Modern French thought, ‘structuralism’, ‘post-structuralism’, ‘postmodernism’, Marxism as well, are currently associated with the so-called ‘death of the subject’. Foucault’s ‘anti-humanism’, the celebrated ‘death of Man’, the declining popularity of the rational, Kantian, transcendent subject, reigning over what Lyotard called ‘metanarratives’, are all parts of the process. Foucault’s rejection of the subject is unequivocally linked to his views on history, more precisely to his criticism of the role played by ‘the sovereignty of consciousness’ in history. His plea against ‘continuous history’ and his full-scale attacks on ‘the sovereignty of the subject’ are closely related:

Continuous history is the indispensable correlative of the founding function of the subject: the guarantee that everything that has eluded him may be restored to him; the certainty that time will disperse nothing without restoring it in a reconstituted unity; the promise that one day the subject – in the form of historical consciousness – will once again be able to appropriate, to bring back under his sway, all those things that are kept at a distance by difference, and find in them what might be called his abode. Making historical analysis the discourse of the continuous and making human consciousness the original subject of all historical development and all action are the two sides of the same system of thought. In this system, time is conceived in terms of totalization and revolutions are never more than moments of consciousness. In various forms, this theme has played a constant role since the nineteenth century: to preserve, against all decentrings, the sovereignty of the subject, and the twin figures of anthropology and humanism.

By ‘decentrings’ of the subject Foucault means ‘the researches of psychoanalysis, linguistics and ethnology’, which ‘have decentred the subject in relation to the laws of his desire, the forms of his language, the rules of his action, or the games of his mythical or fabulous discourse’. ‘Decentred’ does not mean ‘dead’. Foucault’s 1981–82 lectures at the Collège de France dealt with The Hermeneutics of the Subject, that is with the self, the ‘care of the self’ and ancient ethics. It was not at variance with the proposals of The Archaeology of Knowledge: if archaeology is supposed to challenge the ‘transcendental dimension’, if its aim is to ‘free history’ from the grip of the ‘twin figures of anthropology and humanism’, that is of the ‘constituent consciousness’, if its aim is even ‘to free
history from the grip of phenomenology’, it is clear that The Hermeneutics of the Subject does the job in its own, particular way: it surely breaks with ‘historical phenomenology’, while contributing to a ‘history of subjectivity’ as described in Dits et écrits:

[the project is] to study the constitution of the subject as an object for himself: the formation of procedures by which the subject is led to observe himself, analyse himself, interpret himself, recognize himself as a domain of possible knowledge. In short, this concerns the history of subjectivity’, if what is meant by the term is the way in which the subject experiences himself in a game of truth where he relates to himself.4

The Subject and/or The Self. One could rewrite Foucault’s statement using ‘Self’ and ‘Selfhood’ instead of ‘subject’ and ‘subjectivity’. One could even write a whole book on the topics. This book exists. It is Souci de soi (self-consciousness), as preserved when it functions as the object of a noun, Ricœur mentions Le souci de soi, The Care of the Self, ‘Michel Foucault’s magnificent title’.5 But, of course, his philosophical intentions in Oneself as Another are rather different from those of Foucault. One deserves special attention: taking account of the equivocity of the term ‘identical’, depending on whether one understands by ‘identical’ the equivalent of the Latin ipse or idem, Ricœur shows that this equivocity determines two important issues, personal identity and narrative identity, and that it is related to what he calls ‘a primary trait of the self, namely its temporality’. Throughout Oneself as Another Ricœur maintains the thesis of the distinction between sameness, the idem-identity, and selfhood (ipseity), the ipse-identity and the view that ‘identity in the sense of ipse implies no assertion concerning some unchanging core of the personality’. He also has some ideas on the relationship between his own work and Foucault’s herméneutique du sujet, characterizing his own philosophical project as a herméneutique du soi, hermeneutics of the self, as a counterpart to Foucault’s book.

Considering the expressions ‘philosophies of the subject’ and ‘philosophies of the cogito’ as equivalent, holding ‘as paradigmatic of the philosophies of the subject that the subject is formulated in the first person (ego cogito), whether the “I” be defined as an empirical or a transcendental ego’, whether ‘posited absolutely or relatively’ – ‘in all of these instances, the subject is “I”’ – Ricœur suggests that ‘the style specific to the hermeneutics of the self is best understood if one has first had a chance to take stock of the amazing oscillations that the philosophies of the subject appear to present, as though the cogito out of which they arose were unavoidably caught up in an alternating sequence of overevaluation ad underevaluation.’ The transdisciplinary concept of ‘style’ is important. ‘The philosophy of the subject has never existed; rather, there have been a series of reflective styles, arising out of the work of redefinition which the challenge itself has imposed.’ I cannot comment here on those oscillations, those ‘styles’. It should be enough to say that Ricœur’s purpose is based on a distinction between philosophy of the subject or philosophy of the ego (egology), on the one hand, and hermeneutics of the self, intended as dedicated to the question of acting, on the other hand. An agent capable of acting, and of suffering: this is the subject, or better said the self, as conceived by Ricœur. Its place stands ‘at an equal distance from the cogito exalted by Descartes and from the cogito that Nietzsche proclaimed forfeit’. History, phenomenology and ontology are connected in Ricœur’s consideration of the subject. To be ‘able to establish the concrete ties by which the phenomenology of ‘I can’ and the ‘ontology of one’s body are related to an ontology of the self, as an acting and suffering subject’, ‘a long journey through and beyond’ the ‘philosophies of subjectivity’ is required. The ‘assurance of being oneself acting and suffering’, ‘even if it is always in some sense received from another’, this ‘self-attestation’, not the Cartesian ego, are Ricœur’s basic concern: they have to do with persons and ethics. It is only at the ‘ethical level’ (in the final section of the book) that one comes to the real picture: confronting ‘narrative identity, oscillating between sameness and selfhood, and ethical identity, which requires a person accountable for his or her acts’. ‘I never forget to speak of humans as acting and suffering.’ Thus, hermeneutics of the self is concerned with what Ricœur calls the question Who? (distinct from the question What? and the question Why?). ‘We never leave the problem of selfhood as long as we remain within the orbit of the question Who?’; it is concerned with imputation, that is: with the moral subject of imputation, or, better said, ‘the articulation of ascription and imputation in the moral and legal sense’.2
Foucault, Riceur: one should of course add Vincent Descombes. Michel, Paul, Vincent: a French trilogy. After all, it is Descombes who evokes ‘the great controversy concerning the notion of the subject which has occupied a good part of the discussion in France in the second half of the last century, and from which we are not yet entirely free’. ‘Disentangle’ could be Descombes’s keyword for transdisciplinary thought, sorting through all the words or terms that ‘the philosophers use to treat the question of self-consciousness’. Beyond this Wittgensteinian motto, Descombes’s most basic claims are that: (1) we need a concept of the subject; (2) ‘the concept of the subject that we need is that of the agent’; (3) ‘such a subject must have the required traits to play the role of an agent’; (4) ‘it must be not only identifiable as an individual, but present in the world like a causal power’; (5) it must have ‘all the characteristics of a substance or … of a support’. To put it in a nutshell: ‘the subject which it is necessary for us to discover is more Aristotelian than Cartesian.’

Descombes’s analysis is very provocative. But before I assemble some additional materials to substantiate his views I must consider a last trend in ‘modern French thought’. Dominique Janicaud’s book on the so-called ‘theological turn’ of French phenomenology is fairly well known. The book was published in French in 1991; it was followed ten years later by Phenomenology and the Theological Turn: The French Debate, with contributions by Janicaud, Jean-François Courtine, Riceur, and three representatives of the theological turn: Jean-Luc Marion, Michel Henry and Jean-Louis Chrétien. The first philosophical figure of the theological turn is Emmanuel Levinas, but lastly it is Jean-Luc Marion who stands in the forefront, with his phenomenology of givenness (Étant donné, Being Given), his studies of ‘saturated phenomena’ (De surcroît, In Excess), his meditations on the ‘erotic phenomenon’ (Le phénomène érotique, The Erotic Phenomenon) and more recently his book on Augustine, Au lieu de soi, In (the) Place of the Self. As John Caputo nicely put it, Janicaud’s claim was that ‘a purely philosophical method – phenomenology – [had been] “hi-jacked” for theological purposes’ by Levinas, Henry and Marion, ‘who contrived to fit pre-given theological conclusions to supposedly neutral phenomena’. This should be appreciated against the background of Marion’s interpretation of Augustine. Actually Marion’s goal is to free Augustine of metaphysics – ‘he is not involved in metaphysics, at least not in the literal and historical sense of the word’ – metaphysical readings, modern distinctions such as that between theology and philosophy, so that he should be considered as ‘ahead of us’, he who ‘probably never entered metaphysics’, us who are just beginning ‘to emerge from metaphysics’.

As far as In (the) Place of the Self is concerned, the two claims, Janicaud’s and Marion’s, are not mutually exclusive. Marion’s purpose is to read and interpret the Confessions of Saint Augustine in a resolutely non-metaphysical mode, employing to this end the principal concepts which I have come to elaborate in a radically phenomenological logic.

Those concepts, such as l’adonné (the gifted) or l’interlocué, are precisely the ones that Janicaud did characterize or would have characterized as ‘contrived to fit pre-given theological conclusions to supposedly neutral phenomena’. The whole discussion can yet be considered under another perspective, that of the post-Foucauldian ‘archaeology of the subject’.

Marion argues that Augustine does not belong to metaphysics because:

(i) he does not pose the question of Being [l'être];
(ii) neither does he pose the question of beings [l'étant];
(iii) he does not therefore designate God beginning with Being; (iv) nor does he designate Him as the being [l'étant] par excellence;
(v) he does not speak the language of the categories of being [de l'étant];
(vi) he does not speak beginning with the first among these, ou sia;
(vii) he does not enquire into the first foundation;
(viii) nor does he search for this foundation in a subject, understood as either substratum or as ego.

He adds that it might very well be that he would not even belong to theology, granted that,

along with most of the Greek fathers, theology attempts to speak (i) of God; (ii) of principles; (iii) of the creation of the world; (iv) of the creation of man; (v) of the incarnation; (vi) of the holy spirit – just as the Greek philosophers speak (i) of nature; (ii) of the soul; (iii) of the world; (iv) of the categories; (v) of the polis; (vi) of the divine.

It will seem rather paradoxical to argue that Augustine ‘does not speak of God’. But there is a reason for Marion making such a claim: Augustine does not speak of God, because he speaks to God (Au lieu de soi). Shall we follow Marion and say that Augustine does not speak the ‘Greek’ language either, or that of the philosophers, or even that of the Fathers of the Church – mostly Greeks?

One might. But this is not our concern. Rather, it is to connect Descombes’s claims to Marion’s, from an archaeological point of view. Let me quote from my own Naissance du sujet, the first volume of Archéologie du sujet.
To theologize [théologiser] as far as possible the notion of the subject: such would be the byword of the archeology of modern subjectivity [subjectivité]. Theology was for a long time a crucial discipline, absolutely lashed to a practice of power. Whether Christian or pagan, it has become a minor discipline. The current revival of ‘philosophy’ as a ‘way of life’, along with the ‘New Age’ celebrations of ‘personal development’ and of atheology, have made theology one of the invisible minorities in the history of philosophy, a hidden ‘field of memory’.14

Speaking of transdisciplinarity, it is clear that what holds for Augustine according to Marion would certainly not hold at all for philosophy and theology. Both the philosophers and the Fathers of the Church have spoken the language of the categories of Being; both have dealt with ousia, substance. More important than any theological turn in French phenomenology, another, ontological, turn in the Christian faith in Late Antiquity has given rise to alternate turns in the succeeding periods: Christological and anthropological; an anthropological turn in anthropology; an anthropological turn in Christology. The acting subject, the subject who is an agent, described by Descombes, has been from the very beginnings of theology onwards the patient par excellence, the suffering agent, Christ.

From Trinitarian theology and Christology to philosophy, from philosophy to Trinitarian theology and Christology: disciplinarity and transdisciplinarity march together. Disciplines emerge out of their mutual crossovers, conflicts, contaminations: this is the (inter)disciplinary domain any historian of the subject and subjectivity should consider.

Let us take an instance. One of the most important ‘historical events’ or ‘changes’ – ‘historical’ meaning what pertains to the history of Being (Seinsgeschichte) – that account for the rise of the modern subject, is according to Heidegger the first reinterpretation of Aristotelian energia through the medieval notion of actus. It is described by Carol J. White in the following manner:

The epoch of Greek thought comes to an end with the translation of Greek notions into Latin terminology and into the Roman understanding of being. Then a different sense of production begins to reign, one which suggests that the human task is to dominate and control what-is. The fateful translation of terms indicated a change in the understanding of being. The active, involved energia becomes ‘actualitas’, just brute factuality, and the understanding of the being of what-is as actuality will in turn become the notion that reality is ‘objectivity’ (GA 5: 317). The understanding of the being of what-is is set on a path where thinking will find itself ‘set off against being in such a way the being is placed before it and consequently stands opposed to it as object’).15

Energeia becomes actualitas. That is true. But the meaning of this becoming is not understood at all if this Latin translation is taken in isolation, apart from the fact that energia had already been used in the Christological debates on monotheism and monoenergism. The orthodox view was and still is that, being at the same time true God and truly man, Jesus has two wills (contrary to the Monothelite heresy’s claim) and two ‘energies’ (contrary to the Monoenergist heresy’s claim). In Latin the two ‘energies’ become the two ‘actions’ (actiones) or ‘operations’ (operationes). There are two natures in Christ, but how many wills? How many actions or operations? How many hypostases? That is, in Latin, how many supposita? How many persons? Is there only one being in Christ? Or two beings? Those are the questions raised (and allegedly solved) by the Fathers of the Church. They were discussed in those terms up to the nineteenth century. Vincent Descombes’s subject-agent has an absolute pattern (Ricoeur’s one): Christ. When it comes to the question of the subject, Christological problems serve as a pattern of new philosophical problems, and vice versa. Union of the two natures, the human and the divine, ‘in the hypostasis’ or ‘person’ of Christ, the so-called henosis hypostatike, is a pattern for the union of mind and body, from Leibniz onwards up to Peter Strawson. But union of soul and body had previously
been a way of approaching the mystery of the union of the two natures in Christ for the Greek Fathers, from Athanasius onwards up to John of Damascus. So-called ‘Cartesian dualism’ does not face a single problem that theological dyophysism does not – that theological dyophysism actually did face, including the problem of the unity of man, discussed by Descartes, Regius and their Calvinist Aristotelian opponents, Gilbert Voet and Martin Schoock, during the Quarrel of Utrecht. Is man an? An ens unum per accidens? – Regius’s unfortunate formulation – or is he an ens per se? Those questions were currently raised for Christ in Byzantium. Then, again and again, in the Middle Ages.

3

The history of the subject cannot be fully understood, reconstructed or deconstructed, if one does not consider the duo ousia-hypostasis when discussing Heidegger’s genealogy of the subject based on the subtle and quite useful distinction between ‘subjecticity’ or ‘subjectness’ (Subiectität) and ‘subjectivity’ (Subjektivität). The term Subiectität, which is rendered as ‘subjectivity’ or ‘subjectness’ in most English translations, has a precise meaning: at first blush it points to the very quality of being a sub-jectum, ontologically speaking; that is, according to the meaning of the Greek hypokeimenon, which it translates, to the quality of being ‘that-which-lies-before, which, as ground, gathers everything onto itself’. According to the concept of its essence, subiectum is in a distinctive sense that which already lies-before and so lies at the basis of something else, whose ground it therefore is. Heidegger never tires of repeating what is actually his most striking point: in this understanding, subject ‘had first … no special relationship to man and none at all to the I’. We must thus ‘at first remove the concept “man” – and therefore the concepts “I” and “I-ness” as well – from the concept of the essence of subiectum. Stones, plants and animals are subjects – something lying-before of itself – no less than man is. Yet ‘man has become the primary and only real subiectum’. Man has become ‘that being upon which all that is, is grounded as regards the manner of its Being and its truth’. Man has become ‘the relational center of that which is as such’. When did this occur? Heidegger’s answer is cut and dried: with the ‘Cartesian interpretation of man as subiectum’. ‘Since Descartes and through Descartes, man, the human “I” has in a preeminent way come to be the “subject” in metaphysics.’ With the Cartesian interpretation of man ‘begins the completion and consummation of Western metaphysics’, which also ‘creates the metaphysical presupposition for future anthropology of every kind and tendency’. This claim must be taken literally: after Descartes there is no other subject, properly speaking, than ‘the human subject transposed into the “I”’. In other words: Heidegger does not limit himself to saying that with Descartes man is conceived as a subiectum; he pushes further by asserting that within Descartes’s metaphysics man ‘comes to play the role of the one and only subject proper’.

4

Heidegger’s reconstruction has one major flaw: it is exclusively based on the couple hypokeimenon–symbebekhos, subject–accident. Descombes rightly points out that in the Aristotelian tradition ‘subject’ is not opposed to ‘object’ but to ‘accidents’. But precisely, the hypokeimenon is not the only possible source for tracing the history of subjectivity: hypostasis and ousia are much better candidates. Why? Let me briefly give my reasons.

In a lucid article in the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, Eric T. Olson lists the various problems of personal identity:

Who am I? What makes one the person one is?
What property (or set of properties)?
Personhood. What is it to be a person? What is necessary, and what suffices, for something to count as a person, as opposed to a non-person?
Persistence. What does it take for a person to persist from one time to another – that is, for the same person to exist at different times?
Evidence. How do we find out who is who?
Through first-person memory: if you remember doing something, or at least seem to remember, it was probably you who did it. By physical continuity: if the person who did it looks just like you, or even better if she is in some sense physically or spatio-temporally continuous with you, that is reason to think she is you.
Population. The problem of ‘synchronic identity’, as opposed to the ‘diachronic identity’ of the Persistence Question (and the ‘counterfactual identity’ of the How could I have been?).
What am I? What sort of things, metaphysically speaking, are you and I and other human people?
What is our basic metaphysical nature? For instance, what are we made of? Are we made up entirely of matter, just as stones are, or partly or wholly of something else? If we are made of matter, what matter is it? (Just the matter that makes up our bodies, or might we be larger or smaller than our bodies?) Where, in other words, do our spatial boundaries lie? More fundamentally, what fixes those boundaries? Are we substances – metaphysically independent beings – or is each of us a state or an aspect of something else, or perhaps some sort of process or event?
Almost all those questions have been dealt with in Christological debates. Many have been raised in Trinitarian debates. Two people sharing one organism; a single human being with split personality being the home of two or more thinking beings – those hypotheses have been discussed by modern philosophers, but centuries ago the Nestorians had also many arguments for actually posing two persons in Christ. For instance: ‘If you posit two natures of the one Christ, and if there is no nature without hypostasis, then there will be [in him] two hypostases, too.’ There is no nature without hypostasis is a philosophical, anti-Platonic principle (whose present-day version would be: there are no un-instantiated universals). An archeology of subjectivity is primarily concerned with the history of such principles.

Principles, rules, conceptual distinctions, schemes of thought, instances, puzzles are often more interesting than theories, or doctrines. The principle There is no nature without hypostasis reads in Greek: οὐκ ἐστὶ φύσις ἀν-ὑποστάτου; there is no un- or an-hypostatic nature. The distinction between anhypostatos and enhypostatos, that is: ‘enhypostasized’ is part of the long history of subject, subjectivity and subjectivity. En-hypostatos means ‘existing’, ‘having concrete existence’, having a hypostasis. To avoid double personality in Christ you must consider that human nature subsists – is hypostasized – in the hypostasis of the Logos. Two natures thus share the same hypostasis. In the case of the union of soul and body in man, some people say that the two natures, the uncorporeal and the corporeal, share a common subsistence that is constituted by their relationality. Others would rather say that the soul subsists in the body.

The ousia–hypostasis scheme supports all sorts of questions central to Ricoeur’s and Descombes’s reflections on the subject-agent. Of course, it also copes with problems discussed by Marion. And last but not least with the sort of Lockean identity puzzles that have interested Étienne Balibar, such as whether different consciousnesses or memories in the same individual would make different persons or identities, and conversely whether one single consciousness or a continuity of memory from one consciousness to another would make one single identical person of two men or individuals.

Do man and God share their thoughts in Christ? Do they share the pain? Did God suffer during the Passion – as theopaschists or patripassionists held? The accusation of Nestorianism was still vivid in the sixteenth century, among and between Lutherans and Calvinists, as is testified by the Acta of the Colloquy of Montbéliard. There, in 1586, the Lutheran Jakobus Andree and Lukas Osiander maintained against Théodore de Bèze that for the Calvinists:

1. The communicatio idiomatum is merely verbal, not real, so that the humanity of Christ does not share in the omnipresence of the divinity.
2. It follows from (1) that ‘God suffers’ means only that the humanity of Christ suffered.
3. The logical result of this teaching is Nestorianism: there are two Christs. Bèze admits of a human Christ who suffers and a divine Christ who does not suffer, and so on.

Bèze answered that Andree was mistaken, and claimed that his incomprehension of good and sound Christology stemmed from an incomprehension of the difference between concrete and abstract terms.

Thus one could say that Christ is omnipresent, omnipotent, or even that the man Christ is omnipresent and omnipotent because such a concrete subject refers to the person. On the other hand, one may not say that the humanity is omnipresent and omnipotent because this would abolish the distinction between the human and the divine natures. So one can say that God suffers, but only kat’allo or according to the other nature, the possible human nature, possessed by the person, Christ.

To suffer kat’allo. What would it be if the union of body and soul was for us merely communication of properties? I suffer in this body, which is not me. Literally speaking this is allopathy. In any case applied mereology. Indeed, another way of saying the same thing is to distinguish between ‘the whole Christ’ and ‘the whole of Christ’, totus Christus and totum Christi.

Thus: the whole me is suffering, but ‘the whole of me’ is not in my suffering. Christ is not-all’ (in the passio) – a doctrine that later came to be called the extra calvinisticum.

In the Acta, Beza explained that totus refers to the person, totum to the natures. So the whole Christ is omnipotent, but not the whole of Christ (Acta, 308: ‘Totum Christum, non autem totum Christi … omnipotentem esse dicimus.’) Thus one can say that the whole Christ suffered, but not the whole of Christ because his divinity did not suffer. It is in this sense that B. affirmed the presence of the whole Christ to his Church while denying that the whole of Christ is so present since the body of Christ is in heaven until
Having contributed with Étienne Balibar to the article ‘Subject’ in the *Vocabulaire européen des philosophies*[^1] I am particularly interested in stories about words. To conclude, I would like to show that my proposal ‘Théologiser à fond la notion de sujet’ is a good means to understand part of what could be termed, in Foucauldian terms, the ‘historical a priori’ of the modern subject. There is no Cartesian subject in Descartes. But there is something about subjecthood and subjectivity: an overriding desire to avoid any assimilation of the thinking I to a subject of thought. In Descartes’s own philosophical context or ‘field of presence’[^3] a statement about a subject of thought or about mind as a subject had to refer to a body or a corporeal substrate. If Descartes ever used the word ‘subject’ it is because and only because he was forced, by two of his opponents, first Hobbes, then Regius, to accommodate the subject in his dualist approach of man. If Strawson’s interpretation of Cartesian philosophy as a dualism of two subjects or two types of subjects is true, Cartesianism would be a secularization of Nestorianism. Is that thinkable?

Strawson describes Descartes’s theory of self or person as a dualism of two subjects or two types of subjects — that is, substances — each of which has its own exclusive ‘appropriate types of states and properties’, to the extent that ‘states of consciousness belong to one of these substances’, the mind, and not to the other, the body. This is anthropological Nestorianism. Then he characterizes the Schlick–Wittgenstein approach, based on Lichtenberg’s famous *Es denkt* ([‘We should say it thinks, just as we say it lights’)](footnote:36) as ‘a dualism of one subject’ (the body) and one non-subject’ (the ego or pure consciousness), which turns out to be nothing at all, given that the so-called ‘Lichtenbergian approach’ — the ‘no-owner’ or ‘no-ownership theory of the mind’, also called ‘no-subject theory’ — maintains with Moritz Schlick and, up to a certain point, with Wittgenstein himself, that primitive experience is absolutely neutral, that immediate data ‘have no owner’, that original experience is ‘without a subject’, that the pronoun ‘I’ does not denote a possessor; in a word, that no ego is involved in thinking.[^7] This is anthropological monophysism. If Strawson’s interpretation of Descartes is true, then it will also be true to hold that, from a transdisciplinary point of view, philosophy of mind has for centuries been whirled between a theological rock and a no less theological whirlpool — I mean, between a Nestorian Charybdis and a eutychian Scylla.

I think this is very much the case. In other words, Strawson’s interpretation holds good to the extent that Descartes’s assessment of a two-subject theory is a *hapax legomenon*, based on a concession to the

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I think this is very much the case. In other words, Strawson’s interpretation holds good to the extent that Descartes’s assessment of a two-subject theory is a *hapax legomenon*, based on a concession to the
linguistic habits of his former friend and ally during the Quarrel of Utrecht: Regius.\footnote{17} In fact, as I have argued elsewhere,\footnote{18} the main (and almost only) occurrence of ‘subject’ in Descartes takes place in his Notae in programma quoddam (Notes on a Programme, also referred to as Comments on a Certain Broadsheet), the pamphlet he wrote during the winter of 1647–48 in reply to the Explicatio mentis humanae, a broadside recently put out by his former disciple Henricus De Roy, who had by then become his adversary. In the Explicatio mentis humanae Regius had claimed that ‘there [was] no reason why the mind should not be a sort of attribute co-existing with extension in the same subject.’ To Regius’s claim, Descartes responds that ‘attributes which constitute the natures of things’, as thought and extension do, ‘cannot be said [to be] present together in one and the same subject; for that would be equivalent to saying that one and the same subject has two different natures – a statement that implies a contradiction, at least when it is a question of a simple subject … rather than a composite one.’\footnote{19} Two points are involved here: no one and the same simple subject has two different natures; composite subjects, however, may do so. The theological fragrance of those statements is not questionable. What is/are ontologically speaking the two substances whose composition constitutes the composite entity called ‘man’? A Greek Father would have said: a composed hypostasis.

From hypostasis to the subject – a long journey indeed. The modern subject emerged through the combination of two conflicting models of subjectivity (\textit{Subiectität}) that had been steadily proposed, opposed and eventually combined in late scholasticism: the Aristotelian (‘peripatetic’), philosophical, conception of subjecthood, based on the \textit{hypokeimenon}–accidents relationship; and the Augustinian theological conception, based on the \textit{oasía}–hypostases relationship, the mutual indwelling of the three hypostases, their mutual immanence, and the hypostatic union of the two natures in Christ. Heidegger’s \textit{Subiectität} is historically valuable only if it is interpreted as involving the two competing components inherited from late ancient philosophy and theology – \textit{hypokeimenon} and hypostasis – thus enabling us to grasp the ‘modern subject’ as a ‘bridging’, transdisciplinary entity. It is a compromise notion, combining two conceptual schemes: the one of inherence, the other of attribution. It determines what it takes to be a subject in terms of subjecthood, but conceives what it takes for \textit{an I} or \textit{an ego} to be an agent of thought and volition in terms of the idea of the person ‘as a unified centre of choice and action’ – that is to say, as characterized by intentionality and spontaneity. Descartes did not bring about a comprehensive concept unifying subjecthood, personality, identity, egoity, agency and causality under the single word \textit{subject}. Before being decentred ‘the’ subject had to be centred. It had to become a ‘centre’ of perception, a ‘centre’ of acting and suffering. Such a concept had been delineated in the Middle Ages. My guess is that it was formulated in full-fledged form by Leibniz. But this is another story: the story of how the causal hypostatical \textit{monadikon} of the Church Fathers became the Leibnizian monad.

\textbf{Notes}

3. Ibid., p. 13.
6. Ibid., p. 4.
7. Ibid., pp. 23, 123, 151, 145, 169, 122.
17. On subjectivity, see F. Schlegel, \textit{‘Subiectität bei
27. J.P. Raitt, 28. See Raitt, 29. Raitt, 30. Ibid., p. 131: ‘This is the basis of the doctrine that later came to be called the “extra calvinisticum”: I guess that, given his robust sense of logic, Andreæ would have equally objected to the “extra lacanicum” – “Woman is not-all” (in the phallic function).

30. Ibid., p. 131: ‘This is the basis of the doctrine that later came to be called the “extra calvinisticum”: I guess that, given his robust sense of logic, Andreæ would have equally objected to the “extra lacanicum” – “Woman is not-all” (in the phallic function).

31. According to the socinian Stephen Nye, Considerations on the Explications of the Doctrine of the Trinity by Dr. Wallis, Dr. Sherlock, Dr. South, Dr. Cudworth, and Mr. Hooker; as also on the Account given by those that say, the Trinity is an Unconceivable and Inexplicable Mystery, London, 1693, quoted in Naissance, pp. 105–11.
35. Foucault, The Archeology of Knowledge, p. 57. By ‘field of presence’ Foucault understands ‘all statements formulated elsewhere and taken up in a discourse, acknowledged to be truthful, involving exact description, well-founded reasoning, or necessary presupposition’, ‘those that are criticized, discussed, and judged, as well as those that are rejected or excluded’ (ibid.).
36. See Georg Christoph Lichtenberg, Aphorisms, trans. R.J. Hollingdale, Penguin, London and New York, 1990, p. 168: ‘To say cogito is already to say too much as soon as we translate it I think. To assume, to postulate the I is a practical requirement.’ Schlick refers quite enthusiastically to Lichtenberg: ‘Lichtenberg, the wonderful eighteenth-century physicist and philosopher, declared that Descartes had no right to start his philosophy with the proposition “I think”, instead of saying “it thinks”:’ See M. Schlick, ‘Meaning and Verification’, in Gesammelte Aufsätze, Verlag Dr. Müller, Vienna, 1969, pp. 337–68.