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# Social and individual subjectivity from an historical cultural standpoint

## Summary

This paper discusses theoretical issues concerning the topic of subjectivity as it has been recently developed within a cultural – historical framework. This provides a new theoretical and epistemological basis to this issue that does not lead to the misinterpretations of subjectivity found in the modern philosophical approaches to theorizing consciousness. This paper builds on interpretations related to Vygotsky's theory of consciousness that do not follow the current dominant interpretations in Western Psychology. The analyses take departure in the concept of 'sense' introduced by Vygotsky at the end of his work and proceeds to propose the concept of subjective sense as the corner stone for the study of subjectivity. The concept of subjective configuration is discussed and finally, the concept of social subjectivity is introduced understood as those symbolic processes and subjective senses that characterize social scenarios and institutions.

## Introduction

Viewed from an historical approach, the concept of subjectivity differs radically from some modern trends associated with subjectivity within modern philosophy of "the subject" (Descartes, 2004; Kant, 2002, & Husserl, 1984). Subjectivity, like all other terms in science, cannot be reduced to one particular definition, but rather should be considered as a new field in relation to a new ontological definition of human phenomena.

In spite of the fact that modern social science tries, in one way or another, to understand the particularities of the human psyche alone (Elias, 1994; Merleau-Ponty, 1991; Adorno, 2001; Touraine, 1999), they continue to depend somewhat on using terms which were special for psychology. It can be said that psychology is an important reference for practically all of the social sciences. Modern psychology has organized itself within many different institutional domains, closely associating its different representations of the psyche to the practices dominant in those fields.

This essay argues that subjectivity cannot be conceptualized as a fragmented taxonomy of categories embodied in individuals, but rather in terms of the production of subjective senses conceived as dynamic configurations within the social context in which the subject's action is developed. Subjectivity, from this theoretical approach, is a truly complex psychic system, within which different psychological functions and processes express themselves by carrying a subjective sense or appearing as a subjective sense. This definition leads to a new representation of the psyche, implying a new understanding of processes and structures that traditionally have been analyzed without being related to comprehension of the psyche as a whole.

The category of sense has practically been ignored by most of Vygotsky's followers in the Soviet Union and elsewhere and has therefore been left unfinished in his work. Unfortunately, the dominant translation of Vygotsky in Western countries and the consequences of the fall of the Soviet Union for psychology have not given room for a reinterpretation of Vygotsky's work along with the consequences this can give for new developments in current psychology. Starting with Vygotsky's category of sense, I will in this paper go beyond this limitation by introducing the category of subjective sense as a corner stone for a new definition of subjectivity. The development of this concept and its differences to Vygotsky's concept of sense are developed throughout the paper.

## Cultural Historical Approach to subjectivity: its importance to the current moment of psychology

Empiricism was prevalent in the approach to understand the human mind, considering the psyche as a blend of standardized traits. This definition of the psyche was very useful in order to define "mental pathologies", intelligence, skills and other patterns of behavior that legitimate dominant institutional orders (Vygotsky, 1989; González Rey, 1985; Danziger, 1990).

The predominant model of science in American psychology, at the beginning of Twenty century, was naturalistic and experimental; its attributes were intrinsically associated with positivism (Koch, 1961; Danziger, 1990; Farr, 1996). However, it is interesting that some of the more belligerent critics of subjectivity at this time, like Rorty (1997), recognized themselves as followers of American pragmatism, which has been broadly recognized as another way to consider psychic phenomenon. Para-

doxically, however, Dewey (1986) was one of the philosophers that more clearly perceived a differentiating human capacity given by the subjectivation of experience. On this respect Dewey (1986) wrote:

We have said that human experience became human because of the existence of associations and memories which are filtered through the network of imagination in a way that could answer to the exigencies of emotions "...". The things on which imagination put more emphasis when it remodels the experience are those things which never existed in reality (pp. 125 – 126) (Translated by the author)

In spite of Dewey's rejection of some reason or principle situated beyond current human practice, he clearly perceives a human condition which differentiates human experiences from other kinds of experiences: the distorted character of human psychic processes in reality. This distortion has the purpose of maintaining emotional expectancies, which are a condition of human development. Recognition of this fact is very important in order to legitimate subjectivity in its ontological character, as a differentiating qualitative level of the human psyche.

Psychoanalysis emerged as a new way of understanding the psyche, different to its empiricist version yet it did not escape an intrapsychical and biased representation of the psyche, and people continued to remain prisoners of their repressed desires, which were believed to have a universal origin. In subjectivity, nothing new is configured as a result of a direct objective influence. The subject is forever constituted on the basis of foundational trends, inherent to them and universally oriented to predefined behaviors. Nevertheless, we must not evaluate psychoanalysis by its concrete categories, which were created for "giving life", in terms of knowledge to Freud's more general representation related to human nature. One of the most important Freudian

contributions relates to his more general representation of the psyche, which, through the concept of transference, introduced a subjective process to explain the significance of others for the individual's psychical organization. This concept was precisely that which made the difference in relation to the objective comprehension of external influences as the "cause" of personal behavior.

In spite of the fact that subjective phenomena have been introduced by psychoanalysis as a new kind of psychic processes, subjectivity has not been defined as a new ontological phenomenon, meaning that subjective expressions remain associated to the objective physiological and dynamic foundation of the organism. Libido as a kind of energy gave directions of the psychical processes. Reifying a universal unconscious as its subject, Freudian psychoanalysis has not been able to contribute to a reflection about the topic of subjectivity in terms of a new quality of the psyche related to cultural conditions. Later on and even up to now, some psychoanalysts have been considering the facts of culture within a process that could be studied with regards to its consequences for the theorization of subjectivity.

The term subjectivity was an attempt to distinguish something that was different but related to the human psyche but this was never conceived by modern psychology because of its radical division between the psyche and culture. The conditions to overcome reductionism in the comprehension of the human psyche were only created after understanding the mind as a cultural, configured phenomenon. With the emergence of Soviet Psychology, particularly through the work of Vygotsky and Rubinstein, a new representation of the human psyche was introduced on the basis that it would be possible to redefine the topic of subjectivity in psychology. Subjectivity, as conceptualized in this work, defines a new qualitative level of the human psyche that results from the cultural

condition of human life. Like subjectivity, the psyche should be seen as a system of subjective senses, which are configured in human life, but are qualitatively different from the systems involved in its genesis.

From an epistemological point of view, subjectivity is not claimed to be a complete representation of the complex psychic reality of the human being but only aspires to produce intelligibility of this reality. One of the criticisms that have frequently been addressed related to this term (Anderson, 1999; Gergen, 2005) is that subjectivity is conceived as being a substance that can be grasped through the use of concrete methods. Subjectivity cannot be seen as a substance, but should be seen as a certain specific human productions that are impossible to reduce to behavior, symbolic or cognitive processes or any other given category (González Rey, 1997, 1999, 2004). Psychology has been so fragmented that it does not possess a clear notion of who the person is or how people maintain some specific quality in the different domains of their activities. Therefore, many different subjects in psychology have proliferated without any clear link between them.

### Why assume a term that implements the remains of modern thinking?

Categories are not universal entities; they represent the attempt to define something. Their histories are linked to a zone of meanings, with representations that are advanced within the history of knowledge. The Freudian representation of the unconsciousness is not more pertinent than current representations of human psychical processes, and therefore the unconscious should not be eliminated as a category. Categories are particular moments of the production of meanings in the process of knowledge development, within a delimited

“zone of senses” of the knowledge production (Gonzalez Rey, 1997)<sup>1</sup>.

Subjectivity is an attractive concept that challenges dominant rationalism that is oriented to define the human psyche in logical, objective, cognitive and instrumental terms. I will argue that subjectivity responds to a generative character of the human psyche, to the production of something new and it is impossible to define it as a direct result of an external influence or internal universal drive. Subjectivity, as I consider this term is based on the subjective sense and cannot be reduced to a standardized view: A strong trend of psychology is broken down when the classification of normal and pathological patterns is replaced by the comprehension of differentiating subjective configurations of phenomena with appear in very similar behavioral or symptomatic expressions. Alternatively particular configurations of the subjective senses resulting from different people’s experiences can be identified throughout their lives, including their subjective character, historical background and the current contextual dynamics of their life. Relationships, activities, memories and fantasies integrate themselves into a complex network as a result of the process of the subjectivation of experience. This network is shaped into a unique and singular blend of the subjective senses within a specific subjective configuration. For this reason, subjectivity appears to be a system in which experience is organized according to the subjective requirements of the subjective system; it is not just a copy of reality.

## What is represented in the understanding of the psyche as a cultural expression?

The comprehension of the psyche as a cultural production is not reduced to an isomorphic representation of the cultural phenomena. The psyche becomes a symbolic production within cultural scenarios, yet it is not reduced to a symbolic phenomenon. In this sense, the contributions of Vygotsky and Rubinstein were significant, even though their contributions were engulfed by the dominant referents of psychology, either from the Soviet Union or from Western psychologies.

Vygotsky’s use of the term “sense” has been profoundly misunderstood in psychology. This is unfortunate because the notion of sense could be an important starting point in developing the topic of subjectivity from a historical – cultural perspective. From the very beginning of his work and throughout his early work, Vygotsky focused on a broad representation of the human psyche that led him to a new definition of it. For this purpose Vygotsky used categories such as personality and motivation, trying to “grasp” the person as a whole, as well as the unity between cognitive and affective processes. This was evident in his book “Psychology of Art” and in his first works regarding defectology.

In “Psychology of Art”, Vygotsky (1965) understood psychology not only as result of culture, but also as a condition for culture, stating:

No one was as clear as Plejanov in relation to the need for theoretical and methodological psychological research for the Marxist theory of art”. According to him “all ideologies have a general root: the psychology of the current epoch...In this way, the psyche of a social person is considered to be a general background for all ideologies of current epoch, art being one of them. However, art is also recognized to be in a great part defined and condi-

1 A zone of senses represents the constructions of the processes of intelligibility of the phenomena being studied by science. They never represent a final version; they are always within a process of change. Therefore, categories are always relative; they remain in the constant moment within different “zones of senses”.

tioned by the psyche of the social person. (p. 17).  
(Translated by the author)

Both of the aforementioned quotations recognize the importance of psychology and the psyche, respectively, in order to understand art as a complex social phenomenon that cannot be understood without comprehension of the human psyche. Vygotsky's emphasis on the significance of psychology for the Marxist Theory of Art was very relevant for the time and even today will be used as an argument against determinism.

Contrary to any kind of determinism, Vygotsky (1985), referring to Historical Materialism as the sociology of Marxism, wrote in "Psychology of Art": "Yet in a certain way it cannot ignore the psyche or the importance of its study, as a mediator, through which economical relations and socio-political structure create one or another ideology" (p. 18). (Translated by the authors)

Vygotsky rejected any kind of socio-economical determinism, not only regarding the psyche but also in the same production of ideology and alternatively, attributed an important role to the psyche. The psyche began to be considered as something qualitatively different from its social and economical sources. The lack of identification between the psyche and the different phenomena involved in its genesis and development, that was common to Vygotsky and Rubinstein, was the first step in the recognition of a new ontological comprehension of the human psyche.

Within Vygotsky's work the contradiction between two different approaches in relation to the psyche was evident: its reflective character and its generative character. As a result of Lenin's well known position regarding the psyche as reflection, reflection became an important principle of Soviet Psychology. Within Lenin's understanding, reflection was understood as a copy of reality completely ignoring the generative capacity of the psyche.

The tension between the generative and the reflective character of the psyche can be seen in Vygotsky's work.

## Different moments in Vygotsky's representation of the psyche

After Vygotsky's first productive moment as outlined above, it is possible to identify two other different moments within his work. The second moment was centered in the process of mediation and it has been recognized as the semiotic moment in his work. It relates to his concepts of internalization, signs and tools. During this period his main attention was directed towards how the external became internal and not the idea of the comprehension of the mind as a complex and dynamic system of cognitive and affective units. The concepts of this period overlapped with what I consider to be his principal contribution: the creation of the basis for a new comprehension of the psyche as a complex system configured by qualitatively different kinds of processes: senses. This period depicts the more accepted and well-known part of Vygotsky's production for Western countries.

In the third and last period of his work, Vygotsky returns to his primary concern regarding the integration between cognitive and affective processes. During this time, Vygotsky approached this topic through one concept that, in a short period of time had a different meaning in his work: the concept of sense. At first, he understood sense as the internal, semantic instance of language, but, as can be seen in the next sequence of quotations, the concept took another meaning. Sense was understood as a new unity of psychic life where cognition and affect were configured into a new ontological representation of the psyche. In the first moment of Vygotsky's (1987) approach to sense he wrote:

...the word's sense is complex, fluid, and constantly changing. To some extent, it is unique for each consciousness and for a single consciousness in varied circumstances. In this respect, the word's sense is inexhaustible. The word acquires its sense in the phrase. The phrase itself, however, acquires its sense only in the context of the paragraph, the paragraph only in the context of the book, and the book only in the context of the author's collected works. Ultimately, the word's real sense is determined by everything in consciousness, which is related to what the word expresses"..... We never know the complete sense of anything, including that of the given word. The word is an inexhaustible source of new problems. Its sense is never complete. Ultimately, the sense of a word depends on one's understanding of it as a whole and one's internal personality structure. (p. 276).

In this quotation one can perceive the tension between the more semantic definition of sense, associated to the word and the different levels of intellectual production in writing, and to the consideration of sense as a psychological production which compromises the individual as a whole. This was clearly defined in Vygotsky's relationship between sense and personality. Vygotsky kept the definition of sense, as Paulhan did, inseparably associated to a word, though he did begin to associate sense with the psyche and consciousness as a whole in his later work (Vygotsky, 1984). Vygotsky's concern for the internal structure of the psyche is also visible and evident in the way in which he used the concept of personality.

The point is that a cultural-historical approach needs to represent the psyche within the tension of its process and organizational condition. The tension mentioned above between the semantic consideration of sense as an attribute of the word, and sense as a psychological definition, was radically subverted in one of Vygotsky's (1984) later works, "On questions of the psychology of the creative artist". Here we encounter the following thought:

In the process of societal life.... emotions come into new relationships along with the other elements of the psychical life, new systems appear, a new blending of psychical functions, units of a higher order emerge, governed by special laws, mutual dependencies, and special forms of connection and motion. (p. 328). (Translated by the author)

A. A. Leontiev accurately summarized this quotation by Vygotsky: "Just such a blending is the unity of 'intellect and affect'. It forms a dynamic system of senses!" (1992, p. 42).

We owe one of the most important pieces of work within Russian psychology to A. A. Leontiev who oriented his work towards the recuperation of Vygotsky's legacy in relation to topics, which practically remained hidden in Western, and Russian interpretations of Vygotsky's work. This concept of a dynamic system of senses, briefly introduced by Vygotsky in "Thinking and Speech" created a new way to represent psychical units, understanding them as a kind of structure, which is constantly being developed. This is an important concept in order to approach the matter of subjectivity from a new theoretical perspective as a complex system within which complex subjective configurations organize themselves within a subjective system. Referring to the idea of the system of sense Vygotsky (1982) pointed out that:

Generally speaking, the problem is not the unity of affect and intellect, as such, but the realization of this unity in the form of a 'dynamic system of senses', which embraces the 'dynamic of thoughts' (intellect) as well as the 'dynamic of behavior and the concrete activity of personality'. (p. 22). (Translated by the author)

It is clear that the "system of senses" discussed by Vygotsky is important in order to get a more complete and dynamic ontological representation of the psyche. Vygotsky approached the psyche as a new and complex system, which is different from other domains of human knowledge. This aspect of Vygotsky's think-

ing remains much unexplored in the current interpretations of his work.

- The concept of sense allows Vygotsky to concretize the quotation taken from “Psychology of Art” mentioned above, in which he affirmed that the psyche could not be reduced to its social and economical sources. The concept of sense allows him to overcome the dichotomy between the social and the individual elements of facts. The social becomes subjective not because of internalization, but by sense production related to living experience.
- Sense was the best way to express the unity between cognitive and affective processes. Sense opened a different path for a new definition of the psyche that Vygotsky could not develop in depth. The consequences of that category are so complex that the term has been profoundly misunderstood, both in Soviet Psychology and in Western interpretations of Vygotsky’s work, leading to a simplification in the interpretation of Vygotsky’s work. This trend can be observed as an attempt to present Vygotsky’s ideas as completely congruent with approaches that are actually different to his (Shotter, 1993; Prawat, 1999). Sense and dynamic systems are two interrelated categories. Through them it is possible to rethink the topic of subjectivity from a completely different perspective as argued in the following section.

## A new representation of subjectivity taken from the cultural-historical standpoint

In my work I focus on the consequences of sense for the development of the topic of subjectivity from a cultural-historical approach. The legacy of Vygotsky cannot be reduced to the subject of semiotic mediation. To develop a new representation of subjectivity, I have

argued that sense should be seen as subjective sense (González Rey, 1999, 2002), which I consider to be the inseparable unity between symbolic processes and emotions. It is singularly produced by each person within his or her symbolic space and defined into a certain cultural order. Subjective senses represent a unit within which emotions and symbolic processes evoke one another in a recursive relationship in which, none of them becomes the cause of another, creating a true blend of subjective senses. In this process no one part becomes the cause of another. It leads to an intricate network of processes that occur simultaneously, each involving the others within the subject’s current actions. In this process, previous subjective configurations play an active part, defining subjective senses, which are part of any new subjective subject’s production. From this process a new network of senses results, which can be reconfigured in the course of the subject’s action. Therefore, for example, an emotion expressed by a boy in relation to his sister, could express his jealousy regarding his perception of differentiating treatment given to his sister and him by his parents. The boy’s perception related to his parents, may also configure itself from the emotions and symbolic processes resulting from his position in relation to his sister within the school group. For example, sometimes he feels that his sister is more socially recognized than he is, leading to a jealous reaction integrating itself into the subjective sense on the basis of his perception of his parents. Each process involves the others, unfolding into new processes and configuring a true chain that make up the subjective substrata bases of the simple jealous reaction observed in the boy.

The subjective sense is not confined to being intrapsychical. It always exists in the continuous tension between already organized subjective configurations, which are always under pressure from social subjectivity, and the subject’s action. Social subjectivity (González

Rey, 1991) is understood as the subjective sense and symbolic production that articulate the different social spaces in their subjective dimension, configuring a new systemic condition of social organization within which all human practices are organized. Different social spaces are interrelated between themselves through social subjectivity that is generated as a result of the confluence and contradictions that characterize the different processes of subjectivation resulting from the different concrete conditions of social experience, as well as by the institutional symbolic requirements and symbolic orders which define the individual alternatives in each social system within each culture. Therefore, it is impossible to fragment social spaces into a **single** unit of analysis as was attempted by the family systemic approach of the early cybernetic references (Jackson, 1957; Weakland, Fisch, Watzlawick, & Bodin, 1974; Selvini, Palazzoli, Boscolo, Cecchin & Prata, 1978).

Subjective senses are organized into subjective configurations that represent systems that mediate living experience through emotions and symbolic processes that emerge at the moment in which the experience occurs. These emotions and symbolic processes resulted from already constituted subjective senses that could adopt many different ways of expression within the process of ongoing experience. When interpreted, as psychology has frequently done, this construction represents a subversion of the “objective order”, as a one-sided influence from external to internal. The living experience subjectively integrates the way in which the whole system of individual subjectivity reconfigured itself when faced with this experience. Subjective senses appear to be non-logical, non-reproductive expressions of a sequence of objective events. They are arbitrary focuses of subjectivation that emerge as moments of a living experience. They do not follow any logical organization of concrete events.

Every human activity evokes subjective senses, not as a consequence of its specific characteristics, but rather as an expression of the complex network of multiple senses that appear in the context of the activity as a result of the complex organization of individual subjective configurations – social subjective processes (social representations, discourse, and dominant social expectancies amongst others) – contextual psychical processes embodied in the same actions. As a result of this dynamic, chaotic and contradictory process new senses will emerge in the ongoing activity. This comprehension of the subjective sense leads to a different representation of the psyche, emphasizing its singularity. The psyche can no longer be understood through a fragmented taxonomy of categories embodied in individuals. The production of subjective senses always involves dynamic configurations within the social contexts in which the subjective action is developed.

Subjective senses can be understood as units of a new system: subjectivity. This approach to subjectivity lets it be understood as a dynamic and recursive system that is constantly involved in the tension between the social and the individual configurations, in which one of them is an inseparable part of the other, within a process that permanently configures and reconfigures itself. They are part of an activity and they represent a new qualitative side of a human activity. The subjective sense allows one to study a human activity in its inseparable symbolic-emotional unity. This category moves away from the classical terms of motivations, attitudes and so on, oriented to explain the subject’s concrete involvement in particular actions.

Subjective senses integrate themselves into a strong system of configurations that are interrelated in every human expression. Hence, these senses alone constitute a new dimension of psychic phenomena. From this point of view, learning, moral values, health behaviors,



political positions, or any other human expression or action result from complex subjective sense configurations within which one particular subjective sense can transcend into new configurations in any human action. The subjective character of a human expression may organize itself through different configurations in different moments of the person's life.

Subjective senses result from different social, cultural, economical and other activities and affective relationships, but they are not a sum of, an internalization of, or a reflex of living experience: they are developed from experience and are configured into a new phenomenon, made up of moments, fragments and consequences of those activities and relationships that were particular sensitive at the moment of action and became prevalent in the subject's subjective configuration. Once the new experiences become subjective ones, they can be integrated into a new subjective production that can transform the subjective configuration within which they acquire sense in a first moment. Accordingly, subjective senses are always singular and they never result from the direct impact of external influences; but rather, they are truly new psychic productions, which occur on the basis of the chaotic emergence of senses, resulting from the "collision" between the subjective, associated with dominant subjective configurations, and the subjective senses that appear during the action. Subjective senses are very dynamic and singular; it is impossible to standardize them.

Subjective configurations not only involve the emotions and symbolic processes directly involved in one relationship or activity, but all of the consequences, feelings, images and contradictions that directly or indirectly affect us as a result of one particular relationship or activity. For instance, the subjective configuration of a person's father synthesizes many different subjective senses that have appeared throughout life and results not only from the direct relationship, but also as a product of

many consequences of the father's actions, expressions and behaviors, that indirectly impacted the person. There is also another important source of subjective sense in relation to subjective configurations: the social representations and discourses from which the social evaluation of people is produced.

For example in relation to one's father: the son is part of an event where the father reacted aggressively in a confrontation with other person. The son does not understand very well what has happened, but he experiences anger, fear, insecurity and terror during this experience, even though the aggression was not related to him. After the incident, different images and expectations appear related to that living experience. A focus subjectively appears where these emotions unfold into new emotions evoking many different symbolic expressions that in turn unfold in many different ways and lead to the development of other new emotions in an infinite subjective sequence. Under this particular sensitive psychological state, the father discharges a tensional state, punishing his son for "bad behavior", however, in this process the son feels the same emotions as he experienced before because of his father's expression. These events, these emotions and their symbolic consequences are directly or indirectly configured as a moment of subjective sense in relation to his father. These processes and situations characterize the way in which events, which do not have any inherent psychological meaning, can turn into subjective sense. In the example above, the emergence of a new subjective sense in relation to his father, integrates the son's experiences in a certain way such that if prior events had not had happened the current experience would have adopted a different subjective sense. Thus, a common argument between one's mother and father may be perceived as an act of aggression, leading to the son's rejection of his father.

However, subjectivity is so complex, that

the same subjective configuration over time can result in the development of completely different emotions within a different subjective sense, such as when the son is interacting with others and his father appears. In this circumstance, emotions such as pride, security and support appear and would influence the son in a completely different way. All of these complex sequences of emotions and symbolic processes occur in the subjective configurations of his father, within which somewhat contradictory psychic states may coexist. The subjective sense is not something static that automatically appears when faced with certain external or internal conditions. From the description of his father's configuration many different subjective senses may emerge, sometimes contradictory to one another. Subjective senses may also appear that can integrate at the moment when a new configuration surfaces as a result of a new context.

Subjective configurations should be understood as developing systems that have a decisive participation in how a new experience acquires its subjective sense. Subjective senses are never neither an isomorphic expression nor an internalization of a living experience. They are a subjective production in the ongoing subjective configuration of each concrete subject. This complex organization of subjective senses and symbolic processes is not constrained to individuals, as expressed before, but also characterizes social life, whose subjective dimensions appear in what I have defined as social subjectivity.

### The consequences of this definition of subjectivity for the cultural historical framework

1. The notion of subjectivity allows one of the most important contributions of the cultural-historical theory to be rethought

in psychology. It refers to the attempt to develop a systemic comprehension of the psyche, which Vygotsky characterized by the use of units of analysis, among which sense was among the last notions he worked out and possibly the least understood by interpreters of his work. It decisively contributes to the overcoming of several dichotomies which have been present in social science and, in particular, psychology, such as cognitive – affective, conscious – unconscious, social – individual;

2. The introduction of the notion of subjectivity in the current discussion about the legacy of Vygotsky's work contributes to overcome the unilateral interpretation of center in semiotic mediation only, which was one of his many important contributions. The topic of subjectivity rescues interest in Vygotsky in the development of a new ontological definition for the study of the psyche;
3. The notion of subjectivity differs from the strong normative trend of all "psychic" knowledge. Singularity emerges in all of its epistemological, methodological and theoretical relevance. The topic of subjectivity is impossible to be studied through the standardized and universal techniques, contributing in this sense to a breakdown of the "instrumentalism" of the dominant in psychology;
4. This ontological definition of subjectivity viewed epistemologically leads from a cultural- historical standpoint to a constructive, interpretative position regarding the requirements to study subjectivity. This position is different from representational epistemologies, and at the same time is different from the completely relativistic approach according to which there is nothing to be known;
5. The definition of subjective senses realizes a new perspective in the study of

phenomena that is not currently present within the cultural historical approach, such as subjective configurations of chronic diseases, a new approach to psychotherapy, and so forth. Simultaneously, it approaches the study of old research topics like personality and learning, but from a different perspective;

6. This approach to the topic of subjectivity required a new methodological approach to its study. Subjective configurations could not be grasped from the application of any concrete instrument. This new approach should combine a dialectical character with a constructive – interpretative one, oriented to the formulation of the hypothetical models able to advances through its confrontations with a new systems of information resulted from the field work (González Rey 2002, 2005);
7. Finally I would like to emphasize the significance of this position in order to develop one part of Vygotsky's legacy, which has remained completely misunderstood for a long time within Soviet Psychology as well as in Western psychologies. This should have an historical impact on dominant interpretations of Soviet Psychology and contemporary psychology.

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