interpretation. It is very characteristic for psychological dimension of the conception that problem of myth appears in massive form however whole theory is not devoted to the history of culture nor civilization. One can ask the reason of such massive form of the myth appearance in psychological conception. Psychoanalytical current itself was not once called as “powerful mythology”

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<sup>1</sup> Z. Rosińska, *Freud*, Warszawa 1993.

<sup>2</sup> P. Dybel, ‘Freudowska psychoanaliza jako zamaskowana hermeneutyka’, *Colloquia Communia* 3–6 (1989), pp. 61–75.

<sup>3</sup> P. Kutter, *Współczesna psychoanaliza. Psychologia procesów nieświadomych*, Gdańsk 2000.

<sup>4</sup> A. Grünbaum, *Podstawy psychoanalizy. Krytyka filozoficzna*, Kraków 2004.

(L. Wittgenstein) or “seductive mythical alternative” to rational and empirical ethos (F. Crews). These notes are partially grounded in the observation of psychoanalytical interest in myth however they also have deeper causes in the critique of psychoanalytical scientific claims in general.

Myth had one of the most important roles to play in psychoanalytical research of the unconsciousness<sup>5</sup> (unconscious<sup>6</sup>). It is very characteristic for the conception that myth is related to the unconscious – the main difference between psychoanalysis and many schools and methods of myth research. Myth is the expression of hidden dimension of our psyche or organic life processes in the same time. Myth partially presents that what is hidden, the unconscious; it is a way of unconscious manifestation. That is the main factor of its importance for a lot of currents in the psychoanalytical movement. The other is its indication to the anthropological level: if one can find in myth the unconscious pattern, it also means that these patterns are anthropological data; that they are characteristic for human species and not only for the Austrian neurotic type of personality or Swiss psychotic patients.<sup>7</sup> Myth carries its archaic value; if it is based on unconscious pattern also means that myths are archaic and active from remnant times.

The relation between myth and unconscious is the characteristic feature of psychoanalytical school of myth research (M. Lurker<sup>8</sup>). One can recognize that some statement has psychoanalytical origin if myth is understood as related to the unconscious. To understand myth is to understand the unconscious; Freud wrote that it is easier to grasp the language of dreams if we use the language of myth (dreams were also conceived as a manifestation of the unconscious).<sup>9</sup>

## 2. Freudian grasps.

The relation between myth and the unconscious is seen as close and relatively direct however in lots of different currents is understood in their own specific ways. Freud uses a term “myth” relatively rarely – not as frequently as “unconscious” or “dream”; myth as a myth – primeval form of human culture; certainly the aim remains to conceive the unconscious and myth is one of its “languages”.<sup>10</sup> Image and

<sup>5</sup> M. Obrębska writes that when we would like to indicate Freud’s discovery in one word it would be “the unconscious”; M. Obrębska, *W poszukiwaniu ukrytej struktury. Semiotyka wobec problem nieświadomego*, Poznań 2002, p. 44.

<sup>6</sup> In psychoanalysis it was a rule to use the term *unconscious* (*unbewußte*) in the form of adjective; it comes from german philosophical tradition; however the form *unconsciousness* (*Unbewußtsein*) is also used. The terms *unterbewußte*, *Unterbewußtsein* (*subconscious*, *subconsciousness*) is practically not present because it can point to “the less valuable than conscious” or to the spatial associations generally.

<sup>7</sup> J. Hilmann, *Le mythe de la psychanalyse*, Paris 2006.

<sup>8</sup> M. Lurker, *Przestanie symboli w mitach, kulturach i religiach*, Kraków 1994.

<sup>9</sup> S. Freud, *The Theme of Three Caskets* (1913), [in:] S. Freud, *The Standard Edition of Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, J. Strachey (ed.), vol. XII, London 2001 (further on whole series : “SE”).

<sup>10</sup> In *Letter to dr Friedrich Krauss on Anthropophyteia* (1910) Freud wrote that collection of jokes, dreams, myths and legends are auxiliary ways of investigating the unconscious human mind. Folklore has psychological importance – S. Freud, *SE*, vol. X, p. 234. He repeated in *Preface to Bourke’s Scatalogic Rites of All Nations* (1913): psycho-analysis and folklore can teach us to understand human nature – S. Freud, *SE*, vol. XI, p. 336. “Folklore has adopted

imago-symbolic forms are rooted in impulsive representations<sup>11</sup>; without any control of arbitral conscious they will create direct reflects of unconscious processes. Freud's first steps in imago-symbolic creativity of psyche were undertaken very early – in his common with J. Breuer *Studies on Hysteria*.<sup>12</sup> Freud was interested in the interpretation of mnemic symbols of trauma.<sup>13</sup> Some specific symptoms of hysteria, e. g. some olfactory sensations (Lucy R.) are starting points of the analysis. Mnemic symbols leads toward forgotten experiences connected with intensive conflict between affects. That what seems incongruous, idiosyncratic, and incomprehensible today was rooted in real experiences and intense affectivity in objective realm of human interpersonal relation. The language of mnemic symbols is very difficult to understand. They become comprehensible relating them to the first situation they had come from.<sup>14</sup> It is a dark and dense sphere of individual imagery,<sup>15</sup> experiences, biography.<sup>16</sup> From outside perspective *hic et nunc* seems impossible to find meanings of symptoms and its symbolic representations and associations. In the other early published texts Freud concluded that often these are “fragmentary recollections which have remained in the patient's memory from the earliest years of his childhood”<sup>17</sup> and they have pathogenic importance. Mnemic images associate something closely bound with real past experience (some dislocations) but they also relate three dimensions: 1. Psychical significance of events; 2. The experience; 3. The activity of memory. Myth is a language of the unconscious; a lot of various motifs in mnemic symbols and images has close connections with the meanings of myth, legends and fairy tales.<sup>18</sup> Without a knowledge about them, the unconscious remains incomprehensible.

Freud continued that way of understanding in his dream images interpretations. *The Interpretations of Dreams*<sup>19</sup> Freud understood as a insight to the basic sphere of human psyche; the most direct expression in the unconscious are possible to differentiate in spontaneous generated images and acoustical sensations in dreams.

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a quite different method of research, and yet it has reached the same result than psycho-analysis”; *ibidem*, p. 337.

<sup>11</sup> Freud noticed that visual images are the most common in dreams; they are more numerous than words; dream is a system of images rather than a system of language however even gestures in hysteria are manifestation of the unconscious; the last one “speaks more than one dialect” – S. Freud, *The Claims of Psycho-Analysis to Scientific Interest (1913)*, *SE*, vol. XIII, p. 177.

<sup>12</sup> S. Freud, J. Breuer, *Studies on Hysteria (1895/1950)*, *SE*, vol. II.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 107.

<sup>14</sup> S. Freud, *Notes upon Obsessional Neurosis (1909)*, *SE*, vol. X, p. 186. What seems to be very arbitral product of mind including hallucination also “rests upon laws, which we are only now beginning dimly to suspect” wrote Freud earlier – S. Freud, *Delusions and Dreams in Jensen's Gradiva (1907 [1906])*, *SE*, vol. IX, p. 9.

<sup>15</sup> Freud was – according D. Flader – the discoverer of meaning relations, conflicting structures and principles of human subjectivity; he also proposed new form of human experience understanding not in the perspective of criteria of present coherence but these which refers to the past – D. Flader, *Psychoanaliza z perspektywy działania i języka. Pozycje rewizji modeli teoretycznych Freuda z perspektywy teorii działania i ich opracowania*, Warszawa 2002, pp. 7, 155–156.

<sup>16</sup> J. Derrida called Freudian interpretations – “the whole etiological machinery of psychoanalysis” – J. Derrida, *Archive Fever. A Freudian Impression*, transl. E. Prenovitz, Chicago–London 1996, p. 87.

<sup>17</sup> S. Freud, *Screen Memories (1899)*, *SE*, vol. III, p. 303.

<sup>18</sup> S. Freud, *Dreams in Folklore (1957/1911)*, *SE*, vol. XII.

<sup>19</sup> S. Freud, *The Interpretations of Dreams (1900)*, p. I, II, *SE*, vol. IV, V.

That means the unconscious is seen in its pre-critic, unrestrained, non-arbitrary forms of manifestation. Myth remains an instrument of cognition for the meanings of dream imagery.<sup>20</sup> The myth of Oedipus is still the keystone to understand anthropological process of becoming a man; there is no hazard that Freud called the complex using the reference to the myth. The last one justifies anthropological point of view; in Freud's opinion the oedipal triangle is not characteristic only to his patients in Vienna in the last decade of 19<sup>th</sup> century but to the whole species. The Oedipus myth is a kind of proof that in the remnant times human beings were involved in interpersonal circulation of desires, inhibition and rivalry. The myth has a very specific character to play: to justify a universality of human situation and to express a particular scenario in the process of becoming a man. The destiny of the king Oedipus is very impressive for us because he speaks our own voice; that is the same destiny for him and for us. Fromm notices that Freudian complex is connected rather to the tragedy of Sophocles and not with authentic myth; that's the reason of some specific features of his interpretation; he underlined the wish between a son and his mother however there is no one trace for such a suggestion; on the contrary, there is very clear dimension "father-son" rivalry in patriarchal structure of society.<sup>21</sup>

Freud's defense of universal appearance of the Oedipus complex contained whole particular logic of his anthropology with overwhelming power of drives and impulses as a quintessence of evolutionary biological heredity. Myth in its spontaneous way expresses psychological truth in the process of forming a man: he becomes who he is during a struggle between his biological drives, aims of adapting to the natural environment and socially generated inhibition. That is mirrored in Oedipus triangle situation. Myths express human nature with its confrontation with socio-cultural world.

That general confrontation of human internal drives and socio-cultural inhibition is also an axe of dreams. In *The Interpretation of Dreams* Freud tries to grasp a connection between inhibited contents and imago-symbolic representation. The image formation in the mind is unknown; psycho-analysis can only establish a correlation of drives and images. They are not a flux of unconscious life in its primeval form but a representation submerged in outer world observations; thus creative fantasy has always half-internal and half-external sources. Psychoanalytical research is concentrated on its internal sources (signified; *signifié*) using as a tool an external representation, that what is "significance"<sup>22</sup> (*signifiant* in structuralism terms of J. Lacan<sup>23</sup>). Between them act the work of dreams: condensation, dis-

<sup>20</sup> F. Crews ironically noticed that Freud's sources were more folkloristic than scientific and mingled an existential courage ton and clever rhetoric procedures – F. Crews, *Wojna o pamięć. Spór o dziedzictwo Freuda*, Kraków 2001, p. 39.

<sup>21</sup> E. Fromm, *The Forgotten Language. An Introduction to the Understanding of Dreams, Fairy Tales and Myths* (1951), New York 1951 (further: "FL").

<sup>22</sup> R. Barthes noticed that in psychoanalysis there is a very powerful sphere of signified and weakness of ephemeral significance – R. Barthes, *Mit i znak*, Warszawa 1970. On the contrary J. Lacan observes richness of significance chains in symbolic order – J. Lacan, *Les formations de l'inconscient, Le Séminaire (1957–1958)*, Livre V, Paris 1998.

<sup>23</sup> J. Lacan, *Les formations...*

location (metaphor and metonym in structural interpretation of psychoanalytical terms<sup>24</sup>), symbolization and dramatization. Myth and literature gain the deepest layer of internal life although express it through images. Creative fantasy makes it possible to build a bridge between inner and outer worlds. Psyche has also its two systems: consciousness and unconscious with its characteristic relatively conservative and capsule form (“indestructible”, “demonic”, “impossible to bridle”<sup>25</sup>). Thus creative fantasy gains the basic form of human situation in the world; fantasy is “faithful” to its deepest, the most internal, most archaic layers. Social history “betrays”<sup>26</sup> our unconscious<sup>27</sup> a lot of times but creative fantasy never fails to conserve the primeval part of it – human beings with their drives, needs and natural tendency to activate them. A man is here conceived as a cluster of drives and symbolic imagination (C. Castoriadis<sup>28</sup>) or as a *home du désir* (P. Ricoeur<sup>29</sup>); a carrier of *zoe*,<sup>30</sup> the simplest form of life.

The confrontation between the primeval flux of drives, socio-cultural inhibition and environment circumstances express itself in nearly iconic, hieroglyphic language of dreams. To understand human psyche we need decipher that language in some form of translation. In Freud’s understanding it is not a translation from language of images to language of words but rather from unconscious language of drives-mnemonic imagery to conscious cognition instruments unveiling hidden, repressed contents of life experiences what can be understood as a Freudian version of *aletheia*, the gradual way to specific truth of being-in-the-world.<sup>31</sup> Myth is an instrument of understanding as it is universally appeared expression of human situation in the world.

<sup>24</sup> Before psychoanalysis – D. Danek argued – lots of people behaviors had been understood in only naturalistic frame of references and there had been no perception of semiotic articulation of them; psychoanalysis brings the discovery of semantic “mask-articulation” – D. Danek, *Sztuka rozumienia. Literatura i psychoanaliza*, Warszawa 1997, p. 58. The authoress explains that manifest contain is a vehicle and a screen in the same time of hidden one – *ibidem*, p. 59.

<sup>25</sup> These are the adjectives that Freud often used indicating the unconscious in his *Interpretation of Dreams* and also in many others works; in *The Uncanny* he presented the unconscious as producing the uncanny (*Unheimliche*) effect in literature gained as repressed contains return effect; in “demonological neurosis” – devilish symbolization and imagery – S. Freud, *The Uncanny* (1919), *SE*, vol. XVII and *The Seventeenth-Century Demonological Neurosis* (1923), *SE*, vol. XIX.

<sup>26</sup> Extremely clear figure of thought in Marcuse’s interpretation of Freudian anthropology – H. Marcuse in *Eros and Civilization*. Also one can read it in the consequences of symbolic and real orders relation in Lacanian and post-lacanian interpretations and applications of Freudian thought – J. Lacan, *Les formations...* or S. Žižek, *Wzniosty obiekt ideologii*, Wrocław 2001.

<sup>27</sup> It is nearly the constant trait in psychoanalytical understanding of culture as repression of libido – in Freud, Roheim, even Marcuse conceptions – P. Szalek, *Lewica Freudowska. Od psychoanalizy do irracjonalizmu*, Łódź 1999.

<sup>28</sup> C. Castoriadis, *Psychoanalysis and Politics*, [in:] M. Munchow, S. Shamadasani (eds.), *Speculations after Freud. Psychoanalysis, Philosophy and Culture*, London–New York 1994.

<sup>29</sup> P. Ricoeur, *De l’interprétation. Essai sur Freud*, Paris 1965.

<sup>30</sup> S. Freud, *Delusions...*

<sup>31</sup> J. Mills, *Toward a Psychoanalytical Conception of Truth*, a presentation in Institute of Philosophy in Wrocław, January 2014. J. Bouveresse trying to present specific character of the unconscious notion in Freudian version writes that the truth about ourselves is to discover not in ego but in aberrations, dreams, caprices, phobias – idem, *Wittgenstein Reads Freud. The Myth of the Unconscious*, transl. C. Cosman, Princeton 1995, p. XI.

Myth is understood by Freud as an instrument to understand the unconscious; in the same time myth itself is a proof of anthropological importance of unconscious layers in the human mind and an expression of human situation in the world, the process of forming a man. The significance of myth is thus one of the central aspects in the whole psychoanalytic project of research, a possibility of its hermeneutic core.

Freud's position in myth research is anthropological and not exclusively psychological; the multidimensional critiques of his position as psychological reductionism (G. Durand,<sup>32</sup> G. Kirk<sup>33</sup>) are not accurate; the unconscious is not a personal repressed space of unwilled memories but a core of biological base in the process of forming a man and has its anthropological importance. Myth is not reduced to personal repressed contents or to collective dream but express the forms of pattern experiences specific to human species, experiences of conflict between natural drives and socio-cultural inhibition which are an axis of culturally transformed life of a man.

### 3. Jung's archetypal conception of myth.

The heredity of German romanticism and philosophy (conception of F.W.J. Schelling) is the strongest in Jung's thought. He understood the unconscious as a hidden dimension which determinates reality (psychic and beyond-psychic, material) and myth is relatively direct "language" making its manifestation possible. In Freud's thought heredity of romanticism is also present but there are researchers that deny the importance of that influence (J. Derrida,<sup>34</sup> H. Lang<sup>35</sup>); it seems however that it is present but not as important and strong as in Jung's conception case.

Jung noticed mythic-poetical function of the unconscious very early. In 1909 he had written to Freud that without studies on history of cultures one cannot say the last word about neurosis. He had observed the intense activity of that function in phenomenal symptoms of schizophrenic patients in Burghölzli hospital. Monumental, eschatological<sup>36</sup> imagery and pathos of schizophrenic language had to have a strong influence on Jung's idea of nearly automatic generations of powerful quasi-philosophical, quasi-religious character of schizophrenia's imaginative worlds.<sup>37</sup>

Freud had recognized the language of neurosis, Jung tried to grasp the language of psychotic imagery. His first step toward autonomous conception was a text *Symbols of Transformation*<sup>38</sup> which was one of his most "mythological"

<sup>32</sup> G. Durand, *Wyobrażenia symboliczne*, Warszawa 1986.

<sup>33</sup> G.S. Kirk, *The Nature of Greek Myths*, Harmondsworth–Middlesex 1974.

<sup>34</sup> J. Derrida, *La carte postale de Socrate à Freud et au-delà*, Paris 1980.

<sup>35</sup> H. Lang, *Język i nieświadomość. Podstawy teorii psychologicznej Jacquesa Lacana*, Gdańsk 2005.

<sup>36</sup> One of the most important trait in "schizophrenia's metaphysics" – A. Kepiński, *Schizofrenia*, Kraków 1992.

<sup>37</sup> The subject pathology-mythology (even in form of "divinity of pathology") was studied by J. Hillman in his *Re-Visioning Psychology*, New York 1976.

<sup>38</sup> C.G. Jung, *Symbols of Transformation. Analysis on Prelude to Schizophrenia (1912)*, [in:]

works. Jung's point that moved his mythological and literary analysis was the case of schizophrenic patient of Théodore Flournoy. Her visions, poems, delusions were the first factually situated "symptoms" which significance he tried to conceive. Jung built a bridge between symptoms of mental disease, the unconscious functioning assumptions and historic-cultural research on symbols, myths and their meaning.

Jung conceived the unconscious rather in philosophical line heredity than Freudian or psychological ones – the sphere of significance of the notion gradually extended; initially he tried to define it psychologically and psychoanalytically as a hidden inherited sphere of human mind determining whole psyche and its creativity and symptoms; gradually it began to grasp anthropologically understood human species archetypal structures and reached the meaning of hidden process determining reality which penetrates psychic and beyond-psychic, material dimensions. Thus Jung's conception of unconscious embarrassed many dimensions: it is psychologically active hidden sphere of mind determining conscious processes (psychological dimension); its contents are personally grasped during childhood and later experiences yet it is founded on an evolutionary basis of inherited archetypal patterns of meaning (psychoanalytical and anthropological dimension); it is a hidden sphere of psychic and beyond-psychic realities determining processes of psychic order of experience (philosophical perspective). There are multiform and multidimensional connections between these perspectives in different Jungian works; sometimes he refers to psychological, sometimes to philosophical, the most often to anthropological perspective. All process of his conception development followed the passage from biological dimension of evolutionary instinctive basis with its archetypal structures founded on instincts (archetype<sup>39</sup> as a self-portrait of an instinct; a correlation to biological patterns of behavior) to a hidden sphere of reality with its archetypal and psychoid carriers. One can suspect that with development of unconscious conception his grasp of myth should change in the same time. Myth works on these all dimensions: as a so-called "individual myth" gathering symbolically transformed experiences of individual life experiences connected with half-memorized images penetrating oniric activity of a person and introducing meaning to his actual mental processes. Thus myth has diagnostic yet therapeutic psychological importance. However myth induces deeper layers of specific human experiences and expresses a streaming of self becoming as a central process of hu-

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C.G. Jung, *The Collected Works of C.G. Jung*, London–Princeton 1953–1979, vol. V (further of whole series : "CW"; *Symbols*. . . : "SP").

<sup>39</sup> In interpretations of Jung's main category, an archetype, researchers frequently associates it with the notion of *Urbild* coming from German romanticism; in French language it is connected with *images matricielles* (J.J. Wunenburger, *Philosophie des images*, Paris 1997). It is Jung's habit to differentiate trial between an archetype and archetypal, primeval image. In itself an archetype is not able to be represented and it is *facultas praeformandi* – "The archetype in itself is empty and purely formal, nothing but a *facultas praeformandi*, a possibility of representation which is given *a priori*" – C.G. Jung, *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious (1934–1954)*, [in:] C.G. Jung, *CW* 9.1, p. 79 (further on that work: "ACU"). G. Durand applied Jung's notion to his conception of general archetypology but defined an archetype as an "affective-representative bundle" – G. Durand, *Les structures anthropologiques de l'imaginaire: introduction à l'archétypologie générale*, Paris 1984.

manity with its archetypal inherited supports; with all basic human experiences. That is more fundamental anthropological dimension. Myth also expresses the unknown patterns of the unconscious process development as determining reality and has philosophical meaning. These patterns led to the general insight into dynamic changes of historic-cultural process of development. Jung described its universal appearance in the beginning fragments of *Symbols...*: "The myth is although that, what one of Church Fathers [Vincent of Lerin – I. B.] said about: *Quid ubique, quod semper, quod ad omnium creditum est*, thus a man who lives without a myth or beyond it is an exception".<sup>40</sup> Myth becomes has such importance in Jung's conception that it is possible to say that it is a *condition sine qua non* of collective unconscious assumption.

Jung like Freud applies comparative method which is known from research on mythology and language sciences. The material of the comparison is very rich. Henri F. Ellenberger describes it as "erupting" from the *Symbols of Transformation*. Jung refers to the corpus of Hindu, Greek, Babylonian, Hellenistic mythologies, to mythological structures in the Bible, to mythological layers of philosophical texts with their figures as Nietzschean Zarathustra. That frame of references would be constant in his later works however they will pass to the history of philosophy, to alchemy, gnosis and very particular characters of religious symbolism study. The mythological material can be conceived as one of the most frequent and important to him. Mythology provides the universality of appearance of some motif or image. This universality Jung understood as a confirmation of universal archetypal intra-psychical structures. The similarity of mythological motives and images come from universal structure of psyche which has a character of anthropological datum. The manifestation of the unconscious process development is mythological imagery and so-called primitive mentality – psychology refers to them more often than to any medical principles.<sup>41</sup> The references to *représentations collectives* and the question of primitive mentality are very fruitful. They introduce to his way of understanding social and anthropological dimension. Archetypes are frequently defined as "reminding" *représentations collectives* of French sociology school, M. Mauss and H. Hubert. It introduces the social dimension to Jung's most important category, an archetype. The last one "reminds" of a collectively structured way of world understanding, ordering and reacting yet it is inherited and non-personally acquired. In anthropology the question of *la mentalité pre-logique* existence<sup>42</sup> or pre-logical primeval mind with its operations on collective representations, its *participation mystique* and its grasp of reality as a continuum of spiritual horizon was also a question for Jung quoting Lévy-Bruhl's ideas. In psychoanalytical conception in general this "primeval mind" is understood as unconscious itself but never transgressed by human beings, always active in traditional society and in modern contemporary one.

<sup>40</sup> C.G. Jung, *SP*, p. 13. "Which everywhere, which always and which by everybody is believed".

<sup>41</sup> C.G. Jung, *On the Psychogenesis of Schizophrenia (1939)*, [in:] C.G. Jung, *CW*, vol. III, p. 249.

<sup>42</sup> L. Lévy-Bruhl, *Czynności umysłowe w społeczeństwach pierwotnych*, transl. B. Szwarzman-Czrnota, Warszawa 1992.



In interpretation of unconscious contents Jung uses two particular methods: *circumambulatio* and *amplificatio*.<sup>43</sup> They both apply comparative connections with associations of interpreted image, motif or symbol. The material is frequently and mainly mythological. Myths let us understand but only in a circular and approximate way; that circular movement to achieve multitude yet defined meanings is the cause that Jung is called “naturally hermeneut”.<sup>44</sup> He was conscious an approximates character of historic-cultural symbolic meanings.

Archetypes are basis to symbol and myth formation although they are not myths themselves.<sup>45</sup> Myths can be conceived as development and fabulation of archetypal meanings core. One of the myth cycles that was the most fascinating to psychoanalysts was so-called hero cycle myths. R. Segal noticed that these interpretation of hero myth are the “specialization” of psychoanalysis conceived as some school of myth research.<sup>46</sup> The figure of the hero was interpreted by Rank,<sup>47</sup> Freud,<sup>48</sup> Jung,<sup>49</sup> Fromm,<sup>50</sup> Baudouin<sup>51</sup> and Campbell.<sup>52</sup> These interpretations differ in many aspects however the assumption that myth expresses the unconscious is present as a main assumption in all of them. The figure of hero is conceived as a prototype of human self-portrait as emerged from the unconscious, conflicted with its natural instinctive sphere, building his autonomy in the confrontation with socio-cultural values. “The finest of all symbols is the human figure, conceived as a demon or hero”;<sup>53</sup> Jung underlined following L. Froebenius research solar attributes of hero’s figure – as a sun man “sets his own courses by immutable laws and, his journey over, sinks into darkness, to rise again in his children and begin the cycle anew”.<sup>54</sup> In Jungian current the attention is laid on transgressing instinctive chaotic drives constituting new spiritual dimension of a person as realization of self.

Psychological and anthropological dimensions in the unconscious conceptions implies very clearly the grasp of a man figure and his development to spiritual level of his psyche in this way forming image of half-man, half-god being. Jung many times had interpreted hero myths. He attended to the meaning of heroic

<sup>43</sup> Amplification in the Jungian psychology dictionary for example is conceived as connected with use of mythical analogies to establish metaphorical contents of dreams – A. Samuels, B. Shorter, F. Plaut, *Krytyczny słownik analizy jungowskiej*, transl. W. Bobecki, L. Zielińska, s.l. 1994, p. 31.

<sup>44</sup> J.J. Clarke, *Jung and Eastern Thought. A Dialogue with the Orient*, London 1994.

<sup>45</sup> T. Ochlanowski wrote that in every myth is hidden one or more archetypes. Idem, *Jungowska interpretacja mitu ojca w prozie Brunona Schulza*, Białystok 2001, p. 20.

<sup>46</sup> R. Segal, *Introduction*, [in:] O. Rank, *The Myth of the Birth of the Hero. A Psychological Exploration of Myth*, Baltimore–London 2004.

<sup>47</sup> O. Rank, *The Myth of the Birth...*

<sup>48</sup> Freud interpreted that figure many times; S. Freud, *Moses and Monotheism*, SE, vol. 23.

<sup>49</sup> Jung also paid much attention to the figure of hero – SP; ACU.

<sup>50</sup> E. Fromm, *To Have or to Be*, New York 1976 (further: “HB”).

<sup>51</sup> C. Baudouin, *Le Triomphe du héros. Étude psychanalytique sur le mythe du héros et les grandes épopées*, Paris 1952.

<sup>52</sup> J. Campbell, *The Hero with the Thousand Faces*, New York 1956.

<sup>53</sup> C.G. Jung, SP, p. 171.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibidem*.

task, the battle with monster, descent to underground world,<sup>55</sup> symbolical experience of death and meaning of sacrifice for development of spiritual level in psyche. The unconscious movement of libido is able to self-perception through images and symbols only.<sup>56</sup> Jung denied the universal appearance of the Oedipus complex in Freudian interpretation as a incest tendency and inhibition; the Sphinx is a theriomorphic representation of libido; it is a warning to a hero – its riddle was a trap but Oedipus overestimated his intellect wanted to solve the riddle only by words; he had to answer it in his acts in Jung's interpretation. It was a *hýbris* of intellect. The myth of Jonah's journey in the whale's body ("Jonah-and-the-whale complex") is more accurate to express human situation in the world. He struggled to deliver from overwhelming power and become an autonomous individual. Figure of a hero indicates transgression from biological, instinctive,<sup>57</sup> compulsive, unconscious form of behavior to self-knowledge, self as a possibility of free choice of existence mode.<sup>58</sup> All process has also philosophical meaning for a process of becoming a man and thus individuation principle active in the whole unconscious development.

Jung underlined the importance of myth in a book which he wrote in cooperation with Karl Kerényi. The last one was very interested in myth and evaluated it very highly as something comparable to nature itself: its depth, its universality.<sup>59</sup> Mythology is the sum of ancient elements describing gods, divine beings, battle of heroes and descent to the hell. It provides our contact with immense realities of the spiritual world. The individual can submerge himself in the basis of his psyche in the reception of myth. Jung added that the very well known trials to understand mythical figures by solar or astral myths failed; mythology is based on human experiences in the world and it is not a trial to understand or revive the natural environment.<sup>60</sup>

Eleazar Mielecinski commented that in that perspective so-called "subconscious" is very weakly referred to the outer world; then myth can be conceived as something only "psychic". In both conception the unconscious is not incapsulated; Freud conceived it as only partially and relatively close system yet having a lot of relations with an outer world; in Jung perspective – "No, the collective unconscious is anything but an incapsuled personal system; it is a sheer objectivity, as wide as the world and open to all the world".<sup>61</sup> In Jungian and Freudian

<sup>55</sup> Jung conceived it also as a regression "gradual submersion in the abyss of memory" – *ibidem*, p. 407.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 175.

<sup>57</sup> About instinct Jung wrote: „the instincts in general, which are the vital foundations, the laws governing all life” – C.G. Jung, *SP*, p. 180. During the development of his conception from that point of view about instinctive basis of life Jung had never resigned.

<sup>58</sup> The „mystery” of a hero is “the stock of primordial images which everybody brings in him as his human birthright [...] inborn forms peculiar to the instinct. I have called it “potential” psyche or collective unconscious”. The hero is able psychologically to answer on them for reactivation and reorganization of their contents – C.G. Jung, *SP*, p. 408.

<sup>59</sup> C.G. Jung, K. Kerényi, *L'introduction à l'essence de la mythologie. L'enfant divin. La jeune fille divine*, transl. H. E. Medico, Paris 1968, p. 11–13.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibidem*, s. 236.

<sup>61</sup> C.G. Jung, *ACU*, p. 22.

conception understanding of the unconscious is hardly imaginable without myths – they are really the sources of unique possibility to understand nontransparent unconscious. Myth is its language, it covers an outer world of nature and social life; thus myth refers as well to inner as to outer reality as a whole; it avoids that duality.

#### 4. Fromm – myth and social history

Frommian understanding of the unconscious concept is quite different because he introduced the socio-historical dimension to it. The unconscious is “social filter” which denied the entrance for socially not accepted contents; every kind of social organization creates its own form of repression and shaping its own form of social character which is its dialogue with evolutionary impulsive factors. The unconscious is thus not a “separate kingdom” crowded by myth-generating forms of mythical images nor any three dimensional, spatial object. It is understood functionally. The whole tendency to ontologize is denied. This way myths also are conceived as an information about human experiences taking place between anthropological, biological basis of psyche and social unconscious with its forms of repression. Fromm appreciated Freud as an interpreter of unconscious language yet he was also one of the most critical to many assumptions of Freud’s conception.<sup>62</sup> Like Freud he noticed that unconscious is autonomous and does not follow the logical rules, nor temporal and spatial ordering principles and creates the chains of associations according emotional similarity. So-called “logic” of the unconscious is a logic of intensity, emotional intensity and similarity.

Fromm underlined a normative character of mental health and had very defined portrait of human self-fulfillment close to the image of a man in humanistic psychology. It is presented in his vision of a “new man” in new society,<sup>63</sup> his form of utopian thought.

Myths are remnants of matriarchal form of society organization; following Johann Bachofen and his conception of *Mutterrecht*<sup>64</sup> Fromm thought that it was a kind of “forgotten world” in human pre-history and argued that archeological discovery (Çatalhöyük)<sup>65</sup> was the support of that supposition. Thus myths were masked quasi-historical information about times that we have no other documents for apart from archeological reconstructions of Neolithic settlements. For Fromm it is an essential counter-point to the critique of historical forms of patriarchal societies – their hierarchic structure and rivalry destroying interpersonal emotional connections, promoting aggressive, violent streaming for power. The matriarchal societies according Fromm were peaceful, egalitarian, cooperative, avoided of violence and exploitation. That ultra-historical struggle between two principles reminds a mythical structure thinking in itself. The interpretation of Neolithic settle-

<sup>62</sup> *Inter alia*: E. Fromm, *The Greatness and Limitations of Freud’s Thought*, New York–Toronto 1980.

<sup>63</sup> E. Fromm, *HB*.

<sup>64</sup> J.J. Bachofen, *Matriarchat*, Warszawa 2008.

<sup>65</sup> E. Fromm, *The Anatomy of Human Destructiveness (1973)*, New York 1973 (further: “ALD”).

ments and a figure of woman are idealized yet idealization is a horizon from which critique of contemporary mass society is possible and begin to be very expressive one. Fromm as others members of Frankfurt School, as H. Marcuse, was a radical critic of conformism, mercantilism, uniformity and mental health destruction.<sup>66</sup> Myths were useful instruments indicating the forgotten world of matriarchal social organization in showing the lack of necessity in destructive socio-historical process.

Myths are important indications about matriarchal principle and values. It is also a way the unconscious manifestations: mythical images and symbols constitute forgotten universal “pre-language”.<sup>67</sup> That language expresses human experiences in the world and as Lurker said it is transnational and over-ethnic.<sup>68</sup> In Frommian perspective it is an authentic language of the unconscious generating universal (based on anthropological data) symbols that every human being “speaks” yet does not understand. It is not an artificial “code” to be translated but understood. We dream in the same way as people thousands of years before us.<sup>69</sup> Symbolical language is a common trait of the human mind. In an experience of fire warmth inter alia we share the same feelings, emotions and perceptions.

It shows human mind and carnality confronted with the outer world. Thus myth can be conceived as “treasure of wisdom” and exegesis of symbols.<sup>70</sup> Myth also can mingle with ideology and then it is a form of false consciousness. It can produce new form of idolatry generating psychic epidemics but it is also able to form utopia and express idealization possibilities of human mind that can influence social future by shaping an image of social goals.

Mythology has two meanings for Fromm: first, it is a language of unconscious, exegesis of symbols and “treasure of wisdom” about human experiences. Second, it is a form of false consciousness, mingling with ideology and a destructive instrument in social communication. It depends on contexts: in unconscious conception mythology is understood in the first meaning; in the studies of social history area – in the second one.

## 5. Psychoanalytical perspective in myth research

Psychoanalysis founded some specific perspective in myth research. The main assumption is the close relation between myth and unconsciousness; myth is a language of the unconscious. Myths form comparative material for dreams, symbols, involuntary formed images, fairy tales and legends. These are forms of unconsciousness manifestations. In all of them appear *pars pro toto* and *post hoc ergo*

<sup>66</sup> The list of criticized phenomena is very long: to have *modus*, manipulative intelligence, atrophy of emotional life, cybernetic, industrial religion, lack of identity, alienation, “schizophrenia with smiling face” – E. Fromm, *HB*.

<sup>67</sup> It was a romanticism supposition that in primeval times functioned some kind of universal pre-language. For Fromm universality here comes from its foundations in anthropological dimension – the specific human experiences in the world; for Fromm it is only universal language of mankind – E. Fromm, *FL*.

<sup>68</sup> M. Lurker, *Przesłanie symboli w mitach...*, p. 53.

<sup>69</sup> E. Fromm, *ALD*.

<sup>70</sup> E. Fromm, *FL*.

*propter hoc* principles, disorder of spatial and temporal arrangement, emotional intensity of images.

In Freud's line of influence there developed a conception of Otto Rank, Geza Róheim, Karl Abraham, Charles Baudouin. Jung influenced works of Erich Neumann, Károly Kerényi, Joseph Campbell, T. Pearson, even some aspects of Mircea Eliade's or Gaston Bachelard's and Gilbert Durand's works and many others researchers in the domains of myth and symbolical imagination. Not all of them followed every Freudian or Jungian assumptions but they used many instruments of these myth conceptions; even Eliade or Bachelard refer to the conceptions of the unconscious however they understood this notion in their own particular way and it was not the central category of their thoughts.

Psychoanalytical perspective in the myth research was criticized because of naturalism, reductionism, reductive hermeneutic, "oedipal-ism", and the use of a notion of so-called "individual myth".<sup>71</sup> Roger Callois followed the path of critique but he underlined also that psychoanalysis showed how deep the myth is experienced, why it was something alive for us, not only some archaic remnants from immemorial times<sup>72</sup>. It showed myth in the center of functioning of human mind, never gone nor transgressed but always present and ready for its creativity.

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<sup>71</sup> A lot of these accusations were articulated by G. Durand in his *L'imagination symbolique*, Paris 1964.

<sup>72</sup> R. Callois, *Le mythe et l'homme*, Paris 1987.