

The hermeneutic of signs. Studies in semiotic and hermeneutic

La hermenéutica de los signos. Estudios en semiótica y hermenéutica

COLCIENCIAS TIPO 2. ARTÍCULO DE REFLEXIÓN

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Abstract

The work of hermeneutic surges forward beyond the meaning of signs because it is not simple projection of representation. This is evidenced by the fact that what goes for interpretation goes for hermeneutic. In other words, the problem of a technique of interpretation has more particular understanding with the question asked by any act of interpreting. I propose with this essay to explore a common conception concerned and determined by the relationship between signs and social situations that includes both signifier and signified as a common denominator to link the study of communication.

Keywords

Hermeneutic; sign; meaning; communication; visual image; language.

Resumen

El trabajo de la hermenéutica va más allá del significado de los signos, puesto que este no es una simple proyección de la representación. Esto se evidencia en el hecho de que lo que vale para la interpretación vale también para la hermenéutica. En otras palabras, el problema de la técnica de la interpretación tiene una comprensión particular cuando se hace una pregunta sobre cualquier acto de interpretación. En este ensayo se propone explorar la concepción determinada por la relación entre signos y situaciones sociales, en las cuales se incluye, tanto el significante como el significado con un denominador común que está vinculado al estudio de la comunicación.

Palabras Clave

Hermenéutica; signo; significado; comunicación; imagen visual; lenguaje.

The everyday life is built around living signs. These signs generate the meaning of living.

I. WHAT A SIGN IS

A human being is a symbolic animal (E. Cassirer, 1962).

The world of everyday life¹ is communicated by signs, symbols and language, since the act of being is a thing of acts. But the act of being we usually describe in facts.

This distinction of acts cannot be ignored. Why? Because the thinking of sign is in the representation of acts. Properly speaking, in the simple projection of its representation it is the necessary condition for the facts and the experience of the everyday life.

We suppose first, then, that the reason is that this sign and all the things are made by experience of signs. Of course, in social context in which people act from the individual to collective interaction, there is simultaneously communication by circularity of signs.

As can be seen, the problematicity of sign and its need of questioning requires a condition of interpretation to understand how the communication is possible by facts.

And second, one way of explaining the imminent complexity of signs is by the proceeding of hermeneutic. For this reason it is a phase of the appropriation of meaning. Why? Because with hermeneutic we can rationalize and clarify any interpretation, and any interpretation depends on hermeneutic.

From this perspective Aristotle (Ross, 1938, p.81) suggests that *this, again, must necessarily have one primary source.*

This is hermeneutic².

My response is that the work of hermeneutic surges forward beyond the meaning of signs because it is not simple projection of representation. This is evidenced by the fact that what goes for interpretation goes for hermeneutic. We can now complete this description telling that hermeneutic involves a wide spectrum for the interpretation of dreams, technology, mass media, language, signs, and so on. This description also explains why hermeneutic tends to be even more specific and less

discursive than communication.

In other words, the problem of a technique of interpretation has more particular understanding with the question asked by any act of interpreting.

Clearly, then, I propose with this essay to explore a common conception concerned and determined by the relationship between signs and social situations that includes both signifier and signified as a common denominator to link the study of communication.

From these considerations the principal motive which animates this exploration is the desire to contest the various hermeneutic perspectives of signs into communication. That is why my purpose here is to display signs and how they may be related to that in language is given. For the same reason, if the communication forms are changing, hermeneutic is more accessible than the messages they are about.

To go from here to develop a substantive communicative theory we must provide the factual relation among:

1. the experience of signs
2. a specific theory of signs
3. a general theory of how these signs function
4. all we have access to any language in many communicative ways

Sign is infinitude of the expression/communication in general. Such distinction is based in progressive interactions and acts. It is firstness and foremost. *Principium it is a thing first by its own thinking.* It is sign first by its own.

To say this is to affirm also that everything, which is, the possible object of a sign is already expressed in its own reference. Obviously, *a sign is a material object or placed event* (Schutz, 1981, p.81). This object designates one sign in a direct way by designating one thing indirectly (cf. Infra).

Consequently, with sign we can consider hermeneutic connections in a multiple meaning and in its organization and communicative development, because for Saussure, a system of signs are in double relation: *in a syntactic relation, which links opposing signs in a relation 'in praesentia', and in an associative relation, which compares signs which are similar and thus have the capacity to be substituted for one another, but compares them only in a relation 'in absentia'* (Ricoeur, 1974, p.70). So far, in considering in *praesentia* -A- and in *absentia* -B-, both signifier and signified have similar interaction.

¹ Life-world; also: World of everyday life. The total sphere of experiences of an individual which is circumscribed by the objects, persons, and events encountered in the pursuit of the pragmatic objectives of living. It is a "world" in which a person is "wide-awake", and which asserts itself as the "paramount reality" of his life (Schutz, 1970).

² Hermeneutic: The very work of interpretation implies an entire theory of signs and significations. It involves the general problem of comprehension. This connection between interpretation and comprehension, the former taken in the sense of textual exegesis and the later in the broad sense of the clear understanding of signs, is manifested in one of the traditional sense of the word hermeneutics (Ricoeur, 1974).

What is perceptible in this interaction is that, *if A appears, then usually B has appeared previously, or B will appear in the future. We come to understand this series of events in a typification of a plausible relationship between A and B* (Schutz, 1981, p.78).

The interest in considering the human communication is this: the human communication is an ontologic and epistemologic process, which is perhaps equivalent in meaning to a statement about a complete evidential base of signs and interpretations. That is, such signs may create a theory of the effects of communication in ways that were or are beyond the social behaviors. *And this is confirmed by the facts; for it was when almost all the necessities of life and the things that make for comfort and recreation were present, that such knowledge began to be sought* (Ross, 1938, p.43).

In fact, the communication is not only tied to signs in human communication. The notion of sign can be extended and used for all communication systems, including animal communication. To develop the analysis further let's try to tell *that an animal can have thoughts without having words or any other linguistic device* (Searle, 1995, p.61). In this sense we need to distinguish and understand such reasons.

Although some animals have in addition to these the power of locomotion, and have also the power of thinking and reason (Ross, 1938, 206), *communication gives people* at all stages of significance a better sense of what it determines. Almost never, however, this type of analysis in animal fields has been studied and explained.

This aporia is essential to propose that the relation of human communication to animal communication is only the sign of the *animist myth* of a situation on the conception of meaning, which is a necessary condition of the signified question.

Another observation that can be made language is: *the statement that human language is complete once again serves to distinguish it from the animal activity. In the communication of bees, for instance, subjects of systematic discourse are severely limited. Bees cannot; apparently, make an utterance equivalent to The beekeeper is coming* (Campbell & Hepler, 1970, p.251).

As we have said already, we can distinguish the language of a human or an animal.

II. THE EXPERIENCE OF SIGNS

Communication can only receive stimuli transmitted by

signs and associate them to one other. These signs permit the growth of communication.

The concept of sign is a phenomenon that defines any indication in favor of concatenation of the communication system.

Such evidence can be demonstrated in the development of signs, functions into dialectic acts. Thus, *after all, if language is merely a vehicle, only contingently related to the thought it expresses* (Avramides, 1989, p.113), then the signs can be thoughts.

What is interesting is the way in which we can see that this analysis of meaning involves an investigation of our relation between language and signs related to communication. Even, *using a camera or microphone to record events is also quite different from using a pen and paper* (Meyrowitz, 1985, p.81), but in these acts we need the complexity of signs.

These are indications that *communication requires material communicative signs* (Kelly, 1981, p.58).

The conditions on sign rules and its relationships can be determined in the context itself. In this respect, *the context thus plays the role of filter* (Ricoeur, 1974, p.71). We can then say that the context has the characterization in some specific field.

I agree that the context characterizes and manifests the totality of acts.

The meaning of sign result from the context has been understood and known.

Let us take a closer look. When a sign has been interpreted, it can name the object. This way, subjects can name the sign. This sense of sign requires that interpretation appears itself as a mode of language.

III. WE SHALL RETURN TO WIDE CRITERIA OF EXEGESIS IN THE NEXT CHAPTER.

This interpretation, however, is not limited on the side of its object, man, which its tries to grasp as a totality. It is limited only by its point of view; and it is this point of view which we must understand and locate (Ricoeur, 1974, p.122).

It must also be assumed that understanding that sign is one (firstness), explains that its connotation as a meaning may be given to different objects.

The emergence of sign under the supremacy of

firstness reveals the emergence of the name, designating the place and role of meaning of the *subjectum* in communication.

There is a reason to assume that *meaning is very interior to a person* (Kelly, 1981, p.57), and it is for a similar reason that, in common thought, we may represent to our common communication.

But the interpretation of signs is common to all contexts. It is a question of the science called semiotic³ as a part of understanding the signs. In this way, the situations suggest how our actions are shaped by signs. Most of the signs we use to define communication are relative to a social context or a situation.

We consider, therefore, that sign is the measure of the thing, which is.

IV. HERMENEUTIC: INTERPRETING THE SIGNS

Our societies are so vulnerable to immanent signs.

If exegesis raised a hermeneutic problem, that is, a problem of interpretation. In this sense hermeneutic is a philosophical discipline (P. Ricoeur, 1974).

As we see in this analysis of hermeneutical functions, it is important to emphasize that persistent hermeneutical problems, like the problem of sign, have philosophical meaning. But historically it emerges in Genesis by having its appearance in the representation of the sacred texts. Perhaps we can go beyond this problem of the representation, because *today this problem is no longer simply the problem of exegesis in the biblical or even in the secular sense of the word* (Ricoeur, 1974, p.64). This way, hermeneutics first emerges as a technical discipline in Europe in the age of the collapse of traditional Christian unity... (Vattimo, 1988, p.159).

When it is considered in this perspective, then it will be possible to interpret in terms of the social phenomenon that is manifested by the signs.

Such, is to me, the exegesis of representation that may be meant by interpreting hermeneutic of signs and turning to an analysis of the human relations whose point of departure is in the collective ways of communication.

Human beings have a variety of interconnected ways of having access to and representing features of the world to themselves. These

include perception, thought, language, beliefs and desires as well as pictures, maps, diagrams, etc. Just to have a general term I will call these collectively 'representations' (Searle, 1995, p.150). But these representations transfer to higher levels of symbols.

When we communicate we have to include signs to be essentially connected with the representation that manifests it.

When we make sense of a text, picture, person, or event, we need to construct an interpretation that fits with the available information better than alternative interpretations (Thagard, 2000, p.16)

To see why it is reasonable to consider this way to construct an interpretation, let us review this proposition. The relationship of sign to word and to the context of communication of a particular language places the hermeneutic in the manifestation of sign.

In terms of meaning, signs require social relation to a particular discourse in relation to a general hermeneutic comprehension. It offers a general range of comprehension to a particular thought. We see, then, *that hermeneutics may significantly contribute to thinking through this problem from beyond the limits of a notion* (Vattimo, 1988, p.137) of context as a pure play of signs.

With is necessary to say is *it also implies that a communicator and interpreter employ empirically identical schemes of interpretation, schemes that are sufficiently alike to make interlocking possible. However, the communicator must make manifest the most apt signs he or she can conceive of for this particular interpreter* (Kelly, 1981, p.59-60).

It should be clear by now that signs (*sêmeion*) appear to us as a manifestation whose meaning is revealed when in its semantic elucidation we interpretate the hermeneutic problem. The signs system serves to represent. They are carriers of meaning.

We assume then *carriers of meaning are brought to the notice of individuals, or diffused more widely throughout society, by many different devices: graffiti to telex* (Schutz, 1981, p.149), television to internet, and so on.

Much of what I have tried to say is expressed with fundamental words, which describe the immanent role of signs.

As Aristotle says, *we must, however, not only make this general statement, but also apply it to the individual facts* (Ross, 1938, p.234).

This sign has two sides: significant and signified as

³ Semiotic: The study of how symbolic forms (signs) are interpreted. The scientific study of meaning construction. Lull, James. *Media, Communication, Culture*. Columbia University Press, page 290.

Saussure said. They have a close relationship. These two sides are as inseparable as sides of a coin, so that in this sense both are one.

Looking at the matter more closely, this is why, a sign represents the contingent state in terms of a synchrony at a varied social communicative contexts.

If the content of a medium requires complex encoding, then the encoder needs time and effort to formulate messages (Meyrowitz, 1985, p.110). Such complex encoding requires performances expressed in terms of several types of situations and information in specific social situations.

V. THE ROLE OF SIGN IN COMMUNICATION

If language is the house of being (Young, 2002, p.13), sign is in this sense the dwelling of communication. It is first of all its fundamental vehicle. Sign is first among unlimited beings.

In order to understand what a sign is we can do to bring it about we must ask, first, in what dwell⁴ term consists.

However, it is important to recognize that dwell appears to support semantic descriptions. This way we can explain and clarify a variety of facts about signs.

The world in which we live is perceived by signs. These signs always refer to an apprehended world.

This way, signs can be grasped by the individual or collective interpreting.

In order to resolve the relation between signifier and signified, we tend to focus on the phenomena of sign. Obviously, it is necessary to understand that signs in human communication are *textual* and *nontextual*.

We can never even know signs to understand what communication it has of itself in relation to the limit of its relative manifestation. It is probable that this primacy of understanding be performed only through the hermeneutic work itself.

This is the point where we must say that *a thing is comprehended only if it can be traced back to its cause, only if it can be seen against the background of the reason for existence* (Rahner, 1969, p.96).

According to Ricoeur, *it is necessary therefore to enter in the*

hermeneutic circle (1974, p.390). In this respect *more than any other discipline that deals with signs, exegesis requires such an instrument of thought* (1974, p.398).

But we must not stop here. Communication, to be evidenced, will have men and women in intersubjective daily life to communicate and share the socio - cultural world. It is to be remembered that, *such a manifestation, between human beings, must be perceptible to the senses* (Kelly, 1981, 58).

The first point of departure for the interpretation of communication is in the sense that signs signify. Naturally, we must inquire more precisely what exactly is this sign which has been the fundamental representation in the *having being* of human communication.

By experiences the various signs of communication we used to recur are sufficiently understood and accepted in concrete circumstances which are the appropriate key signifiers at the manifested messages.

However, as I noted earlier the having being is immerse in its own necessary essence-*esse*.

A description of the world of daily life implies networks of signs. At this point much of what I have tried to explain about signs implies many other forms of communication. But that is no reason for not including them.

As we had said already, I admit that *other forms of communicative signs are used in constructing the socio-cultural world: dress, food, ceremonies, courtship customs, dwellings, tombs, altars, temples* (Kelly, 1981, p.24). These are always important elements in a knowledge framework to postulate signifying factors to explaining a possible theory of these signs.

The point here would be that knowledge of these signs we use of any kind of social living we necessarily need to establish the existence of communication phenomena.

As a shared messages system, communication tends to include many aspects of every facet of our everyday life. This situational analysis of communication suggests that *social behavior and communication, then, involve much more than people bouncing messages off each other* (Meyrowitz, 1985, p.27). But it is not from the behavioral point of view that I take up this concept. My point of departure is in the *polysemy spheres*.

Of course, we already are now in position to recognize

⁴ Dwell: Is confined to the topic of "construction", *bauen* (to build) really means not only to construct but also to cultivate (Young, 2000).

that polysemy⁵ is inescapable in human communication. Why? Because *in a given state of language, the same word has several meanings; strictly speaking, polysemy is a synchronic concept. In diachrony, multiple meaning is called a change of meaning, a transfer of meaning* (Ricoeur, 1974, p.68). This distinction, as we know, is properly an effect produced in a particular sector of discourse.

This is not all. *For the interpreter, it is the text which has multiple meaning* (Ricoeur, 1974, p.64).

For example, *war* oscillates between naming a type of large-scale social fact and a type of institutional fact. The test for the distinction is whether the term *war* is used to label an existing set of relations or whether it implies further consequences that derive from its recognized status as a *war* (Searle, 1995, p.89).

As we said above, text can, by various semantic analogous dimensions, realize various means. Every mean has a different referent. And every expression has a recognized convention⁶. Furthermore, *there are words and other expressions, these have senses or meanings, and in virtue of these senses they have referents* (Searle, 1995, p.67).

In the previous chapters we have defined several signs frameworks for the problem of communication. In the following chapter we will show a figure of communication of such interpretation problem.

VI. SIGN AND SOCIAL MEANING

Sign is the mediation of a representative and communicative meaning.

For that reason the problem of sign is in the object of its predication. Only if we are able to accept this, it is clear that we may have a compatible communication.

First of all, we can describe the essence of sign more precisely by defining language into which it implies the particular object of communication.

Following Avramides (1989), we can say that the fact that it makes sense to tell the story, the fact that a language could have arisen in this way, helps us to see what is possible with respect to our concepts of thought and language.

⁵ Polysemy: There are in any language terms with several connotations. They, too, are noted in the dictionary. But besides these standardized connotations, every element of the speech acquires its special secondary meaning derived from the context or the social environment within it is used and, in addition, gets a special tinge from the actual occasion in which it is employed (Schutz, 1970).

⁶ Convention: Implies arbitrariness, but constitutive rules in general are not in that sense arbitrary. It means they are rules (Searle, 1995).

How is this possible? Explanations in communication consist in tracing semantic connections in a significant language. All of the content of communication at least has to be interchangeable with thoughts and language derivable from the reference of social signs or at least dependent on these signs.

In particular, the question of everyday life requires a matter of communicative arguments that contribute to establishing the various elements of significant coherence. Moreover, *the transmission implies vast networks of social communication* (Kelly, 1981, p.57).

According to Kelly, we can, of course, say that *the elements of communication's context are meaning, communicative signs or carriers of meaning; communicators; and interpreters, the people who try to share meaning* (1981, p.57).

In sum, different people may use different signs in particular things, situations or *words* but the various elements in the communication are signs.

Another view of meaning is that *the best interpretation is one that provides the most coherent account of what we want to understand, considering these pieces of information that fit with each other and pieces of information that do not fit with each other* (Thagard, 2000, p.16).

At this point we can already recognize that *the word is much more and much less than the sentence. It is much less, because there is not yet any word before the sentence* (Ricoeur, 1974, p.92). In such cases, *the meanings of the words themselves are sufficient to guarantee the validity of the inference* (Searle, 2001, p.19).

In addition to the meaning of words we need to explain that communication determines conditions of intentional actions which can be comprehensible in the communicative act.

It becomes necessary to invoke Searle, to postulate that this procedure in a human language is made possible by the fact that the words of the language have a *form of intentionality*.

My view is that the meaning of a sign depends on both the signifier and the significance of the object connected to it by consistent relations and coherent information. But this relation and information should be correctly understood.

If being is the essence of existence, sign is the dwelling of communication. In this way, *being speaks in many ways* (Ricoeur, 1974, p.67)

This is, of course, a principle produced by rational and conventional construction of mental phenomena that guide our communicative interpretation.

For this reason, *interpretation*, we will say with Ricoeur, is the work of thought which consists in deciphering the hidden meaning in the apparent meaning, in unfolding the levels of meaning implied in the literal meaning (1974, p.13). This is the case where sign is wholly representational

According to this concept, the question remains: May sign, itself, determine the place where such a mental phenomenon is to take place?

A second question might be: What, then, is the meaning of this sign which makes us think in representation or the wide sense of significance? Moreover, Searle considers that, *all you have to do is detach the sense of meaning from the expression and just think of the sense of meaning* (2001, p.67).

To see how this works, the basic theory of signs can be summarized in three principles analogous as follows:

- Signs have both signifier and significance and interactions among represented objects, which generate semantic⁷ valences.
- Signs can have signifier and signified represented by mental elements to other signs.
- The significance of a sign is determined by the convention and acceptability of all its social communication phenomena.

Obviously, in the context of their interpretation the association of signs can be understood in terms of social meaning.

We can now understand why the manifestation depends on the practice that we can do to achieve social apprehension. The majority of arguments of these explanations are evidence for believing in signs, for believing that communication is manifestation of, or effects of, the different ways we can communicate.

Language is much more than its own meaning. It is a reference of many signs. Because any sign of human communication would have to include an account of new concepts, new representations, new thoughts and so on. They bring a wide range of different elements to make the communication systems coherent.

⁷ I will call semantics the model which governs our understanding of the sentence (Ricoeur, 1974).

For this reason sign is revelation and possibility of human communication besides, looking at the matter more closely, we can say that *the kinds of questions we ask are as many as the kinds of things which we know* (Ross, 1938, p.32).

They are probabilities by which we have explanatory properties to conceive and perform the communication we may have. Aspects of inference can also be perceived with some forms of language and understanding.

Once, we establish a correspondence between our language operations and others, we can transfer information that is similar to the informational valence of communication operations.

The basic idea, which I will now explain, is that communication is constituted by many situations with many explanations. This is what I want to try to show in the next figure of this analysis. As such, *figure 1* gives a more detailed picture of communicative meaning.

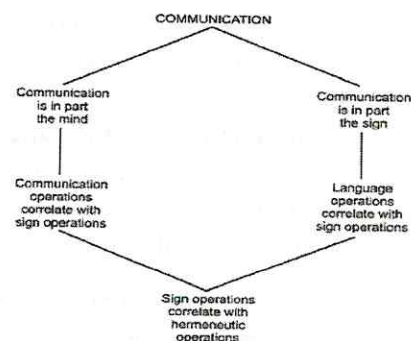
This figure postulates that by interrelating the functioning of signs and communication as a common interaction in everyday life, we can interpretate that hermeneutic is the measure of comprehension.

Thus, hermeneutic is essential for interpreting the communication in the world of everyday life. *Only by sharing in these dynamics does understanding enter the properly critical dimension of exegesis and become hermeneutic* (Ricoeur, 1974, p.298).

In summary, we have determined and developed the nature of communication but in relation to the social system. In terms of information we are organized into a network of signs.

For all these reasons, signs are frequently used for processing and interpreting information by way of the hermeneutic.

Figure 1. Communication process



VII. THE "WE" - RELATIONSHIP IN COMMUNICATION AS A SHARING MEANING: INTERPRETING THE SIGN

Before there can be a reciprocity of perspectives there must be, in the Self and the Other, a homogeneous system of purposes - in - hand and of relevances. Otherwise their attention may be given to different objects (J.C. Kelly, 1981).

This paper shows the importance of the relationship between communication signs and messages.

The sign has been placed in a common relationship between a subject and an object in a specific application. Most often associated with the organizational complexity of signs. These subjects or objects, as a *being*, according to Heidegger, *is that it is something present, noticeable, capable of being of concern to us. Presence is just another name for beings*" (Young, 2002, p.10), but determined by the appearance of objects in any social experience.

This means that the *We-relationship is already given to us by the mere fact that we are born into the world of directly experiencing social reality*" (Schutz, 1970, p.187). My relationship is sufficient to understand that I am able to reduce *my acts, my objects* to the experience of signs. To understand them, the first thing to take into account then concerns *signs*.

Obviously, the question I am asking is: What is it to associate a sign or a thought with a representation or idea of *us or me*? However, *we* can say that there are many different ways to define what a sign is.

The very term sign implies a state of theorizing and analysis the communicative processes with a dynamic relation called *context*.

A communicator defines the circumstances and desires a concrete situation to communicate his message to. It is clear, that he needs an interpreter to communicate with. We can, in fact, say, that *everyone using or interpreting a sign associates with the sign a certain meaning, which has its origin in the unique quality of experiences in which he once learned to use the sign* (Schutz, 1970, p.108). This is the reason why signs can operate in language related to the communicative experience in human relations. At the same time, the evolution of *mass communication* has developed the study of static situations and changing situation signs in people's experiences and events in social places.

Even so, *communication requires material signs. That is to say, communication requires material objects or events in the outer world produced by the communicator. These events or objects are produced in*

the body or by the body of the communicator (Kelly, 1981, p.58).

In other words, our common human relations make communication possible with signs and acts (*akts, happenings*, cf. *infra*). These acts mean *that any communication system must be at least indirectly dependent on the intentions of the speaker* (Avramides, 1989, p.17). They are always, of course within the sphere of the speaker (communicators).

This distinction is important because *the communicator as the carrier of communication be apprehended by the interpreter (principle of the relative irrelevance of the vehicle* (Schutz, 1970, p.203). The term *interpreter* is used here in the broadest peircean sense, denoting *subject*.

For this reason, under this conception of communication, *the interpreter includes everything that people are capable of doing. Which is why it is not an object of empirical inquiry, and why nothing sensible can be said about it* (Chomsky, 2000, p.69) .

To illustrate this fact, I want to point out three things that need to be associated with interpretation: 1- sign (primarily); 2- object (secondly); 3- interpreter (thirdly), that is a subject (Me, I or We), as Peirce describes (1997, p.35). What is motivated by it is an action or a *performance* in a *context*, yet the term *act* covers different contexts, because it can be used in ways that favor the interpreters. These particularizations are already revealed in the foundation of signs.

Once we accept this formulation, communication corresponds from one subject to another; this receptive interaction must have a correspondence to its own determining *object*. As Schutz has suggested, moreover, it is possible that all three types are discernible in one and the same person at the same time (1981, p.54).

In this way, what is to be emphasized is that a *sign is a firstness*.

In short, what I need at the moment of interpretation is: I assume that A is communicating to B, but B, is able to communicate to C. In these circumstances, every member of A or B knows the reference of C. This *third-C-*, involves a triangular procedure in different and determined meanings. It is one of the appropriate arguments for the existence of signs.

Recognizing all these factors we can suggest that this sharing of meaning is based in the spectrum of signs in face-to-face interactions but in different social situations.

Thus, *meaning is not something assigned only to external objects. Interpretative work is also a process of self-discovery and understanding. Every interpretation of a sign is simultaneously an interpretation and transformation of the imagined self* (Lull, 2000, p.219).

The combination of these procedural semantics describes the close connection in which the word is to its object. Thus, there is a crucial interdependence in the interpreter's intentions.

This means that in communication, there are both internal and external human factors affecting the *we-relationship*. In this sense, *the existence of public knowledge, depends, therefore, on certain basic similarities among men* (Boulding, 1961, p.37), thus, interpersonal communication involves more given signs in an expressive scheme. To understand this is sufficient reason to find acts other's in face-to-face interaction.

The sign is indeed the sign for what it means or signifies, *the so-called 'sign meaning' or 'sign function'. The sign is also the 'sign for' what it expresses, namely, the subjective experiences of the person using the sign* (Schutz, 1981, p.103).

Clearly, it is the connection of the subjective/objective distinction that gives us a point of reference to understand the part signs play in language communication. In all these cases, *I am not only located in space and time, I am also located in a field of personal relations. It is literal because we are of one blood, that is, genetic constitution, we are able to communicate with each other* (Boulding, 1970, p.29), or with all the other members of a group in several possible communication situations.

This relation may sometimes be interpreted by several processes that have taken place in particular channels. *Certain facts, objects and events are known to me as interrelated in a more or less typical way, however, my knowledge of the particular kind of interrelatedness might be rather vague or even lack transparency* (Schutz, 1981, p.100).

In these terms, *an object, then, (cf. Infra, p.7) is a status of meaning and a form determined by its interdependent and oppositional relations with other objects. In short, an object's value is determined by the system in which it inheres* (Genosko, 1999, p.71). This object is an object of signs integrated into the system-among other signs.

The particular schemes and channels it employs are adequate conventions that can be used for coordination among appropriate signs (*signatum*). There are, of course, many kinds of signs, which make up massive sharing of

information through the communication process.

From this perspective, through the process of communication, the interpreter of communication receives and performs a situation he prefers, but what communication signifies to different receivers depends on how they interpret.

Here is a normal act of communication: a *semiosis*.

In other words, the most obvious reference for communication is the place where the phenomenon of *we-relationship* avoids such confrontation, in the use and practice of our acts in signs, because the message is defined in relation to signs.

However, in order to be able to understand sign, we must be able to bring to significance the interpretative process of our *experience*.

Since signs and subjects, as well as objects, images or sounds, all play a part in our daily experience, and since this *experience* always involves a communication process. We may be sure when we consider the sign to be concrete in every communication process.

As a matter of communication, there is no situation in which the interpreter of a language is independent of the communicator's intentions. To the extent that he can interpret it, his interpretation will be based primarily on his experience and knowledge, to do with experience is subject. It is true that, *the interpreter needs only to know the meaning of a sign* (Schutz, 1981, 103).

What is needed to complete this concept is called *sign phenomena*. It might also be that *in general we tend to believe not only those explanations that exist, but the ones that would enlighten our existence* (Quine & Ullian, 1978, p.119).

This explanation is expressible in terms of *semantic triangulation* (cf. supra).

Because of this, the communication pattern will determine how frequently special signs relationships in acts are given attention to by interpreters. I can for instance understand the acts because, in understanding someone who is speaking (or *reading*), I interpret not only his individual words but his total articulated syntactical sequence of connected words. In short, *what he is saying* (Quine & Ullian, 1978, p.109).

This expression refers to relationship of signs people use to make sense of words, images and how they construct everyday communication.

As we have seen, these considerations are fundamental to my position.

I believe they can determine the concept of meaning as well as the interpretation of communication. However we should take in to consideration, that there is a clear sense of our imagination by which signs determine the variable circumstances in the context.

To understand how sign works, we must give to the concepts employed the appropriate interpretation, which means, *words into signs or signs into words* because one may think in the basic functional form of the natural and artificial language. Furthermore, *what is considered functional or dysfunctional, normal or deviant, stabilizing or disruptive is always an interpretation made by individuals or groups in accord with their own world views and motivations* (Lull, 2000, p.80).

One of the main motivations for understanding human communication has been precise multimodal language and interaction between signs and words. The *key idea is communication*. How these interactions are connected by words.

Given the need to identify signs, my next question concerns the mode of words.

What is a word which involves an act namely communication? How is this possible?

In general, words are used to name things, but at the same time, things are signs. For a detailed concept of this, see Mejía (2008, p.53).

This distinction is important, because *the sign is also an indication in the mind of the user - sign* (Lull, 2000, p.109).

In the state of complete words, it is possible to apply this criterion to the social world of communication. In this case, communication is conceived as multimodal language (cf. supra). It should be clear by now that material communicative signs include some aspects of every facet of our information system. It should also be clear that, *the act of communication is always concrete, unique and in the here and now* (Lonergan et al., 1981, p.40).

The meaning of all these social world words in all their diversity, signs correlated to communication are in a web of social relationships, systems, signs and symbols with a common goal: language.

It is commonly accepted that formal communication has been widely analyzed in derivated processes of signs in language. The main application of these analyses is to

well extend forms of syntactic, semantic and pragmatic to the case of mass communication and its social processes. However, what distinguishes this process is that it identifies multiple signs in a complete context.

As Schutz says, *the vernacular of everyday life is primarily a language of named things and events, and any name includes a typification and generalization referring to the relevance system prevailing in the linguistic in-group which found the named thing significant enough to provide a separate term for it* (1981, p.96). From this point of view, it is as reasonable to believe that language is the result of comprehension of signs independent from mechanisms of thought.

Chomsky says, *the faculty of language can reasonably be regarded as a language organ in the sense in which scientists speak of the visual system, immune system, or circulatory system, as body organs* (2000, p.4).

In this sense, these few considerations clear the way to strengthen the We-relationship in social interaction.

Once again, every sign system is therefore a scheme for communicative experience. It is certainly, one of the most important requirements of human experience. That is to say, the subject is expressed in the form of a web of signs.

At the same time, this fact makes it clear that every human activity occurs by signs.

For this reason, some kinds of signs are understood in terms of analogical and perceptual coherence. For example, an object, *the traffic light*, can be distinguished by graphical perception, syntactic attributes and semantic attributes. In this case, syntactic attributes and semantic attributes are used to associate meanings with a visual object (red light, yellow light and green light). In fact, there is a procedure of association that offers certain aspects of perception and articulation that are used to determine the object function and the correct comprehension of its object into the communication.

Once we accept this formulation, it can be concluded that communication can be measured in terms of the coherent relationships of the We-relationship by various signs and objects.

VIII. SIGNS AND LANGUAGE: AN OUTLINED THEORY

Language is that, by means of which, we express ourselves and express things (P. Ricoeur, 1974).

Language, I suggest is the basic social way to express

communication and it is essential for the constitution of social acts because it has conventional representations and intentional meanings. This way, *if people are to behave very differently in different situations, every organism exudes expressions* (Meyrowitz, 1985, 116, 108). This scenario shows the reduction of sign relations and their interactions in our communicative experiences.

In my understanding, the sign and the word are part of language in which verbal language is in the process of being instituted between a discourse in act and text in a common denominator: communication.

In essence, to say that language is arbitrary is merely to say that it is social. This is perhaps the most important statement that can be made about language (Campbell & Hepler, 1970, p.248).

Another way in which a close relation comes out in language is that at the same time language is an object by which signs we can change the significance or our meaning. The comprehension of this function is motivated by the consideration of the understanding.

By now, language is very important *because it is a solely human activity, which separates man from other living beings* (Campbell & Hepler, 1970, p.252).

What is manifested here is that with language we can move from our universe of signs to the levels of dialectic and communication. We now know that the science of communication requires that we develop its analysis with the hermeneutic process.

In fact, *if language is itself an institution, then it seems language must require language* (Searle, 2001, p.60).

IX. AS WE TALK WITH WORDS

Every day language is used to cope with socially given and accepted typifications and patterns in a way that is appropriate in the here and now. It is used to enable ourselves and others to know, feel and behave in familiar but ever - new ways. (J.C. Kelly, 1981).

Social subjects are constituted by social acts, but in language human actions are just the continuous objects of social acts. It is on this concept that I propose to examine what becomes a fundamental function of words when they are transferred to a function of being as a manifestation of language and why they constitute the function of interpretation.

The study of language is the study of properties of words. Evidence shows clearly that knowledge of language

cannot arise without words.

In terms of context meaning, language, communication and interpretation, of being and *Sein*, the social forms of language have a structural human comprehension which is expressed by our existence.

Clearly, this task has to be taken of words, may designate certain interpretations in context. .

Especially, for our purposes, within any given the manifestation of language is perceived in a variety of ways or in variable dimensions: one of them is word. Thus, it is necessary to first establish an explanation, *for the fact that a speaker or reader of a language will perceive, interpret, form, or use an utterance in certain ways and not in other ways* (Chomsky, 1972, p.27). Because of this, language is the only way to unfold and achieve human activity. Everything in communication depends on this. Of course, we become, in other words, human beings. The point is that, *we inhabit it*.

I find in words, ontological foundations for language to be interpreted. In effect, in order to immerse ourselves in the horizon of language, reflection becomes necessary because philosophizing about words is a daunting enterprise. This I think it is a serious matter not to be taken lightly.

In Aristotle terms: *spoken words are the symbols of mental experience and written words are the symbols of spoken words* (Ross, 1938, p.7)

The most fundamental description in terms of the set of practices in which words are embedded is human language.

What, then, is language? According to Young for example, *language is the house of being; it is where being is to be found* (Young, 2002, p.7). The essence of being may, Heidegger suggests, be called *Sein* (Young, 2002, p.15), because *being* is the matter of *thinking*. At the same time, *this being can be defined by knowledge of a particular existent thing which can be arrived at, even though it is beyond the world of appearance* (Rahner, 1969, p.151).

The point, then, is that in language, to remark upon the fact that these elements manifest the meaning of *Sein*. As Schutz suggests, Thoughts are expressed by a combination of words. Words in order to be communicated require a vehicle for their transmission from one person to another: sounds that can be heard, gestures that can be seen, written messages that can be read. *In other words, revelation must be contained in human speech* (Rahner, 1969, p.156).

If this is right, I am tempted to assume that language is relevant in a complex possibility of elements: words, icons, subjects, sounds, voices, and so on. These, above all, are matters of thought. It seems to me that language represents the domain of thought in many sorts of social acts. *Another aspect involves language as a matter of logical necessity, because the linguistic expression of the thought is essential to its being the thought that it is* (Searle, 1995, p.64).

This suggests that they are beings we can trust. They belong to language.

In general, what is common to all of these elements in communication is the circular relationship between the social language and its social information.

In general, *information* is used here in a special sense to mean *social* information: all that people are capable of knowing about the behavior and actions of themselves and others.

As described earlier, such information comes in many forms including words, gestures, vocalization, posture, dress, and pace of activity (cf. Supra, p.2). Basically, the information we are concerned with here deals with social behavior-our access to each other's social performances (Meyrowitz, 1985, p.37).

As I have indicated, to explain this phenomenon we must discover the meaning that relates to sound and its representation in words in question and the general principles that determine the function of these words. This particularization of words is already revealed in the foundation of the existence of things. This is because, mean the conceptual represented by all existent things, but also by that what we call *language*.

The manifestation of language creates the possibility of playing with words. In other words with language we regulate human understanding. Language expresses the fundamental representation in human communication.

Thus the statement that words require the institution of language, communication requires regulative conventions.

This so-called *convention* implies arbitrariness, but constitutive rules in general that make communicative and semantic sense.

To demonstrate this, consider for example, the following particular definition. The word *money*, marks one

node⁸ in a whole network of functions, the functions of owning, buying, selling, earning, and paying for services, paying off debts, and so on.

The word *money* functions as a placeholder for the linguistic articulation of all these functions (Searle, 1995, p.52). There is a special relation between the social practice in question and the manifested function of money, which *is designed to provide a unit of value in all kind of transactions* (Searle, 1995, p.56).

We accept this, because words are specific forms and representations of human sense. This describes *the key aspects of any representation that is being represented* (Narayanan & Hübscher, 1998, p.97).

One general principle is this: In the case of language, words and many expressions have sense and meaning, and in virtue of its referents they make sense.

In general, *the existence of a verbal language, whether spoken or written, assumes and implies reciprocities of perspective, recognition schemes, and interpretation, between everyone who communicates in that language* (Kelly, 1981, p.88).

With language, community life is necessary. The word is the locus of the human language. We need words, because words have a referential focus.

Verbal language needs situations that involve face-to-face encounters in given places so that communication is able to take place.

It becomes clear, that there is a mutual dependence between context and situation that then extends to situations of the social roles in social experiences.

Perhaps, context, itself, determines the social process we project. This means that, *since situations are created by us, they can also be changed by us* (Meyrowitz, 1985, p.26).

To understand a communication process, we must know much more than the representation of this communication process. We must also know the reference and meaning of the syntax of the words which language is composed of. Why? Because *words in discourse belong to the level of manifestation of words* (Ricoeur, 1974, p.74).

The point of our present discussion is that if social facts require language and if language is in itself an object, then it seems language must require social representations

⁸ Node: is a polydimensional spatial center where its components are combined with analogical connectionist valences to produce a coherent whole communication system based on complex inferences.

because it represents infinite factors. There are several ways to demonstrate this, but in general, social facts involve a wide range of language forms.

To summarize these points: language is a matter of systematic relationships. In truth, let me say that it can be found in all languages.

The most amazing form of human communication is in *the revelation of words*, and verbal language is the most precise form to describe the logical structure of human society.

It is clear that *knowledge of a language involves the ability to assign deep and surface structures to an infinite range of sentences, to use these structures appropriately, and to assign a semantic interpretation and a phonetic interpretation to both deep and surface structures* (Chomsky, 1972, p.30).

It has to be noted that language is the base of semantic relations that determines semantic interpretations. This is what happens in the moment our acts determine the motive represented by our own expression.

Just as language and other communication codes are learned and reinforced in everyday social interaction, ideology is likewise made familiar and normal in routine social interaction. These are the processes of *social mediation* (Lull, 2000, p.26), interaction and dialogue, because language represents our facts to ourselves, and what's more, language is a constitutive part of the facts.

Without language we couldn't exist. The reason for this distinction is that words are needed to communicate about images or objects, we need a dialogue.

However, we have to emphasize the implication of reason. It is necessary to clearly recognize this meaning *since reason is a parameter of any conversation between creatures who think. I will call it a dialogue to distinguish it from a conversation of gestures* (Cavell, 1998, p.462). Thus reason, is what anchors the explanation of the word by being, the development of language confirms our individual thinking.

As we have seen, *We may use a single word to denote all of this-world* (Rahner, 1969, p.141), language. At the same time, what is important here is interpretation of language. The analysis laid out here it is in no way separable from interpretation.

Finally, the words and variables in a certain context are implicit and explicit in spatial relationship, and they are used in several communication systems. In effect, this is why the *teleology of language* has a dialectical meaning for

communication.

After all, I believe that we must be able to tell people what is linguistically represented, because facts require the recognition of the represented acts, and acts correspond to *statements of being*.

X. THE VISUAL IMAGE, A MENTAL COMPLEX SYSTEM

The development of images is part of the culture or the subculture in which they are developed, and it depends upon all the elements of that culture or subculture (Boulding, 1970).

The perception refers the images it transmits.

What's in an image?

When we ask what's in an image, we ask what an image is composed of. There exist many ways to describe what an image is. However, I wish to describe a few of the concepts which define an image.

The concept of image is as a visual icon, without reference to its meaning.

An image is associated with a specific type of perception. It is a human mental process, an iconic expression of the human mind. This concept will be illustrated by examples in the following.

A visual image *A* of an image *B* is a copy of the same denoted image of the same reference.

Let me introduce the term *icon* to refer to a representation that plays a specific role in communication. It is from this point of view that the term icon permits one to make many distinctions in diverse representations.

In the following, I will first explain this idea for the knowledge of visual languages and then show how it can be defined to represent graphically objects.

In a word, *image is a social mediation* that expresses conformity to the communication process but *it must be an entity capable of perception, memory, belief, desire, thought, inference, and general cognition* (Searle, 2001, p.92).

Under these circumstances, people can receive information transmitted by the sense and associated with images, since the images or icons allow interpretational meaning.

There are many examples that explain this icon, but in these cases forms differ in the representation they express. In principle, there are many ways in which an image might be represented.

So we must explore different ways of viewing them in various actions.

An image generates many factors that interact to determine what is represented. This fact is a special case of a particular representation called a *triangle*.

For example, in the case of a triangle, there is little difference between form and surface structure. The corresponding structure of the three sides is represented as a form in which each side has a structural function which constitutes the geometric representation: An icon.

Of course, the definition of a triangle can be extended straight away to geometric varieties of triangles. However, there is a complex relationship between the language of interactions a receiver might deploy to understand a triangle and the language of this visual image

Considering an *equilateral triangle*, the elements connected to the shared space must graphically match up to the corresponding angle of the corner.

Visual representations then support the generation of meaning because they represent relevant relations implicitly. The system of rules that specifies the visual meaning relation for a given icon is called *syntax*.

To our knowledge, *distinguishing between a representation (triangle), its interpretation, and (a description of) the object it represents helps to clarify the distinction between what a representation, represents and how it represents this* (Gurr, 1998, p.304).

In fact, *the image itself* expresses the structure of thinking.

We may say that an image associates *perception* and meaning in a special case, and it is to be able, in principle, to understand what is represented and to express with an icon a wide variety of semantic interpretations. For the moment, let us consider what perception means. *Perception consists of two components*.

In the case of vision, for example, a perception consists of a conscious visual experience, together with a state of affairs perceived (Searle, 2001, p.46).

In the visual experience, image is a self-reference. The statement of the image specifies the icon, because the form can give the reason to the thing. It is for this reason that a triangle represents the general notion of meaning as form. If we have some knowledge of the image, we can formulate the mentally represented icon in a meaningful

way. Constrained by its rules to express a specific form of language.

Chomsky for example argued that, *there are few languages for which descriptions in depth are available. Only some selected aspects of language have been studied with sufficient care and success to provide support for these conclusions* (1972, p.115)

For some people, an image in itself is an expression in which aspects perform and reasons that stand for one or more explaining relations to which it refers.

For our purpose we can say any image has a visual representation and its representation is based on visual language. *Visual languages* can be characterized by images consisting of *visual representations that are used for human communication* (Narayanan & Hübscher, 1998, p.90).

In particular, each image has a syntactic attribution associated to visual language. Surely in the case of images, there is a close relation between properties of an object and features of mental images. *This type of syntactic attribute is associated with the graphical objects of visual language and the type of relations that can be used to compose pictures is strongly related to and define a syntactic model* (Chang, Costagliola, Orefice, Polese, & Baker, 1992, p.174).

A visual image is an arrangement of geometric elements related in different *visual thinking* in one or more dimensions. Generated according to syntactic representation, the iconic representation can be associated with interpretation rules. *In fact, visual thinking is deeply embedded in the psyche of every culture, and visual languages predate the development of textual ones* (Narayanan & Hübscher, 1998, p.90).

In visual images, every comprehensive characteristic is interpreted although not only by just one meaning, because the association between social characteristics and attributed meanings is not necessarily constant.

For any image two interpretations exist: The first is the one intended by the sender and the second is the one derived by the receiver (Bottoni et al., 1998, p.356). Description of images and Interpretation may occur, according to the context, but, *interaction processes require the interpretation and materialization of image structures* (Bottoni et al., p.357).

Geometry defines the set of possible signs by which the signs of a particular image-*icon*-can be represented. We may think of a geometric representation (triangle) as a matrix in which an *object* corresponds to the features of universal triangles. Each triangle is an image that specifies the

meaning of a particular case of a triangle. These objects can be used to compose other predefined geometric objects.

The case of image is particularly interesting because it is based on structured language as a function of human communication. It is important to note that in this case it describes a system of communication in a vast concept of information. The process that is involved within this infinite range of information is referred to as isotopic. Isotopic is an umbrella term that is formed in the syntax operations involved in language-image-use. In this way, a visual image distinguishes geometric variations in spatial perceptions because it may be the relational icon for visual grammar with respect to graphical objects and nominal objects.

To explain such a phenomenon we must understand the meaning that expresses comprehension of information or the image in question. The syntax that has been associated by the *sender* who knows the representation and the general principles that determine the function of this image.

Common iconic problems, like the problem of image, have a characteristic human meaning dependent upon the interpretation process. Such as the meaning represented by the image that ensures that this is so.

Image arrays on the retina are caused by physical processes not subject to cognitive control, so we can take them as given (Thagard, 2000, p.59).

For a coherent theory of epistemic justification, it is important to say that *considerable processing begins even at the retinal level, and many layers of visual processing occur before a person has a perceptual experience* (Thagard, p.59).

An image such as a triangle performs its function by virtue of its geometric structure. I think this case reveals a case for image and form because we create certain forms that motivate, but only in virtue of the collective recognition of the image as having special distinction. This short example should suffice to illustrate the semantic definition.

For these reasons, semantic and syntax components are purely meaning. *I will call semantics the model which governs our understanding of the sentence* (Ricoeur, 1974, p.79) and of the image, because meaning is first of all situated in relation to multiple meaning.

As we have mentioned earlier, it seems reasonable to

assume that these properties of the triangle, are evidences of universal language.

We can see these reasons are relational arguments in the processes leading to images. These arguments suggest two semantic relations. First, the representation of both form and representation must have an intention. Second, there must be some reason corresponding to that form in each human language.

It seems, once again, that there is a geometric principle that accounts for such images, and the use of images can help people understand meaning represented by icons, and that the match between the syntactic and semantic structures of images represent a very important part of the analogy.

Cavell has suggested that, *even a portrait of Marilyn Monroe, that is very faithful to her can be taken to be her portrait only by someone who knows something about Monroe* (1998, p.456).

In addition to that, the efficacy of different kinds of images in communication is based on human experiences. It means that *reasoning from a representation is easier when its interpretation is isomorphic to that which it represents* (Gurr, 1998, p.304).

Finally, the interpretation of images gives us some coherent judgments that can be accepted by foundational representation. Although simple, this interpretation can generate intentional information about the function and representation of denoted images.

XI. CONCLUSION

There are no signs independent of actions or representation for communication. Because of this, we can now understand why signs are representations, such as thoughts, ideas, images, and so on. That is, the facts that constitute everyday life must be represented, known or recognized by the subjectum that motives an action.

Finally, for this way of thinking, I would be willing to say that the signs functions, require not only the communicability of interpreters but also, it is always in and based on immanent hermeneutic relations.

In this way, as Vattimo argues, signs and gestures are the modes of significance (1988). This can be seen in the work of Peirce (1997), who says that, hermeneutics is ruled by the open state of the universe of signs.

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I. CURRÍCULO

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