

# Methodological evolution and clinical application of C.G. Jung's Word Association Experiment: a follow-up study

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**Abstract:** We became interested in the clinical application of the Word Association Experiment (AE) when we decided to use Jung's theory of complexes in the psychodiagnostic evaluation and treatment of patients applying to our Psychotherapy Outpatients Unit (Psychiatric Clinic, Milan University).

In psychopathological situations, complexes with a particularly high emotional charge become autonomous and disturbing, inhibiting the ego's functions. The representations and affective states corresponding to these complexes become dominant, conditioning the expression of symptoms and the subject's relational modes.

In this experimental study we started out from the basic theory that our psychotherapeutic work should lead to a progressive change in the patient's initial complex set up. Jung's Word Association Experiment allows us to identify those words which indicate and stimulate a specific activation of the complexes for each subject via specific markers of complexes. We therefore decided to determine whether AE, administered during the first phase of clinical-diagnostic evaluation and after one year of treatment, revealed any changes occurring in the patients' set up of complexes.

**Key words:** archetypal nucleus, complexes, psychodiagnostic evaluation, relational modes, shadow aspects, Word Association Experiment

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The Psychotherapy Unit carries out its activities at the Ospedale Policlinico, and is therefore a public service. It aims to provide short-term treatment for those subjects who develop acute psychopathological symptoms and prove to be suitable for psychotherapeutic intervention.

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## First phase

During the first phase of clinical-diagnostic assessment comprising three psychodynamically-oriented interview sessions, the patients came to our Unit and completed the following tests:

- Structured Clinical Interview for diagnosis according to DSM IV (SCID I e II).
- Relationship Anecdotes Paradigm (RAP), a semi-structured interview from which the Core Conflictual Relationship Theme can be extrapolated (Luborsky's CCRT). It is used to evaluate the subject's transference dynamics towards others and, especially, the therapist.
- Horowitz Interpersonal Inventory of Personality (IIP) for an evaluation of the relational dynamics.
- Symptom Check List 90 Revised (S.C.L. 90-R) to judge the presence and severity the psychiatric symptoms.
- Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI).
- Rorschach Test.
- Jung's AE.

The evaluation phase lasting approximately three weeks was followed by team discussion of the case.

## Follow up

The model for this clinical research was a single subject, pre-test, post-test, follow-up study analysing clinical variables and therapeutic process. The tests administered at recruitment of patients (T<sub>0</sub>) for the study were the same as those given at the end of the psychotherapy (T<sub>1</sub>), and 12 months afterwards (T<sub>2</sub>)<sup>2</sup>. Administering the AE allowed the concordance/discordance aspects of the complexes to be compared with conflictual dynamics and projective themes brought out by the other tests.

## The Word Association Experiment

The AE is composed of 100 words. The first phase of the experiment consists in saying each word and noting down the patient's reply and the time taken to respond, measured by a chronometer. In addition to time taken to respond, any paralinguistic signals would also be noted (laughter, crying, comments, sighs, gestures, changes in posture and so on). After about 20 minutes the experiment is repeated, noting any replies that do not correspond to those previously given. The median is then calculated. Any response not given within 6 seconds is classified as a failure to answer.

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<sup>2</sup> In the present work T<sub>2</sub> is not included.

The next step consisted in evaluating the answers and their significant indexes. After about 1 week there was another meeting with the patient for the context phase. The patient was presented with the 'marked', annotated words and asked to describe the image evoked.

For the interpretation of AE, we started out with the most highly noted words and failures to answer, registered as blanks. The autonomous complex is emotionally loaded and represents a partial, split-off part of the psyche. It is incompatible with consciousness and interferes with the flow of associations. 'Free association' becomes 'bound association' because it calls to mind other words, images, themes, and affects: 'the associations lead to the theme of the complex and the related emotion' (Kast 1998, pp. 296–316).

It is important to note how we proceeded in the evaluation phase of the experiment and our reflections on the process. Right from the beginning we were concerned about the projections of the experimenters. The experimenters' association processes are however inevitable. In their turn, the images evoke associations and more images especially when, as for example in what is defined as 'context analysis', speech becomes increasingly narrative and therefore metaphorical. In 'Analytic methods revisited', Cambray and Carter stated that 'Metaphors in analysis are woven into narratives, which offer a creative domain for playful interaction and allow multiple strands of a life to be interwoven'. And quoting psychoanalyst Arnold Modell, 'Metaphor, as is true of memory, rests on the border between psychology and physiology. It can be said that metaphor represents an emergent property of mind' (Cambray & Carter 2004, p. 139).

### Analysis of Pre-Test to AE (TO)

In our experiment there were two blanks, one after another: stimuli 35, **Road** and 36, **Bury**. One may legitimately wonder whether the delay in responding to the second stimulus **Bury** was not a reverberation of **Road** [via can also mean 'away' in Italian].

#### 35. VIA = BRONZERRI (Blank+ 3 annotations)

Where I live, my house. I really love my neighbourhood, my road and my house. I feel safe. It could also be the path of life.

#### 36. BURY= DEATH/ I DON'T REMEMBER (Blank+ 3 annotations)

The dead. An image of when I was a little girl comes to mind. I was digging and an earthworm came out, but it could have been a piece of electric cable. I thought it was a poisonous snake. I was really frightened. I never played at hiding in the ground.

The answers given in the context seemed to address the issue of safety for the ego complex (house, neighbourhood, street) and fear of what had been

buried because it was frightening. One wonders: had it been buried in the unconscious?

Passing on to the words with three annotations, we have **Dance** which recalls a vital aspect, but one which perhaps has been neglected.

#### 15. DANCE = HAVING FUN, FLYING/SEEING

I haven't been dancing for ages. Two years ago in Spain, dancing the flamenco.

The word considered immediately afterwards was **Big**.

#### 66. BIG = TREE

Big Trouble in Little China! A big plant, a palm my mother has in her courtyard, a big ficus that she has in her house that I gave her... that's it, I am fat, I am fat.

She answers by quoting a title, and then goes on to the palm in her mother's courtyard and ... 'that's it, I'm fat, I'm fat'. The repetition almost makes you think of a cry.

Then we have **Take** and **Lamp**.

#### 20. TAKE = LEAVE/ BURDEN

My son to nursery school, what a burden! The hardest thing I am currently doing.

#### 27. LAMP = FRIDGE [a light bulb translates as a 'little lamp' in Italian]

I used the light bulb in the fridge to replace the one in my son's room. Paper lampshades, with a modern design. I really like them. It mustn't be a dazzling light, I hate that. A warm light.

The associations contain a reference to being a mother, to the burden of being a mother. Is there a connection between being fat and being a mother, between having a mother and the burden of being a mother, or the burden of having a mother? What is the connection between the big palm, the big ficus, she gave her mother and 'that's it, I'm fat, I'm fat'?

'The big palm in her mother's garden' recalled, in the experimenters' group associations, the symbol of the palm as something that rises towards the sky, perhaps a male principle that starts to grow in her mother's courtyard. A palm is also a southern tree, from Sicilian or Neapolitan gardens, with Arabian connotations, perhaps a reference to a transcendent principle betrayed by being fat, by seeing herself as fat. Does she feel too earthy, maternal, enveloping? The 'big ficus' in the association, another tree with big dark green leaves which also comes from hot, sunny places, with mild winters and lush gardens, given to her mother and the association followed by '... I am fat' perhaps alludes to a

sacrificing of the male principle, to not having integrated that principle. Perhaps it is the sacrifice made to her mother.

The experimenters had no biographical information about the patient undergoing the experiment, therefore the experimenters' associations to the palm and ficus trees with lush southern gardens could be arbitrary. The patient's mother's garden could be in Milan or Stockholm, but if we attribute a metaphorical value to the sentence and we relate it to the metaphor contained in the **Lamp** association, we are again in the presence of a dichotomy: on the one hand, a warm light is evoked, on the other, the light bulb in the fridge, which cannot be very warm, is being used to light her son's room. The fridge light bulb brings to mind a solution for an emergency. Might this not be an emergency situation in her relationship with her son and with her being a mother, or with being a woman? In the association with **Take** we find the statement 'taking my son to nursery school is a burden', but why do they have to separate? As yet there is no answer. Again in the association with **Lamp**, paper lampshades are mentioned, and the response to the stimulus **Paper** is dirty, of further note.

The experimenters gave a certain weight to the title of John Carpenter's film, *Big Trouble in Little China*. This story begins with a situation of 'normality' and then moves to a world where the rules are different. This is a fantastic and magical world, where the irony of the anti-hero, Jack Burton, makes the unbeatable heroes look ridiculous, until the final showdown. One wonders whether it was a rite of entry into a world situated between reality and non-reality, as happens in fairy tales. In our evaluation of AE, we work mainly by using associations and aspects of our countertransference. However, we hold that, with AE, there is a possibility of verifying the countertransference intuitions, at least in part. At any time we can return to what could be defined as the basic structure of AE. The formal structure of AE theoretically should form the 'objective experimental' basis for our research and our evaluation, and should allow us to check the validity of our interpretative hypothesis within the experiment itself, without having recourse to information external to the experimental material.

So as not to lose the sequences of the AE evaluation process we started to record and then transcribe the group evaluation sessions. The recordings allowed us to re-examine our methodology, by checking the data and interpretative hypotheses.

Again with three annotations, we have **60, Marry** and **64, Fight**. We also found stereotyped responses in the relative responses and repetitions. Responses which occur more than three times are considered stereotyped.

## 60. MARRY = EARLY/ LOVELY

My wedding was a very strange day; I was ill. I had a gorgeous dress and my mother-in-law criticized it. That's something that occurs to me and which makes me angry.

#### 64. FIGHT = NOT MUCH / HAPPY, USELESS

It's a word I don't like. I remember my aunt telling my mother, 'I've fought tooth and nail all of my life and now I don't want to any more'. One should fight if one has an ideal, but if you have to fight for ordinary, everyday things, what a pain!

The stimulus words with the same response as **Marry** are:

#### 43. BOOK = LOVELY/ NEW, LOVELY

I'm reading *The Lord of the Rings*, I can't understand this business of right wing and left wing, I can't understand these subtleties, I suppose it's right wing.

#### 81. TABLE = SHINY?/ NEW, LOVELY

I have an image in my mind. It's not a table, it's a stretcher, my husband when he had his operation. A table where people are about to eat, a nice lunch, a lovely sunny day, my family. Lunch with my family.

#### 88. KISS = LOVELY

My son covers me in kisses, he licks my face all over, is that normal? A kiss for my husband, a goodnight kiss. Even if I'm angry... I just can't go to bed ... I wouldn't sleep.

#### 55. CHILD = LOVELY

The associative node connected with **Marry** via the stereotyped associations is:

**Marry = Child = Kiss = Bride = Book = Table.** In this context, child and kiss recall being a mother, whereas marry recalls the mother/mother-in-law who criticizes, an aspect of the negative mother. As far as kiss goes, the difference between the kisses of the husband and the son again connotes a very intense maternal relationship and a colder and more distant conjugal relationship: the husband gets the goodnight kiss and the son a more involved one. Then, as an association to table, the husband is seen as suffering and needing a stretcher—my husband when he had his operation.

In the context of the association of a family we have reference to the husband and the native family. The husband is already mentioned in **Table** as ill. In this context she clarifies, with a few hesitations, that she can't rely on him, 'my husband... I can't really count on him because I know he has problems'. References to her native family has connections with other word associations, obviously with **66, Big**, with **14, Swim**, with her sister and a friend, and with **Plum/Prune** [the root word is the same in Italian] when she talks about her father's constipation, the fact that prunes are dried as opposed to the juiciness of other fruit and the reference to a trip to California. **Wool** can be associated

with family from the reference to the grandmother. The feminine is amplified by the reference to Heidi. However, helping her grandmother to wind wool into balls means untangling it and getting ready to make sweaters. Does it perhaps have something to do with untangling the tangled skein of life connected with her pleas for help and the beginning of the therapy?

We find another reference to the husband in **Despair** and, via the stereotyped response *useless* given in the repetition. We can see a chain of association with **Spiteful, Despise, Try, Fight, Insult**. In **Spiteful** we have a **Book** as a reference, *Lord of the Rings*, which was quoted in both contexts (book and spiteful). The experimenters thought they could recognize a sort of amplification on a theme connected with problematic aspects of the relationship with the inner male in the passage, from the reality of everyday life to the quoting of literary situations. It is not therefore with the real partner or the real father; neither is it with the son who, being very young, is still incorporated in the female/maternal, but with a problematic 'archetypal' male, a weak or obscurely omnipotent personification of the male. In **Plum/Prune** where the patient mentions that she can go to California, on the other side of the Ocean, on a journey where she takes advantage of possibilities of going about the world which could be perhaps the product of a relationship with a facilitating paternal element, what is remembered about the father is his withholding, keeping inside, not his generosity. Is it her father or an experience with the male which leaves her insecure?

**Try** can only be experienced as a game. Competition is seen as useless, not as fun. In this reference too, the experimenters saw difficulty connected with struggling and found a connection with **64, Fight**: 'It is a word I don't like', just like 'I don't like competition'. At this point the question arose of whether we were not witnessing the denial of a conflict or a difficulty in sustaining a conflict. Conflict could be distanced by means of idealization, 'You should fight if you have an ideal, but if you have to fight for ordinary, everyday things, what a pain!'

If we now verify the hypothesis advanced at **Big**, in other words, the existence of a conflict between the male and female component, we can see the various associative chains represented as follows:

Family  $\Rightarrow$  Wool  $\Rightarrow$  Swim  $\Rightarrow$  Child (maternal/female)

Big  $\uparrow\downarrow$

$\uparrow\downarrow$  Dance

Despair  $\Rightarrow$  Table  $\Rightarrow$  Plum/Prune  $\Rightarrow$  Book  $\Rightarrow$  Spiteful (paternal/male)

For each of these words there are various branches. The main ones are:

- ♦ Child  $\Rightarrow$  Take  $\Rightarrow$  Lamp  $\Rightarrow$  Pleased  $\Rightarrow$  Marry  $\Rightarrow$  Book  $\Rightarrow$  Table  $\Rightarrow$  Kiss  $\Rightarrow$  Frightened  $\Rightarrow$  Bury
- ♦ Despair  $\Rightarrow$  Table  $\Rightarrow$  Bad  $\Rightarrow$  Try  $\Rightarrow$  Spiteful  $\Rightarrow$  Despise  $\Rightarrow$  Fight
- ♦ Table  $\Rightarrow$  Kiss  $\Rightarrow$  Book  $\Rightarrow$  Marry  $\Rightarrow$  Dress  $\Rightarrow$  Choice
- ♦ Spiteful  $\Rightarrow$  Book  $\Rightarrow$  Despise  $\Rightarrow$  Try  $\Rightarrow$  Despair
- ♦ Prune  $\Rightarrow$  Table  $\Rightarrow$  Family

The experimenters then started drawing up the map of complexes, elaborating on the associative chains. In drawing up the map, we decided to keep to a schema which considered a limited number of complexes established a priori, in the attempt to make the maps comparable one with another. The decision may be debatable, but we started out from the statement made by Jung that the number of complexes is limited, and from Dieckmann's observations regarding the various possible nomenclatures for complexes (based on attitudes and behaviours, according to drive characteristics etc.). Out of the various possibilities, we chose the one based on the archetypal figures identified by Jung as characteristic of the process of individuation (i.e., the Persona, the Shadow, the Anima etc.) and on the two fundamental maternal and paternal complexes (Dieckmann 1993, p.16).

We began making the map starting out from **Big**. With the stimulus **Big** the maternal complex is activated, together with its branches, via family, wool, child, and connections with the other complexes are formed.

**Child – Take**, in addition to activating the maternal complex, this activates the ego complex via the response to **Take = Leave**, which admits the difficulty of separation, thus activating that part of the ego conscious of this difficulty.

**Child – Frightened – Bury** leads us to how repressed and distanced the Shadow aspects have been.

**Child – Lamp** demonstrates the ability to solve a problem and relates therefore to the ego complex, but also to the lack of heat and the fragility of the paper lampshades and dirty paper, again something repressed.

**Child – Pleased**

**Child – Marry**

**Child – Table – Kiss** presents a problem in the relationship with the adult male and with the husband. All of the Eros seems to be concentrated on the child. So, this connection touches both on the maternal and on the paternal complexes.

**Child – Kiss – Book – Spiteful** moves from the positive, non-differentiated, maternal complex to the Shadow of a destructive and archetypal male.

In order to check the connections, we constructed the map in Figure 1.

### Analysis of the Post-Test AE (T1)

Let us now examine the AE given one year later from the start of the therapy. It should be specified that our experimental knowledge of AE had increased in the meantime. We had seen that some hypotheses regarding the internal consistency of the experiment had been confirmed by other experiments. We therefore felt confident enough to introduce some variations. While maintaining the set parameters established for our study, we wanted to introduce some changes in the evaluation procedure. These changes were as follows:

1. use of all the AE words, both annotated and unmarked, to further check the associative consistency;



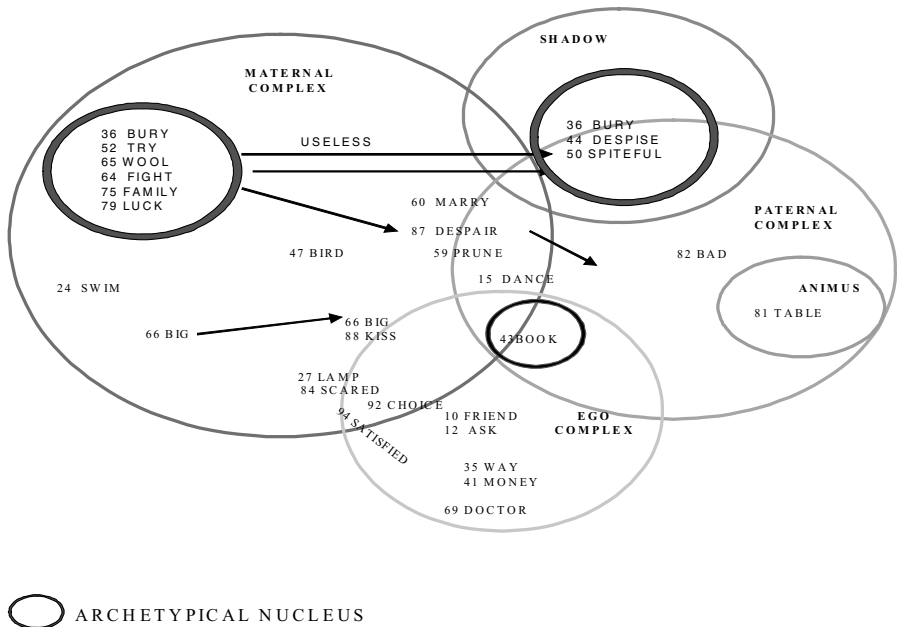


Figure 1

2. construct the associative network, which, up to then, had remained implicit.

As in the previous AE, the annotated words were placed in accordance with a hypothesis regarding the complexes and the map was constructed. However, when we attempted to return from the map to the hypotheses from which it had been built up, we had to rework the whole experiment. The construction of the associative network should have allowed us to identify the path taken more rapidly and reduce the arbitrary nature of the choices in the construction of the map.

In the evaluation of this AE we did not start from the use of the blanks, following the standard procedure, but from the stereotypes. In the research group there had been much discussion as to why the stereotyped responses should be used. In the evaluation session of 9 June 2004 we arrived at the following conclusions: the stereotyped responses highlight a reiteration and thus an aspect of the complex's autonomy. If followed, they lead us to the heart of the complex that has been activated. The annotated responses express the autonomous part of the complex and disturb the ego complex. Although the unmarked associations are probably related to the constellated complexes, they represent the most conscious part of it.

The associative network constructed is portrayed in Figure 2.

Examination of the stereotyped responses, blanks and other marked words gave rise to the first associative chains, that is, to aggregations of words linked



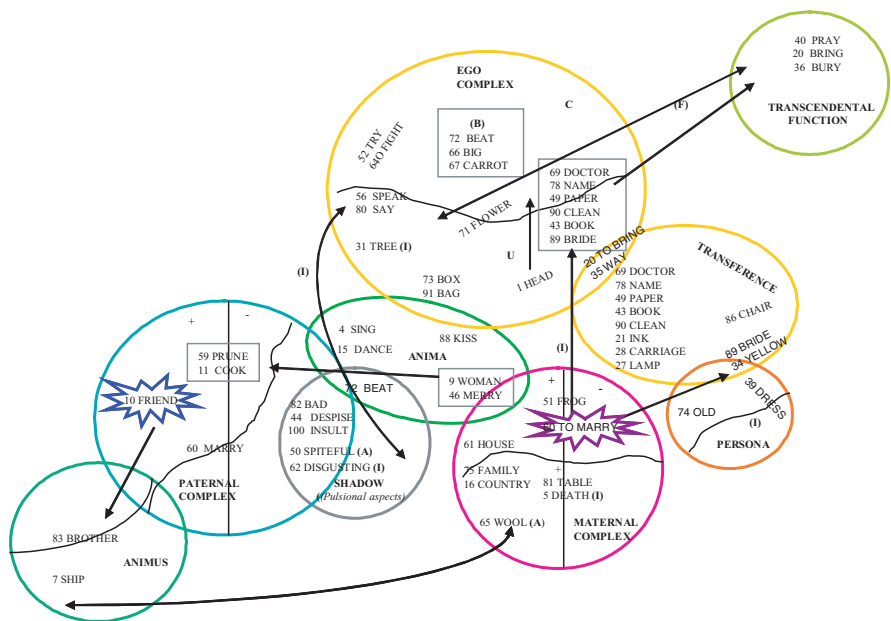


Figure 3

- (A) Changing Conscious Elements. New representations. Ego reinforced  
(B) Elements especially unconscious, conflict between pulsion/ control  
(C) To be able to take care  
(I) Inhibitory Influences  
(F) Enhancing Influences

together by some element. The analysis of the protocol soon took the form of a series of swings between strict adherence to the data present in the protocol itself (blanks, stereotyped responses and annotations) and consideration of meanings, images and symbols produced by the patient in the context. Simultaneous to what might be called this horizontal swing, our group moved in a sinusoidal and thus vertical progression, from a search for the words, annotations, stereotyped responses and their links to real interpretations of what gradually was taking shape: hypotheses as to the complexes activated and aspects of the defences, transference, resistance or transformational resources. Out of this dual movement some interconnected groups of words, true 'islands of meaning' gradually took shape on a big sheet of paper: the associative network.

To illustrate it in a summary fashion we started from the top. First and foremost the map shows the stimulus-words which elicited the seven stereotyped responses: **HAPPY**, **LOVELY**, **OLD**, **NEW**, **CHEERFUL**, **UGLY** [the Italian word also means 'nasty'] and **GREEN**. Under the stereotype clusters, we can see some interpretative hypotheses. The cluster of words linked by the stereotype **HAPPY** has to do with aspects of desire, disillusionment and idealization. The cluster

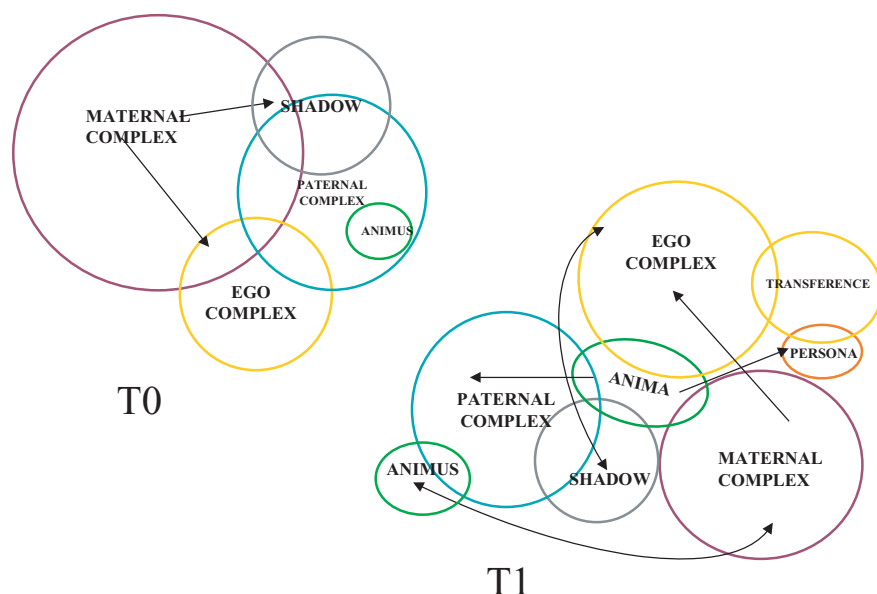


Figure 4

characterized by **LOVELY** seems mainly to refer to aspects yet to be developed, connected with sharing and the sense of protection. **OLD** and **NEW** are two stereotypes between which the theme of transformation is played out, with resistance on the one hand and innovative aspects in the relationship with the word, fostered by the positive transference experienced within the therapeutic process, on the other. The cluster **CHEERFUL** shares the theme of idealization with the cluster **HAPPY**, in a more defensive mode, via the denial of painful aspects. The transference is particularly evident in the cluster, which contains words that the patient connects with her transformational relationship with the therapist. The words **MARRY** and **BRIDE** are connected by an arrow that links the theme of idealization to that of renewal.

In the central part of the map we find the 'islands of meaning' which do not have stereotyped responses in common, but have been aggregated around the responses given at the initial administration of the experiment and the context session and are again connected according to what the patient expressed during the experiment.

Here, we can see some hypotheses, such as the theme of feared drives and also control (73, **Beat**), aspects of defensive and, all things considered, evolutionary irony (67, **Carrot**), and the differentiation of the ego, which is constantly supported by transference (78, **Name**) or infantile tendencies (80, **Say**).

At the bottom, the patient's responses to the AE have been categorized: Opposites, Synonyms, Quotes and Responses by Spatial Contiguity, following the classification suggested by Jung (1979).

The associative network thus includes all the words of the experiment and their interconnections. The next step consisted in drawing the Map of Complexes within which the structures of the conscious and unconscious psyche can be identified, together with their comparative strength and reciprocal influence as they emerged from the associative experiment.

The ego complex, the maternal and paternal complexes, aspects of the Shadow, Animus and Anima—just like elements of the transference or areas of trauma—are some of the structures that emerge. However, here we do not start out from a theoretical *a priori*, although they are still connected with the ‘islands of meaning’ that the verbal map previously identified.

From the very beginning the aspects of the transference that emerge in this AE struck the experimenters. It can be noticed that the transference changes the complexes due to the strengthening of the ego complex by freeing it from the parental complexes. The transference investment constellates the transcendent function, freeing libidinal energy that becomes available and can be invested in psychic development where the neurotic rigidity dissolves. The animus can be seen to function as symbolic male attributes of separation and action, and the anima as a vitalizing element of Eros. The most significant steps in the transference function may be perceived at:

#### **69. DOCTOR = BOND**

An unmarked response where the name of the analyst is given, a conscious and, at the same time, personal aspect of the analyst's role as a caregiver.

#### **49. PAPER = WHITE/ GREEN**

A nice letter, to write to Dr. Bond.

In this response too the importance of communication with the analyst is recalled. The nice letter to be written stresses the value and the importance of self-expression in the analytical relationship.

#### **21. INK = GREEN**

The colour of my eyes. . . when they want to be. . . sometimes they're grey. The colour of meadows, relaxing.

The same stereotype as **Paper**—and the analyst also has green eyes.

#### **86. CHAIR = MADE OF WOOD**

Comfortable, really comfortable this chair, because it's upholstered. The ones in my house, the ones I've just bought at Coin, are all coming unstuck . . . damn it!

Recognition of the analytical acceptance and a comparison with everyday life. They pertain to two different spaces: one safe and comfortable, the other problematic. It is an important distinction, especially if associated with lamp.

## 27. LAMP = LIGHT

It occurs to me that I said 'fridge'. It gives light, this lamp is nice, it gives a warm, limited light. I don't like neon light. It must be something that doesn't hurt your eyes.

The patient remembers her response during the previous experiment and shifts her attention to the present in the analytic relationship. The light in the office where analysis takes place does not hurt the eyes. Here one can perceive a reference to analytical containment, to the possibility of finding one's way: 'the light of truth', without being dazzled or hurt.

## 28. TRANSPORT = TRAM

Taxi, when I come to see Dr. Bond, because I want to be on time, when I'm late. A way of reaching a goal.

The importance given to the analytic work causes the investment in the path undertaken, thus in oneself. This frees energies that converge in the ego complex, which structures itself according to the development of the personality: reaching a goal.

The associations reported so far have close connections, according to the experimenters' hypotheses, with the strengthening of the ego complex, because they are relatively conscious and concern actions that can protect the therapy.

A different type of transference association seemed to be given to book.

## 43. BOOK = LOVELY/ OLD

Now that I have finished, reading a book is pure joy, reading lying on the bed, a time that is all my own. It is a bit like entering someone else's world.

You enter someone else's world when you read, but also when you do therapy. We thought a lot about the two stereotyped responses: lovely and old. The story told in a book is a story that has already been thought out or experienced and reinvented through fiction. In therapy the story told is experienced anew in the presence of an involved witness who is, in part, aware of the process. The considerations noted immediately above triggered some questions regarding the association to the stimulus word.

# 10. FRIEND = ENEMY (it makes me think of just the opposite)

I could think about it for an hour, but nobody comes to mind ... someone who can be trusted, faithful, whom you can share your feelings with, without any worries.

The blank indicates the action of an autonomous complex. The response 'enemy' expresses the opposite, the blocking of the response first and the positive description of the qualities attributed to friend afterwards. The patient recognized them as difficulties in exploring the path between the two poles represented by **Friend-enemy**. The complex is not only autonomous but split. It is possible to experience only the positive part. We wondered if the patient was exploring only the positive part of the complex in the transference, projecting it onto the analyst while denying the problematic part of the relationship. The problem consisted in whether it was possible to find a collusive split in the complex in the AE and how that split operated in the transference. Concerning the more conscious aspects of the transference, examined above, the two poles of the complex seem to be present and expressed. In the associations, the relationship with the analyst—even though invested very positively—does not exclude recognition of the difficulty and the presence of negative aspects to be explored. In other associations connected with the maternal and paternal complexes, the split collusive aspect needed to be further investigated. Here is an example.

# 90. CLEAN = CLEAN, OLD

What a bore! Cleaning the house (what I did before I came here). It's nice, but it's also hard work. It can become an obsession. Clean is something good.

It is a metaphor for the effort and the importance of getting things sorted out. It is a movement towards the awareness required in analytic work. It can become an obsession brought to mind by the association.

# 72. BEAT = OH HEAVENS, PROSTITUTE/PAVEMENT, PROSTITUTE [the Italian 'battere' also means to 'walk the streets', and a woman 'on the pavement' is a street-walker]

Apart from the crap I was talking the other day ... Beat the mattress, it is a verb I don't like ... Mrs. Agnese beating the mattress at six o'clock in the morning and keeping an eye on [in Italian, the verb is the same as that used for 'controlling', 'keeping under control'] everything that happens.

Keeping under control for fear of ... giving way to Eros and becoming a devalued female figure like a prostitute. However, the alternative is Mrs. Agnese, beating the mattress and keeping everything that happens in the building 'under control'. The prostitute is practically the Shadow aspect of the female who cannot manage

to integrate Eros, the passion. The only way of avoiding condemnation and social devaluation is to be a sacrificial mother and wife. We should not forget the response to the blank: **Marry**.

#### 60. MARRY = OH GOODNESS, MARRY, HUSBAND/ HAPPY

It is sharing your soul completely, even if it's not always like that. What I would like, but it's not possible.

If the response to **Beat** constitutes the missing and non-explorable erotic aspect of the female, the one given to **Marry** expresses at the same time idealization and the impossibility of fully sharing. In the conclusive 'but it's not possible' one can perceive the regret and the limitations of working this out in the analytic relationship. The response to **Woman** throws new light on these aspects.

#### 9. WOMAN = MAN

A song of Anna Oxa's comes to mind. I should be a woman, but it's difficult to achieve maturity in one's own being: mother, daughter, sister, spouse. She should be the man's ally. I really like the term alliance.

Again an opposite **Woman-Man**, but in this case, alongside the awareness of the difficulty of achieving full female maturity together with the response: man, the male component is constellated, which suggests the possibility of an alliance in a non-oppositional relationship. While still being different the alliance includes the two poles, male and female.

With regards to the maternal complex and the transference, the experience of investment in the transference seems to allow a new awareness of opposing poles without colluding with one or the other. A significant aspect of the transference is noted in the next response.

#### 56. SPEAK = WELL/ PFF... A LITTLE

Expressing yourself... is a difficult thing, and also dangerous, because I am a person who likes talking about herself, and that's not always a good thing. For me it is also connected with sincerity... you have to be careful.

There seems to be a lot of awareness in this response: the positive and negative aspects of the talking cure are very much in the forefront. On one hand, there is the welcoming relationship, being able to tell someone about yourself. On the other hand, there is awareness that the absolutes of right or goodness do not exist—even in the talking cure. The two poles of the maternal complex (the welcoming, intimate and caring aspects of relationship, on one hand, getting so wrapped up in words that you lose sight of the truth, on the other) seem to be present without the analytical relationship colluding with the splitting



of the complex. This may be due partly to the appearance of the transcendent function.

The response given to the question on collusive splitting, for which the transference could act as a vehicle, is again brought up in relationship to the paternal complex, including its archetypal Shadow component. The paternal complex has been rendered less autonomous partially by the transference and the transcendent function. In the process energies have been made available to establish functions such as that of the animus and the anima. Let us see how.

## 11. COOK = STEAK

I keep having stomach problems... a nice steak, beef, Californian steaks.

## 59. PRUNE = (laughs) PURPLE [there is no difference between the root word for plums and prunes in Italian]

A fruit, laxative. My father used them, so I remember Californian prunes/plums... how I loved that journey... I was in love with an airline pilot... I went to see him... the most sordid thing in my life. But I really loved California... I felt free. They are delicious, juicy, good.

## 7. SHIP = CRUISE

Cruise, I always wanted to go on a cruise. My biology teacher said she met her husband on a cruise. She found a husband, only I'm already married. I'd like to go to New York for two days on my own.

## 52. TRY = WON'T HURT/ SUCCEED

Won't hurt. A climb in the mountains. When I was a girl, now I don't do it any more.

The responses to **Cook** and **Prune** show that the animus is still incorporated in, suppressed and distorted by the parental complexes. The responses to **Ship** and **Try** indicate the appearance of a function that is more autonomous from the parental complexes represented by the possibility of experimenting, exploring new possibilities.

## Comparison between the two associative experiments

At T1 the ego complex is more differentiated from the maternal and paternal complexes and is strengthened. In a corresponding fashion, the maternal complex proves to be diminished, thus made less powerful and relocated outside the ego complex. One important element from the clinical point of view is that the paternal complex no longer overlaps the maternal complex.

The appearance of the persona indicates a differentiation on the level of social functioning. Aspects of the Shadow have become less archetypal, the stimulus words are more or less the same, but the archetypal component is less important. At TO the archetypal component is conveyed by the literary references made at **Spiteful**, whereas the associations at T1 indicate that conscious transformational elements can be observed. Inhibitory influences can be seen in the associations with **Disgusting**.

**Beat** should be placed between Anima and Shadow as an entity, which should be relieved of its Shadow aspects in order to express Eros. It could be said to be the activation of a unifying Eros, which by remaining partly bound to the Shadow, still proves to be dangerous for the patient. The differentiation is also demonstrated in Anima and Animus aspects.

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TRANSLATIONS OF ABSTRACT

Nous nous sommes intéressés à l'application clinique des Recherches Expérimentales sur les Associations de Jung, lorsque nous avons décidé d'utiliser la théorie jungienne des complexes à des fins d'évaluation psycho-diagnostique et de traitement de nos patients relevant de l'Unité de jour de Psychothérapie (Clinique Psychiatrique, Université de Milan). Dans des situations psychopathologiques, les complexes à charge émotionnelle particulièrement élevée deviennent autonomes, perturbant et inhibant les fonctions du moi. Les représentations et les états émotionnels correspondant à ces complexes deviennent alors prédominants et conditionnent les modes relationnels du sujet ainsi que l'expression de ses symptômes. Au cours de cette étude expérimentale, nous avons posé l'hypothèse de départ selon laquelle notre travail de psychothérapie devait aboutir à un changement progressif de l'équipement complexe initial du patient. L'expérience d'association de mots telle qu'elle a été conçue par C.G. Jung, nous a permis d'identifier les termes qui indiquaient et stimulaient une activation spécifique de complexes pour chacun des sujets via des inducteurs spécifiques de complexes. Nous avons donc décidé de déterminer si ce protocole, conduit tout d'abord au cours de la première phase d'évaluation clinico-diagnostique, puis, suite à une année de traitement, permettait de dénoter des changements de l'équipement complexe du patient.

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Wir entwickelten ein Interesse an der klinischen Anwendung des Wortassoziationsexperiments, als wir uns entschieden, Jungs Theorie der Komplexe in die psychodiagnostische Evaluation und die Behandlung von nicht stationären Patienten einzuführen, die sich an unsere psychotherapeutische Ambulanz (Psychiatrische Klinik der Universität Mailand) wandten. In psychopathologischen Zuständen werden Komplexe mit einer besonders hohen emotionalen Aufladung autonom, sie stören und behindern die Funktionen des Ich. Die Repräsentationen und affektiven Zustände, die mit diesen Komplexen korrespondieren, werden dominant und bedingen die Art, wie die Symptome sich darstellen, sowie die Beziehungsmodi des Subjekts. In dieser experimentellen Studie gingen wir von der grundlegenden Theorie aus, dass unsere psychotherapeutische Arbeit zu einer fortschreitenden Veränderung in der initialen Anordnung der Komplexe

unserer Patienten und Patientinnen führen sollte. Jungs Wortassoziationsexperiment erlaubt uns, solche Wörter zu identifizieren, die auf eine bestimmte Aktivierung der Komplexe - für jedes Subjekt mittels spezifischer Komplexmarkierung - hinweisen oder diese stimulieren. Aus diesem Grund beschlossen wir, herauszufinden, ob das Wortassoziationsexperiment, welches in der ersten Phase der klinisch diagnostischen Evaluation und dann wieder nach einem Jahr Behandlung angewendet wird, Änderungen aufzeigt, die in der Komplexkonstellation der Patienten auftreten.

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Cominciammo a interessarci dell'applicazione clinica dell'Esperimento Associativo verbale (AE) quando decidemmo di utilizzare la teoria junghiana dei complessi nella valutazione psicodiagnostica e nel trattamento utilizzandola nella nostra Unità di Psicoterapia per pazienti ambulatoriali (Clinica Psichiatrica, Università di Milano). Nelle situazioni psicopatologiche complessi con intensità emotiva particolarmente alta divengono autonomi disturbando quindi e inibendo le funzioni dell'Io. Le rappresentazioni e gli stati affettivi corrispondenti a tali complessi divengono dominanti condizionando l'espressione dei sintomi e le modalità relazionali del soggetto. In questo studio sperimentale siamo partiti dalla teoria basilare che il nostro lavoro psicoterapeutico potesse portare a un progressivo mutamento dell'assetto iniziale del complesso nel paziente. L'Esperimento di Associazione Verbale di Jung ci permette di identificare quelle parole che indicano e stimolano una specifica attivazione dei complessi in ciascun soggetto attraverso specifici markers di complessi. Decidemmo poi di determinare se l'AE somministrato durante la prima fase della valutazione diagnostico-clinica e dopo un anno di trattamento rivelasse il verificarsi di cambiamenti nell'assetto complessuale dei pazienti.

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Nos interesamos en la aplicación clínica del Experimento de asociación de Palabras(AE) cuando decidimos usar la teoría de Jung de los complejos en la evaluación psicodiagnóstica y el tratamiento de pacientes de nuestra Unidad de Consulta Externa. (Clínica Psiquiátrica, Universidad de Milán) En las situaciones psicopatológicas, los complejos con una particular alta carga emocional se hacen autónomos, perturbadores e inhibidores de las funciones del ego. Las representaciones y estados afectivos correspondientes se hacen dominantes, condicionando al expresión de síntomas y los modos relacionales del sujeto. En este estudio experimental comenzamos por la idea básica de que nuestro trabajo terapéutico conduciría a un cambio progresivo en la composición inicial de los complejos. El experimento de asociación de Palabras nos permitió identificara aquellas palabras que indicaban y estimulaban a la activación de los complejos en cada sujecio por vía de marcadores de complejos. Por tanto, decidimos determinar si el AE, administrado durante la primera fase de la evaluación clínica diagnóstica y despues de un año de tratamiento, mostraban cambios en la composición inicial de los complejos.

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