

The Role of the Drawing in the Process of Psychotherapy

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Abstract

Art-therapy is a branch of psychotherapy, which uses patient's drawings as a third element in doctor-patient relationships. The role of the spontaneously made pictures in the process of the psychotherapy has been argued for decades. During last two years 108 schizophrenic patients participated in the art-therapeutic process held by me. More than 2300 pictures had been analyzed. One of the questions which I tried to answer was: what characteristics of the drawings are most useful for the process of cure, or it can be said also, why are the drawings so important in the course of the psychotherapy, what do they give to the patient and to the doctor for the therapeutic aid? The answer I could give is following: the pairs of opposites like cosmos and chaos, which can be seen in some patients' works, is the product of the compensating nature of unconscious. Hence, the pictures which are animated mainly by unconscious carry the same compensating principle, and the role they can play for the patients' sake is to give insight to the conscious and show it the future goal in the process of the personal growth.

Keywords: *art-therapy, schizophrenia, conscious, unconscious, compensating function*

Art-therapy is a special kind of psychotherapy. In this particular type of therapy relationship between patient and doctor is mediated by drawing. Thanks to this archetypal number three is constellated, which is more stable than traditional client-therapist dyad. Here the question arises, what for is this talk about the tertium comparationis of the art-therapeutic process?! The answer is: this very ingredient is most typical and from the therapeutic point of view most important in the course of art-therapy.

Today quite a number of specialists use art-therapy in their practice. Art-therapy associations exist in USA, UK, Russia, Switzerland and other countries. Practice of art-therapy is held in psychiatric clinics, rehabilitation centers and private cabinets all over the world.

Different schools have their own point of view concerning the therapeutic mechanisms of art-therapy. Of course the main stress is made on the value of the drawing in the process of therapy. But even here there can exist different opinions. Here is a short list of positive aspects of the art-therapy due to the existence of drawings:

1. Drawings shorten the process of therapy;

1. Drawings defend us from the transference phenomena, or help us to solve it;
2. Drawings give us a clue to the unconscious processes of the human psyche;
3. They make easier doctor-patient relationships;
4. They improve self-esteem of the patients and etc.

Many specialists tried to find out the typical features of the drawings in different mental illnesses. The reason of the drawings being an important factor in the therapeutic process must lie in both the fact of existence of the drawing as the third element between doctor and patient, and the content of the drawing. The second factor always interested specialists more than the first one.

In the psychiatric clinic I observed 108 schizophrenic patients who took part in the process of art-therapy during last two years. More than 2300 pictures had been analyzed. The material is enough to make conclusions on the most of the questions, which arose in the process of the study. The question which interested me most of

all was: what characteristics of the drawing are most useful for the process of cure, or it can be said also, why are the drawings so important in the course of the psychotherapy, what do they give to the patient and to the doctor for the therapeutic aid?!

While trying to find answers in the literature I found the following assumptions, which are common for many investigations. The works of patients ill with schizophrenia are mostly chaotic, stereotypic, with lost sense of proportions and composition, often appear "schizophrenic fractions", and disorder in the series of drawings changes in accordance to the psychic status of the patient. And I fully agree with the most of the statements, but to be honest there are still facts that need to be mentioned and analyzed. The observation I would like to mention is following: not always are the drawings of mental patients chaotic, and there is no direct accordance of the psychic status (from the traditional point of view) with the order shown in the drawing. In other words, one and the same patient can draw chaos and cosmos in an interval of ten minutes, or one day he "makes" chaos and next day cosmos. This strange fact of order-disorder relatedness coming from the schizophrenic mind is not mentioned in the literature about art-therapy I had observed. Now, the question arises, how can a psyche that is assumed to be totally damaged produce such opposites. If it is evident, that chaos that appears in such conditions corresponds with the psychic status, it is obscure to what does cosmos correspond.

As it turned out later, the answer on this question could simultaneously give answer to the wider theme what is the therapeutic use of art.

Compensating function of the drawings in art-therapy

Concept of "compensating function of the drawing" can be derived from more general statement about the compensating function of the unconscious towards the conscious mind. Carl Gustav Jung, a famous Swiss psychiatrist and psychotherapist, the founder of the Analytical Psychology, first said this. Drawings of the patients, as European and American psychiatrists

assume, mostly come from the unconscious. So it is natural if we say, what derives from unconscious has same character as unconscious generally. The compensating function of unconscious (that can be seen in dreams and visions mainly) forms the contents of the drawings. What is compensating in the disorder shown in schizophrenic art? And the answer is: it shows the real chaotic condition of the psyche to the conscious. It helps consciousness to gain insight, which is usually lacking in psychosis. The drawing tells the patient in quite straight manner: "this is your state of mind, you have disaster in your brain". Then comes another drawing with "mandala" like figures and unconscious says: "this is a model of order your psyche lacks, it is your goal (in fact cross-like figures like a goal with a center appear quite often in the series of drawings), you have it inside, go and get it". Usually the crucial point of rational psychotherapy is to formulate an insight in the conscious of the patient, and this becomes the main basis for the future goals in the course of the therapy. Drawings which come from the patient are especially valuable in this respect, as they are not our opinion but patients'. When the position of a doctor is met by the similar position of the patients psyche the therapeutic process tends to be easier (what unfortunately does not happen frequently).

Now, the following suggestions can be made:

1. If the pictures show us dynamics between chaos and cosmos, not all psyche of the schizophrenic person is ruined, but there exist parts in it that still show order and symmetry. This equals to the potentiality in the unconscious, which, at least theoretically, can be realized by conscious and implemented in life.
2. Another suggestion is that psyche is a self-balancing system and even in mental illness it automatically sets cosmos against chaos, thus compensating psychotic state of mind.
3. The third idea is that compensating function of the drawings towards consciousness of the patient is the main therapeutic factor in hands of a doctor, which can be used successfully in the process of cure.

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Роль рисунка в процессе психотерапии

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РЕЗЮМЕ

Арт-терапия один из видов психотерапии, который использует рисунки пациента как *tertium comparationis* в отношениях доктора с пациентом. О роли спонтанно выполненных рисунков в процессе психотерапии много говорилось в течение последних десятилетий. Последние два года 108 пациентов больных шизофренией приняли участие в сеансах арт-терапии, которые проводились нами. Проанализировано свыше 2300 рисунков. Во время работы возник ряд вопросов. Один из них, на который мы попытались дать ответ, состоит в следующем: какие характеристики рисунков более полезны для процесса лечения, иными словами почему рисунки так важны для терапии и что полезного дают они больному и врачу? На этот вопрос мы смогли дать следующий ответ: пара противоположностей, как космос и хаос, которые можно увидеть в некоторых рисунках продукты которые исходят из компенсационной природы бессознательного. Исходя из этого, рисунки которые в основном воодушевляются бессознательным, несут тот же компенсирующий принцип, и роль которую они могут сыграть на благо больного - это дать инсайт его сознанию и показать будущую цель в процессе личностного роста.

Ключевые слова: арт-терапия, шизофрения, сознание, бессознательное, компенсационная функция