

**UNLOCKING THE PSYCHE: THE THERAPEUTIC POWER
OF ASSOCIATIVE METAPHOR CARDS IN INDIVIDUAL
AND GROUP PSYCHOTHERAPY. THE THERAPEUTIC STORY
"MUSTAFA. THE WAY TO YOURSELF"**

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Annotation. Metaphoric association cards (OH) serve as powerful tools in psychotherapy, counselling, and personal development, facilitating self-expression, communication, and emotional exploration. By combining metaphoric association cards, individuals access unconscious thoughts, emotions, and traumatic experiences, triggering self-healing. Integrated with story therapy, OH cards help diagnose and correct internal processes, identify values, and navigate life challenges. The therapeutic story "1001 Nights" illustrates self-discovery, spiritual awakening, and inner balance through symbolic themes. Used in group psychotherapy, these cards foster insight, catharsis, empowerment, and integration, making storytelling a transformative tool for emotional processing and psychological growth.

Keywords: metaphoric association cards OH, group psychotherapy, therapeutic story, individual work, metaphor, archetype.

**DEBLOCAREA PSIHICULUI: PUTEREA TERAPEUTICĂ
A CARDURILOR ASOCIATIVE METAFORICE ÎN PSIHOTERAPIA
INDIVIDUALĂ ȘI DE GRUP. POVESTEA TERAPEUTICĂ
„MUSTAFA. CALEA CĂTRE TINE ÎNSUȚI”**

Adnotare. Cardurile metaforice de asociere (OH) sunt instrumente puternice în psihoterapie, consiliere și dezvoltare personală, facilitând auto-exprimarea, comunicarea și explorarea emoțională. Prin combinarea cardurilor metaforice de asociere, indivizii accesează gânduri inconștiente, emoții și experiențe traumatiche, declanșând procese de auto-vindecare. Integrate în terapia prin poveste, cardurile OH ajută la diagnosticarea și corectarea proceselor interne, identificarea valorilor și gestionarea provocărilor vieții. Povestea terapeutică „1001 de nopți” ilustrează descoperirea de sine, trezirea spirituală și echilibrul interior prin teme simbolice. Folosite în psihoterapia de grup, aceste carduri stimulează introspecția, catharsisul, împuternicirea și integrarea, făcând din povestire un instrument transformator pentru procesarea emoțională și creșterea psihologică.

Cuvinte cheie: carduri metaforice de asociere OH, psihoterapie de grup, poveste terapeutică, lucru individual, metaforă, arhetip.

Introduction

The most beautiful emotion we can experience is the mysterious. It is the fundamental emotion that stands at the cradle of all true art and science.

Albert Einstein

The Synergy of Metaphorical Associative Cards - OH and Story Therapy in Psychotherapeutic Narratives

Metaphoric OH cards, also known as association cards, OH-cards, therapy cards, or insight cards, feature images or words that evoke diverse emotions, states, and feelings, serving as versatile tools in personal development, socio-emotional development, counseling, psychotherapy, and training. The vast benefits they offer to the psychotherapeutic process are significant, allowing the revelation of hidden thoughts, emotions, desires, fears, dreams, and traumatic situations by transcending the rational mind and accessing the depths of the human psyche, archetypes, and the transformational process. In the words of Moritz, "the magic is in us, the cards are just paper and color". Neil Postman emphasizes that [3] "A metaphor is not an ornament; it is an organ of perception, allowing us to see the world through different lenses". Sebastian Guerrini underscores that "Images have no inherent power; it is we who empower them". Orson Scott Card suggests that "Metaphors possess a unique ability to encapsulate truth within a condensed space". Ben Vedder notes that "In metaphor, the focus is not on describing empirical reality but on revealing the previously unseen within a being". Jo A. Tyler and David M. Boje highlight that "To tell something is to shape it intuitively and deliberately; storytelling transforms events into experiences and memories. Without the story, an experience remains a mere re-enactment. To recreate is to relive the events, feeling the pain, fear, and terror". Iulia Sara expresses that "OH books are captivating, thought-provoking, dramatic, or entertaining, serving as an external expression of one's inner world" [1].

The concept of associative cards draws inspiration from Gestalt psychology, Carl Jung's analytical psychology, Joseph Campbell's perspective of myths and archetypes, and solution-oriented therapeutic approaches. Carl Jung was one of the creators of modern deep psychology, which sought to facilitate a conversation with the unconscious energies that live in each of us. Carl Jung is appreciated for his philosophical thinking and deep introspection on aspects of the self, believing that we are spiritual beings and that developing a spiritual relationship with ourselves helps us to understand more deeply all aspects of our being. As Carl Jung says: "Your visions become clear only when you can look into your own heart. Whoever looks outside, dreams; whoever looks inside, wakes up" [6].

OH cards emerged in 1982, conceived by painter Ely Raman. In "The Little Book About The OH Cards", Raman highlighted that OH provides an opportunity to uncover and appreciate diverse perspectives - a distinctive tool for fostering peace and healing. With OH, there is a celebration of each other's intelligence and imagination, recognizing that the value, like love, resides in the mind of the beholder. Emphasizing health as a holistic state

encompassing emotional, intellectual, physical, social, and spiritual dimensions, OH encourages the integration of these levels [2].

Ever since I discovered OH cards during my art therapy internship in 2009, I have been captivated by their transformative power. Getting certified and attending professional supervision courses with OH-Publishing coordinator Moritz Egetmeyer further deepened my appreciation for this remarkable tool.

Materials and methods of research

Metaphorical association cards serve as a psychologist's versatile tool applicable across various psychotherapeutic schools

Like musical notes adaptable to jazz, classical, or rock, these cards enable the creation of diverse therapeutic melodies. Termed associative, they spark personal associations, inviting individuals to revisit their stories, project emotionally resonant images, and engage in therapeutic processes. Operating primarily in the irrational realm, these cards activate the right hemisphere of the brain, triggering internal processes of self-healing and crisis resolution. Each image serves as a visual metaphor, unlocking doors to an individual's inner world [4].

Metaphorical associative cards offer numerous benefits:

1. Bypass internal resistance and rational thinking, reducing conscious censorship.
2. Alleviate internal tension and resistance.
3. Foster an atmosphere of security and trust.
4. Facilitate quick and clear information gathering for quality client work and deep diagnosis.
5. Illuminate the dynamics of interpersonal relationships.
6. Depict a person's relationship with external or internal ideas, fostering a dialogue between worlds.
7. Clarify and understand the client's current experiences, needs, and unfinished internal processes.
8. Simulate processes of the past and future, working with a timeline.
9. Address traumatic situations through metaphor, preventing additional traumatization.
10. Encourage verbalization of the problem for therapeutic effect.
11. Enhance therapy speed and effectiveness.
12. Provide a context for safe solution searching and modelling.
13. Initiate internal processes of self-healing.
14. Guide the process of finding a unique crisis resolution.
15. Allow for infinite combinations and topics during distinct phases of psychotherapy.

Metaphorical associative maps, such as OH, align seamlessly with fairy tale therapy, both grounded in metaphor and projection. I integrated cards from the "1001 Nights" set to

craft a collective fairy tale in group and individual sessions. This deck, with 55 cards depicting scenes from oriental tales, aids in diagnosing and correcting internal processes, identifying values and needs, fostering a value-based self-attitude, and seeking balance between the external and internal worlds. The names used in this story are those mentioned by the participants during the composition of the story [12].

Using this deck enables deeper problem-solving:

1. Acquiring additional resources in real life.
2. Navigating problematic situations arising from misunderstanding.
3. Defining personal boundaries and resource states.
4. Developing techniques for invoking and maintaining resource states.
5. Exploring concepts and techniques related to resource states.
6. Assessing interaction with the external world and clarifying individual values.

In group settings, each member draws a card, contributing to a collective fairy tale and exploring personal narratives. Analysis involves questions about alignment with one's life, emotional responses, surprises, fears, happiness, feelings during and after the story, and desired changes. External aggression may manifest as a knight defending a castle, pregnancy as children, and choices as diverging roads.

Ethics OH

Outline a set of ethical principles for working with cards - OH. These principles reflect a commitment to respecting privacy, promoting a supportive environment, valuing diverse perspectives, and acknowledging the subjective nature of interpretation. These ethical guidelines align with principles commonly associated with various therapeutic and counselling approaches, emphasizing the importance of creating a safe and non-judgmental space [10].

Let's break down each point:

1. *Respect for Privacy:* Individuals have the autonomy to choose whether to share their thoughts or chosen cards; The freedom to provide explanations or keep interpretations private is acknowledged.
2. *Respect for Each Other:* Active listening is encouraged by not interrupting when someone is sharing; This creates an atmosphere of respect and validates the speaker's experience.
3. *Respect for Intelligence and Imagination:* Avoiding the imposition of personal interpretations allows individuals to explore their own understanding of the cards; This principle encourages a non-directive and open approach to interpretation.
4. *Respect for the Integrity of the Individual:* Avoiding contradiction or argumentation with interpretations emphasizes that there is no absolute "right" or "wrong" readings; Acknowledging the subjective nature of interpretation fosters a non-judgmental environment.

5. *Respect for Individuality*: Recognizing that personal interpretations are unique and may not be shared by others; Encouraging an open-minded perspective that appreciates diverse viewpoints.

These ethical principles are well-designed to create a supportive and respectful environment for engaging with OH cards. They emphasize the importance of individual autonomy, diverse perspectives, and maintaining a non-judgmental space for exploration and interpretation. These principles could be particularly valuable in settings where OH cards are used for personal reflection, counselling, or group discussions.

Results and consideration

The therapeutic story "Mustafa. The way to yourself"

"In one eastern state, at a time when there was still a caste division between rich and poor, a young wounded man named Mustafa was lying on the street... and then his amazing meeting with a priest took place.

Mustafa flew on a magic carpet. But since he did not control it very well, he fell from it and injured himself.

When Mustafa fell from the magic carpet, a crowd of people gathered. Some just out of curiosity, some with the goal of helping.

Currently, the neighbour girl Azida was playing with a ball in the neighbouring yard. She was so engrossed in the game that she was not at all interested in what was happening.

Mustafa was a musician. He was in a hurry to get to his concert, which is why he crashed on the plane's carpet.

The priest and his neighbour decided to help our hero and help him. Azida treated his wounds.

After Mustafa was healed, the priest invited him to serve in the temple.

Mustafa received communion with the saint in the temple. Thanks to which he received revelation and came to know God. Neighbours were sitting nearby. One of the neighbours' daughter, Esmeralda, was sleeping peacefully in a peaceful, ecstatic state with a slight smile.

One day, while walking around the city, Mustafa saw a house that was unlike the others. Here, among the eastern buildings, he looked as if he were a stranger... this house prompted him to remember. Something that happened before, in the past...before his fall.

The cause of Mustafa's fall and injury was a passer-by, Arif. Mustafa's friend found him and took revenge. The body was thrown from the bridge into the sea at sunset. Arif paid with his life only for being in the wrong place at the wrong time.

The worker was paid to get rid of the corpse.

A year after the events, Esmeralda gave her mother Azida a scandal about why she would not let her go for a walk. She ran out of the house and ran to the lake, where she worried about what happened.

Mustafa, while in the temple, at the age of 23, thought deeply about his life and turned to himself, after which he began to drink heavily due to his lack of fulfilment in the musical field. He sadly realized to himself: "I'm just a musician..."

Mustafa decided not to drink wine anymore and start dancing. He found beautiful shoes and became a hip-hop dancer. Every person has many talents and needs to reveal their abilities, and not plunge into the tragedy that something did not work out (like Mustafa didn't work out with singing).

Mustafa thought about the years he had lived, that something was not right. He is constantly searching for himself, his place in life... He has some ideas. And with all this, he decided to go to the elder to receive a blessing.

Time has passed. Mustafa's friend was tormented by conscience for what he had done. He decided to go to church and repent.

He came to a group of priests in search of himself.

After leaving the priests, Mustafa met a horse near the lake, by the way, near the lake where Esmeralda had previously sat, and decided to take the horse with him.

He came home with his horse and saw an unusual fruit on his table. As soon as Mustafa ate it, he immediately decreased in size. Then a huge bird burst into his window. She picked up Mustafa and carried him on her wings to unknown lands. During the flight, he slipped off the wings of the bird, and in order not to fall, he began to hold on to its legs.

The smaller Mustafa flew holding the bird's legs. When the bird flew over the forest, he could no longer hold on and fell straight into a tree. Stuck on a tree, he hung. Beautiful Adila passed by. She was incredibly beautiful but hid her face under a burqa. She took off Mustafa and brought him to her home. She got him drunk and gave him an enchanted apple, thanks to which he returned to his former height. Then Adila fed Mustafa and looked after him until he fully recovered.

The stranger with whom he woke up fed him with the gifts of the East. Juicy and sweet fruits. His strength increased.

After the changes that have occurred to him, Mustafa, having already become more beautiful and sexier, decides to go in search of his beloved, who will be worthy of him.

He is preparing the house for life together with his future partner.

After he received his first harvest, he met the Berbers and decided to establish trade with them. He gave them fruits and vegetables, and they gave him cloth, salt, water, etc.

During a business meeting, one of the merchants once asked Mustafa: "Do you remember that huge bird that took you away from your house?"

Mustafa remembered how he was in another city, where Adila lived, and there he saw luxury, wealth, a lot of food, and how the padishah's turban was carried through the streets of the city. He also saw people preparing food together and then eating together. This brings them joy and pleasure.

Mustafa, in addition to the horse, bought himself a donkey with a cart to help with the housework.

A storm occurs in the desert, which brought changes in Mustafa's life, in his thinking and lifestyle. He understood that he would never be the same.

He built a cellar to store wine and other products.

At night, when the moon rose, our hero heard a rustling in the field. It turned out to be a tiger. The tiger jumped at the hero, but he managed to dodge in time.

Mustafa's mother is an adult woman about 50 years old. A woman of very pretty appearance, with beautiful deep eyes. Uncharacteristic for this age, grey hair covered her entire head, and a worried look. All this speaks of her worries for her son. The woman thought that she was able to give her son the best. But Mustafa's long search for herself makes her wonder where she made a mistake. What gave rise to concern in her son for his life and what prompted him to leave his native land and set out in search of himself. And of course, she would like to fix everything, and she prayed that her son would return and give her the opportunity to do this.

Mustafa, having defeated the tiger, remembered what his grandmother told him in his early childhood. She told him that he had a huge gift, unbelievably valuable, worth its weight in gold, and that Mustafa just needed to reveal it in himself.

Mustafa wondered whether this gift was real or just an oasis in the desert. And he realized that he had to simply act and simply realize his desires, dreams and reveal his abilities. His gift will only be a reality if he puts it into practice. We can discover new abilities in ourselves all our lives, we just need to act.

Time has passed, Mustafa is 30 years old... The elders are surprised at how he is thrown from side to side, how he rushes around not knowing what he needs in life... But despite all this, Mustafa is still in search of himself, his place in life.

After the shock he suffered, he decided to go in a narrow direction to his happiness.

He remembers his thorny path that he went through and ponders it.

After he thought about the past, he decided to go to a place where he could smoke a hookah, eat and drink to take his mind off his boring thoughts. All this lasted until 3-4 o'clock in the morning. In the morning he did not regret going there.

Esmeralda is a young girl with blond hair and blue eyes. Since childhood, from the moment she met Mustafa, she dreamed of him, and was in love with him deeply, but unrequitedly. Mustafa looked at the girl as his friend or as his sister. These were warm

feelings in their own way. But this was not enough for the girl. And in her dreams, she dreamed of Mustafa as her beloved.

Mustafa smoked and smoked his hookah for a long time, expanding his consciousness, still trying to understand his gift, his purpose, and then it dawned on him: "I want to get married! It's time for me to become a parent and have a baby!"

Mustafa thinks that he already wants to get married but is not quite ready yet. He wants to go to a wonderful place where there is beautiful nature, a refreshing fountain, a river of pleasure and a river of energy. He can admire the beauty, be in harmony with himself, and perhaps his soulmate is waiting for him behind the fountain. Looking at her, he will immediately understand that she is his soul mate.

His memories of the house haunted him... He decided to return to his native land, to this house... there he was met by a beautiful young girl, in whom he recognized the girl he knew... and he realized that he was drawn to... some amazing, deep feelings...

A couple of years passed, and Mustafa did not return to his native land. Esmeralda decides to go look for him.

Esmeralda handed over all her valuables to go in search of Mustafa.

The bird stole the key to Esmeralda's treasure, and our hero had to return it and catch up with this bird. This bird had red eyes and would play a significant role in the future.

Adelia was a young woman, slightly older than Mustafa. She is beautiful, tall with big black eyes. But there was something very cold and frightening in her gaze. She had magical powers. And she really wanted to get Mustafa. She bewitched him when he ate a fruit that made him shrink, and the black bird brought Mustafa to Adelia. There, a woman cast a spell on a young guy, and he succumbed to Adelia's charms, and they lived together for some time. But when the spell wore off, Mustafa left Adelia, thereby leaving her to suffer. But the woman thought that eventually he would return. But she was wrong. Mustafa was looking for something completely different. And when he met Esmeralda after a long separation, he saw how beautiful she became and realized that he loved her. Upon learning of this, Adelia sent her bird and stole the keys to Esmeralda's treasure. But this plan was unsuccessful, and Adelia gave up, realizing that she could not change anything.

This woman, Adilya, was not simple. She used her dark side and black powers to destroy everything and prevent others from being happy.

Each person has many masks and many roles and subpersonalities. For the sake of something or someone, we are not ourselves, but wear masks. But everyone wants to be themselves; accept all sides of yourself and, as a result, easily express yourself and be yourself.

Mustafa, seeing the one who was once a little girl, realized what had been happening to him all these years. What we are looking for somewhere far away is sometimes under our feet, but we do not immediately notice it. He loved Esmeralda with all his heart, but he

also retained a great love for the country where he spent many years, for the East. He decided to show his beloved this amazing land.

But it was not there. Esmeralda's secret admirer has tracked down the lovers and, hiding in a tree among the foliage, wants to shoot Esmeralda with a bow. If he did not get it, let no one get it.

Mustafa and Esmeralda finally meet, she tells him what she had to overcome to meet him. Mustafa feels guilty before her for forgetting about her while searching for himself.

After the night of our hero and Esmeralda, he continued to pursue the bird to return the treasure.

Leah is Esmeralda's nanny who raised the girl. An elderly woman. He loves the girl very much, like his own. She put all the love and affection into her. And when times were difficult, Leah helped Esmeralda survive the separation from her loved one and supported her in the idea of going in search of Mustafa. And it was not in vain. Their faith helped them. And this support from Leah was particularly important for Esmeralda. All this helped the girl, and her dream came true. She met Mustafa and he fell in love with her.

Mustafa, chasing a bird, fell into a mountain river from a cliff, he was spun, sucked in and carried out by stormy water into the open sea, where a storm and storm raged. He tried to stay afloat, but every now and then he sank, taking in lungs full of air, went under the water, pushed off there and swam up again. In the sea, he saw a sailboat, which, like Mustafa, struggling with the elements, continued its way.

The ship's captain was an evil and oppressive man who kidnapped people and sold them into slavery. He caught Mustafa too. But the ship they were sailing on is wrecked, and Mustafa is saved. He returns to Esmeralda, and they decide to sing and dance together.

After all the hardships that befell Mustafa, he is once again separated from Esmeralda. After all the trials that he overcame, Mustafa makes his way home, returns to her, to his beloved girl, who also loved him all these years and was waiting in that very house.

Esmeralda and Mustafa must hide from their pursuers. They manage to escape to another country, where in a big city they get lost among a crowd of people.

Esmeralda gave birth to a boy. They named him Innocent.

And after all this, Mustafa decided to write a book about this whole story.

And now we see Esmeralda again, after the birth of the child. They had a boy - Innocent. The girl blossomed. She has matured, her gaze has become more expressive and confident. She changed not only internally, but also externally. She was not afraid to experiment. Her idea to tint her eyebrows and hair dark was a good one. It suited her very well. Beautiful velvet skin and blue eyes have become even more expressive. Mustafa liked it. They always supported each other.

And this happy story, included in Scheherazade's collection "1000 and One Nights," is still passed down from generation to generation, from mouth to mouth...."

Each book seamlessly evolved as the group actively contributed to a collaborative narrative, intertwining personal reflections and shared experiences. As the story unfolded, the group encountered challenges, celebrated successes, and uncovered hidden strengths. The books functioned as a canvas for the group's emotions and thoughts, forging a shared metaphorical language that enriched their connections. Each metaphorical book played a distinct role in the collective narrative, fostering self-discovery and fortifying bonds within the therapeutic community. This collaborative storytelling approach empowered participants to convey their thoughts through metaphor and imagery, fostering creativity, empathy, and a profound understanding of each other's experiences within the framework of group psychotherapy.

Psychological analysis of the story" Mustafa. The Path to Yourself"

Magic Carpet and Unconscious Desires: The magic carpet symbolizes unconscious desires and aspirations in Mustafa's journey, reflecting the unpredictable and tumultuous nature of exploring the unconscious mind.

Priest and Spiritual Awakening: Mustafa's encounter with the priest and communion in the temple signifies a quest for spiritual meaning and self-discovery, representing the integration of conscious and unconscious aspects.

Azida's Healing and Feminine Archetype: Azida's role as a healer embodies the feminine archetype, highlighting the need for self-care and the integration of the anima (feminine) within Mustafa.

Mustafa's Transformation to a Hip-Hop Dancer: Mustafa's shift from musician to hip-hop dancer represents a change in self-expression and identity, reflecting an alignment with contemporary modes of self-expression.

Adila and the Temptation of Dark Desires: Adila's enchantment of Mustafa symbolizes the allure of forbidden desires within the unconscious, with Mustafa's rejection serving as a confrontation with inner conflicts.

Trade with Berbers and Material Pursuits: Mustafa's trade with the Berbers underscores the balance between spiritual pursuits (symbolized by the temple) and practical, material considerations in psychological development.

Storm in the Desert and Inner Turmoil: The desert storm serves as a metaphor for inner turmoil and psychological conflict, with Mustafa's realization signalling irreversible changes in his psyche.

Mustafa's Return and Reconciliation: Mustafa's return to his native land and reconciliation with Esmeralda reflects a resolution of inner conflicts and a pursuit of authentic connections, symbolizing a journey toward self-acceptance.

Esmeralda's Unrequited Love: Esmeralda's unrequited love symbolizes unresolved desires and the intricate interplay of conscious and unconscious emotions, with her dreams representing unexplored aspects of her psyche.

Innocent's Birth and Symbolism of Renewal: The birth of Innocent symbolizes the potential for renewal and new beginnings, signifying the emergence of innocence and the opportunity for Mustafa and Esmeralda to create a fresh narrative.

The fairy tale delves into the psychological journey of its characters, using symbols and events to illustrate the complexities of self-discovery, spiritual awakening, and the integration of conscious and unconscious elements within the psyche [11].

Psychological analysis of the heroes in this fairy tale

The fairy tale you presented is rich in symbolic elements, characters and events that lend themselves well to psychoanalytic and psychological analysis. Let us explore some key aspects:

1. Mustafa's Journey and Psychoanalytic Interpretation:

- *Magic Carpet and the Fall:* The magic carpet symbolizes Mustafa's attempt to transcend his current state. The fall represents the inevitable setbacks in life, the loss of control, and the vulnerability inherent in pursuing one's dreams. This can be interpreted as a metaphor for the unconscious mind and the challenges faced in navigating its depths.
- *Meeting with the Priest:* Mustafa's encounter with the priest can be seen as a representation of seeking guidance from authority figures or inner wisdom during challenging times. The temple and communion with the saint suggest a spiritual or transcendent experience, marking a turning point in Mustafa's self-discovery.
- *Esmeralda and Azida:* Esmeralda and Azida represent contrasting aspects of Mustafa's psyche. Esmeralda, the unrequited love interest, symbolizes unfulfilled desires and the yearning for a deeper connection. Azida, on the other hand, embodies nurturing and healing, providing Mustafa with care and support during his time of need.

2. Mustafa's Personal Development:

- *Musician to Hip-Hop Dancer:* Mustafa's transition from a musician to a hip-hop dancer reflects his evolving identity and the search for a mode of self-expression that resonates with his true self. This transformation may signify the importance of embracing one's authentic talents and passions.
- *Encounter with Adila:* Adila's enchantment of Mustafa and the subsequent realization of his true feelings for Esmeralda highlight the influence of external forces on one's choices in relationships. Mustafa's rejection of Adila signifies a rejection of inauthentic connections in favour of genuine love.

- *Trade with Berbers:* Mustafa's engagement in trade with the Berbers represents the practical aspects of life and the need for balance between material pursuits and spiritual fulfilment. It underscores the importance of integrating different facets of life to achieve holistic well-being.
3. *Esmeralda's Unrequited Love:*
- *Dreams and Reality:* Esmeralda's unrequited love for Mustafa reflects the theme of unattainable desires and the tension between dreams and reality. Her pursuit of Mustafa demonstrates the psychological impact of unfulfilled longings on an individual's psyche.
 - *Esmeralda's Sacrifice:* Esmeralda's decision to search for Mustafa, even at the cost of giving up her valuables, illustrates the sacrifices one may make for the sake of love and personal fulfilment. This could be analysed in the context of the unconscious motives that drive individuals to pursue their deepest desires.
4. *Adila's Dark Powers and Inner Struggles:*
- *Dark Side and Masks:* Adila's use of dark powers and her inability to find lasting happiness despite her manipulative actions symbolize the destructive consequences of succumbing to one's darker impulses. This can be seen as a representation of the internal conflicts and masks people wear to achieve their desires.
 - *Mustafa's Recognition:* Mustafa's recognition of Esmeralda as his true love signifies the triumph of genuine emotions over superficial enchantment. This theme reinforces the idea that authentic connections and self-awareness are crucial for lasting fulfilment.
5. *Mustafa and Esmeralda's Escape:*
- *Escape and New Beginnings:* Mustafa and Esmeralda's escape to another country symbolizes the opportunity for a fresh start and the possibility of creating a new narrative for their lives. The birth of their son, Innocent, represents the potential for innocence and new beginnings.
 - *Authoring a Book:* Mustafa's decision to write a book about his experiences suggests a desire to make sense of his journey, share his wisdom, and contribute to the collective understanding of human experiences. This act can be seen as a form of self-reflection and integration.

The fairy tale weaves a complex narrative that delves into the psyche of its characters, exploring themes of self-discovery, love, sacrifice, and the interplay between dreams and reality. Each character and event can be interpreted through psychoanalytic and psychological lenses, offering insights into the intricacies of the human mind and the transformative nature of personal journeys.

What awaits Mustafa in the future?

The fairy tale "Mustafa. The Path to Yourself" provides narrative rich with symbolism and psychological themes. While the tale concludes with the birth of Mustafa and Esmeralda's child, Innocent, and their decision to write a book about their experiences, the specific events of Mustafa's later life are not explicitly outlined. However, we can speculate on potential developments based on the themes and character arcs presented in the story:

Family Life and Parenthood: Mustafa expressed a desire to get married and become a parent. The birth of Innocent suggests that Mustafa and Esmeralda embark on the journey of parenthood. Mustafa may find fulfilment in raising a family and navigating the challenges and joys of family life.

Integration of Experiences: Writing a book about his experiences indicates that Mustafa may engage in a process of reflection and integration. This could involve exploring the psychological and spiritual lessons learned on his path to self-discovery, providing guidance and insights for others.

Continued Self-Discovery: Mustafa's journey seems to be ongoing, marked by a continual search for self. In later life, he may continue to explore new aspects of himself, perhaps embracing new passions, relationships, or challenges that contribute to his personal growth.

Cultural Exploration and Connection: Mustafa's deep connection to the East and his decision to show Esmeralda the beauty of that land may suggest a continued exploration of cultural identity. He may engage in activities that celebrate and preserve the traditions and values of his native land.

Harmony Between Material and Spiritual: The tale emphasizes the importance of balancing material pursuits and spiritual fulfilment. Mustafa, having experienced both the temptations of material success and the spiritual journey, may continue to seek a harmonious integration of these elements in his later life.

Challenges and Resilience: Mustafa's life has been marked by challenges, including his fall from the magic carpet and encounters with enchanting yet perilous figures like Adila. In later life, he may face new challenges that require resilience and the application of lessons learned from his earlier experiences.

Legacy and Contribution: Through writing a book, Mustafa and Esmeralda may leave a legacy. Mustafa might become a source of inspiration for others, sharing his wisdom and insights gained from his psychological and spiritual journey.

Reconnection with Roots: Mustafa's return to his native land may signify a desire for reconnection with his roots. In later life, he may engage more deeply with his cultural heritage, fostering a sense of belonging and contributing to the preservation of cultural traditions.

While the specifics are open to interpretation, Mustafa's later life could be characterized by a continued quest for self-discovery, the challenges and rewards of family life, the integration of spiritual and material pursuits, and a commitment to leaving a meaningful legacy through the sharing of his experiences.

Metaphor as a bridge to the unconscious

What can the therapist later explore more deeply from the symbolic meaning of the story "Mustafa. The path to self" in group or individual sessions, bringing to light the hidden thoughts, desires, or conflicts of the participants. Here's an exploration of some symbolic elements in the story [9].

Magic Carpet: The magic carpet can be seen as a representation of Mustafa's unconscious desires and aspirations. The lack of control and the subsequent fall from the carpet may symbolize the unpredictability and challenges that come with exploring one's deeper, unconscious self. Therapists may explore Mustafa's feelings of instability and the fear associated with delving into unknown aspects of the psyche.

Priest and Temple: The encounter with the priest and Mustafa's communion in the temple could symbolize the search for spiritual meaning and self-discovery. Therapists may explore Mustafa's relationship with spirituality and how it intersects with his identity, possibly uncovering hidden conflicts or desires related to his beliefs and values.

Adila and the Enchanted Apple: Adila, with her magical powers and the enchanted apple, may represent the allure of forbidden desires or the consequences of succumbing to external temptations. Therapists can explore Mustafa's interactions with Adila to uncover any internal conflicts related to desires, relationships, and the consequences of indulging in certain behaviours.

Trade with Berbers: Mustafa's engagement in trade with the Berbers may symbolize the negotiation between his inner self and external influences. Therapists can explore Mustafa's attitudes towards material success, societal expectations, and the balance between personal fulfilment and external validation.

Storm in the Desert: The storm in the desert could represent inner turmoil and psychological conflict. Mustafa's realization that he will never be the same may signify a profound shift in his self-perception. Therapists may explore Mustafa's emotional responses to significant life changes and his evolving sense of identity.

Esmeralda's Unrequited Love: Esmeralda's unrequited love for Mustafa may indicate unexplored emotions and desires within their relationship. Therapists can delve into Mustafa's feelings towards Esmeralda and the dynamics of their connection, uncovering potential conflicts or unspoken desires.

Innocent's Birth: The birth of Innocent represents the potential for renewal and new beginnings. Therapists can explore Mustafa's emotions and thoughts regarding parenthood, family dynamics, and the impact of past experiences on his approach to forming a family.

Returning to Native Land: Mustafa's decision to return to his native land may signify a quest for self-acceptance and a connection to his roots. Therapists can explore Mustafa's sense of identity, belonging, and how the past shapes his present and future.

Collaborative Storytelling: The collaborative construction of the story in group psychotherapy with metaphorical cards may represent the interconnectedness of Mustafa's inner world with external influences and interpersonal relationships. Therapists can use this as a platform to explore Mustafa's relational patterns, communication styles, and the impact of group dynamics on his self-discovery.

The symbolic elements in "Mustafa. The Path to Self" provide therapists with a rich tapestry to explore Mustafa's unconscious mind, bringing to light hidden thoughts, desires, and conflicts. Through careful analysis and discussion, therapists can guide individuals or groups in uncovering and understanding the deeper layers of their psychological experiences.

Analysis of the lexical and stylistic style of the story

Here is a stylistic and lexical analysis:

Descriptive Language: The tale employs vivid and descriptive language to paint a picture of the settings, characters, and events. Phrases such as "magic carpet," "enchanted apple," and "storm in the desert" evoke a sense of fantasy and wonder, contributing to the fairy-tale ambiance [5].

Symbolism and Metaphor: Symbolism is prominent throughout the story. The magic carpet, priest, and storm can be interpreted metaphorically, adding depth to the narrative. These symbols serve as literary devices to convey abstract concepts related to the characters' inner journeys and personal transformations.

Emotional Tone: The emotional tone of the story fluctuates between moments of wonder, romance, and introspection. The language used to describe Mustafa's fall from the magic carpet, Esmeralda's unrequited love, and Mustafa's self-discovery in the temple carries emotional weight, engaging the reader's empathy.

Cultural and Exotic Elements: The lexical choice includes culturally rich and exotic elements, such as "Berbers," "padishah's turban," and references to the East. These contribute to the story's setting and atmosphere, transporting the reader to a world infused with cultural diversity and intrigue [8].

Characterization through Dialogue: The characters' dialogue is characterized by a blend of colloquial and formal language. For example, Mustafa's realization, "I'm just a musician," reflects a more casual tone, while the priest's dialogue in the temple adopts a more formal and spiritual language.

Narrative Pacing: The story is paced in a way that builds tension and suspense, particularly during key events like Mustafa's fall from the magic carpet and his encounter

with Adila. The use of descriptive language and well-timed revelations contributes to the overall pacing and engagement of the reader.

Repetition for Emphasis: Certain phrases and motifs are repeated throughout the story, such as Mustafa's desire to return to himself, the symbolism of the storm, and the theme of self-discovery. This repetition serves to emphasize key concepts and tie the narrative together, reinforcing the central themes.

Culmination in Moral or Lesson: Like many traditional fairy tales, "Mustafa. The Path to Yourself" culminates in a moral or lesson. Mustafa's realization about the importance of self-discovery and the integration of one's desires and abilities are conveyed through the narrative events and his eventual decision to write a book.

The story's stylistic and lexical choices contribute to its enchanting and symbolic nature. The use of descriptive language, cultural elements, symbolism, and a blend of formal and colloquial tones creates a narrative that engages readers and invites them into a fantastical world of self-discovery and transformation [7].

Conclusions

Using metaphorical associative cards to compose stories in group psychotherapy can have several therapeutic effects on participants. Here are some potential psychotherapeutic benefits:

Self-Expression and Exploration: Composing stories with metaphorical cards provides a nonverbal and creative outlet for self-expression. Participants can explore and articulate their thoughts, emotions, and personal experiences in a symbolic and metaphorical way, allowing for a deeper understanding of their internal world.

Metaphorical Communication: Metaphors can serve as powerful tools for communication, especially when expressing complex or abstract emotions. Participants may find it easier to convey their feelings and experiences using metaphorical imagery, promoting effective communication within the group.

Symbolic Representation: The process of selecting and interpreting metaphorical cards allows participants to represent aspects of their lives or challenges they are facing. This symbolic representation can lead to insights and a more profound understanding of their own experiences.

Collaborative Storytelling: The act of composing stories collaboratively fosters a sense of community and shared experience within the group. Participants can witness and appreciate the diversity of perspectives, fostering empathy and connection among group members.

Empowerment and Agency: Choosing metaphorical cards and actively contributing to the creation of a story can provide a sense of agency and empowerment. Participants

may experience a shift from a passive role to an active one, promoting a sense of control over their narrative and therapeutic journey.

Catharsis and Emotional Release: The storytelling process, especially when using metaphorical imagery, can facilitate emotional release and catharsis. Participants may find that expressing themselves through storytelling allows them to process and release pent-up emotions in a safe and supportive environment.

Reflection and Insight: The act of constructing and listening to stories can promote reflection and insight into personal challenges, coping mechanisms, and potential solutions. Participants may gain a clearer understanding of their own narratives and the narratives of others in the group.

Metaphor as a Bridge to the Unconscious: Metaphors can serve as bridges to the unconscious mind. Exploring the symbolic meaning behind chosen cards may bring to light hidden thoughts, desires, or conflicts, providing therapists with valuable material for deeper exploration in individual or group sessions.

Normalization of Experiences: Hearing others' stories can contribute to a sense of normalization. Recognizing shared themes or struggles within the group may reduce feelings of isolation and enhance a sense of belonging, promoting a supportive therapeutic community.

Integration and Closure: The collaborative construction of stories allows participants to integrate various elements of their experiences. Crafting an ending to the story may symbolize a sense of closure or resolution, fostering a sense of completeness and accomplishment within the therapeutic process.

The use of metaphorical associative cards (OH) in individual and group psychotherapy exemplifies the profound synergy between symbolic storytelling and psychological transformation. As tools rooted in metaphor and projection, OH cards offer unique opportunities to explore hidden layers of the psyche, bypassing rational barriers to access emotions, desires, fears, and aspirations. This study demonstrates how these cards, particularly when integrated with therapeutic storytelling, serve as catalysts for personal and collective growth, enabling individuals to embark on profound journeys of self-discovery, healing, and renewal.

The therapeutic story "Mustafa: The Path to Yourself" serves as a testament to the depth and versatility of metaphorical techniques. By intertwining archetypal symbols such as the magic carpet, storms in the desert, and transformative encounters, the narrative encapsulates the intricacies of the human condition. It reflects themes of unconscious desires, spiritual awakening, identity formation, and the reconciliation of inner conflicts. Each symbol not only deepens the narrative but also functions as a gateway for participants to explore their psychological landscapes, fostering insights into their lived experiences and emotional realities.

Metaphor-based interventions with OH cards in group settings reveal their immense potential in fostering self-expression, collaborative storytelling, and emotional processing. Participants find themselves empowered to articulate personal experiences through symbolic imagery, enhancing their capacity for self-reflection and insight. Moreover, the collaborative nature of group storytelling nurtures a sense of belonging, empathy, and shared understanding, strengthening the therapeutic community.

This study highlights several therapeutic benefits of OH cards, including their ability to bypass cognitive resistance, foster emotional release, and facilitate integration. By enabling clients to project their internal worlds onto external symbols, these cards encourage a safe and creative exploration of challenges, promoting resilience and adaptability. In doing so, they provide therapists with a versatile tool for diagnosing internal processes, addressing trauma, and supporting the development of healthy coping mechanisms.

The ethical principles outlined for the use of OH cards underscore the importance of creating a respectful, supportive, and inclusive environment. Respect for individuality, diverse perspectives, and subjective interpretations forms the cornerstone of effective therapeutic practice with these tools, ensuring that clients feel empowered and validated throughout their journeys.

Despite their versatility and efficacy, metaphorical associative cards require skilful application. Cultural sensitivity, personalized adaptation, and a nuanced understanding of symbolic communication are essential for maximizing their impact. Future research should aim to refine guidelines for metaphor selection, assess long-term outcomes, and explore their application across diverse cultural and therapeutic contexts.

In conclusion, metaphorical associative cards represent a powerful bridge between the conscious and unconscious, fostering psychological transformation through creative and symbolic means. By integrating them into therapeutic practice, clinicians can offer clients a profound means of self-exploration and healing, grounded in the timeless art of storytelling. The narrative of Mustafa, with its rich archetypes and transformative journey, encapsulates the potential of these tools to inspire personal growth and collective connection. As the field of psychotherapy continues to evolve, the innovative use of metaphorical tools promises to expand the horizons of emotional healing and self-discovery.

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