

RESEARCH VISION

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THE CREATION OF MICROANTHROPOLOGY : Anchoring Biology as the Basis for Constructing Knowledge in Social Sciences

Abstract

Every human act derives its roots from biological determinism (Damasio, 2019). Biology acts as source of all human dynamics, including human cultures or civilizations, in space and time. Consequently, the link between biology and human cultures is the most legitimate channel from which all knowledge in social and human sciences should be built. Because this link is objective, these knowledges would make it possible to build better knowledges on human beings and on human societies; they would make it possible to highlight immutable and irrefutable laws and principles; they would make social sciences pure science like Physics, etc. This link opens a field of knowledge with almost unlimited potential. Overall, the exploration of this field opens a new universe to the construction of knowledge in the social sciences and provides new solutions to current crises (global warming, etc.). Far from materialism and beyond the Cartesian dualism, this analytical approach, setting biology as a base of the construction of knowledges in the social sciences, represents microanthropology.

Keywords: Biology, biological determinism, Philosophy of cognitive sciences, materialism, Cartesian dualism, « Libetian dualism », culture, Biosocial

The research proposal

Anthropology, by its global definition, studies the human being in all its aspects, including its evolution, its physical structure, its culture, etc. It should therefore provide successive knowledge, step by step, from the human cell to human civilizations. This means, also, that Anthropology have to explain the links between endogenous dynamics of the body and human facts in relation to the exogenous environment to the body, including culture.

Nowadays, many studies, including those on Biosocial (Meloni, Williams & Martin, 2017 ; Frost, 2016), devote their research objects to these links. A fortiori, there is a discipline, underlying Anthropology, that is supposed to create bridges between biology and social sciences. It's Bioanthropology. Basically, this discipline should highlight the intrinsic force to any human being, called "homeostasis" by Antonio Damasio¹, triggering intentionality and

¹ Antonio Damasio, *The Strange Order of Things*, Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group, 2019.

stimulating human will and choices; it should explain the mechanisms of the governance of this force on human behaviors; it should explain precisely the mechanisms involving this force in human violence and, therefore, in perspective, in the triggering of wars and various other conflicts; it should lay the groundwork for the fundamental influence of this force in the emergence of economic inequalities between peoples; it should lay the groundwork for the involvement of this force on the emergence of racism; From one climate zone to another, it should lay the groundwork for the involvement of this force on the unequal distribution levels of accumulation of knowledge, experiences and ease to exploit the potential of intelligence; it should position this force in relation to moral, to free will, to reason and responsibility; etc. In this wake, the social sciences knowledge would be built from biology.

Thus, concretely, both Biosocial and Bioanthropology have failed to establish Biology as the basis for constructing knowledge in the social sciences (see below to understand precisely why). Precisely, it lacks practical knowledge objectively illustrating the influence of biological dynamics on the choices, decisions and actions of the human being. It's a crucial step establishing the link between the study of the internal environment of the body, the biology, and the study of external environments, the social sciences. This step would make it possible to integrate engineering into the social sciences and, therefore, to create immutable and irrefutable laws as it's the case, for example, in Physics. In short, biology should be the basis for building knowledge in the social sciences.

The questions are therefore to know why the truths of biological dynamics aren't established as the foundations of the construction of knowledge in the social sciences and how to create these links.

In short, these failures of the Bioanthropology and Biosocial are synonymous with a vacuum left by Anthropology; there is a significant rupture in the process of studying the Human Being. Consequently, this means that there is an unexplored specific field of knowledge in Anthropology. Studying this field and its potential is the purpose of this research project.

The background and work which has led up to the project

Filling the vacuum left by Anthropology would establish the biology as the basis of the knowledge construction in social sciences. It's therefore means, a priori, to analyze the influence of biological dynamics on the psyche. To do this, the cognitive sciences represent the reference discipline. However, there are many different paradigms developed in philosophy of cognitive sciences. We cite, for example, neuroscientific materialism, also called monism, and Cartesian dualism. Which one is most suitable for this research project?

Neuroscientific materialism is the currently paradigm legitimized by the scientific community. It's densely represented in literature. To understand how it imposed itself in literature and teaching, we must go back to the 18th century. Indeed, According to the context of the 18th century, the secularization of Western societies in particular seemed to be the new horizon. This process, for it to be legitimate, involved knowledges about the functioning of the brain.

This involvement, more cultural than scientific, represented what G.S. Rousseau calls "*neuromania*"². In this wake, since the Enlightenment, the cognitive sciences have been governed by a paradigm reducing existence to materiality. Precisely, this paradigm assimilates the soul/mind to the body. This neuromania is very accentuated in Diderot³, one of the Enlightenment thinkers.

Objectively, in the philosophy of cognitive science, neuroscientific materialists defend the idea that "all mental states have their sources in the physical structures of the body (specifically the brain)". According to them, « *Psyché est corporelle* »⁴ ("Psyche is corporeal"). They are qualified as monists, because very far from the three-dimensionality advocating the three dimensions of the human being structure, they refute Cartesian dualism⁵. Materialist neuroscientific theories "admit the existence of consciousness or mental states [perception, thought, emotions, intentions, memories, dreams, creative imagination]. [...] [But] all postulate that the physical events that take place in the brain are the only effective causes of the action."⁶ According to them, "brain functioning and thought are therefore only one"⁷. All psychic phenomena, including consciousness, derive their sources only from the physical structures of the brain. There are in scientific literature many reflections and explanations trying to justify this reductionism. For example, Jean-Pierre Changeux arrives at the conclusion that "Man has nothing more to do with "mind", it's enough for him to be the neuronal man"⁸. According to him, consciousness is a product of the activity of "Various neurons groups"⁹. This thesis is shared by Carl Zimmer¹⁰. Edelman, meanwhile, considers that "It's not necessary to add any new principle to account for consciousness - only new morphologies from evolution are needed."¹¹ In other words, "there is no need to use principles other than biological to explain the appearance of the mind"¹². In Short, Edelman subscribes to the idea of the "*Biologization of the Mind*"¹³. For him, the appearance of the mind is a biological "process" linked to evolution. Antonio Damasio is also part of monism when he assimilates the mind to the body¹⁴. In the same logic Stanislas Dehaene radically refutes Cartesian dualism in favor of monism¹⁵.

² G.S. Rousseau, *Nervous Acts : Essays on Literature, Culture, and Sensibility*, p. 250, New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2004.

³ Denis Diderot, *Éléments de physiologie*, Histoire du matérialisme, Éditions Matériologique, [1875] 2019.

⁴ Françoise Coblence « La vie d'âme. Psyché est corporelle, n'en sait rien », *Revue française de psychanalyse*, 74/5, (2010), p. 1285-1356, 2010.

⁵ René DESCARTES, *Le discours de la méthode*, Édition numérique réalisée par Tremblay Jean-Marie (Cégep Chicoutimi). <http://dx.doi.org/doi:10.1522/cla.der.dis> (« Les auteur(e)s classiques »), 1637.

⁶ John Eccles, *Comment la conscience contrôle le cerveau*, p.25, Paris, Fayard, 1989.

⁷ Dominique Laplane, *La mouche dans le bocal, Essai sur la liberté de l'homme neuronal*, p. 12, Paris, Plon, 1987.

⁸ Jean-Pierre Changeux, *L'Homme neuronal*, p. 228, Paris, Fayard (coll. Le temps des sciences), 1983.

⁹ Jean-Pierre Changeux, *Ibidem.*, p. 213.

¹⁰ Carl Zimmer, *Et l'âme devint chair : aux origines de la neurologie*, p. 9, Trad. par Sophie Renaut, Zones sensibles 2014.

¹¹ Gerald Edelman, *Biologie de la conscience*, p. 209, Paris, Odile Jacob (coll. Sciences), 1992.

¹² Bernard Feltz, *Neurosciences et réductionnisme*, in *Entre l'esprit et le corps*, page 202, Mardaga, 1994.

¹³ Bernard Feltz, *Ibidem.*

¹⁴ Antonio R. Damasio, *L'erreur de Descartes*, p. 315, Paris, Odile Jacob, 1995.

¹⁵ Stanislas Dehaene, *Le code de la conscience*, pp.26-27, Paris, Odile Jacob, 2014.

By reducing existence, and specifically the structure of the human being, to its material dimension, the monism reduces at the same time the fields of the possible of the knowledge. Precisely, as this paradigm imposes a unique and restricted trajectory of the construction of the knowledge, it atrophies the field of the knowledge.

In this project, we'll show that this radical interpretation is false and places the construction of the knowledge on a very narrow and erroneous track; it pushes the construction of the knowledge and political dynamics in an impasse.

Thus, in any case, because bioanthropology is normativized and aligned with materialism, any attempt to base research in social sciences on biology would have led to a dead end. As for Biosocial, it would be hasty to consider it a failure. Because it's not in itself a normative discipline embedded in materialism; it arises as a trend of generic research open to the future. But if, for around thirty years, it hasn't succeeded in establishing biology as the basis for constructing knowledge in the social sciences, it's because sociologists are faced with a problem of methodology. For example, researchers devoting their research to it don't create qualitative synergy between all the sciences inherent to the internal functioning of the body. In isolation, some are devoted to epigenetics (Chung E., Cromby J., Papadopoulos D., & Tufarelli C., 2017; Pickersgill M., 2016; Chiapperino L., Testa G., 2016) while others seek answers through neuroscience (Fitzgerald D., Rose N., Singh I., 2016; Bone J., 2016). It's from this faulty method that we can speak of the failure of the Biosocial.

The expected outcomes from my work

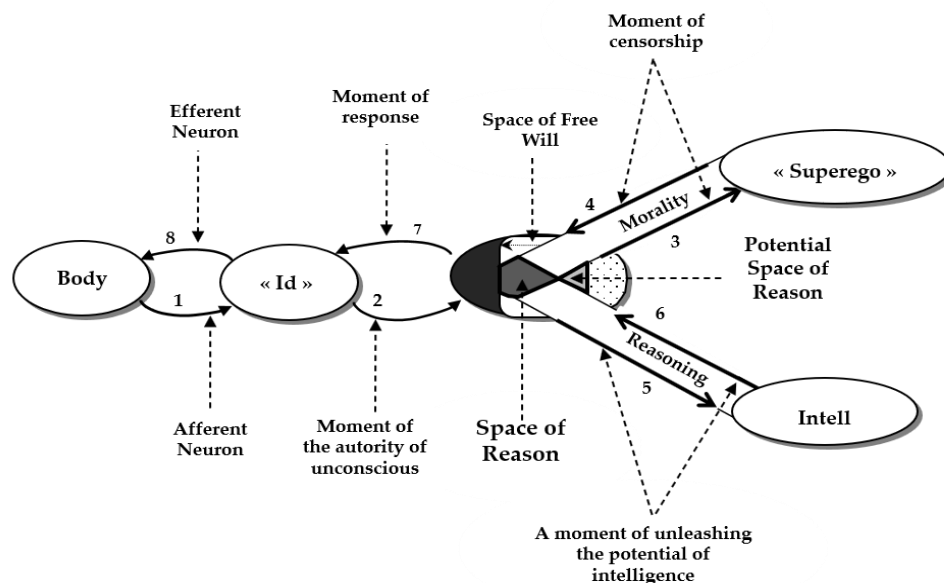
Far from materialism and beyond dualism, this project will fill the void left by Anthropology. And, because Bioanthropology is normativized and aligned with materialism, all the knowledge produced will be entitled Microanthropology. We'll present, in their entirety, the identity and the dynamics of biological determinism and explain how they impel any human act. Specifically, we'll show how this force is endowed with intentionality, memory, will and intelligence. We'll show how it interacts with the dynamics of conscious and generates every elaborate action (contrary to reflex) in Human Being. This simplified scheme is the basis of the link between biology and human cultures; it establishes biology as the foundation of the building of knowledge in the social sciences.

We'll show how this scheme becomes more complex depending on the nature of the body's needs and the challenges posed by the environments exogenous to the body; we'll then show how moral intervenes to make emerge free will, reason and responsibility. From here, we'll have the main data to objectively assess the main theories of social sciences including that of the neoliberal economy, the Kantian theory of reason, etc. ; we'll explain the roots of economic inequalities, the origins of racism;

we'll elaborate the law of violence and its mechanisms; we'll highlight the immutable logic of human intelligence; we'll show how, due to biological dynamics, dictatorship, individualism,

nationalism, racism, etc. are the rule while democracy, altruism, universalism, etc. are the exception; etc.

The following diagram is the one we'll methodically construct. It's the general diagram of Microanthropology from which we'll write many other theses.



General scheme of microanthropology

Methodology

Far from materialism and beyond Cartesian dualism, we put three-dimensionality into perspective for the creation of Microanthropology. And, unlike the materialists according to whom "psyche is bodily", we consider (and justify) rather than body is psychic. That is to say that the body is the "fruit" of the psyche. This is the only track that makes it possible to justify and explain both the impact of moral and the emergence of free will, reason and responsibility. To explain this, we first consider the powerful intrinsic force (homeostasis according to Damasio¹⁶), biological determinism, governing any Human Being. Then, to better position it, according to its etymology, we subdivide the human soul into two distinct parts. The first is the lower part, which we associate with the unconscious and whose dynamics are governed by the Autonomic Nervous System. It's to this lower part that biological determinism belongs. It plays the role of formation, maintenance and transformation of the body of all living beings.

¹⁶ Antonio Damasio, *The Strange Order of Things*, Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group, 2019.

The second is the upper part; we associate it with the conscious and its dynamics are governed by the Central Nervous System.

The dynamics of the unconscious manages the entire endogenous environment of the body. It captures (or detects) various lacks associated with the conservation (survival & well-being) of the body, for example dehydration. In the form of injunctions, it transmits requests (for example rehydration) to the dynamics of the conscious, managing the various exogenous environments of the body; It's from these exogenous environments that various resources are captured in order to satisfy to these lacks. In this relationship, the dynamic of the conscious is subordinate to that of the unconscious.

A priori, every human being is born without impact of the moral, without free will, without reason and without responsibility. The potential impact of the moral and the emergence of these three phenomena (free will, reason and responsibility) occur with the awakening of the dynamics of the conscious. To show how these three phenomena emerge, we confront the authority of the unconscious with various authorities exogenous to the body. The quality of this confrontation represents the first of the two variables of combination of culture. The second variable mainly illustrates the level of exploitation of the potential of intelligence. This level depends on the density of informations circulating between the dynamics of the unconscious and that of conscious. And various combinations of these two variables represent as many diverse human cultures.

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