

Dreams and Dream Interpretation in Traditional Bulgarian Culture

Anatol Anchev

(Summary)

In this article, I offer a summarized survey of the different folklore genres in Bulgarian traditional culture that refer to dreams, dream interpretation and the consequences of dreams. The study is based on a substantial number of narratives of dreams and dream interpretations that I have recorded through fieldwork, and on my research on this topic. I have also utilized published and archive materials, dating since the Bulgarian Revival period until modern times, and published research by folklorists and ethnographers from the distant past until the present day. I delineate the main principles of dream interpretation; the ways of dream interpretation, and the factors that influence it. It is underlined that dream interpretation is part of the cultural education in patriarchal Bulgarian society as an essential element of the skills and practices referring to predicting the future. All of this confirms the fact that dreams and dream interpretation are a significant part of the system of Bulgarian traditional culture. I emphasize the unity of opposites, which is basic for the classification and interpretation of dreams. It is an important characteristic of Bulgarian traditional culture as a whole and also of the Bulgarian culture and language from the Middle Ages until modern times. Simultaneously, I also dwell on the analytical-psychological essence the unity of opposites. Special attention is paid to the crucial role of the context for the correct interpretation of dreams, which corresponds to the method of amplification in Jungian psychology.

Keywords: dreams; dream interpretation; genres of folklore; Bulgarian traditional culture; cultural education; system; unity of opposites; context; amplification; analytical psychology

Anatol Anchev
Bulgarian Academy of Sciences
Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Studies
with Ethnographic Museum
Bl. 6 Acad. Georgi Bonchev St.
1113 Sofia, BULGARIA
anatol22011@abv.bg