

C. G. JUNG AND B. KAFKA – COMPARISON OF TWO PERSONALITIES FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF APPLIED SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY

JAN GRUBER

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Abstract:

The article discusses two prominent personalities working in the field of psychotherapy and experimental psychology - among them C.G. Jung, who became famous on the world level and B. Kafka on the regional level. The article tries to find answers to why it was so, from the point of view of applied social psychology.

Keywords: C. G. Jung, B. Kafka, status, reference group, applied social psychology, self-assertion, depth psychology, analytical psychology, parapsychology, hypnosis, psychoanalysis

Introduction

Carl Gustav Jung was born in 1875 in Kesswil, Switzerland. He was undoubtedly a talented man who became one of the most famous psychotherapists and researchers in the field of psychology of all time - almost every educated member of Euro-American civilization knows C.G. Jung. (14)

Břetislav Kafka (beware, this is not the Czech writer F. Kafka, it's just a coincidence of names) was born in 1891 in Horní Kostelec in Austria-Hungary. He was undoubtedly a talented person who became a locally famous hypnotist and researcher in the field of psychology - almost every Czech with an interest in healing and esotericism knows the name Břetislav Kafka. (10)

Comparing these two personalities is at first sight completely unthinkable - what could a Swiss professor have in common with an uneducated sculptor and folk healer? Nevertheless, we find certain similarities:

- Both were born in the last quarter of the nineteenth century and died in the sixties of the twentieth century.
- Both came from the “periphery” - small settlements in Central European states.
- Both were deeply concerned with the human psyche based on their own intrapsychic experiences and were perceived by those around them as extraordinary personalities.
- Both used their experience for the successful treatment of mental disorders and psychotherapy, as well as for experiments and scientific work in the field, which they tried to present in published works.
- Their work was not quite “scientific” in the sense of science based on statistics, empirical evidence and correlations - qualitative methodology and case studies prevailed, both did not hesitate to create concepts and hypothetical constructs that contradict the standard physical model of the world - they did not hesitate to admit phenomena and introduce theories that we could describe as pseudoscience.
- Their work was often attacked from the position of academic psychologists (e.g. my professor on the history of psychology commented that Kafka’s “New foundations of experimental psychology” (cf. 11) are neither foundations nor experimental, let alone psychology. Psychologists often look at Jungian psychology very suspiciously, only very rigidly make its way into undergraduate psychology study programs and, for example, the History of Psychology by Hunt (6) mentions C. G. Jung in only one line, even though its Czech edition has a nice 708 pages).
- As part of the regional conference Kladské Pomezí – the land of stories on May 2, 2016, the Municipal Library of Červený Kostelec had been ceremoniously renamed the Břetislav Kafka Library of Červený Kostelec. (3)
- In August 2019, a world conference of Jungian psychologists was held in Vienna with the motto Encountering the Other: Within Us, Between Us, and in the World. (2) It was already the twenty-first conference of the Jungian IAAP, with the participation of many hundreds of psychologists from all over the world. The number of certified Jungian therapists-supervisors in the world reaches three thousand in 2020 and each of them has several tens to hundreds of Jungian-oriented therapists.

Why was the 21st Břetislav Kafka World Conference not held? Why are his successors not an influential school of psychotherapy? Why does the author of

the article undergo self-experience training in a Jungian-oriented approach, and one of his Swiss colleagues does not undergo a therapeutic self-experience in the Kafka style?

Different strategies of self-assertion

We can, of course, discuss the depth and sophistication of the concepts of both personalities, their intellectual appeal and their contribution to the 21st century (by the way, in the afterword of Jung's "Tavistock Lectures" we find "he was ahead of his time by at least 50 years" (9) and in the afterword of Kafka's "Parapsychologie" we find "the research was ahead of its time by several decades") (10).

But it is quite an indisputable fact that both gentlemen had a successful therapeutic practice and concepts with which they tried to describe and convey that practice to others. I would rather focus on the sociological aspects that contributed to the fact that one of the men became an inspiring icon of the world conference fifty years after his death, while the library in the Červený Kostelec was named after the other one.

So what should Břetislav Kafka do to become world-famous and establish himself in the same way as C. G. Jung did? What strategy could make him perceived as a high-status member of the professional community and a reference figure for many followers?

- To graduate in medicine. Not that C. G. Jung used knowledge from pathology, anatomy, physiology, etc. in his career. From the beginning, his interest related to mental health problems, of course in addition to the polyhistorical focus on cultural studies, mythology, religious studies, ethnography, etc. But since he graduated in medicine, he always had access to the scientific community, and even state authorities will respect him.

If you want to treat the mentally ill, as a doctor you will have an easier position. Maybe not even in relation to patients, but definitely in relation to the scientific community and authorities. While C. G. Jung joined the hospital in Burgholzl (14) as a psychiatrist in 1900 after graduating from medical school, Kafka was fined one hundred crowns by the local authorities for his therapeutic activities in 1926. (10) In addition: an official university education gives, in addition to the hallmark of authority, a certain insight, critical thinking and a way of argumentation, which Kafka lacks a lot in his books. It doesn't always help everyone, but it's better to have it than not to have it. No one is saying you can't learn what you do

without college. But by not attending it, you are preparing yourself for a lifelong handicap - at least according to the comparison of these two gentlemen.

- It is not good to just read Freud - it is good to write to him. It is not true that Kafka was merely an autodidact who was not interested in the way others thought about a problem. It is clear from his publications that he had an overview of professionals who were involved in similar disciplines as himself. However, unlike him, Jung wrote to Freud, came into contact with him and experienced an intense relationship with him, which gradually shifted from the student/teacher form to the form of two independent, strong players in the field (14). If you make personal contact with people who are interested in the same things as you, you will probably be in a much better position. Education is not enough, you need to network.
- It is good to marry rich. Although B. Kafka had a prosperous sculpture and restoration company in his life (he left behind a picturesque villa with an interesting studio in Červený Kostelec - 16), he had to solve existential problems all his life. His work in the field of soul-searching was therefore always more of a hobby, even though he devoted himself to it intensively and in depth, he still had to think about his livelihood. C. G. Jung, on the other hand, obtained the means for an independent life dedicated to research by marrying Emma Rauschenbach from an industrialist family in 1903.

It seems that talent cultivated in an environment of secure existence tends to flourish. We can cite experiments with turnbuckles and a box of matches, the point of which is the fact that solving a quiz takes less time if you do not depend on it for your livelihood, we can cite the example of Ester Ledecká, an undoubtedly talented athlete (17), who became a double Olympic medallist not only/but also because she didn't have to deal with sponsorship issues. Duncker's experiment with a candle (fix it on the wall using the material you have at your disposal, you have to figure out how) is solved faster by people who do not care about the reward (as demonstrated already in 1962 by Glucksberg) (1). It seems like it kills real creativity if you get paid for it. Of course, you can embrace the concept of voluntary poverty and create. But if you want a normal life and build something more permanent, it's good to have a sponsor and not sell talent to secure a livelihood.

- It is not effective to overdo it with parapsychology, mysticism and hypnosis. Both Jung and Kafka grew up in families with a spiritualist tradition. This was reflected in the willingness to emphasize the concepts of the work that do not quite fit the paradigm of evidence-based science. In their works, both men refer to the physical discoveries of the time, hoping that the uncertainty principle or the discovery of some new elementary particles will explain the phenomena

they encountered in practice. (12) By the way, they were ahead of their time - for example, "The Tao of Physics" by the leading representative of the New Age movement Fritjof Capra was published in 1975 (4), when both gentlemen were already deceased. While Jung spiced up his deeply psychological concepts with mysticism (the parapsychological or mystical overlap typically only appears at the end of his works and it can be seen that the essay is about to end - 7), B. Kafka does not hesitate to jump straight from the considerations of hypnosis and therapy to telepathy, clairvoyance, distant healing, etc.

Jungian mysticism becomes a source of transpersonal psychology and foreshadows a certain paradigmatic shift in psychotherapy and can be an inspiration for a large number of people dealing with the psyche (15). Kafka's approach is to a large extent a replication of the paradigm of magicians of the 19th century, such as A. Crowley (5) with their ideas about the will of a strong individual controlling the world around him. In one dialogue, Freud warns Jung against the "black mire of the occult" and reproaches him for being willing to retreat from sexual theory as an explanatory scheme. (14) Freud would probably say to Kafka that he uses mud wraps in his theories.

- For both authors, mysticism and parapsychology function as explanatory schemes. But if you support your mystical reach with a comprehensive cultural comparison, spread-wide through religious studies, the mythology of different cultures and symbolism, you will probably be more interested.(7) C. G. Jung achieved enormous famous for, among other things, his introduction to the Chinese divination tool "I-Ting" (14), which was subsequently a bestseller on the American book market. It is simply necessary to be global and with an overlap. After all, a humanities education is also useful for marketing: when you work with substructures of the personality, it is much better to call them "Shadow", or "Anima" (8) than "Ludvík" or "Tomáš" as in Kafka's case studies (10).
- It is good to have students. A lot of students. Just as networking works during the period when you are looking for a place in the sun, so also later in the position of a recognized personality, your students will guarantee that your legacy will remain alive and not just fill the pages of dusty books. C.G. Jung was surrounded by a large number of personalities who elaborated his ideas, and an institute with a certified training system was created, which exports the Jungian approach to the world. (14) B. Kafka rather worked with subjects - easily hypnotizable people with whom he conducted experiments. However, he did not establish the school and we do not have the institute after him.
- Rather be born in Switzerland than in nineteenth- and twentieth-century Bohemia. And if you can't choose, move out of the Czech Republic as soon as

possible (like Freud). Although both states are somewhat similar (inland, size, region, bilingualism of the population...). Switzerland had the huge advantage of real independence and neutrality in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, so neither the world wars nor the totalitarian regimes that followed affected it much. Before the war, Jung had ideas that led some of his opponents to accuse him of sympathizing with Nazism, he rejected it as firmly as possible and explained even in communication with a famous rabbi that he had absolutely nothing to do with Hitler. (14) If Switzerland had been taken over by the Nazis, Jung would probably have ended up in a concentration camp (15). But this did not happen, and while Jung survived Nazism quite well, Kafka was the target of persecution both by the Nazis and later by the Communist regime (10). Who knows if his ideas would not have gained more traction if he had gone to the United States, for example, and published in English or German. After all, a huge number of outstanding people left Europe, and we owe them such things as the atomic bomb, space flights, or, in the field of mental research, the modern form of psychoanalysis and general psychology. If you stay in the Czech Republic, you can also make world discoveries - for example, contact lenses or discoveries in the field of virology belong to Czech residents. But your destiny will probably be more complicated and your contribution will often be forgotten for a long time, even if you are a genius. Božek, Mendel, Jánský, or perhaps the excellent autodidact aircraft designer Kadeřábek could say a lot about this. The author hopes that in the 21st century the fate of talented Czech geniuses will be somewhat happier, even if they do not leave the Central European area (13).

Perhaps all of this would not be enough, perhaps B. Kafka would not have achieved the same worldwide acclaim as C. G. Jung. His son writes about Kafka in the epilogue of one of his books that he was modest and rejected fame (10). It is possible, however, that the indicated principles of self-assertion in the professional world of Western society may extend to the present day and can be used as inspiration for self-assertion in the field of humanities. Talent certainly matters. At the same time, we should know about social and marketing factors that also decide whether our life story will be similar to the story of C. G. Jung (or perhaps S. Freud), or whether it will be lined up with the stories of J. Božek, J. Ressel, Břetislav Kafka and other talented, regionally famous personalities of the Central European area.

Conclusion:

Both personalities have several common socio-demographic characteristics: similar origin, the time in which they lived, the area of professional interest in theory and practice and ambivalent acceptance by the scientific community. There are several social psychological factors that (besides quantitatively certainly incomparable expertise) contributed to this. C.G. Jung became famous as an icon of worldwide importance, while B. Kafka remained a regionally known personality. In the opinion of the author, these include adequate professional education and professionalism in the performance of activities, networking and willingness to join global groups operating in this specific professional field, as well as good self-marketing and popularization of one's ideas. Last but not least, the geopolitical situation in specific regions of Central Europe during the 20th century. Certain parallels can be traced between the life destinies of B. Kafka and other highly talented people who grew up in the 19th and 20th centuries in what is now the Czech Republic.

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Contact:

PhDr. Jan Gruber, PhD.

Specialization:

Industrial and organizational psychology, psychodiagnostic.

Counselling and psychotherapy. Education.

Education:

FF UK – the psychology (PhDr. PhD.), Education in the field of non-verbal and relaxation techniques, telephone crisis intervention, integrative psychotherapy, currently in systematic training in a Jungian-oriented approach.

Practice:

Lecturer and seminar activity (Faculty of Philosophy,

Charles University, VŠAPS, VŠO),

consulting, diagnostic activities (Tres consulting, s.r.o.),

<http://honzagruber.cz/>

<http://tresconsulting.cz/>

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/jan-gruber-97904814a/>