

38th Lecture at the Gramsci Monument, The Bronx, NYC: 7th August 2013

WHAT IS IDENTITY?

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1. Western thinking lives from the illusion of identity and self-sameness of the human subject.
2. It is always concerned with the question, "Who am I?"
3. This question is always answered by promising the ego a home, a transcendental intimacy and familiarity with itself.
4. And yet, it is apparent that this will and this desire and the ethics which demands such a self-stabilization within an ego- or self-entity are indebted to ontological catastrophe: the inkling, the knowledge that there is no subject identical with itself.
5. Perhaps there is something resembling a subject, but it does not coincide with itself. The human being is "not at home in its own essence," writes Heidegger.¹
6. Therefore, in Deleuze's and Derrida's work, among others', the human being is not called a subject.
7. The subject is too late, too early, or delayed, "always too late or ahead of time in both directions simultaneously, but never on time," says Deleuze.²
8. The human being is a subject of absolute non-simultaneity, subject of a certain *différance* (Derrida), of an irreducible deferment and conflict.
9. It does not coincide with itself. It does not agree with itself and is alien to itself. It is scarcely still a subject insofar as subject means the subject of transcendental self-consciousness of the thinking of the modern age, Descartes' *fundamentum inconcussum*, Kant's transcendental subject, Hegel's concept conceiving itself and German idealism in general. The subject of an original, not subsequent, (self-) alienation is a subject without transcendental housing, a subject of transcendental homelessness, subject without subjectivity because its subjectivity is the name of this 'without'.

1 *Einführung in die Metaphysik* Tübingen 1987 p. 120.
2 *Logik des Sinns* Frankfurt/M. 1993 p. 107.