

notes on “ontological cubism”

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We empty the subject to repopulate the world. The subject, most radically understood, is nothing but the being of world. Here we understand the (ontological) subject as **a** streaming of **the** world.

If we focus first on our human situation, this streaming of the world has a person at its center. It is as if the world streams “through” or “for” the sense organs of this person.

We call an individual streaming of the world an ontological subject because the “form” of the that worldstreaming is “subject-like.” The world streams as if it were a streaming of that person’s experience.

Panenexperientialism tends to use “experience” as a key word, to emphasize the “subject-likeness” of the stream.

This paper (under the tentative label of “ontological cubism”) will take a complementary approach, stressing that the objects of the world have their genuine and only being in such streams.

The ontological subject is a mobile “unhiding” of the world. Heidegger says something like this: “dasein is discoveriture [disclosure]. ” J. S. Mill’s description of the matter of substance of objects in terms of the possibility of sensation can also be interpreted this way.

A person understands the world as vast, while being able to perceive only a relatively tiny portion of it that is near that person’s body. The ontological subject is a “presencing” of entities. It “follows” the (body of) the person from room to room, converting the possibility of sensation into actual sensation. In updated language, we might speak of signitive intentions being fulfilled. I “know” that Kroger is down the street, though I can’t see it right now. I can “make Kroger present” by getting in my car, and driving there, etc.

Most of the world is absent in this way. We see from this that memory and the sense of the possible (possibility itself) are fundamental aspects of world’s being.

We can now explain that the world is repopulated by recognizing that it includes toothaches as well as tarantulas, promises as well as protons. The ontological subject is “empty.” It is “time as the nothingness of every entity.” But this is also “time as the **being** of every entity.” The ontological subject is the “fluid or nonpunctiform now.” It is always ahead of itself and behind itself. It is “ecstatic time,” as described by Heidegger.

But we don't want to feel constrained by Heidegger or by Advaita Vedanta, no matter how helpful we find these texts associated with either. We should not expect a perfect (as in final) articulation of the basic structure of existence. It suffices to appreciate the better articulations so far and improve them if we can, by the usual criticism and synthesis.