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# APPEARANCE OF SUBJECTIVITY

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***Abstract.*** The authors attempt to outline an ontological perspective different from the mainstream materialistic ontology. Some aspects of this perspective can be found in the works of eminent philosophers of the past, such as Husserl or Hegel. The authors, however, point out a systematic methodological mistake earlier thinkers made concerning the notion of the Other. The Other is the key factor in the development of consciousness and subjectivity, and this paper seeks to show how the Other moulds and creates subjectivity out of a biological man. Human identity arises in two steps: ontological identity is created first, from which empirical identity grows, culminating in consciousness and personality. It was logical for philosophical consciousness to contemplate subjectivity which is not yet formed. *Tabula rasa* is a biological man, but that structure will not become a human subjectivity if it does not dwell with other subjectivities. The Other is not simply another Self. There is no elementary sensation to inform a biological organism of the state in which it finds itself; it is a kind of a physical unity for the emerging consciousness, but in itself it is not yet ready to perceive and act according to it at this stage. Without the influence of the Other, a human organism will never become Self. This unifying *perception* of the Other depicts an original encounter where there is also fascination. But fascination turns into frustration when the Other disappears or exits the focused perceptual field. This process of perceptual addition and dissolution is repeated, creating a change in what can be called the game of presence and absence. With the departure of the Other, the cause of the focus goes away, but what remains is its trace — the attention that is now left to wonder. Attention left without its source is only to itself and is directed to itself because this is the only direction that remains. Subjectivity, once symbolised by a circle, finally takes the form of a torus in whose interior hole resides the *trace of the Other.* With the entry of multiple Others into the relationship, primarily through speech, meanings acquire solid aspects introducing the law of symbolic order. This stabilisation of meanings frees uninitiated subjectivity, by which one truly enters the field of freedom opening that of ethics. The authors' point is that accounting for the notion of external world, one should consider the Other first, and only after that simple otherness.

**Keywords:** consciousness, identity, otherness, personality, Self, subjectivity, the Other

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Исследовательская статья

# СТАНОВЛЕНИЕ СУБЪЕКТНОСТИ

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**Аннотация.** Авторы намечают онтологическую перспективу, отличную от общепринятой материалистической онтологии. Отдельные моменты этой перспективы можно обнаружить в работах выдающихся философов прошлого, таких как Гуссерль и Гегель. Авторы обращают, однако, внимание на систематическую методологическую ошибку мыслителей прежних веков относительно понятия Другого. Другой — ключевой фактор в становлении сознания и субъектности, и статья имеет целью показать, как Другой формирует и создаёт субъектность из «материала» биологического человека. Человеческая идентичность возникает в два этапа: сначала создаётся идентичность онтологическая, из которой вырастает эмпирическая идентичность, порождающая сознание и личность. Философская мысль, начинала с рассмотрения ещё не оформившейся субъектности. Tabula rasa таким образом — это биологический человек, но подобная сущность может обрести человеческую субъектность лишь в общении с другими субъектностями. Другой — это не просто ещё одно Я. Нет никакого базового ощущения, способного донести до биологического организма информацию о его собственном состоянии; такой организм представляет собой природную основу для возникновения сознания, но сам по себе на этом этапе ещё не способен воспринимать и действовать как сознательное существо. Без воздействия Другого человеческий организм никогда не станет Я. Единящее «восприятие» Другого есть исходная встреча, порождающая очарование. Но очарование сменяется фрустрацией, когда Другой исчезает из поля зрения. Этот повторяющийся процесс перцептивного присоединения и расторжения порождает своего рода игру в присутствие и отсутствие. С удалением Другого точка фокусирования исчезает, но оставляет после себя след в виде блуждающего внимания. Внимание, лишённое точки приложения, остаётся наедине с собой и направляется на себя, потому что больше ему направляться не на что. Субъектность, которая когда-то символизировалась кругом, принимает форму тора, в пустом центре которого пребывает «след Другого». С присоединением, преимущественно посредством речи, множественных Других смыслы обретают устойчивость, порождая символический порядок. Стабилизация смыслов высвобождает профанную субъектность и знаменует вступление в область свободы и, стало быть, в область этического. Объясняя саму идею внешней действительности, настаивают авторы, следует, в первую очередь, принимать во внимание Другого (Иного) и лишь затем — инаковость как таковую.

**Ключевые слова:** Другой (Иной), идентичность, инаковость, личность, сознание, субъектность, Я

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In this paper we intend to substantiate an ontology different from the set of theories we are accustomed to in contemporary philosophy. This is by no means an attempt to forsake critical insights into traditional philosophy, nor uncritical espousal of contemporary professional trends. As stated in an earlier paper, the critique of tradition is not in itself our goal[1]. One of the results relevant to this study is the understanding that tradition has followed a seemingly logically correct order of basic questions, viz.: a) Leibnitz's question [Leibnitz, 1890: 213], b) the question about the possibility of life, and c) the problem of how a thing such as ego-structure is possible? This order of questions sets the ontology as we know it, tracing all the solutions allowed by the paradigm.

The ontology implied by this sequence of questions expresses objectivist tendency and proceeds from general units (elements, particles) which account for the emergence of material structures that can be called live and on the basis of which consciousness develops. This historically and practically deeply grounded paradigm does not allow for any deviation from the order of constituents; the illusion is supported by the fact that technologies flourish while science derogates into a series of unscientific protocols subjected to unscientific interests. If, however, one looks at the problem from a different perspective, reversing the questions, there is something new to be said about this constellation. In view of the current confusion about the dominant paradigm, nothing seems to contradict the assumption that answering the question about the possibility of identity structure of the form Self = Self opens greater opportunities and allows for better insights into the question of the origin of life and, consequently, the transcendence of the world. This means that interpretation of this third question provides for a glimpse into a somewhat different structure of subjectivity as well as its origins[2].

This question arises again: how is human subjectivity possible? If this is posed as a question of identity, human identity arises in two steps: ontological identity is created first, from which, as from its transcendental basis, empirical identity grows, culminating in what is considered consciousness and personality. Setting out from self-awareness, we get to the conclusion that, for all the changes in philosophy, the only uncontested truth and the starting point for anyone contemplating possibility of knowledge is the Cartesian or Husserl's attitude. Whatever we acquire by reduction of *ego cogito to cogitatum* [Хусерл, 1975: 71], consciousness is perceived as a fundamental and undeniable identity of the Self with ourselves which is attested by the fact that we are given to ourselves in a way completely different from the way everything else is given to us.

The starting position is therefore basically the same: we have the situation of self-presented consciousness, self-awareness, or if you prefer *self-certainty* [Hegel, 1979: 106] of the one who speaks, that is, our Self. The history of philosophy has taught us that to start philosophising from science means to fail to reach the outside world resulting in the *destruction of metaphysics* and the victory of the eternal *danger of solipsism* [Сартр, 1984:237]. On the other hand, by abandoning the problem itself, pragmatism proved, paradoxically, to be an epochal dominant program.

Philosophising from Self, having reached the position of self-consciousness, did not establish itself historically as the transcendental condition of all science, but rather attempted to establish a starting point exterior to the fact of self-awareness. That was due to the fact that the overlapping of language and consciousness was not properly understood. A consciousness that starts to philosophise upon the very decision to do so is initially equipped only with the language in which it thinks. Philosophy that can only be expressed in language is, therefore, obliged to reflect precisely this fact. Even though contemporary philosophy has given up searching for original moments and meanings of some class of language phenomena, no *results* of such an attitude oblige

[1] Therefore, some elements of the preliminary foundations of our position will reappear as motives [Братина, 2010; 2017].
[2] This question was almost literally banned by Fichte who found it meaningless, but was rehabilitated by subsequent philosophy, starting with phenomenology. One of the best examples is Heidegger's famous text on the *principle of identity.*

us to avoid asking questions about the origins of language, just as Fichte could not forbid the simple question "Where did I come from?" [Fichte, 1974: 47].

But, if we ask that question ourselves, we can see immediately that, from the phenomenological standpoint, either it is We ourselves, or it is Others who are the source of language as the language itself suggests. The former option is based on the assumption that all perceptions are always personal and that we are not obliged to imply any existence *behind* them, so we can take on the role of the language creator and hence the creator of entire reality. Of all the concepts we have, however, it is only the concept of God that allows for such a possibility, because God alone is capable of self-separating and creating a language; ergo, the former option means that we attribute divine attributes to ourselves. To advocate such an attitude is suggestive of a diagnosis rather than a philosophical position. However, when solipsism is viewed, albeit linguistically, precisely from the standpoint of possibility of subjectivity, it turns out that the price of existing as a human and entering into a language and the world is precisely that principled possibility of solipsism. The *danger of solipsism* does not actually exist, despite it being always possible. In other words, there is no one free of this imperfection that proves to be the transcendental condition of human subjectivity.

Husserl, like a consummate Western ontologist, seeks to constitute the Other proceeding from his body or the behaviour of him-as-body [Хусерл, 1975: 119]. And, as stated earlier, this has proven to be an unsuccessful project from the dawn of modernity to the present day, if we put aside the criteria of pragmatism and behavioural psychology. Establishing the Other by deriving him from what is merely other is equally valid for Heidegger and is common to the whole modern tradition[3]. Whether Husserl forms the Other in the so-called reconstitution of the outside world, or Heidegger neglects the reductive process and situates *Mit-dasein* among the basic existentials [Хајдегер, 1988: 135], we cannot avoid getting the impression that the transcendental ego, just like the initial *Dasein*, looks more like a small child which encounters things around him than like a self-established existence. This motive repeats itself in psychoanalysis (that searches precisely for that little child in the subject) and in that full-blown rejection of psychoanalysis, Levinas's broad exposition of *separation* [Levinas, 1976: 53]. In a somewhat different register, that a young man is initially in some *il y a* state[4].

One remark on empiricism is needed at this point; someone might find our procedure of self-reflection as, at first glance, empirical, because it looks like a kind of observational research. Yet this research is only about private, philosophising consciousness. That is, perceptions, feelings, and even mental conclusions remain just something for *us*, that individual minimal subjectivity that *belongs* to every philosophising consciousness. In order for it to become intelligent, it must stay away from all interests except cognition. That is why there is no place for true empiricism here, because the fact of the language leads us to itself as the only a priori of philosophy.

It was somehow logical for philosophical consciousness to come to observation of subjectivity which it is not yet formed. *Tabula rasa,* for us, is a biological man, but that structure will not become a human subjectivity if it does not dwell with other subjectivities[5]. Here it becomes clear that the Other is not simply another Self as Husserl and later Derrida [Дњеида, 2001: 63] found. To that extent, we

[3] This thesis is originally Levinas's. We have argued this extensively in the cited works, but in a concise form we have done so in a text titled "Other or the Other" [Bratina, 2016].

[4] For lack of space we have to pass by the many different positions of contemporary philosophy. We take Levinas's position as exemplary because we find that the main facet of The Other is closeness as indicated in the final part of *Totality and Infinite,* and not *strangeness*. Levinas pays attention to the notion of strangeness, too, but we wish to track down the developments that arise out of closeness. In this we differ from Waldenfells who accentuates strangeness rather than closeness.

[5] The attitude that what does not reside among people cannot even become a man as an ego-structure is actually fundamentally important in this performance. This is paradigmatically expressed in the field of empirical sciences by the famous case of the *wolf sisters.* They were not humans and then they could not become humans because they were already wolves.

also accept research from the situation of *continuum* [Лоренцер, 1984: 37], or Levinas's *il y a,* i.e. that our cognitive consciousness on that path to recognizing the Self and the Other is not yet either a subject or an object.

Being in a state of continuum would recognize first the contact with the Other and not some desolate otherness; he who is not yet lacks the ability to understand simple otherness. There is no elementary sensation to inform a biological organism of the state in which it finds itself; it is a kind of physical unity for the emerging consciousness, but in itself it is not yet ready to perceive and act according to it at this stage. There is no perception of any pre-reflexive content or recognition of squares, straight lines, or at least points, so there is still no self-awareness for which these could make sense. Without the influence of the Other, a human organism is doomed to never become Self. A biological organism in the state of continuum remains closed.

It must be the Other which will be an effective cause of the change in the state of the continuum for the not-yet-arrived. The one who has not yet entered the world does not react to the Other as if it saw some *other Self,* or even as a psychophysical unity. The action that needs to be performed was described by Levinas as *anarchic* and *asymmetric speech relation*, more specifically known as *call*. The Other that can see itself in the world and at the same time outside of it, which is always the case with a philosophising ego-structure, believes that the new consciousness necessarily belongs to the world, rejoices in it and invites it to join the world. The new consciousness does not understand the content of the call, nor that it is called upon, but it is exposed to frequent repetitions of calls at the level of physical stimuli. Since every biological organism is in this sense always dependent on the compulsion of repetition, it responds to repetition with adaptation which is also linked to other, more persistent forms of repeating, like hunger, thirst or pain, which together form the most necessary needs of the organism.

There is a repeating of focusing on Other that frequently occupies the larger part of perceptions of the to-be-ego structure directing them to the Other. It happens that scattered perceptions unite outside into a bundle. Levinas would say that it is the face of the Other who calls. "Here I am!" is what provokes a reaction that is still far from being linguistic in the sense of the so-called natural language, or a symbolic response of any Self. This unifying *perception* of the Other depicts an original encounter with him where there is also fascination. Fascination is there not only because of the fact of changing one's condition, but for him that fascination resembles a certain encounter with the *fullness of being*.

The Other at that time cannot know what is happening within the object of his attention, even if he is the one calling it. Thus, an encounter that no one will remember is marked by ignorance, as well as by fascination of experiencing the fullness of the presence of the Other. But fascination turns into frustration when the Other disappears or exits the focused perceptual field. This process of perceptual addition and dissolution is repeated, creating a change in what will later be called the game of presence and absence. With the departure of the Other, the cause of the focus goes away, but what remains even then is its trace — the attention that is now left to wonder. Precisely attention left without its source is only to itself and is directed to itself because this is the only direction that remains. This orientation in the absence of the Other becomes an object to itself and formally gives the first abstract word of language: Fichte's Self = Self.

This can be understood as an ontological description of Lacan's mirror stage [Lacan, 1983: 5]. Here it is important to note that the new structure closes in itself due to the denied contact with the Other. We come to see that this abolition of the Other has literally produced the Self as a structure of self-consciousness. Here we should not miss the fact that this *closure* can never be remembered by the would-be subjectivity, since it did not even exist before this original encounter. Even treating this *an-archic* meeting as a process, i.e. a series of encounters repeated until the *feedback loop* is established, makes no crucial difference. At the same time a human structure becomes self-consciousness, it also becomes capable of disciplining its perceptions. Its state is not pure episteme, it is what existed prior to the splitting into theoretical, practical and poetic, or into reason and senses. It is one, undivided

and undifferentiated, still lacking knowledge of how much it depends on the Other. In other words, it enters the world in a dyadic way, preserving the state of the primary dyad as a trace of the original encounter — a trace, not a memory. Although the structure has already been conceived, it has not yet taken the form of one, but persists in that of two. This is where the emergence of what we have called ontological identity ends. What arises from it is due to be torn into senses and reason, but for moment these remain indistinguishable.

Ontological identity is the real starting point toward future subjectivity. The second part of the abstraction, which we call empirical identity, originally displays no significant difference vis-a-vis the ontological. The game of the presence and absence of the Other through which the Self is to arise goes on. Since the action is repetitive, it becomes a basis on which perceptions can be maintained as retentions made fit for discipline. Ontological identity becomes forgotten, empirical identity hence perceived as the only identity within the emerging consciousness. The difference between the two is that the ontological identity is formed by the Other and is common to all Selves, whereas everything else belongs to the empirical identity. Subjectivity, once symbolised by a circle, finally takes the form of a torus in whose interior hole, however, resides the *trace of the Other.* The future-Self is on the way to become that, but since the Other is the one who educates, denies and rewards it, it cannot express itself freely because it is still temporarily imprisoned in that dyadic relation. The Other, who introduces the world, also guarantees all the meanings that will arise in the process. This means that if one never extends beyond this dyadic relation, one would never step on the soil of freedom but would remain forever trapped and constrained[6]. For a newcomer this dyadic relation plays, of course, a protective role hitherto performed by the Other. The Other produces both Self and the first concept of world for Self. At this stage, the Self has become essentially separate and will continue to individualise, constituted now to develop as an empirical identity. Empirical identity is by no means less important as far as formation of personality, character and capacities are concerned, but ontological identity remains the transcendental basis for the formation of Self. This does not mean that ontological identity is a sufficient condition for subjectivity, because without empirical identity there would be no personality formed around the ontological identity other than the personality of the Other.

In order for this to happen, it is necessary for a Second Other to enter into the relation with Self, the one that Levinas would baptise the Third. It is a transition that renders all other selves simply others for a newcomer who finds himself in a situation that is given to himself in a way that differs from how everything else is given to him, i.e. directly. With the entry of multiple Others into the relationship, primarily through speech, meanings acquire solid aspects introducing the law of symbolic order. This stabilisation of meanings frees the uninitiated subjectivity, so that one is capable of saying what one wants; one can respect one's unconscious debt to the Other or refuse to do so, be good or wicked, assume and find his own expressions. By this one truly enters the field of freedom. With this the field of ethics is also opened.

However, the most important thing for us is that freedom of subjectivity is expressed primarily as free use of language, it is independence of the symbolic as an essential provision of consciousness. Even Heidegger's *Dasein* always speaks and acts through language. One can also say that Hegel seemed to know something about this, because his *consummate* subjectivity differed from that on the threshold of language, let alone from what had not yet separated from the state of the continuum. Even though there were some steps in that direction, modern philosophical tradition has not yielded a proper reflection of ontological identity. Hegel's stage of self-certainty allows to distinguish others from self, though he does not name the former; from the opening pages of *Being and Time* Heidegger's Dasein is al-

[6] By the way, this shows why consequences of an unresolved Oedipus complex are so horrendous and why it has to be resolved. In the absence of this resolution, one lingers on in a state of slavery denied the power of reflection.

ready looking for things it can sort out; Husserl's transcendental self already has, in the so-called reconstitution of the external world, a *primordial world* to cope with. To Heidegger and Husserl, it does not appear strange that formations of *Dasein*, i.e. transcendental egos, are *thrown into the world*; they already speak and are directed towards otherness where Other has failed to enter the equation at the right moment. Homo sapiens is not yet human; he still lacks precisely that kind of *sapientia* which is regarded as the trace of the symbolical.

The consummation of this subjectivity occurs among signs; *self-certainty* is for Hegel, Husserl, and Heidegger only the beginning of inquiry, and this is where we end our investigation. Indeed, entering and mastering signs means entering the world, accepting the rules, as well as entering the intersubjective moral and ontological order as given in the exterior. Signs that have always been there but have not meant anything earlier, are now flooding the world of the newcomer due to the necessity to respond to them. This mastery of signs allows for the linguistic sequence of self-reflection, but also for the falling, necessary as it is, into the symbolic order. This opportunity found upon entering the world of signs which allows one to understand oneself as another Other, contains a *trace* of what happened during the formation of ontological identity, a trace that can never be the subject of intentional consciousness or any sense or instinct, just of some vague feeling partially embedded in the assumptions of language. But the first word of language, the *Self = Self*, does not enter through consciousness, nor is it latent in the Freudian unconscious. When philosophy came to this view, it did not remember its origin but nailed it to the foundation of subjectivity as something behind which there was nothing – the first step of subjectivity.

One of the goals of this research has been to understand how the flow of language has affected subjectivity since the state of continuity, even though it meant nothing to one at the time and one passed by without recognising the relevant signs[7]. Sound gained relevance in relation to the whole sensory apparatus and acquired ontological identity, but it was not initially interpreted symbolically, rather as a kind of musically meaningful message expressing pleasure or discomfort, delight or horror. With the intrusion of other Others into the field of the conceived Self, words cease to be signals and begin to become signs; one thus enters a language community only after the intrusion. The meaning and the use of words not yet duly matched is revealed to consciousness mostly through the way others use same sound constructions. A newborn, upon acquiring meanings thanks to his ability to compare, notices his freedom and feels satisfaction when he perceives the similar or different use of words. He also begins to connect sounds to entities available to other senses much easier and more often, and with this we come to matters better known to general literature. A. Petrović argued that "Separate existence of an individual is not explainable from the standpoint of physicalistic organisation of nature"8, so we have tried to offer herewith an alternative standpoint that allows, at least, to account for connections between individuals without invoking the mechanistic paradigm.

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[7] Since this paper is a part of a broader investigation, we have to say that in our discussion of speech relation, we stand by Levinas who argued that relations of that kind are not symmetric but asymmetric and criticised Buber's position on it (this also concerns Bahtin's philosophy of dialogue). This is especially important because we philosophise from the perspective of Self and not from the standpoint of the Other.

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