

# **Psychotherapy with children in the context of justice: A social space for education, learning and subjective development**

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## *Abstract*

The way psychotherapy with children constitutes a social space for education, learning and subjective development has been discussed from the perspective of the theory of subjectivity in commitment to the generating capacity of individuals. Continuously immersed in this space, I have been building theoretical models explaining the uniqueness of this development process – especially the development of children whose parents dispute their custody in court. The interpretative constructions of these children's actions and relationships with their parents take place in individual and joint therapeutic sessions, enlivened by multiple ludic scenarios, without any previous theme or methodological coercion. While engaging in these sessions with the children and their parents, we dialogue about their experiences and provoke their unfolding in dramatic scenes and actions or the experience of the “as if” game with spontaneity and creativity, to the point of recreating them with their fantasies and imagination. During this constructive-interpretive process of dialogic character, engaging in this social space with their subjective productions and without suppressing their contradictions related to the conflicts of their parents, children learn how to create and recreate their relationships in the family and beyond, indicating that there is subjective development or qualitative changes in their subjective organization. The result of such experiences suggests that psychotherapy favors the original process of constituting subjective configurations compatible with the emergence of the agent or the subject to subvert the instituted order in favor of the development of society. Therefore, psychotherapy with children is representative of the political aspect of the theory of subjectivity or it is a resource for the process of subjective development of children in which the individual and the social are contradictory and recursively interrelated.

## *Keywords*

psychotherapy with children, education and learning, subjective development, politics in psychology

## Introduction

I really wish to share some of my ideas on the value of psychotherapy with children in the process of human development. I have immersed myself in this field since 1977, first, from the perspective of Jacob Levy Moreno (1889-1974), the creator of sociometry, the theory of social relations, and recently, based on the cultural-historical theory of subjectivity<sup>1</sup>, developed by Fernando Luis González Rey (1949- 2019).

Initially, inspired by the thoughts of Levy Moreno (1997) on human relationships, I integrated psychodiagnosis and intervention, in practice, involving both the family and the child in joint therapeutic sessions, in which the child demonstrates to be active in their development process (Peres, 1983 ).

Later, guided by the theory of subjectivity, I understood that the child is active in this process by generating “subjective sense”<sup>2</sup> of communication and emotional climate in their family relations and outside of it (Peres, 2012).

I am aware that family is the “social placenta” for children, in which they learn to play social roles, that is, where they begin their development process, whose key factor, according to Levy Moreno (1997), is the emerging spontaneity in an “open universe”, in which they can move and make a stand in relation to other people who also surround them.

I agree when Levy Moreno (1997, p. 99) states that the infants are “pure spontaneity”, “potential geniuses”, that they “[...] warm up and sustain themselves from the moment of their birth”. For the author, spontaneity arises when the infant freely comes up with a need to act. However, standing by the philosophy of the encounter by the humanist Martin Buber (1977), the author affirms that the infant depends on the state of spontaneity of others such as the therapist.

Based on the theory of subjectivity by González Rey (1997, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2007) I believe that spontaneity is a subjective resource<sup>3</sup> produced by children themselves and it emerges in their relationships with others, enhancing their capacity to creatively act. For psychotherapy, a universe open to the emergence of spontaneity, the therapist is the significant other to the children, from whom they are detached and position themselves creatively in relation to their families and other social spaces.

For González Rey (2004), the children can generate subjective senses in relation to their significant others and these senses may be the source of their development.

I think that these subjective senses involve spontaneity which emerges while enhancing the children's capacity to act freely and creatively express their affective needs, conflicts and suffering. It is worth mentioning that the children's

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<sup>1</sup> “The Theory of Subjectivity, from the cultural-historical perspective, is a way of understanding the specificity of human processes in the conditions of culture”. (Mitjáns Martínez & González Rey, 2019, p. 15).

<sup>2</sup> “Subjective sense” is the processual unit of the symbolic and the emotional that emerges in every human experience [...]” (González Rey, 2002, p. 31).

<sup>3</sup> Goulart and González Rey (2019, p. 268) exemplify how the subjective resource “is generated in a therapeutic process” of a group that “generates new positions and forms of communication” [...].

spontaneity emerges from their emotionality and fantasies in the ongoing therapeutic process, a process that involves the therapist's actions and the interactions between them.

In Levy Moreno (1997), the children's spontaneity and creativity, imagination and fantasies in relation to the experience, represent the development of psychodramatic roles, the roles of the “psyche”. From my point of view and in accordance to the theory of subjectivity by González Rey, these roles are integrated in their process of subjective development<sup>4</sup>, favoring or not their emergence as agents or subjects<sup>5</sup> of the social process.

Levy Moreno (1997) states that roles are the smallest “cultural unit of conduct” which allow us to understand the quality of human relationships and they can be continuously developed. The idea that the individuals (actors) can break with the social role, move freely to transform themselves and the society, suggests some proximity to the theory of subjectivity by González Rey (2003), regarding the categories of agent and subject.

It is noteworthy presenting the thought of Morin (2003a, pp. 131-132) on the “psycho-sociology of social roles” and how it evidenced the social crystallization of the roles experienced personally, “a ritual of characters in everyday life” [...] “ambassadors of the self in relation to the other, but also images of the self in relation to itself”.

Thus, I think that the value of Levy Moreno's theory of roles (1997), as elements of the “formation of the self”, comes from his idea of subjectivity, interrelated to spontaneity and creativity. It is important for the author to understand that the individual can break with the “cultural conserve” (norms and values of the institutions) and develop psychodramatic roles, the roles of emotionality and fantasies about the experience, representing an idea of subjectivity that integrates the social, individual and psychodramatic contexts into the action.

Calvente (2002), an Argentine psychodramatist, concludes that Levy Moreno failed to explain how the affective learning of roles occurs in the first universe of the identity matrix, which is “the origin and nourishment of subjectivity”.

I understand that Levy Moreno failed to develop his definition of subjectivity, especially on childhood. Even having stated that children are capable of reversing roles and understanding others in their singularity, he does not explain how they develop a “certain degree of initiative” in their actions and address bonds or relationships with different quality.

Therefore, the idea that childhood is a special moment in life, which can brighten the individual's subjective development process can not be ignored. I know that in psychotherapy the children position themselves by expressing their

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<sup>4</sup> “Subjective development is a singular and non-predictable process that implies emergence of individuals and social groups as subjects and, therefore, the development of new subjective resources that impact different spheres of their lives” (Goulart & González Rey, 2019, p. 263).

<sup>5</sup> The agent would be the individual – or social group – located in the course of events in the current field of their experiences. The subject represents the capacity of individuals and groups to position themselves, whose limits are in the very symbolic production of culture and in the subjective resources to assume the challenges of the existential spaces of experience (González Rey & Mitjáns Martínez, 2017, p. 73).

needs and affective motivations more confidently, and that this requires them to generate new subjective senses regarding their relational experiences. The way children experience these relationships in the first universe of their development processes, a universe that Levy Moreno called the “social placenta” or, in other words, the emotional climate of relationships in the family “where everything begins” is yet to be clarified.

As previously mentioned, the family is involved in the children's therapeutic process, in their learning about themselves, on how to relate to differences, with the game rules and also the unexpected. I delve into the study of this learning that is a source of subjective development. Therapeutic sessions are an opportunity for children to demonstrate their ability to act with spontaneity and creativity. In that sense, I remind that children engage in the game and in the dramatic action that are “emotional initiators” or “inductors” of the dialogue about their conflicts, which tell us a lot about their emotionality and subjective development.

From González Rey's theory of subjectivity, I observe that the performance of roles, which are both individual and collective, integrates the unique processes of children's subjective development. These processes are complexly inseparable from their families' processes of subjective development. Everything points to the fact that the children and their families are also, simultaneously and recursively, involved in the processes of subjective development of the society they live in (Peres, 2012, 2014, 2022).

With the theory of subjectivity, I seek to broaden the knowledge on the dynamic and recursive interrelation among the subjective development of children, the subjective development of the family and the subjective development of the society. Immersed in the field of psychotherapy with children, understanding that there is no direct and linear relationship in the development of these systems (the child, the family and the society) has been quite challenging. So, I try to explain how children and their families, with their subjective specificities, are mutually and recursively constituted in a cultural-historical process; how these interrelated systems simultaneously constitute the individual and social subjectivity of the therapeutic space, a subjectivity that, according to Mitjáns Martínez and González Rey has a “significant force” in the expression of the actions of individuals (Mitjáns Martínez & González Rey, 2019, p. 15).

González Rey (2004) believes that the source of the complex development process is the individual with his subjectivity in relation to his experience in different complexly interrelated social spaces.

As far as I'm concerned, the author means that the subjective development of the individual is a complex process of organization and qualitative reorganization of “a complex network of subjective configurations” generated by him in the course of his history. This history is constantly updated, from birth to death, through his continuous subjective productions in relation to their experiences in different social spaces (González Rey, 2003).

The author means that the subjectivity produced by the individual in relation to what he has experienced, at any moment of his life, in different social

spaces, enables him to continually reorganize himself and achieve a new “formation” that does not depend on any universal or that this process is singular, that is, it is not subject to categories *a priori*.

Considering all this, I present a brief discussion about the value of psychotherapy with children for the processes of subjective development of individuals and society, simultaneously. My intention is to highlight the unique processes of development of the agent and the subject, subjective conditions that represent, among other categories, the political aspect of the theory of subjectivity.

### **Psychotherapy with children as a social space for education, learning and subjective development**

The idea behind psychotherapy sessions with children, a social space for education and learning as a subjective production, of complexly interrelated dimensions, is free of linearity. The therapeutic process in childhood, a sensitive moment in life, is favorable to the subjective development of the individual. In this process, without being immediately aware, children learn to take action in the creation and recreation of the social space of their relationships. If past and future are inseparable, as stated by González Rey (2007), I have no doubt that the children's subjective development favors the emergence of the agent or the subject at any other moment in their lives.

Immersively working with children, I have built theoretical models that explain the uniqueness of their development processes, especially the development of children whose parents dispute their custody in court. The interpretative constructions of these children's actions and relationships with their parents take place in individual and joint therapeutic sessions, enlivened by multiple ludic scenarios, without any previous theme or methodological coercion. Engaged in these sessions, in the dialogue about their experiences, the children are provoked to unfold them in dramatic scenes and actions or to experience them in the “as if” play, with spontaneity and creativity, to the point of recreating them with their fantasies and imagination.

In this process, antagonistic subjective senses emerge, generated by children in relation to communication with their families, conflicting subjective senses, dynamically and recursively implied with the disorder in this system. It is possible that they emerge as an expression of their processes of subjective development, of their singularities, which, as stated by Morin (2003b), carry “the entire form of the human condition”. Morin (2003b) assumes that the expression of emotions, at this moment in life, can mean the universality of the “affective unit” of human beings, the cultural sense of intersubjectivity and communication.

Considering the theory of subjectivity, I suppose that at this moment, subjectively configured emotions guide the children's actions and may emerge at any other moment in life. In the study of multiple singular cases, I recognize that there is an unlimited diversity in the quality of the expression of emotions, depending, during the ongoing dialogue, on the subjective implications of the

children and the therapist (González Rey & Mitjáns Martínez, 2017). So, in addition to what Morin (2003b) states, I would say that the quality of expression of children's emotions in psychotherapy depends on the subjective senses that they generate in relation to communication with their families and that these subjective senses carry the social subjectivity and the subjectivity of the entire humanity, its antagonisms and contradictions.

In psychotherapy with children, I seek to interpret these subjective senses and how they enable the development of agent and subject conditions. That implies making them understand how they are located at the center of the world and occupy their spaces in the systems in which they are living and developing themselves with creative actions. How does this happen? I understand that they learn to experience themselves as agents or as subjects of these spaces, including and distinguishing themselves from other characters in the “as if” play. Through action and interaction with these other characters, imaginary or not, they can, at the same time, experience opposing affective forces and recreate them with spontaneity.

The children's action in the “as if” play and outside of it can motivate new subjective senses in relation to what has been experienced; the development of their subject condition, ensuring the quality of the relationship with themselves and the quality of the relationship with the other. In the action, children can update themselves in relation to the significant other, in relation to the mothers, for example, and take a stand for them in the face of an unfair accusation, as this child did: “I like you [...] you lied and that's what I don't like”. This qualitative moment took place in the joint session, a space for reflection in the midst of the “as if” play, in which the child and the mother engaged in an authentic dialogue about themselves, defining themselves. With their fantasies and imagination, they created in the “as if” play and outside of it new ways of living together in their daily lives which were more pleasant and committed.

That child taught us that taking a stand in relation to the other does not mean excluding, nullifying, or annulling oneself, but differentiating oneself. It means learning to live dialogically, which, in theory, favored the development of the quality of her subjective organization and differentiated her from her mother. Motivated by this action, it is likely that she has generated new subjective senses in relation to the litigation and a subjective configuration<sup>6</sup> favorable to the development of the subject condition of their family as a social space. It is likely that the child has emerged as a subject in this specific circumstance by “subverting an established order”, favoring the development of her family and indirectly the development of society.

Just like this one, our other interpretative constructions of singular cases seek to make the subjective senses that guide the child's actions in the family and in other social spaces, such as school, intelligible. These constructions guide the actions we use to tension the therapeutic dialogues in which the subjective senses

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<sup>6</sup> “The subjective configuration is a self-generating formation that arises from the diverse flow of subjective senses, producing, from its generating character, converging groups of subjective senses that are expressed in the most stable subjective states of individuals in the course of an experience”. (González Rey & Mitjáns Martínez, 2017, p. 63).

are generated by the children in relation to what is experienced in the family. In this complex process, subjective senses of multiple experiences emerge, which can be reorganized.

By engaging in psychotherapy without suppressing their contradictions in relation to their parents' conflicts, children develop the ability to create and recreate their relationships in the family and outside of it, suggesting that there is subjective development. The result of these experiences suggests that psychotherapy favors the original process of constituting subjective configurations favorable to the emergence of the agent and the subject. So, I can say that psychotherapy with children is representative of the political aspect of the theory of subjectivity or that it is a resource for the process of subjective development of individuals suggesting, as I see it, a permanent reorganization of antagonistic and conflicting subjective senses.

My curiosity is about how antagonistic and conflicting subjective senses are permanently reorganized in the course of life, which leads me to reach for the principle of complexity - disorder - as thought by Morin (2003c). This author teaches us that permanent reorganization enables human beings to be original and singular.

As yet, I understand how subjective development is an original and unique process. For González Rey (2004), it is involved with the subjective senses that individuals generate in relation to multiple social and cultural experiences, in different contexts. Although he does not deny the place of the other in this process, González Rey (2004) emphasizes "the active and specific place of one's self-organization processes in the initial stages of development and their permanent presence as the subject of their interrelationships" (González Rey, 2004, p. 3). His criticism about the emphasis given by other theories to the place of the other in human development makes sense for psychotherapy with children from the perspective of subjectivity which, as we propose, includes spontaneity as a resource generated by children which enhances their creativity. I understand that this resource emerges in the therapeutic process, from the children themselves, from their emotionality in relation to the other.

González Rey (2004, p. 4) states that "human relationships are organized, from a very early age, as a system in which emotional expressions play a very important role, including the most important one for a newborn". So, it implies that emotion has a central place in subjective development processes. In accordance with González Rey's thinking, I try to understand children's subjective development from their emotions as affections initially produced in the communicative process and in their relationships with his family (Peres, 2001, 2012, 2013).

González Rey (2004) discusses how children generate subjective senses in the communicative process in the family and produces complex emotions that define the quality of their relationships in this space. Meanwhile, he points out that development is a process of qualitative change in the subjective organization of the individual and that it implies a variety of emotions. For the author, in this process, the individual's tensions and actions, always involved with their subjective productions, guarantee the development of their subject condition.

In the therapeutic process, I focus on the subjective senses that children generate from the communication in the family. During the “as if” play, I provoke them not to lose sight of their freedom to dialogue and to transit spontaneously between the experienced and the imagined, or to express themselves about their fantasies to their parents who embody different characters in this game. The make-believe play, the “as if” play, is a symbolic space in which the children experience reality and fiction, learn about themselves and about the other in a dialogic constructive-interpretative process. As in children's psychodrama, this takes place without a prior and delimited stage, without any regularity or pattern. Playing make-believe or “as if” encourages children to explore their possibilities of dialogic communication and creative actions, in the course of which they can generate new subjective senses in relation to their experiences.

Since nothing is previously organized, at that moment, the children experience their histories integrating past and future, or as Morin says, (2003b, p. 18), they experience the unusual in a unique way, that is, “the entire form of the human condition”.

In the piece, *The game and the child*, Jean Chateau (1987, p. 18) details how in each new experience, in each game, the child learns to provoke the new, to experiment with his possibilities, to have the pleasure of producing. In his words: “what pleases the child is less the result itself than the fact that he produced that result”. For the author, it is in make-believe play, in the creative game that “the child asserts his powers, proves his worth”, and I would say, with reference to the theory of subjectivity, that it is in this space that he can generate new senses, subjective aspects of communication and family relationships. I can say that in the therapeutic session there is a dialogical communicational process, which, as Morin (1998, p. 48) would say, “introduces pluralities, separations, oppositions, retroactivity and warmth” [...].

I know that in each therapeutic scenario there is a dialogical communication process in which there are unforeseen events, contradictions and paradoxes. I also know that each child, as a unique individual, “carries the entire form of the human condition” (Morin, 2003b, p. 18). I recognize that during the therapeutic process the singular child, in addition to carrying the entire form of the human condition, shows that his subjective development has a specific quality that is a condition for emerging or not as an agent or subject of his social process.

### **Psychotherapy with children as a social space for the development of the agent and subject of the social process**

From the perspective of the theory of subjectivity, it is possible to build theoretical models that explain the uniqueness of the subjective development process of children. Since 2005, I have been building explanatory models of the development of children whose parents dispute their custody in court. The dialogic interpretative constructions of these children's actions and relationships with their parents take place in individual and joint therapeutic sessions,



enlivened by multiple ludic scenarios, without any prior theme or any methodological coercion. Our job is to think and build indicators and hypotheses about convergent subjective senses involved in the “as if” play that induces the therapeutic dialogue and the emergence of the organization of a subjective configuration.

Psychotherapy with children is a social space for communication and production of subjectivity. In the sessions there is dialogue about how their experiences are heightened in scenes and dramatic actions in the “as if” play. In this ludic space of dialogue, they tense up to the point of recreating their experiences with their imagination and fantasies, leading us to believe that they generated new subjective senses in relation to the problem.

Children engage in therapeutic dialogue with their subjective productions, without suppressing their contradictions in relation to their families and the conflicts of their parents. It is likely that in this process they learn to create and recreate their relationships in the family and outside of it, suggesting that there is development or qualitative changes in their subjective organization, which indicates that psychotherapy encourages the original process of constituting subjective configurations favorable to the emergence of the agent or the subject that subverts the established order enabling the development of society. As far as we are concerned psychotherapy with children, from the perspective of the theory of subjectivity, is a social space for education, learning and subjective development.

With the concept of subjective development, González Rey and Mitjans Martínez (2017) offer new knowledge for psychotherapy with children and challenge us to expand it considering the infinite possibilities that children have to emerge as agents or subjects of the social process. Motivated by this knowledge, I recognize that psychotherapy in childhood can favor the subjective development process of individuals in the course of their living histories, so that they can emerge as agents or subjects of their social processes. I therefore understand that the agent and subject categories represent the political character of the theory of subjectivity, having a special value in psychotherapy with children. As I suppose, this psychotherapy opens possibilities for the development of the quality of the children’s subjective organization and a continuous development of their condition as agents or subjects of the social process, which, recursively, brings possibilities for the subjective development of society.

While dealing with children, I privilege the development of the subject. In this process, children can learn about themselves and the other, develop the quality of subjective senses and subjective configurations that guide their actions, and emerge as subjects in a specific circumstance and at any other moment in life.

Agent and subject are categories that represent subjective processes of development, of which individuals are not immediately aware. From what González Rey and Mitjans Martínez (2017) say about these categories, I inferred that they have different qualities of engaging individuals to action. I understood that the quality that surrounds the subject makes it possible for him not only to be

active and participative, like the agent, but to subvert the established order favoring the development of society, which demonstrates the political aspect of the theory of subjectivity.

González Rey and Mitjans Martínez (2017) state that individuals are always active in their development processes, that is, they are never passive. As I see it, they mean that individuals can emerge as agents or subjects in different ways, with different expressions, in different circumstances.

From my point of view, children are active in their processes of development. During the litigation of their parents, they are often active and can emerge as subjects. I observe that they suffer and complain about the separation of their parents, who take a stand on the conflict generated by them in the marriage and, sometimes, even with actions that subvert the order of the dispute, transgressing its normativity. I have several examples of how children subvert the order of litigation by revealing the secrecy of the accusation to the therapist, even putting the accusing parent at risk, for not having evidence. We are going to comment on the case of a 6-year-old child, compulsorily separated from her father accused of abuse, who reveals the secrecy of the accusation, defining her subjective experience of the litigation, in which past and future emerge integrated in her living history. The constructive-interpretative dialogue of the information took place at different times, in individual and joint sessions involving all family members in a complex process.

We have built indicators of subjective senses and hypotheses about the “subjective configuration of the action”<sup>7</sup> of this child when confronting her father and mother with questions about the conflict, the separation of the couple and the secrecy of the accusation without evidence. In the process of engaging in the constructive-interpretative dialogue, the child expresses her emotions and reveals the secrecy of the accusation, kept “under lock and key”, to protect the mother from punishment by the Justice: “my mother lied about my father, but the chief police cannot know otherwise he will arrest her”.

In the individual sessions, I emphasize her spontaneous and creative engagement in the dialogue about her parents' conflict through “intermediate objects” (cloth dolls that represent the family characters), as in this fragment: “I will tell you a story: the father arrived to see the children and played with them [...], the father gave the mother some money and she left [...] the father slept and when he woke up he asked: where is the money? The mother: I forgot it at the store”... The father got angry [...].

Dialogue is provoked through the intertwining of indicators and hypotheses about multiple subjective senses generated by the child in relation to her experiences in the family.

These subjective senses are involved in the organization of the child's speech at different moments of the therapeutic process and they are different from the social representation, which according to González Rey (2003) is a

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<sup>7</sup> “Self-generating formation, which arises from the diverse flow of subjective senses, producing, from its generating character, convergent groups of subjective senses that are expressed in the most stable subjective states of individuals in the course of an experience” (González Rey, & Mitjans Martínez, 2017, p. 63).

known reality and does not have a singular character, such as the subjective sense.

It turns out that, often, in a situation of separation or divorce, the permanent parent builds a representation of the other for the children based on their current needs and motivations. In this case, at various times the child shows commitment to the representation of a “bad” father and the need to protect her mother. The reality that the child knows about the separation and the father is the one that the mother presented her with and even if it sounds distant and confusing the child assumes it as real.

In the joint session, this child presents contradictory movements of distancing and approaching in relation to the father while looking at the family photo album. In this act, the tensioning of historical and current subjective senses transforms the quality of the dialogue between them.

The therapeutic dialogue is made possible by intertwining the indicators of these multiple subjective senses. Impacted, the child takes action and defines herself: “I’m suffering a lot [...] I don’t know what to do, should I stay here or should I stay there, one pulls me here and the other there [...].”

The fact that she interacted with her father in the dreaded joint session (monitored by the police and the police chief) and that she revealed the secrecy of the accusation is an important element for the interpretative construction of the subjective senses that she created from her experiences with him, not represented in a conscious way. Also, when she expressed herself about love, suffering, loss and guilt, she brought up the contradictory subjective senses that she generated in relation to her father and of which she is not aware.

Other excerpts, from other moments: “it’s my fault, it’s everyone’s fault” [...] “I can talk, but there are things I can’t” [...] “I’m good, but sometimes I lie a little (...) so as not to hurt my mother (...) I feel sorry for her (referring to her mother). I lie because sometimes I want to impress my mother. Everyone makes mistakes, right? I lie a little. But, if I speak, something very bad can happen, my mother can be arrested, she told me (...) “I lied because I don’t like my father and because he is mean”.

The “guilt”, however, may be implied in the subjectivity produced by her in relation to what she experienced while her parents separated, which she does not even remember anymore, “a long time ago, it was in the past” [...].

Although it comes from something very distant, from a story that she doesn’t even know for sure, subjectively configured, guilt acquires a unique form for her in her current suffering, that is, the parents’ litigation. That’s why she questions them, seeks explanations for the separation or perhaps seeks to understand their explanations about it, sometimes allowing herself or not to express them.

Then she seems to reflect: “you know, a very difficult decision had to be made, you know? The separation (...) very difficult (...) my mother (...) if I speak my mother can be arrested (...) the separation (...) very difficult. My mom [...]”.

In this dialogue, the child’s imagination emerges from the legal consequences of her mother’s action, enabling the construction of indicators of subjective senses generated by her in relation to the dispute.

The mother, in turn, by constructing a current representation of the father, makes it possible to interpret the subjective senses that she generated not only in relation to the couple's conflict or in relation to the father's impulsive affective expressions, but also regarding other experiences, perhaps, those which affected her own childhood.

As I understand it, the therapeutic dialogue made it possible for the child to develop subjective resources to position herself in relation to the father. It is possible that in this process she generated subjective senses that allowed her to take on the challenge of breaking with the social representation of “bad” (the father), created for her.

Therefore, I restate that the child can emerge as an agent or subject of the social process, depending on her subjective development or the quality of her subjective organization. On the other hand, not having their own ways of subjectivating their experiences in interrelated systems, such as the family and the judiciary, it is possible that they feel oppressed and present the most diverse symptoms. Psychotherapy can be an opportunity to open up their own subjectivation pathways in relation to these interrelated systems, to break with inappropriate names for childhood, traditionally attributed to adults, like bipolar disorder.

According to Vasen (2011), an Argentine psychiatrist and psychoanalyst, an epidemic of inappropriate names indicates that there is a wrong use of language for children's symptoms. This is the hegemonic language of the biomedical model, which dominates science and professional practice. I point out that this model makes it difficult to understand subjectivity, which “has no intelligibility in the visible and immediate”, and enables us to recognize “a generative, active subject, creator of realities (González Rey, 2014, p. 36).

The theory of subjectivity thus inaugurates a new framework for reflecting on health-disease processes, which I seek to make intelligible in psychotherapy with children. I seek to make the uniqueness of the cultural-historical process of children's development intelligible, without excluding the interrelated systems in which they live from this process: the family, the school, the child care network, the health care system, among others. Psychotherapy, in this perspective, offers children during the process of litigation between their parents the opportunity to realize their spontaneity, to open their own ways of subjectivation and to develop the condition of agent or subject of the social process. They can develop the quality of their subjective organization and creatively position themselves on the norms of the family, the judiciary and other interrelated systems, such as the school, for example.

With this, we reached in psychotherapy with children what González Rey (2004, 2005) supposes about the dynamic and recursive interrelationship between individual and social subjectivity that represents a complex system. Briefly, we have achieved what González Rey and Mitjáns Martínez (2017) assume when they state that in the micro and macro, individual and social spaces, a set of subjective configurations of multiple interrelated systems emerge.

In the therapeutic process with children who experience their parents' litigation, their subjectivities articulated with the subjectivity of the family and

the subjectivity of the legal institution emerge. The subjectivity of the family, in relation to the children, integrates a multiplicity of shared symbolic productions. For example, symbolic productions about human development, about health, about learning and others. We can say that in the therapeutic process with children symbolic and emotional productions or multiple subjective senses generated by them, by their families and by the judicial system emerge, forming a “symbolic-emotional chain” that guides their actions in the dispute.

At this moment, psychotherapy, as education and learning, can be a differential in the subjective development process of the children, the families and the judicial system. It is possible that the symbolic productions (beliefs, values, myths) of these interrelated systems reach a subjective level, which, for González Rey and Mitijáns Martínez (2017, p. 63) would be necessary for the “definition of a new quality in the subjective organization” of these systems.

Certainly my history working with children and their families from the perspective of Levy Moreno (1997), an author who made “an alliance with human health”, makes it easier for me to engage in this psychotherapy perspective, understanding that there is no determinism in the configurational system of subjectivity, that individuals can open “new ways of subjectivation” in relation to social meanings and that this opening favors the generation of new subjective senses and new subjective configurations in relation to what they experience.

I understand that, from this perspective, psychotherapy favors the development of individuals' subjective configurational systems, to the point of developing the condition of agents or subjects in the social process.

### **The emergence of new subjective senses and new subjective configurations in the therapeutic process**

Our hypothesis about the example presented above is that the child generated new subjective senses during the therapeutic process in relation to the separation of her parents and emerged as a subject of her own development when she transgressed the legal norms, revealed the legal secrecy and defined herself in relation to her closest ones.

This explains how the two interrelated concepts – subjective senses and subjective configurations – guide the individual's actions, without them being immediately aware of them (González Rey, 2002).

Like this one, many other examples encourage me to discuss the value of psychotherapy with children for the development of individuals as agents and subjects in the social process. This practice integrates past, present and future processes of subjective development, and makes us understand that “the complete vitality of life” integrates dynamically interrelated moments. As stated by González Rey and Mitijáns Martínez (2017, p. 63), “this new type of process emerges in culturally organized social life, allowing the integration of past and future as an inseparable quality of current subjective production”.

I even dare to confirm that in psychotherapy with children and also with adults at different moments in life, the past, present and future unit is organized in a subjective configuration (“a self-generating formation”).

According to González Rey and Mitjáns Martínez (2017, p. 63) this configuration “arises from the diverse flow of subjective senses, producing, from its generative character, convergent groups of subjective senses that are expressed in the most stable subjective states of individuals in the course of an experience”.

In addition to this, I would say that the most stable states of individuals appear in different circumstances of life, for example, in the legal litigation of ex-spouses for the custody of their children. Apparently, these states are part of a group of subjective senses generated throughout their lives and which, subjectively configured, emerge in this circumstance. I mean that they emerge in a subjective configuration that predominates and guides their actions in that circumstance (Peres, 2014, 2022).

This dominant subjective configuration in the dispute, complexly interrelated with the subjective development processes of the ex-spouses, challenges me to think about the value of psychotherapy with children as a social space for education and learning, as a social space that can favor their subjective development processes or the emergence of a subjective configuration, whose quality allows them to emerge as agents or subjects at this and other moments of life. So, I think that, even with great emotional burdens and suffering, these children can manage, at different times in their lives, to integrate past and future into opening new ways of subjectivating their current experiences.

Nevertheless, there are cases where this does not happen. I can give an example of an adult whose suffering is a subjective production of what he experienced in childhood. He is unable, in his current experiences, to integrate his past and future, and for not opening new subjectivation pathways nor generating new subjective senses from his past experiences, he does not generate new subjective configurations, constituting a pathological process.

González Rey (2007) states that it is the flow of historical and current subjective senses that allows individuals to always generate new subjective configurations, qualitatively different, and “new significant subjective resources for their relationships”.

I recognize this flow in the dynamism of the children's and adults' stories and that psychotherapy is the opportunity for them to generate new subjective senses of their relational experiences and emerge as agents or subjects in their social processes. I acknowledge that psychotherapy, in both cases, integrates the historical and the present, and it is sensitive to the possibility of dynamic reorganization of their experiences. I observe that in the therapeutic process with children subjective senses of different experiences emerge and that in psychotherapy with adults subjective senses of different moments of life emerge. With this, I confirm that in the theory of subjectivity there is no separation between past, present and future.

Past and future are inseparable qualities of the current subjective production. Past and future form a subjective unit marked by the imagination

(and fantasies) of the individual in relation to the experience (González Rey, & Mitjáns Martínez, 2017), representing the procedural and dynamic character of subjectivity.

This inseparability between past and future makes it possible to understand how multiple historical and current subjective senses integrate the most stable subjective configuration of ex-spouses in litigation, a formation that guides their actions in this life circumstance. While working with ex-couples, the interpretative construction of supposedly more stable configurations makes it possible to understand the interrelationship of different configurations and how they differ in the circumstance of litigation, even with the subjective configurations of the children (Peres, 2022). I recall that building up an interpretation of these configurations requires complex thinking, processual thinking, which interrelates historical and current subjective senses (Peres, 2022), that is, it requires understanding and explaining how the agent and the subject are gradually constituted throughout life.

This means that, even without being aware of it, individuals constitute subjective processes of development that allow or prevent them from emerging as agents or subjects of the social process (González Rey, & Mitjáns Martínez, 2017). According to the authors, both the agent and the subject have an active character; they think, act and organize themselves, generating a multiplicity of subjective senses and subjective configurations of which they are not immediately aware.

It is also noteworthy that Vygotsky (2001), in his work *Psychology of Art*, as analyzed by González Rey (2013), defines consciousness as a system, which for the author is a procedural organization, certainly a subjective organization of lived experience, a more complex system “and that it transcends what can be considered as cognition” (González Rey, 2014, p. 41).

In psychotherapy there are times when individuals, without being immediately aware of their actions, accuse the other of being responsible for the problem. At other times, when there is tension between emotional and symbolic productions, they own their actions, dialogue and reflect on them, repositioning themselves. I think that this ownership (Peres, 2022) represents subjective development, the quality of a subjective configuration that leads them to act or to emerge as subjects of the social process by subverting the order of litigation and the organization of the legal institution.

As González Rey and Mitjáns Martínez (2017) explain, emerging as an agent or subject depends on the quality of the subjective configuration that causes the individuals to turn into subjects, which is different from the subjective configuration that causes them to emerge as agents. According to the authors, the subjects transcend the normativity of the contexts in which they live, opening their own ways of subjectivation with their creativity, while the agents act according to the normativity of the contexts.

Thus, the process of subjective development, according to González Rey and Mitjáns Martínez (2017), is a continuous process without any regularity. In this process, individuals generate new subjective configurations, qualitatively different. In other words, the emergence of new subjective senses and new

subjective configurations, with new qualities, enable individuals to carry out the necessary changes to new forms of actions and relationships.

Indicators show that the therapeutic process with children enables qualitative changes in their subjective organization. As in other moments of life, in this process they can, for example, generate new subjective senses in relation to the conflict between parents and a configuration that leads them to reorganize their experiences in the family, at school or in other social spaces. I think that this process in childhood favors the emergence of the agent and the subject at any other moment in life.

I give the example of another adult, for whom psychotherapy in childhood favored his subjective development process. At that moment, he committed himself to his therapeutic process, which I suppose generated new subjective senses in relation to the family's disorders and new subjective configurations that made him free himself from the oppression of a deterministic diagnosis and the constitution of a pathological process. There are indicators pointing that the subjective senses he generated from this childhood experience were favorable to his emergence as a subject of the therapeutic and social processes. We conclude that he emerged as a subject of these processes by making “a revolution” in his subjective organization and in the quality of his life process, subverting the order of illness processes of other members in his family. The fact is that he managed to subvert his way of life and his relationships, no longer isolating himself and “consciously” positioning himself in the interrelated systems in which he lives and develops himself. The most interesting thing was that the subjective configuration of the pathology, relatively stable in childhood, and represented by behaviors of non-interaction or social distancing, did not define his subjective development. His subjective configurational system, in ongoing development, enabled him to generate new subjective senses and new subjective configurations in relation to the family disorder, illness processes and, probably, to have remained engaged in the therapeutic process. Probably his continuous engagement in this process, since childhood, made it possible to generate other subjective configurations, without any regularity, but qualitatively different and favorable to the development of his condition as an agent and subject of the social process.

By questioning about how the individual achieves these conditions in their subjective development process, I recognize the value of psychotherapy with children, and occasionally, those who experience the legal dispute between their parents.

### **Psychotherapy with children, subjective development and the emergence of the agent and the subject of the social process**

Children's emotional, active and creative engagement in the therapeutic dialogue suggests a possibility for them to emerge as an agent or as a subject of the social process. Their engagement in the dialogue about the “subjective-relational plot”



of parents in legal litigation expresses their subjective development processes, involved with the process of developing their emotionality.

Regarding the development of emotionality, I observe what González Rey (2005) states, when he says that in this process children express their needs and fantasies before any sort of reflection on their actions and relationships. Before understanding their relationships, they generate subjective senses about the emotional atmosphere of these relationships and these subjective senses integrate the subjective configuration that guides their actions, which sometimes represent pathologies of the biomedical model.

Once again, resorting to Vasen (2011), I suspect that the “inappropriate names” that children receive are representative of specialists' lack of knowledge about singular processes of emotionality development.

That is the case of children diagnosed with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) or with Autistic Spectrum Disorder, whose emotionality precedes their understanding of the conflict and litigation between their parents. I do not discuss what those children present (their symptoms?): restlessness, lack of attention and aggressiveness in the family context, but how this is their way of expressing a set of emotions from the subjective senses that they generated in relation to the conflict and parental litigation. I infer how these emotions, imaginatively associated with social meanings, are subjectively configured and guide their actions. At this point, I find it interesting to spot some of the imagination concepts by the philosopher Riccoeur (1913-2005). For the philosopher, imagination is “the arbitrary invocation of absent things”, of fictions that make the individual “believe in a reality that is misleading”. From his point of view, the imagination can be deceptive or serve criticism, reproduce or produce. (Riccoeur & Castoriadis, 2016, p. 76).

There is much evidence that the symptoms presented by children in the process of separation between their parents are emotional and symbolic (imaginative) productions, which justify psychotherapy at this moment in life as a space for learning and subjective development. It can be argued that it is a space for transforming the quality of the imagination, which, if not pathological, can be associated with complex fantasies of the child about the experience with the parents and complex emotions.

González Rey (2007) states that emotion is a form of expression of the individual in relation to an experience. As he exemplifies, children's irritation can be implicated with a combination of emotions that “do not correspond to a structure of meanings”, but express their “psychological state”.

In the case of a child diagnosed with ADHD, or with autism spectrum disorder, I understand that he is sensitive to the conflicts between his parents and the symbolic consequences of this conflict in the family system. The indicators suggest that he generated subjective senses and subjective configuration that led him to act. However, his action compromised the quality of his relationships with his parents and the possibility of the emergence of new subjective senses and new emotions. Psychotherapy was the opportunity to express his emotionality in relation to what he had experienced in the family and to understand how this emotionality was involved in his relationships. Like this example, others have

inspired me to think about how psychotherapy allows children to express their “emotional state” in relation to an experience (Peres, 1983) and generate new subjective senses in relation to it.

In this example, my hypothesis is that this child's emotional state is implicated with subjective senses of a subjective configuration that evokes various emotions like fear, insecurity and rejection, all of them committed with symbolic manifestations, such as attacking the father, distancing himself from the father and continually requesting the mother, among others. It is likely that these symbolic manifestations form a complex subjective network, inaccessible to the comprehension of parents and specialists. I understand this to be the current form of expression for this child, probably guided by a relatively stable subjective configuration, which favors the perpetuation of the emotional climate in family relationships and hinders the emergence of new subjective senses in relation to the conflict between parents.

According to González Rey (2007), if the subjective senses do not change, integrating the individual's relatively stable subjective configuration, there is no therapeutic change.

As for the above-mentioned example, we found that for a long time there were no significant changes in the child's family system, in the relationships between his parents, in their relationships with the child, who increasingly distanced himself from their expectations for his development, how to be well-mannered and attentive to their commands, and know how to conduct himself simultaneously. I believe that the change implies that the parents would generate new subjective senses in relation to the child's manifestations.

Translating the thought of González Rey (2007, p. 138) on examples like this, it is possible to understand that the child “does not live the experience in a neutral way”, that he “expresses a set of expectations and subjective states” related to the subjective configuration that guides his actions.

Still in our example, my assumption was that the child expressed the expectation that the parents would not fight and that his subjective state was related to a subjective configuration that represented the beginning of his subjective development process, a process that will define his differentiated expression, such as the case of the adult, previously presented.

As for the hegemony of a subjective configuration in a given context or life circumstance, I agree with González Rey (2007) that it requires further studies. Although this theme has been approached by me in the study of the legal litigation between ex-spouses for child custody (Peres, 2022), I still have many unanswered questions, mainly about how the cultural history of individuals, since birth, can be understood in psychotherapy.

As stated by González Rey (2007, p. 138), “the subjective configuration is fed and developed from a variety of subjective senses generated by the individual in the context of his actions”, but it maintains “stable nuclei of subjective production” that must be identified in the varied forms they assume in human behavior”.

Children expressing the quality of their emotional systems in the therapeutic space draws my attention; how this quality enables them to act in

difficult life circumstances. In this regard, we have the example of a child who expressed his emotionality in the circumstances of his parent's death, even before understanding the meanings of his action in "trying to save him", or how this action was implicated with his needs and affective motivations, or his expectations and his emotional state.

For González Rey (2005, p. 21), the development of emotionality "is the result of the convergence and the confrontation of meaning elements constituted in individual subjectivity, as an expression of the subject's history [...]".

It is possible that the development of the child's emotionality in our example is the result of the convergence and the confrontation of subjective senses in relation to his experiences with his parents, before and after separation. It is possible that, by positioning himself with his subjectivity in relation to the parent, he has emotionally transcended the linear and direct influences of the family system. Also, these subjective senses may be at the basis of his subversion in the order of the family system. With this subversion, I can assume that his subjectivity was unfolded and developed amid objective processes of his family's social organization. I suppose that the subjective senses that he generated from his parent's separation and death experiences may represent, as González Rey (2007) explains, another way in which this complex reality affected him.

In order to expand this thought, I continue to practice the interpretative construction of multiple singular cases or the understanding of the object of psychotherapy with children, their subjective development. As I say, the social space of psychotherapy with children enables the interpretative construction of a set of indicators on the subjective senses that they generate from communication and family relationships, subjective senses that are dynamically interrelated in a configuration of their developing subjective system.

Subjective senses emerge in this space in a disorganized, chaotic way, especially in the dialogic scenarios of make-believe plays in the "as if" simulation. They are not directly explicit in children's speech, narratives, or behaviors. The psychotherapists build indicators of subjective sense, based on hypotheses, inferences and their knowledge about the theory of subjectivity, childhood, family and others. By establishing an interpretation of the subjective configuration that guides the actions of a child, the therapist finds elements to develop the explanatory theoretical model of this unique process of subjective development and produce knowledge about the value of psychotherapy for this continuous process.

When working with families in litigation processes (Peres, 2022) it occurs to me that children are guided by subjective configurations in continuous development. I understand that they generate subjective senses related to their relationships with their parents, as well as the daily communication between them, and that these subjective senses form the subjective configuration that guides their actions. This moment of life – childhood – is of great sensitivity for the constitution of a subjective configuration involved with subjective senses generated in relation to what is lived in the immediate social space, the family. Including, in this space of great sensitivity for educational communication, there

can be learning favoring their subjective development, and their condition as agents and subjects of the social process.

Educational communication, as discussed by Tacca (2019, p. 139), “always accompanied by speeches, gestures, glances” [...] offers “many interpretative possibilities” that, as I think, may or may not result in significant learning for the subjective development of individuals. By being inserted in a new subjective configuration, with a new quality, it can cause individuals to emerge as agents or subjects of the social process. Therefore, I say: the subjective senses generated by the child in relation to this communication can emerge in different ways, at different times of his subjective development process, that is, involved with a new subjective configuration, which has a new quality. This requires the family to value the child in the communicative process, instigating this child to be active, reflective, and to freely express his fantasies and conflicts in relation to what he has experienced and to create alternatives to it with actions in the course of which he can generate new subjective senses in relation what he has lived.

Furthermore, in González Rey (2007, p. 29), I understand that the subjective senses that the individual generates from their experiences “are inseparable from the subjective configurations of their historical-social condition”, a condition that generates both individual and social subjective senses, generator of subjectivities.

I only have indicators about this. For example, the indicator that the historical and social condition of the child previously mentioned, an unstable and unpredictable condition, is inseparable from the subjective configuration that guides his actions in the family and at school, interrelated systems and producers of subjective senses. I am aware that in these interrelated systems, childhood is a time of “openness to the new”, of curiosity, but also of conflicts and contradictions. From the perspective of the theory of subjectivity, conflicts are a source of subjective development, which justifies psychotherapy with children who experience parental litigation. The therapeutic dialogue about their conflicts, as I propose, takes place in the midst of a play, which is how children originally express their emotionality. I propose the therapeutic dialogue about contradictions and conflicts to happen during an “as if” play.

I understand that this resource opens “zones of senses” for the children's learning about human values and principles, such as respecting themselves and others; being fair to themselves and others. In this social space of education, learning and subjective development, the children and their families dialogue about their conflicts, embodying different characters, who assume different features, with their own principles and values. I understand that this space generates new subjective senses of what the children experience in interrelated systems, certainly inseparable from the subjective configuration of their historical-social conditions.

In this social space, which is different from other spaces, children can open their own ways of subjectivating their experiences and parents can understand the development of their emotions and come up with new subjective senses about their manifestations.

Here's another example: a nine-year-old girl, who even contrary to her mother's expectations, takes a stand on her need and motivation to live with her non-custodial parent. Apparently, she generated subjective senses and configuration that led her to open up her own ways of subjectivation about her parents' litigation. The dialogue on this theme, in the "as if" play, was enough to express in a playful way her emotionality, which we assume is susceptible to the emergence of the agent or the subject in the process of the parents' litigation. Regarding the mother, we have indicators that she understood the child's emotionality and no longer embarrassed her with threats of abandonment, for courageously expressing her intention to "live with her father".

However, considering the theory of subjectivity, I still have many questions about these processes and about the value of psychotherapy in childhood for the subjective development of individuals and that, according to González Rey and Mitjáns Martínez (2017), is the development of resources that allow them to bring about "qualitative changes in different areas of life". The authors state that these changes originate in individuals "an ever deeper personal involvement in the area in which the subjective configuration of development is organized" (Mitjáns Martínez & González Rey, 2017, p. 23).

Considering this statement, I continue to study how the subjective configurations of development are organized in children who live the experience of their parents' litigation. Even nowadays, immersed in this field, I keep studying multiple cases and seek to build explanatory theoretical models on how different subjective configurations of development are organized in children and also in their parents.

With my hypotheses on the historical development of the agent and the subject, I follow the organization of the past, present and future unit in the therapeutic work. I try to understand how it organizes itself in new subjective configurations, qualitatively different, in each singular case. I keep track of how an adult, for example, without losing the original power of therapeutic learning in childhood, emerges as the subject of his social process, by subverting the order of an oppressive, pathologizing marital relationship. I interpreted that this is the result of his subjective development or that it represents the dynamic flow between multiple and diverse past subjective senses (originated in childhood) and current subjective senses, some of them developed in the ongoing therapeutic process.

This is my starting point when situating the value of psychotherapy with children for the emergence of subjectively configured qualities, in a continuous process of development. My hypothesis is that these emergences indicate that children have subjective resources or that they act guided by the quality of their subjective organization and not just by influences or impositions from the family system. As in the aforementioned case, these resources can emerge at any other time in life, with a new quality. Explicitly bringing the concept of Morin (2003c, p. 139), that "emergence is a new quality in relation to the components of the system", a concept that defines the objective of psychotherapy with children who experience parental litigation.

What happens is that the child emerges in the family system and sets all its components in motion. She tries as hard as she can to express her grief and take a stand against the system. I suppose that in this movement she develops new subjective senses of her communicational and relational experiences in the family and outside of it (Peres, 2022). This assumption is my guiding thread. I have indicators that the child, even though she can not communicate clearly through speech, does not subject herself to the social representations constructed for her.

As Morin (2003b) would say, she does not subject herself to the limits that speech imposes on communication. I have examples that, even when speech is incipient, children manage to communicate about their affective relationships. They signify them through the emotional tone of the scenarios they create for the make-believe play, for the “as” simulation. As noted (Vygotsky, 1996), even before speech, “children signify more the 'emotional nuance' of their social spaces than their objective aspects”.

This nuance allows the therapist to interpret the subjective senses they generate from communication and relationships in the family (Peres, 2001). I know that the subjective senses they generate from communication and their relationships in the family have an emotional nuance or that they carry a set of contradictory, conflicting emotions that affect their “body and mind”, but sometimes, to the point of developing the most diverse symptoms (Peres, 2022).

Under this perspective psychotherapy is the opportunity for children to be heard, embraced, understood and to create, with their spontaneity, alternatives to their own suffering embroiled with conflicting subjective senses. In a previous work (Peres, 2001), about “street children” and their families, I developed the hypothesis that conflicting, antagonistic subjective senses (historical and current) generated by them in relation to communication in the family, motivate them to “flee to the street”. I think they motivate them to break with the normative space of the family and to choose the street or the street group as a new social space for development. With the construction of several theoretical models to explain this process, I meant it as a singular process of subjective constitution of the subject, the one that, according to González Rey (2003), at some point in life, is capable of subverting the social space in which he lives, with options that go against the normativity of this space.

At that moment, this knowledge brought up a new “zone of sense” for understanding the cultural-historical process of subjective constitution of the so-called “street child”, but, above all, a new zone of sense for understanding the cultural-historical process of constituting the subject from the perspective of the theory of subjectivity. At that time, the knowledge about the unique processes of development of these children makes the theory of subjectivity legitimate for it surpasses the determinism and the simplification of classical science. Nowadays, with this knowledge, it is possible to discuss the value of psychotherapy with children for the process of subjective development of individuals.

## Final considerations

I reinforce that psychotherapy with children is a social space for education and learning, and that it is sensitive to their affective needs. The psychotherapist is the significant other, with whom children communicate about their actions and relationships, and to whom they express emotions imaginatively associated with the family's social representations of them, and from which I think they can emancipate themselves. Certainly, psychotherapy with children is not an imposition and needs to reach the idea of complex causality present in the theory of subjectivity, defined as a generating system, in constant organization and reorganization.

From my point of view, this social space for education and learning favors the spontaneous and creative expression of emotions, conflicts, imagination and fantasies of the children about the experience and the constitution of a relatively stable subjective configuration, with quality for them to take action as agents or subjects at that time and at future times. The construction-interpretation of the information allows me to confirm that the past, present and future unit is organized in qualitatively different subjective configurations in different moments of life. I dare to infer that the "most stable subjective states of individuals" represent multiple and diverse subjective senses generated throughout their histories, without any regularity, and that there is a dynamic flow between them, whether they converge or not.

Some indicators point out that in the actions that impact parents in litigation and destabilize the judicial process, children can generate subjective senses of a more stable subjective configuration. It is likely that in these actions children are under tension, enhancing emerging qualities of their developing subjective configurational system.

This process may represent the possibility of developing the subject condition, that is, the possibility of differentiating oneself from the normative processes of the family, even implying tension and antagonisms. So, I reaffirm the definition of the subject by the theory of subjectivity, which involves the definition of development as a subjective process, interrelated, dynamically and recursively, with what is lived in the tension of social life. I also reaffirm Morin's thought (2003b), that the subject emerges, that is, it is not an imposed condition.

With these ideas, I suggest that the therapist's actions, not even a constructive-interpretative dialogue, impact the children by straining their social processes; that these actions favor the original process of constitution of subjective configurations allowing them to emerge as subjects, to subvert the instituted order favoring their development and the development of their families. Thus, I reiterate that psychotherapy with children is a social space for education and learning and is sensitive to the children's affective needs. The psychotherapist is the significant other, with whom they communicate about their actions and relationships and to whom they express emotions imaginatively associated with the family's social representations of them, and from which I think they can emancipate themselves with spontaneity and creativity.

So, I can confirm that learning to emancipate oneself is not easy, it requires creating “one's own path of subjectivation”, which implies suffering when facing difficult life circumstances. I have several examples: that of ex-couples who, despite suffering, choose to become subjects of marital conflict; that of children who break with the desired family life and, contradictorily, assume the street as a social space for development; and the example of children who experience the dispute of their parents and who, even afraid of being rejected or abandoned, position themselves before their parents about their affective needs and their conflicts. Even with suffering, there are children who sometimes subvert the order of litigation, probably emerging as subjects in their social space.

Finally, I would presume that, especially in the context of parental litigation, new qualities may emerge in children's subjective organization. This emergence opens up a new intelligibility about the value of psychotherapy at this moment in life, and about its value for the development of the agent and the subject as defined in the theory of subjectivity. I can say that, from this perspective, therapy with children gains a political status, because it “inverts the sovereignty of command” in the game of power, both in the “as if” simulation and outside of it. For this, the therapist needs to act from the children's perspectives, that is, to get involved with them in make-believe plays, so that the communication about differences, antagonisms and complementarities of relationships in the family is expanded.

There is strong evidence that this inversion allows children to set their generating capacity to motion, emerging new subjective senses in tension with historical subjective senses. Everything indicates that this may be the root of the individual's subjective development, of their condition as subjects of the social process.

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