

Dreams and Semiotic Schemes are Intermediaries between The Soul and The Body

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Abstract

The article discusses another variant of the connection between the soul and the body. But first, the author examines the solution of this issue in the ancient world, Aristotle, Descartes and S. Freud. In Descartes, the solution boils down to the assumption that the bodily process (the movement of animal spirits) creates the conditions for the psychic (passions), while in Freud a complex picture emerges: mental processes create the conditions for bodily transformations, and these, in turn, create conditions for new mental changes. The author bases his own approach on the assumption that dreams and semiotic schemes act as intermediaries between the soul and the body. To substantiate this assumption, he offers a reconstruction and explanation of two cases.

Keywords: soul; body; dreams; schemas; consciousness; psyche; intermediaries

Medical knowledge describes the soul (in the modern type of rationality – consciousness and psyche) and the human body separately and in different scientific ways. At the same time, although the influence of the soul on the body and vice versa is recognized, there is no strictly scientific explanation of this connection and mutual influence. What do I understand when I talk about intermediaries. This concept was introduced by sociologist Bruno Latour, although in my opinion it works well in the case of medical sciences as well. Latour picks up a very important observation of Z. Bauman and some other sociologists that in the modern world social relations and connections *are mediated* by technical objects, activities, various principles, standards, etc. He examines the following three cases. First, instead of directly guarding the sheep, the shepherd “guards” them with the help of a fence and dogs. The traffic controller “controls” them with the help of traffic lights and “speed bumps”. Third, instead of direct communication between the designer and the future user, the environment thought out by the architect is used as an intermediary. In all these cases, as well as in most others, direct relationships (direct social ties) are mediated by cultural objects, and, as a rule, the number of such mediations (“intermediaries” according to Latour) can be significant. Unlike the “conductors”, who are subject to cause-and-effect relations, intermediaries are not subordinate to them and are incommensurable with each other. [Latour, 2014, pp. 331-332] Intermediaries separate the phenomena of

interest to the scientist and connect them; So further I will try to show that dreams and schemas can be considered as intermediaries connecting the soul and the body.

Historical Explanations of the Relationship between Soul and Body.

The very first relates to archaic culture. Ancient man explained this connection, as the classic of cultural studies E. Taylor shows, within the framework of magic. That is, he believed that the soul lives in the body, can leave this “home”, but also come back, and these actions explain all the main observable states of a person (death – the departure of the soul forever, without return, illness – the temporary exit of the soul from the body, dreams – the journey of the soul during sleep, the creation of rock paintings – the summoning of the soul). [Taylor, 1939; Rozin 2023] It is clear that, from the point of view of modern science, there is no explanation here, but archaic man had a different consciousness and vision of everything, in any case, such a narrative allowed him to act quite effectively for that time. For example, to treat the sick (if the soul has left the body because it has become cold, we will warm the body, if, on the contrary, it is hot, we will cool it down, if it is hungry, we will feed the first medicines).

In ancient culture, Aristotle rejected such an explanation, believing that it led to contradictions. Thus, in his work “On the Soul”, he writes, if we proceed from the fact that the soul and the body are connected by movement, then the soul of a deceased person can return, and he will come to life, but man, unlike the gods, is mortal. Stagirit is the first to explain the connection between soul and body rationally, saying that the soul can be subsumed under the concept of form, and the body can be subsumed under the concept of matter, and the soul and the body are connected as form with matter, i.e. through the act of formation.

In modern times, Descartes not only contrasts the soul and the body, but also discusses how they are connected. He suggests that the “pineal gland” is the mediator here. Animal spirits, which are particles of the blood of the body, “running past the pineal gland” shook it and thereby “evoked suffering states of the soul” – joy or sorrow, which allowed the soul to judge the harmfulness or usefulness of a given external stimulus for the body... The decisive factor in the emergence of “passions of the soul” was precisely the movements of animal spirits, i.e. purely material processes of the functioning of the nervous system” [Stepin, Stochik, Zatravkin, 2017, p. 109].

The explanation, as we have seen, boils down to the assumption that the bodily process (the movement of animal spirits) creates the conditions for the psychic (passions).

Something similar was proposed a few centuries later by S. Freud. But rather, on the contrary, at first, mental processes (the clash of opposite desires and attractions) create conditions for biological transformations (splitting of consciousness, falling out of it of a zone that can no longer be conscious, i.e. it is a biological substrate). Then, biological transformations, in turn, create conditions for mental and somatic processes (suffering, pain). “But how could it happen,” Freud asks, “that such an affectively saturated group of representations should be isolated?.. This question may be answered by taking into account two facts which we can judge with complete certainty, namely: (1) hysterical pains arose simultaneously with the formation of this isolated group of ideas, and (2) the patient strongly resisted any attempt to establish a connection between this isolated group and the other substantive components of consciousness; When this connection was finally established, she experienced great mental pain. Consciousness cannot predict when exactly an unbearable idea will arise. The intolerable idea is excluded and forms an isolated psychic group together with everything connected with it. But originally it had to be represented in consciousness, entering into the main stream of thought, otherwise there would not have been a conflict that is the cause of such an exclusion. It is these moments that we consider “traumatic”; it is then that the conversion takes place, the results of which are a splitting of consciousness and a hysterical symptom” [Freud, 1992, pp. 64-65, 69, 71]. “Through the study of hypnotic phenomena,” Freud explains in another work, “we have become accustomed to an understanding which at first seemed to us utterly alien, namely, that in one and the same individual there may be several psychic groupings which may exist in one individual quite independently of each other, which may know nothing of each other, and which, by changing consciousness, become detached from one another. If, in such a split of personality, consciousness is constantly inherent in one of the personalities, then this latter is called a conscious state of mind, and the personality separated from it is called unconscious... we have an excellent example of the influence that the conscious state can experience from the unconscious” [Freud, 1923, p. 17].

A rather complex picture emerges: mental processes create conditions for bodily transformations, and these for new mental ones.

The author's explanation of the relationship between mental and somatic processes.

For a better understanding, I offer the following case from my childhood – an interesting dream I had during the war in evacuation near Kuibyshev. I was five or six years old. My mother worked day and night at an aircraft factory and only occasionally snatched a few hours to visit me and my brother in kindergarten. Almost always she brought something delicious: cocoa in a thermos, chocolate or something else. And so I stubbornly began to dream with my mother and delicious products in addition. It is understandable how upset I was when I woke up: there was no mother, no cocoa. Finally, in order not to be deceived and not to be upset in vain, I decided to check myself – to pinch my ear: if it hurts – I don't sleep, if it doesn't hurt – I sleep. And that same night I had a dream: my mother arrives, I pull my ear, make sure that I am not sleeping, drink something and then... Wake up. Then everything is clear. The force of grief firmly imprinted this dream on my memory.

I also remember an incident that occurred a few days later. I was playing with blocks and suddenly I heard the teacher responding: "Vadik, go down to the first floor, your mother is waiting for you there." I rushed headlong and saw my mother as I walked down the stairs, but when I ran up, it was a nurse who was waiting for me. Then I asked the teacher where my mother was, and she was surprised: "I told you that a nurse was waiting." Now the explanation of dreams.

They are caused by problem situations that for some reason do not allow to realize the desires that have arisen in a person. As, for example, in this case: at first I had a blocked desire to see my mother, then not to be deceived, in the last story – to see my mother again. My analysis shows that desire, both psychologically and biologically, is a complex formation. This is something like a program (it, on the one hand, is set by language, signs and schemes, on the other hand, by physiological structures), the implementation of which involves living through certain events (meeting your mother, communicating with her, delicious food, etc.). Blocking this program does not lead to its disintegration, i.e. the desire still strives to realize itself. In order not to interfere with the normal life activity that continues, the psyche takes the blocked program to another horizon, so to speak, until better times. These times come during sleep, when the psychic apparatus is freed from the waking work of overcoming those desires for which there were conditions. The work of dream construction begins: from the existing units of experience (this was shown, in particular, by G. Helmholtz), the psyche constructs dream events, which nevertheless make it possible to realize the blocked program. For example, in this case, the first desire constituted in a dream and triggered the plot of the mother's arrival, in the second case, it was a test for sleep or lack thereof, in the third case, in the form of an auditory and visual hallucination, it "replaced" the words of the teacher and the image of the nurse (here the mechanisms of interpretation, completion and rearrangement of ordinary perceptions by dream perceptions are at work, see more [Rozin, 2011]).

All the basic processes involved in the construction of dreams are twofold: psychological, i.e., relating to the soul, and physiological, relating to the body. For example, what is desire as a program? On the one hand, there is semiotic and mental education, in which events to be realized are set by means of semiotic means. On the other hand, a program is a physiological process that creates pressure and tension in the body that requires resolution. The dual nature of dream programs and other processes allows us to consider dreams as intermediaries between the soul and the body. Now another, more complex case is the youthful memory of Carl Jung.

"The world is beautiful and the church is beautiful," Jung says in his latest book, "and the God who created all this sits far, far away in the blue sky on a golden throne and... Here my thoughts were cut short and I felt suffocated. I was numb and remembered only one thing: Don't think now! Something terrible is coming.

(After three days and two sleepless nights, Jung finally decided to think over the idea he had begun. –V.R.).

I summoned up all my courage, as if I had suddenly decided to jump into the fires of hell at once, and let the thought appear. I saw a cathedral in front of me, a blue sky. God sits on His golden throne, high above the world – and from under the throne a piece of feces falls on the shining new roof of the cathedral, breaks through it, everything collapses, the walls of the cathedral break into pieces.

That’s it! I felt unspeakably relieved. Instead of the expected curse, grace descended on me, and with it an inexpressible bliss that I had never known... I understood many things that I did not understand before, I understood what my father never understood—the will of God... His father took the commandments of the Bible as a guide, he believed in God, as the Bible prescribed and as his father taught him. But he didn’t know the living God who stands, free and omnipotent, over the Bible and over the Church, who calls people to be just as free. God, for the sake of doing His Will, can force the father to abandon all his views and beliefs. Testing human courage, God forces us to abandon traditions, no matter how sacred they may be” [Jung, 1994, pp. 46, 50].

Why did Jung see God looking like a kind of revolutionary, destroying the church in an obscene way? Because during this period he had a conflict with his father (a hereditary pastor) and the church, and Jung wanted to break off relations with them, which he did after the story of the fantasy that visited him (as I show, it was a waking dream [Rozin, 2011, pp. 371-372]). “In this religion,” he writes, “I no longer found God. I knew that I would never be able to take part in this ceremony again. The church is a place where I will not go again. Everything is dead there, there is no life there. I felt sorry for my father. I realized the tragedy of his profession and life. He struggled with a death whose existence he could not acknowledge. An abyss opened between him and me, it was limitless, and I did not see the possibility of ever overcoming it” [Jung, 1994, p. 64].

In this case, for Jung, the problem situation is a poorly realized desire to break off relations with his father and the church, despite the fact that it is almost impossible to do this for a teenager brought up in religion. Nevertheless, Jung solves this problem, but in three stages. At the first stage, a problematic situation triggers a waking dream (a fantasy close to a hallucination), which mortally frightens Jung; and suddenly, God will strike him for blasphemy. This process is mainly, as in the case of Freud, physiological, which, however, determines psychic images. At the second stage, Jung intuitively searches for a rational solution and gropes for it in the construction of a scheme in which God looks like a revolutionary, giving Jung the sanction to break with his father and the church. At the third stage, he actualizes this scheme, finding himself in a new reality (“understood the will of God” and so on).

Soul	(language)↓		
Problem situation →	Body reaction Fantasy – a dream in reality	SCHEME → New Reality	Break with his father and the church
Body	↑		

The reaction of the organism is also not a biological process, because Jung dreamed of a picture that can only be understood with the help of language. In rational comprehension, the main role is played by the construction of schemas. Schemas are the construction (invention) of an individual, which makes it possible to solve a problem situation, thereby setting a new reality, and opening up the possibility of acting in a new way. “Sometimes,” writes psychotherapist G. Nazloyan, “patients are surprised by the shape of their ear, nose, the pattern of their eyes, lips, and chin. This is the first way out of autistic captivity, the first look at oneself from the outside, the first attempt to compare oneself with other people without vicious mythologization and dysmorphophobic attitudes that distort the vision of the world in general and the world of human relations in particular. Sergey V., for whom the forehead was a “testing ground”, the surface of the nose was a “launching pad”, and the mouth was a “cave”, eventually recalled this with an ironic smile, as well as the developed delusional system and inadequate actions associated with the fact that he was an Alien from the Future. Another patient, Vladimir U., who has yet to be treated, “molds” horses, cats and other animals from his cheeks, and then “erases” them. What is hidden behind all this?” [Nazloyan, 1994, p. 23].

As I show, the vision of schizophrenics of their face, as well as the main sensations, are completely determined by the features of the “deformed reality”, which has been formed as a result of the formation of the anthropological image of the patient. In turn, a new pyramid of realities is formed as a result of the patient’s construction of schemes that solve, according to his conviction, his problems schizophrenic as getting into a new world, where sensuality and events are different. So, precisely because Sergey V. considers himself an alien from the future and, therefore, an astronaut, he perceives his nose as a “launching pad” and his forehead as a “space testing ground”. [Rozin, 2023, pp. 55-56].

Conclusion

I understand that a psychologist and a physician would like to get an answer to the question of how the mechanisms that allow the transition from the soul to the body and back are arranged, which determine these transitions. In my opinion, such a formulation of the question is not entirely correct. Not transitions, but interdependence, the simultaneous action of the soul and the body, mediated by dreams and schemas.

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