

Warwick Continental Philosophy Conference (5th Edition)

Subject and Identity

08—09th June 2023



This booklet collects all the relevant information for WCPC 2023 Conference *Subject and Identity*.

The information presented here should be accurate. In case of discrepancy, the information on the conference website takes precedence: <https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/philosophy/research/activities/postkantian/events/wcpc/>

NOTE: In case of last minute changes please follow the guidelines communicated to you from the conference email account.

Conference Booklet Version 1.1

This template originates from [LaTeXTemplates.com](https://www.latextemplates.com) and is based on the original version at:
https://github.com/maximelucas/AMCOS_booklet

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About

WCPC

Warwick Continental Philosophy Conference is an annual conference organised by the Postgraduate and Early-Career community of the University of Warwick Philosophy Department. The conference aims to be a meeting point for scholars who understand their work as falling within the purview of 'Continental Philosophy' broadly construed. WCPC operates as a part of the Centre for Research in Post-Kantian European Philosophy at the University of Warwick.

PKEP

The Centre for Research in Post-Kantian European Philosophy at the University of Warwick provides a unique forum for discussion and research in 19th and 20th century European philosophy, including interdisciplinary research with scholars across the humanities and social sciences. It organises regular seminars, workshops and conferences to promote innovative work in the field of post-Kantian European philosophy and provide a stimulating research environment for MA and PhD students, junior and senior faculty. For our programme of events, please [click here](#). As a complement to its research programme, the Centre is also closely associated with the MA in Continental Philosophy. The other departments and centres affiliated to the Centre for Research in Post-Kantian European Philosophy include Philosophy, French Studies, German Studies, Film and TV Studies, English, History, Sociology, Politics and International Studies, as well as the Centre for Interdisciplinary Methodologies and the Social Theory Centre. The Centre is run by a Director, Andrew Huddleston, and a Deputy Director, Tobias Keiling. For a full list of staff associated with the work of the Centre please [click here](#).

Organisation

Organising Committee

Ben Champion Raffaele Grandoni Joshua Kaluba
Sebastian Leyton-Blanco Sabina Pachlopníková Luke Valentine
Ke Xia

Organising Advisors

Andrew Huddleston Dino Jakusić Tobias Keiling

Panel Chairs

Ben Champion Sebastian Leyton-Blanco Clarissa Muller
Michi Nanayakkara Luke Valentine

Special Thanks

Emily Hargreaves Sarah Taylor

Attending the Conference

Conference Format

The conference is organised as a pre-read event. This means that the papers submitted by the speakers will be circulated in advance. There will be no long presentations of articles. Instead, the panelists will be given 5 minutes to introduce their paper, with the rest of the time (25 min) being dedicated to questions and answers from the audience. Panelist presentations and Q&A will proceed sequentially in 30-minute slots. Due to this, please familiarise yourself with the submitted papers in order to better follow the discussion.

This structure will not apply to keynote presentations. Instead, they will proceed in a more traditional manner (45 min presentation + 45 min Q&A without pre-circulation). We hope to record keynote lectures and make them available on the conference website after the conference. Panels and Keynote Q&As will not be recorded.

The conference will take place in hybrid format, with both in-person and Zoom presentations. We have organised one Zoom meeting, so you can join any slot you wish by using the same link. You can either use the link in this booklet, or enter the meeting ID and password. During the Q&A, audience questions will be selected by the chair. Please raise your hand if you are attending in person, or use the Zoom 'raise hand' function if you would like to ask the question.

Links to pre-circulated papers, as well as to Zoom meetings are available in the next section.

If you require a letter confirming your attendance at the conference please email us at wpc@warwick.ac.uk.

If you encounter any other issues or have questions regarding the conference, please feel free to contact us on the same address as above.

Link for Conference Papers

Please click [here](#) in order to access the papers for the conference. The link should allow you access to the conference OneDrive account. You will be able to read and download papers, but not modify them. Papers are separated per day and panel. Please familiarise yourself with the papers for the panel(s) you wish to attend.

Zoom Links

Day 1

Topic: WCPC Day 1

Time: Jun 8, 2023 09:00 London

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/82088128427?pwd=VVVZcXJ4a2c1RThTVzBncmRMbjhMdz09>

Meeting ID: 820 8812 8427

Passcode: 839023

Day 2

Topic: WCPC Day 2

Time: Jun 9, 2023 09:30 London

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/86499014300?pwd=aXZ2NDJyWlZPVH1LRktVTGF1cUVHUT09>

Meeting ID: 864 9901 4300

Passcode: 395873

Conference Room: OC0.05

The conference room used is wheelchair accessible. It also has accessible toilets nearby. Gender neutral toilets can be found in the Social Sciences building, in the Student Union Headquarters and in the Dirty Duck pub (these last two buildings are located on the main campus piazza). If you would like to discuss accessibility details further, please don't hesitate to contact us via the relevant section on the registration form or email us at wpcp@warwick.ac.uk. For more information on possible routes to the conference see the map attached in the end of the document or visit the official interactive map online (<https://campus.warwick.ac.uk/>).

Travelling to the University of Warwick

The University of Warwick lies between the area of Coventry city and two other towns, Kenilworth and Leamington Spa. Train services run from London Euston station to Coventry train station and from London Marylebone station to Leamington Spa town. Ticket prices vary depending on the time of travel but its best to book your rail tickets in advance to get a good deal. You can book by visiting the following website: <http://www.nationalrail.co.uk>.

From Coventry Train Station

You can either take a taxi or a bus to the University's central campus (you will need to get off at central campus' Bus Interchange, ask the driver if you are unsure).

A taxi rank operates outside the station. The journey will cost you approximately £10-12 and will take 10-15 mins depending on traffic.

Bus services run between Coventry station and the University of Warwick. You can take either the number 11, 11U or the 12X bus from Coventry station (and back). The journey time with the 11 and 11U buses takes 20-25 mins, whereas journey time with the 12X takes 12-15 mins. A single journey costs £2.00 and an unlimited day pass costs £4.00. You can pay by either cash or contactless debit/credit card on the bus (Note: international credit/debit cards may not work on the bus as forms of payment).

From Leamington Spa Train Station

You can either take a taxi or a bus to the University's central campus.

No taxi rank is in operation at Leamington Spa train station but you can call a cab (01926 42 59 59) to take you to the University's central campus. The cost will be approximately £20 and the journey time will be approximately 25 minutes.

Bus services run between Leamington Spa station and the University of Warwick. You can take the number 11 bus, which will take you to the University. The bus stop for number 11 is located on High Street. As you come out of the rail station you will find yourself on a road called Old Warwick Road. Turn left and walk down the road; as you walk down the road you should see opposite a big building called 'Station House', if you see this then you are going the right way. Continue down this road, crossing Lower Avenue. Upon crossing Lower Avenue you will notice that Old Warwick Road has now become High Street. On the opposite side of the road you should see a convenience store called 'Wisla Delikatesy'. From here one can take the 11 or the 11U bus to Warwick University (the 11 and the 11U follow an identical route).

The bus journey goes via Leamington Spa city centre and Kenilworth town and lasts approximately 40 minutes. All bus services run to the main campus' Bus Interchange. A single journey costs (£2.00) and a day pass (£4.00). Be advised that drivers will only accept the exact cash amount and do not give change, alternatively, you can pay via contactless.

University Campuses and Accommodation Locations

The University of Warwick is comprised of three campuses: Westwood campus, Central or Main campus and Gibbet Hill campus. They are a short distance apart.

University Address: University of Warwick, Coventry, CV4 7AL, United Kingdom

Please visit this site for an Interactive Campus map: <https://campus.warwick.ac.uk/>. If you are looking for a particular building or room, just type its name in the search bar and you will be shown its exact location.

You can either walk, which takes around ten minutes, or take a taxi between Westwood and Main Campus. If you decide to go by taxi, then you can pick a taxi up at the Central campus' Bus Interchange to take you to Westwood campus. The University's Bus Interchange is located right next to the Warwick Arts Centre.

Buses from Coventry and Leamington Spa all stop on Kirby Corner Road. Information regarding accommodation in the Coventry, Kenilworth and Leamington areas can be found here:

<https://warwick.ac.uk/services/accommodation/staff/offcampus/relocationsservice/shorttermaccommodation/>

Information regarding hotel rooms located on campus can be found here:

<https://warwick.ac.uk/services/conferences/bed-and-breakfast>

Assistance and Emergency Contact

In case of emergency, please dial 999 from any phone and speak either to police or ambulance services. For less urgent matters, campus security are available 24 hours a day and can be reached on 024 7652 2083, or 22083 from an internal Warwick campus phone.

Timetable

IP: In-person Talk, OL: Online Talk, KL: Keynote Lecture

Day 1: Thursday, 8th of June

9:20–9:30	Conference Introduction		
9:30–11:00	Panel 1		
9:30–10:00	OL	Denis Vyaznikov Independent	Constructing a Collective Subject Based on Negativity
10:00–10:30	IP	Colette Olive KCL	The Russian Subject: Kantian and Hegelian Themes in the Russian Personality
10:30–11:00	IP	Paul Gorby St. Andrews	The Policing Animal: Towards a Critique of Punitive Humanism
11:00–11:30	Coffee Break		
11:30–13:00	KL	Koshka Duff Nottingham	Justice Under A Cloud: Liberal ideology and the critique of violence from Walter Benjamin to Black Lives Matter
13:00–14:30	Lunch Break		
14:30–16:00	Panel 2		
14:30–15:00	IP	Bill Cashmore Kingston	Impossible Identity: Beyond Positivity in Trans Theory
15:00–15:30	IP	Adam Herpolsheimer Temple (USA)	“Our World Must Be Defended”: Sex Determination in and out of a Biological Context
15:30–16:00	OL	Devon Bailey Johannesburg	The Black South African Woman: Analysing Recognition and Redistribution in Identity Politics
16:00–16:30	Coffee Break		
16:30–18:00	Panel 3		
16:30–17:00	OL	Colt Hutchinson Kent State	Towards an Emancipatory Politics: An Analysis of the Political Subject in Lacan and Foucault
17:00–17:30	OL	Olerato Mogomotsi Cape Town	Culture Wars and the Hegelian Ontology of Personal and Social Identity Formation
17:30–18:00	OL	Dexter Martin UAEM (Mexico)	Notes on Zapatistas’ Tactics of (De)subjectivation

Day 2: Friday, 9th of June

9:30–11:00	Panel 4		
9:30–10:00	OL	Anda Pleniceanu Western (Canada)	The Negative Power of Circular Subjectivity
10:00–10:30	IP	Mat Messerschmidt Chicago	Nietzsche's Ambivalent Twilight of the Subject
10:30–11:00	IP	Kobe Keymeulen Ghent	Science, Art & Truth. On the subject constituted in Ljubljana's disciplinary concern
11:00–11:30	Coffee Break		
11:30–13:00	Panel 5		
11:30–12:00	IP	Rasmus Krogh Løvschal Edinburgh	Kierkegaard on Instagram: Construction of Identity as an Escape from Existential Confrontation
12:00–12:30	OL	James Ternent Edinburgh	Self-Deprecation: Henri Bergson, Laughter, and the Subject
12:30–13:00	IP	Antoni I. Marí Marí Barcelona	Critique of the Subject in Deleuze and Lacan
13:00–14:30	Lunch Break		
14:30–16:00	KL	Peter V. Zima Klagenfurt (Austria)	Subjectivity, Narrativity, Power. Who Narrates Whom?
16:00–16:30	Coffee Break		
16:30–18:00	Panel 6		
16:30–17:00	OL	Irene Breuer Wuppertal (Germany)	Exile and Narrative Identity – “Stranger to myself and to the world” (A. Camus)
17:00–17:30	IP	Thomas Moore Sheffield	The Phenomenology of the Relational Self: A Japanese Critique of Heidegger's Conception of Authenticity
17:30–18:00	OL	Otniel Kish Durham	The Subject as Saturated Phenomena and the Prospects for Subjectivity without Objectification



List of Abstracts

Day 1: Thursday, 8th of June

Constructing a Collective Subject Based on Negativity

Denis Vyaznikov

OL

University of Manchester

Thomas Hobbes' Europe was torn by civil and religious wars. The sides in the conflict interpret divine/natural law differently, deriving their own claims to power from it. In such a situation, the conventional position since the time of Aristotle: "man is a political animal" is unable to substantiate a stable political order. The new theory refuses to see in man substantive qualities leading him to build a coexistence with others. On the contrary, the intrinsic qualities of human beings lead to a state of "bellum omnium contra omnes". This begs the question, how is social order possible when rivalry and greed prevent the creation of bonds between people? Ernesto Laclau in his text "Why do empty signifiers matters in politics?" explains that people according to Hobbes construct a collective subject (the people) on the basis of common negativity in relation to the common misery of the natural state. The sovereign in this case acts as a particularistic expression of the universal opposition to total social disharmony. In his philosophy, Ernesto Laclau sought to solve a similar problem. After the failure of 1968, there was a need for a theory capable of unifying different social identities into a single collective subject without reducing them to a single substantive (class, national, etc.) identity. Laclau's solution is that a set of individual identities (or social demands in the case of populism) form a chain of equivalence in which one arbitrary part takes on the function of representing the whole. In doing so, such an operation itself implies a unification against, an antagonism. Thus a multitude of heterogeneous demands is united not by any pre-determined principle, but by a common dissatisfaction. Social demand is represented by the new collective subject is not of fundamental importance. However, therein lies the strength as well as the weakness of Ernesto Laclau's theory. On the one hand, a collective entity can be assembled from any content, which makes this kind of strategy unlimited in its application. On the other hand, the problem of constructing collective subjects according to the principles of the equivalence chain ends up blurring the original content of the demand. Acquiring hegemony is therefore a "dangerous victory". Together with a genuinely effective strategy for mobilising the collective subject, Laclau loses the very possibility of embodying the goal for which the collective subject is gathering: change of the political order. As an alternative, which also makes use of antagonism and negativity but is able to create a political order in a strong sense, we suggest a strategy of fanaticism. (J. Olson, A. Toscano) Also, like populism, fanaticism seeks to produce a political frontier, but in a different way. Fanaticism tends to reduce the possible multiplicity of positions on a political issue to two: 'for' and 'against'. For example, radical abolitionists in their speeches declared that the position of ambiguity preserves the status quo, and anyone undecided on the issue of slavery - automatically becomes a supporter. At the same time, for radical abolitionists, all other social conflicts existed, but this one has been labeled an absolute evil that had to be destroyed. The problem with fanaticism as a strategy for constructing collective subjects is that it does not have the character of a systematic theory. J. Olson has made important first steps in exploring the question and A. Toscano has produced an intellectual-historical analysis, but nevertheless fanaticism "hangs in the air". In this paper, we will suggest possible ontological grounds for a theory of fanaticism based on the work of E. Laclau, and in turn point out what development the theory of fanaticism can give to the tradition of discursive hegemony.

The Russian Subject: Kantian and Hegelian Themes in the Russian Personality

Colette Olive

IP

King's College London

Lichnost, variously translated as personality, person, individual, and self is a distinctive feature of Russian philosophy and was a philosophical problem that preoccupied many thinkers from the 19th century. Hamburg and Poole identify “its richest philosophical meaning” as “personhood, a term emphasising the absolute value and dignity of human beings” as ends in themselves (Hamburg & Poole 2010: 5). During the early years of Russian philosophy, philosophers split into two camps: Slavophiles and Westernisers. The Westernisers resented the Slavophile commitment to embracing religious orthodoxy as central to social and political life as well as their suspicion of Western rationalism. Contra the Slavophiles, the Westernisers sought to reinstate reason as the new God and advocated for social reform and the recognition of the inherent dignity of the human being as the cornerstone of morality. Sergey Horujy identified lichnost as the central concern of the Westernisers, but contended that the idea was never subjected to sufficient conceptual analysis (Horujy 2010: 40). This paper aims to reconstruct the early conception of lichnost in Russian thought, focusing on the work of Vissarion Belinsky (1811-1848). What emerges is that Russian lichnost has much in common with the Kantian conception of human dignity, but the Russian subject is seen not only as the central of our moral lives, but also as a lens through which Russian philosophers came to understand historical progress. In this sense, the Russian subject merges Kantian and Hegelian characteristics but develops them into a novel and distinct conception of personhood. It is crucial that the Russian subject has the quintessentially Kantian feature of an inherent, non-instrumental and categorical human dignity that is endowed to all humans, but Belinsky synthesises this into an account of personhood that organically links these individuals within society, which gives the theory a Hegelian timbre. The individual is thus a subject who operates within a nexus of social relations that are socio-historically situated. In spite of clearly Kantian and Hegelian elements, lichnost as a concept is distinctive to its German counterparts which is motivated by broader criticisms of Kantianism and Hegelianism levelled by figures like Belinsky and Herzen. The paper goes on to outline some of these divergences to show that a reconstruction of lichnost can provide a conceptual analysis of the concept that fleshes it out into an idea worthy of philosophical discussion. Given how central the concept of lichnost is to a broader understanding of Russian philosophy, an analysis of the concept is a useful lens through which we can analyse the trajectory of the tradition in general.

The Policing Animal: Towards a Critique of Punitive Humanism

Paul Gorby

IP

University of St. Andrews

The purpose of this paper is to uncover, analyse, and critique a common, yet under-recognised trend in the history of Western philosophy, which I refer to as 'punitive humanism'. Engaging with canonical texts and drawing on critical and post-structuralist interpretations, I suggest that for various influential philosophers of the Western Enlightenment – specifically John Locke, Immanuel Kant, and Jeremy Bentham – the 'natural' and 'proper' response of human beings to transgression is a punitive one. A punitive instinct, for these philosophers, is something built into the human subject and is constitutive of human identity, it is assumed to be universal and prior to social identity formation. Indeed, an a priori punitive subjectivity is taken to be necessary for any kind of society whatsoever, and therefore necessarily precedes societal influences on subject and identity formation. Thus, the acts of policing, imprisonment, and execution which human beings engage in as responses to violations of norms and laws are, from the perspective of the punitive humanist, not only morally proper but also anthropologically proper. Prior to any definition of the human subject as the 'political animal', the punitive humanist claims that we are first and foremost the 'punitive animal', the 'policing animal'. Although the three core philosophers considered in this paper each express different understandings of how human subjectivity is formed by punitive instincts, I follow Michel Foucault in arguing that these philosophies each constitute strands in the Gordian knot of justifications for contemporary punitive structures. Taking up a critical, abolitionist perspective, I argue that the philosophy of punitive humanism is something that must be confronted and challenged if we are to form societies free from punitive apparatuses such as policing and imprisonment. If we wish to make these punitive apparatuses obsolete, as Angela Davis calls on us to do, then we must first confront our own punitive subjectivities. In order to confront punitive humanism and propose a critical challenge to it, I draw on the work of Friedrich Nietzsche and place his philosophy in dialogue with contemporary abolitionist thinkers such as Angela Davis, Ruth Wilson Gilmore, and Mariame Kaba. Examining Nietzsche's account of resentment as a constitutive aspect of both human subjectivity and the impulse to punish perceived wrongdoers, I argue that Nietzsche's philosophy points the way towards an abolitionist critique of punitive humanism – one which recognises that both penalty and humanity must be overcome simultaneously. In order to abolish punitive structures, we must also abolish the human subject: abolitionism is necessarily a philosophy which seeks to move beyond traditional Western interpretations and models of the human subject, replacing it with a higher type which refuses resentment and refuses punitive subjectivity in favour of an affirmative relationship with the world. The overcoming of punitive society necessarily entails the overcoming of the human type understood as the policing animal.

Justice Under A Cloud: Liberal ideology and the critique of violence from Walter Benjamin to Black Lives Matter

Koshka Duff

KL

University of Nottingham

Policing is broadly legitimate – even while imperfect and in need of reform. This axiom of liberal politics is shaken by movements like Black Lives Matter, which confront ‘law-enforcement’ violence as the routine and deadly edge of racial capitalism. Thinking in solidarity with these movements, I want to unpick the ideological discourses through which policing and carceral violence is legitimised in real existing liberalism. This talk will extend the argument of Michael Neu’s *Just Liberal Violence: Sweatshops, Torture, War* into new terrain by reading it through the lens of Walter Benjamin’s ‘Critique of Violence’. I hope to show how two phenomena Neu identifies – analytical atomism and the mythologisation of law – feature in standard justifications of policing. The figuration of unjust violence as always exceptional, monstrous, and deviant serves, in both cases, to legitimise the institutions in and through which that violence is normalised. Benjamin’s excavation of sovereign power in the policing function, meanwhile, will help us expose the limitations of liberal appeals to the ‘rule of law’. Resisting the systems of oppression that police violence upholds means reckoning with emergency not as downpour but as climate, and justice not as the false promise of the law but as prefigured in the movements that seek to abolish it.

Impossible Identity: Beyond Positivity in Trans Theory

Bill Cashmore

IP

Kingston University

It is now a well-rehearsed point that narratives of trans identity emerging from being “born this way”, even “born in the wrong body” are, at best, a useful falsehood. But the position now more readily assented to is that trans identity possesses a kind of radicality by virtue of its breaking with a patriarchal matrix of desire and identification: this break, supposedly, ought to be affirmed. This is most apparent in the more “utopian” accounts of trans identity, following Muñoz, but persists in even in the apparently more “negative” mode presented by Jack Halberstam and Lee Edelman. I will show that this negativity amounts to little more than the distinction between positive and negative affect. My objection is that they all announce the possibility of a trans subject position outside of patriarchy. In so doing, they assert the compatibility of transness with a transphobic actuality, and ultimately defuse trans selfhood of its resistance to actuality. If any proof is needed of this, the ease with which trans identity (along with other LGBT+ identities) has been recuperated by a corporate culture industry might suggest that, if there is to be queer radicalism, it must come from another source. This paper will advance this criticism of positivity in accounts of trans identity, and begin to articulate an account of trans “non-identity”, drawing particularly on Theodor Adorno’s Negative Dialectics and Shulamith Firestone’s analysis of the concept of sex. I will argue that trans identity is secured by an identification with non-identity, whose merely illusory, momentary presentation of an identity beyond patriarchy articulates the impossibility of such an identity under these conditions of domination. It is at this point that the position outlined in my paper will diverge from those affirmative accounts of trans identity. Sex, I will argue, is a contradictory social category that presents itself as both irreducibly biological and necessarily social. While the assertion of the biological pole of sex might seem, initially, to play into the hands of those who disbelieve trans people’s accounts of themselves, my intention is otherwise. I attempt to show how trans identity articulates the falsehood of the patriarchal concepts of sex and gender while nonetheless participating in them. By adopting and appropriating Firestone’s dialectic of sex, I will connect trans identity to the history of radical feminism such that the place of trans identity is clarified for feminism today. Furthermore, this connection will transform our understanding of the subject of feminist liberation in a manner fully committed to the goal of the abolition of the patriarchal state of things. Ultimately, this paper will present a version of trans identity that foregrounds struggle and negation rather than joy and affirmation, which too easily amounts to affirming the patriarchal norms that we, as both feminists and trans people, ought to reject. This will open up new avenues in the philosophy of trans identity and resistance, but will implicitly also bear upon all accounts of identities formed by conditions which they purport to resist.

“Our World Must Be Defended”: Sex Determination in and out of a Biological Context

Adam Herpolsheimer

IP

Temple University

How to properly and effectively define biological sex has become a mainstay in both academic philosophy of biology and the somewhat less than academic debates surrounding trans-inclusivity. Nevertheless, continental philosophy has been stunningly absent from both, some even going as far as to say that “[p]ost-Kantian continental philosophy is seemingly allergic to biology.” (Waltham-Smith, 2018). This is particularly puzzling as the Foucauldian concept of bio-power is integral to many strands of continental philosophy, hell, “bio” is even in the name. Why then is continental philosophy avoided as a methodology for defining biological sex? Does it not stand to reason that such categorization is inherently biopolitical and that the ontogenetic criteria for any definition are nothing more than the structural manner for subjectivation? Are humans always already biological subjects? This paper seeks to answer those questions and more by working through three contemporary definitions of biological sex. The first, a teleological definition that defines sex by what gametes an organism is “designed” to produce (Rifkin and Garson, 2023), is challenged for both what it offers and what it avoids: namely a succinct albeit trans-agnostic understanding of the nature of both anisogamy and the alleged sex/gender distinction. The minimally engaged work of Georges Canguilhem on sex determination will allow me to recenter identity and life within this context. Next, this paper explores a more robust definition of biological sex that figures the genesis of sexual identity as an ontological moment: fertilization (Roughgarden 2004; Sterelny and Griffiths 1999). This definition avoids some of the pitfalls of the first, as it accounts for a more exact narrative of sexual reproduction, but it opens itself up to a larger critique of ontogenesis and the nature of “the individual.” As such, through a critique of this definition, as ultimately a non-teleological expansion of the first, I show the limits of biological description as it pertains to an understanding of sexual identity and uncover the subjectivizing role of these biological mechanisms as they inherently and discursively construct sexuality. Lastly, I provide my own definition of biological sex that does not contradict either of the first two, but instead privileges a socio-discursive account for identity. This identarian definition serves to not only account for the first-person authority of identity but to also center sexual identity as a constantly negotiated trans-actional reality. Further, this definition accounts for the uniqueness of identity as a subjectivizing mechanism in and of itself.

The Black South African Woman: Analysing Recognition and Redistribution in Identity Politics

Devon Bailey

OL

University of Johannesburg

The issue of identity has gained significant traction in the literature over several years. The development and discussion of the problem of identity politics has been particularly interesting within the scope of philosophical literature. In this paper, I aim to critically analyse the identity formation of the black South African woman within the context of identity politics. To effectively explore the abovementioned analysis, I unpack one problem of identity politics, which is often debated from two specific standpoints. On the one hand, universalists such as Francis Fukuyama (2019) argue that all human beings ought to be recognized for their inherent human dignity – that which makes us all universal human beings. On the other hand, the politics of difference advocates for people to be recognized according to their differences (Taylor, 1994). I show how the debate on universalism and difference gives way to the politics of recognition and redistribution (Fraser, 1997), and largely determines the value of a group or individual according to the perceptions of others. These ‘others’ include those in positions of power, as well as individuals who hold a certain perspective of marginalised groups and individuals. In this paper, I explore the extent to which recognition and redistribution contribute to the challenges faced by the black South African woman in her quest to form an identity. The significance of referencing the black South African woman is that she has varying intersecting aspects of her identity that must be considered in terms of how she is recognised within her specific sociocultural context and the degree to which she is a recipient of the equal redistribution of resources. Recognition and redistribution, therefore, prove significant approaches to understanding the extent to which the identity of the woman in question is imposed and the extent to which it is self-constructed. The abovementioned approaches also raise considerable questions within the scope of feminist theory in understanding identity. As is evident in post-Apartheid South Africa, the racial, gendered, and class aspects of the black woman’s identity are bound to intersect, often infringing on her first-personal, subjective construction of a self. This infringement is a primary result of the history of injustice and oppression imposed upon black and non-white individuals during the Apartheid era. The notion of intersectionality therefore bears significant weight in developing an understanding of the way the black South African woman forms her identity in the face of recognition and redistribution. Intersectionality assists us in analysing how identity aspects related to race, gender, and class affect the formation of identity within a particular sociocultural context.

Toward an Emancipatory Politics: An Analysis of the Political Subject in Lacan and Foucault

Colt Hutchinson

OL

University of St. Andrews

In this paper, I will examine the notions of subjectivity as presented in the work of Jacques Lacan and Michel Foucault, with the ultimate aim of demonstrating how these two theorists can be integrated in order to gain insight into contemporary political discourse, specifically those pertaining to identity. Despite Foucault's complicated and occasionally conflicting relationship with psychoanalysis—one characterized by intense fluctuations between both praising the achievements of psychoanalysis, yet also outlining its inherent failures—this paper posits that it is inaccurate to assume such a connection is fundamentally closed off. Rather, I will argue that we can map a similar trajectory of how identity is formed in both analyses and that a return to their radical notion of subjectivity is the only way for us to progress toward an emancipatory political project. On this view, I will show that while many Lacanians decry the historicism at play in Foucault's thought, it is already at work in Lacan; when asserting the death drive as a universal aspect of subjectivity, one cannot avoid the fact that it is emerging from the realm of the Symbolic, which is undoubtedly, historically conditioned. To achieve these aims, I will begin by examining Lacan's concept of *méconnaissance*, found in both the 'Mirror Stage' and in other crucial later texts, tracing out its implications not only on individual identity formation but equally on the position of the subject. This analysis will be coupled with a demonstration of how Foucault's understanding of power and knowledge structures leads to the production of historically specific subjectivity. What I will emphasize in this account is that both figures ultimately agree that we are always thrust back into ourselves as specific identities in relation to an existent Symbolic network. Furthermore, this will serve to highlight how the identities we assume are fundamentally 'lacking,' given that they fail to express the full dimension of our subjectivity. Hence, this project comes to bear on how we engage in contemporary political discussions. What I hope to demonstrate through this analysis is that, for a future emancipatory political project, we cannot structure our discussions along discrete lines of identity. Instead, we must come to grasp how we can establish a universal politics based precisely on our one point of intersection—our shared status as lacking subjects. In other words, we must be prepared to move beyond 'identity politics' and towards a universal politics based on our shared experience of a 'lacking' subjectivity. Only then can we begin to imagine a political project that has the potential for true emancipation, one that seeks not only to liberate specific groups but to fundamentally transform the structures of power and knowledge that produce these identities in the first place. Furthermore, it is only by keeping open the possibility of an account of subjectivity that we can meaningfully discuss whether emancipation is realizable. Thus, we must critically examine the ways in which current political discussions are structured and consider new approaches that prioritize universal subjectivity—understood here to be related with lack—evaluating how only in this position can we engage in acts that challenge our entrenched social and political ordering.

Culture Wars and the Hegelian Ontology of Personal and Social Identity Formation

Olerato Mogomotsi

OL

University of Cape Town

The phenomenon of culture wars surrounding new social identities and how others choose to express their social identities has dominated a number of Western societies over the last few years. In these culture wars, there are two adversaries, where one group believes that they have a right to express themselves in a manner that expresses their full self-determination, where the opposing groups aim to gatekeep the emergence of new identities and conservatively defend the traditional social identity matrix. How can we best account for why such culture wars have come about? I argue that we can look to Hegelian social theory to understand best diagnose the contemporary social malaise. In this paper, I argue that the culture wars are part and parcel of the process of achieving individual self-realization within the social world. I argue that Hegel's philosophy, read primarily as a social theory, demonstrates this in his two seminal texts, *Phenomenology of Spirit* (1807) and *Philosophy of Right* (1820). In particular, I appeal to Maria Bykova (2009) interpretation of Hegel that the social world and the individuals who are part of it mutually constitute and affirm each other's actuality. As such, taking Hegel to be engaged in a theory of how individual self-realization can be achieved and thus be actual, I argue Hegel to be tracing how individual self-expressions, which have the potential of creating new social identities, will seek to achieve actuality and ultimately attain complete freedom by being at one with fully part of the social world. Taking Hegel to argue that self-realization can only be achieved within *Sittlichkeit* (Ethical Life), I argue that the actuality of the identities that one seeks to achieve and make actual is dependent to the extent that it can be taken as a part *Sittlichkeit* – as a reasonable option for others to take on as a way of life. At the core of whether this actuality is achieved is whether recognition can be attained by those who offer up new ways of being in the world. The process of recognition, particularly of proposed new ways of being, is a contentious process primarily because it animates a tension between those who are propelling world spirit (which he calls Great Historical men) and those who are completely “at home” with *Sittlichkeit* and its demands. Culture wars, ultimately, are exactly war-like because they represent the mutable and contentious nature of the unfolding of *Geist* (world spirit), which manifests in the changes *Sittlichkeit* undergoes at the hands of innovations on ways of being.

Notes on Zapatistas' tactics of (de)subjectivation

Dexter Martin

OL

Autonomous University of Morelos

I aim to discuss the notion of (de)subjectivation as a conceptual framework that could challenge the notion of a subject implied in the constellation of modern sovereignty and the modern State. To do so, I consider the Zapatistas movement and Zapatistas' peculiar notion of "subject" as a case study, taking it into account as an exemplar alternative conception of subjectivity that could be better defined as a process of (de)subjectivation. I present the notion of "subject" that is crafted in Hobbes' Leviathan theoretical framework, which can be considered, among others, as the philosophical genetic source of the modern "closed" and individualized subjectivity. Then, I concentrate on the historical conjunctures through which the clash between the Mexican State (with a Hobbesian approach) and the Zapatistas movement developed. I interpret Zapatistas' project as an open practice of (de)subjectivation through their own conception of what it is to be part of a Zapatista community. The tension between the Zapatistas and the Mexican State is not only politically driven, in terms of a power relation, it is also philosophical and epistemological. One of the many lessons that this conflict left us with was the impossibility of the Mexican State to include the Zapatistas. The State's condition to include their demands was to re-subjectify the indigenous peoples of Chiapas in the logic of modern sovereignty. Zapatistas, during the first stage of their movement, wanted to be included in Mexican civil law as rightful citizens but were not willing to let go of their own traditions, land, and resources, namely, their history. As it is evident, the Modern State couldn't accept this, because the historical contingent specificity is what must be eschewed to homogenize subjects as citizens through civil laws. In other words, the Modern State operates through Universal History. Under this framework, the Zapatistas' claim for historicity and economic self-determination represented a grain of sand within the gears of the Leviathan, creating the risk of a systemic short circuit. From this point of view, the Zapatistas –if partially absorbed in the State– could be considered a breach of Modern Sovereignty, and, consequently, an alternative project of subjectivation, problematic for the State and its project of subjectivity. Furthermore, Zapatistas' own social organization utterly contrasts with any form that subjectivity through sovereignty could take. Broadly, modern state subjectivity refers to the way in which individuals are defined and categorized by the state based on factors such as citizenship, nationality, legal status, and individual rights and responsibilities. In contrast, subjectivity in Zapatista communities is based on collective identity, communal decision-making, and mutual aid. Individuals are seen as part of a larger collective, and decisions are made through a process of participatory democracy. This means that the focus is on the community as a whole, rather than on the individual. Overall, the Zapatistas project can be seen as a constant effort to avoid a closed subjectivity offered by the interpellation of the State, as Althusser puts it. They inhabit their own (de)subjectivity and statelessness through very concrete political and social practices.

Day 2: Friday, 9th of June

The Negative Power of Circular Subjectivity

Anda Pleniceanu

OL

The University of Western Ontario

My paper examines the circular conceptualization of subjectivity in several influential sources of continental thought in order to determine what role negativity plays in relation to the subject. In continental philosophy, negativity is generally associated with the thinking of absolute otherness. However, circular subjectivity treats negativity as a mobile “resource” that animates the structure of the subject itself. In other words, negativity is considered only in its instrumental, internalized form, in relation to the subject. To establish how circular subjectivity operates in more detail, I examine Hegel’s restructuring of Descartes’s cogito, since the latter is often referred to as the originator of the philosophical lineage that conceives of man as subject (subjectum). Hegel shifts the focus from Descartes’s notion of “I” as immediacy by introducing negation, which leads to the process of mediated knowledge undertaken by the subject. For Hegel, the self-negation of the “I” leads to the restructuring of the subject in a sublimated form. Although Hegel’s dialectical process is often likened to a spiral structure, the logical operation of reconfiguring the subject by means of a negating instance is, in fact, circular. Thus, I argue that the key to understanding the functioning of negativity in the circular structure of the subject is its operationality. When negativity becomes negation—that is, a mediating operation between any two terms—it loses its own ontological status. I call this weak negativity: negation defined by its operationality and reliance on the circular structure of subjectivity. For most thinkers in the twentieth century, this mediated manner of conceiving the subject remained unchallenged. Despite the fact that twentieth-century philosophy is characterized by a preoccupation with (and displacement of) the subject’s privileged status, most of the time, the critique of the subject leads to a deconstruction of the subject while maintaining the circular structure of subjectivity intact. Expressed in more contemporary terms, the dismantling of anthropocentrism and of the privileges of organic life frequently leads to a naturalization of subject-like qualities as part of inorganic matter. To illustrate these trends, I draw on three fundamental post-Hegelian texts: Alexandre Kojève’s *Introduction to the Reading of Hegel* (2009), Jean Hyppolite’s *Genesis and Structure of Hegel’s Phenomenology of Spirit* (1974), and Judith Butler’s *The Psychic Life of Power* (1997). I argue that these works maintain the sovereignty of anthropocentric subjectivity by treating negation as the subject’s constant power of establishing and renewing itself. The subject, whose moments of birth and death are either omitted or mythological, is conceptualized as a circular process of self-production despite its internal disjunctions, alterities, aporias, and death—that is, despite confronting nothingness, or radical negativity, both within itself and in the world at large. In the sources discussed in this paper, negativity as nothingness that exceeds the subject is dissipated in circular structures and left without its own ontological ground. Finally, I discuss the possibility of thinking negativity in a radical form by drawing on the notion of the “outside” in the works of Michel Foucault and Maurice Blanchot. By centering the notion of subjectivity on a concept of negativity that cannot be subsumed, the dominating circularity that has informed our notions of subjectivity for centuries may give way to new configurations that allow otherness to develop beyond pre-established anthropocentric structures.

Nietzsche's Ambivalent Twilight of the Subject

Mat Messerschmidt

IP

University of Chicago

This 3,000-word paper considers the legacy of Nietzsche's rejection of the subject in light of twentieth-century responses to his thought. We can identify two apparently divergent directions in twentieth-century interrogations of the traditional subject, both of which resonate with Nietzsche's thought in different ways. On the one hand, the anti-essentialism of existentialism and gender performativity echoes Nietzsche's rejection of human essences, resulting in an emphasis on human freedom in the construction of our identity. On the other hand, (Freudian) psychoanalysis repeats the Nietzschean insight that drive structures are by and large unconscious, limiting our freedom to refashion or redirect them. My discussion of these post-Nietzschean tendencies in the twentieth century begins with the observation that, in Nietzsche's own thinking, they stem from one and the same insight, namely, his rejection of the subject in favor of the self as body. What does the notion of the self as body mean for the future of human freedom? For both Heidegger and subsequent poststructuralist readings of the "new Nietzsche," the self as embodied will to power is to be read as a radically empowering thought. The self as body, as opposed to the human being as *zoon logon echon*, implies that there is no longer any single standard, such as reason, by which human self-expression must measure itself. Whether via the metaphysical (and covertly subjectivist) embrace of the "will to power as art," as by Heidegger, or via the anti-metaphysical rejection of essentialist metaphysical notions of subjectivity, as by his poststructuralist respondents, the designation of the self as body is a liberating act, an act corresponding to a new power of self-fashioning in modernity. In this sense, the "new Nietzsche" might be said to reject less in Heidegger's reading than advertised. My reading of the phrase "twilight of the idols" cautions against indulging too complacently in this newfound freedom. "Idolatry," I argue, is always a kind of self-idolatry for Nietzsche, one which corresponds to a deluded belief in one's own unbridled creative power of self-fashioning – a claim which I defend via analyses of the figures of Socrates, Zarathustra, and Wagner in the Nietzsche corpus. Nietzsche's liberation of the self from subjectivity is not simply a modern declaration of freedom but is also the modern articulation of a new realm of finite power in which the human being must make its meaning. That realm is the body as the realm of the drives which comprise it. As by Freud, for Nietzsche, the vast majority of the drives are unconscious, and drives that cannot be found consciously presumably cannot be consciously bent in a different direction. So in Nietzsche we see both the upward and the downward trend in human freedom, with regard to the self-fashioning of our identity, that we see in the 20th century, both coming, crucially, from one and the same source: the body as drives. Modernity discovers the body and thereby discovers both its freedom and its limitations. In conclusion, the lesson of Nietzsche for the twentieth century is not that we must choose between anti-essential freedom or structural determinism, but that we cannot. I conclude by observing that this implies an innate and inescapable ambivalence to the meaning of the death of God and of modernity: the death of metaphysics and of the rational subject, and the corresponding birth of the body of drives, lead human self-understanding simultaneously in two contrary directions.

Science, Art & Truth - On the subject constituted in Ljubljana's disciplinary concern

Kobe Keymeulen

IP

Ghent University

This paper addresses a particular problem of subjectivity within the frame of the Ljubljana School, popularized by thinkers such as Slavoj Žižek. Within this theoretical field, we find seemingly totally separate debates: (a) the ontological meaning of advancements in neuroscience (Johnston and Malabout 2013; Žižek 2011), and (b) Ljubljana's often unexplained fascination with cinema as a preferred artistic object of study (Heath 1999; McGowan 2007). Previously, I have argued that these debates are (at least in part) an expression of the same disciplinary tension. Because Ljubljana is committed to both considering its own philosophical practices as a large interdisciplinary endeavor (Johnston 2020; Žižek 2012), and connects its Badiouan case for anti-historicism to one of antidisciplinary contingency (Copjec 1994; McGowan 2017), it is not always able to properly articulate how and why certain scientific disciplines or artistic practices should be of a greater concern than others. In this paper, I further explore both this shared underlying tension by addressing the second of the two problems mentioned above (b), by continuing a line of thought developed in the literature of the first (a). In the debate on the ontology of neuroscience (a), many have begun to return to the seminal essay *La science et la vérité* (1966) (De Vos and Pluth 2016), in which Lacan details the relation between psychoanalysis and modern science. Not only do disciplinary practices constitute their own object of study or science, they also have to constitute a subject of study, as Lacan argues (contra Koyré 1929). From this stems the contemporary argument that it is here, by constituting a different subjectivity, where psychoanalysis distinguishes itself, relates differently to other modern scientific disciplines than they might among themselves (Althusser 1993; Milner 1995; Pluth 2018; Tomšič 2012) – an argument which some (contra Lacan himself) suggest could be extended to philosophy too (Johnston 2013). In the debate on the philosophical significance of cinema (b), the main argument has revolved around cinema's consideration of subjectivity and the Gaze. It has been argued that that it ought to be due to Ljubljana's interest in the Lacanian Gaze as a concept, that it ought to take an interest in cinema. However, this argument does not sufficiently explain this connection between cinema and the Gaze beyond a combination of a series of examples, and the mere intuitive reasoning that cinema concerns looking at a screen (McGowan 2007). However, a much more recent suggestion has been to treat artistic disciplines as constituting distinct objects of artistic practice, similar to a scientific discipline (McGowan 2020). I develop this latest suggestion by McGowan further by demonstrating how the Lacanian/Milnerian argument can be mapped onto it. How it, in other words, can be argued that various artistic practices constitute different modern subjects – as understood in a Ljubljana manner (e.g. Zupančič 2000). Lastly, I also briefly show how this argument is supported by previous exploration of this disciplinary topic, which was done by way of the position of the subject in G.W.F. Hegel's *Naturphilosophie* and *Aesthetics* (Keymeulen 2021). Throughout, I make use of Milner's reading of Lacan in particular when it comes to avoiding the problem of historicism, which, after all, I argue, lies at the bottom of this conundrum.

Kierkegaard on Instagram: Construction of identity as an Escape from Existential Confrontation

Rasmus Krogh Løvschal

IP

University of Edinburgh

With this presentation, I argue that the possibility of self-staging on social media viewed through the lens of Kierkegaard can be seen as an obstacle to taking the project of the self seriously and challenge (fringe) contemporary applications of Kierkegaard to social media. In *Either-Or* (Part one) one of Kierkegaard's characters 'A' lays out a social theory of boredom, and the need for constant change or rather constant shift in perspective on life. One's identity, associates and doing should change and as the character proposes this is done through the art of forgetting. This concept is fully realised in the social media platforms of today, not only allowing you to completely stage a desired persona but also forcefully forgetting the doings of a former you. I will not attempt to account for the Kierkegaardian notion of self and subject, but rather use the psychological insight from 'Either-Or' to argue the role of self-staging on social media isn't done solely for the other or to gain their approval, but rather, that it serves as a tool for molding personal identity. I will take issue with previous attempts to analyse social media phenomena with Kierkegaard directly applying the existential stages to different types of profiles, specifically I argue the analysis of Brinkmann misses the conscious overt nature not only of the curation but of the impact on the identity of the self. Brinkmann holds that the mindful and politically minded posts are characteristic of an ethical framework exhibiting the qualities argued for by the ethical character 'Judge Vilhelm' in *Either-Or*. That these posts are indicative of someone who takes their responsibility to themselves and the other seriously, someone who passionately chooses themselves, (the self) and their circumstance, but also haven't come to terms with the limitations of their own existence and functions, seeking to control their own history and effect through social media. I argue this misses the importance of forgetting and conflates the move between existential states with shifting identities. This critique will hinge on my ability to argue the difference between self and identity or how obsession with the latter bars one from engaging with the former. Specifically, despair as explored in *The Sickness unto Death* will be helpful in engaging this problem, as Kierkegaard takes this to be at its core something that prevents us from realising the self. I appreciate that with any study regarding Kierkegaard the question of the contribution of thought to him or the purpose of the text will be ambiguous, I will however take a rather conventional approach and assume that *Either-Or* serves as a parody of the modes of existence as well as providing insight into the mechanism of their thinking.

Self-Deprecation: Henri Bergson, Laughter, and the Subject

James Ternent

OL

University of Edinburgh

This presentation attempts to offer a reading of Henri Bergson, in particular his account of laughter, that reaffirms the harmony of his dual subjectivity. In his work *Creative Evolution*, Bergson discusses the subject as something necessarily divided. On the one hand, the self is something derived from his fundamental *élan vital* – the vital impulse that brings about all life. This vital impulse is, at all times, evolving and developing through different stages of life. On the other hand, the individual is a fragmentary creation, made up of moments within time that can, at no point, get a full grip of the evolutionary process. That is, we can never grasp that we are stages in the evolutionary process, that have been subject to a ‘creative’ evolutionary process and will, in turn, be sublated into further stages, enhancing the ‘divergence’ between different forms of life. All that we perceive at any given time is our own conception of ourselves as temporally situated in the now. In this respect, a full understanding of the subject seems to get a little lost: it is either subsumed under the mechanical processes of an evolving *élan vital*, or else it is a temporally situated absolute identity, splintered away from this impulse from which all life has sprung. Though Bergson himself appeals to ‘intuition’ to unite these two apparently opposed accounts of life, I want to argue that his account of laughter offers more flavour to his account of the subject and identity. I will explore the notion of the subject found, in particular, in *Creative Evolution*, before offering an understanding of his work *Laughter: An Essay on the Meaning of the Comic* which illustrates, and even to a degree adds further colour to, the notion of the subject which is found elsewhere in his work. This is for the reason that laughter is, on Bergson’s account, both a social activity, and one which challenges the ‘rigidity’ of everyday ‘mechanistic’ behaviour. Laughter is the representation of a subject striving to attain oneness with itself – to achieve the fabled true self, albeit unattainable. It is my intention, not to account for any particular ‘answers’ to the big questions on the nature of the subject which plague us today, but to propose that Bergson does pre-empt some of these questions, and that his work on laughter offers a window through which to examine how the subject is necessarily something fragmented. This fragmentation, I argue, is the very condition of Bergson’s identity; identity is found only when the fragmented subject attempts to achieve oneness with itself. Laughter, I argue, by performing both an individual and a social role, serves as an ideal corrective for this, a means by which we see that the universal subject is, and can only be, a pot of gold at the end of the rainbow.

Critique of the subject in Jacques Lacan and Gilles Deleuze

Antoni I. Marí Marí

IP

University of Barcelona

The aim of this paper is twofold. First, I would like to thematize the critique of the modern concept of subject in the early works of Gilles Deleuze and the late teachings of Jacques Lacan. Secondly, I would like to think through a possible convergence of both thinkers concerning their critique of the subject, which ultimately points to its dissolution and relates it to the order of being. On the one hand, Deleuze is regarded as a major opponent to the concept of subject. However, in his first works (*Difference and Repetition*, *Logic of Sense*) Deleuze's critique is not a critique *de facto*; that is, he can't be accused of dismissing the concept of subject in favor of plural empirical subjectivities. Deleuze's critique is a critique *de iure*: he shows how the subject dissolves from within. It is the introduction of the transcendental form of time into thought which dissolves the subject. On the other hand, Lacan's position regarding the modern concept of the subject is ambivalent. While in his first seminars, he opposes the subject with the widespread argument that it is fraudulent, in his last teachings he affirms that the subject of psychoanalysis is the cartesian cogito, the subject of science. In this sense, for Lacan, the subject is a strong concept, without which there can be no structure. And, at the same time, it is situated in the crack of the structure, it marks its impossibility: the subject occupies the place of the primal repression (*Urverdrängung*). This said the concept of phantasm occupies, in both thinkers, a crucial role regarding the subject and its dissolution. In Deleuze the phantasm identifies with the role of the dark precursor in language, the key element that brings forth the disjunctive synthesis in the third synthesis of time, as thematized in *DR*. Having done away with the notion of subject, the death drive, identified with liberated time, gives way to ontology as univocity of being. In Lacan, the phantasm is the ultimate kernel of the fetishistic illusion of the subject, its uninterpretable core, the formation which revolves around the object *a*. The ultimate act, the dissolution of the subject, which signals the end of analysis and points to the position of the analyst, is traversing the fantasy. It is in the concept of object *a* where the link between subject and being is found: the place of the (im)possibility of ontology. Therefore, this paper aims to give an account of the critique of the subject that both thinkers undertake, namely, one which doesn't fall into an affirmation of plural grounded/empirical subjectivities, and show that in the concept of phantasm, we can find convergence in their deployment: a *de iure* critique which brings forth the subject's dissolution and relates it to the order of being.

Subjectivity, Narrativity, Power. Who Narrates Whom?

Peter V. Zima

KL

University of Klagenfurt

The lecture will relate three concepts to each other: discourse, power and subjectivity. It is divided into three parts. In the first part it will be shown that discourse and power are interrelated insofar as an individual or collective subject is responsible for the semantic basis of discourse: for its relevance criteria, its semantic selections and its definitions. Especially the relevance criteria (the answer to the question: what is relevant for me, for us) lay down the trajectory of a discourse and are always an exercise of power. If a subject decides that not the semantic opposite capitalism/socialism is relevant for understanding the development of society, but the opposite female/male, it will not only narrate a story very different from the Marxist, but also exercise power by excluding competing narratives. This also applies to conflicts of sociological discourses such as Habermas's critical theory and Luhmann's system theory. Unlike Habermas, who sets out from the semantic opposite systems/life world, Luhmann holds the opposite system/environment to be relevant and thus produces a very different discourse or narrative. To what extent power and subjectivity are at stake in discourses is shown in the second part of the lecture which is based on the analyses of the American-Canadian sociologist Erving Goffman and his book *Asylums* with the subtitle "Essays on the Situation of Mental Patients and other Inmates". This book shows how the dominant discourse of a clinic tries to encompass and control the discourses of the patients by subjecting them to the semantic opposite normal/abnormal and the corresponding discourse. In this case, the contested object is the identity of the patients. The third part of the lecture focuses on the development of the individual subject in a permanent dialogue with others (parents, teachers, friends). This dialogue is a necessary aspect of socialisation, but it can also be conceived as an ongoing struggle for subjectivity: for a person's developing identity.

Exile and Narrative Identity – “Stranger to myself and to the world” (A. Camus)

Irene Breuer

OL

University of Wuppertal

Human beings and world are related to each other through a feeling of belonging: The human being is 'in the world' because it concerns him/her. With the term 'world' we mean a totality that embraces more than the 'whole of things.' The world constitutes above all the grounding soil of every natural experience. Phenomenology departs from this understanding and posits the idea of a lifeworld, in which human beings are bodily anchored. It is a world that is enriched by the streaming-in and sedimentation of historically varying and diverse cultural practices and political/theoretical aims. Phenomenology is best suited to account for the problem of intercultural tensions arising from the confrontation between home and alien worlds. Instead of aiming at reducing one to another and obliterating thus their mutual difference, phenomenology rather retrieves their origin in the lifeworld as the common soil of experience and in the political life as the 'second nature' of human beings. These intercultural tensions are best attested by the limit experience of exile, which has gained an undeniable actuality. It is presently a crucial task for any political or social debate to discuss the problem of exile from the perspective of the exiled itself: Exile is the limit experience par excellence insofar as it involves the experience of loss of the home-world, in one word of alienation and the reconfiguration of narrative identity. In order to illustrate this painful experience, I will recur to the Uruguayan writer Mario Benedetti, whose stories and poems best account for the drama of his own exile. This experience concerns in the first place the subject's relationship with the 'other', be it an individual or a community, an encounter through which both, individuals and communities, refigure their identities. It results from the alienation of one's own origins. Exile illustrates thus the conflicting relationship between narrative, experience, life, and the manner in which life makes sense by bridging the gap between disruption and reconfiguration. Hence, narrative identity is a two-sided coin: Experiential selfhood and sense-constitution are two aspects of the same phenomenon. In this connection, if we assume with Paul Ricœur that "life itself" is "a cloth woven of stories told", we should then disclose the way in which a new, hidden and originally unconscious sense emerges from the encounter with the other; a sense which overcomes the narrator of his own story and causes a break within his own life history. The encounter with the other causes a reconfiguration of the self in the sense that when someone makes elements of a foreign lifeworld his own, there is a correlative discovery of some hidden aspects in his own self: The self, which gets involved with the otherness, is self-same (ipse) through becoming another (alter)-than-himself. Therefore, 'otherness' implies not only a self-reconfiguration through the appropriation of an external or 'transcendent otherness' but the realization of an internal or 'immanent otherness' that comprises those aspects of selfhood (values, opinions, actions) that, by constituting the subject's own habitual, unquestioned world of experience, remain obscure until the self engages in a work of working through and thus becomes progressively conscious of their meaning. Once the exiled subject has assumed foreign and own narratives and has succeeded in reconfiguring them into a new sense, then there emerges a cultural plurality and a narrative diversity within the self, which account for the essential mutability of life and self. Exile illustrates thus the conflicting relationship between narrative, experience, life, identity and the manner in which life makes sense by bridging the gap between disruption and reconfiguration. Hence, narrative identity is a two-sided coin: Experiential selfhood and sense-constitution are two aspects of the same phenomenon.

The Phenomenology of the Relational Self: A Japanese Critique of Heidegger's Conception of Authenticity

Thomas Moore

IP

University of Sheffield

This paper will use the work of the Japanese phenomenologist Watsuji Tetsuro (particularly his *Rinrigaku (Ethics)* (1996)) to critique Heidegger's conception of Dasein (and subsequent conception of authenticity) as being insufficiently relational, arguing Watsuji's conception of the self as *Ningen* is a better alternative. The argument will proceed in several steps. Firstly, it will briefly explore the context surrounding Heidegger and Watsuji, particularly how Watsuji's views are grounded in Daoism, Buddhism and Confucianism. Secondly, I will use my own novel examples to explain Watsuji's view that we can only define individuality and sociality in terms of the negation of each other. In brief, this is the view that an individual is not an individual unless they stand opposed to others; people have to be individual relative to something and this something is group identity. For example, someone who can run 5K in under 20 minutes is a fast runner relative to the general population (with this perhaps being a key part of their individual identity) but still slow relative to Olympic runners, thus their running times can only serve to stand them out as an individual vis-à-vis the former group. Thirdly I will follow Watsuji (1996: 80) in arguing that Heidegger's error is precisely to ignore the prior notion. Heidegger, like most Western philosophers, denies that the I is a negation of communal character, cutting off the interconnectedness between self and other; hence he attributes the idea of an authentic self solely to our individual side. To Watsuji (1996: 225), regarding the self in this way is an illegitimate move because the self here is already grasped as opposed to the other; hence a negation of *Ningens* sociality is implicitly made by Heidegger before he arrives at his individualist conception of authenticity. To see this we can continue the prior example, visualising how someone who trains up to become a great professional runner instead of following the societal norm of getting a 9-5 office job is only an individual in terms defined by their sociality. I argue that this means Heidegger's authenticity is actually inauthenticity because he is arbitrarily giving first priority to the individual side of *Ningen*, instead of considering the totality of *Ningens* existence (both our social and individual sides). In contrast, Watsuji's phenomenology of the self arguably gives a more accurate expression of authenticity, especially surrounding ethical obligations. Take an example of someone who has a choice between taking up postgraduate study and looking after their sick mother. Heidegger would say it was more authentic to take the postgraduate study if this is an expression of someone's individuality, since by doing this they can be themselves (with themselves being the individual side of *Ningen*), rather than simply taking up the duties society expects of them (and therefore being part of the they-self). Whereas Watsuji's *Ningen* accurately gives phenomenological expression to the ethical obligations we perceive someone to have regarding their mother.

The Subject as Saturated Phenomena and the Prospects for Subjectivity without Objectification

Otniel Kish

OL

University of Durham

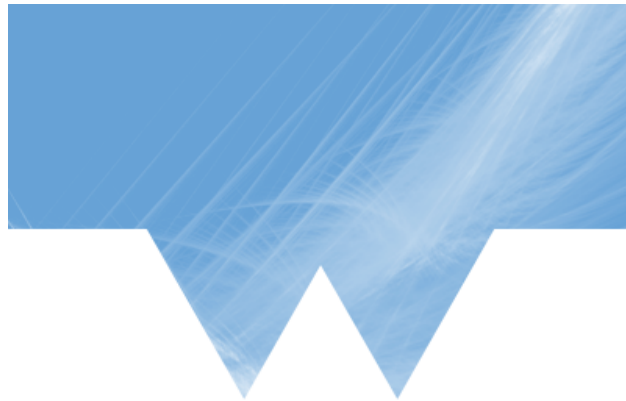
This paper will investigate the concept of the subject within the phenomenology of Jean-Luc Marion. The point of departure for this discussion will be Jean-Luc Marion's claim that subjectivity is received from 'saturated phenomena' — a freighted neologism referring to phenomena encountered by the subject which exceed its ability to grasp them entirely.¹ Indeed, Marion names the subject *l'adonné* precisely because the subject is constituted by its encounter with saturated phenomena. It will be argued that this manner of characterizing the subject for Marion is derived from his reliance on Lévinas and especially Ricoeur for the call and response structure that thus constitutes the subject. Yet, Marion also states, in *Negative Certainties*, that "... man appears to himself only as a phenomenon that he cannot constitute, because he passes by excess beyond the field of every horizon and of every system of categories. . . This can be formulated thus: man appears to himself as a saturated phenomenon; and no concept (quiddity, essence, or definition) can constitute as an object the excess with which the intuition gratifies that phenomenon."² That is to say, it seems that for Marion it is not only that the subject is constituted by phenomena which escapes its intentional aims but also becomes for itself in its reflexive mode, a phenomena which exceeds its capacity to grasp within its horizon of understanding. This paper will explore this peculiar doubling which in a sense seems to cast the notion of subjectivity in an analogous mode to Marion's saturated phenomena. Lastly, this paper will explore the political trajectories of Marion's notion of the subject and his insistence that providing a definition of the human is perhaps the first step for political exclusion since it sets the boundaries for what may be defined as the non-human. It will be asked whether what Marion proposes, as an apophatic form of the subject, indeed holds the promise for a self which does not slip under the guise of objectification. In order to sharpen Marion's proposition, his discussion of the subject will be brought into dialogue with Achille Mbembe's explorations of the concept of the subject in his work, *Necro-Politics*. This paper will argue that having taken into account the larger political structures operating in the production of subjectivity, restricting objectification alone cannot preclude the possibility of violence towards the subject.

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