

Review of: "On the subject part I: what is the subject?"

Lucas Faial Soneghet¹

¹ Universidade Federal de Pernambuco

Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.

Overall comments:

- The article could use a review in order to improve writing, specifically removing repeated words and syntax.
- It would be good to discuss the solipsistic principle of Kant a little more. It could be good to mention critiques of that idea, such as Merleau-Ponty's or Scheler's, among many others who wrote about the subjective-objective dualism. Pragmatists such as Dewey or James also deal with this, posing that reality is neither unreachable nor wholly fabricated. By the end of the section "Collectivity", there seems to be a leap from a defense of the solipsistic principle to an argument against it based on the idea of collective knowledge, but the steps are not clear. Why is collective knowledge different from individual knowledge? If our ideas are ultimately collective, isn't all individual perception overdetermined? And if it is, why really bother with subjectivity?
- I recommend removing mentions of forthcoming articles. Given that the readers don't have access to that, it doesn't really help them;
- The first sentence in the first part of the article reads "The emergence of intersubjective human awareness and agency are called science and technology." This statement is somewhat problematic, given that intersubjective human awareness is not yet defined in this point of the text, and that it seems reductive. There are other kinds of intersubjective knowledge production outside of science, such as religious traditions, arts and numerous forms of practical knowledge. I'd recommend working towards that or rewriting the sentence.
- The dualism of "automaton" versus "conscious", or "material" versus "idea", is a central concern of Bruno Latour's writing. It could be good to engage with him a bit, even if briefly.
- In the section "Consciousness", I'd recommend touching on affect theory (Massumi for instance). A lot of arguments present on agency have similarities with this strand of theory.
- Some points regarding the "social dimension" of subjectivity are underdeveloped. The idea of an evolutionary drive behind social systems has long been debated and often discarded in social theory. Similarly, there is a sense that this evolution is a positive transformation towards human self realization, which is a bit one-sided when one considers society's troubles. Niklas Luhmann, referenced in the paper, could have more space in these discussions, as well as Bruno Latour (for the constructivist side of things) and Margaret Archer (for the realist/emergence side of things). Those thinkers deal with larger philosophical issues while grounded on debates of subjectivity, agency, nature and society.