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UNITY IN PSYCHOLOGY? A COMPARISON OF THE UNCONSCIOUS CONCEPT TO SOME OF THE MAIN CURRENT STRAINS OF PSYCHOLOGY

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Abstract: This article aims to compare the concept of the unconscious to some of the main authors of modern psychology. The chosen authors were: Freud, representing Psychoanalysis, Jung, representing Analytical Psychology, Viktor Frankl, representing Logotherapy and Skinner, representing Radical Behaviorism. For this, the method used was qualitative content analysis in relation to the description of the concept of the unconscious that these authors make throughout their works. The contents of the books of the aforementioned authors were used. The conclusion of this work reveals that the term unconscious is not univocal for psychology, since each author has a different conception of what is unconscious, and particularly Skinner, denies that there is even the notion of mind or psyche, and consequently, of the unconscious. as conceived by other authors. It also points to the different objects of study of each theoretical line.

Keywords: Unconscious, psychology, currents of psychology.

INTRODUCTION

Throughout the article, we will try to cite in detail each concept of the unconscious, at least from some of the main psychological currents, in order to demonstrate the divergence or incompatibility of a univocal term of unconscious within modern psychology.

METHOD

In this study, the qualitative content analysis method was used. ¹ to examine the concept of the unconscious described in the main currents of modern psychology, such as Psychoanalysis, Analytical Psychology, Logotherapy and Behaviorism.

By qualitative content analysis, it is

1. Content Analysis (CA) emerged at the beginning of the 20th century in the United States to analyze journalistic material, with a boost occurring between 1940 and 1950, when scientists began to be interested in by political symbols, having this fact contributed to its development; between 1950 and 1960 AC extended to several areas. Therefore, this technique "has existed for more than half a century in various sectors of human sciences", predating Discourse Analysis.

understood that it is a technique that aims to make inferences from the content of a text by a given author that consider the characteristics of the messages left by the authors in their texts. (CAREGNATO. R.C.A; MUTTI.R., 2006).

We clarified that the objective of the work is not to discuss the method itself, but rather the theoretical content of each psychological current represented by their respective authors.

LINES OF THINKING

The psychological currents that will be presented and compared throughout the article were chosen both for their influence on psychology and for their popularity. For this, the following were chosen: Freud, representing Psychoanalysis, Jung, representing Analytical Psychology, Viktor Frankl, representing Logotherapy and Skinner, representing Radical Behaviorism.

According to Echevarría (2021), the term unconscious can be described in 5 different ways, according to the main theorists of the main contemporary currents of psychology. The first form of the unconscious would be all content that is simply not present in consciousness; the second way would be a kind of cognitive processes that are not perceived by the subject's consciousness, being named for that very reason, unconscious; the third mode stems from some process of repression, which can also be called the dynamic unconscious, and the fourth, which is subdivided into two more and which, according to the author, is a kind of unconscious that opposes the Freudian: the unconscious according to Viktor Frankl and according to Marritain, which has a spiritual character. And finally, the fifth and last model of the unconscious,

the collective unconscious, by Carl Gustav Jung, which would have a character that would encompass the human being as a species, being transpersonal.

Besides, Skinner, who has an opinion that the term “mind” does not really exist and does not have the capacity to explain our behavior, and since the unconscious is a derived term or that is part of psyche, ends up also denying the very notion of psyche.

THE UNCONSCIOUS DYNAMICS FOR FREUDIAN PSYCHOANALYSIS

Freud explains dynamics and emergence. of the unconscious between id, ego and superego in the work “Moises and Monotheism: sketch of psychoanalysis and other essays”, and describes the dynamics of what constituted the psychic apparatus for him:

“If the id of a human being gives rise to an instinctual demand of an aggressive or erotic nature, the simplest and most natural thing is for the ego, which has both the thinking apparatus and the muscular apparatus at its disposal, to satisfy the demand by means of an action. This satisfaction of the instinct is felt by the ego as pleasure, just as its non-satisfaction would undoubtedly become a source of displeasure.” (FREUD. S. p. 74. 1976)

Therefore, the ego, according to the Freudian line of thought, is the result of the conflict between the id, which represents the instinctive forces of the human being, and the superego, which is the result of the internalization of rules and social conduct that are impeding or restrictive to the fulfillment of the id’s desire. Out of this conflict arises the ego, or sense of self.

Freud explains that the reality principle, or, circumstances can prevent the id from fulfilling its desire through the ego, thus generating an internal tension. Such external demands that impede the fulfillment of the id’s desires are, so to speak, internalized in the

subject, thus forming what Freud called the Superego, which would be the external reason that prohibits and restricts the subject, such as parents, school, society in general. general, which would prevent the child from doing what he feels like doing, or, in psychoanalytic language, the fulfillment of the id’s desire through the ego. We are not going to go deeper into other particularities of this id, ego and superego relationship because it is not pertinent to the subject of the present study, but Freud continues to make other analyzes of the psychic apparatus as he conceived it. (FREUD. S. 1976)

THE UNCONSCIOUS DYNAMICS IN JUNG’S ANALYTICAL PSYCHOLOGY

The notion of unconscious is derived from the act of repressing some content, and such repressed content would be legacy to the unconscious for Freud. However, Jung does not limit his view of the unconscious to just the personal unconscious, but expands Freud’s concept with the collective unconscious.

Jung (2014), who was initially a disciple of Freud, sees the theory of repressions in psychoanalysis. According to Jung, Freud says that neurosis appears in exaggeratedly moralistic people who repress their sexual impulses, from this dynamic, neuroses would arise. Therefore, a person who was immoral and repressed practically nothing, or very little of his sexuality, must be immune to neurosis, as he does not repress his sexual drives, however, this is not what Jung observes. In practice, Jung says, that immoral people also have neuroses, as well as excessively moral ones and that morality is actually something properly human, that is, it is not an exclusively external imposition on our nature, but also an internal one.

Jung accepts the Freudian theory of the personal unconscious, however, he is not limited to it. For Jung (2014 p. 76):

“Aside from personal memories, there are, in each individual, the great ‘primordial’ images [...] that is, the hereditary aptitude of the human imagination to be as it was in the beginning. This heredity explains the phenomenon, at bottom surprising, of some themes and motifs of legends being repeated all over the world and in identical forms, in addition to explaining why our mental patients can reproduce exactly the same images and associations that we know from ancient texts.”

Jung (2014 p.77) differentiates his type of unconscious from Freud’s.

“Therefore, at this more advanced stage of the treatment, in which fantasies no longer rest on personal reminiscences, it is a question of the manifestation of the deepest layer of the unconscious, where universal and original human images lie dormant. These images or motifs I have called archetypes (or else ‘dominant’).

Already in his work *Psychological Types*, Jung comments on what he thinks to be the totality of the human psyche:

“in the course of my investigations into the nature of the unconscious, I found myself led to establish a conceptual distinction between soul and psyche. By psyche I mean the totality of psychic processes, both conscious and unconscious. By soul, however, I understand a determined and circumscribed functional complex, which the best way to characterize it would be to call it personality.” (JUNG, 2011, p. 442)

In the same work, Jung (2011) says that the notion of “I” would be just one more psychological complex among several others, including unconscious ones, however, which would be linked to our conscious will.

We can still find in the same literature, what Jung understands to a large extent that makes up the unconscious, which are the archetypes, or primordial images that are collective and common to people of all civilizations and all times, in addition to having a relevant degree

of autonomy. As the notion of archetypes is part of the psychic apparatus, we can say that it is a marked difference from the vision of psyche and unconscious that Freud presented.

On Jung’s vision of the unconscious, the author dedicates an entire chapter of his work *Psychology and religion* (1983) naming such chapter as “The autonomy of the Unconscious”. The collective unconscious would be the main trait that differentiates his perception of the unconscious from Freud’s psychoanalysis.

THE UNCONSCIOUS DYNAMICS FOR VIKTOR FRANKL’S LOGOTHERAPY

The Austrian psychiatrist Viktor Emil Frankl explains the concept of the unconscious based on logotherapy, a theoretical line that he developed and which includes the concept of the spiritual unconscious.

And his book entitled “*A will de Sentido*” discusses central themes in his type of psychotherapy, which he named logotherapy. Frankl says that man has a freedom of will, that is, man is not free from the events or contingencies that occur to him, but he is free to choose what to do with what occurs to him (FRANKL, 2011).

His theoretical line differs from the others, insofar as man is endowed with the ability to resort to self-distancing in the face of events that occur to him, and that only human beings have this ability. About this ability, Frankl called being part of the dimension of noetic phenomena, or the noological dimension, which, very briefly speaking, is the ability to transcend in relation to oneself or in relation to the other, and he called this “self-transcendence”.

The will to meaning is also one of the central themes of his works, being this ability, that only human beings have to discover their meaning, this idea made Frankl disagree with Freud’s theory of homeostasis, for which

psychic energy, or libido, would always tend. For the Swiss psychiatrist, unlike Freud, the healthy human being would always be under some tension, not from a negative point of view, but the tension of someone who is always moving towards the desire for meaning. (FRANKL, 2011)

After this brief presentation of some of the most important terms of the psychological school of Viktor Frankl, we will dwell on what he said in relation to the term unconscious from the point of view of his theoretical line.

THE SPIRITUAL UNCONSCIOUS

Frankl says that the spiritual unconscious is where the will to meaning comes from, that is, the impulse we have to seek or discover some purpose in the situations presented to us by life (FRANKL, 2011). In his book "In search of meaning" (1984), Frankl questions the environmental, physical and psychological conditioning to which he was subjected in the concentration camp and whether this would completely remove his power of choice. However, the author concludes that even in this extreme condition there is still an inner freedom that cannot be taken away. He realized that he could make choices that would go against all the environmental pressure of the concentration camp and that, therefore, man would still remain free to choose how to behave in the face of situations, in his case, in the face of the absurdities of meaningless activities. of the concentration camps by which passed.

Frankl says that dreams also have a superior dimension, a dimension of meaning, and for that very reason, he does not exclude them from his approach. In his book "The Ignored Presence of God (2007)", Frankl devotes a chapter to addressing the theme of the spiritual unconscious and states that man is only seen in a complete way if seen as a bio-psycho-spiritual being.

THE UNCONSCIOUS DYNAMICS IN PSYCHOLOGY FOR SKINNER

Skinner denies the concept of unconscious, because for the author, this term would indicate an immaterial phenomenon and, therefore, not amenable to scientific study. Thus, Skinner denies the concept of the unconscious, saying that all behavior such as emotions and feelings are of the same nature as observable behavior, however, being of a private order, that is, that only the subject who feels has access. Skinner says that personality is a set of behaviors that were selected for the consequences they produced in the environment, and that the term unconscious or personality would only be metaphors used by the verbal community.

In his book, *Science and Human Behavior*, Skinner says that all science, when new, tries to establish a cause-consequence relationship as an explanation of the phenomena they intend to study. In relation to human behavior, these sciences must move from a more archaic and superstitious explanation of behavior to a more scientific reality, that is, subject to measurement and/or observation. (SKINNER, 2003).

Resorting to immaterial explanations that cannot be measured or explained, such as the use of the term "mind" or "psyche", would still be an archaic and superstitious form that has not yet abandoned psychology in favor of a more scientific form of explanation, which would be behaviors observable and measurable in some way. (SKINNER, 2003).

For Skinner, who developed the theoretical current called Radical Behaviorism, for the behaviorist psychologist, a thought is a behavior, of the same nature as "public" behaviors such as running or jumping, however, which occur in a "private" way. (SKINNER, 2003). By private behavior, it is understood when only the subject has access to it and by public behavior, actions in which third parties would also have access.

Therefore, for Skinner, a formulation of the unconscious would not make sense, since not even the term cognition is accepted by him, as he makes clear in his article entitled “Because I am not a cognitive psychologist”. The author says:

“Having changed the environment into the head in the form of conscious experience and the behavior in the form of intentions, desires, and choices, and having stored the effects of contingencies of reinforcement as knowledge and rules, cognitive psychologists put them all together to compose a internal simulacrum of the organism, no different from the classic homunculus.” Skinner (SKINNER, 2007, p.307)

In other words, attributing a behavior that is of an internal and immaterial (cognitive) nature would be for Skinner precisely a way of not explaining it. Therefore, emotion or any private behavior must be explained rather than serving as an explanation or cause of a behavior. That explanation, for a behaviorist, would be in the contingencies of reinforcement, in most cases.

By contingencies of reinforcement, behaviorists understand, in a very general way, the functional relationship between environmental stimuli and the organism, as well as their cause-consequence relationships. (SKINNER, 2003).

DISCUSSION

For Freud, the unconscious is only personal and keeps our repressed desires, for Jung, the unconscious expands to the entire human species and is, in some way, shared among them, in addition to the fact that the contents of this unconscious have a certain autonomy and are reserves of positive potentials for man and not just composed of repressed sexual impulses, as for Freud.

For Viktor Frankl, there is a noological dimension in man that, if neglected, could lead him to an existential void, this would imply

a spiritual unconscious dimension, which already differs greatly from other approaches.

Contrary to the notion of the personal unconscious for Freud, and the collective unconscious for Jung, Frankl says that man has a spiritual unconscious, which are basically found in two ways, the first is a phenomenological attitude in seeking meaning in the situations in which we find ourselves. they were given by the very nature of life events, even if it is unfavorable and causes you suffering, as he makes clear in his book “Em Busca de Sentido” (1984) and the second is through the interpretation of dreams. (CARVALHO, 2021).

Another point is about the interpretation of dreams, which in Frankl has a totally different aspect from the interpretations of Freud and Jung. Frankl agrees that the interpretation of dreams are valid methods, however, he does not reduce them to simple instincts and impulses like Freud or to unconscious archetypes like Jung.

In the same work, the author harshly criticizes Psychoanalysis, stating that it would be reductionist in amputating man to a set of unconscious mechanisms that govern human life, with the therapist’s job being merely to work with these mechanisms. This dynamic focused on unconscious mechanics would depersonalize man and place him in the position of a machine, instead of a being that has freedom. For this reason, for Frankl, man is not doomed to the unconscious libidinal movements of psychoanalysis, but rather has the responsibility of dealing with the consequences of the choices he is free to make in his particular circumstances and finding a meaning for his existence from this dynamic.

In Skinner we have a purely materialistic view of the human being, the term unconscious does not exist by itself, being just a metaphor to refer to what he calls private behaviors, thus not differentiating them, in their nature, from

external and visible behaviors by third parties.

Analyzing the concepts proposed in each current of thought in psychology, it was observed that there is no consensus on the term unconscious, even though they are a key theme for several currents of psychology. As the cited authors are situated within the same area of science (psychology), it would be expected that there would be some kind of relationship regarding the description or mode of functioning of the unconscious, which in practice has been shown to not happen.

CONCLUSION

From the analyzes made on such theoretical currents, it is possible to arrive at two theories. The first is that psychology has a notion of the unconscious that is not only different from each other, but is diametrically opposed, as

when comparing Skinner's materialist monist view with the others. The other authors agree with the concept of the unconscious; however, they disagree with the dynamics of the functioning of this unconscious.

The second is that the object of study of psychology, which is formally regarded as subjectivity, also does not fully match what the authors have as the object of study of their theoretical lines, because, for Skinner, the object of study of Behaviorism it is behavior, and for each author it points to a different object of study throughout the development of their theoretical lines.

In view of this, we invite other reflections and demarcations on the main concepts of the theoretical lines contained in this article to be the subject of other studies.

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