

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

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All considered, the paper is interesting and deserves to be published. The conclusions are strong and indicate many interesting possible developments. However, there are major issues concerning the style, the structure, and the content of the paper that should be fixed before the publication. For this reason, I suggest to accept it in the event that its authors improve it.

## Style

The style is not very academic. Some sentences are very assertive and should be rewritten. For example, "Society is not natural, but created by humans ..." is a very questionable and questioned position by philosophers, ethnologists and so on. One could object that "culture" is part of human nature, making reference to the notion of "nurture", or ask what is the boundary between nature and culture and so on. Since, in the quoted passage, the author refers to Kant, the sentence could be easily rewritten as follows: "According to Kant/In a Kantian perspective, society is not natural etc."

Another example of very assertive sentence is the following: "I will first analyze western philosophical literature to show that distance is not just proper to man/thought but the most essential form of any living body (2.1 – 2.4). Western philosophy is nothing other than the performance of distance". The claim sound pretentious, since the author considers only *some selected authors* and then generalises his conclusions to the totality of western philosophy without any exception. Greater caution is recommended.

## Structure

The presence of a section about God (3.2) sounds somehow off-topic and should be better introduced and justified, provided the title (distance as the most essential form of *human* thought and subjectivity). The theme is not present in the abstract and in the introduction. Probably, God deserves a separate, deeper research.

## Content

1. The section on Heidegger is very problematic. The author identifies the notion of distance with Heidegger's "difference". Unfortunately, a kernel notion of Heidegger's is de-distancing (Ent-Fernung), defined as "a constitution of being of Da-sein of which de-distancing something, putting it away, is only a definite, factual mode. [...] Da-sein is essentially de-distancing" (Being and Time par. 23, The Spatiality of Being-in-the-World). The author does not quote Heidegger's *opus majus*, confuses difference and de-distancing, referring the notion of "distance" to the subject while

in Heidegger's is related to the relation between being and the world. The section should be rewritten, as the role of distance in Heidegger's thought is opposite from what the author believes it is: in fact, the author wrote: "it is precisely this lack of distance in Heidegger's Dasein that makes the matter of thinking unclarifiable in Being and Time"

2. Paragraph 3.1 consists in a discussion of Merleau-Ponty's work. However, it starts referring to "the psychoanalytical thesis which claims that infants, initially in their ontogenetic history, are unable to discriminate between the self and world (...)". This is somehow deceiving for different reasons: first, Merleau-Ponty's conceptual frame is phenomenological and not psychoanalytical; second, psychoanalysis and phenomenology diverge on such ground notions as "unconscious" and "intentionality". A second problem: the discussion is mainly a collection of judgments on Merleau-Ponty avoiding a direct face-to-face with the the French scholar's works.