

Illusions, disillusionment and inner motherhood. A study of dreams of pregnant women

Svetlozar Vassilev, Bulgarian Psychoanalytical Society

The paper presents a clinical study of unconscious transfigurations during pregnancy by tracing dreams dreamt in the period between conception and birth.

The results suggest that the experience of pregnancy varies according to the psychic organization of the patient. Perceptions of pregnancy among neurotic patients have similar characteristics - motherhood provokes joyful feelings, but also specific anxieties about the vitality of the baby and fears that the dreamer would not be an ideal mother. The inner life of the borderline patients is dominated by the conflict between love and hate and identity problems, which often lead to depression, anxiety and psychosomatic crises. Their dreams are confusing and distorted and they often imagined childbirth as an aggressive act and their babies as deformed or monstrous.

My clinical experience shows that working through the difficulties encountered by both groups can be significantly supported by psychoanalytic treatment. However, working with patients who experience difficulties in the perception of themselves as potent, reproductively capable and good parents, presents the analyst with a number of difficulties. Foremost among these is the ability to withstand a painful countertransference and to maintain hope during the moments of disillusionment, due to inevitable setbacks, prematurely lost pregnancies, and the inevitable states of regression. In these cases, the psychoanalyst's task is to provide a space to contain the pain and grief for the losses and limitations in patient's life.