THE CONCEPT OF SUBCONSCIOUS – A THEORETICAL EVOLUTION SYNTHESIS

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Abstract

The psyche is known to have a complex and contradictory structure. The process that leads to delimiting these defining notes of the psyche consists of reporting it to an external criterion to emphasize its own identity. Wallon was the one who, in 1924, contributed to launching a new conception on the subconscious. He tried to discover the representation ways of the subconscious states, because accepting the primary idea, according to which the reproduce conscious states leads to idea of considering it the only expression of the psyche. Freud defined the subconscious as a descriptive form of the unconscious. The subconscious took two main steps to be defined and to be discovered in its every dimension. Thus, in the first step, it was considered to be a form of the unconscious, a simple latent container of what once was conscious and might be once “activated”. The subconscious, controversy instance of our psyche, is remarked through multiple aspects, from its intermediary position between the unconscious and consciousness to its own qualities and derived functions of this position. In time the conclusion was reached that these conceptions could be inconsistent, so the subconscious was given a new status, of psyche state that disposes of its own processes and even creative qualities.

Keywords: Subconscious, psychoanalysis, psychological states, psyche state.

1. THEORETHICAL FRAMEWORK

The psyche is known to have a complex and contradictory structure. The process that leads to delimiting these defining notes of the psyche consists of reporting it to an external criterion to emphasise its own identity. Thus, the psyche can be characterised as “an expression of the relational life, phenomena which is inseparably connected to material structures, a subjective replication of the
objective world, a product of conditionals and social, historical and cultural factors” (Zlate, 2007).

The psyche manifests in various ways. It has its moments of clear, lucid activity, and other when it manifests in an obscure way. The source of these manifestations is found in the three stated of our psyche structure – conscious, subconscious and unconscious.

The conscious is the first state of subjective and active integration of all forms of the psyche life which allows the individual’s report to the environment, the subconscious keeps a memory of all the actions that once had been conscious but in present lack the usual control. The unconscious level represents a basic level, source and influence for the psyche.

The subconscious can also be met under other names such as pre-consciousness or post-consciousness. In the “Grand dictionary of psychology” it is defined as “an assembly of psychological states that the subject is not aware about the influence of his behaviour”. Even if some authors don’t agree and this notion or claim that the subconscious usually tends to merge with the unconscious, it is kept, under a definition or another and is commonly used in psychology. Because the subconscious presents such a customised content and also specific mechanisms and goals, its identity cannot be ignored or reduced to being equalled to other psychological states.

Understanding the concept of subconscious took several steps itself. In the first phase, most of the authors accepted the subconscious as a psyche level that contains actions that once were conscious but at the present time they lack the conscious control. Here, all the memories, motor stereotypes, abilities, compulsions, stereotypes ideas are kept, with other words, all the actions that once were consumed and in the present are steady, having the possibility to become active once again, passing to a conscious level.

Freud (2003) used the term of “subconscious” in his first writings but then he abandoned it to avoid confusion. “When someone speaks about the subconscious, I can’t tell if they understand it as a topic: something that we find deep in the soul under the consciousness – or in its quantity meaning: a different consciousness, sort to say, an underground one (Lapache &Pontalis, 1994).

He explains the subconscious as any other phenomena that can switch the unconscious state to the conscious one. Also, any process which is usually conscious, no matter how complicated it might be, can remain subconscious. Separating these two states of the psyche is cannot be done in a permanent matter – preconscious elements become conscious without us making an effort, and the unconscious can become conscious through a process of overcoming resistances. At the same time, the preconscious content can sometimes become unreachable, blocked by resistances (like temporary forgetfulness), or in the case of humour, when such a thought can be commuted to the unconscious. These transformations
can take place spontaneously or with man’s contribution. At that time it was admitted that the subconscious was closer as a state to the conscious.

Also, Freud (2004) defined the subconscious as a descriptive form of the unconscious, saving the former one to describe the meaning of slumping, a dynamic structure. He sustained the idea that using the three terms to describe the psyche states don’t rise any trouble unless we take in account the idea that descriptively there are two types of unconscious. In several processes he did not considered to be important any distinction between the unconscious and subconscious while in other cases this distinction became essential. Thus, admitting that though a double sense of the unconscious did not bring any benefit, it cannot be ignored.

The idea of separating pre-conscious thoughts from the subconscious once had been abandoned from the classifications domain, the result being an image of functional and dynamic relations of the psychological activity. Thus it has been discovered that an active preconscious level that easily passed to consciousness and an active unconscious, separated from it.

The difference between a presentation or an unconscious idea and a preconscious one consists of reporting the first one to an unknown material, while the second one was associated to a verbal representation. This is the first attempt to characterise the first two hypotheses in a different matter than by reporting them to consciousness. Another aspect could have become subconscious by associating it to verbal corresponding representations. These represent remains from the memory, old perceptions that might become conscious – thus, nothing can become conscious unless it once passed the level of concrete perception.

Henri Wallon was the one who, in 1924, contributed to launching a new conception on the subconscious. He tried to discover the representation ways of the subconscious states, because accepting the primary idea, according to which the reproduce conscious states leads to idea of considering it the only expression of the psyche. Wallon considered this conception to be superficial. He succeeded in separating the subconscious both from the unconscious and the conscious levels by offering it a self-standing position. Thus, the subconscious states modify, being connected to relations of cause-effect and influencing each other. Wallon defined the subconscious as “latent brain work” under “the apparent simplicity of perception” (1982).

The characteristics of the subconscious result from its position as a connection between the conscious and subconscious. Its latency and potentiality assume keeping the content in a latent state until the moment they will be reactivated and used by the consciousness. The subconscious can also be characterised by its co-existence with the consciousness – most of the time, it represents an alternative expression, more condense, as the two states permanently coexist. Also, the preconscious can be seen as a “servant” of the consciousness.
Their content passing from a level to another are filtered and mediated by the subconscious – they don’t pass directly to it (Zlate, 2007).

Paul Popescu Neveanu (1976) resumed these features discussing the “proximity of the subconscious to the consciousness” and their compatibility. There are many similarities between them than between the conscious-unconscious pair. Thus, the latter state is viewed as an information and operation contained that sometimes constitutes the source of the conscious facts. This idea is met in the work of other authors too: “The subconscious contains what is out of the attention’s focus, but can affect the consciousness”. To avoid returning to the first step of defining, that claimed that the preconscious is a simple container, it was proven that is benefits from its own mechanisms. Aside from conservation it is capable of independent processing, restricting and creation. The obtained material is not identical to those initially introduced in the subconscious. Several factors, such as time, emotions, distraction lead to this material modification of the subconscious, because of the new relations it involves in. A creative function of the subconscious is also mentioned: “The dynamics of the subconscious life is spontaneously organised based on a schema of data spread through the psyche, mixing them into a new structure (Biberi, 1970, p. 58).

Over time, two directions were faced when approaching the psychological states. Whether accepting Freud’s conception of the three main levels which we’ve already mentioned or trying to figure out if that’s really how we should view the structure of our minds (Freud, 2003, 2004). Believing only in the conscious level has its consequences – it’s like stating that we don’t evolve at all since the first months of our lives, when our mind only functions based on concrete information we come in contact with. The idea is sustained that the subconscious starts to function when the baby starts to feel the need of naming objects. It seems that this state finds its foundation in the reaction of people around the baby; he tries to correctly name each object because he know that this way he will trigger positive and encouraging reactions. Therefore, the subconscious is a container of both concreter information and its meaning. Another important function is that the subconscious develops defence mechanisms, as all of the psychological harm is produced on a conscious level.

The subconscious, controversy instance of our psyche, is remarked through multiple aspects, from its intermediary position between the unconscious and consciousness to its own qualities and derived functions of this position. Despite the discussions generated through time, its importance cannot be neglected.
2. REFERECES


3. REZUMAT

Psihicul este cunoscut ca având o structură complexă și contradictorie. Procesul care conduce spre delimitarea acestor notă definitorii ale psihicului constă în raportarea sa la criterii externe pentru a-i evidenția identitatea. Henri Wallon este cel care a lansat noul concept de subconștient în anul 1924. Acesta a încercat să descopere modalitățile de reprezentare ale stărilor subconștiente pentru că acceptarea ideii primare conform căreia stările de conștiință reproduce conduce spre ideea considerării lor ca singura formă de existență a psihicului. Sigmund Freud definea subconștientul ca fiind o formă descriptivă a inconştientului. Subconștientul a făcut doi pași importanți spre definirea sa și spre identificarea sa în fiecare dimensiune. Astfel, în prima etapă, a fost considerat o formă a inconştientului, un container latent a ceea ce a fost cândva conștient și care ar putea fi activat la un moment dat. Subconștientul, instant controversată a psihicului, se remarca prin multiple aspect, de la poziția sa intermediară între inconștient și conștient, până la calitățile sale și funcțiile derive din această poziție. Pe parcursul timpului, s-a ajuns la concluzia că aceste concepții sunt inconsistente, astfel subconștientului i-a fost acordat un nou statut, de instant a psihicului care dispune de propriile procese și chiar de propriile calități creative.