

Review of: "Distance as the most essential form of human thought and subjectivity"

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Review: Distance as the Most Essential Form of Human Thought and Subjectivity

The author discusses the ontological distance between determinacy and indeterminacy as a central element of human thought and relates this to the history of philosophy. In general, the paper is well written and draws on a wide range of classical and modern authors to delineate a central element of modern thought that arose out of the problems created by the great systems from Descartes onward: The dependence of determinate systems of thought on indeterminate foundations, and the oscillating distance between them. This, the author argues, is central to understanding human thought. The paper is worth publishing, although it could be improved with minor revisions.

First of all, the discourse taken up by the author is one that is currently discussed in various approaches: Alain Badiou's (2006) "Being and Event," Slavoj Žižek's (2008) "The Ticklish Subject," Alenka Zupančič's (2017) "What is Sex," Quentin Meillassoux's (2008) "After Finitude," and others address this problem centrally. It would help readers who are not approaching the text from an extensive knowledge of classical authors to locate the text in the current discourse. Especially as the author builds psychoanalytic insights, accordingly, taking into account current philosophy influenced by structural psychoanalysis could improve the text for readers.

The next question with which I would engage the text is based on this modern discourse: Is the indeterminacy with which the subject oscillates an ontological indeterminacy or an epistemic indeterminacy? The latter is a classical notion that can be found in many authors, while the former may have been introduced by Schelling in his "Das Wesen der Menschlichen Freiheit" (Schelling, 1950) as the "Grund" in difference to existence. An elaboration of this would improve the authors' position that the distance between determinacy and indeterminacy is central to human thought, but has been somewhat "forgotten". Especially if one takes into account Heidegger's concept of *aletheia* as based in absence, not presence, as he discusses it in his lectures on the presocratic philosophies: as the temporal emergence and fading of something intelligible from an undifferentiated or unintelligible void ("am Rand des Nichts") (Heidegger, 2012: 9).

My final question concerns the status of phenomenology. It seems that the inclusion of the indeterminate is a problem for

phenomenology, as Blumenberg (2022) argues in the recently re-published "The Ontological Distance". Where he points to a "distance problem" of phenomenology that caused Heidegger to leave behind the phenomenological approach of his earlier works. However, the author claims that "thinking it phenomenologically, in experience" is important for the conceptualization of this oscillation. For me, this might need some clarification, since it is undoubtedly important to experience, but focal elements of thought are in some way always beyond experience, as Quentin Meillassoux (2008) demonstrates in his arch-fossil.

Finally, there are some chapters (e.g. 2.2) that could use a more fluid writing style to engage with readers.

References

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