



# The Role of Meanings in the Construction of a Subjective-Affective Perspective of the Processes of Action and Social Transformation

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## Abstract

Starting from the study of the neurophenomenological process that takes place around the construction of subjective meanings, it is intended to explore the role of meanings in the processes of action and social transformation. This will allow building an epistemological platform that allows completing the model of historical analysis of the social developed by Hugo Zemelman's critical epistemology. This model seeks to understand the historical constitution of social reality in a dialectical key and for this it proposes the approach of three interdependent dimensions of analysis: the dimension of the actors, the dimension of the circumstances and the dimension of the meanings. This text deals with developing this last dimension.

**Keywords:** Neurophenomenological; Epistemology; French Pragmatist; enactive cognition

## Introduction

In the social sciences, the study of meanings has been marginal; although anthropology, from its symbolic perspective, has given them a central role in explaining behaviors and conducts, as well as in the creation of cultural artifacts of human beings. The same has happened with psychology, whose object of study is inscribed within the mental world of the subject where meanings constitute a fundamental analysis niche in the understanding of the psyche and its impact on the daily practices of individuals.

However, it must be said that, although not in a systematic way, meanings have been present in the comprehensive tradition of sociology under the protection of the configurationist and relational conception of society, even though historically this conception has been at a disadvantage in the face of a more structural and positivist conception of the social.

In fact, despite studies on social movements, and in general those studies that deal with social action,

contemporary sociology - with the exception perhaps of studies on political culture and the so-called French pragmatist sociology - has not repaired with sufficiency in the heuristic potential of meanings for the understanding of action; This omission is also reflected, for example, in the marginal position of research and reflections on political discourse.

The foregoing indicates that meanings have not been absent from analytical treatment in the social sciences, but certainly their approach has been scarce and marginal. Furthermore, in general, the epistemological and methodological treatment of meanings in the social sciences has sought to evade subjectivity. On the one hand, this is understandable if one takes into account that disciplines such as linguistics or semiotics - which historically constitute the natural field of study of meanings - have been treated from a historical point of view, articulating a sociocultural perspective of the significance that impacts the way of understanding cognition and the meanings as a result of it.

On the other hand, the evasion of the subjective in the treatment of meanings in the social sciences has also been due

to the predominance of a rational conception of the subject that reduces the heuristic value of the dual appetite-aversion as a base category to explain the unfolding of the subject. Will as a response to the dialectical tension between necessity and freedom implied in all human existence. This basically restricts the emotional potential implicit in the autonomous capacity of the subject and its role in the configuration of social reality. For this reason, it is considered that the social sciences have avoided understanding the subject as a human subject, that is, as a social being that is also, and in a basic, essential and inescapable way, an individual, that is, a subjective being.

Based on the above, this text has the purpose of theoretically exploring the relationship between the generation of subjective meanings and the role of these meanings in the historical constitution of the social via their deployment in action and in the processes of social transformation derived from dynamism intrinsic to social reality. To understand the generation of subjective meanings we rely on the developments of neurophenomenology -also known as New Cognitive Science or enactivism- and to understand the role of meanings in the historical constitution of reality and the processes of change within it, we rely on in the legacy of critical epistemology.

To ensure its better understanding, the text is organized into three sections: the first section seeks to understand the category of meanings by describing them centrally from the conceptual point of view that relies on the neurophenomenological perspective; the second section focuses on understanding the role that critical epistemology assigns to meanings in the historical constitution of social reality. Finally, in the third section, the focus is placed on the way in which the articulation between neurophenomenology and critical epistemology can contribute to an understanding of the processes of social transformation from a subjective perspective that is also necessarily transdisciplinary.

### **The Subjective Meanings and the Cognitive Processes from which they are Formed**

Subjective meanings are those meanings that the subject cognitively constructs from his own biological (organic and mental) subjectivity from the way that, through that same perception, he lives and signifies his experiences of interaction with/in the world. In this sense, the epistemological foundation underlying such definition is based on the premise that perceived reality does not exist outside of the processes of cognition implicit in the conscious matter that it perceives and knows as an individual cognitive organism.

In human beings, the processes of cognition are involved

in the conscious and unconscious processes of subjectivity formation since our mind is enabled to build maps on our own body. According to Damasio [1], it is that capacity of the human mind that allows us to have a subjective idea of the body and its action, specifically the body and action in the first person, that is, in a phenomenological, subjective, experiential key.

This supposes that human beings realize that we walk when, for example, our foot hits the ground, thus elaborating a pre-logical content of walking that is linked to the lower extremities of the body; and it also allows us to realize that we feel pain when our feet hit something hard on the way, being able to also elaborate an emotional and affective content around the stumble and the pain it causes in its relationship with the foot, with the body and with the environment that intervenes in such a stumble.

It follows that the human ability to develop mental maps of the body is closely linked to the processes of subjective cognition —more related to what we know as perception—, understanding that these are processes of construction of meaning where things are mentally intertwined. pre-reflective with the emotional-affective, inasmuch as the latter is bodily involved. Here is that, although in general the processes of cognition have been circumscribed to the higher functions of the brain (attention, memory, language, reasoning), as postulated by neurophenomenology, there is not only cognition at the perceptual levels, but also that this cognition constitutes the basis of subjective signification, whether it is conscious or not.

Neurophenomenology is a research program that Francisco Varela founded during the last decades of the last century and that starts from understanding consciousness as a cognitive mechanism typical of living incarnate; that is: consciousness as a mechanism that emerges linked to living matter to regulate the functioning of the body from the sensory-motor relationships established by the body itself in its interaction with / in the world, and the way in which it operates. Body intersubjectively via action and language.

Neurophenomenology starts from understanding the mind indissolubly linked to the body, which means that the body-mind unit cannot be separated from the environment or environment in which the body develops as living matter. Thus, mind, body and world make up the cognitive unit par excellence, assuming that cognition configures an automatic process involved in the preservation of the autonomy and the somatic identity of the organism [2]. Cognition, understood in this way, is inherent to life; therefore, the meanings that result from it are also.

From neurophenomenology, cognition is bodily inscribed, and as Vázquez Rocca [3] points out, it constitutes

immediate evidence of what our body does when it acts in / with the environment. From this perspective, the human being defines his own cognitive domains and does so from the coupling relationship established between the body, the nervous system and the environment with which he interacts to manage his life as a living organism. This coupling relationship makes cognition a dynamic mechanism for self-regulation of one's own life, in such a way that human beings define their own point of view about the world by living, interacting and experiencing [4].

Understood in this way, neurophenomenology conceptualizes cognition in terms of enaction, describing a process of construction of information that is nothing more than a process of construction of meanings constructed from the intertwining of emotionality-rationality, as Maturana [5] said, and that —a Unlike other cognitive approaches such as connectionism or representationalist computationalism, it proposes cognition essentially linked to the body and movement as part of the operational dynamics of the living organism itself.

With this, the idea that cognition is linked only and sufficiently to reason is discarded, to give way to a more vitalist and irrationalist conception of cognition, establishing it at its base in the processes of appetite-aversion. In summary, as Vázquez Rocca [3] points out, Varela poses cognition as an accident of wanting, that is, of emotion and affect, which implies the presence of cognition in emotion, so that the cognitive processes take place as the subject lives, acts and interacts with the environment; and this is precisely what is called enactive cognition.

Enactive cognition is then defined as that which emerges from the excited body. It is about understanding that knowing is not a logical or rational act, but a process of regulation of the vital autonomy of individuals throughout their life management, as this is what allows them to ensure their survival by creating a system of own cognitions that passes, in principle, through the recognition of the existence of a body and the sensorial-motor relationships associated with it. From this approach, cognition does not imply the representation of the external world, but rather the immediate construction of information from the interrelation between the body, the nervous system and the external world, thus implying cognition as an emotional and corporal disposition.

From the above it is possible to affirm then that cognition is a self-produced process and from that self-production emerge meanings that are also self-produced, that is, subjective. As García Blanco points out [3], each emotional and bodily state of the organism participates constitutively in the production of the next state, so that cognition constitutes a self-produced and self-referenced process in

constant update, in constant change. Understood in this way, in terms of Varela [4] there is no other world except the one we experience, which leads us to conclude that cognition is a vital process that occurs from individual experiences.

Taking into account the above, the existence of a biological substrate of cognition - which Maturana and Varela [6] named as the biology of knowing - in the case of human beings allows the emergence of an experience of ourselves, that is, of a subjective experience. This subjective experience is the awareness of our experience in / with the environment [7], and to the extent that it is repeated repeatedly, it forms stable cognitive patterns [4] that, as Von Glasersfeld [8] points out, they order the informational flow of experience while developing certainties about the world for the individual. These certainties serve to act — and this is what is specifically important for the purposes of this work, since it allows subjective meanings to be seen as certainties insofar as they are unquestionable.

And it is that for the enactive approach of cognition, this is inseparable from sensation, emotion, perception and action; It is about understanding our own reality as the place from which we are unquestionably for ourselves and cognition as a perceptually oriented action in a world that is inseparable from our sensory-motor capacities. As can be seen, this conceptualization breaks with the idea that was had of cognition as the recovery of a pre-defined world and alien to the individual who knows. Varela [4] says it more or less in these terms: cognition is not given by representations, but by embodied actions, that is, by body movements.

As can be seen, defining cognition in this way makes it possible to understand it as something that produces results immediately and unquestionably, since it takes place automatically and stably, in addition to being based on our personal history. Seen in this way, subjective meanings are the fruit of these basic processes of cognition that are not mediated by language and that base their content on feeling (the emotional-affective) and not on the reflective thinking of logical and linguistic cognition. From this point of view, cognition is a natural reaction of our insertion as living beings in the world, where the world itself is cognitively involved in our relationship with it. That is, there is a mutual dependence between the world and the individual in cognitive terms.

Obviously, this Varelian conception of reality, as well as that of previously developed cognition, in addition to assuming the subject and the world as mutually implicated, also implies understanding the world in a different way from what is presupposed from logical cognition (a world stable, durable, separate and alien) and the different subject also as it is conceived from representationalism and connectionism (a defined, determined, stable subject and with a cognitive

apparatus governed by fixed rules).

Coinciding with Varela it is possible to affirm that neither the world is stable nor the subject is determined; Rather, the author considers that the world is a process and that the cognitive subject is a being that defines itself in it and through it through interaction. That is the reason why, from neurophenomenology, cognition does not suppose the existence of given facts or things per se, but of interested interactions oriented by a first-person point of view; hence the emergence of subjective meanings.

From the above it follows that there is no single world or a single reality, but that this is different for each of us, and even for each moment of us. In other words, we configure our world cognitively —literally— at every step: world and subject constitute a methodological unit not determined in advance, and in that sense unstable, unfinished, in process, under construction.

The neurobiology that supports the thesis on enactive cognition rests on the peripheral position of neurosciences, which is what locates cognition processes within the entire nervous system, that is, in relation to other body systems, specifically in the extremities and with other peripheral systems.

Unlike what happens with the centralist posture, which locates cognition processes in the central nervous system (brain and spinal cord), the peripheral posture of neurosciences does it around the entire nervous system, including other organs and the extremities. From this perspective it is postulated that there is no cognition without emotions; or what is the same: that cognition has a biological substrate that in human beings is both emotional and affective since sensory perception, which involves the body, constitutes the minimum threshold of rooted cognition, that is, in-embodied literally in the sensory-motor system.

The foregoing implies understanding that perception or cognition is always active, which is based on the fact that we perceive with interest, in the first person and also for some reason, that is, for something that even unconsciously involves us in our materiality, in our body in terms of need. It is this positioning on cognition in the body that beats the peripheral posture the possibility of linking cognition with emotion, since emotion is a homeostatic mechanism that acts from the body-mind relationship, based on the basic appetite axis. aversion, generating in human consciousness an associated affective valence.

Castilla del Pino [9] argues in this regard that the appetite-aversion axis configures the cognitive and affective basis of our psyche. Therefore, in the understanding that the

psyche shapes our disposition to be / be in the world, it is plausible to think that emotions are part of who we are, what we do and how we act.

Adding to the above the neurophenomenological thesis that our behaviors configure cognitions and our cognitions are in turn the result of our actions, it can be concluded that perceiving reality involves the subject's experience of interaction with that reality, where the resulting reality is the result cognitive and affective (subjective) of said experience. From this it follows not only that the action emerges cognitively in the form of meanings, but that these meanings are produced basically in an affective key.

The foregoing is relevant for the understanding of the historical constitution of social reality, since it allows to establish at least two conclusions: 1) that the action of social subjects —in principle, always subjective— always implies rationality and affectivity simultaneously, and 2) that the action of social subjects is imbricated with the result of the cognitions that are formed through said action, updating the system of beliefs, dispositions, representations and references that in human beings, moreover, is always intertwined with the historical and sociocultural belief system, representations and references.

From the legacy of critical epistemology, by the hand of Hugo Zemelman, it is this reality of historical meaning that seeks to question from subjective meanings as part of the implicit referents in the historical memory of societies, in the manner of cognitive pillars that sustain and reproduce cultural knowledge. Let's see what is proposed from this epistemological approach around the relationship between meanings and action.

### The Role of Meanings in the Historical Constitution of the Social

Hugo Zemelman's critical epistemology, also known as Latin American critical epistemology, constitutes a scientific program within the social sciences around the epistemological and methodological revision of the category of social reality as a concrete totality, in an attempt to recover the central notions of historical-dialectical materialism of Marxist lineage with a view to the processes of social transformation.

From the point of view of the historical-dialectical approach of Marxism, the category of concrete totality allows us to describe the transformation potential of social reality based on the action of social subjects; thus, social action not only constitutes a constitutive element of the social, but a constitutive element of the intrinsic dynamism that characterizes it. That is: social action is revealed as the



dynamic motor of society, in the understanding that without the action of social subjects, society would not be possible, and neither would its transformation.

From the postulates of Zemelmanian critical epistemology in this dynamism of social reality through action, what De la Garza [10-12] called meanings participate in a relevant and interdependent way; a broad category that—together with that of the actors and the contextual and situational circumstances in which these actors live, feel, think and act—constitutes a kind of parameter or axis of reference in the orientation, configuration and deployment of the action. For this reason, once the role of meanings in action has been previously explained from the cognitive and neurophenomenological point of view, now is the time to understand how, precisely for this reason, meanings enable spaces or instances for their own transformation, thus impacting the transformation processes of society.

Thus, from the social point of view, it is presumable to think that the subjective meanings that are displayed in individual action are also displayed in the social, updating themselves. Therefore, in the understanding that subjective meanings have a theoretically changing character, it is possible to suppose that in situations of social interaction these subjective meanings also change insofar as the relationship with other subjects implies not only the deployment of these meanings (and of course, such and as we will see later, also of the sociocultural meanings) but - above all - the possibility of their dispute; hence the breeding ground for updating.

As can be seen, the process of updating meanings also implies a process of transformation of the logic of meaning associated with the meanings in question; and in turn this process of transformation of the logic of meaning is related to the transformation of the forms and contents of the action. From this perspective, social interaction as a mechanism for social action reveals the need to think of oneself as the instance that enables the dispute over meanings and at the same time as the instance in which said dispute opens the possibility to transform the order of interaction itself.

Thus, social interaction dynamizes the social on a daily basis, opening possible spaces for the transformation of the social itself, which implies that the social is transformed via the interaction between social subjects and this in turn is transformed through action. From this point of view, social reality can never be a static or given fact in advance, but rather a “becoming”; that is, something that is constituted to the extent that the subjects interact in the present. It is precisely this idea that haunts the definition of Zemelman’s critical epistemology when it defines social reality from the historical-dialectical category of concrete totality.

That is why assuming social reality as a concrete totality implies thinking about it from a tension, situated and processual point of view, also assuming it as porous, contradictory, unprecedented and unfinished. Consequently, critical epistemology describes social reality in constant change, from the composition and recomposition of the relationships and networks of relationships between its components (actors, circumstances and meanings), so that in the result of this perpetual movement it is the situated action of the social actors that appears as the protagonist.

From the perspective of critical epistemology, the action of social subjects is articulated both to the circumstances and to the meanings and logics of meaning from which it is oriented. This dynamic operates from the need-freedom tension both at a subjective and historical level, and it is from this tension that it is possible to configure spaces of creativity and autonomy that potentially make transformation possible. In this way, in frank dialectical alignment, social reality is defined as a giving in what is given [13,14], that is, as a constant movement, not determining in advance, despite the fact that it takes place within certain conditions or circumstances since these are in turn changing as influenced by said movement. The dynamic that takes shape as the essence of this movement of the social is precisely what makes possible the theoretical description of social transformation as a historical possibility.

For this reason, it is affirmed from the critical epistemology that the dynamic essence of social reality historically constitutes the social [15,14,10,11]. Thus, the dynamics of social reality is what allows us to specify certain possibilities of action and others not, depending on the interrelation between actors, circumstances and meanings. The possibilities of action that are specified or crystallized are those that emerge as reality, and as Zemelman (s / f-a) [16] points out, they are those that are configured as fact to our perception.

For Zemelman (s / f-a) [16], the perception of social reality as a fact obeys the natural way of perceiving human beings, therefore it is an error to assume it in scientific terms as a fact. For the author, a fact is something static, given once and for all, and although this is indeed the fruit of human observation, social reality has its own logic that escapes precisely this observation [16]. Thus, social reality understood as a fact constitutes an epistemological error that, according to the author, prevents us from approaching it scientifically in order to understand it in its constitution; or what is the same: to understand it in the intrinsic dynamics of its historically possible constitution.

The Zemelmanian distinction around the historically possible real constitutes, in our opinion, one of the most

dynamic and least deterministic conceptions of reality. If it is taken into account that the circumstances given in any social reality constitute the fruit or result of a certain historical correlation of forces between the different social actors, it seems clear that said correlation has been favored by a specific concretion of conditions and factors that crystallize at the same time heat of the action of the subjects, the meanings that they construct from the action itself and the circumstances —constrictive or liberating— in which both the action and those meanings unfold.

The type of interrelation between these three components of the social from its own historical constitution thus configures the social reality that emerges through action as an action in which meanings are precisely disputed, specifically their reproduction or transformation; In this way, if meanings are reproduced, the symbolic and action order that sustains and hierarchizes them within the collective memory is reproduced socially (and of course politically as well) and that forms part of the social knowledge on which the universe of sense that serves as a reference to guide the life management of subjects in societies. The opposite would happen — grossly, of course — if meanings are transformed.

For a better understanding of the above, it is worth noting that the meanings are named by Zemelman from a more integrative category that the author calls parameter. For critical Zemelmanian epistemology, the parameter constitutes the synthesis of the contents of intersubjective historical memory [15]. It is a category that, although it is vitalized from its epistemology from the recognition of its logical-epistemological character, is poorly developed from its cognitive nature. However, without the intention of reducing the complexity of the parameter category in Zemelman, the parameter can be understood as a logic of operation of meanings, rather than as a meaning in itself.

From this perspective, the Zemelmanian parameter could be described in the manner of Jodelet's mental schemes, Moscovici's social representations, or Durkheim's collective representations, Weber's ideal types, or Castoriadis's imaginary. Despite their differences, what is common in these authors and their respective theoretical developments is that —as assumed from the category of parameter in critical epistemology— all these categories linked to thinking can be summarized in what we are defining here as meanings. ; In all these authors, roughly speaking, meanings are understood as networks and logics of meaning that guide social life and the action of social actors in a given time-space, insofar as they are circumscribed to intersubjective historical memory and are shared as referents of thought and action.

Seen this way, although it is not possible to affirm that Zemelman and his critical epistemology go beyond the

sociocultural treatment of meanings that is common place in the social sciences, it can be argued that metaphysics present in Zemelman's parameter category in the same way of cognitive pillars for action, allows articulating his proposal, at least theoretically —as it is intended here— with the developments of neurophenomenology.

The Zemelmanian parameter —equivalent in critical epistemology to the category of meanings that we are trying to describe here— appears constituted by the referents of meaning in which not only memory is based, but also the logic of collective belonging of social actors, orienting and regulating its action. However, it is necessary to point out that for the author, the role of the parameter in the regulation of action is not constrictive, but rather the opposite. For Zemelman, the parameter is transformed, it changes; and what allows this movement is precisely its constant interrelation with the actors and with the circumstances.

As has been seen, from the point of view of neurophenomenology, the transformation of meanings occurs from action, since there is no cognition outside it, that is, outside the movement of the body that makes it up. In this sense, although Zemelman is based on a dialectical perspective of the action and did not develop the action from the subjective point of view, we believe that it is possible to try a subjective approach to the action and the processes of social transformation based on its category of parameter. and approaching it from a perspective that combines neurophenomenology and historical analysis to build the bases of a model that explains the processes of social transformation in a subjective-affective key.

This, we believe, fits with the dialectical conception of social reality as a succession of conjunctures [15,14] that invites us to understand the movement as the essence of the social as a historical key to its constitution, in addition to inviting also to think about how this movement is possible. The bet that is supported here consists of specifying at a theoretical level the way in which meanings participate in the realization of this movement, and as it has been tried to demonstrate, neurophenomenological theses offer an understandable starting point for this, in the understanding that subjective meanings operate in the social, co-constituting the social itself.

Regarding the above, from the hand of contemporary phenomenology and assuming the perspective of relational sociologies that postulate that society and its transformation operate from the relationships and links between individual and collective subjects through social interaction, in The next and last section of this article is intended to offer an explanation of how subjective meanings could participate in the processes of social transformation.

## Subjective Meanings and their Role in Social Transformation Processes

The meanings and logics of meaning that social actors possess and that are deployed precisely in their individual and social action, are as much the result of the constitution of the symbolic-historical, as of the processes of construction of subjective meaning. Thus, while the meaning-circumstances relationship is specified in scenarios where historical memory unfolds socio-culturally, the meaning-actor relationship is specified through the deployment of the actors' cognitive resources, which are configured both socio-culturally, is In other words, within the cultural logic that precedes our birth and that is fundamentally part of our primary and secondary socialization processes, as well as within those processes that are subjectively configured, that is, within a neurophenomenological logic that starts from of cognition as a basic mechanism of adaptability and agency in human beings.

But as can be assumed from all that has been said, the fact that subjective meanings intervene in the processes of adaptability and agency of human individuals in the different environments where their lives occur, constitutes a weighty factor in the configuration of their action. , since it is about meanings that make up the part of the subject's cognitive world that is more unquestionable, more "true". Let us remember that these are meanings that are sensory and affective as the body is inevitably involved in the cognitive process.

As indicated by neurophenomenology, the mechanisms of adaptability and agency of human beings are involved in the processes of cognition and these mechanisms are essentially emotional; hence the agency, as directly linked to motor control, needs to be understood in close relationship with pre-reflective experiences.

From the social point of view, these pre-reflective experiences are involved in the processes of social cognition through the automatic and immediate recognition of the action provided by mirror neurons [17]; These neurons configure a direct way of understanding the actions of others since they configure perceptual processes where cognition takes place through automatic recognition mechanisms [18], which are those in which the motor system is involved. As Gallagher and Zahavi [19] point out, the own motor system rumbles or resonates in the interaction with the other, which is what seems to be happening through the presence of mirror neurons that are activated so much when an agent undertakes actions specific instrumental instruments such as when watching someone else do them [20].

That is the reason why the processes of neural resonance via mirror neurons are inscribed within the processes of

intersubjective perception, specifying the participation of the body and cognition from an enactive perspective, as it is sustained from neurophenomenology and peripheral posture of neurosciences. Consequently, the understanding of the other does not work primarily from logical inference, but rather from interaction, since it takes place through the body.

This is how Gallagher and Zahavi [19] argue in this regard that social interaction is itself an essentially bodily practice. In social interaction, the body is always accessible to others, that is, it has a public dimension where the perception of the body and the emotional expression of the other generate a reaction towards the forms or mental states that are expressed through corporeality, building intersubjectivity [21].

Seen in this way, it can be affirmed that through their mirror neurons the human being understands what the other does directly from their sensorimotor perception, and from this infers the mental states of the other that have caused their action. This is possible because from this approach intersubjective understanding is activated because most mental states find a natural expression in bodily behavior [22], making the expression meaningful, that is, making the behavior an "object" with meaning.

The emphasis that contemporary phenomenology places on the dimension of corporeality, its expression and action, defines the experience of interaction as primarily corporeal and consequently affective since it is emotionally colored or colored. In this way, emotions -which from the point of view of cognitive psychology are understood as reactions with valence, that is, as the result of certain kinds of cognitions based on how their content, structure and organization are perceived and interpreted [23] build an atmosphere of affectivity in the human being that functions as a framework for meaning, understood as a process of construction of subjective meanings related to the appetite-aversion axis. But although these representations emerge subjectively, it is important to note that both from the sociocultural and neurobiological point of view (via mirror neurons) they can also become social.

This is how the neurobiologically understood intersubjectivity constitutes the scene of a non-sociocultural social cognition, establishing itself as the basis of collective social action since through intersubjectivity collective parameters of meaning can be established, in the manner of shared references and representations necessarily sociocultural. It is these references and representations that make up the atmosphere of shared meaning from which collective social action is organized, although it must not be forgotten that this atmosphere of shared meaning is made

up of meanings and logics of meanings constructed from the intertwining between rationality and emotionality not only on a subjective level, but also on a social and historical level.

As can be seen, intersubjectivity reveals the existence of shared worlds of meaning: from the sociocultural point of view, these worlds of meaning are full of historical references and representations that are assumed as a kind of cultural “a priori”; However, from the phenomenological and neuroscientific point of view, intersubjectivity is constituted from automatic and pre-reflective recognitions of the other, their expressions and actions, in such a way that this allows the construction of pre-reflective inferences rather than logical references. In this sense, neurophenomenologically speaking intersubjectivity becomes a non-cultural and non-historical sphere of sociality and cognition; Hence, it constitutes the base scenario for the configuration of meanings that are produced mainly from the subjective-affective-emotional point of view.

These subjective meanings are the ones that are most likely to be changed or transformed; in the first place due to the cognitive autonomy of the subject that was mentioned previously, and also due to the natural transformations that derive from the processes of construction of intersubjectivity from the neurobiological point of view, which — needless to say— they are intertwined with those that are promoted from intersubjectivity understood as a mechanism to share references and representations that configure shared worlds of life [24].

Thus, in the inevitable interrelation between what we have called neurophenomenological intersubjectivity and sociocultural intersubjectivity, the cognitive instance is configured for the transformation of meanings, which is nothing more than a natural process of updating them. This is what opens the door to the transformation processes of social reality, in the understanding that social reality is a reality in continuous movement, that is, in continuous composition and recomposition of subjective and intersubjective actions and relationships.

Therefore, it is possible to postulate that the subjective and logical-affective nature of meanings participates in the dynamics of constitution of the social and in the intrinsic transformation processes that support these dynamics where subjective meanings (fundamentally emotional and affective nature) are they cognitively imbricate in action at least as much as socioculturally shared intersubjective meanings, the nature of which is essentially logical and historical. In both cases - and this is what is important in this conclusion - the meanings and logics of meaning make up inferences, references and dispositions for action that are

constantly updated, whether they reinforce or transform the subject’s system of cognitions.

From the above it is theoretically inferred 1) that meanings and logics of meanings are never predetermined, even those that are grouped around the somatic markers that Damasio [1] names as dispositional representations (this is due to the plasticity of our brain that allows the transformation of thoughts and the neural pathways that configure them) and 2) that meanings and logics of meaning unfold in the manner of contexts of use and understanding for the subjects [19] with a view to the action in terms of adaptive agency.

That is why social interaction turns out to be anything but a given scenario because no one knows how a particular interaction will take place. It is possible that there are elements that make it possible to foresee some concrete type of interaction, but the unfolding of the subjective will always indicates — at least theoretically — the indeterminacy of the action. This configures the idea of freedom or cognitive autonomy, that is, of freedom or autonomy for the production of meanings through action.

From this perspective, social interaction must be understood as an interaction between subjectivities where the biological / phenomenological plane (which articulates the logical-affective cognitive relationship that is established between the body and the mind), is articulated with the social plane, which is where the interaction occurs between these biological subjectivities that unfold phenomenologically in social experience. And it is that social actors, as individuals - even if they form collectives - go to social interaction with their biology in tow, with their psychology, with their memory and their biographical and social experiences, but also with their motivations and interests, that is, with their wishes and their subjective and group goals, even those unconscious, unclear, sometimes also contradictory.

The human being knows based on his biology, which is where that threshold of cognition that makes up his mental world, his psychology, is materially established; from both lives and signifies the experience of relationship with the other or with the other —which is nothing other than social experience. And since biology and psychology change from individual to individual, and even within the individual himself, it is plausible to think that social interaction cannot be described in one way or once and for all - no matter how predictable it may be. The theoretical impossibility of forecasting is due to the forced and constant presence of cognition processes in our lives, which are processes in which body, brain, emotions and affections are inevitably involved.



That is the reason why intersubjectivity shows its conflictive, potentially contradictory character - in contrast to the widespread idea of intersubjectivity as dialogue or consensus - and this conflictivity is precisely what establishes the margin of autonomy necessary to transcend the existing order and, potentially, transform it. In our view, what has been said here is relevant to understanding the constitution of the social in its own nature "giving itself" since, in order to transcend the existing order, it is necessary to configure that margin of autonomy that enables the production of new meanings. That is the dimension of freedom anchored to need that is potentially configured from action.

## Closing

What has been said here has sought to explore the role of subjective meanings in the constitution of the processes of social transformation in which human beings participate as social beings. This exploration has taken shape from the developments of neurophenomenology, a neurocognitive perspective that is more or less novel in the understanding of the subject for the social sciences.

It is about a perspective of the social subject that in turn impacts on an idea of society that instead of understanding it as a fact, that is, as a crystallization of factors, tries to understand it as a "becoming", as something unfinished, unpublished, indeterminate. Precisely, the gerund nature of this condition implies human will or free will, which is configured, more than as freedom of action, in terms of cognitive autonomy. For this reason, the cognitive subject that is revealed from the neurosciences constitutes the key to understanding not only the functioning of the social in its intrinsic movement, but also the role that meanings have in general, and in particular the subjective ones in the configuration of the action.

Neurosciences, and specifically the two neuroscientific perspectives on which this work has been based (neurophenomenology and peripheral posture), have revealed a subject who knows both rationally and affectively; In fact, as Maturana [5] said, it is about a subject who knows by intertwining emotion and reason: a pre-reflective, unconscious, affective, pre-linguistic and subjective subject, that is, a full-fledged individual, as any of us, capable of transforming his mind and his action, from transforming the meanings that make up his mental world; that cognitive bridge with reality without which its management of life as a living organism is impossible.

Precisely, the construction of a subjective-affective perspective to understand the action and processes of social transformation puts the accent on that mental world of the

individual, thus inviting the social sciences to open the pitch where today both the subject and the individual are mostly encapsulated. their meanings: the socio-cultural symbolic framework is the place where meanings are only collective and swarm shared socio-culturally and historically for use.

The proposal made here around the role of subjective meanings in action and processes of social transformation allows us to cross this line, understanding meanings from a more subjective and biographical threshold, without demeriting the historical-social. However, it is important to point out that the predetermination that underlies the roles and historical-sociocultural cleavages in the explanation of the action of subjects in their relationship with other subjects, with institutions, with the world or with their self, constitutes a ghost that detracts from the autonomy of the subject as a cognitive subject.

Human beings act based on the meanings that we construct and this is based on experience, especially based on the conjunctural, historical and phenomenological way in which we signify that experience. It is a process of cognition-signification that always occurs emotionally, so it is possible to affirm that there is no a priori meaning of experience or of things in the world. There is, yes, a memory that can make one think that the meaning is predictable; But the human being is an autonomous being emotionally and cognitively speaking, and this is what gives rise to think about the possibility of transforming meanings even from / on the same experience.

For this reason, cognition is precisely the category that allows theoretically enabling the space of the potentially constant transformation of meanings, which affects the possibility of potentially transforming action as well. Along with the transformation of the action, it is possible to think that the social reality that is built through it is transformed. This constantly moving social reality is constantly being composed and recomposed precisely thanks to the process of updating / transformation of meanings; and this in turn is what is expressed through the intrinsic tension of all human behavior: the tension that is invoiced between necessity and freedom of action and meaning.

The social sciences thus find in the affective-emotional nature of human cognition a valuable way to think about the unforeseen and conjunctural character of the action, as well as about the way in which said character impacts on the constitution of social reality as a dynamic and dynamic reality, historically possible. It is about a clear return to the human subject from the recovery of his mental world in its logical-affective interrelation, since this interrelation is precisely what allows us to think about the contradiction, which is ultimately the matter from which the transformation.

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