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**From Fundamental Ontology Toward Fundamental Anthropology: Subject as a Negativity (Hegel, Kojève, Heidegger, and Sartre)**

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**Abstract**

My research is devoted to the study of the subject’s place in modern philosophy and above all the philosophy of the twentieth century (such as existentialism, phenomenology and dialectics). Underlying this research is the principle of the so-called refusal of transcendence. The concept of transcendence played an important role in defining the nature of the subject in classical modern philosophy. With the refusal of this concept, in a number of contexts of the philosophy of twentieth century, the representation of the subject changes. In this research, it is to be studied which changes in particular are going to happen with the subject in connection with this. The main philosophical context of the research will be Hegel’s philosophy, as well as the philosophical approaches of Kojève, Sartre, and Heidegger. An analysis of the legacy of these authors will show that a project of what can be called a fundamental anthropology appeared, and replaced the usual fundamental ontology. Within the framework of that project, mostly by refusing the classical concept of “subject”, the emphasis begins to fall on the special status of the person and their way of existence in the world. The central concept that underlies these transformations is that of “negativity”. In this research, a detailed reconstruction of the idea of negativity in Hegel, Kojève, Sartre, and Heidegger, pointing out the similarities and differences in their philosophical approaches and how they relate negativity to the person, will underpin a presentation of the logic of the appearance of the concept of negativity and its connection to the role of the person in the world. Whether a man is the engine of progress, the crown jewel of creation, or a humble witness to independently developing processes of history, directly depends on what role is attributed to the subject and its place in the world.

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**Abbreviations**

**For Heidegger’s works:**

**BT:** Heidegger, Martin. *Being and time*. Stambaugh, Joan (trans.) Albany: State University of New York Press. 1953.

**PM:** Heidegger, Martin. *Pathmarks*. McNeill, William (ed.) Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 1998.

**For Kojève’s work:**

**IRH:** Alexandre, Kojève. *Introduction to the Reading of Hegel*. Bloom, Allan (ed.) Nichols, L. James, Jr (trans.) London and Ithaca: Cornell University Press. 1980.

**For Sartre’s work:**

**BN:** Sartre, Jean-Paul. *Being and Nothingness*. Barnes, E. Hazel (trans.) Washington: Washington Square Press. 1993.

**For Hegel’s work:**

**PS:** Hegel, W. F. Georg. *Phenomenology of Spirit*. Findlay, J. N. (trans.) Oxford: Oxford University Press. 1977.

**EPS**: Hegel, W. F. Georg, *Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences in Outline and Critical Writings*, ed. E.Behler, trans. A.V.Miller & S.A.Taubeneck (Continuum Press, London, 1991)

**For Kant’s work:**

**CPR:** Kant, Immanuel. *Critique of Pure Reason*. Guyer, Paul & Wood, W. Allen (ed. & trans.) Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 1998.

**Introduction**

The opportunity to discuss fundamental anthropology arises from an important tendency in the formation of the continental philosophy of the twentieth century, i.e. the movement to an unequivocal refusal to divide the world into sensible and intelligible or phenomenal and noumenal. In the twentieth century, thinking was clearly inspired by the attempt to replace dualistic ontology by demonstrating the synthetic unity of Universe. This thinking opposed the metaphysics of the past, which operated with nothing but abstractions and hypostatized substances. Recognizing “what Nietzsche called “the illusion of worlds-behind-the-scene”[[1]](#footnote-1) reflects a desire to overthrow the transcendent, and can be characterized as striving to break with the model of Being as split, which discriminates inevitably against the phenomenal in favor of the noumenal. In this research, we define the backbone of this idea as a view of the world which becomes more and more immanent, an idea that implies the overthrow of Platonism.

In what way is the theoretical pathos of this research revealed? Its main thesis concerns the idea of the anthropologization of the negative in the philosophical thought of the twentieth century. If in earlier times the negative was interpreted as some kind of reverse side of being, then in the century now passed it was extracted from the transcendent world behind the looking-glass put to work in the very core of the earthly, and to be precise, in human existence, or the existence of a human being. This assimilation, as will be shown, was prefigured in the nineteenth century, in Hegelian speculative philosophy that rejected the transcendent in favour of absolute immanence. With the expansion of absolute immanence and the displacement of the transcendent the negative was made immanent. Such a displacement changed the geometry of the world itself, which became “flat”, to use the metaphor of Thomas Friedman[[2]](#footnote-2). However, the interiorization of the negative does not mean its disappearance. On the contrary, its presence becomes more evident. But how can this presence be characterized? Where is the negative first revealed? In this research, I will show that the negative is revealed in the very fact of human existence, it is this existence itself. The philosophers on whose work my research is based are announced in the title of the work itself – these are Hegel, Kojève, Sartre and Heidegger. The reasons for my choice of these particular figures will be explained as I go along.

The foundation of this operation was laid as early as the nineteenth century in Hegel’s philosophy:

*The Phenomenology of Spirit* being precisely the great book that announces the disappearance of the two worlds, there is no more than a single world. Hegel’s formula is: behind the curtain, there is nothing to see. Philosophically that means that the phenomenon is not a mere appearance behind which an essence is located; the phenomenon is an apparition that refers to the conditions of its apparition. There is but one single world. That is the moment when philosophy breaks its final links to theology. [[3]](#footnote-3)

Hegelian idea of Absolute Spirit that defines the world in the strive for completeness and finite Identity become the true basis of formation for “*the philosophy of negativity”*[[4]](#footnote-4). His Phenomenology of Spirit provided groundbreaking approach to the concept of negativity, thus provoking numerous discussions and interpretations. One of the most influential consequences was seminar at École Normale Supérieure in Paris from 1933 to 1939. Presided over by Alexandre Kojève and attended, among the others, by Hyppolite, Merleau-Ponty, Keno, Aron, Bataille, Lacan and Breton, it became the reference point for their consequent works and their approach to immanence and negativity. Therefore, Hegelian view on the subject and its role in the creation of ontology is both innovative and path breaking.

Despite the fact that “philosophy of negativity” was transformed into “ontology of lack”[[5]](#footnote-5) by some subsequent authors, the Hegelian thought “moves invisibly” in all iterations of modern philosophical thought. Alexander Kojève developed a kind of an anthropological theory of negativity, lack and desire. He synthesized Hegelian negativity and an internal temporal characteristic of Dasein, creating “an original attempt to link Hegel to Heidegger’s tradition”.[[6]](#footnote-6) This anthropological version of Hegelian dialectics become dominant in France in mid-20th century. This synthesis captured fundamental features of both Hegelian and Heidegger’s discourse, thus providing constructive definition of negativity.

This interpretation of negativity as included in being came to be a distinguishing feature of twentieth century philosophy. The immanent turn, which clearly characterizes philosophy of this period, would be unthinkable without such a consideration of negativity. But at the authoritative suggestion of Hegel and later Kojève, this negativity will usually be connected with a subject, i.e. the person. According to this approach, firstly, the person is not simply reduced to the subject of cognition, as was implied in many ways in the New Europe philosophy; and secondly, even if the subject is responsible for cognition, then this function is performed in the paradox of the external existence of subject. The person as negativity will be interpreted not as an individualized person who, in a mysterious way, transcends being (which is generally speaking total and comprehensive) but as being itself, its special and privileged part, the most valuable part of being, thanks to which, there is being at all.

However, before this process takes place, much of significance will be discussed about negativity in the theories of the four main philosophers that are the focus of our research; i.e. Hegel, Kojève, Sartre, and Heidegger. This discussion will address different interpretations of negativity which agree or disagree with the canon and organ on of Hegel’s interpretation.

In particular, in the works of Theodor Adorno, negativity is discussed as a counter to Hegel’s interpretation.[[7]](#footnote-7) In *Negative Dialectics,* Adorno does not criticize Hegel’s ideas so much as show that Hegel himself could not fully realize his own interpretation of negativity and departed from it. Insomuch as negativity is to be a pure negation, it should not be included in the Absolute and, complying with the logic of the Absolute, almost become a “tame” negativity, losing its originality and singularity.[[8]](#footnote-8) We shall meet similar ideas in Heidegger’s philosophy and discuss them in the Chapter 4. Meanwhile, Adorno himself will stay outside the frame of our narration because his treatment of negativity has less to do with the person than with negativity in its natural sense (as in natural philosophy). Also, in this connection, I take the view that the “Frankfurt” concepts of “negative dialectics”[[9]](#footnote-9) or “great refusal”[[10]](#footnote-10) on the one hand, and Hegelian “negativity” on the other, with all their sematic similarity, are not modifications of the same idea, but expressions of deeply antagonistically ontologies. At the turn of the 1960s, the attitude to the category of “negativity” on part of bearers of “liberation discourse” changed significantly. It stopped being associated with the discourse of revolutionary liberation (coming from Kojève’s ideas on labour and struggle, which shape the human freedom) and starts to be linked to what is repressive and conservative. According to the representatives of Frankfurt School, negativity should not simply revolutionize, it should negate everything and everybody. However, because this change is related not so much to the “revaluation of the idea”, as to the regeneration of the very movement of intellectuals, inspired by Hegel, from a “progressivist” force into “contracultural” one, the question is about a radically different ontology. “Hegelian negativity”, according to various “left” movements, is a sort of, “substance of evil”, that smuggles in the transcendent, which several European philosophers (Nietzsche, Sartre, Lyotard and others) already identified as a source of repressiveness. This is why I leave these developments outside the frame of my thesis and will not refer to the Frankfurt School. In brief, it constructs a different ideology and does not move in the direction of the project of fundamental anthropology.

Thereafter, Georges Bataille and Maurice Blanchot, also influences by Hegel, will devote much of their philosophical reflections to question of negativity. While trying to overcome Hegel, they still endorse him in many ways. Moreover, negativity shares sacral treatment of Hegelian legacy and all of the most important matters in their work are observed in relation to it.

By developing the subject of negativity, Bataille considered his theory of sovereignty to be the development of some of Hegel’s ideas and claimed that his main concept related to Hegel’s will to autonomy[[11]](#footnote-11). In Bataille’s opinion, absolute knowledge, in which the subject is identified with the object, ultimately “dissolves into nothingness of lack of knowledge, and the very thought of lack of knowledge disappears in a flash”.[[12]](#footnote-12) The singularity of Bataille’s lack of knowledge (or sovereignty) is as follows: even though Bataille remains faithful to Hegel’s idea of sovereign[[13]](#footnote-13), absolute knowledge is closed whereas Bataille’s “disappearing thought”[[14]](#footnote-14) is open. Bataille links the openness of the disappearing thought with the encounter with transcendenсe, and he even directly refers to Dionysius the Areopagite who stated: “God is nothingness [néant]”.[[15]](#footnote-15)

Bataille’s thought is formed around the concepts of “open wound” and “headless”, which are different from the anthropological understanding of nothingness. His development of “acephality” idea mark philosophical retreat from supremacy of anthropology in understanding of negativity. We will only shortly describe the further development of these ideas as they are outside of the scope.

All of them originate from the ideas of Nietzsche and can be divided into several major schools. Jacquez Derrida and his philosophy of difference represent the first of them.[[16]](#footnote-16) While reflecting on negativity he departs from fundamentals in Hegelian understanding of negativity – its relation to the person and its ontological basis. For him, negativity is the manifestation of signs’ mobility as temporal substitution for each of them in the process. Another major thinker is Jean Baudrillard, who developed Bataille’s views on the concept of death. They both regard it as “delirium, superabundance and a redundancy of exchanges. Death is a proof that life exists only at invasion of death and at exchange, otherwise it is doomed to a discontinuous regime of values and, consequently, to an absolute deficit”[[17]](#footnote-17). Therefore, he also does not consider negativity as independent concept – it is just a temporal state of being.

In his turn, Gilles Deleuze tried to create a non-Hegelian metaphysics of difference. The fundamental concept for him is not negativity, but the pure affirmative difference. The immanent difference of being is not contradiction, as the being does not have an alternative. If there is no alternative than there is no negativity and synthesis of being and its alternative is impossible.

The “naked life” in the negative anthropology of Giorgio Agamben definitely bears certain influence of Hegel.[[18]](#footnote-18) Nevertheless, his central concept is life that is quite self-sufficient and independent from person. Therefore, Agamben, too, will not be part of our discussion.

Although I use the terms “anthropology” and “anthropological” in a strictly philosophical sense, I include neither the school of “philosophical anthropology”, nor key figures in it, such as Max Scheler, Helmut Plessner and Arnold Gehlen, in my research. Why have they remained outside the frame of this work? The first explanation is very simple: they never used the concept ‘negativity’. In addition, one of the “fellow travelers” of philosophical anthropology, a representative of the so-called ‘philosophy of life’ school, Henri Bergson, criticized the reality of negativity and engaged in a polemic with Sartre over this very question (I refer to this in the chapter dedicated to Sartre). He affirmed the illusory nature of negativity (Nothing), seeing it as a purely speculative and almost psychological category emerging from man’s critical capacity to compare that which exists in one place with that which exists in another. In *Creative Evolution*, Bergson clearly declares himself an Aristotelian: the world is filled with existence,with Being. The illusion of negation is born from the comparison of some parts of the world with others, which is only a “statement of the second order”. Bergson, not without reason, is a representative of the philosophy of life, one always inspired more by Nietzsche than by Hegel.

Naturally, neither is Nietzsche part of our research, nor is Deleuze and a number of other brilliant Nietzscheans. Bergson and Nietzsche advocate the affirmation of the entirety of Being, the world is active and productive, but this productivity differs from that which features in Hegel and Kojeve. There is no negation at all in the world. Not without reason does Oliver Marchart designate this school “the philosophy of excess” as opposed to the “philosophy of scarcity”. The world affirms itself and continues so as not to resort to the mediation of limitations and negations. Similarly, man in such a world is its natural continuation, possessing, arguably, no especially privileged status. A similar philosophical approach appeals to the logic of the “philosophy of becoming”; however, in becoming there is nothing but positive self-affirmation.

By a similar logic we do not turn our attention to the work of the theoreticians of the “philosophical anthropology” Scheler, Plessner and Gehlen. Broadly speaking, their philosophy is closer to traditions of naturalism - man as a part of the World (as in Gehlen) or of the cosmos (as in Scheler). Nature here is understood in its broadest sense in both their positions. The universe which engenders man and which, in turn, is formed by man through their deep circular and interactive relations is Nature, with which man is one.

By contrast, the tradition whose protagonists I aim to consider clearly separates the world of Nature from the world of man. As we see, in one of the authors central to my research, Alexander Kojeve, the difference between the realm of man and the realm of nature is fundamental. However, Nature and Man ultimately form an identity of the Absolutein the last instance, despite their contradictory (dialectical) interrelations, rejecting and repelling each other. Their interrelationship is one of an identity in conflict and mutual confrontation. Only man is denied in being, being the focus of negativity, whereas nature only affirms itself, in the constancy of the reproduction of its own forms. It is for this reason that only man is dialectical whereas nature is cyclical.

Apart from this, phenomenology in the sense in which I adopt it, bears little proximity to the representatives of “philosophical anthropology”. The relationship of “philosophical anthropology”, for example in Plessner’s version, to Heidegger’s “fundamental ontology” is rather problematic. Thus, in the preface to the second edition of his main work *The Levels of the Organic and Man*, Plessner writes “Heidegger with one stroke broke through the established idealistic constructions …”[[19]](#footnote-19). However, while giving Heidegger his due, Plessner relates to him very skeptically: “With all one’s reservations”, he believes, that the present project cannot be considered a form of philosophical anthropology, insofar as it is too close to Heidegger’s fundamental ontology, and more precisely, is “a procedure for searching the meaning of existence” and not the final goal of researching into human existence[[20]](#footnote-20).

Plessner does not agree with Heidegger that the “being of man, his essence is determined only by its relationship to being as such”, whereas the biological differences of man, therefore “have no meaning” at all[[21]](#footnote-21). He is convinced that philosophical anthropology cannot neglect natural conditions, or the “physical life” of the existential, even with an account of the meaning of “existence” as such, insofar as the existential itself is, in Plessner’s words, “grounded in life”. Plessner proposes that one should continue to study the existential as something that springs from the flesh, the body. Therefore, key phenomenological existentials elaborated by Heidegger’, such as ‘anxiety’, horror’ and ’care’, are to Plessner too determined from within, once again in an idealistic manner, through the life of consciousness as it were. The argument from phenomenological intentionality, in which consciousness is directed towards objects, and correspondingly, all the key ’existentials’ always prove to be things (and in the world too) does not convince Plessner. He states that “only a physical being can be directed”; for example, “only it can be afraid[[22]](#footnote-22)”. From here Plessner, with Gehlen and Scheler, opens the possibility of explaining man from without, as, among other things, a physical being included in nature. Man is a part of the natural order and this thesis can be stated as a thesis made “about” man. For the project of fundamental anthropology such an inclusion of man in existence is not fully correct - we cannot speak in the name of Nature (as science usually does). Otherwise, man turns intoan object, something unacceptable for the underlying phenomenological bases of fundamental anthropology. And insofar as Plessner, too, understands this, concluding that “There is no path from Heidegger to philosophical anthropology…”[[23]](#footnote-23), then we leave the theory in brackets, just as we would the two other theories of Gehlen and Scheler, belonging to the school of philosophical anthropology. .

In view of what I have outlined above, I shall deal only with those authors who (1) consider negativity quite real, (2) connect it directly with the person, and (3) try to include it in the world (being), not place it outside. By summing these items, we can summarize Kojève’s philosophical idea which is extremely important for understanding the ontology of negativity and fundamental anthropology: despite the fact that Kojève’s Neo-Hegelian philosophy is grounded in a refusal of God as an organizing principle in favor of immanence, he focuses his attention on the person as an agent of negativity (the abovementioned idea of referring Hegel to Heidegger’s tradition) or, in the words of Kojève’s successor Jean-Paul Sartre, “lack of being”.[[24]](#footnote-24)

I shall address only those authors who apply negativity to the person, giving rise to fundamental anthropology. Negativity is not spread over the whole being; it has a specific embodiment, i.e. medium. On the contrary, supporters of negativity such as Bataille, Deleuze, and to some extent Derrida, by rethinking Kojève’s interpretation of *Phenomenology of Spirit*, come to the refusal of the transcendent (the death of God) in the terms of Nietzsche. This concept is understood as a genuine universality or ever-incomplete and unstable being. This idea of *de-anthropologization* lines up a peculiar kind of bridge to the ontologies of abundance and difference. The person does not possess a privileged access to negativity and negativity does not need the person. Negativity is in itself. In view of this prospect we single out four main philosophical names who underlie our research: Hegel, Kojève, Sartre, and Heidegger. Each plays an essential part. We consider Hegel as a basis and a forerunner of the tradition of the anthropologization of negativity which produced such a rich crop of ideas and interpretations. He was the first to apply ontological theory to negativity, primarily in his works *Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences* and *Science of Logic*; i.e. he did what had previously been considered something of a scandal or, at best, a curiosity in the conventional metaphysics. He also provided the preliminary ideas of connecting negativity with a subject, the subject of cognition, who enabled the Absolute to know about himself in the dialectical development. In this regard, the work *Phenomenology of Spirit* is canonical. The next important one is Kojève, who developed the anthropological essence of negativity. In his works, he distinguishes the negativity from the natural world and provides human being control over it. He will be careful to separate negativity from the rest of the world, to single it out from the natural world and give complete control over it only to the person. History exists only through negation by the person, so there is no history without it - such was Kojève’s verdict, which sounded too bold, even for Hegel, who would not go so far. Moreover, this groundbreaking thought disclosed the idea of anthropologization of negativity. It became evident that negativity could be and should be associated only with the person, but be sought in different human manifestations. This move brought to life the draft of an existential and phenomenological interpretation of the nature of negativity. For example, negativity came to be considered *a basic existential*. It is clear that the deepest and significant work on this was carried out by Heidegger, but a great contribution to the development of this idea was also made by Sartre.

Kojève added an anthropological aspect to negativity and Heidegger discovered the phenomenological potential of this concept. However, it is not the only instance, where their thoughts matched. In particular, the interpretation of the nature of human negativity as finitude. What is the basis of the relationship between the being and negativity? There would be no negativity if the beings were immortal. Moreover, Kojève’s interpretation of dialectics (Master/Slave) and his negating struggle for recognition, relates to a somewhat strained understanding of Heidegger’s idea of extremity. In *Being and Time*the German philosopher presents the temporality of Dasein on the basis of its finitude, thus defining Dasein as being-to-death.[[25]](#footnote-25) In addition, extremity is not the end of life because death cannot ever be reached as such, we can observe our own death. Whereas, according to Kojève, the one who is ready to accept his extremity in the struggle for recognition becomes Master, thus forcing the Slave to recognize him as such. However, this recognition is only forced. The universal recognition in achievable only at the end of history, and this idea holds a prominent place in Kojève’s vision, though it does not quite agree with the abovementioned unattainability of death in Heidegger’s theory. In addition, Heidegger is inclined to revise the subordinate nature of negativity; the latter does not at all serve the dialectical nature of the Absolute but has its own spontaneous, unpredictable nature. Negativity is solitary (as soon as it is existential, according to Heidegger) and owes its productivity not to economic independence from the Absolute but to its own spontaneity. It inspired Kojève’s followers to strengthen his model. One of the most substantial attempts was undertaken in the research of Sartre and received its most comprehensive treatment in *Being and Nothingness*. By developing the idea of the unresolvable nature of negativity, Sartre remade the traditional ontological problem of being-as-being into the theory of being-as-lack.[[26]](#footnote-26) He divides reality into two areas, namely, being-for-itself (consciousness) and being-in-itself (nature), investing the first term with the status of agent of negativity and the latter, again according to the teaching of Kojève, with the status of positivity and identity. Negation becomes a constitutive element of the human engagement with being that makes it possible to speak of the “humanization of nothingness”.[[27]](#footnote-27) Thus, lack of self-identity is at the center of subjectivity. The basis of being cannot be found. Sartre as well as Kojève consider negativity and lack to be productive and not nihilistic categories. According to Sartre, freedom will be the predominant existential expression of negativity in human nature and, consequently, in the very being of the world, in which the individual has taken root. It is only freedom that is pure negation and freedom itself.

Thus, Kojève, Sartre, and Heidegger came into view of the present research as the main proponents of negativity as an anthropological category (or what, really and truly, characterizes genuine human nature). The analysis of works by these authors allows us to uncover the logic of the idea of internalized negativity, which became extremely popular in the 20th and 21st centuries. Of course, Hegel ranks high among these names as the first supporter and the classic of a truly philosophical category of negativity. It is owing to his efforts that the idea of the individual became a focus of theorizing negativity, when negativity came to be associated with the individual, namely, with its specific way of being in the world or with its existence. In this context, the category of negativity came to lose the metaphysical aura inherent to it in traditional Western philosophy and increasingly to acquire an existential implication; only then did talking of the individual became unthinkable without referring to negativity, and talking of negativity became senseless without referring to the individual.

Among the most authoritative representatives of the ontology of negativity in contemporary philosophy one can mention Alain Badiou, Slavoj Žižek, Ernesto Laclau, Chantal Mouffe, and Claude Lefort. Their work can be considered as the development of the basic ideas initiated by the four notable philosophers selected for the present research.

I would like to say a few words here about the structure and the logic of the work as well as what it is aiming for. Its composition somewhat differs from one with a deeply historical and philosophical orientation. Its structure is arranged in the following way.

I begin by posing the question of the status of the subject of knowledge, a rather abstract issue with a general philosophical significance. One is concerned here with how one can ontologize a subject intending to knowthe world as a whole. In other words, if the world is thought of as all-embracing being, we cannot derive the subject externally by realizing a descriptive pattern of subject-objectrelations. Besides, if one thinks about the world as a whole as something imperfect, then it is unclear how any absolutely true consciousness is possible. Through trying to resolve this problem, we enter the philosophy of dialectics, in so far as it was Hegel who attempted to resolve the question epistemologically, just as he attempted to resolve the ontological status of the subject of knowledge.

We will then follow for the most part a Hegelian logic, however, we will try to maintain a certain distance and not immerse ourselves fully into his system. Of more significance than any direct examples of the actualization of his thought that Hegel proposed in his time, are the very thought processes and logic of reasoning that he used. One maintains, then, a certain neutrality regarding the choice of philosophical language and optics in the first part of the work.

In the first third of the work I attempt to show that the solution of the ontological and epistemological status of the observer follows the path of denying its transcendental status. Transcendence here has a dual significance. Firstly, it does not fit within the limits of the world. Secondly, it no longer strives to absolute truth if for no other reason than that truth never exists in any single period of time, and the world exists in a real and concrete manner. Hence the subject of knowledge simply becomes man seeking knowledge.

Along this path he plunges into the world and begins to live by its logic. But insofar as the world exists in time and within history, it endures and develops and so man endures and develops along with it and along with his knowledge of it. I show how man, forfeiting his transcendental powers, becomes a historical being. In this part of my work I turn my attention to a critique of the Kantian idea of the division of the world into the phenomenal and noumenal, and namely its rejection of the idea of the transcendental. To do so I initially address Hegel’s dialectics (his well-known idea of the identity of the subject and substance), and then Husserl’s phenomenology (the concepts of the phenomenon and intentionality). I also provisionally address Heidegger, in order to show that there is a similar logic involved in his distinction between the ontic and the ontological. The subject is no longer thought of as an abstract and all-seeing eye situated outside of the world. It is no longer a new European subject of knowledge positing the subject-object dualism in a potential scientific pattern. This is man who exists in the world (Dasein) insofar as there is no other world for him. I attempt to show how and why his deep union with Being is actualized.

The first part of the thesis can be taken as a kind of extensive restoration of the theme of negativity raised in my work. I attempt to show what preceded interest in negativity as an anthropological category. The work done in the first part is important because it is grounded in each of the philosophical positions employed in my project, including the dialectical stance of Hegel, Husserl’s phenomenological stance, and the ontological turn initiated by Heidegger. Indeed, in the first part I prepare that ground allowing one to consider the second part of the thesis as in many ways illustrative, an ensemble of examples of those thought processes and strategies outlined in the first part. Here I insert a sort of conceptual framework for my research. I will focus on it according to the contexts chosen. Meanwhile, the reader not searching to recreate the context of the issue of negativity in all its details and nuances may pay less attention to the first part of the thesis (possibly ignoring certain parts) and move on to the second part.

I begin the second part with an analysis of the transition from the concept of fundamental ontology to that of fundamental anthropology.

Here I introduce the Heideggerian concept of “fundamental ontology”, explaining how I will use it during my research. Essentially, one of my main contributionsconsists in showing the key role played by the concept of negativity at the heart of the project of fundamental anthropology.

It is here that the concept of negativity emerges in my considerations, a concept that, to some degree can be seen as a metaphor. In the history of philosophical thought, various meanings of this concept are known, namely nothing, non-existence, non-being, a designation referring to a significant philosophical problem. Some of these issues are: how is it possible that nothing or non-existence is possible, how can it exist and how could it be thought. This is also the problem of duration, development, time, that is, as a whole the problem of the translation from non-existence to existence and once again back to non-existence. Finally, there is the issue of completely new events which through in novelty emerge from nothing. The complex of these philosophical issues albeit widely known before the epoch of ancient philosophy and before the emergence of Hegel’s philosophy, attracted almost no attention from philosophers. But after Hegel, in the philosophy of the 20th Century, there emerges a whole array of interpretations of negativity understood as the embodiment of history or that of action and activity, or as human finitudeas well as human freedom and the ability to understand the world. More concretely, in my research I use the term negativity as a collective notion or, in its own way, as a metaphor of the significance of the human capacity of acting, of being free, of bestowing new events upon the world, of understanding this world and of existing in this world not as an entity. If in the history of philosophy negativity was initially understood only in terms of duration

 (if you will, the temporality of the world, its capacity of development), then after the philosophical contribution of Hegel, negativity it is given greater specificity, acquiring anthropological characteristics. Negativity is transformed from a complex and abstract philosophical concept into a synonym of very concrete human capacities and characteristics. All these capacities bear a fundamentally mundane character, and no longer a transcendental one. In particular, the ability to be free in the world, act in the world, think about the world and die in this same world. However, due to the fact that on the basis of each of these capacities lie the fundamental characteristic of negativity, then man himself, albeit deprived of transcendental privileges, is not trivialized but, on the contrary, becomes even more fundamental.

This reading of the history of the concept of negativity is due in large part to the assimilation of Hegelian philosophy through Kojeve. For this reason, Kojeve is a particularly prominent figure in my research, and the main ideas elaborated here are grouped around him.

Hence, my method combines research into basic issues and research into the history of ideas. I pose a problem, track possible solutions and then propose certain interpretations of these paths, namely by using key examples. To these examples, I also refer to the theories and approaches of four major thinkers – Hegel, Kojeve, Sartre and Heidegger – who I considered the most indicative figures. I consider their approaches as examples and illustrations of that which I call the “anthropologization of negativity”. My choice is limited to these four figures for a number of reasons. Firstly, these names are the foremost and most recognisable ones in those contexts in which I am working. Secondly, their work has been the most influential. . With the exception of Hegel, they belonged to a single era. They also (and here one can include Hegel in this), used a similar lexicon of terms and concepts. The logic of their work is still relatively isomorphic, whereas later philosophy on the topic of negativity and man will increasingly blur this focus into ever more varied new interpretations.

I start with Hegel, regarding him as a key figure giving birth to that discourse which I am researching. As it were, everything starts with him. Turning my attention to Hegel, in the first instance I analyze his concept of the subject. Those parts of his philosophical system where he clearly shows the connection of the subjective not with the identical and the real but rather with thefluidand the changeable are significant for me. Important, too, are his arguments where he declares that there is no essence of the subject before the performance of action, that is, only by acting does the subject reveal himself.

I then move on to the figure of Kojeve, the key figure in the research as a whole, for although Hegel gave birth to the discourse of negativity, it was Kojeve who saw the possibility of connecting the concept of negativity with man. I place Kojeve at the centre of the whole composition, since the prototype of the concept of the anthropologization of negativity, which I introduce and develop in the course of my work, can first be found in his work. Effectively, it is Kojeve who can be considered the pioneer of those proposing an anthropological version of Hegelian philosophy. This version proposes the division of the universe into two realms - negativity, inherent exclusively to the human dimension of being (history) and identity, a feature of the world of nature. Mankind is an “intraworld negativity” insofar as ionly he is capable of acting radically: of introducing new events to the world and cardinally changing the order of the development of the universe. Unlike nature which, despite its seeming mutability,can only reproduce in time the constancy of its forms, man can literally create world events and, thus, the world itself. This interpretation of negativity as an exclusively human prerogative, separates Kojeve from a traditional Hegelian reading (which sees nature, too, as negative), and makes him an original and surprisingly influential philosopher. I dwell separately on the logic of this break, and also show in what sense the two subsequent philosophers, Sartre and Heidegger, following Kojeve’s original thought, have the courage to re-evaluate Hegel.

Then, following, to a large extent, the Kojevian interpretations of negativity, I move on to Jean-Paul Sartre for whom the human condition of being in nothingness signifies an access to freedom. I show in what sense freedom in Sartre’s conception effectively acts as the equivalence of negativity, that it can exist exclusively as the negation by the subject of the existing state of things. For Sartre, man is “doomed to freedom”, insofar as all his deeds, actions and choices occur without any compulsionfrom previous causes. Choice is realized in the desert of pure possibility, literally “from nothing”. I outline the far-reaching philosophical consequences of the Sartrean philosophy of freedom, insofar as soon as man plunges intothe world of events, redrawing each time the history of the universe, the world becomes spontaneous and indeterministic due to the existence of man.

I then come to Heidegger’s philosophy, showing that his method of anthropologising negativity can be considered particularly human-oriented. I take some early works of Heidegger as a starting point of my research. There are certain reasons to do so. In his early works, Heidegger clearly shows an interest in negativity. In his famous lecture “What is metaphysics” he interprets negativity through Human Being-in the same way Kojeve and Sartre did. “Nothing” enters the world and Human Being is addressed (relates) to “Existence” from the point of view (area) of “Nothing.” This early motif of Heidegger relates him very closely to the same tradition to interpret negativity which we will study in this work. However, we admit that Heidegger lost his interest in his type of interpretation in his latest period of work. This work will be limited to Heidegger’s early works, leaving his latest work mostly untouched. It should be noted that we will not understand the path and trajectories of Heidegger’s later work without understanding on what grounds he is increasingly evaded (departed) from his early understanding of negativity. Indeed, the path by which Heidegger is moving away from the topic of negativity is not accidental and is determined at the very beginning of his work. This logic of evasion will be discussed in some parts of chapter four, which will be devoted to the relationship and differences in the understanding of negativity by Heidegger and Hegel.

I show that it is Heidegger’s idea of finitude, reunited with Hegelian dialectics, which leads to the emergence of a version of the anthropologisation of negativity according to which man becomes the conductor of negativity in the world. I consider the logic of Dasein which, being intrinsically temporal by virtue of its finitude, is effectively being-towards-death. The very relationship of man to the world testifies to his connection with negativity. I show that one of the main theses of Heidegger’s philosophy is that Being *is* because man destroys it. To see, to witness Being, man must retreat into non-Being, into non-existence, but, effectively, as Heidegger tells us, he is always sojourning there. Man is the messenger of non-being, its guardian and representative and this gives him the possibility of creating Being, as something in existence. But this capability is not a private attainment “for-man”. In this act of the discovery of Being as Being, an ontological event comes to fruition - man opens up the world to the world itself.

Finally, I compare and contrast all four models of the “humanization of negativity” project that I consider in detail in my work. Firstly, I show their common elements, and namely that they consider man’s sojourn in the world to be a significant and essential act for the world itself. The world is as it is only due to the participation of man. I also outline how all these approaches differ from each other. I show that if Kojeve, following Hegel, is full of pride for man and optimism regarding his role in the universe, then Sartre does not share their optimism, indicating the tragedy of man’, who experiences eternal anxiety connected with his freedom. Finally, I show the complexity of Heidegger in terms of these comparisons. On the one hand, he follows this optimistic position on the elevation of man, who as the “shepherd of Being” is the conductor and the meaning of Being. On the other, he shows how far man is lost and stunned by his own mission and at what immense price (finitude and personal death) this mission is granted. Compared to the philosophies of other existentialists, mourning the strange fate of man, for which the world (nature and things) has no concern for (Camus),and in relation to which manis forever unhappy and confused, Heidegger raises this human unhappiness to unprecedented metaphysical summits, which, at the same time, complicates the whole set up. Now the relationship between man and the world takes on a Hegelian-like cyclical from: man is unhappy in his abjection from the eternally sojourning world, but it is due to this human unhappiness that the world owes its existence. Man is non-existing so that the world exists.

I would like to say a few more words about the novelty of my research and the personal contribution of the author.

One reason why I believe my research has a certain originality has been the way in which the research was undertaken. I have tried to construct a certain unified perspective for reading the work of different authors through the prism of a single concept - that of negativity.

I have also highlighted the central figure of the narrative, namely the figure of Kojeve, who as a thinker proposed an interpretation of negativity which integrated the contributions of other figures – Hegel, Sartre and Heidegger. As a rule, these authors are usually considered separately, or a certain ‘end-to-end’ similarityis noted. My task consisted in being almost the first to show that all four authors do not simply overlap but that they entail each other, they derive from each other’s logic and literally they ‘string together’ that interpretation which Kojeve proposed.

By way of an original contribution I also propose a Hegelian reading of Heidegger’s philosophy. Using for the most part the early work of Heidegger, I show that in Heidegger man is not simply the co-creator of Being, but also the conductor of negativity in Being. I consider the complex relations between Hegel and Heidegger (a comparison of these thinkers is not always unproblematic), but in those cases where some similarity can nonetheless be shown, I appeal to the mediation of Kojevian interpretations, aided by this, I believe, Heidegger can be read through a Hegelian lens.

Finally, I introduce the very concept of the “anthropologisation of negativity”. With this kind of composite concept, I try to show that all four of the authors that I have considered, move in a similar direction. This consists in an existentialist thinking through of the Hegelian legacy. Dialectical categories, including one of the most fundamental, namely the category of negativity, then begin to be connected with man. My work consists in considering the most striking example of the most curious of philosophical projects – a synthesis of dialectics, phenomenology and existentialism. The quintessential feature of this synthesis is this very category of negativity.

Using a Kojevian interpretation of negativity, I show how it is possible to “read through” the transition from a fundamental ontology to fundamental anthropology. As a rule, the motifs of this transition are interpreted in the philosophy of Heidegger himself. But I show that an understanding of this transition will only benefit from an attempt to look at this through the lens of Hegelian dialectics in a Kojevian interpretation. Indeed, such a reading is rarely applied toHeidegger’s thought, but I felt it was important to risk using him as a starting point.

Another key aspect is how I work with the concepts of Heidegger’s philosophy, and, namely, with the concept of “fundamental anthropology”. What I do is demonstrate that at the heart of the project of fundamental anthropology the key role is played by the concept of negativity.

Adopting the four key meanings of negativity used in my work, namely activity, freedom, finitude and understanding, I show that the idea of the fundamental inclusion of man in Being is possible given the condition that man is explained as not fully present in this world (not ontically). He cannot simply *be* in being as things or objects do. He is compelled *not to be* in being so that being itself occurs as well as his understanding of it. I pay particular attention to this interpretation of mine and propose my own direct authorial contribution.

The problem of negativity and negation is raised in a lot of articles written by English speaking authors. There two main branches of the consideration of the problem. The first one is connected to the understanding of negativity in the West and East and can be called a cultural branch as it deals with cultural peculiarities of the interpretation. The second one is focused on logical and ontological aspects of negation and concerns works by Hegel, Sartre, Heidegger and others.

The cultural perspective (for example the articles Non-being and Mu: the Metaphysical nature of negativity in the East and the West[[28]](#footnote-28) and Negativity and Dialectical materialism: Zhang Shying’s reading of Hegel’s dialectical Logic[[29]](#footnote-29)) usually concerns different traditions of understanding being and non-being or differences between the interpretation of dialectic in the East and in Europe. Through ancient Greek and Christian philosophy, it provides a treatment of being as it is prior to non-being. It is assumed being contains being itself and non-being. For instance, Chinese interpretation of Confucianism lies close to the West as it claims that good has to overcome evil. But for Taoists and Buddhists the idea of nothingness becomes central and essential. It is Taoists who realize that Tao is all-embracing and unfailing and yet unnamable, unknowable and nonexistent. What is more, they enact a “thoroughgoing negation”[[30]](#footnote-30) which can help to reach the ultimate reality. In its turn, such reality is beyond the beginning and the end, existence and nonexistence. This idea then is developed in India, especially in Buddhism. Buddhists has an idea of Emptiness which is not nihilistic. We can see tendencies when negativity is understood as positivity in the West, for example in Christian mysticism (negative theology: God is beyond good evil) and German philosophy in Nietzsche (the introduction of “nihilism”) and Heidegger (Nothingness and Being itself).

The second branch is focused on the understanding of negativity in Western philosophy and includes meditations on Hegel, Kojève, Heidegger and Sartre’s interpretations. Some of the articles consider negativity and negation only as a part of logic, some of them treat the phenomenon as a part of the ontological level. This branch also includes attempts to apply philosophical investigations on negativity to adjacent disciplines, such as literature.

For example, Daniel Dahlstrom has addressed the ontological significance of negation. He argues that negation is fundamental to our understanding of what it means to be; i.e. he tries to show the connection of negation to being and examines ontological significance of negation. At first, he analyzes the issue of negation according to “Parmenidean quandary”, and then discusses two ways of resolving this quandary which lead him to the claim of ontological superfluousness of negation. Finally, he argues that the analysis of negative perceptual judgments provides ample reason to countenance negative facts.

For Jean-Luc Nancy himself his Reading of Hegel[[31]](#footnote-31) is focused on the power of negative is presented as thought’s self-transformation – and all the peculiarities of the negative can be found in the consideration of the process of thought’s transformation. The first point in this consideration is analyses of how the understanding works in society as Hegel shifts from the understanding itself to the collective self-understandings. The second point is to capture the individual idea of self and to analyze what experience is because it is our experience that makes us. The Phenomenology of Spirit demonstrates that “the meaningful relation of consciousness to the world is only possible because consciousness is implicitly self-transcending”. For Nancy “self” is not what it already is because the self is always in the process of change and becoming. Thus negativity here is the factor that abolishes any conception of absolute as given. Eventually, the movement of self-consciousness is the movement of phenomenology and negativity plays a particular role in this movement.

There are also some papers that are close to main ideas of our investigation. In the article “The Discursivity of the Negative: Kojève on language in Hegel”, Daniel J. Selcer argues that the negative is infected and structured by discourse.[[32]](#footnote-32) He analyses Kojève’s interpretation of Hegelian philosophy as Kojève (a) reintroduces Hegel to French intellectuals, (b) investigates Hegel’s historical claim and (c) shows the centrality of desire for Hegel’s philosophy. But what is more important for Selcer is that Kojève attributes a wider signification to the status of negation as he is confident that negativity and language are touchstones of Hegelian thought. For Kojève language is not just an instrument, but rather rests on the very heart of negation and action that drive spirit. Through original analyses of the idea of language in Kojève’s philosophy the author comes to a thought of materiality of language. It leads to the conclusion that negation is effective for labor in the world and that language can be jettisoned into future, leaving the present for the real action of actual labor.

 “Thinking of Nothing: Heidegger’s Criticism of Hegel’s Conception of Negativity” by Daniel O. Dahlstrom analyses Heidegger’s interpretation of the nothing.[[33]](#footnote-33) Heidegger’s main critical point in analyzing Hegel’s understanding of negativity is that Hegel could not question negativity. For Heidegger negativity is the name of a realm of questions about the connection of saying no, denial, being denied, nothing and nihilation and this is the realm of decision. However, Dahlstrom concludes that Hegel does not depart radically from traditional logic, in the main because for him negativity is not treated as problematic. By contrast, Heidegger connects it to the ontological level where it is tied into the question of being. I will come back to this point later in the text.

“Man, God and Death in Hegel’s Phenomenology” by John Burbidge addresses the connection between negativity and death.[[34]](#footnote-34) The author comes to the conclusion that death is the most radical phenomenological evidence of negativity and that the negative process is endless as every time it opens up a new set of transitions. This particular research isuseful insofar as it establishes one of the most important existential characteristics of human being and subjectivity – death – and emphasizes its connection to negativity.

Hegel and metaphysics of absolute negativity by Brady Bowman is a profound and original investigation of Hegel’s notion “negativity” and its place in Hegel’s philosophical system.[[35]](#footnote-35) Unlike previous investigations (such as Robert Pippin’s reading of Hegel) the author emphasizes the metaphysical character of Hegelian philosophy. Although he does not link negativity to anthropological aspects of human existence or to the development of subjectivity, the book helpfully shows causal connections with different philosophical systems that are compared or related to that of Hegel, and develops the notion of negation in its metaphysical sense.

The following articles are focused on the problem of subjectivity. They do not study negativity in a direct way but develop ideas of becoming the subject through investigations on Heidegger and Hegel philosophical works.

“Hegel, Subjectivity and Metaphysics: A Heideggerian Interpretation” by Sean Castleberry explicates Heidegger’s critique of Hegelian philosophical system.[[36]](#footnote-36) The outline of the article consists of a few main parts. At first the author demonstrates Heidegger’s historical-philosophical interpretation of Hegel which is based on Heidegger’s 1968 seminar. Then Castleberry examines the dilemma of metaphysical thinking as the whole. Finally, Heidegger’s critique of Hegel’s philosophy is connected to the clearing of Being which is, in turn, the ground of all beings. This article demonstrates the problem of subjectivity in Heidegger’s and Hegel’s philosophy from the critical perspective but is not directly focused on the problem of negativity.

“Sein und Geist: Heidegger’s Confrontation with Hegel’s philosophy” by Robert Sinnerbrink is focused on Heidegger’s “confrontation” with Hegel’s The Phenomenology of Spirit but this “confrontation” is articulated in a dialogical way.[[37]](#footnote-37) The article is to show that Hegel can be treated as a contemporary philosopher because he studies intersubjectivity, the historicity of the experience of the spirit, and recognition, and criticizes modernity in his philosophy. The first part analyses Heidegger’s critique of Hegel’s treatment of time and Spirit, and the second deals with the problematic of finitude. Thus the article presents a rounded treatment of Heidegger’s critique of Hegel’s phenomenology and this critique is closely connected to the problem of subjectivity.

Of course, these works do not exhaust the diversity of texts dedicated to negativity and the subject as well as Hegel`s, Kojève`s, Sartre`s and Heidegger`s philosophy. In addition, there are plenty of new studies dedicated to these topics in one way or another. Of this abundance of texts, I have mentioned only a small part. However, it is clear that little or no attention is given to negativity in its relation to anthropology. Associating the four names declared in the present research (Hegel, Kojève, Sartre, and Heidegger) can be considered an innovative approach. I will show what links these four authors together, which is not always noticeable to readers. I will also demonstrate the link between negativity and the subject, which is usually left in research in this area. Finally, I will trace those the logical and philosophical consequences of linking negativity and subject, which mostly remain obscure. Collectively, these objectives will bring to light the transition from fundamental ontology toward fundamental anthropology through the subject as a negativity.

**Part 1. The world becoming immanent.**

**Сhapter 1. The Vanishing Subject**

 **1. The paradox of the subject-object model**

The obscure meaning of many ideas offered by modern philosophy will become much clearer if we understand its main motives. One of the motives stems from the changes in the philosophical and cultural climate of Europe, which date back to the second half of the 19th century and which had an impact on the entire 20th century. As these changes were given different names, such as “disenchantment of the world”[[38]](#footnote-38), “the death of God”[[39]](#footnote-39), “the decline of the metanarrative”[[40]](#footnote-40), “one-dimensional man/culture”[[41]](#footnote-41) and others, I will use a collective term capturing the core idea: “*detranscending of the world*” which means “becoming immanent”.

The becoming immanent process did not come from nothing. It was intended to help solve the problem of the ontology of the subject.

The problem will be clearly seen, if we start with the “subject” and “object” intuition available to anyone. The subject-object couple has been indispensable in classical philosophy since modern European epistemology and provides a simple illustrative pattern of any research process. The “subject” is *cognizing*, while the “object” is *cognized*. Although the pattern is highly illustrative, it has two non-transparent conditions of possibility, and both of them pose logical problems.

Let us look into the first problem. Philosophy is known to gravitate toward a certain maximalism – in contrast to the special sciences, philosophical research tends to focus on *all-encompassing entities* – *mind (consciousness) and being (the world of objects).* Philosophical research generally deals with *being.* As a rule, the researcher explores fragments of being, but perceives them only as parts of the hypothetical whole – *everything that exists*. Even if we apply the modern European paradigm where the mind is the focus of study, the overall disposition retains its schematic pattern – mind (the cognizing subject) is counterposed to the being-world (the cognized object). What “goes wrong” in this pattern?

The problem is that one part of this two-way scheme, and namely the subject's position (its ontological position, to be exact), appears as some sort of a “blind spot”. The subject that occupies a meta-position with respect to the entire world causes this dual scheme to be paradoxical. Where the whole of being is identified as something that differs from the subject and is presented to the subject as an objectified givenness, a question as simple as “does the subject belong to being?”, or (which is essentially the same) “does the subject exist?”, may be confusing. If the cognizing-perceiving subject exists, it is then a part of the being–world, but then the requirement of objectivity (externality) of being in relation to the subject is not satisfied. After all, an object must be independent from the subject by definition. But if being as an object is outside the subject, then the subject will be soaring in some kind of ontological void or vacuum. In other words, such a subject simply does not exist. The transformation of the world into an object transforms the subject into some kind of ghost.

This intuition can be found in works of Schopenhauer who undoubtedly moved from Kant in the same direction as Hegel – towards the removal of the transcendent dimension, replacing it with the totality of the world.

In fact, the meaning that I am looking for of the world that stands before me simply as my representation, or the transition from it as mere representation of the knowing subject to whatever it may be besides this, could never be found if the investigator himself were nothing more than the purely knowing subject (a winged cherub without a body). But he himself is rooted in that world; and thus he finds himself in it as an *individual,* in other words, his knowledge, which is the conditional supporter of the whole world as representation, is nevertheless given entirely through the medium of a body, and the affections of this body are, as we have shown, the starting-point for the understanding in its perception of this world.[[42]](#footnote-42)

What is proposed here is a particular form of monism where the subject, in contrast to the dualistic model, loses its paradoxical transcendent status.

From the outset, philosophical monism aims to acknowledge the *uniformity* of everything that exists. In the history of philosophical thought, this concept has a number of well-designed precedents – above all, the models offered by Aristotle, Schopenhauer and Hegel. According to these scholars, the world, even initially, is neither a pure object (matter) nor a pure subject (knowledge: information, experience). They cannot exist individually and on their own. Pure matter cannot exist, as if it is unshaped (unidentified), it is nothing and, therefore, does not exist. Information (knowledge about what the matter is) cannot also exist without an object, as *what the knowledge is about* must definitely exist. The best metaphorical illustration here is a two-page spread where two pages are an integral whole.

As we will see, the most systemic concept of philosophical monism was offered by Hegel. The individual as a bearer of knowledge (experience about the world) does not come to the world, parachuting down from somewhere else. From the very beginning, he is part of this world, he appears in it, following its laws. He is endowed with an amazing ability to learn. Therefore, knowledge about the world must be part of the world. Evidently, the entire pattern must be cyclical – the world learns about itself through the individual (his mind). The world forms a circle – it moves from nonorganic to organic, to life and, eventually, to the individual who discovers the world. Thus, the consciousness of the individual is the consciousness of the world. The individual (consciousness) and the nature (matter) are two sides of one sheet – the world.

The essence of the problem posed here is that cognition about the world cannot be located outside the world or in addition to the world. Although any cognizing scheme draws on precisely such a subject-object model, when considered in relation to the whole world, it stops working. But then how one should think this knowledge? What will it be, and how will it be related to the world?

An analysis of this problem leads to the model formulated by Hegel – the subject is also an object (substance), and inseparably so. Knowledge about the world overall (the Absolute) cannot be added to the Absolute, otherwise the Absolute will cease be as such. Paradoxically, from the very beginning we should ground knowledge about the Absolute in the Absolute itself, and to that extent, where the subject itself bears responsibility for this knowledge – the source and the bearer of knowledge, it interiorizes with necessity. I take this model, as systematized by Hegel, as a fundamental point of departure in this work. Thus, my approach to the analysis of the problem of the subject begins with the Hegelian philosophy of absolute idealism.

As for the second problem, in all fairness it should be mentioned that classical philosophy frequently turned to it when it needed to prove oneness of the world and the illusion of subject-object dualism. At the very least, two philosophers deserve attention – Spinoza and Hegel. They can be seen as classical expressions of philosophical immanentism. In this regard, Spinoza commanded respect from Gilles Deleuze, as he was the first to present a detailed project of immanentist philosophy in the very heart of modern European dualism. In general terms, the evidence of immanentism is intended to show that *the world taken as a whole, in its entirety, cannot be an object.* In this context, classical epistemology firmly adheres to the conceptual opposition – something is *either* a “subject” *or* an “object”, *tertio non datur*. At this point, non-classical epistemology prefers to abstain from insisting of such disjunctions, being well aware of their insecurity. However, why is the being-world not an object? If it were an object, it would need *external causation*. The full version of this argument (dating back to Spinoza) also implies the argument based on “outer motion”. If the whole world is an object, then something that is outside the world must be the cause of its motion. Then, the “whole world” is not an entire world; it is only its part, as somewhere there is *something else*[[43]](#footnote-43).

To understand the meaning of this explanation we should focus our attention on the word “whole” when we speak about the world (being). The “*whole*” world or the “*whole*” being is something, apart from which there is nothing else. This argument is difficult to confute, as it stems from the definition of being. If it is true, then the world must be confined to itself – only in this case it will retain the all-encompassing character implied by its definition. If the world requires an external cause of its existence, its totality will be disturbed – it will lack its own parts, as, in other words, somewhere there is something else that affects our failed “world”. All this can be explained in a very simple way: the cause of being either exists or does not exist. If it does not exist, there is no being; if it exists, it belongs to being. What does this entail? It is clear that the world constitutes one whole, but it is not clear whether it is subjective or objective. As the conventional definition of the subject implies self-causation (the subject can affect itself), the conclusion suggests itself – *the world taken as a whole cannot be an object, though it can and must be a subject*. For Spinoza, subjectification of the world, i.e. its turning into a substance, *causa sui* or cause of itself means that the world is animate, capable of thinking, self-creating and self-supporting. with the notion of an Absolute Subject (recalling a similar figure in Hegel’s metaphysics) is identified in Spinoza’s philosophy as God, though, in contrast to canonical Christianity, it is identical with the creation – the product of its own creative life.

This answer could be satisfactory to everyone, if the subject, at least, logically, did not need an object. We have nothing else to do but *identify the subject with the object and recognize them as one whole.* The result of such reasoning is that by using the seemingly clear and convincing subject-object model where the subject is perceiving consciousness and the object is something that is passive and must be perceived we are not able to describe the world in its entirety. To be able to speak about the world rather than about its shadow we must give up our assumption that being is an object and the philosopher-researcher is a subject.

The critical approach to subject-object dualism is the first step towards an extensive process of world detranscending. If the subject does not hold a privileged meta-position in relation to the world or, in other words, does not transcend the world, as was implied in some versions of classical modern European epistemology, the transcendent dimension disappears and the world becomes *one-dimensional* or *detranscendent (immanent)*.

In view of the ideas outlined above, one can summarize the task of those contexts, to which we are planning to refer in the future, in the following way. Retaining the transcendence will make it extremely difficult to overcome several epistemic paradoxes and ambiguities; however, as soon as we refuse it more favorable logical opportunities come into view. Now nothing prevents us from practicing a more coherent immanent approach. However, assuming the responsibilities of following this approach, we will also have to answer a certain questions that arise. These require a definition of the role that will be assigned to the subject (human being), and its place in existence,

The authors to which we will refer, and my own approach, will begin with the preferable character of the paradigm of immanentism. It will include a specification of who and what the individual will be in such a worldview. These clarifications will be needed later to explain how the immersing the cognizing subject into the world influenced the project of the anthropologization of negativity - the central leitmotifof my work. As I show later this replacement was marked not simply by well-known existentialist interpretations in which knowledge pales into insignificance before the primordiality of existence**.** I show that in his new role man still maintains his privileges, but now at the price of a highly unusual sojourn in the world - with the rights not of a being that exists but rather of a being that does not exist but which is nonetheless productive.

**2. The elimination of the noumenal world**

The drawbacks of the subject-object approach are not the only ones we have in mind when speaking about the reasons for detranscending (making world immanent). Although phenomenology is in some respects very Kantian, and Husserl was working in the context of neo-Kantianism and there is a lot they share, the *anti-Kantian* movement started by phenomenology may have been the most massive attack on the perception of the world that implies the transcendent dimension. In Kant’s ontology, being was split into two regions – the cognizable world of phenomena and the non-cognizable world of noumena. This distinction let phenomenology spring from the depths of Kant’s philosophy. The “illusion of worlds-behind-the-scene” as a program statement that supports bringing down the transcendent can be concretized in the attempt to get rid of the model of the split Being; that is, the model which distinguishes between the phenomenal and the noumenal, privileges the noumenal, and asserts that *phenomena are not real* - *only noumena are real*, though accessible.

The distinction between noumena and phenomena appears for the first time in Kant’s dissertation, written in 1770 г. “De mundi sensibilis atque intelligibilis forma et principiis” (The Form and Principles of the Sensible and Intelligible World). By distinguishing cognition (events, phenomena) from the rational and intelligible (noumena), Kant defined the difference between them in the following way: “Objects are therefore given to us by means of sensibility, and it alone affords us intuitions; but they are thought through the understanding, and from it arise concepts”.[[44]](#footnote-44)

The task that Kant was facing in the eighteenth century was at first sight completely unsolvable. He inherited the legacy of the subject-object scheme, but it made dealing with science highly problematic.

So, what did this scheme look like? The act of cognition represents itself the interaction of the *cognizing subject and the cognized object*. The subject, of course, claims that its act of cognition “was successful”, i.e. it claims the cognition of the *truth*. Thus, if the object of my cognition is “pineapple”, I want to be sure that it remains as such when I cognized it, and upon the following encounter with a pineapple in my experience, I will easily recognize it as what it is, as distinct from another fruit. In addition, I also want to be sure that the pineapple really exists and was not sent to me by a Cartesian evil demon, or is not a figment of my imagination.

In this respect, Descartes showed that the subject can easily doubt its own experience, even if a thousand of pineapples fall on its head. The existence of a thinking subject, “I”, is the only thing that cannot be doubted. In the “I” itself, we observe the ideas put into it by God, that warrant our objective knowledge of the reality. However, at first sight the simple and convincing scheme was soon pulled to pieces.

David Hume critiqued this scheme, asking the Cartesian tradition to consider the status of this subject as a warrant of our knowledge. Hume declared that there was no subject, no pure *cogito*. All that exists is a set of impressions or ideas (I am either hot or hungry, or I have an aesthetic experience etc.).[[45]](#footnote-45) It seemed that the subject may have been killed off forever by this reason.

After having read Hume, Kant woke up from his “dogmatic sleep” at last and was ready to work. He concluded that the scheme was worth of nothing. Would it be better to consider not the “subject” or “object” as such but how the objectof cognition *is given to us*? The task for philosophy becomes the study of the relation that is givenness.

Thus, in the history of philosophy, attention turned to the representation of the object. How do we know in general what it is? It might seem that one could “turn around” the idea and never “break through” to the object itself. What is to be done?

Under the barrage of these questions, Kant came up with a completely revolutionary idea: to know *what the idea is*, one needs to find the conditions of its possibility. Having studied the composition of the idea carefully, Kant separates three cognitive abilities: sensibility (it is passive and represents the ability to receive ideas), the understanding (which actively processes the data received in sensibility - i.e. intuitions) and reason (systemizing all received knowledge). Together, they make possible the phenomenon; *i.e. how the object of cognition is given to us.*[[46]](#footnote-46)

This leads Kant to take the next step – to find the *conditions of the possibility* of the capabilities themselves. It turns out that the sensible intuitions are possible because there are *a priori* forms of space and time, the “processing” of intuitions received in space and time is possible due to the understanding with its 12 categories, and reason in its turn “directs” our cognition according to three transcendent ideas – *soul, world as a whole, and God.*

The categories are important here (four classes: quantity, quality, relation and modality), insofar as they play apart in making our experience possible. Thanks to the categories, we in general understand that the cat is sitting on the table; the Sun will rise tomorrow, the amount of energy is unchangeable etc. Nothing from what we encountered, encounter or will encounter in our experience, might fit into these categories. They are functions of our reasoning, in the sense in which the function makes something possible but restricts the area of admissible values.[[47]](#footnote-47)

However, at this stage Kant finds an important consequence: if categories make our experience possible, then they also restrict it as such. Thanks to all the discovered conditions of cognition, we know exactly *how* the object is given to us, as it is we ourselves that are the bearers of these conditions. However, we cannot say, *what the world looks like in itself* (as opposed to how it appears to us), or indeed how the world looks through the eyes of a cat or those of an alien.

The division of the world by Kant into the “phenomenal” and the “noumenal” is a well-known philosophical idea. That this is the world of phenomena (something that appears)is not difficult to understand – this is the world given to us thanks to the the forms of space, time, the categories etc. In other words, this is the world structured by *our* cognitive abilities. But then what is the world of noumenon (something that is in principal inaccessible to our cognition)?

If we consider *The Critique of Pure Reason*, we find there quite a vague definition. Noumenon is a thing, which is not an object of our sensual contemplation, it has a negative meaning, this is the thing, “which is not to be thought as the object of thought, but as a thing-in-itself”. For Kant, the noumenon is necessary to “provide the boundaries of application to reason” and “not to spread the sensual contemplations to the sphere of things-in-themselves”.[[48]](#footnote-48)

What does this all mean? Because eachseparate phenomenon (given to us in the experience according to the conditions of possibility of this experience as defined by Kant) is represented by *something,* it is logical to assume that *the whole world* also has this *something* in its basis.[[49]](#footnote-49) Such an intuition can be seen already on the very first pages of “The Transcendental Aesthetic”, where Kant writes that sensibility is the ability to receive ideas in the same way that we are affected by objects.[[50]](#footnote-50) In the original text, the German verb “*affizieren*” (to incite, to influence) is used. The “pineapple” given to us in space and time is given insofar as something influenced *the a priori* forms of space and time. One could say, with several stipulations, that “the-pineapple-in-itself” influenced us; however, even here we cannot be entirely sure, as everything that may be given to us in experience is subordinated to categories, and what is not subordinated to categories we cannot cognize at all. At a practical level, the idea is that however we may perfect our microscopes and “grind” the tiniest physical particles into even tinier ones, we will never get to “the-pineapple-in-itself”.

One could easily suspect Kant “stealing” of Plato’s world of ideas; however, there are many differences between them. Thus, Plato’s world promises cognition of the truth to us, whereas the “noumenal world” on the contrary, limits our cognition. Besides, in a paradoxical way, we somehow know about the hierarchy in the world of Plato’s ideas; however, there is no hierarchy at all in Kant’s supersensible world.

These last remarks refer us to the practical philosophy of Kant, which also originaes in the division between the sensible and supersensible worlds, the world of nature and the world of freedom. Insofar as the human being has access to the world of freedom, it might be said that there is no hierarchy in this world at all (unlike Plato): allpeople are ends-in-themselves, there is no “more” or “less” of an individual, regardless of whether they are virtuous or evil.

Therefore on first inspection there are two aspects to Kant’s distinction between noumenal and phenomenal worlds. The *functional* is in the fact that the noumenal world *affiziert* the phenomenal one, and is its condition. Moreover, it points to the limits of the application of our cognizing apparatus. We do not know what is “the-pineapple-in-itself” and never will, as the categories making our experience possible, limit it at the same time.[[51]](#footnote-51)

This is important in relation to self-cognition. If intuition, for Kant, can only be sensible (as intuition is what fills the concept with content), it follows that it cannot be *intellectual*. I cannot be the object of cognition for myself; the “I” never originates from the experience, and therefore cannot be an idea, therefore cannot be an object of cognition. All that we can say about “I” is that it is “a point of assembly”, which “collects” many different representations and makes them mine. “This transcendental unity of apperception forms out of all possible appearances, which can stand alongside one another in one experience, a connection of all these representations according to laws”.[[52]](#footnote-52) Philosophical thought in the years that followed, starting with Schelling, struggled persistently with this thought.

In spite of its flawless logic, we can find drawbacks in Kant’s transcendental approach. Generally speaking, these may all be narrowed down to the well-known remark made by philosopher Jacobi: “Without the presupposition [of the “thing in itself”] I was unable to enter into [Kant's] system, but with it I was unable to stay within it”.[[53]](#footnote-53) This remark suggests that “the thing-in-itself” is a highly paradoxical object and even though it may be said to be quite natural for the noumenal (transcendent) object, this paradoxicality can be attributed to an inconsistency typical of the Kantian duality. The inconsistency in question is that the transcendent noumenal world *cannot even be identified*. The conceivability characteristic of the transcendent world implies that it is inconceivable. We do not know where the transcendent world is and whether it exists at all – any knowledge, even general, about the transcendent realm detranscends it, turning it into part of the real (phenomenal) world. Certainly, Jacobi was not the only one to pay attention to this. A generation of post-Kantian philosophers period literally “made a name” by criticizing this idea. Among them, were such eminent philosophers as Fichte and Schelling, though the full implications of the criticism of Kant’s division of the world into phenomena and noumena, as I will outline shortly, was laid out only by Hegel.

We know nothing about the noumenal world; we cannot even find out whether it exists, because existence is the category belonging to the world of phenomena. If the thing-in-itself is isolated, it means that isolation belongs to the one that isolates, as the bond is difficult to break. Then, at least, the semantic exchange between the immanent and the transcendent cannot be avoided. The absence of semantic boundaries, in its turn, results in the dispersion of any boundaries at all, and therefore ontology can no longer be burdened with differentiation into immanent (phenomenal) and transcendent (noumenal) realms.

In the meantime, this idea by no means brings relief to all minds. Remember that philosophical concepts and theories rarely exist as autonomous in terms of the discipline. The concept of the transcendent in philosophy is probably more loaded than most, as it is easy to see that transcendence is, first of all, the domain of monotheistic faith. It should be admitted that despite its strained relations with religion, philosophy in its modern period gave a lot of attention to the concept of the *transcendent guarantor*. Although philosophers rarely neglect to mention that the God of philosophy is not identical to the Christian God, the impact of the Christian religion on the major philosophical systems of the Western European pattern cannot be ignored. The God of most of the modern philosophical systems matches Christian God in almost every way. Besides numerous perfections and absolutizations, his main quality is transcendence with respect to the world. It was this divine attribute that was used by modern philosophy to prove the ability of the cognizing subject to transcend the world – the human being is created in the image of God and, therefore, possesses a transcendent vector, which allows him to address the world from its outside. Before it reached its high point during the modern European period of philosophy, this model had been elaborated by Augustine in his concept of two cities – the City of God and the City of Man – that create a dualistic dimension for the soul, and which corresponds to the dual structure of the universe. The citizenship of the soul depends on who the citizen serves – himself or God. The famous dilemma of Augustine – “Amor sui ad contemptum Dei, amor Dei ad contemptum sui” (The one loves God to the point of disregarding self, the other loves self to the point of disregarding God) has a broad meaning.[[54]](#footnote-54) “Loving self” means not only an ego-centrical position, but also serving the human in himself or, to be more exact, recognizing only the human (socially induced) motivation. In this context, humanism without God or humanistically driven altruism is an example of life in the City of Man. In a similar manner, “loving God” means that only divine precepts are perceived as ultimate motivation. Such unconditional serving God can be seen as the soul’s staying in the City of God.

A relation to God, however, meant not only existential, meaningful and value-based reference points, but also, necessarily, the cognitive point of reference. The subject could know and understand something only due to the transcendent vector around which it was constructed. Without it, the individual could make any effort in cognition, but would always remain in the dark. “The natural light of reason”[[55]](#footnote-55) is the divine light, it goes without saying. The knowledge in such interpretation is understood as something holy, but access to the holy can be opened only by God, and therefore by being in direct contact with him. The knowledge of the truth, or at least an aspiration for it, denotes the divine spark – the initial foundation of the divine light. Therefore the subject of cognition, being always transcendent in the act of cognition, is given the possibility to comprehend the truth from above; however, for this to be the case, he needs to hover above the world. In fact, this structure resolved the paradox to which I referred in Chapter One – to cognize, the subject should separate itself from the world, go beyond its boundaries, transcend it and in this respect stop being a part of it. For this, it should crystallize its connection to God – to look at the world from the outside, that means to look at the world from the point of view of God.

Thus, Nietzsche’s important concept of “the death of God”[[56]](#footnote-56) implies a broader context, which cannot be narrowed down to the principle of philosophical detranscending.

From the philosophical point of view[[57]](#footnote-57) this means that the subject is deprived of a special sacral access to cognition. The Cartesian idea that the subject has initial privileges conferred from above, in the form of innate ideas enclosed into us, loses its meaning. God as the true basis of truth and knowledge is devalued. If in the philosophical systems of Descartes, Leibniz or Berkeley, God gave a lasting guarantee of the possibility receiving true knowledge, then the concept of “Death of God” means also the disappearance of this guarantee. However, in addition, this opens the way not to a new scepticism, but on the contrary, to so-called epistemological optimism, which is however not dependent on divine mercy. The second concept of “the illusion of worlds-behind-the-scene” mentioned by us many times already, which clearly rests on the noumenal in Kant, means that absence of a transcendent warrant is also connected with the absence of transcendent itself – the one which is hidden and which in order to access one requires special permission or special access conferred from above. Knowledge is always given to us in immediate use – in the form of phenomena followed by nothing but other phenomena. We will come across this thesis later in Sartre – in his thematization of immanence. Existence, as he says, opens as a series of phenomena. But we find the very same idea on the immediacy of knowledge (truth) in Hegel (as will be shown below), in his version of refusal the transcendent.

Thus, we saw that after the most systematic project in the history of philosophy, the division between the cognizable and non-cognizable, and to be more precise, Kant’s division into phenomena and noumena, already begins to place this division in question. Philosophy since its very origin has been inclined to believe that the world is not exhausted by the visible and imaginable; *phenomenon*, however, also has a certain underside representing itself as the true state of things – *essence*. Kant’s project was the most critical one in this respect, for essences were not only postulated, as in the majority of philosophical systems, but were radically cut from the world of phenomena, leaving the observer no chance to penetrate to the other side of the screen of their own perception. Overall, in dealing with cognition modern philosophy always appealed to the *model of “essence-phenomenon”*, only differing in their recognition of what is possible for the cognizing subject – the *observer* mastering what it can see. The period after modern philosophy, which we will be interested in, is our focus in this research, will be marked by review of this traditional pairing, in the spirit of the principle of *elimination of duplication –* the world of entities is cut off in favour of only phenomena. In philosophy, this work will be done by *dialectics* (represented by Hegel) and, most systematically, by *phenomenology* (starting with Husserl). Both of these thinkers put the transcendent in question and focus on the immanent. According this approach, cognizing subjects not only admitted non-neutral conditions for the possibility of a phenomenon, always already deployed in the modality *for-myself,* which also serve as a *boundary of the world,* a certainlimit, beyond which it is pointless to look, or eve to ask what lies beyond it.

What the cognizing subject (observer-researcher) finds beyond the boundaries of a given phenomenon will be another phenomenon, beyond which another one “is hidden”, and then another etc. However, would it be easier to get access to the *entity* if it is in essence nothing more than an object constructed by reason (in a sense a *pseudo-object*), which in the real world we would never come across anyway (or the encounter with which, as Derrida has it, is always postponed)? The philosopher might then no longer be inspired by the image of Plato’s cave, as he sees the boundary reality in phenomena, something that should be studied as a self-sufficient state of the world. As Sartre writes at the very beginning of *Being and Nothingness*:

Modern thought has realized considerable progress by reducing the existent to the series of appearances which manifest it. Its aim was to overcome a certain number of dualisms which have embarrassed philosophy and to replace them by the monism of the phenomenon. In the first place we certainly thus get rid of the dualism which in the existent opposes interior to exterior. There is no longer an exterior for the existent if one means by that a superficial covering which hides from sight the true nature of the object. And this true nature in turn, if it is to be the secret reality of the thing, which one can have a presentiment of or which one can suppose but never reach because it is the “interior” of the object under consideration – this nature no longer exists. … Force, for example, is not a metaphysical conatus of an unknown kind which hides behind its effects (accellerations, deviations, etc); it is the totality of these effects. Similarly an electric current does not have a secret reverse side; it is nothing but the totality of the physical-chemical actions which (electrolysis, the incandescence of a carbon filament, the displacement of the needle of a galvanometer, etc.) [[58]](#footnote-58)

The obvious conclusion is that the dualism of being and appearance is no longer entitled to any legal status within philosophy. The appearance refers to the total series of appearances and not to a hidden reality which would drain to itself all the being of the existent. And the appearance for its part is not an inconsistent manifestation of this being. To the extent that men had believed in noumenal realities, they have presented appearances as a pure negative. It was “that which is not being”; it had no other being than that of illusion and error.

“Modern thought” no longer thinks in terms of “noumena-phenomena”, “present-hidden”, “visible-invisible”, but accepts the visible for the only thing in existence, behind which one does not need to look for anything else. This abandonment of “true nature” and “innermost reality” is evidently aimed at theology, yet it contains a most important epistemological resource, which I take as a starting point for this research. This resource is at stake in the essentiality of the phenomena-event, and in the movement undertaken by both Husserl and Hegel. Factually this will mean the transition to phenomenology as an epistemological project that better reflects the needs of an immanent ontology. Guided by the interpretation of Kojève, I will show that there is a significant proximity between these two philosophers. Owing to the logic of this proximity and the work done by both thinkers, it became possible to talk about the purely immanent status of the subject itself, and thereby to understand what becomes of the subject when it is incorporated into existence, and how it anthropizes existence. Below, we will move on to consider the phenomenological implication of fundamental anthropology prepared by Husserl and Hegel.

**3. “Subject is also substance”: and Husserl’s intentionality**

Going back to philosophical detranscending, I should explain the philosophical meaning inherent in the following words: “*there is no otherworldly dimension”.* To do that I will turn to the legacy of two scholars whose works played a critical part in the further development of philosophy of detranscendency. Here, we refer to philosophers whose research dates back to different periods of time, though their world detranscending strategies, *dialectical and phenomenological*, are strikingly similar: namely, Hegel and Husserl.

The purpose of this paragraph is to trace the relation between the two philosophical projects engaging in immanentism. In a certain sense, one can say that the work done by Husserl in epistemology had already done by Hegel in ontology. Husserl immanentized the cognition, and Hegel immanentized the existence. Although it goes without saying that each step implies the other. This may be why Kojève insists on the similarity of what was achieved by these two thinkers. However, this is not to deny that each places his own emphasis – for Hegel it was ontological, and for Husserl it was epistemological. Accordingly, insofar as the basis of this research lies in ontology than epistemology, I will refer primarily to Hegel (his significance will also turn out to be paramount because it will reveal the connection between the immanentizing of the subject and negativity). However, to the extent that I will refer also to Heidegger's legacy, it will also important to outline the phenomenological perspective on the refusal of the transcendence in relation to which resorting to Husserl seems justified. But how does the convergence of these two authors manifest itself, and how do they work with the idea of immanent, aimed to “overshadow” the transcendence?

Comparison of Hegel’s phenomenology and the phenomenology developed by Husserl is a fairly rare undertaking.[[59]](#footnote-59)

However, at some point, a comparison of this kind had a decisive impact on the whole of the subsequent development of philosophical thought directed at an analysis of the concept of negativity.

In his remarkable lectures addressing Hegel’s philosophy[[60]](#footnote-60), Kojève demonstrated that though Hegel’s dialectic appears very different from Husserl’s phenomenology, the work conducted by the two scholars has significant similarities, and they reached similar results in eliminating the duplication of the world. In fact, the similarity of their results and applied methodologies is easy to explain – for in their criticism they shared the same target: Kant’s transcendental philosophy, which divided the world into phenomena and noumena. In Chapter 2 of Part 2, I will present the logic of Kojève’s assumptions in more details.

The term “phenomenology” received its integral and original meaning thanks to Hegel after the publication of *The Phenomenology of Spirit* in 1807. Phenomenology is the “science on consciousness” where consciousness is knowledge of an object, be it external or internal.

To understand Hegel’s detranscending strategy one needs to keep in mind its basic assumption – *the world taken in its entirety is both subjective and substantial*. It is the first and most fundamental assumption of Hegel’s “phenomenology of spirit” – the entire world is represented as the identity of the object (substance) and the subject. Using Hegel’s terminology, this identity is the *Absolute* – *subjectified being.* As we can see, the Absolute does not and cannot have any “other side”, any external dimension, and therefore the Absolute is pure detranscendence[[61]](#footnote-61). In Hegel's system transcendence appears to be more internal through the assumption of the identity of being and thinking. The well-known maxim “no object without a subject” can also be read in reverse order: “no subject without an object”. While the first part of this formula represents Kantianism, where the object is constituted by the subject, the Hegelian semantics constitutes the subject itself with the object, that, as we shall see, coincides with the phenomenological approach, well-founded with a principle of intentionality by which the subject perceives itself and the world within its actual focus on objectivity, (re)creating the form and rich content of its mind. The central idea in ​​Hegel is that if we wanted to know the Absolute (the real itself) without being part of this Absolute from the very beginning, we would not only be doomed to failure, but could never articulate the idea of ​the Absolute at all. Hegel writes:

However much we were just supposed to bring the absolute a bit closer to us by means of the instrument and not have the instrument change anything in it at all, perhaps similar to the way we would ensnare a bird on a twig covered in birdlime, the absolute itself would nonetheless almost surely cast scorn on this ruse if it were not both in and for itself already there with us and wanted to be there.[[62]](#footnote-62)

All doublings known in philosophy (as for ideas and things, noumena and phenomena, absolute and relative, the divine and the earthly - in a word, the knowable and the unknowable) are only the result of a faint-hearted, and yet hypocritical fear of error.

In this connection Hegel remarks wittily:Meanwhile, if the fear of falling into error introduces an element of distrust into science, it is not easy to understand why, conversely, a distrust should not be placed in this very distrust, and why we should not take care lest the fear of error is not just the initial error. As a matter of fact, this fear presupposes something and supports its scruples and consequences on what should itself be examined beforehand to see whether it is truth. It starts with ideas of knowledge as an instrument, and as a medium; and presupposes a distinction of ourselves from this knowledge. More especially it takes for granted that the Absolute stands on one side, and that knowledge on the other side, by itself and cut off from the Absolute, is still something real; in other words, that knowledge, which, by being outside the Absolute, is certainly also outside truth, is nevertheless true — a position which, while calling itself fear of error, makes itself known rather as fear of the truth.[[63]](#footnote-63)

Why should the possibility of error not frighten us? It is very simple: there is no world and consciousness taken separately (in this form they are given only as an abstraction), but there is a real world and a real consciousness, such that the world-is-always-already-captured-by-consciousness, and consciousness-is-always-already-addressed-to-the-world.

Kojève writes:

What exists in *reality,* as soon as there is a Reality *of which one speaks –* and since we in fact *speak* of reality, there can be for us only Reality of which one speaks – what exists in reality, I say, is the Subject that knows the Object, or, what is the same thing, the Object known by the Subject. This double reality which is nonetheless one because it is equally real in each aspect, taken in its whole or as Totality, is called in Hegel “Spirit” (*Geist*) or (in the *Logik*) “absolute idea”.[[64]](#footnote-64)

Hegel's basic argumentation is simple to understand. Because (1) the only Absolute is the truth (as well as the truth can only be Absolute), and since (2) Absolute is subjective by its nature, (3) our understanding from the very beginning is a part of reality, acceptance of absolute reality, with nothing there beyond it. This means that the eternal restlessness of consciousness stating that reality is of a sort of otherworldly noumenal nature should be strongly rejected; “The fear of error is error itself” (Hegel), as the entire world, taken as a whole, is *either a real concept or cognized reality*.[[65]](#footnote-65)*.* This approach makes exploring activities to be simplified radically. Now we need only to take care of checking in the proper sense of the word, so... all we have is a simple observation, because consciousness checks itself on its own. For consciousness is object awareness on the one hand, and self-awareness on the other hand: the consciousness of what is true for him, and the consciousness of his knowledge about it. Then, “knowledge no longer needs to go out beyond itself, where it finds itself and where concept corresponds to object, and object to concept”.[[66]](#footnote-66) Therefore, the aim of cognition will lie in the most accurately description of the observed, i.e. it will be reduced to a passive, contemplative and descriptive activity. This allows Kojève to argue that “The Hegelian *method*, therefore, is … purely contemplative and descriptive, or better *phenomenological* in Husserl’s sense of the term”[[67]](#footnote-67)

Indeed the similarity of Hegel and Husserl methodologies is obvious. From the subjective point of view phenomenology is the science of “consciousness-beholding-the essence”. However methodologically it points to the need of properly released contemplation, particularly pure description of contemplated object, because what we really see is what takes place in reality. Husserl erases the border between phenomena and noumena due to essential phenomenological principle of the *intentionality*.

The concept “intentionality” is interpreted differently by phenomenologists. The most elaborated phenomenological conception of intentionality of consciousness is that of Husserl, according to which consciousness is, as a matter of fact, intentionality. For Husserl, “intentionality is the defining characteristics for stream of consciousness”, “the fundamental property of consciousness”.[[68]](#footnote-68) As long as the phenomenological method is developed in more details, the role, which intentionality starts to play in the phenomenological methodology, increases substantially. The intentional analysis is gradually turning into universal analytics of consciousness, as intentionality is considered as that characteristics of consciousness, which not only refers us to the object, but owing to which there appears a possibility to talk about constituting of the cognized object. In Husserl’s philosophy, ontologizing of intentionality takes place, as intentionality is considered here as a force, which coordinates and synthesizes the most various acts of consciousness underlying the constituting of objects. It is intentional objects that Husserl declared as sole absolute realia’s. Phenomenology declares the fundamental level of intentional relations.

To the unity of the thing there belongs more than the individualised concretum; there belongs also (ideally speaking) a possible infinite manifold of temporally succeeding concreta of one and the same form, passing continuously into each other in the sense of the concepts of change and perseverance, this manifold being held together (either for itself or together with other associated manifolds of a similar constitution) through the unity of causality. This means that there obtains a lawfulness in relation to these manifolds which makes the concreta co-existing at any given point in time unilaterally dependent on those concreta of an arbitrarily chosen earlier point in time which are assigned to it in the sense of change or perseverance.[[69]](#footnote-69)

The intentional relation implies the essential inter-dependence of the correlated elements: the act depends on the object, and on the contrary, the object depends on that act, where it is constituted. The items on which consciousness is originally directed and which equally constitute the integrity and reality of consciousness itself are called *phenomena* by Husserl. The phenomenon is both the conscious experience and the object forming this experience; the object and the thought about it are *one and the same.* In this sense, the difference between the subject and the object is superseded in favour of their phenomenological oneness. It is proposed by this strategy to break away from the hypothetical “thing-in-itself”, limiting the discourse to “things for myself”, namely, *phenomena.*[[70]](#footnote-70) Here, it is important to understand that a phenomenon fully reveals its essence in the course of perception, as long as the act of perception follows certain rules. The perception that adhere to certain criteria reveals the essence of phenomena. The main criteria is absence of active cognition, contrary to what is implied by modern epistemology. Thus passive contemplation and registration of what one sees are expected. This procedure is defined as “reduction” by Husserl and it enables removal of everything introduced into the phenomenon by consciousness itself. Therefore, by avoiding the flaws inherent to the operation of consciousness, phenomena are emptied of everything extraneous and register their self-manifestation. Føllesdal defines the reduction as follows: “The real world is reduced to a correlative of our acts, which constitute it, bring it forth. All that is transcendent is put in brackets together with the other objects of our acts. What is left, purified of all that is transcendent, Husserl called *transcendental.* The phenomenological reduction hence leads us from the transcendent to the transcendental”.[[71]](#footnote-71) Reduction means purification of phenomena of consciousness from facticity*.* “The fact that all phenomena can be grasped as something, can simply be neglected”.[[72]](#footnote-72) Phenomenological reduction opens up the phenomena of inner experience; “eidetic reduction is neither a form of induction nor an abstraction. In accordance with the phenomenological reduction, it abstains from any sort of positing of the actual existence of its objects”[[73]](#footnote-73). It is the sphere of psychic existence. Thus, pure phenomenology:

… is concerned with the essence of whatever is immanent in consciousness, and that it is concerned with describing immanent essences. To confuse the essences of things with the mental representations of those essences is to confuse the aims of phenomenology and psychology. Phenomenology is a descriptive analysis of being as consciousness, while psychology is a descriptive analysis of being as reality. The difference between being as consciousness and being as reality is also the difference between transcendental and transcendent being.[[74]](#footnote-74)

Experiences through intuition are analysed in pure necessity as real facts; that is, as experiences of human beings or animals in the phenomenal world set as a fact of experience. However, the mere activity of independent mind is not the source of the abovementioned flaws. It is more of the indication that reaching the point where consciousness is identical to phenomenon requires skill. The consciousness concentrates on manifestations of phenomena and then removes excessive features that shade the pure phenomenon. Here, self-evidence is defined as the passive registration by the conscience of the self-manifestation of object-phenomena in the plane of their actual self-presence in experience “for-me”, or if you will, “through me”. As Husserl observes:

Every truly given contemplation is a legitimate source of cognition: everything that reveals itself through “intuition” (so to say, in its true reality) must be accepted the way it manifests itself and to such extents within which it manifests itself.[[75]](#footnote-75)

In *Cartesian Mediations*, and specifically in the chapter “Evidence as itself-givenness and the modifications of evidence”, Husserl writes:

In the broadest sense, evidence denotes a universal primal phenomenon of intentional life, namely as contrasted with other consciousness-of, which is capable a priori of being “empty”, expectant, indirect, non-presentive – the quite preeminent mode of consciousness that consists in the *self-appearance*, the *self-exhibiting*, the *self-giving*, of an affair, an affair complex (or state of affairs), a universality, a value, or other objectivity, in the final mode: “itself there”, “immediately intuited”, “given originaliter”. For the Ego that signifies: not aiming confusedly at something, with an empty expectant intention, but being with it itself, viewing, seeing, having insight into it itself. Experience in the ordinary sense is a particular evidence. All evidence, we may say, is *experience in a maximally broad, and yet essentially unitary, sense*.[[76]](#footnote-76)

Removal of subject subjectivity as precondition for the cognition to contemplate or even insight into essences is the deviation from modern contexts, most notably supported by Kant.

“In a word, for the phenomenological version of de-transcending, it is not actually about knowing whether we perceive the reality as it is ... because the reality is exactly the same as we perceive it”.[[77]](#footnote-77) But exactly the same statement is made by Hegel. His de-transcendence strategy can be best described in the following words: “The Universe's hidden essence has no such power in itself which would be capable of resisting the boldness of cognition, but must reveal itself before it, unfold before its eyes the wealth and depths of its nature, and let it have delight in them”.[[78]](#footnote-78)

It is not by chance that Kojève, playing upon the name of the main work by Hegel “Phenomenology of Spirit”, directly says that “Hegelian method is … phenomenological in Husserl’s sense of the term”.[[79]](#footnote-79)

Kojève writes:

However that may be, philosophic thought or “scientific” thought in the Hegelian sense of the word — i.e., rigorously true thought — has the goal of revealing, through the meaning of a coherent discourse (Logos), Being (Sein) as it is and exists in the totality of its objective-Reality (Wirklichkeit). The philosophic or “scientific” Method, therefore, must assure the adequation of Thought to Being, since Thought must adapt itself to Being and to the Real without modifying them in any way whatsoever. This is to say that the attitude of the philosopher or the “scientist” (= the Wise Man) with respect to Being and to the Real is one of purely passive contemplation, and that philosophic or “scientific” activity reduces to a pure and simple description of the Real and of Being. The Hegelian method, therefore, is not at all “dialectical”: it is purely contemplative and descriptive, or better, phenomenological in Husserl’s sense of the term. In the Preface and the Introduction to the Phenomenology, Hegel insists at length on the passive, contemplative, and descriptive character of the “scientific” method. He underlines that there is a dialectic of “scientific” thought only because there is a dialectic of the Being which that thought reveals. As soon as the revealing description is correct, it can be said that ordo et connexio idearum idem est ac ordo et connexio rerum; for the order and the connection of the real are, according to Hegel, dialectical.[[80]](#footnote-80)

Traditional logic takes relation of designation for granted, as a given fact, not worthy of further analysis, while phenomenology of intentional acts reveals dynamic nature of this relation. Premonition of meaning defines the “pure intention”, which is not yet accomplished or designated. The flow of psychic experiences acquires meaning in the objective world through designation. The “accomplishment of intention” is manifested in formation of the intentional subject, i.e. the image of an actually perceived house or an anticipated event. The “performance of intention” is displayed by deliberate creative acts, the revelation of the will in striving to achieve something not yet defined. This abstract intention and anticipation is substantiated during “performance”. Through the direct comparison of key concepts “intention/in-itself” and “performance/for-itself” and their relation, the similarity of approaches by Hegel and Husserl is defined. The difference is not conceptual, but semantical – Hegelian “development of concept” directly corresponds to “performance of intention” by Husserl. Moreover, both approaches share the same structure of designation: implication becomes comprehension, subconscious becomes conscious and unclear anticipation becomes accomplished and comprehended objective reality. The difference is that Husserl’s phenomenology draws upon general linguistics and general psychology, while Hegelian is ultimately abstract and logically speculative. Therefore, the former has immediate connection to positive knowledge, such as Gestalt psychology; consequently, the mentioned analogy seems to be vague. However, the careful consideration of Husserl’s philosophical evolution - from strict epistemology to the concept “first philosophy”, in the unpublished lectures of the 1920s confirms the viability of the analogy with Hegel.[[81]](#footnote-81)

In the Preface to *The Phenomenology of Spirit,* Hegel writes: “Lastly, the third moment of the truth of Enlightenment is the relation of the individual being to absolute Being, is the relation between the first two moments… being as well as nothing, the in-self as well as its opposite… the relation of the actual world… is as much a negating as positing of that actual world.”[[82]](#footnote-82) The science moving in this direction is the science of experience perfected by consciousness. As Lyotard observes: “There is thus no answer to the question whether philosophy must begin with an object (realism) or with the ego (idealism). The very idea of phenomenology puts this question out of play: consciousness is always consciousness of, and there is no object which is not an object for”.[[83]](#footnote-83) However, “There is no immanence of the object to consciousness unless one correlatively assigns the object a rational meaning, without which the object would not be an object for. Concept of meaning is not exterior to Being; rather, Being is immediately concept in itself, and the concept is Being for itself”.[[84]](#footnote-84)

One can see from this passage that with the identification of the subject and substance, the problem of the origin is eliminated: it is not correct to say that there is a certain immediate and absolute origin, which, as we mentioned above, already would not be the result of the encountering the comprehended existence and the thing orientated at the existence. Therefore one needs to be careful in speaking about the “encounter” here, as there is no object without consciousness or consciousness without an object; when they appear, they appear immediately “together”. It is important to specify that this encounter itself is not static, frozen and in this case original – it always unfolds, is already a process and a history of inter-relations. In this respect, Hegelian philosophy assumes as “An absolute fact the emergence of the random in the very bosom of necessity and the very fact that the random, the aleatory, becomes necessarily”.[[85]](#footnote-85) As Hyppolite notes, “Absolute knowledge does not come from an origin, but from the very movement of starting, from the minimum rationale, which is the triad Being-Nothingness-Becoming; that is, it starts from the absolute as mediation, in its immediate form of becoming”.[[86]](#footnote-86)

This idea, according to which neither cognition, nor existence precede each other as something original, allows one both to bring Husserl and Hegel together and also separate them from each other, in spite of the fact that both thinkers revise Kantianism in the direction of detranscending. Husserl’s phenomenology also accords with the fact that an object always already “constitutes” the subject, equal to the subject itself becoming actual in the course of such constituting. There is no logical preceding of categories, not even forms, by means of which the transcendental subject would appropriate objects. On the contrary, as was shown, experience and judgment are applied statements and categories which envisage the primary certainty, that Being exists, i.e. reality is sublime. Husserl is following the hermeneutic idea of pre-understanding, according to which there is an initial connection between the cognition and the object, in the form of pre-reflexive grasp.

However, as Hyppolite writes: “For Hegel, therefore, there is no ineffable that would be on this side of or beyond the knowledge, no immediate singularity or transcendence; there is no ontological silence, rather dialectical discourse is a progressive conquest of sense”.[[87]](#footnote-87) Hegel neutralized the Kantian transcendence as always related and proportionate to the cognizing subject. On the contrary, what Husserl introduces in *Experience and Judgement* in the form of a *Lebenswelt* prior to any predicate might seem to be the reconstruction of the transcendental, insofar as the primary background is pre-reflexive and pre-predicate; in spite of the fact that each act of cognition presupposes it, it can neither concretize nor objectivize this world. In fact, nothing can be said about such a world, apart from the fact that it exists. Such a formulation of the *Lebenswelt* makes it closer to Heidegger’s existence, about which nothing concrete can be said either, and in particular to which no attribute, property, or predicate can be attached.

By contrast, Hegel’s world understood as a system of knowledge is complete and the whole fullness of meaning in it is fully implemented – if not immediately, then “as a final result”. But therein Kojève is absolutely right saying that Hegelian method in *The Phenomenology of Spirit* is, like that of Husserl, “purely descriptive”.

At one point, Kojève even writes that “the Hegelian method, therefore, is not at all “dialectical”: it is purely contemplative and descriptive, or better phenomenological in Husserl’s sense of the word”.[[88]](#footnote-88) For Kojève, true cognition as per Hegel does not have anything in common with modern philosophical reflection, and that “is why there is also no place for the Real of jouissance in Heidegger's edifice”,[[89]](#footnote-89) as Kojève contemplates the Real and *places himself outside it, without knowing where exactly*. Such reflection presupposes the subject of cognition, who is autonomous and does not depend on the object of cognition, but such a subject, for Hegel, is no more than an artificially isolated aspect of the cognized, or revealed, Real.

Phenomenological method requires that the subject, which does not take a meta-position with respect to its own subject matter, should limit itself to the pure description. If the subject himself, as noted earlier, is constituted by the object in the act of intentionality, and both poles of this structure are mutually maintained, the only method of “cognition” could be description. But if, as Hegel puts it, the Absolute is the equality of the subject and substance, then how can one “cognize” such an “object”? The absolute is to describe itself through a subject describing the object, and this is nothing more than the phenomenological description of the relation between the subject and substance within intentionality. Kojève points out the phenomenological nature of the correct Hegelian method in the following reasoning:

Like the Spirit or the Idea, each Concept is hence double and single at the same time; it is both “subjective” and “objective”, both real thought of a real entity and a real entity really thought. The *real* aspect of the Concept is called “object” (*Gegenstandt*), “given-Being” (Sein), “entity that exists as a given-Being” (*Seiendes*), “In-itself” (*Ansich*), and so on. The aspect *thought* is called “knowledge” (*Wissen*), “act of knowing” (*Erkennen*), “knowledge” (*Erkenntniss*), “act of chinking” (*Denken*), and so on; and occasionally “concept” (*Begriff*) in the common sense (when Hegel says: *nur Begriff*). But these two aspects are inseparable and complementary, and it is of little importance to know which of the two must be called *Wissen* or *Begriff* (in the common sense), and which *Gegenstand*. What is of importance is that in the Truth-there is perfect *coincidence* of the *Begriff* and the *Gegenstand*, and that-in the Truth-Knowledge is purely passive equation to essential-Reality.[[90]](#footnote-90)

In effect, this seems what Hegel was saying in the “Introduction” to *The Phenomenology of Spirit*:

If by concept we mean knowledge (Wissen), and by the essential reality (Wesen) or the true-entity (Wahre) we mean entity existing as a given-being (Seiende) or object (Gegenstand), it follows that verification (Prüfung) consists in seeing (zuzusehen) if the concept corresponds to the object. But if by concept we mean the essential reality of the In-itself (An-sich) of the object,and by object, on the other hand, we understand the object [taken] as object, namely, as it is for another [i.e., for the knowing Subject], it follows that verification consists in our seeing if the object corresponds to its concept. It is easily seen that both [expressions signify] the same thing. But what is essential is to keep [in mind] for the whole study (Untersuchung) that these two constituent-elements (Momente), [namely] concept and object, Being for another and Being in itself, are situated within the very knowledge that we are studying, and that consequently we do not need to bring in standards (Masssäbe) or to apply our [own] intuitions (Einfälle) and ideas (Gedanken) during the study. By omitting these latter, we attain [the possibility] of viewing the thing as it is in and for itself[[91]](#footnote-91).

Kojeve comments this passage as an phenomenological idea of description. Consciousness just verifies itself, it should not add something or reduce.

Now, any addition (Zutat) [coming] from us becomes superfluous not only in the sense (nach dieser Seite) that [the] concet and (the] object, the standard and what is to be verified, are present (vorhanden) in the Consciousness (Bewusstsein) itself [which we, as philosophers, study in the Phenomenology]; but we are also spared the effort of comparing the two and of verifying in the strict sense, so that — since [studied] Consciousness verifies itself — in this respect too, only pure contemplation (Zusehen) is left for us to do. [[92]](#footnote-92)

Thus, the cognition of Absolute is a description which establishes the correlation only with itself. Indeed, logic suggests that Absolute cannot realize any other cognition (as it cannot surpass itself or go beyond its own boundaries); it does not confront itself, but rests in itself, and, being pure and embodied immanence, is exhausted by self-description. The truth of Absolute is not *outside* and is not located *within it* – it is the Absolute itself.

About this Kojève writes:

…, even the pre-Hegelian philosopher — each in his way opposes himself to the Real and deforms it by opposing, his own means of action and methods of thought to it. The Wise Man, on the contrary, is fully and definitively reconciled with everything that is: he entrusts himself without reserve to Being and opens himself entirely to the Real without resisting it. His role is that of a perfectly flat and indefinitely extended mirror: he does not reflect on the Real; it is the Real that reflects itself on him, is reflected in his consciousness, and is revealed in its own dialectical structure by the discourse of the Wise who describes it without deforming it.[[93]](#footnote-93)

And this echoes what Hegel himself wrote in the Introduction to *The Phenomenology of Spirit*:

This *dialectical* movement which consciousness exercises on itself, on its object as well as on its knowing, *insofar* as out of this *the new true object emerges*, is properly what is called experience (*Erfahrung*).[[94]](#footnote-94)

As Kojève writes, it goes without saying that this “experience” is not the experience of regular science at all, or of “pre-Hegelian” philosophy. Scientific experience, it may be thought, reveals the Object existing independently from the Subject. However, the human being deals with experiences, as he lives in Nature and cannot be removed from it, but also opposes himself to the Nature and wants to transform it.

Kojève maintains that science is born from a desire to adapt the World to human needs, and its ultimate goal will be its technological application. That is why scientific cognition is never totally passive, nor purely contemplative and descriptive. On the contrary, correct cognition only is in self (revelation), as it is neither Object, taken separately from the Subject, nor a Subject taken separately from the Object, and is only the result of an intentional engagement of both, or, if you like, this very interrelation. On the contrary, scientific experience and scientific cognition are aimed at the Object independent from the Subject and separated from it. Therefore, they do not find what they are looking for, do not provide what they promise, as they do not reveal or give the correct description of what Real is. Kojève writes:

Generally speaking, Truth ( = revealed Reality) is the coincidence of thought or descriptive knowledge with the concrete real. Now, for vulgar science, this real is supposed to be independent of the thought which describes it. But in fact, this science never attains this autonomous real, this “thing in itself” of Kant-Newton, because it incessantly perturbs it. Hence scientific thought does not attain its truth in the *strong* and proper sense of the term. Scientific experience is thus only a pseudo-experience. And it cannot be otherwise, for vulgar science is in fact concerned not with the concrete real, but with an *abstraction*. To the extent that the scientist thinks or knows his object, what really and concretely exists is the *entirety* of the Object known by the Subject or of the Subject knowing the Object. The isolated Object is but an abstraction, and that is why it has no fixed or stable continuity (*Bestehen*) and is perpetually deformed or perturbed. Therefore, it cannot serve as a basis for a Truth, which by definition is universally and eternally valid. And the same goes for the “object” of vulgar psychology, epistemology, and philosophy, which is the Subject artificially isolated from the Object – i.e., yet another abstraction.[[95]](#footnote-95)

It is clear that things are quite different when it comes to Hegelian experience. He reveals the specific Reality and discloses it by not distorting and not “disturbing”. That is why when this experience is verbally described, it represents Truth in the very original sense of this word. The specific Real (which we are talking about) is simultaneously the Real-revealed-by speech and Speech-revealing-real. The Hegelian experience does not refer either to Real or to Speech, taken separately, but to their inseparable, factual, intentionally understandable, unity. And although revealed by Speech, it remains on the side of the specific Real described by it. It brings nothing from outside, and thinking, generated by it, or speech, are already not the reflection regarding the Real, but this Real itself, which thinks itself or is reflected in speech, or Real as thinking. In particular, if the thought and speech of the Hegelian philosopher are dialectic, then it is above all because they reflect correctly the “dialectic movement” of the Real, of which they are part, and the adequate experience of which they constitute.

As we see, there are serious grounds to maintain a certain similarity in the approaches of Husserl and Hegel. Meanwhile, if one is nevertheless to identify differences between their approaches, these might be seen in the fact that Hegelian phenomenology finalizes cognition (at the limit, any cognition), whereas for Husserl the capture of meaning (cognition in essence) turns out to be in principle incomplete, as the capture of the *Lebenswelt* is always situated in some sort of horizon. In this connection, Lyotard notes a similarity in the ideas of Husserl, Merleau-Ponty and Bergson maintaining that misfortune of a philosopher.[[96]](#footnote-96) In spite of his purely descriptive approach to the phenomena of the world, and, in the long run, to truth, Husserl accords a certain primacy to the world itself, which is present in every act of capturing as an only potentially cognized truth. In Hegel, on the contrary, “immediate being, that pretended “origin”, is already logos, meaning, not the achievement of regressive analysis or the absolute beginning of existence; we cannot “consider the beginning as an immediate, but as mediated and derivative, since it is itself determined vis-à-vis the determination of the later result”.[[97]](#footnote-97)

Thus, in the phenomenological project itself, one can see a sort of dialectic contradiction by virtue of the process of capturing meaning, even though meaning is withheld in the intentional act. In this case, the truth would be becoming; and not the self-given presence, it is the reconstruction and correction of the evidences following each other, dialectics of evidences. As an example, Merleau-Ponty writes: “perception does not give me the truth like geometry but presences”.[[98]](#footnote-98) This idea of phenomenology makes it possible to compare Hegelian project with Husserl’s one once again. But the difference can be seen in the fact that *The Phenomenology of Spirit* offers philosophy accomplished meaning, whereas Husserl’s phenomenology presupposes an incompleteness in the process of constituting a meaning, at least in any final sense.

The philosophical knowledge (according to Hegel) is unique in both form and substance. It does not imply empirical generalization, nor standard deduction in any form (syllogistic or hypothetical-deductive constructions). Natural sciences differ empirical knowledge from theoretical explanatory principle, while in philosophy there is no such difference. The development of the concept makes it “real”, it is not just a concept anymore, as it reveals itself as a part of reality. This difference between concept (logic) and reality was introduced by Hegel and immediately eliminated in the course of the immanent development of the principle. The unfolding of the system as a whole is the core of such development and constitutes the philosophical proof of the truth. In other words, the display of object’s making of itself through itself is a philosophical proof. But if this is so, why do we start with what is untrue, and not directly with the truth? The answer is that the truth as such should prove itself, and such a proof lies in the framework of logic and is in the fact that the concept starts straight from the truth. The answer is the truth as such should show itself, and such a proof within logic lies in the way that the concept shows itself to be mediated by itself and through itself, and consequently is immediate. “Truth is truth is only when it appears”.[[99]](#footnote-99)

The principle goal of philosophy is the revelation of the absolute truth, however, such revelation is the result of incremental process. The philosophy approaches absolute truth gradually, by continuous expansion of the limits of explanation. The “internal anxiety of concept” is the inner impetus for the expansion, as every thought strives to reach absolute self-consciousness and to fully reveal its implied meaning. The spirit of internal reflexion ever provokes further expansion until the final limit is reached. However, is there a final limit? The Hegelian system proposes the concept of “world spirit”, where (the concept) in it (the system) is justified, and this justification merits further consideration. Precisely this idea of completeness led the majority of critics of Hegelian philosophy point out that the interpretation of negativity as something included in the finished project of the becoming of the Absolute is contradictory. We will mention it again when we turn to Heidegger’s interpretation of negativity.

The phenomenology is one of the most influential approaches in the modern philosophy that in many cases defined the course of its development. However, the core concepts of phenomenology are not Hegelian, instead they are defined by Husserl. In his polemics with epistemological scepticism (Kant's agnosticism), and, in particular, with the understanding of “phenomenon” as certain psychic or subjective reality, beyond which the “real” objective reality is hidden, Husserl attributed full ontological status to “concept”, thus rehabilitating it. Husserl argued that there is no “other thing in itself” that stands beyond the phenomenon. The essential image of the thing (eidos)reveals itself in phenomenon. According to Husserl, “natural attitude” of consciousness is the belief that exists separately from observers. The phenomenologist should always be consciously aware of this attitude and remember to “include it in parentheses”, or “disallow” in Hegelian terms. This continuous “parenthesizing” (epoché) or “suspension” secures the strictly descriptive nature of phenomenology as an epistemological project. The post-Kantian view of incognizable authenticity becomes the target for Hegelian ontology. For Hegel the truth is something self-given and self-present, in its self-disclosure it can never be hidden from consciousness. Consciousness is aware of itself as constantly transcending its own boundaries, thereby still remaining consciousness. Therefore, conscious activity by the “force of reason” and “the work of the negativity” comes to the point where phenomenon becomes equal to entity.

In this model the identity of the subject and substance is put into effect, which comprises the nature of Absolute. And both approaches, phenomenological at their basis, point to the self-sufficiency of the immanent interpretation of existence, and the adequacy of the descriptive method of cognition. For us, the important assertion here will be the one regarding the immanence of the world and cognition, which directly raises the question who or what the subject should be in such a world, what it can do in it, how its ontological and epistemological status changes. By answering these questions in the following chapters, I will address the topic of the negative nature of the subject as it is incorporated in the world. And I will show that this subject transforms fundamental ontology into a fundamental anthropology.

**Сhapter 2. From Ancient paradigm through Modern Paradigm: Toward Immanent Ontology**

The tasks for this chapter do not include the completed picture of each stage of the subject’s thematisation (the differentiation of which itself remains hypothetical and conditional to a certain degree). The goal is rather the explication of those structures in each of the epochs which allow a number of philosophers of the twentieth century (at least those that we are planning to investigate) to build their own philosophy of the subject, having connected it with negativity. Therefore I will be referring mostly to reflections on the history of the formation of subjectivity, as we find them in the authors’ works being considered in this research. The greatest attention to such historical changes in the concepts of existence and the subject is found in the work of Hegel and Heidegger; therefore, I will begin with their analyses. In turn, of those two thinkers, it was Heidegger who gave the problem of the thematisation of existence a new turn which will be the most significant for us. The key work, where he considers the *history* of the philosophical thematisation of existence, and therefore of the subject, “The Basic Problems of Phenomenology”, will my primary point of reference in this matter.

One can trace the history of the formation of the idea of existence and the subject across the key epochs – antiquity, medievalism, early modern period, and Post-Modernism. The latter two stages fall in the twentieth century, which underlies this research. This formalisation of the subject, as we said, is directly related to the formalisation of existence, to which I will refer at the very beginning.

I will view the history of philosophy, and in particular, the periods of Antiquity and the Middle Ages, through the eyes of philosophers of the twentieth century – those philosophers that we are interested in in this research. They are all united by the attempt in various ways to oppose their approach, and in particular their understanding of ontology, to the interpretation of Antiquity and the Middle Ages. In their interpretation, Antiquity and the Middle Ages will be criticised for an insufficiently radical ontological problematic (this is most characteristic of Heidegger), as well as a reduction to the idealism of ideas (this will be the critical angle in Hegel). As Heidegger proposes, one needs to study closely the logic of thought in the philosophy of Antiquity in order to realize where the “fracture” occurred and return to the origin, “bypassing” the errors of later distortions. And as Hegel proposes, by rethinking history as one’s own history of spirit, one can realise that the spirit of cognition (and self-cognition — existential experiments on oneself) is no more than the history of Absolute’s experience. As I will show in the chapter devoted to Hegel, in reality this course of history looks like the history of a subject of cognition constantly familiarizing himself in this endless world. Thus, the ancient philosophy will be understood by Hegel as first steps of a still inexperienced, naïve Absolute not knowing itself.

As the work of several philosophers whose ideas are key for our research shows, serious changes in the understanding of existence and formation of ontology have taken place throughout the history of philosophy. For example, Kojève points out that Hegel’s “absurd philosophy of Nature, his insensate critique of Newton, and his own “magical” physics which discredited his System in the nineteenth century”.[[100]](#footnote-100) We can find similar observations in Heidegger, in whose opinion fundamental ontology must start with the question of the meaning of existence, which had been relegated by European philosophy into the sphere of abstractions and logical elaborations. Existence, for Heidegger, was and remains the most important thing for philosophical thought, as it is the question regarding existence that is most important for human beings. For Hegel as well as for Heidegger, the problematic of existence in the history of philosophical thought had been inadmissibly simplified. By this Heidegger means that in Antiquity, the structure of objectivity is explicated in “present-at-hand”, “material”, or, as Heidegger puts it, “cosmic/material element”. As Heidegger himself assumes, Existence is understood in Antiquity in its existent *naturalness*. The significant characteristics of such will be *closeness in space*, *horizontality* (*total immanence*), *periodicity* of time, which characterise the material-physical plan of Cosmos-centric antiquity[[101]](#footnote-101). According to the widespread classification, the world of the ancient Europe is characterised as “Cosmo-centric”. The first thing that characterises the “Cosmo-centric” quality of the world is the relation to the world as home. This home-world is proportionate to the human being; in a certain sense they exist as one, they share in the same existence. As the researcher of myths Bachofen says, this existence can be understood as “the immense maternal body of nature and, no less, the maternal body of history, of the past – the body that both brings forth life and imposes death, that is both “womb” and “tomb”.”[[102]](#footnote-102)

Nature and society are both permeated by the presence of divine. Kurt Hubner, analysing Greek myth in his book *Myth-Revelation*, reaches an important conclusion: any place is closely connected to this or that divinity, and as such, these places are the essence of gods’ insertion.[[103]](#footnote-103) These gods are indifferent to the world but not transcendent to it. Before Plato, it appears that there was only one ontology for ancient consciousness – that of people, things and gods. Later, Plato differentiated things and ideas – and only the latter would truly exist, whereas the former would only become – i.e. possess illusionary existence.

In the twentieth century, the ancient philosophy of existence was actively questioned. Not the least role is played by Nietzsche, with his famous opposition of the “Apollonian” and the “Dionysian” principles[[104]](#footnote-104). The Apollonian existence is not fully existence or is already non-existence; on the contrary, only Dionysian existence, undefined and spontaneous in its basis will be the true existence.

Logos becomes the main form of expressing existence in antiquity. It is in ancient Greece that the philosophical task was founded to comprehend all things in existence in one *word*, to put the meaning of the whole of existence into one word. This could be seen as a way out from the division of the world into the “Dionysian” and the “Apollonian” (Nietzsche), which reflects one of the features of the ancient reasoning[[105]](#footnote-105). However, gathering the “Dionysian” and the “Apollonian” is somewhat different to the accumulation of how the Greeks were thinking correspondingly as logos and idea, as ideal and present, exactly in the modus of their correlation there appears the conceived difference of being and becoming in ancient Greece. In this respect, real existence will be only ideal existence, whereas the “existence of things” – becoming – will only be an illusion of existence, a phantom or deceit. Also as Jean-Pierre Vernant writes:

In the history of humankind, the beginning ordinarily eludes us. But if the advent of philosophy in Greece marked the decline of mythological thought and the beginning of rational understanding, we can fix the date and place of birth of rational understanding - establish its civil status. It was at the beginning of the sixth century, in Ionian Miletus, that such men as Thales, Anaximander and Anaximenes ushered in a new way of thinking about nature. They made it the object of a detached and systematic investigation (a *historia*) and offered a comprehensive view of it (a *theoria*). The explanations they proposed for the origin of the world, its composition and structure, and all meteorological phenomena were unencumbered by the dramatic machinery of earlier theogonies and cosmogonies. The figures of the great primordial powers were now obliterated. ..... Nothing existed that was not nature, *physis*. ... As there was but one *physis*, which excluded the very notion of anything supernatural, so there was but a single temporality. The ancient and the primordial were stripped of their grandeur and mystery: they had the reassuring banality of familiar phenomena. To mythological thought, daily experience was illumined and given meaning by exemplary deeds performed by the gods “in the beginning”. For the Ionians, the comparison was reversed. The primal events, the forces that produced the cosmos, were conceived in the image of the facts that could be observed today, and explained in the same way. It was no longer the beginning that illumined and transfigured the everyday; it was the everyday that made the beginning intelligible, by supplying models for an understanding of how the world had been shaped and set in order.[[106]](#footnote-106)

However, the most important thing for us here will be that the human being is understood in antiquity as a homogeneous (according to its ontological grounds) entity as compared to Cosmos. However, even if it belongs to the world of illusory things by virtue of its material basis, and to the world of ideal entities by virtue of its spiritual origin, it will still be covered by the same ontological principles, according to which the whole world exists. It is the lawful part of the existing world, being nothing different from it. If the human being retains a certain priority, this will be the priority of cognition – the reflection of things in existence. However, its conditions of existence belong to the world of existence on the same very grounds as all the rest. It is part of the world and exists only because it belongs (by its soul) to the united world and the single existence.

The proper balance might be conveyed by Heidegger’s concept of “uncovered”. The truth is not isolated from the human being, and is not placed in a separate world. Heidegger states that Anaximander, Heraclitus and Parmenides were the only “primordial thinkers” because they thought the beginning. This period was of utmost importance because of un-concealment of Being by pre-Socratics. When Heidegger argues that Parmenides is governed by Truth it related to Hegelian formula of human being as the organ of divine consciousness. Only ones who were thinking the “beginning” (Anfang) are primordial. And Heidegger argues that Anfang is actually Being (Sein). This “beginning” is not something becoming, that can be defined and classified for further examination. For primordial thinkers, the Anfang is not something given, which they treat in this or that way by comprehension. On the contrary, Anfang is something that acts on these thinkers, as it captures them in such a way that they have to retreat before the existence. Such thinkers are thinkers in essence, as *caused by this beginning of the origin* to itself, as if overtaken and gathered around it.

Although Heidegger later on will specify the grounds on which the human being is present in existence, in antiquity he sees such a model, according to which the human being is placed inside existence, in a certain sense coinciding with its nature. The world on this understanding is given to the human being directly – it is simple as such because there is no other world, apart from the one where the human being lives, as it is simply absent. This World-Existence, about which Parmenides talked, saying that only this one exists, and all the rest would be in essence Non-existence, which does not exist at all[[107]](#footnote-107).

On the contrary, in Christian Medievalism, the structure of subjectivity expresses itself in the ideal, transcendent divinity, bearing witness to the existence of God as other worldly (therefore, a certain vertical mark appears in the world). The accent is transferred now from the *real* body to the *ideal* spirit, which simultaneously states their difference. Such a transferral defines the transition of periodic time into the linear and directed time of *history,* and understands the soul as a *reflection* of divine subjectivity. Suchan idea gives preference to the spirit, as a witness of the Divine presence, before the body. It also certifies for the first time that the existence of the world (not as created, but the truly real one, i.e. divine) and human existence are separate.

Christian theology sets *boundaries* of accomplishment of the historical world and by assuming *linearity* as a consistent movement and *orientation* as a sense of purpose, historicises ontology. *Evolvement*, from how it was understood by Antiquity, in the sense of opposition of the existence and evolvement, is projected to the *horizon* of history, transforming into the *historical development*, around which the substance of “eternal” Logos is centred as a time reference point.

*In its turn, transcendence* turns out to be closely connected to *symbolization*. This is what Johan Huizinga says in this respect: “The nature of man and things, especially human nature understood as “what is inborn” which leads to the situation that any representation is being limited by unchanging boundaries of the “symbol”, and is isolated in its being”.[[108]](#footnote-108)

In such a model, the human beings are quite radically separated in their human conditions of existence from the existence of anything else. Equally, all things in existence are divided – there is a real and eternal existence (divine), and there is conditional and temporary existence (created, human, historical). The world loses its integrity. It is important to understand that exactly in this world, the idea of a cognizing subject might have appeared, which transcends to the world, cognizes it, being initially involved in the divine privilege, dominating over the created world which “read the symbols”. Exactly such a model will underlie the whole of the following gnoseology and epistemology of the early modern period and lead to one of the most paradoxical interpretations of the subject, to which I referred at the beginning of this paper.

The development of the Western European philosophy as seen through the history of being is a downward spiral towards pure nihilism. According to Heidegger, modern world experiences “worldnight” due to both “abandonment by Being” and “forgetting of Being”*.* Therefore, despite its grandiose history, revelations and discoveries, the Western European philosophy failed to heed the ontological difference of Being.

In the introduction to *Being and Time*, Heidegger notes that the question on existence was investigated in detail by Plato and Aristotle, however in spite of this, today it fell into oblivion and went silent as a thematic question of real examination.

This question has today been forgotten – although our time considers itself progressive in again affirming “metaphysics”. Yet the question we are touching upon is not just any question. It is one which provided a stimulus for the researches of Plato and Aristotle, only to subside from then on as a theme for actual investigation. What these two men achieved was to persist through many alterations and “retouchings” down to the “logic” of Hegel. And what they wrested with the utmost intellectual effort from the phenomena, fragmentary and incipient though it was, has long since become trivialized.[[109]](#footnote-109)

The essential result of Greek exploration of existence is the dogmatic opinion that study of being is unnecessary, and three consequent preconceptions[[110]](#footnote-110). This line of arguments start with the notion that existence is a very general concept, and Heidegger admits that it is “the most obscure of all concepts”[[111]](#footnote-111). However, he specifies that presumptions that “existence” require additional definition are misleading. Consequently, second conception of “existence” states that it is indeterminable. This logic assumption is derived from the fact that there is no common denominator for existence and its definition through things in existence is impossible. Existence is not only different from things in existence, it presents something brand new, however, existence still present a problem[[112]](#footnote-112). According to the final predication existence is seen as a self-evident concept. The ambiguity of these notions (both obscurity and obviousness) of existence lead to the essential question of its meaning. [[113]](#footnote-113)

The differentiation criteria for existence and non-existence were defined by Parmenides and Plato and remain unchanged ever since – existence exists, while non-existence does not. Heidegger supports this view: “Being lies …in Reality; in presence-at-hand; …in subsistence; …in the there is”[[114]](#footnote-114); “…[T]hat simple awareness of something present-at-hand in its sheer presence-at-hand, which Parmenides had already taken to guide him in his own interpretation of Being…”[[115]](#footnote-115). Greek denote everything that exists as things in existence, thus its being is manifested through “X is Y”, making things in existence and being inseparable. However, Heidegger highlight the essential shift if perspective, from questioning “*about things in existence”* to *being of things in existence*. Therefore, Heidegger formulates his ontological difference with both ontological and ontical levels of expression: “But such an inquiry itself – ontology taken in the widest sense without favoring any particular ontological directions or tendencies-requires a further clue. Ontological inquiry is indeed more primordial, as over against the ontical inquiry of the positive sciences”[[116]](#footnote-116).

Heidegger specifies that the source of the Western-European philosophy as a whole and total ontological nihilism of modern times in particular can be found in Greek miscomprehension of relation of things in existence to existence itself. This initial minor mistake grew bigger with every subsequent. Therefore, Heidegger argues that the understanding of the relation between existence and things in existence in modern philosophy is achievable only by thorough analysis of its Greek origin and works of early philosophers.

Heidegger cites Plato’s *Sophist* in the epigraph to the *Being and Time*: “We, however, who used to think we understood it, have now become perplexed”[[117]](#footnote-117), clear indication that the question of existence if essential for him. Heidegger’s argument in favour of stated “oblivion of existence” demands the answer to this Plato’s question from philosophy and science created by it. Since there is none, he maintains, these disciplines substituted existence for things in existence. Heidegger outlines his urge to repeat the antique question “what is existence?” and his engagement in “interpretation of time as a possible horizon of existence”[[118]](#footnote-118).

Heidegger states the following in relation to the nature of the ontological problem: “Being cannot have the character of an entity”[[119]](#footnote-119) . For Heidegger it means that thinking about existence only as “things in existence” should bring us somewhere beyond it. Here, the structure of *Bezug* (relation) comes to the foreground: “[T]here is a way – perhaps even a very special one – in which entities with the character of Dasein are related to the question of Being”[[120]](#footnote-120) .

The ontological structure of the whole Western-European philosophy and its *Bezug* is reducible to the single notion: “Being is essence of things in existence”. Consequently, there are two ontological levels – the level of “things in existence” and the level of essence. Therefore, antique philosophers differentiate being and “things in existence” via their essence, and Western Philosophy tradition adopted this view[[121]](#footnote-121). As a result, being of things in existence coincided with things in existence in its comprehensiveness. The subtle difference refers to other things in existence, the ones of a higher order or supreme things in existence, however still things in existence[[122]](#footnote-122). Ultimately, existence acquired the property of things in existence substantiating the claim of Parmenides:– “being simply exists”. Such an assumption is possible only in relation to things in existence of the highest order, original, simple and united. If there were existence, then it would be essence of things in existence.

Nevertheless, because “the whatness (essential) of this being”, “the being of being is itself not a being”[[123]](#footnote-123), there should be a way of identification for Being, its separation from “things in existence”. What are things in existence? Heidegger writes: “But what we call many things existent [*seiend*] and in different senses. Everything we talk about, mean, and are related to is in being in one way or another.”[[124]](#footnote-124) Being is more sophisticated than “things in existence”, different by the fact of difference.

Therefore, difference is the main property of being, since it is different from things in existence. Moreover, it is not identical to the essence of things in existence, which loses it value as the common denominator to all things in existence. The final logic path is as follows: existence is not being, being is not things in existence, being is nothing from things in existence (including the non-essence of things in existence, and not common to them. Therefore, Heidegger maintains that existence is nothing (das Sein ist das Nichts).

Thought can directly interact with things in existence: compare, differentiate and integrate them. Moreover, during this process it is not necessary to engage in reflection on existence. Therefore, the ancient Greeks perceived thought about existence as an intrusion into the life of something divine. Consequently, Heidegger argues that Greeks were the first to cognize things in existence (*to on*) as phenomena. For instance for Aristotle *en* is the synonym of *on,* existence has “focal meaning” and is almost a synonym to unity. Consequently, logos can be connected to existence, and the whole problematic raised to the second (highest) level[[125]](#footnote-125).

Considering the problem of the relation (*Bezug*) of things in existence (*Seiende, on*) to existence (Sein, εἶναι), Heidegger points out the *two levels of ontology*, in accordance with which this problem might be considered at a different angle. Heidegger gives these definitions in his *Sein und Zeit*.

The first level is *ontical*, from the Greek *ον* (*things in existence)* (οντο – the genitive, from which compound words are usually formed in Greek). The reasoning of the surrounding world with its differences and varieties directly captures the ontical dimension. Whereby the reasoning does not pose about what is the being of things in existence or the essence of things in existence; and is limited only to stating simply that things in existence are “as such”. Reasoning as such unfolds precisely in this dimension. To think about things in existence as such is to compare some of them to others or to themselves, while always remaining at the same level of reasoning. Therefore, one should not question their origination, what is considered the being of things in existence, where is the beginning and the end of things in existence.

The second level Heidegger calls *ontological***.** Ontology starts where the “main question of philosophy” is asked: “what is the being of things in existence”? What is the difference between existence itself and things in existence? Ontology determines the structure and quality of the *relation* of former to the latter. The philosophy begins from a question of existence, the question which also occupies the reasoning, but philosophy moves the focus to the question of the being of things in existence and the difference between this being and things in existence themselves.

This ontology solves the question of existence. It *equates the being of things in existence with essence of things in existence*, while maintaining the difference between things in existence and existence (as common to all things in existence). In fact, this superordinate of things in existence is equalized to existence itself. Therefore, Heidegger argues that from the very beginning the ontology lost its way. The birth of philosophy and the consequent breakthrough to the logos should have resulted in separation from the ontic, and pushed thought to the discovery and revelation of existence, beyond the horizon of things in existence. Thus the only real foundation for philosophy could be set. From the acquired ontical perspective, the Greeks should then have advanced into nothing, into non-existence. Consequently, the foundation for the things in the existence would be existence itself. Unfortunately, the existence for Greeks became a general property of all things, and such view become the basis for created ontology. Heidegger refers to the traditional equality of substance (“Dasein” or “whatness”) to the “essence” of things in existence[[126]](#footnote-126). He highlights that “essence” of substance does not answer “what it is?”, instead it shows the way of revelation for things in existence, thus, the question being “how it is?”. This subtle difference between the concepts of essence and existence requires deep understanding of the nature of each concept.

Until Hegel, medieval and early modern thought understood entities as something abstract. The discussion on the nature of universals was inspired by Plato and generated a variety of approaches (realism, nominalism and conceptualism). According to realism, entities are essence of abstraction. Correspondingly, the way they exist is to be clarified (ontological status) as well as how they meet their existence. Later on, Hegel will comment on the retrospective effect of such approach. In reality, things already exist because of essences encountering existence. However, in fact, there never was such an encounter. Essences and existences are not to be separated. In Hegelian view, our thought *analyses* the things in existence to represent essence as separate from existence before trying to determine its connection with the existence itself.

In such interpretation, Heidegger differs himself from Hegel and adds new impetus to the interpretation of negativity. Hegel retains the connection with the Divine as the guidance for the Absolute while making the human being immanent to the world. The God himself becomes immanent to the world, and the human being is presented as the “organ of his self-consciousness”. In the Hegelian view, God himself is present in history via his human embodiment. The human being is privileged by virtue of this special connection with the Absolute as it unfolded in history. This idea has direct inheritance from Divine transcendence. The difference is that the Hegelian concrete is nevertheless subordinate to the abstract (Absolute); it expresses it and implements it. On the contrary, the “There-Is” of Heidegger, same as “here-and-now” in Heidegger's understanding, is not subordinate to anything and represents nothing, apart from itself – it is truly authentic and radically unique and individual. Once more, there is a difference between negativity in the respective interpretations of Heidegger and Hegel, which we will see later.

The revision of the idealistic interpretation of metaphysics was necessary, and not only Hegel and Heidegger felt it. Concept is not just an abstraction retrieved from the particular existing thing. The power of reasoning makes it possible to ascend from the analytical (simplest) up to dialectic (most complex) level of understanding. Therefore, at this final dialectic stage, it becomes clear that abstractions do not exist separately. This means that modern metaphysics, which regards the ideas as certain abstract essences, needs to be revised.

All the above-mentioned leads us to the assumption that Greek ontology, which was adopted by Western Philosophy was based on false premises. Therefore, is there alternative path?

This assumption is based solely on the notion of initial error in Greek philosophical thought. If one can find this error and define it, the whole Western philosophical tradition could be reversed. The revision of ontology leads to the very basic, essential concepts - to the ontic.. Both Hegel and Heidegger express their desire to reevaluate the question of Existence and create new ontological meaning. While Heidegger states the oblivion of genuine ontology, Hegel points out unproductiveness and insufficiency of analytical metaphysics, which has abandoned the path to dialectics. Phenomenology with its conception of “Lebenswelt” poses this task to a certain extent; and it goes without saying that it deals with the issue of intentionality, as we mentioned earlier.

The new path starts with the same basic construct – “logos”, but its process of mediation is different. Heidegger argues that this difference concerns the ”leading question of philosophy”. This question used to be “What is the essence of ‘things in existence?” and now it is “What is being of things in existence?”.

This question is significant for Heidegger, who argues that return to the ontic in its uncorrupted state is not sufficient, the new explosion of logos is necessary to complete the circle. This time the question on existence should not be formulated indirectly, as Greek did (through essentialism and things in existence). The ontic starting point is the same, however, this time we should look inside the things of existence, into *nothing*. This nothing is not just the absence of things in existence; it makes things in existence exist as things in existence, but without becoming as such.

Nothing or negativity is introduced into dialectics as that productive basis of the world which not only allows the world to be more versatile and to last in time, but which, within limits, allows it in principle *to be.* Traditionally, dialectics introduces nothing as *the ability of the world to change its own states*. In order for this ability to last to be implemented, we should say that negativity *is* real *nothing, and* that according to all laws of modern logic, it should not and cannot be. In dialectics, this *nothing* turns out to be existing, as something that temporalizes the world as a result of its active production; as such, it contributes to the generation of *new* events, for example, *future events, which are not present.* Where then do they come from (or where do they go, if we talk about the past)? From *nothing, non-existence* or *negativity,* i.e. the real ontological *emptiness*. Dialectics is prepared to say: the new event (from which history is made) does not exist as something real, therefore, the *non-existence* itself *is also real*. This *objective non-existence is negativity* – as the most important characteristic of the world, allowing it to evolve.

Heidegger defined it as *fundamental ontology*, which reveals new logos, that focuses on nothing instead of things in existence. The logos of fundamental ontology regards nothing as eternally present origin of things in existence. This is quite opposite to the modern ontology that sees nothing as antithesis to the things in existence and essence in general. The new logos dissolves (Hegelian negation) the things in existence as an essence, but continues to belong to the existence.

Now let`s come to some bottom line said above. The ontology of immanent philosophy implies affirming the *primordiality of existence compared to the subject* and in this respect it should be presented as a particular motif in the evolution of existence, one with a certain privilege that reaches its climax in Hegel. In their most radical moments, supporters of the idea of immanence will try as far as possible to avoid psychological terms, and instead to describe the subject in ontological terms: for instance, to say “care” instead of the customary “reflection” and “Dasein” instead of “subject as such”. Thus, the subject will be represented by no more than a *modality of existence* – a special kind of genesis (let us name it as “here-subsistence” or “named existence”).

What does Existence mean in the first place (prior to Subject-conscience)? Clearly, one could enter into an unproductive discussion regarding whether one should exist first in order to be conscious of something or first to be conscious of something in order to exist (that is to acknowledge one’s existence based on consciousness). The question arises as a purely metaphysical one – where and how should philosophical thought originate in order for it to make sense? There are relatively few options for th origin of meaning in philosophy – the ancient world suggested starting with a consideration of the Existence-Object, the Early Modern Period supported the Existence-Subject, and Hegelian dialectic rested on the equality of both, for as we have seen one should talk about a *particular reality*, which is always a *sensible reality* and at the same time *a real thought*. This option might be considered to perfect, a sort of a benchmark as a “correct origin”, but for one important amendment.

This amendment, which incidentally will not pose any significant conceptual importance for the philosophy of twentieth century (as its authorship should be attributed rather to Kant) will open the rapid development of one of the most influential trends in philosophy – *existentialism.* The main essence of this amendment consists in the fact that existence is something so difficult to define and is so elusive that we cannot deal with it easily, as dialectics prescribes. In its turn, the unique essence of existence, which is irreducible, will give grounds for existentialists to consider it *radically primordial*; that is, something which precedes any origin. If one manages to account for the absolute comprehension of existence, as well as representing the subject as one of its forms, such an ontology will be essentially *fundamental.*

Why is Existence so elusive and what is the essence of its mystery – is it something which is understandable and axiomatically self-apparent despite the ancient intuitions, i.e. something that our thought can take as a starting point? Far from it, as in spite of the illusory ease with which we think we can understand the nature of the existence, we are still unable to perceive its essence. The problem is that whilst dealing with some existing object, e.g. a tree growing in front of my window, I cannot explain the *existence* of this tree. It is obvious that the existence of the tree is not the tree itself as otherwise it could not exist with the same result; rather it is something which accompanies or does not accompany this tree but does not equals it. In order to avoid the naive equation of the existing tree with the existence itself, we shall differentiate our terminology: we will call something *that* is existent – *the thing in existence* (the tree itself), and something that gives place for its existence, this “existence” itself. *The thing in existence (ontical* in Heidegger terminology) is in fact the same *essence,* and *existence* (*ontological* in Heidegger terminology) is same as *existence*.

In ontological investigations, philosophy made two key mistakes, which did not allow it get to grips with the true essence of the problem of existence.

With regard to the *first mistake*, we refer to ancient thought, where existence is understood as the overall fullness of existing, literally in Aristotle’s terminology it is perceived as “everything that exists”. In their immediacy, things in existence have the integrity of “single objects”, “these very things”, “separate things”, “things in existence perceived by feelings” or “sensuous entities”. Existence is everything that exists, being a kind of analogy to a mathematical set embracing all its elements, or a physical universe, where there is literally nothing beyond its boundaries. The objection to the ancient philosophers would lie in the fact that the object might exist in reality but that it could also not exist in the same reality and we are interested in *what distinguishes one from the other*. We cannot assimilate the imaginary tree to the one that exists in reality, in the same way that we cannot identify the possible Universe as compared to the actual one. Ontologists are interested in the difference that separates the imaginary from the real, and it is this that they are hoping to make the subject of their research. In this respect, Heidegger says that for ontology (just as for metaphysics) only one question has been posed correctly: “Why does something exist but not nothing”, or, in other words, “what makes existing as existing (as being existent)”. Therefore, what is significant lies not in the *fullness* of the existing but in what it means to say “existing”; therefore as the matter is not in quantity, it may appear to be in the quality.

*The second mistake* is represented by all medieval and even early modern European philosophy up to Kant’s epoch-making argument on the “hundred thalers”. Medieval thought was inspired by the intuition of ancient thought referring to the existence as fullness of the existing, whereby it lost sight of something very important – the existence itself, something that distinguishes the imaginary thing from the one existing in reality. Such articulation of a problem leads to the fact that existence (or subsistence) begins to be understood as a specific quality of the existing object. Existence (subsistence) is a *quality* of the object that constitutes it as existing. In terms of scholastic terminology, the object itself (including the imaginary one) is an *essence* (some essence), and the objective reality understood as a feature or an attribute, is in fact *existence*. By being a characteristic or an attribute of objects, existence might be predicated of objects – if it accompanies any object (existing), that object exists in reality, if it does not accompany it, then it stays in the world of imaginary or possible (ideas etc.). Kant inflicted a blow to this theory in his famous example with 100 thalers. In a real 100 thalers, there are no additional qualities as compared to the possible 100 thalers – in both cases we deal with the similar amount. We cannot talk about existence in terms of qualities, as well as in categories of addition and subtraction. Therefore, existence is not also a property. Thus, existence is not the fullness of the existing and not an attribute of the existing. So what is Existence then? Heidegger advises as follows:

What is there existent in this piece of chalk? Even this question is ambiguous as the word “existing” might be understood from the two points of view… The existing envisages that in each of these cases the existing is, in particular, this white-grey, brittle mass, arranged in a certain way. Further on, “the existing” envisages something which somehow “makes” it so that this designation would be existing and not non-existing on the contrary, something that is in the existing, as far as this exists and forms the existence. We have enumerated what is existent in the piece of chalk. Besides, we can easily detect that this might not also be so, that this chalk does not necessarily has to be here and to be in general. But what is in this case, in distinction from something that might stand in the existence or pass back into oblivion, what is it, unlike the existing, — is the existence? Is it the same as the existing? This is what we ask again. However, we did not take in to account the existence, but stated: such and such substance, white-grey, light, arranged in a particular way, brittle. Where is the *existence* hiding here?.[[127]](#footnote-127)

We can make two preliminary conclusions from what Heidegger writes here. First of all, existence appears to be something truly paradoxical, as it is not detectable in things, although it makes things exist. Secondly, existence is not so paradoxical that we cannot grasp it in some intuitive manner, as when in conversation we talk about existence, however we cannot convey these ideas by simply using the language of concepts. Thus, existence is not absolutely ucomprehensible, but it is uncomprehensible for thought, which continually appeals to the concept. The thought cannot detect a difference between the existing thing and that which is only imaginable, as for this thought, it would be two objects – the hypothetical and the real 100 are in essence *one and the same concept*. That is why in the language of concepts existence cannot be grasped, and therefore it is not comprehensible for thinking. However, if existence is something independent from the concepts and substances, which are in their turn are not sensitive to the existence, and if the language of concepts does not tell us anything about whether some object exists or not, then existence cannot be controlled by concepts, acquires independence, elusiveness and incomprehensibility. All this points to the need to search for an alternative non-conceptual language, as Heidegger did (successfully, it seems), appealing to the language of poetry as the most appropriate language for ontological thought. This involves a move to a non-representational use of language. Language “presents” in the sense that the presencing of Being takes place in and through language, but language in this sense is not primarily descriptive, it doesn't *re*-present.  But this also means that in identifying existence, we cannot start with the *thought* but only with the subject. The existence is somewhat earlier than the subject, more primordial; it remains as such when this subject can find or catch it as something that *already exists*.

Judging by this primordiality of existence over things in existence, existentialism reaches another important conclusion allowing us in a preliminary way to separate *the human being as a particular region of existence*. If we think about arrangement of human ontology, we find that, the principle of the precedence of existence over things in existence (“essence” in terminology of Sartre) is expressed very distinctly, more so than ever. It is human existence that most evidently precedes essence – the essence of the human being. What does this mean? Quite simply that every person is nothing but a specific case of the general concept of “human being”; equally as it is not an exemplification of one self as being eidetic, some ideal ego. It goes without saying, that Aristotle could – indeed does – say that every person is just a specific case of the general concept of human being, because definitions, and essences, can be given only of genera or species, but not of individual beings. However, the essence also is that Aristotle also implies that the key to understanding to what makes this individual person a human being – is belonging to what is common. Without the common, the individuals would not achieve their individuality, would remain undefined and would not acquire meaning. On the contrary, existentialism will always insist on the fact that belonging to the common does not give definition and meaning to the individual human being at all (it is not accidental that the question on meaning of human existence is among the philosophically most complex). Every particular person does not have any essence which allows checking upon it, translate it or consistently deploy it as a genetic code. Socrates existed, not because there is Socrate’s idea there, but because he simply existed, without any other grounds. Consequently, the human being is destined to be a singularity. Sartre said in this connection: “…There is at least one existence, where the existence itself precedes essence, the existence that exists prior to what might be identified by any concept, and this existence is nothing but a human being”[[128]](#footnote-128), or, according to Heidegger, the human reality. What does it mean “existence precedes”? That means that at first, the human being exists, meets, appears in the world, and only then they take some shape” Such state of affairs allows one to call human existence by a special name: “existence”. It stipulates specific conditions of human existence,– as the human being does not have a prototype, they do not have a life *plan*, which given to them from above, and there are no meanings or values which they can automatically follow. Everything that the human being would like to establish as reference points will be the result of their own will and choice. This means that the human being is something which is not complete, and the answer to the question “who am I” – always lies in the future and not in the present. In the present, the human being is always a lack; as they rather represent a pure possibility of themselves, they have to postpone their integrity every time. *“…I am that, which I will be in the modality of non-existence.* Therefore, I, the way I exist, am dependent on myself, that I have not reached yet, to the same degree, that I, the one does not exist yet, is not dependent on myself, the way I am”[[129]](#footnote-129).

This movement forward without a definite plan or aim at the future (a thrust, as Heidegger calls it) in a situation of cut-off experience is the human way of existence in the world, the specifics of which are still open for discussion.

Thus, existence is everywhere, it is primordial, and because of this, it is fundamental, but it is also inconceivable (for the thought) and therefore it might not coincide with thinking as in the dialectic formula: “Existence is equivalent to the existence of what is experienced”. This is the point of an *amendment* (in essence, of existentialism to dialectics) that I promised to consider, and, in the general sense, this is where the main motivations of *existentialist philosophy* lie– the most important trend in Neo-Classicism. However, from the fact that existence is not equal to existence as conceived, it does not follow that *the existence cannot learn about itself.*

I shall now discuss how this might happen and what we mean by it.

A key component in this will be grasping the logic of the turn from fundamental ontology to fundamental anthropology. A human being, who in their existence learns about themselves, allows the model of the world to be shaped; humanity allows the world to come true – to become what it is via and with the help of the humanity.

In order to get to the root of the matter, it is sufficient to pose the following question. If existence truly satisfies all the assumptions we made earlier, and in particular, in its general sense, we would say it is all-embracing, ever-present and total, but in this case where do we place the subject, or, if this term is undesirable, the human being?

By posing Heidegger’s main question regarding existence – “from which being is the disclosure of being to get its start?”[[130]](#footnote-130) – we will factually arrive at the human individual. The choice of existing human things is not accidental. It is we ourselves who are these things in existence *that have the opportunity to ask about the existence, which already have an understanding of being*. Heidegger understands these things in existence as Dasein. Thus, to reveal the meaning of existence in general, one must reveal the existence of Dasein. The question regarding existence turns into a question regarding human existence specifically; i.e. it is as if the question regarding existence turns around and now points directly at the enquirer, the one who is asking about existence. Thus, fundamental ontology turns into an existential analytic, and the main task of the treatise becomes the interpretation of simple specific human existence. One can also see Hegel’s titanic project unfolding here – the Absolute learns about itself and comes back to itself via a person, who comprehends the philosophy of absolute idealism. The key question 'what is existence?’ or ‘what is the Absolute?’ requires an appeal to a person. However, this is not enough, as we will find out later. The answer to this question will require another reference to the category of negativity and will lead us to search for it in the project of *fundamental ontology* rather than in a project of *fundamental anthropology,* which, in its turn, will become possible thanks to the *anthropologization of negativity.*

In this sense, immanentist philosophy will schematically orient itself to the following decision: the person (subject) remaining part of existence and defined rather as existence-by person than as a bearer of autonomous cognition or reflection, must nevertheless be specified in their existence. The aim is that even though we are ready to present the subject as a ‘moment of existence’ or as ‘being-present-at-hand’, we are still not intending to fully immerse it in the existence, but wish to retain at least certain privileges for it. These privileges will be far from those which contemporary epistemology would attribute to the subject, as in immanentist philosophy the subject is not already opposed to world-existence by virtue of having the rights associated with cognition and reasoning, but rather represents a privileged area of existence. The human being stands in the existence in a specific way.

**Part 2. (Solutions): Transition from Fundamental Ontology to fundamental anthropology – Man as the Negativity**

The idea of fundamental ontology is very closely connected with the above-mentioned “removal of duplication”.

The term “fundamental ontology” was introduced by Heidegger; however, we will also apply it to the work of other philosophers, directly or indirectly using a similar scheme. Beginning with Descartes, ontology gradually gives way to epistemology, which sets its sights on cognizing existence not as existence, but on existence as understanding, and therefore the interest shifts towards the sphere of cognitive conditions. However, after realizing the paradoxes of cognition described above and the difficulties of ontologizing the cognizing subject, a gradual return to ontology occurs in the 20th century, prepared, first of all, by Hegel (and partially by Schelling and Nietzsche), and secured by Heidegger, who treated all the epistemologists dismissively. Moreover, Heidegger – as Marhart notes– even read Kant’s theory not as critical epistemology but as ontology, which was clearly intended to be a rebuttal of the neo-Kantianism prevailing in the university environment of the earlytwentieth century. However, Marhart continues, by the time ontology came back, triggered by Heidegger, the category of existence had begun to be seen as something pursued by the phantom of its own groundlessness, in other words, existence had lost the stable ground characteristic for pre-Modernist metaphysical projects. For this reason, ontology stopped being understood as traditional onto-theology in the sense intended by Hegel, capable of providing us with the access of presence (of Absolute) as the stable ground. Heidegger, who in many aspects prepared this thought, which later on became important also for deconstructivists, announced that traditional metaphysics. Despite the existing difference between the plans of the general and particular – ontological and ontic, – never really tried to cognize this difference. By setting this goal, Heidegger became a pioneer in the thematization of existence, which refers neither to ontological, nor to ontic, but rather represents the play of their simultaneous integration and disintegration – a play demonstrating difference in existence itself, which is constituent for any stable ground.

However, another of Heidegger’s ideas, as already stated above, pushed the development of the anthropological theory of negativity. This is the idea of the temporality Dasein, which transforms being into being-towards-oneself, or being-towards-death. This postulates the relation of being and nothing, which is important for subsequent theorists of negativity. In the ontology of negativity, the subject begins to be cognized precisely as the agent of negativity.

As such agent, the subject manifests the most important ontological authorities. This means that he is not a detached and non-interested transcendental observer to the world, as he used to be. He acts proactively in the world attributing the definitive characteristics that make this world as it is and not different. Therefore, the question of substance or foundation is direcly connected to the concept of the subject. Eberhard Jüngel supports this concept, stating (as cited by Catherine Malabou in *The Future of Hegel)*: “the subject originally is simply another name for substance”.[[131]](#footnote-131) However, one cannot disregard Nietzsche, and in particular, the echoes of Nietzsche’s question on the death of God in the European culture, as it is impossible The belief in the subject is inseparably connected to believe in God and the world. Therefore, it is necessary to consider the Nietzsche’s question on the death of God and its repercussions in European Culture. It is carefully discussed by Heidegger as “…in Western philosophy the problematics of the subject is discredited as false, as it is metaphysical. If God is dead, then the subject “dies” as well”. For Heidegger the concept of God is similar to the transcendent world of ideal forms. The traditional dual division of the world into sensuous/intelligible and of subjectivity into soul/body is nullified by the God’s death. The abolition of the regulating principle and the appearance of decentralised pluralistic ontological constructions led to the necessity of an immanentist conceptualisation of the subject. It would be more correct to call such a “subject” a human being, or a special area of being in existence itself. The understanding of its ontology lies not in the traditional metaphysics that dates back to Parmenides, but in Heidegger’s refusal of it. Gianni Vattimo points out that both Nietzsche’s non-existence of the divine and Heidegger’s refusal of metaphysics should not be regarded as pure denial. Should it be the case, they would fall into a metaphysical trap where metaphysics presents existence as a justified structure, and this highlights the true state of affairs.

As Vattimo says, Heidegger rejects the metaphysical understanding of being:

What is the characteristic feature of thinking as *An-Denken*? This thinking that lets go of Being as foundation and manages to think *Anwesen* [presence] as *Anwesenlassen* [letting-be-present], manages to move toward thinking properly – why should it be *Andeken*?’[[132]](#footnote-132) Heidegger rejects the metaphysical understanding as something objective, structured – only for the sake of freedom: if we exist as projects, hopes, suppositions, fears, i.e. as finite creatures which nonetheless possess the past and the future then existence cannot be reasoned in the categories of objectivist metaphysics[[133]](#footnote-133).

Thus Heidegger followed a vector of development for philosophy comprising a radical critique of metaphysics. The question regarding the meaning of existence, without which one cannot start philosophizing, is fundamental; therefore, Heidegger calls his ontology fundamental, unlike traditional doctrines regarding existence, which substitute existence for things in existence. According to Heidegger himself, the most important things should become part of an analysis of the human being’s existence in the world, for the sake of a clarification of the meaning of existence. Taking into the account the fact that two completed Divisions of *Being and Time* are devoted to this analysis, one would expect the formulation for the new ontological question. However, it is not the case. While it was clearly intended, this was not accomplished. Therefore, according to Husserl, the ontological thinking of HHeidegger produced existentially interpreted anthropology. In many aspects “Being and Time” indeed can serve as a foundation for philosophical anthropology, even though Heidegger rejected the primacy of existence of human being in relation to the existence itself. The “What is it – to be?” precedes the ontological question of being, both of which are to asked by human being. Heidegger showed that human existence world as well as cognizability of “I” structures the existence of the world. Heidegger’s attempt to create a new ontology on the postulate that the person is existence-in-the world in its essence actually set the world alight. Therefore, Heidegger enhanced the phenomenological idea that “intentionality of consciousness has its ground in the objective time of human existence”.[[134]](#footnote-134)

For Heidegger, the philosophy is ready to abandon the false dualism and retain only one philosophical dimension, i.e. think without the subject.

Heidegger argues that philosophy is ready to operate without metaphysics, within new ontology, fundamental one. Fundamental ontology is to provide a basis for all other ontologies, and can be found only through “existential analytic of being (Dasein)”. However, such analysis should not presuppose the figure of a privileged subject-observer, thus reducing it to the investigation of human knowledge. This knowledge is only one way of a person’s existence in the world. Eventually, such an existential analysis will lead to the appeal of fundamental ontology to fundamental anthropology[[135]](#footnote-135).

Let us see how this happens.

First, we need to explain how one should understand the statement “to do without a subject”; as the project of “de-transcendending of the world” applied equally to the object and the subject, and in particular, the ephemerality of their contradiction, why are we talking only about the elimination of the “subject”? The point is that one eliminates the modern new European definition of the subject as a certain self-sufficient “reality” enclosed in itself, having absolutely inexplicable and non-stipulated connections with reality in general. From now on, consciousness must reveal itself, without breaking away from existence itself. This correlates with Kojève’s words best of all:

[T]rue cognition does not have anything in common with “Reflection” peculiar to pseudo-philosophy (i.e. pre-Hegelian philosophy) and pseudo-science (Newtonian), which reflect *over* the Real, that is located *outside* it, without it in general being clear where; with Reflection which is trying to provide the “vision” of the Real from the point of view of cognizing Subject (who is considered to be autonomous, that is, independent from the Object of cognition), from the point of view of such a Subject, who, according to Hegel, is only artificially isolated aspect of cognized, or disclosed, Reality[[136]](#footnote-136).

Philosophy offers four main scenarios of such a specification, provided respectively by: Hegel, Heidegger, Kojève, Sartre. However, it is Hegel who provides the logic of this narrative description.

We will consider each of them in order, beginning with Hegel.

In this way, we will see that in one way or another at the basis of fundamental anthropology we find the concept of negativity[[137]](#footnote-137). The person, by interiorizing into the world, or, more correctly to say, always being of it part, gives the world a certain image. Looking closely at this image, we see that the world possesses a number of features such as: 1. The ability to last itself in time and history, to change and generate new events through action; 2. Contain freedom in itself; 3. Know about oneself, refer to itself, reflect and ask about itself. If one looks closer at these features, it can be noted that on the one hand, they all have relation to a person, which means that person who is embedded the world-existence. In addition, they all have a relation to negativity.

The ability to last and to create history means the ability to bring into the world events which had not been there in any sense. History in its true meaning implies the appearance of new events in the world, and such events, unlike a simple reproduction of entities in time (as happens, for example, in nature, where there are temporal cycles, but there are no qualitative leaps and no transition from one entity to another), mean the radical nature of changes happening in the world. History means the appearance of single phenomena, that do not repeat the past, which cannot be predicted, and which therefore cannot be explained scientifically. However, such an “ability of the world” clearly envisages a split from the categories of things in existence or being – for history to take place, existence cannot just simply happen. It must be cancelled, paused, terminated and amended, in other words be negated – let itself be infiltrated by negativity, or be negativity itself. The possibility of the world to be different and therefore *new* means the negative characteristics of the world and therefore negativity of the world. This account was initiated by Hegel and actively developed by Kojève and is the latter who revealed history as the experience of negativity is accomplished in the world not by the world itself but by a person living in this world, by a human being. Only a person can cancel the old world and create a new one; a possibility of radical change expressed in Kojève's declaration that “man does not know what he is, where he is”[[138]](#footnote-138). Kojève showed that the human being makes history via two essential characteristics: Labour and Struggle. These characteristics let him negate the given existence as an Object-nature (by working we transform the heap of metal into a plane or a tablet) and as Subject-other person (by competing or collaborating with the other, we change our own inborn characteristics or the inborn characteristics of the other).

Such an ability of the person to negate existence in history is closely connected with his other ability – freedom. Freedom means negativity, i.e. it is freedom that presupposes the possibility of breaking up deterministic chains of existence, understood as the completeness of things in existence. If being were what it is – eternally present and positively-read – the freedom of a person could have no a place in it. And conversely, by showing that the person nevertheless has freedom – the ability to create what is not subject to the routine of existence, but is the result of negation of things in present existence – we will demonstrate the presence of negativity in the world. Freedom is one more evident type of negation of existence. To be free means to negate what is there in favour of what is not, and equally to bring into the world what is not there, making it what there is. This ability to negate the world embedded in freedom was considered in detail by Sartre, who demonstrated the existential-ontological characteristic of negativity. Freedom as an existential characteristic of the person is negativity in its ontological embodiment – it is the real characteristic of the world giving the world its in-deterministic nature. And vice versa, negativity as an ontological characteristic of the world would be the existence of the human being immanent to the world.

Lastly, the knowledge existence has about itself, its ability “to question existence”, transcendent to the world, like someone who questions the world or knows what the world is – these abilities also require a dismissing-negating attitude to the world. Not only to enquire about the world, not only to be surprised at it, not only always to understand that the world might not be there (however it is), but simply to establish that the world is presupposed by us, it prevails and it is laid out in front of us and requires the negative attitude to the world. The human being “emerges” from existence and relates to the world obliquely. This means that he can approach the world in a subjunctive mode, and therefore have some other reference point – an alternative to existence; i.e. factually negating it. We will find such a model of world-existence, learning about itself via and by means of a human being, both in Hegel and in Heidegger (with certain differences, which we will determine later on). The act of the self-identification of the world (Hegel) or immediate understanding of oneself as existing (Heidegger), are accomplished through this cognizing-learning negation of the world that the human being carries out in their being. If the person can ask about the world and if the person can cognize the world, this means in both cases not to believe entirely in this world as it seems to be (to doubt it, to take the position of negating). It is the person that is charged with the responsibility preserving and objectifying negativity in its three key guises – History, Freedom and Knowledge.

Thus, it is possible to show that it is *negativity that transforms fundamental ontology into fundamental anthropology.* Appealing to the authorship of our four main philosophers, where we can encounter these moves, in one way or another, according with this hypothesis in different respects, we will show the correlation of negativity and fundamental anthropology. These four figures are: Hegel as the one who thematized the idea of continuance and self-consciousness of the world accomplished through a person; Kojève as the thinker who points at the action carried out by a person that transforms existence; Sartre as the philosopher who justified presence of freedom in the world and who negated a total determinism of all things in existence, by way of nondeterministic actions of the person; and finally Heidegger, as the philosopher connecting the nature of existence (Dasein) with Nothing.

My goal will be to show how these four authors apply the model of fundamental anthropology in specific ways, thereby demonstrating the inner logic of the project of the fundamental anthropology. In this respect, the list of the authors chosen in this research might be considered open. One might expect or presuppose that in continuation of these four theories, we might come across new theories and approaches, with the aim of filling the model of fundamental anthropology with new content. In other words, I assume that negativity as a basic existential c haracteristic of human being can be filled with new and other contents, while the philosophical approaches of Hegel, Kojève, Sartre and Heidegger serve as a sort of template. In this sense, the four approaches demonstrate how they each express fundamental anthropology in their own way . At the same time, the presentation of these four authors serves not only as a canonical illustration of how the project of fundamental anthropology can be implemented, but also shows that the four theories complement one other. Thinking through each of the four approaches, it is difficult to reach the boundaries and the horizon of one theory without the rest of the three. In particular, the historicity of the human being is unthinkable without an appellation to his freedom, and the idea of a human being as the conductor of self-cognition of the spirit clearly refers to the idea of “questioning existence”. Equally it is not possible to understand how Dasein exists, without raising the question regarding the freedom of the human being and its ontological status, whereas Sartre’s freedom is only possible here as “here-existence” (Dasein). In a word, an appeal to all four authors and their approaches is a kind of logical necessity, as understanding one requires clarifying the others. Lastly, in their integrity and fullness, these four approaches allow us to clarify the essence of fundamental anthropology in the best possible way. In this respect, all four approaches are elements of a single idea or a single approach. By representing this project from different perspectives, we can better understand why it was necessary to create it.

Thus, through the considerations given below, I will set out the following model. The inclusion of the person in existence was conditioned by the task of getting rid of the paradox of the external observer: in this sense, fundamental ontology turns out to be a fundamental anthropology, insofar as existence may be understood only via a person included within it who understands this existence as such. Looking more closely at the nature of such an “inclusion”, we see that it is possible do to the work of negativity; it is this that allows the person to be located within existence in such a way that the model of fundamental anthropology can be constructed. It goes without saying that this negativity is not something single and monotonous: it manifests itself differently. Below, I will go on to consider its various manifestations – Self-consciousness, Action, Freedom, Dasein – as different “ways of transforming” of fundamental ontology into fundamental anthropology. The most common thing for all four concepts with quite different plans would be the fact that they comprise four different ways of existence-by the person. In addition, each approach comprises a different way of existing for the person. I will explore the most important aspect of the human being in the world, which may be defined provisionally as the *preservation of inter-world negativity****.*** It is this theme that will underlie the four projects that I will go on to consider, in the sense that in the philosophies of four authors addressed negativity serves as a condition for the possibility of performing the role of a human being. The different approaches, nevertheless, do not change the crux of the matter – *the human being the specificity of his existence owe to negation.* In terms of composition, in the chapters devoted to the approaches of Kojève, Sartre, and Heidegger, I will set out the differences in their understanding of the nature of negativity in relation to the understanding of this concept in Hegel. I will show what each of these philosophers brought to the understanding of negativity that is new with respect to Hegel, and where they remained loyal to a Hegelian tradition. In this way, Hegel will retain a certain centrality, insofar as he prepared the ground for the conceptualisation of negativity and its connection to the person-in the world, while each of the three figures I look at subsequently developed this problem in a different way.

**Chapter 1. “The subject is the organ of divine self-cognition” (*Hegel*)**

# The equality of subject and substance is primarily important in Hegelian philosophy. This notion is manifested in the Preface to *The Phenomenology of Spirit* and provides greater understanding of this work and Hegelian system as a whole. Moreover, this principle is important in to clarify the relation of Hegel’s philosophy to the idea of fundamental ontology.

Hegel begins with an indication of what he considers is substantial and new in his philosophy: “In my opinion, which can be justified only through the exposition of the System itself, everything depends (es kommt alles darauf an) on this, that one expresses and understands (aufzufassen) the True (Wahre) not [only] as *substance*, but rather just as much as *subject.”*[[139]](#footnote-139) The main idea in Hegel’s ontology (the *Science of Logic*) is the identification of the Subject (*Thinking*) and Substance (*Existence*). Based on such an identification, Hegel deduces a special philosophical concept – the *Absolute Idea*. The absolute idea (*Absolute Spirit or Absolute*) is the only existing true reality; the prime cause of the entire surrounding world (and the world itself), its objects and phenomena; the world spirit possessing self-awareness and ability to create. The absolute spirit about which nothing in particular can be said alienates itself in the form of the outside world: nature and human being. After this alienation via thinking and the activity of the human being, the natural process of history returns to itself once again. This is the complete circle of Absolute spirit which occurs according to the scheme: world history (Absolute spirit) – the alienation into the outside world (into thinking and activity of the human being) – the actualisation of the spirit itself through thinking and activity of the human being (return of the Absolute Spirit to itself).

Alienation itself includes complicated relations between the object (surrounding world) and the subject (human person) via human cognition. The Human being bears the Absolute idea in Hegelian view; therefore, it has a special role in its ontology. The consciousness of each person is a particle of World history. The abstract and impersonal world spirit acquires its will, identity, character, individuality in the person and through it reveals the knowledge of itself. This knowledge manifests in the form of words, speech, language and gestures. Its shape changes via actions of the person throughout the course of history. Lastly, it gets to know itself through the cognitive activity of the person and is creative in the form of the material and spiritual culture created by the person. Thus, the person is the “final spirit” of the World history.

Let us consider this mechanism in more detail.

We remember that Hegel defines the elimination of duplication of the world by identifying the subject and substance. Earlier, we promised to explain what this formula would mean for the subject. Given that the Hegelian equation does not deny the fact that we are all in essence thinking individual creatures, what does the fact of individual thinking mean in the system of Absolute spirit? Let us reconstruct the logic of philosophy of Absolute Spirit. Absolute Spirit, as we have said already, involves the equality of the subject and the substance. This means that Absolute Spirit is the subject cognizing itself in the act of self-reflection. Thus, the Absolute Spirit is absolute only when it knows that it is Absolute Spirit. But this knowledge about itself, self-cognition, as Absolute Spirit takes time to be realised and as long as “Absolute Spirit” does not know that it is Absolute Spirit, it is not that spirit as such. Only once it has cognized itself will it enter into its full absolute rights. How and when does the self-cognition of Absolute Spirit take place? Here, exactly in the arena of the self-evolving Absolute Spirit, the Human being itself appears. The human being is a creature having consciousness, and this consciousness is distinguished by paradoxical qualities – it transforms the world being cognized into objects, separates itself, being located into an area of existence that transcends the world. This has its own consequences as the subject has to be literally carried away to the area of non-existence, as in spite of modern philosophy, immanentist philosophy does not agree t separate the world into terrestial and divine, and then correlate the subject with the divine world through consciousness. However, if we are not ready to declare the subject non-existent, and at the same time we hope to preserve its consciousness, then we have to retain it in existence, but disguised as the *consciousness of existence itself*. This will be the essence of Hegel’s decision. It perfectly agrees with what he had to prove – that Absolute Spirit is not only substance but also subject. Thus, *Absolute Spirit is endowed with the consciousness that the human being is endowed with*. *And the consciousness of the human being is the consciousness of Absolute Spirit*. This is how Hegel’s formula might be deciphered as “the human being is the organ of divine self-consciousness”. Or how Kojève would say: “Existence talks about itself through discourse, which the human being conducts regarding Existence”.[[140]](#footnote-140) In other words, when we think, Absolute Spirit is thinking for us. The overall scheme is as follows: mankind appears within the boundaries of the *universum*, which intends to recognize itself and looks into the mirror at its own reflection existing in the form of human consciousness. With this, human consciousness is historical insofar as the history of the movement of Absolute Spirit towards itself takes the form of the development of sciences, crafts, and indeed any knowledge, from the simple to the most complex ideas; and all this depends on the fact that although Absolute Spirit learns more about itself, it does not know the most important thing – that it is Absolute Spirit. Only in Hegel’s philosophy, this final knowledge is stipulated. But as any knowledge is the knowledge of Absolute Spirit itself, in Hegel’s voice, Absolute Spirit itself suddenly learns the most important thing about itself, and that is that it is Absolute Spirit, and, strictly speaking, it becomes as such only at that moment. If everything said above seems somewhat mystifying, Hegel is always ready to suggest his own proof (borrowed from Fichte), which can be presented as follows. The person starts his cognition of the world, which he opposes to himself. He finds an array of interesting things there, such as organic and inorganic nature, laws of physics and mathematics etc. However, starting his investigation from an amoeba or even with an inorganic stone, gradually stepping onto the ladder of cognition, he would inevitably come to be a person, who would be *part of this world*. The world would be incomplete without a human being; it includes the human being as a biological, social and historical creature. Then it appears that the person, who cognized the world as something external, finds himself, the subject of cognition coincides with the object of cognition, the circle is closed, and Absolute spirit comes to itself in the act of self-reflection cognition[[141]](#footnote-141).

The human is the “organ of self-consciousness” of nature. We also read in Feuerbach: “The consciousness of God is the self-consciousness of man; the knowledge of God is the self-knowledge of man. Man’s notion of himself – the two are identical… God is the manifestation of man’s inner nature”.[[142]](#footnote-142) The following words of Kojève also serve as a good illustration of this same idea:

Everything that is true, the true entity, the True, *das* *Wahre*, is a real entity, or Being itself, as revealed correctly and completely by coherent discourse having a meaning (Logos). And this is what Hegel also calls Begriff, concept; a term that means for him (except when, as in the writings of his youth and still occasionally in the Phenomenology, he says, *nur Begriff*) nor an “abstract notion” detached from the real entity to which it is related, but “conceptually understood reality”. The True and the Concept are, as Hegel himself says, a *Logisch-Reelles*, something logical and real at the same time, a realized concept or a conceived reality.[[143]](#footnote-143)

Thus, it is not enough for the cognizing subject to describe Existence, he must also describe the disclosed-Existence and be aware of the fact of disclosing the Existence in Discourse. The cognizing person must describe the totality of what is and exists. As a matter of fact, this totality includes Discourse and in particular, philosophical discourse. Therefore, the philosopher deals not only with the static-given Existence (*Sein*), or Substance, which represent the Object of Discourse, but also with the Subject of Discourse and philosophy: it is not enough to talk about Existence, which is given to him; he must also talk about himself and explain himself as someone speaking about Existence and oneself.

Thus, existence has consciousness and this consciousness is the human being. Thanks to the human being, existence comes to itself and learns about itself. In order to emphasize the elimination of boundaries between the internal (conscious, subject) and external (world, existence) subsequent philosophy will often resort to the metaphor of the fold[[144]](#footnote-144), which aims to show the reflection of the world without a transcendent (and transcendent) dimension, equally as the presence of consciousness and the world without the necessity to duplicate the world.

In particular, Hegel still talks about reflection (self-reflection) of the spirit, due to the fact that *reflection* was traditionally perceived by philosophy as *consciousness understanding itself*, but later thinking will choose to discard this term. To eliminate ambiguity, the term *existence* is used instead to denote not only “existence” but also the *existence understanding itself*.

Let us consider the becoming of this existence which understands itself – .which is factually “I” – in more detail.

The elimination of present sensuality precedes the existence of “I”. The thing *exists* and it is given always as *that* or *the other*, it is not always considered the same, but always is *another*. However, being *another* it is not in-itself, but for consciousness (for I), as it already exists, it *constitutes* the fact of change. Consequently, it is twofold as *its own existence-for-itself* and as *general existence for-something else*. Two sides – external and internal, constitute such a thing. In addition, because the thing is defined by something *else*, as some *other* thing, its content is *another*. That is, the thing does not have its *own* content.

The task of reasoning is to fill the “internal” emptiness of things with the “content”. The thing does not possess any *essence*, which is its *meaning*; however, it possesses the features that constitute its being. Therefore, reasoning, by assigning *meaning* to the thing, integrates it into its *unity*. Reasoning unites things by introducing a general equivalent – concept. The thing is a *subject* of its *concept*. What is an object for reasoning in the sensual case, is a “pure concept” for us in its substantial form.

The thing that acquired a meaning gets the unity - identity, and its existence as a subject is a *coinciding* with the *concept*. In *The* *Phenomenology of Spirit*, Hegel continues to develop the history of spirit as the history of the *self-consciousness* of humankind (*Menschschaft*). The formation of I is essential in this development, as it maintains its steadiness, while the sensual horizon is caught in the movement. Its inner integrity makes up that horizon into *bearing* moments of oneself as a centre. Therefore, this “I” is *stabilized* at the expense of the de-stabilizing of *others* and becomes *continuous*, while they are interrupted. Ultimately, the destruction of the independent subject reports the veracity of “I” as a true authenticity.

In *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, Hegel outlines a specific genealogy of subjectivity. In the process Hegel returns to the relation of the “I” and the “thing”. The primary definition of a thing is in its simple consumption, by means of which the “I” is defined as *sameness* within natural boundaries. This means that the “I” is divided into *lack* and *satisfaction* as “I-empty” and “I-full”. However, as the thing disappears during consumption, “I” reflects itself as an *activity* (action), provided by a *wish*. First of all, *lack* was the contemplation of *empty* “I”; secondly, the “I” experienced a wish, a will for a thing; and thirdly, the “I”, by consuming the thing as the “difference-in-itself” *cognized* it as its *difference*, as differentiation into “I” and a thing as a body. As a result, the “I” acted as the master of its body in its *thingness*. Consequently, the “I” overcomes the immediate consumption in favour of *labour*, where the thing is *cognized* by means of a process. However, it is not only the thing that is *cognized*; in labour, the human being cognizes *himself* in a certain way. Thus, labour not only serves as a condition for cognizing, it also moves us into the *knowledge* of the “I”. As a result, in the thing transformed into a *subject* of processing, its subsistence-in-itself is destroyed and the existence-for-*another* appears*.*

Moreover, “I” also represents itself as a difference between the masculine and the feminine, or *love*, as “each person knows itself in another, it refuses oneself”. The *equality* of love is based on the difference from another. We cognize another person as our own lack, and these defects are cancelled by the creation of a *family*. Thus, it is one of the fundamental schemes of subjectivity for Hegel, as the family is based on a voluntary *exchange*, for the sake of how this exchange *mediated*. Here, for the first time in this subjective phase, the mediation appeared as a *symbol*, as a *child* is as a symbol of love because “love knows itself in a child”. In other words, the means became a goal, a telos, a body.

The master/slave relations also constitute essential part of this genealogy as they represent extreme terms of speculation – the master is a slave by their interconnection of truth about each other. The inner contradiction of the “I” is explicitly expressed in the “master-slave” scheme. Through such expression the cognition becomes *recognition*. The social differentiation of individuals in Master/Slave paradigm represents the difference between the good and the evil, or, the difference of *personal right* and injustice *respectively*. The “I” acts as an *entity* insisting on its *right* as a “conscious will”. Right is an instance of *existence in recognition* or an institute of universal exchange. As the persons are not able to satisfy all the needs on their own, they need the *division of labour*, where one person works for the many, and the many work for one.

Nevertheless, the will that knows itself as *labour* is materialized in its own *labour*, but does not coincide with the one that knows itself as the *need* and materializes as labour *of another*. Therefore, the exchange is the only way to overcome this disparity. The exchange is the essential stage for introducing justice to individuals and their subsequent integration into the social world. The exchange involves the mutual recognition of the cost as the mediator of things’ difference and even difference of wills based on the cost.

Hegelian understanding *concentrates* on the *instance* of exchange as a *point* of mediation between two sides, each of which simultaneously contains *its own other*. The “I” is exchanged for a thing in the process of perception and consumption, masculine for feminine in the creation of a *family*, a thing for another thing by means of money, right for a duty by means of a *verbal* agreement. Hegel argues that if the “I” underlies the exchange, then the purpose of exchange is also “I”. Agreement is an ideal exchange in its essence. Existence in recognition eliminates existence as such, shaping the present existence of the *universal will*, or *law*, or *obligation*. The will of “I”, following the universal, is identified as the *universal will*, as here, “like other things, only in so far as my *will* is in them” *recognized by everybody*. However, the will alienated in the obligation bears in itself the split into a singular will and the universal will, i.e. in its *concept* and *presence* in the obligation. Consequently, the broken balance of the universal will (*crime*) requires restoration (*punishment)*.

Hegel discovers that sin and evil represent the creative power, thence are necessary fundamentally as *negativity*. Consequently, the difference between good and evil is just a difference between the lesser evil and just the evil, and the choice is the question of preference.

The highest level of Hegelian hierarchy of the universal exchange is a ruler, “a great man” who eliminates the contradiction himself, between his singular will and the universal will as the universal law, or being-for-itself of the state. Whereby, the figure of the ruler carries two functions: firstly, he centres the circumference of *integration*, responding to the needs of everyone in the *universal*; secondly, it is the goal of *identification*, meeting the needs of everyone in the singular.

Thus, in the *The Phenomenology of Spirit* a model of the formation of subjectivity is presented in which the history of existence starts with a crack; a split of this crack affects the human creature itself. Existence is broken down into present existence, which becomes apparent, and Logos or reasoning. The world as a whole is a *reasonable* existence. The horizon of present existence and the vertical of the nominal existence are merged in the person as a bearer of their unity (at least, in possibility). This structure consists of three stages, at each of which there occurs the accentuation of one of three forms, the forms of the historical sequence of spirit revealing itself. We know these stages as Antiquity, Middle Ages and the Modern Period; and lastly, Hegel’s philosophy itself. Each of these stages accentuates one of the components of the same structure of subjectivity.

Hegel created the principle of contradiction as the main impulsive force of his study and put it at the basis of his “system of sciences”. Cognition is possible only due to difference as the “spirit”, as we recall, “reaches its truth only by acquiring itself in absolute disruptiveness”. The subject is the *centre of difference* between the nominal and the present existence; it is the centre of difference and is that difference itself. The nature of existence for this centre as a principle of subjectivity is such that the centre exists only as long as it differentiates: it is identical as long as it differentiates and is continuous as long as it interrupts.

Let us see now in what sense the subject in Hegel is related to negativity in the sense that the subject acquires negative power in existence as such. However, before we do this, I will say a few words about the negative itself in Hegel’s system.

From the moment of its creation, Hegel’s system did not experience any shortage in attention, being subject of constant interest from various quarters in philosophy. However, the principle of negativity determining it, despite its general timeliness has in many respects never been clearly defined, and its connection to the widely accepted components of dialectic and speculative statements not sufficiently well disclosed. The limitations of many researches into Hegelian idealism are related to the fact that the concepts of negativity (*die Negativität*), and negation (*die Negation*) are not considered as Gestalt in accordance with the intention of his system and in essential correlation with the subject (*das Nichts*), serving as its ontological guide.

Negation is frequently related only to the formal structure of dialectics, without revealing its ontological, and as I will try to show, anthropological prerequisites. The concept of negativity is quite often defined not as an independent subject of research, conditioning the main forms of Hegelian speculative thinking, but as empty in content, an immediate negation that is taken off in its uncertainty in the process of logical development.

Despite such an approach, Hegel does not consider the dialectic provisions only as simple laws of thought, which then are thrust upon external present existence, represented in the form of nature and history. On the contrary, such provisions might be considered in his system only because they form their own speculative principles of the apperceived existence, which implements these laws in the most specific and immediate, and as a matter of fact immanent, way – as an algorithm, a scenario and a pattern of its own development. Cognition in this way becomes a real step towards unfolding of the world, and the subject of cognition – the agent of this deployment. That is, factually, the unfolding of history of the world as a progressive process makes the person-subject an essential figure for its realization.

Despite the fact that the concept of negativity was analysed and interpreted by whole range of authors, the most comprehensive approach to its ontology we find in the work of Heinrich, Düsing, Hösle, and Baum. Heinrich observes that Hegelian philosophy transformed negation from the form of thinking into the ontological form of the real correlation of all things in existence.[[145]](#footnote-145) The nature of negativity in the sphere of reflection is understood as the self-attitude of negativity in the form of the thinking of equality, difference and contradiction. Negativity is also seen as a logical-reflexive substrate, which takes itself to be in contradiction to itself and remains identical by adjusting this difference.

Also, in general one can say that negativity is that resource which allows existence to last in time and to develop in the variety of its forms. None of the specific meanings of negativity, as I will show below, will be connected to the human being. In general, Hegel’s philosophy, developing in the form of a system of dialectically interrelated categories, might be interpreted on the basis of an assumption of the concept of Subject, which is thought as an absolute and thinks itself in a unity with real existence. Subjectivity is therefore ontologically interpreted as the absolute unity of the negativity of the concept, which assumes itself in its negation, being the unity of its opposite definitions. Hyppolite[[146]](#footnote-146) and Wahl[[147]](#footnote-147) as the representatives of French neo-Hegelianism argue that the Absolute exists exclusively in the negative division of oneself followed by the movement to overcome this division and the identity of sides of opposition eventually. Lastly, one of the most famous French researchers of Hegelian system, Kojève, as we will see later, interprets Hegelian statements on negativity only as relating to human existence. In accordance with his conception, the human being, by embedding the negativity of the nothing in himself, realizes himself via negation and the transformation of present existence (identical to himself). Negativity, understood in Hegel in the ontological sphere as nothing, is implemented, for Kojève, in existence as the active deeds of the subject.[[148]](#footnote-148)

In this respect, the research of the principle of negativity in Hegelian philosophy is decisive to comprehend how exactly this existence is understood in philosophy with regards to its equation with reasoning, and on this basis for the way the human being can comprehend its own existence. Being, acting as the true base of everything existing, which is deliberated by Hegel in his account of the concept, is revealed not through such absolute negativity, which expresses not only the negative nature of the existence of things in existence, but the ground and essence of existence itself.

Let us see now, for Hegel, in what sense negativity factually defines Spirit, and therefore the human being (both the subject and individual).

We have to emphasize that Negation basically remains the same as if it were understood in the framework of dialectic, but there are implications that have not been looked at before; that is, that negativity points towards the need for a fundamental anthropology. As I will demonstrate, only through the role played by human being can negativity fully appear.

Hegelian view on the detailed characterization of a particular person (individual) is presented in chapter “Observation of self-consciousness and its relation to its immediate reality. Physiognomy and Phrenology” of *The Phenomenology of Spirit*.

Hegel writes that “An individual is not defined by an external or internal, neither by the natural appearances, temperament, peculiarities of the social environment (these are only the “potential”, that he/she possesses), nor by the internal (of what he is thinking about himself, and what he thinks he is capable of)”.[[149]](#footnote-149) Hegel defines the latter as “alleged existence”. This is nothing until (unless) it materializes itself into actions and deeds.

The creation of person should not be set in opposition to his internal possibility, capability or intention, as “….only creation should be considered as true reality, even if he himself is in the error in this respect”.[[150]](#footnote-150) The person might not be able to realize the full richness and potential of his inner world due to lack of possibilities, however, they remain as his “imaginary” world.

The inner world of the person cannot be assessed by analysis of the external features, thus making the original intention of physiognomist irrelevant. Even if such an endeavor of guessing the whole truth about the person is successful in a particular moment, it is still the case that “for the latter it would be enough to make a straight decision in order to become the inconceivable again for the centuries ahead”.

The person is defined by his actions. He is what he has made out of himself. “The action is something simply defined… the action is a murder, theft, or a noble action, a feast etc. and one can talk about its existence… and an individual person is what he is like, what it is”.[[151]](#footnote-151)

When Hegel speaks about not a single person but about the “World spirit” (in *Encyclopedia of Philosophical Sciences*), he defines it in the same manner as he defined an individual before: Hegel is defining the thinking itself, as pure activity. The creative activity of spirit serves as tool for the universum arrangement in Hegelain system.

Initially the universum was thought to be equal to human being, as in every philosophical tradition and approach beginning is the beginning, thus it remains constant. However, Hegel introduces the creative activity of the spirit to this beginning, making it subjected to change due to the decisions taken by individual.

Roughly speaking, Hegel’s “spirit” is the individual elevated to the absolute level, and it is this movable beginning that he places in the foreground for the system of all things. It is therefore not surprising that Hegel’s verb “to be” undergoes certain changes.

If we want the example of quite the opposite for the essence of spirit – it would be bone or bones, e.g. skull or spine. The bone cannot serve as an organ of activity, thus it is just a thing. It does not say about anything. “…The skull bone in itself is an in different naive thing, that in it directly one cannot see or suppose something different apart from itself”.[[152]](#footnote-152) Consequently, such discipline as phrenology is considered by Hegel as an illustrative example of pseudoscience, since it tries to find the essence of spirit exactly in the place where it is the least probable.

The bone is the “constant thing at rest” as it just exists. However, the existence of the spirit is not equal to the one of bone. Hegel argues that the existence as such is not the essence of the spirit. “The freedom of an individual, and evolving circumstances, is in different to the existence in general, - to the existence and as to something originally internal, similarly as to something external, fossilized”.[[153]](#footnote-153) Therefore, Hegel maintains notion that Spirit “exists” is not appropriate, as it implies some stable existence, and while not in the sense of factual existence, like something that can be seen and touched, but the difference is too subtle. . The key characteristics of the thing is its existence, while spirit represents itself through negation,.. “Things in existence without spiritual activity are things to be comprehended and are of little existence, so that it is better to say, is that what is opposed to it, and the consciousness is real for itself only thanks to negation and destruction of such existence”.[[154]](#footnote-154)

Any individual is much more than a sum of its parts, and simple enumeration of his substantial features is not enough for its designation, not even taking into account changeable nature of traits dependent on decisions. The person is considered to be a human being (the bearer of the spirit) not because he is a musician or an accountant, choleric or a melancholic, but because he might refuse one existence just to assume another.

If we now connect the first part of our chapter with the second – and to be precise with the principle of self-cognition of Absolute Spirit, perceived through a subject in view of the negative nature of this very subject – then we will have the right to ask once again: what does the subject do that is so negative in existence? How is his negativity manifested on the way to the self-cognition of Spirit? On answering this question, we will be able to show what the project of fundamental anthropology looks like in Hegel. By anthropologizing negativity and harnessing it to the service of the supreme ontological dimension – the dimension of Absolute Spirit – Hegel realizes his scenario of a fundamental anthropology in which the *fundamentality* of the anthropological resource does not raise any doubts. The subject, performing in its negativity the work of the self-cognition of Absolute Spirit, coming through this self-cognition to itself, learning about itself and becoming factually itself, does the Spirit the most extravagant favour that one could imagine. Let us see how negativity is worked out in this connection.

Above we said that the knowledge that exists in the world, belongs to the consciousness of the Absolute, being in fact its self-consciousness. This knowledge is accumulated since the world began and develops gradually. But for Hegel it would be incorrect to represent the history of development of human thought as a succession of certain opinions, claiming universality, contradicting each other, abolishing each other and with the course of time retaining only “historical significance”. However detailed historical reviews or formal typologizations of knowledge may be, they lose sight of the main thing: the knowledge itself. As for Hegel, from the very beginning he discovered thought itself in the history of the development of this thought, owing to which the history of ascending to the true thought for the first time transforms into the real thought. In other words, all the knowledge that exists in the world, exists not as something additional (as if at first there was the world, and then the knowledge about it began to form), but as part of the world itself, “pushing” the world forward, creating additional provisions, composing its nature. For example, when mankind receives knowledge regarding atomic energy or digital technologies, this knowledge changes the world, which becomes different from this moment on. Knowledge does not merely accompany the world as some sort of ideal double, it is a real part forming the world, which means that knowledge is always obtained historically – the human being moves from the state of ignorance to the state of knowledge. The advance of the cognizing thought, unfolding towards its historical fullness, is defined in Hegel as the self-testing of thought in practice. Reasoning, in other words the actuality of historical spirit, is the unfolding experiment of spirit over itself. A simple thought, a scientific theory or a global philosophical system —these are not discretionary speculations on external existence by subject-observers, but events occurring in the “mind of spirit”. “The path towards truth coincides with the truth itself” as the famous line from Hegel quotation runs. What does it mean? The point is that our efforts to capture the truth in cognition and the and the path to knowledge are not inspired by anything else, they themselves are part of this truth. Therefore, Hegel maintains: “To study the history of philosophy is itself a philosophic enterprise”, and “to study the history of philosophy is to study philosophy itself...”.[[155]](#footnote-155) Consequently, *our mistakes and errors* are not external to the truth, but are integral to it. It is important to understand that the experience of errors should remain part of the truth, as the truth can be only cognized, and we can only cognize what we had never known before. Consequently, our ignorance should serve as a condition of possibility for the truth, as an integral condition, comprised by it. Precisely in this sense the Absolute is also a subject. He must *understand* (the truth), and for this, first, he must recognize the experience of his own incomprehension (ignorance, lie or error). Reality should err – this is Hegel’s formula. It should genuinely err, and only then might it really understand – to compare the experience of ignorance with the experience of knowledge, as only in this case we say that we understood something. Unlike Plato’s world of ideas, where truths are simply stored, the Absolute *learns* the truth precisely to the extent that it is the subject . The most important point here is the concept “to know”. Knowledge is properly possible only in the form of recognition. If we are simply faced with the written formula Е=mc2, and we repeat it, this does not mean that we know what it means. To understand its meaning, one needs really to move from the experience of ignorance to the experience of knowledge – and such a transfer can be called “understanding”. And the Absolute, which is also a subject as well, by virtue of grasping the truth, should precisely understand it. Thus, ignorance should be real. It means the history of errors, the negation of certain hypotheses or timely truths (which, without doubt, were true) should be incorporated into the Absolute. The negation of truths, the ability to cancel one piece of knowledge in favour of another, i.e. factually speaking *negativity* in the form of the movement of cognition, is that anthropological resource which the human being implements in existence.

Why in this negativity of forming mistakes is the most important role entrusted to the human being? It is known that in Hegel’s dialectics, time is one of the significant factors of the general movement capable of transferring the human truths into errors. Hegel himself illustrated this statement by the following example: let us look at the clock – it shows midday. Let us write this on paper and thus fix a certain truth in writing. Then we will again look at the clock to make sure how the truth became false, as now it will show five minutes past twelve.

It is, then, sense-certainty itself that must be asked: “What is the *This?”* If we take the “This” in the twofold shape of its being, as “Now” and as “Here”, the dialectic it has in it will receive a form as intelligible as the “This” itself is. To the question: “What is Now?”, let us answer, e.g. “Now is Night”. In order to test the truth of this sense-certainty a simple experiment will suffice. We write down this truth; a truth cannot lose anything by being written down, any more than it can lose anything through our preserving it. If *now, this noon,* we look again at the written truth we shall have to say that it has become stale.[[156]](#footnote-156)

In relation to this, Kojève writes:

This observation was made a long time ago: since Plato or, rather, since Parmenides and perhaps even earlier. But one aspect of the question was neglected until Hegel; namely, the fact that, through his discourse, through his written discourse in particular, man succeeds in *preserving* error in the very heart of reality. If Nature happens to commit an error (the malformation of an animal, for example), it eliminates it immediately (the animal dies, or at least does not propagate). Only the errors committed by man *endure* indefinitely and are propagated at a distance, thanks to language. And man could be defined as an error that is preserved in existence, that *endures* within reality. Now, since error means *disagreement* with the real; since what is other than what is, is *false*, one can also say that the man who errs is a Nothingness that nihilates in Being, or an “ideal” that is present in the real.[[157]](#footnote-157)

However, supporting the mistake in the real is only possible because its transformation into the truth is possible. Only by virtue of the possibility of rectification is the mistake a not pure nothing. “An experience show that human errors are actually corrected in the course of time and become truths. One can even say that every *truth* in the proper sense of the term is an *error* that has been corrected… Therefore, there is really a *truth* only where there *has been* an error”.[[158]](#footnote-158)

And further on, Kojève writes:.

Another example, which is not found in Hegel but which illustrates his thought well, permits us to see how man succeeds in transforming into truth the error which he was able to preserve as error in the real.

Let us suppose that, in the Middle Ages, a poet wrote in a poem: “at this moment a man is flying over the ocean”. This was without a doubt an error, and it remained such for centuries. But if we now reread that sentence, we are most likely reading a truth, for it is almost certain that at this *moment* some aviator is over the Atlantic, for example.[[159]](#footnote-159)

And further:

Only man can err without thereby having to become extinct: he can continue to exist, making mistakes all the while about what exists; he can *live* his error or in error; and the error or the false which is nothing in itself becomes *real* in him.[[160]](#footnote-160)

It goes without saying that for such circulation of errors into truths and truths into errors to be possible, the person must realise a peculiar property – to negate presently given existence. As Kojève says, the person must say “no” to the world.

 In this way, the human being is closely related with the falsehood in existence, and produces this falsehood mainly during the cognition of the world, which as we now know is always the self-cognition of the Absolute. And since the history of human errors (productive in the long run and always ready to be transformed into truths) is not simply the history of the local errors and disappointments of mankind, but factually the history of the Absolute itself, then the scope and scale of this cycle of falsehood and truth turns out to be truly fundamental.

In describing this mechanism, Hegel presents himself as the hero of a novel who is at the same time its author (so that it is a kind of autobiography an autobiography of self-consciousness), where this figure is thinking Spirit itself. This thinking Spirit is Absolute, but it thinks through a person. The plot of the novel is “two-thousand-year continuous work of (this) spirit”. Intellectual “positions”, “ideas”, “systems” are in essence, various forms of this intellectual work, historical bonds of a single chain of epochal events, including feats and frustrations, wanderings and discoveries, forming stages, growth steps, special ages in the life of the spirit.

The history of cognition, for Hegel, is first of all the history of the life of spirit cognizing the world and in this way understanding itself more and more fully. It is the single and objective spirit in the sense that different individuals at various times switched into it into the spiritually significant history of mankind to the extent that they are capable of taking part in the works of generations before them. To this end, they need to grasp the achievements of spirit (...result of the work of all previous generations) and enlighten (form) their private subjectivity up to the level of the best knowledge; in Hegel’s terminology, up to the level of Logic. For this to happen, universal spirit, realized in its objective achievements (books, tools, works, institutes), needs the *subjectivity of individuals*. For its part, the subjective thought of the individual can acquire historically significant truth (understand the meaning of events, catch the logic of things,), only by forming itself in this spirit, appearing and manifesting itself in it, becoming its acting focus.

The truth in cognition for Hegel comprehends the experience of the historical existence of the human being, and the historical existence of the person who expresses this truth. This is the log of the empirical laboratory of the human experience of existence and theoretical study of the human person. Historical time has meaning, and the person manages to learn, get knowledge, and comprehend the truth, to the extent that history can be understood as a history of the self-cognition of the Spirit via a human person. The sequence of steps — the logic of the distance covered — is part of the content of actual experience whereupon, as in the experimental sciences, all knowledge gained by a given time is present and is acting, equally as mistakes. This means that all the history of mistakes and errors, possibly owing to the human ability to negate, is significant and, by accumulating in the history of cognitive process, brings it closer to the truth. The inner connection of historical experience, events compressed by thought and logic, constitute the experience of history of the mankind.

It is important to understand that when we are talking about the history of errors and mistakes, we mean not only the history of knowledge, but “real” history as well – the history of wars and conflicts, the history of the formation and change of religious consciousness, the history of societies and social groups, the history of changing values etc. In all this factual history of the mankind, the truth is revealed. Such history is the resource of the experience of becoming of the Absolute through a human person (the journey to oneself). In its turn, the history of philosophy is the quintessence of the meaning achieved by the historical labour of the human being. As Paul Ricoeur writes in relation to this combination of philosophy and history, “The history of philosophy appears as “relationship” of the historicity of reasoning and the meaning of history”.[[161]](#footnote-161)

For Hegel, in the history of cognition, each stage, each form that was internally overcome and historically passed is understood as an abstract element (moment) that acts, as an irreplaceable component of reason as it is actually thinking. Hegel calls this critical delimitation of certain knowledge as real, the definition of its meaning, and therefore its inclusion in the organon of thinking spirit, *die Aufhebung*, which is traditionally translated as “sublation”. As the sublated — ideal — moment, cognition at each turn is not discarded but raised to the level of actual cognition, by retaining the meaning of thought as active. History is all about the systematic unfolding of such reasoning, or the form of the development of a person, compressed into specific theories or formulae. As Hegel maintains:

The single individual must also pass through the formative stages of universal Spirit so far as their content is concerned, but as shapes which Spirit has already left behind, as stages on a way that has been made level with toil. Thus, as far as factual information is concerned find that what in former ages engaged the attention of men of mature mind, has been reduced to the level of facts, exercises, and even games for children; and in the child's progress through school, we shall recognize the history of the cultural development of the world traced, as it were, in a silhouette.[[162]](#footnote-162)

What was acquired wandering through errors in historical experience, becomes a quick logical skill of the modern educated mind. The original theories of scientific and philosophical schools held by the generations, fateful decisions, meaningful revelations, defining epochs and fates of the peoples, — everything that took the “mature spirit of men” – in education is relegated to the “games of boyhood”, and in immediate cognition to momentary steps in an immediate grasp. All thеsis in fact the path of negativity – the ability to negate old knowledge in favour of the new, but also the ability to be mistaken, to have a negative experience of cognition (which in reality for Hegel is positive, as it is gathered up as knowledge). The work of the in the movement of cognition, aspiring to the final truth, should not be too quick, should not miss the necessary, and in essence *erroneous* steps or withhold difficulties (for example, logical paradoxes, ambiguities, downfalls in explanation and other failures of cognition). All the negative moments of the cognizing movement of the thinking (concentrating in oneself) spirit are necessary.

Hegel writes:

But the *length* of this path has to be endured, because, for one thing, each moment is necessary; and further, each moment has to be *lingered* over, because each is itself a complete individual shape, and one is only viewed in absolute perspective when its determinateness is regarded as a concrete whole, or the whole is regarded as uniquely qualified by that determination.[[163]](#footnote-163)

Thus, the goal is not something found in the form or truth, but the work of research itself. But how can truth be the history of cognition; the history of search of truth? The question can be posed the other way around: how does the idea of truth change when it is made to include the search for it, history and reasoning (the moment of subjectivity)? It is in the rethinking of the idea of truth that the mechanism of negativity works out once again, as translated by the human being. Apart from the objective content of the truth, which followed the former reasoning, “it is subjectively certain of itself in and through its individual acts: alternatively, its acts provide the subjective certainty of which its aims are the objective truth...”,[[164]](#footnote-164) as Hegel remarks. Behind this rethinking, there lies a more significant problem: the question regarding the truth — i.е. meaningfulness — of history, the question of how it is that history does not wear out like some colossal misunderstanding, but enters truth precisely in the form of human history.

Heidegger, cited in Niemoczynski: “This new spirit might be described as a speculative turn”[[165]](#footnote-165) that was left behind but which we are still living in the form of an alleged phantasy.

Clarification of this statement is in the fact that each following stage, by being subjected to negation, is retained in each turn of the spiral of history. For as already described, the history of errors is substantive for history itself. However, the whole of this mechanism of ascending to the truth, where the truth is the path itself, could not be understood if it were not for the inconstancy of the subject of cognition himself – the human being who makes mistakes. As a matter of fact, with each new turn of the spiral, the human being himself changes, and that is why the mistakes of the past, transforming into the truths of the present, do not shock anyone. In this respect, the modern person, seeing the plane flying over the Atlantic, is different from the medieval person, pronouncing the same “false” observation. Reality changes as a whole, encompassing also the cognizing subject – a person. With the equation of the Subject and Substance, each one exists inseparably of the other.

Thus, in his cognition, and therefore in the self-cognition of the Absolute, the human being negates the givenness present to him, as well as himself. Cognition as the self-cognition of the Absolute, in which the path to the truth coincides with the truth itself, is arranged by the work of negativity. It happens in this way because ignorance, or if you like, the temporary ignorance of the Absolute, must be objectified. The person is not only the organ of divine knowledge (understanding), but also the organ of divine incomprehension. It is important to understand that this mechanism is not mystification, but happens in reality: by possessing nuclear energy, genetic engineering, subconscious “mechanisms” of consciousness, the laws of functioning of societies, the person can, in principle, create and destroy the worlds, construct breeds, arrange societies. The person acquires here not only the means of cognition (for example, by mastering the productive forces of the nature), but the nature itself, and in this true form, he is the truth of existence himself, so that in this productivity he is the goal in itself.

Thus, the development of the cognizing spirit is in no way reduced to the simple growth of knowledge about the world. Knowledge is not some gold residue, washed off by the long labour of cognition, and therefore the history of science is not at all the accumulation and theoretical systematisation of knowledge, summarized in the textbooks. Scientific knowledge does not remain lying in the warehouse of obtained truths, it immediately becomes the instrument of cognition, and every step in cognition rearranges the instrumentum (changes the subject himself). In Hegel’s language: cognized substance becomes power (conceptual) and “tools for results” for the cognizing subject. It understands that by knowing the complex arrangement of the thought forming it, is concisely present in it. And it is itself capable of understanding what is going to be understood, not because it is applied but because it is changed in its whole mental arrangement. So not only the subject-content of the concept is changed, but the understanding-form changes as well, and at ultimately even the idea of understanding itself. And knowledge in due course gets to know what it is to be knowledge. Therefore, as Hegel put it, “the development and unfolding of thought has taken place with them from the earliest beginning, and in order to comprehend their Philosophy we main remain with them without requiring to seek for further and external influences”.[[166]](#footnote-166) It is only because of error and mistakes, that spirit understands what is as a matter of fact to be understood. The result of cognition is then not only the negation of some theory about the world, but also the negation of the theorist himself, who internally changes within the course of history. Hence, the world opens to another theorist as a “subject” in a different manner – in another theory.

In this way cognition unfolds into history, because it is already history in itself. Human thought has history not because it is in history, but the reverse; real history materialises because thought concentrates in itself (and therefore, on the truth). Thinking about the meaning of the present trueness of the world, it goes beyond itself towards the first hypotheses and generalisations, makes mistakes and fails and tries to make hypotheses again: this is how history occurs.

It is, then, by being moved by the experience of negativity, which opens up a truth each time more truthful than the last, than the one that seemed to be final[[167]](#footnote-167). And so any justification passes by way of a critical reduction or negation in which both the object and the subject present the truth together.

# Existence, then, is realised not only as Nature and the natural World, but also as the Human Being and the historical World. In this respect, ontology should not be only ontology of nature, it should also be an *anthropology:* in addition to the ontological ground of natural reality, it should find the ground of human reality, or the latter can reveal itself in Knowledge (Truth).

# Precisely by describing Truth as the Subject or, in other words by analysing the specific characteristics of human reality, Hegel discovers the dialectical structure of Being and the Real, as well as the anthropological category of Negativity that underlies this dialectic.

# The basis of the Subject of Knowledge, revealing the Truth of Existence and the person-oneself, that is the Human Being, is a function of Negativity. Thus, the Human Being, defined in his existence by Negativity, is not the static-given-Being, but an Action or Act-change-of oneself. He exists as an objective-reality only as “dialectic movement”, the result of which is “mediated” by the negation of the present-Being and in the long run of oneself in the history of cognition.

# It is this Negativity that divides Being into Object and Subject, creating the Human Being opposed to Nature. But exactly this Negativity implemented as human existence, once again unites the Subject and Object in true cognition, where the Truth “coincides” with the Being which it reveals.

# Thus, the True or revealed-Being is not the first and original Identity as it was understood by Parmenides and his opponents, and even not the “immediate” or natural givenness of being and reasoning; on the contrary, the true is the *result* of a long process of cognition which starts by opposing the Human Being to Nature, about which he talks and which he “negates” by means of its own cognition.

# The reconstruction of the final coincidence of “Substance” and the “Subject” occurs in the adequate cognition (phenomenological description as we mentioned above) of the totality of Being by means of “absolute” philosophy, which is to say Hegel’s philosophy. The theorist operating with it already does not contradict himself as the “Subject” to Nature understood as “Substance”. Such complete and final correspondence between Being (= Substance) and Knowledge (= Subject) can be achieved only “at the end of the times”, when the creative movement of Human Being is complete. This completion is revealed in the fact that Human Being does not go forward anymore and is content with repetition (in philosophical cognition) of what has already occurred (I will talk about it in more detail in the chapter devoted to Kojève).

# To summarize, negativity, the bearer and the agent of which is the human person, is expressed in cognitive activity, which by means of mistakes and revision moves on the history of the world, which is simply the self-understanding of the Absolute. Thus, the human being is not only the organ of divine self-awareness, he is negative in nature: he is the erring organ of divine self-awareness. The Absolute cognizes via the Human Being, making mistakes and literally learning from them.

**Chapter 2. Kojève: Subject is an Action – Labor and Struggle**

The anthropological interpretation of Hegel suggested by A. Kojève[[168]](#footnote-168) divided the world into two opposing spheres: the kingdom of negativity, where the human being exists, and the kingdom of identity, or the natural dimension of existence. And if history is dialectical, nature has nothing in common with dialectics.

Vincent Descombes, however, noticed that such an ontology is not in fact dualistic insofaras existence and nothing are two meanings of existence, at the intersection of which we can find dialectics: In the long run, as Descombes puts it, we make an assumption regarding existence, where it is defined by “the logical meaning of identity”.[[169]](#footnote-169) Therefore there is no more “ontological dualism”. This idea is confirmed by Kojève’s passage:

The negating being negates its identity to itself and becomes its own opposite, but it continues to be the same being. And *this, its* unity within opposition to itself, is its *affirmation* in spite of its negation or “dissolution”, or, better, “transformation”. It is as this negating affirmation of itself, as reaffirmation of its original identity to itself, that the being is a “speculative” or “positively rational” entity. Thus Being which reaffirms itself as Being identical to itself, after having negated itself as such, is neither Identity nor Negativity, but Totality. And it is as Totality that Being is truly and fully dialectical. But Being is dialectical and not tautological Identity because it is also Negativity. Totality is the unifying-unity of Identity and Negativity: it is affirmation by negation.[[170]](#footnote-170)

Nevertheless, irrespective of how we describe Kojève’s ontology, its upshot is the elevation of the human above all nature, as it is human beings and only human beings, this hole in existence, as Sartre put it, that are capable of negation. The negation of present givenness becomes the synonym of freedom: Freedom does not comprise of the choice between two entities: it is the negation of the given as something which is “in-itself” (as animal or an “embedded tradition”), also of what it is not part of (natural and social World)”[[171]](#footnote-171). The same equation of negativity and freedom can be found in Sartre: “Negation tears us free of being”[[172]](#footnote-172). Moreover, negativity as a concept includes the idea of dialectic becoming in itself; in other words, time is a sort of entry into the world of creation. The privilege of a person as a being negating existence lies in their ability to create history. This idea is directly connected to the pragmatic conception of truth as negation. Descombes characterises it in the following way: “Todays’ error will turn out to be the future truth: “dialectic feat” that will perform the action”.[[173]](#footnote-173)

Therefore, for Kojève concept of truth is not theoretical, it is quite literally the result of a completed action. Truth is not to be “found”, it is proactively implemented to world, destroying all the obstacles in the process. Successfully implemented truth becomes objective reality and justification for sin (negation) that was committed in the process. The question is, how can this recognition of the truth be measured? Complete recognition, he proposes, is only possible at the end of the history[[174]](#footnote-174), which is the product of negating activity; struggle and labour, drive the mechanism of history.

The problem of human being is predominant in Kojève’s works. He stated that the essence and novelty of Hegel’s philosophy is expressed in foreword to *The Phenomenology of Spirit*: “In my opinion, which should be justified only by the narration of the system itself, the matter is to understand and express the truth not only as a *substance,* but equally as a subject”.[[175]](#footnote-175)

However, while sharing the Hegelian view on the dialectic identity of the subject and the substance, Kojève voids it of objectively idealistic content. For Hegel, the subject-substance is spirit understood as “a particular real entity taken *separately* but understood as an *integral element* of Totality”.[[176]](#footnote-176) By separating and then returning to itself in the process of history, spirit represents the self-consciousness of the absolute idea performing the dialectic and ascending to the absolute knowledge. Kojève writes:

Man is Self-Consciousness. He is conscious of himself, conscious of his human reality and dignity; and it is in this that he is essentially different from animals, which do not go beyond the level of simple Sentiment of self. Man becomes conscious of himself at the moment when – for “the first time” – he says “I”. To understand man by understanding his “origins” is, therefore, to understand the origin of I revealed by speech.[[177]](#footnote-177)

Kojève unites Hegelian atheism with its anthropology, replacing the absolute spirit, creator of history through the human activity by the self-sufficient human spirit. Therefore, Kojève emphasizes the comprehension of human activity and existence.

The ontology of his anthropology is inherently dualistic: “identity and negativity are two primordial and universal ontological categories”.[[178]](#footnote-178) Kojève provided numerous synonyms for each of these two concepts in his works. The “identity” is also mentioned as “present-given existence”, “substance”, “self-identity”, “thesis”, “object”, “nature” etc.

The *anthropogenesis* is the historic evolution of human subjectivity. Hegel provided anthropogenic transition from consciousness to self-consciousness[[179]](#footnote-179). Here, the interpretation of Hegelian concept of *Desire* (Begierde) becomes central for Kojève: “Begierde… is directed toward another Desire (and thus is Desire for Recognition) and that realizes itself through Action (*Tat*) negating given-Being. But, once more, this “a priori” construction can be carried out only after the fact”.[[180]](#footnote-180) Thus, Desire is the consequence of human being negativity that is directed at changing the surrounding reality. Desire can be also defined as struggle for recognition.[[181]](#footnote-181) In particular, in the form of destruction and the appropriation of the object of negation.

The emergence of human desire presupposes anthropogenic transition from desire for a natural thing. The human being is characterized by Desire that “is not transformed into a thing”, Desire towards a Desire. Thus, natural instinct of self-preservation serves the primordial desires of the animal; it is always present-given. The “human desire” is desire for the non-existent in the natural world, something that is not related to his biological survival. Human reality, “being essentially Desire and action in terms of Desire … can be born and maintained only within an animal life. But it is equally impossible when only one of the adversaries is killed …. This multiplicity, this “society” must in addition imply two essentially different human or anthropogenetic behaviours”.[[182]](#footnote-182)

Kojève implies that negation is the tool for human being to appropriate the reality, reality that is a source of infinite dissatisfaction for being. According to Hegel, the human being is not only what he is, but also what he can be, negating the fact that he is present. The human being is directed to the future, and is not equal to himself at any point of the time. The human being generates the difference between itself-present and itself-future, while being “self-identical”. This identity is related to own negative entity, which is maintained by constant negating. However, according to Kojève, “Being that reaffirms itself as Being identical to itself, after having negated itself as such, is neither Identity nor Negativity, but Totality. And it is as Totality that Being is truly and fully dialectical. But Being is dialectical Totality and not tautological Identity because it is also Negativity. Totality is the unifying-unity of Identity and Negativity: it is affirmation by negation.”[[183]](#footnote-183)

The eventual implementation of “project” in reality is the end goal of the human being’s labour. In negating the present for the future, it transforms reality according to the idea, created by thought and speech and based on “knowledge of the Past”.

Consequently, human practice is inseparably connected with discourse (*logos*). Therefore the human being in Kojève is the subject for both activity and speech. For Kojève, the ability for abstract reasoning is manifested by speech. “We deal here, – as Kojève marks, – with the negation of present-given as it is given (by “natural” connection of entity and existence)”; in other words, creation (of concepts…); in other words, acting or work.

Through the concepts of time and death, “Phenomenology of Spirit” addressed the negativity of abstraction. Any conceptual understanding (Begreifen) “is equivalent to murder”, – Kojève interprets Hegel’s position in such a way. Developing his thought, he gives the following example: the word “Dog” reveals the essence of the dog, and without this word this essence would not be revealed to men; but the essence of the *dog* is what realizes the meaning of the word; the dog is what allows man to develop the word “Dog” into a judgment, saying: “the dog is an animal with four feet, covered with hair, etc”. [[184]](#footnote-184) If a dog or any living creature in general or an object did not change in time and in the end would not die, then abstraction would also be impossible as its essence as an object would always be equal to its existence. The influence of future negativity provokes constant changes of the object, shifting it from present to past, allowing the separation of the empirical experience (directed towards past) and essence.

The natural life of an animal is characterized by living here and now (*hic et nunc*) that represents the present-given existence. The animal is able to surpass its present-given experience through illness, which abstracts it by displacing its natural topos. Its singularity is left forfeit, and animal becomes a general concept. However, this difference will be eventually illuminated by this very illness.[[185]](#footnote-185). The animal essence on human being may turn sick and die, the human being is able to create individuality by dialectical synthesis of the singular and the general. Maintaining the natural essence of the present-given human being augments it with speech, struggle and labour (reasonable actions) of the Universal[[186]](#footnote-186). Therefore, this interminable struggle of Singular and Universal is the reason for the very possibility for human freedom and individuality. This opposition is manifested through disease (disagreement between an animal and the natural world) and death of animal. This process also encompasses the animal essence in human being. [[187]](#footnote-187).

Human being through the speech discloses the endless totality of existence. Kojève explains the process and structure of such disclosure by a finite creature:

The human being reveals separate parts of totality one by one, gradually, and in order to be able to do so, he *puts* it to pieces, only the total of speeches spread in time can reveal the total reality… As a matter of fact, these moments are not separated from that integral that they are part of, being connected between themselves by space and time ties, let us say material, which are inseparable. Their *separation* can *astonish*, and the power producing them can be called “absolute”. This is “a separate solitary unit by giving him direction for his entire life.[[188]](#footnote-188)

The present reality as the “absolute essential-Reality”[[189]](#footnote-189) is therefore real-revealed-by-speech. This is what Hegel calls “Spirit”(Geist)”. Whereby the human being as the subject of speech cognizing the reality becomes a part of that reality. In the synthetic totality of discourse, the subject of speech is identical to its object – the person-in-the world. The category “person-in-the world” can be understood as a substance transformed by the human being itself. Therefore, the spirit is born and is seen as the unity of the subject and object, the subject and substance. However, the spirit has purely human negativity at its basis and is deprived of any objective-idealistic content. The integrity of all philosophical discourses disclosing the separate fragments of the total reality, generates a discursive totality or, in other words, the absolute knowledge of Hegel’s philosophical Science[[190]](#footnote-190).

The human subjectivity was eventually destroyed by the appearance of absolute knowledge. The ultimate appeasement of insatiable hunger for recognition leaves the person without its driving force, no longer in the opposition to the subject. Such a person loses its negating potential, until it disappears as negating present action and eventually loses its connection to negativity. This leads to the literal standstill, absence of any action or in Kojève terms disclosure of their philosophical discourse and the “disappearance of wars and bloody revolutions” [[191]](#footnote-191). Therefore, the history, which led to the creation of Hegelian Science, is exhausted.

As the result, every citizen of such universal homogenous state is devoid of human capability to negate, becoming no more than just a happy animal. Kojève characterises this post-historical period by an appeal to Marx’s philosophy: “proper History, where men (classes) fight among themselves for recognition and fight against nature by work, is called in Marx “Realm of Necessity” (*Reich der Notwendigkeit*); *beyond* (*jenseits*) is situated the “Realm of Freedom” (*Reich der Freiheit*) in which men, mutually recognizing one another without reservation, no longer fight and work as little as possible (Nature having been definitively mastered – that is, harmonized with Man).”[[192]](#footnote-192) Nevertheless, this post-historical person is not free as freedom presupposes a connection with negativity and death. That post-historical person is mortal; however, he lives and dies as an animal, as he does not negate the present-given existence. The being freed of negativity loses its freedom.

Thus, the human being manifests through actions as the subject of negativity. The concept of “amazing power of reason” should not be criticized despite the fact that human history is the history of death, destruction or war caused by the limitless power.. The ultimate goal is the state of universal recognition, and this progression is supported by the phenomenological agents of the essence of the human being, such as power, violence and death. Therefore, Kojève regards any action and exercise of negating power, however scary and bloody, just as a necessary stage of historical development. The history will end as a totality, utopian world of universal recognition with no space for contradictions. This concept shows that Kojéve’s atheistic eschatology is both ruthless and optimistic.[[193]](#footnote-193)

Thus, Kojève draws our attention to the fact that Hegel holds an ambiguous position with respect to negativity and its immediate connection with the subject. In *The Phenomenology of Spirit* he appears to assume that the source of negativity in existence is the human being itself, whereas in the rest of his works, he presents dialectic as auniversal characteristic of the whole world: the world (existence) is dialectical not because there is a human being in it but because there is time that encompasses both the world of nature and the world of person – the world wholly deploys itself in time. Kojève draws our attention to the contradiction (or to be precise to the “fantastical character”) of the second approach and will insist that it is in *The Phenomenology of Spirit* that Hegel expresses his true opinion. But whatever the case, Kojève himself agrees only with the “anthropological” explanation of negativity. And it is this thought that will become the key for subsequent post-Hegelian thought (French, in particular).

How does the *anthropological* version of the explanation of negativity differ from the so-called “natural-philosophical” one? The matter concerns the area in which negativity occurs and the scale at which it spreads. If we believe that it is not only the person but also *nature* that is implicated in negativity – which means it can cancel itself dialectically and negate itself by destructing some of its states in order for others to come in their place – then we are essentially *natural philosophers*. The *anthropological* version, envisages that there is nothing negative in the world apart from the person (his practical activity). From the anthropological point of view, there is no negativity in nature at all: taking into account all apparent changes, it is always *the same.* Any natural thing, for example a birch tree, is only its nature dictates. It is unable to change so dramatically as to change its substantial identity – the existence of being a birch. In spite of any transformation, the birch remains a birch or is simply destroyed altogether. The objects of nature are as such, that they always only *reproduce* themselves (the birch will give life to another new birch, puppies will be born from a dog, and kittens from a cat). We may mistake this simple substantial reproduction for negativity by, but it is not. By contrast, the natural philosophical approach includes these features, attributing dialectic properties to nature itself: an ability to change, to stop being itself, to transform into other state etc. Kojève will try to convince his audience (and he will succeed in this) that “the right dialectics” should give up the temptation of natural philosophy: nature should be regarded as the offspring of identity and only the human being is the true embodiment of nothing[[194]](#footnote-194). If nature only duplicates itself in the world, then the person is capable of radical transformations. Only the person can cancel himself in dialectical manner: by not being what he is, and by being of what he is not.[[195]](#footnote-195)

How does the human being manage to do this? And what is its radicality? It lies in the unique capability for *Action* (Hegel himself says as much, and not only in *The Phenomenology of Spirit*). It is by action that a person can *bring something new into the world*, in its broad sense; that is, something that was not existence in any shape or form before. Only the human being can introduce a *new event* into the world. Kojève presents this as follows: if *da-Sein* corresponds to the Nature, from the point of view of ontology, then it is Tat that represents a person as a Human Being. The Human Being as such is not present-in Existence, but represents creative Action. By acting, he implements and reveals Negativity or its Difference from this natural Existence.[[196]](#footnote-196) In this way the human being establishes a direct connection with nothing (negativity), accessing an almost mystical power (attributed by classical metaphysics to nothing more but a transcendent God) to create something from nothing. Therefore, a person is someone who literally creates the world *ex nihilo*, which is possible insofar as he exists as embodied negation. The human being is the only creature in the world that can totally transform itself, to the point of destruction, and this will be completed by a person and not by external reasons and circumstances. For example, only the human being can commit suicide, which no other living creature is capable of. This ability for deliberate self-destruction reveals the true connection to nothing. The human being is therefore humane when it denies any facticity in itself, that is either animal or human, but which is defined by a certain historical or social environment. In spite of the radical self-negation, the person remains in existence. In this way, human existence is defined by a “negative” ontology in which existence includes action, which gives existence its dialectical structure.[[197]](#footnote-197)

The human being is a creature capable of negation of present-given in the true dialectic sense. As he cancels and retains himself in this movement of establishing, one would assume that the human being in its essence is a *historical* creature. However, all of this is accessible to him only to that extent that he is an *active* and *productive* condensate of negation in the world. “Generally speaking, Negation, Freedom, and Action do not arise from thought, nor from consciousness of self or of external things; on the contrary, thought and consciousness arise from Negativity which realizes itself and “reveals” itself (through thought in Consciousness) as effective free action.”.[[198]](#footnote-198)

How does all this relate to the *transformation of fundamental ontology into fundamental anthropology*? The approach suggested by Kojève (and partly by Hegel) contributes directly to the development of this transformation by virtue of what I have called the *anthropologization of negativity.* First of all, just as we see in Heidegger, the question concerns the nothing in the depths of existence. The picture that Kojève actually offers to us depicts not of two parallel Existences (existence of nature/identity and existence of human action/negativity), but rather what might be called the structural embeddedness of Nothing in Existence. In this connection, Kojève gives his famous example of a gold ring.

“Let us consider a gold ring. There is a hole, and this hole is just as essential to the ring as the gold is: without the gold, the “hole” (which, moreover, would not exist) would not be a ring; but without the hole the gold (which would nonetheless exist) would not be a ring either. But if one has found atoms in the gold, it is not at all necessary to look for them in the hole. And nothing indicates that the gold and the hole are in one and the same manner (of course, what is involved is the hole as “hole”, and not the air which is “in the hole”). The hole is nothingness that subsists (as the presence of the absence) thanks to the gold which surrounds it. Likewise, Man who is Action could be a nothingness the “nihilates” in being, thanks to the being which it negates”.[[199]](#footnote-199)

And a few pages further on he writes that by acting man “realizes and manifests Negativity or his Difference from natural given Being”.[[200]](#footnote-200)As we see, it is the human being that is responsible for there being negation in the world. But here he is involved not by virtue of existing and being able to question existence, but by virtue of active practice – negating the present reality by bringing something *new* into the world. Thus, existence has the appearance that it has due to human being. The philosophical scheme here is similar to that in Heidegger: the human being is presented as a modality of existence, and this modality is then specified as “negativity”, that is, emptiness in existence, to which Kojève then attributes an active practice: “If the “objective reality” of Nature is its real existence, that of Man properly so-called is his effective action.”.[[201]](#footnote-201)This treatment of the person, the human being, leads to the transition from fundamental ontology to fundamental anthropology, presented here as we find it in Kojève’s work.

So, what is the immediate difference between the approaches of Kojèves and Hegel?

We considered the project of anthropologization of negativity in Kojève, who provides perhaps the most coherent and concentrated account of how human being implements the negativity in the world, and in essence acts as embedded negativity himself. In a sense, he states the negativity of the human spirit. The Human Being is the one, who via Action, Struggle and Labour, is ready to negate the world. And what is he motivated by? By what gives strength, induces, directs and most importantly, makes possible such a way of being in the world. Kojève’s interpretation of Action has all the features of the substantial nature of the human being, wherethe essence of the human being is in action. For Kojève, it is not worth asking why he wants to act, or not to act – such questions mean a waste of time and lead to an endless regress of grounds (explanations). But it seems to me that one *should* pose such a question. Otherwise it might turn out that the clarification of the nature of Action will certainly demand the answer to additional questions. As a minimum, it is important to analyze if not the reason, then at least the inherent characteristics of human Action. As we will see below, the concept of Freedom cannot be articulated by clarifying the essence of the human ability for Action and its deep motivation. Since Kojève himself does not elaborate on the concept of freedom, we need to turn to another thinker for a clarification of this concept, one who directly developed the project of anthropologization of negativity and made a colossal contribution into it. I am referring to J.-P. Sartre.

**Chapter 3. Sartre: The Subject is Freedom**

Paul Sartre elaborated probably the fullest account of negativity, from a logical point of view. Sartre attempts classification of the classical European dualism, dividing the pairs of concepts (being/thinking; matter/consciousness; external/internal; object/subject; world/person; signified/signifying; nature/spirit) into two “regions” of being: “being in itself” and “being for itself”. Sartre argues that “being in itself” can not be defined, as it is what it is and no more, being “indivisible, dense, massive and compact”, it is absolute inactivity. Being self-sufficient, this region provides no distinction between “this” and “other” nor any quantitative/qualitative certainty. Therefore, all characteristics and qualities of the world (space; time; meaning; death; quality; form; causality etc.) are introduced *only* through consciousness (“being for itself”). In phenomenal world, these two regions of being are never equal to each other. “Being in itself” is indifferent to “being for itself”, leading Sartre to the conclusion that person’s complex feelings towards the world always include a feeling of absolute otherness and rejection.

Sartre’s thoughts in *Being and Nothingness* imply that the process of “overcoming Ego” is essential for mental construction of reflection. He sees consciousness not just as cognition but more like a trans-phenomenal dimension of a subject being. Sartre defines consciousness as being, for which its being already includes the question of its being to such an extent as this being implies being different from itself.[[202]](#footnote-202)Sartre highlights paradoxical ability of a subject to inquire into itself, but in an unreflexive way, as if it was *not* a subject: “non-thetic consciousness is self-consciousness as the free project toward a possibility which is its own; that is, insofar as it is the foundation for its own nothingness.”[[203]](#footnote-203)

The consciousness, according to Sartre, is constantly denying its existent conditions, the outside being and even its own past. Sartre says that the subject is “nothingness” and his function is to discharge “nothingness”. Sartre argues that there is tradition of describing consciousness as denial, and this tradition belongs to European philosophy from Spinoza’s “To determine means negate” to Hegelian “Spirit is negativity”.

The philosophies considered in this research are obviously orientated towards the ontologization of negativity[[204]](#footnote-204), and Sartre considers it necessary to raise the question about nothing, while bearing in mind another motif. This motif might be defined as a *phenomenological problematisation of nothing* (up to this point I have mostly talked about dialectic, although Heidegger also addressed the problematisation of nothing and Sartre may have been influenced by this). Unlike the dialectical version, which is driven by the problem of the existence of time and temporalisation of the world in general, the phenomenological version poses a question specifically regarding envisaging presence of a human being. In this version, the human being is supposed to be an *observer*. What does this mean? If we briefly take the position of a phenomenologist, i.e. one who describes the world in terms of phenomena being observed, then it will not be easy to explain how *negative phenomena* arise. Let us imagine that I am stating the absence of something, e.g. I say “there’s no pencil at hand”. What about that strange “no” that is creeping into my experience? How can one observe the non-existence of something (of a pencil) in the existence? How is the phenomenon of non-existence possible at all – o can it be equivalent to the non-existence of a phenomenon? Can absence (being absent) or non-existence (not existing) appear to us? If we are not prepared to give a positive answer, then it is at least possible to give an answer that will connect non-existence with a human being. This solution, suggested by Henri Bergson and rejected by Sartre runs as follows. If we look closely at how negative utterances are constructed, we see that they do not contain any *real non-existence*. My negative judgement is not referred to the real nothing at all; on the contrary, it refers not to *nothing* but to *something.* When I say: “there is no pencil here”, it does not mean that absence of a pencil is some sort of specific experience – for example, if my pencil is of a green colour, then its absence has a grey colour etc. The absence of a pencil cannot be described as an independent experience, and it means that in some respect, this is not an experience at all or rather a pseudo experience. In reality, at any moment we deal with presence or absence (of the world and things in it), and only by comparing one presence to another, we as subjects driven by expectations, wishes and imagination, register the non-coincidence of one with another in the shape of special negative structures of language (i.e. *statements of a second order*). “Negation, therefore, differs from affirmation, so called in that it is an affirmation of the second degree: it affirms something of an affirmation which itself affirms something of an object”[[205]](#footnote-205)*.* Existence itself does not present anything negative to us – not to find the pencil on the table means to find the table itself, an array of other things on it, but *not the pencil.* Thus, when I have one something in reality and another something in imagination, in the real world all things are still *present* (and my pencil exists happily in some other place), and in this case I resort to a negative formulation. Therefore, negations are solely products of language, and *nothing* as *something* real is a fiction; however both are possible only because there is a human being in the world. The last remark might be considered Bergson’s contribution into the project of antropologization of negativity, although at the expense of announcing nothing as illusion.

On this view, there is no real emptiness in the world (the place of my absent pencil is always taken by something), and *nothing* can in no way be a part of things (if I say: this pencil is not green, this can mean only that it has a *different* – suppose, blue or orange colour). In the first place, Bergson’s solution is close to Leibniz (the world does not tolerate emptiness) and Kant (“Nothing” is an idea formed by means of negating the idea of “Nothing”), but categorically, it is not so close to Sartre, who intends to demonstrate that non-existence is absolutely real, and that it is the essence and the source of negations, and not vice versa. Sartre is closer to Heidegger on this point. “The not does not originate through negation; rather, negation is grounded in the not that springs from the nihilation of the nothing. But negation is only one way of nihilating, that is only one sort of comportment that has been grounded beforehand in the nihilation of the nothing”.[[206]](#footnote-206)

Sartre will hold a position exactly opposite to that of Bergson and Kantsuch that negativity will become something quite real and even objective for him. A further issue, is that due to this objectivity, negativity will depend on the human being. Contra Bergson, who claims that negation cannot present itself in any way, Sartre gives his famous example of the absence of Pierre in the café: When I enter the café, where I expect to meet Pierre, I see that he is not there yet. According to Bergson, there is nothing magic in this situation; it is necessary only to state the presence of Pierre in another place and drop the subject. But for Sartre the situation appears much more complicated. His description of the experience is worth citing in full.

It is certain that the café with its patrons, its tables, its booths, its mirrors, its light, its smoky atmosphere, and the sounds of voices, rattling saucers, and footsteps which fill it – the café is a fullness of being. All the intuitions of detail which I can have are filled by these odors, these sounds, these colors, all phenomena which have a transphenomenal being. Similarly, Pierre’s actual presence in the place which I do not know is also a plenitude of being. We seem to have found fullness everywhere. But we must observe that in perception there is always a construction of a figure on a ground. No one object, no group of objects is especially designed to be organized as specifically either ground or figure; all depends on the direction of my attention. When I enter this café to search for Pierre, there is formed a synthetic organization of all the objects in the café as the ground is an original nihilation. Each element of the setting, a person, a table, a chair, attempts to isolate itself, to lift itself upon the ground constituted by the totality of the other objects, only to fall back once more into undifferentiation of this ground; it melts into the ground. For the ground is that which is seen inly in addition, that which is the object of a purely marginal attention. Thus, the original nihilation of all the figures which appear and are swallowed up in the total neutrality of a ground is the necessary condition for the appearance of the principle figure, which is here the person of Pierre. This nihilation is given to my intuition; I am witness to the successive disappearance of all the objects which I look at – in particular to the faces, which detain me for an instant (Could this be Pierre?) and which as quickly decompose precisely because they “are not” the face of Pierre. Nevertheless, if I should finally discover Pierre, my intuition would be filled by a solid element, I should be suddenly arrested by his face and the whole café would organize itself around his as a discrete presence.

But now Pierre is here. This does not mean that I discover his absence in some precise spot in the establishment. In fact Pierre is absent from the whole café, his absence fixes the café in its evanescence; the café remains ground; it persists in offering itself as an undifferentiated totality to my only marginal attention; it slips into the background; it pursues its nihilation. Only it makes itself ground for a determined figure; it carries the figure everywhere to me. This figure which slips constantly between my look and the solid, real objects of the café is precisely a perpetual disappearance; it is Pierre raising himself as nothingness on the ground, the nihilation of which summons and demands the appearance of the figure, and it is the figure – the nothingness which slips as a nothing to the surface of the ground. It serves as foundation for the judgement – “Pierre is not here”. It is in fact the intuitive apprehension of a double nihilation. To be sure, Pierre’s absence supposes an original relation between me and this café: there is infinity of people who are without any relation with the café for want of a real expectation which establishes their absence. But, to be exact, I myself expected to see Pierre, and my expectation has caused the absence of Pierre to happen as a real event concerning this café. It is an objective fact at present that I have discovered this absence, and it presents itself as synthetic relation between Pierre and the settling in which I am looking for him. Pierre absent haunts this café and is the condition of its self-nihilating organizations as ground, By contrast, judgements which I can make subsequently to amuse myself, such as, “Wellington is not in this café, Paul Valery is no longer here, etc.” – these have a purely abstract meaning; they are pure applications of the principle of negation without real or efficacious foundation and they never succeed in establishing a real relation between the café and Wellington or Valery. Here the relation “is not” is merely thought. This example is sufficient to show that non-being does not come to things by a negative judgement; it is the negative judgement, on the contrary, which is supported by non-being.[[207]](#footnote-207)

So, how can one demonstrate the reality of nothing? From the point of view of common sense, the world is thought by us as a casually uninterrupted flow of reasons and consequences, and therefore it is important that each separate consequence is matched by a *homogeneous* reason. The fall of an apple from a tree, as a certain physical event, must be matched by a certain physical reason – a vibration in the air, weight, a mechanical influence etc. We cannot, without appealing to mysticism, invoke a non-physical reason governing this process; for example, we cannot say that the reason of for the apple falling was a certain event “x” that left no other trace in the physical world. However, it does not occur to us to say that the reason for the apple falling was its own decision to fall. If we adhere to this point of view consistently, we will come to a radical determinism, which would have to extend to human beings as well, depriving them of free will. However, if we still acknowledge the presence of free will on the part of a subject, in virtue of what do we do this? In virtue of fact that we understand that physical events that come about as a result of human activity cannot be wholly explained by physical reasons. It goes without saying that physical reasons are included into the casual chain, however they do not constitute it entirely. For example, when I get up and close the window, my behaviour as a physical body (rising, moving, transferring etc.) might be described solely in terms of physics, but how would my decision be described in this case? It is obvious, that we can refer to the physical sense of coldness, that my body is experiencing, to the stimulation to nerve-endings that led to corresponding signals in the brain neurons. Will this explanation lead to my decision as rigidly as water boils when heated to 100 degrees; is the decision itself described in terms of the language of neurons? As it seems, no. We understand it well – under similar physical conditions, the decision might be completely different. Moreover, the decision itself is not identical to the physical (neural) correlates accompany. In the same manner, the most thorough recording of all the physical changes in the body of someone who is eating an ice-cream still does not let us taste the flavour of the ice-cream, i.e. to gain access to one’s own subjective feeling. In this case, what corresponds to my decision in the physical world? Strictly speaking, nothing. It appears to be a blank space and a disruption in the chain of physical causes and effects. Even in this respect, the free-willed action might be called “nothing”.

Although Sartre leaves it outside his research the classical philosophical problem of deterministic and indeterministic approaches, it defines his own position, which is to retain freedom in the world (i.e. existence in general is indeterministic) without doubling the world, while also trying to tie its production solely to human being. Sartre’s version of the specificity of the existence of the human being is simply that freedom exists in the world due to the existence of the human being in it. The For-itself, in fact, is nothing but the pure nihilation of the In-itself, it is like a hole in being at the heart of Being.[[208]](#footnote-208) It is the human being that is that creature that is endowed with the ability to start the causal sequences unconditionally. This does not mean that nothing influences our activity, but no influences, either in total or separately do not form the cause for a human action in the same sense as we are talking about the cause for any physical activities. We talk about the reason for a physical body falling, but not in the same sense as we talk about the reason for someone’s decision. The falling body cannot choose the trajectory of its falling, the human being, however, can choose from the variety of options. It is possible to perceive the meaning of these reasonings at any moment. Even when making a simple choice, we may always feel that we prefer one actualized possibility to another; nothing directs human action as rigidly as events in the physical world. From an external point of view, a person may be presented as an absolutely spontaneous system whose actions cannot be figured out in advance; from an internal perspective there is an existential sense in which at every moment the human being realizes the emptiness or absence of preconditioning of his own activities. Therefore, certain motives and incentives might be behind a particular decision, but this does not mean that they strictly prohibit another decision that may be very different. The person is the one, who can perform *more than one action*, any of which may introduce a new event into the world. All of this is conditioned by one very important consideration: abilities in Sartre’s ontology are understood as *absolutely real.* Equally, possibilities exist in the world itself in the form of nothing. In Sartre’s words: “Nothingness lies coiled in the heart of being – like a worm”.[[209]](#footnote-209)This may be contrasted with Aristotle’s notion that the possible and the actual exist in different regions of the existence, and that in the actualisation of potentiality there is no arbitrariness (freedom), since this would violate the principle that no thing can come into existence from nothing. Philosophers, such as Sartre, tell us that the reality of possibilities present the reality of nothing, within the boundaries of existence and with the help of a human being. The statement on the freedom of a human being should not be understood as the statement that the person is capable of anything at all – there are always objective limitations. The point is that any action that is actually happening is surrounded by other possible actions, and the choice of which is undertaken is requires the emptiness of a break in the chain of causes and effect.

It is easy to find examples to support Sartre’s position here. Suppose we are considering whether to accept a new job, to move house, to accept a proposal etc. Each of these choices reveals a range of possibilities as a person never deals with one possibility only, and there will always be two at the very least: “to agree\not to agree”. In their turn, each of the possible decisions may be regarded as the *unconditional beginning of a causative range*– a person might take into account a whole array of various and convincing arguments and considerations, but his actions will never have a rigid row of causes and effects behind it. This means that the human activity has a unique ability to start from itself, to launch a sequence of events from nothing. Thus, the choice of a certain partner might open up a certain life scenario, whereas another choice would open up a different one. Each of these rows of events is ontologically new, transferred by the subject himself from a potency into an act. However, if there is no pre-determination, the subject of the choice in such a situation will always be burdened by an awareness that it actualized only a certain part from a number of potential possibilities, and possibly not the optimal one. Other possibilities might have appeared to be more attractive. Due to this uncertainty, the subject will always be subjected to *alarm* – an implicit awareness of how he could have acted differently, whereas the choice of a certain actualization is not guaranteed to be the best. A person standing in front of as lot-machine will know that the possibility of winning a million is absolutely real, and that what *will happen in reality* (he will not play, will play and wins nothing etc.) is not pre-determined anywhere in the world. The world “*does not know”* whether someone will win or not – as there *no* future. The future appears thanks to a person, as if something out of nothing[[210]](#footnote-210). Accordingly, by taking a decision not to play, he can absolutely and really miss out on winning a million. This is the awareness that each action closes thousands of possibilities before us and constitutes the essence of existential alarm. If we imagine the life of a person as a certain scenario (project), it will become clear why the person is never satisfied – he never knows if this scenario is the best or the worst from all the possible ones. Moreover, the person understands that nothing can deprive him of freedom in his actions, as the human action is unconditioned in principle, it might always be different.[[211]](#footnote-211) For “Dasein” there is even a permanent possibility of finding oneself “face to face” with nothingness and discovering it as a phenomenon: this possibility is anguish.” But I am in anguish precisely because any conduct on my part is only possible, and this means that while constituting a totality of motives for pushing away that situation, I at the same moment apprehend these motives as not sufficiently effective.[[212]](#footnote-212) Inefficiency of motives” means that such motives cannot rigidly pre-set the active performance of a subject, and their presence does not mean that the person was straightforwardly determined in this or that action. In other words, the motive is not the same as the reason. For example, the collision of cars as a result of an accident is the *reason* that they suffered, however the hurriedness of the driver, leading him to break a red light, is a motive. In spite of his hurriedness, the driver might not have violated the rules. As a motive is not a reason, we can talk about a *split* in the chain of causes and effects in relation to human actions.

Sartre’s version of the specification of the human being looks like this: there is freedom in the world because of the existence of Nothingness in the form of the person. Sartre writes: “We set out upon our pursuit of being, and it seemed to us that the series of our questions had led us to the heart of being. But behold, at the moment when we thought we were arriving at the goal, a glance cast on the question itself has revealed to us suddenly that we are encompassed with nothingness. The permanent possibility of non-being, outside us and within, conditions our question about being. … “Being is that and outside of that, nothing”.[[213]](#footnote-213) If there are no predetermined conditions, then “the subject” of a choice is burdened always with the consciousness that it realized only one possibility, perhaps not the best, from a set of potential possibilities. Due to this uncertainty, the subject is always exposed to *alarm* (the horror discussed by Heidegger, as we shall see below). The first negation, by which the human being claims that *it is what it is not, not equal to itself, non-self-sufficient*, is experienced as *alarm*. In this case, alarm is the person’s fear of his own freedom, in the face of “a set” of different possibilities of his being. The person is aware that no motivation can withdraw freedom from his actions because human action is basically without preconditions; it can be *always* different. In this respect, by selecting one possibility the person is bound *to annihilate* other possibilities: I believe that to have this (my) possibility, all other possibilities should be annihilated. The emptiness, Nothingness, of consciousness and the opposed being-in-itself constitute an *a priori* ontological “frame” within which Sartre’s man deconstructs his subjectivity.

The process of choice leads to the creation, as we provide value for the chosen by the choice made. Each choice negates all the other possibilities, thus, conversing to Nothingness. Ability to make a choice is the manifestation of freedom, therefore, there is no “good” or “bad” choice.

His key definition of human freedom is that it is the “an nihilating gap” between the present and the past, and the present and the future. “… a nothingness has slipped into the heart of this relation; I am not the self which I will be. First I am not that self because time separates me from it. Secondly, I am not that self because what I am is not the foundation of what I will be. Finally I am not that self because no actual existent can determine strictly what I am going to be”. [[214]](#footnote-214) For Sartre, the person exists in a gap in time; the present does not result from the past and does not prepare the future. It is the pure Nothingness, the Nothingness of its freedom. In fact, according to Sartre, the person is *a tool of indeterministic* existence. And, of course, freedom, to which the person is “doomed”, “chained to it like a prisoner to the ball”, as Sartre says, is negativity structurally embedded in being.

Sartre gives his own example in connection with all that has just been said:

I am on a narrow pat – without a guard-rail – which goes along a precipice. The precipice presents itself to me as to be avoided; it represents a danger of death. At the same time, I conceive of a certain number of causes, originating in universal determinism, which can transform that threat of death into reality; I can slip on a stone and fall into the abyss; the crumbling earth of the path can give way under my steps. Through these various anticipations, I am given to myself as a thing; I am passive in relation to these possibilities; they come to me from without; in so far as I am also an object in the world, subject to gravitation, they are my possibilities. At this moment fear appears, which in terms of the situation is the apprehension of myself as a destructible transcendent in the midst of transcendence, as an object which does not contain in itself the origin of its future disappearance. My reaction will be of the reflective order; I will pay attention to the stones in the road; I will keep myself as far as possible from the edge of the path.[[215]](#footnote-215)

Thus, the key definition of the human freedom will be the “gap” between the present and the past, as well as present and the future. “The present is precisely this negation of being, this escape from being inasmuch as being is there as that from which one escapes. The For-itself is present to being in the form of flight: The Present is a perpetual flight in the face of being… It is a flight outside of co-present being and from the being which it was towards the being that it will be”.[[216]](#footnote-216) In Sartre’s interpretation, the human being stands in a gap in time; the present not running from the past and not prepared by the future, is pure nothing – nothing of his freedom.

If we now turn to the question of how nothing can appear to us, i.e. how the statement in relation to the absence of something is possible, Sartre’s response is as follows. The experience of existence by a person is the experience of nihilating in existence, which means the possibility of a split between what has been and what is now and also what is going to happen in the future, and the human being introduces this gap into the existence very realistically. In this case, the gaps in time do not mean that my future is not flowing directly from my present, and the present is not flowing from the past, as there is no linear determination between one and the other. The person is always submerged in the emptiness of possibilities, and that is why he feels the paradox of the time so acutely – there is no past, there is no future yet, and the present is evasively vague and elusive. These three modes of time characterize the area of human freedom, which is to say the occurrence of chronic gaps in the chain of causes and effects (in this case the moments of time) – there is no causative sequence determining the future, there is no future as determined by the past, the present is merely an emptiness which is the subject itself (of choice). Therefore, difficulties arise in describing time as a linear determinate process – the subject is not able to perform this procedure as he is also implicated in the discontinuous nature of temporalisation, when each following moment does not result from the previous one. Thus, to state the non-presence of a pencil on the table is possible only from the point of view of human ontology, simply because the non-existence is quite real – it is intimately connected to the non-existence of reasons, disturbing the succession of the experience. As an example, in order to register the absence of a person known to us in a room, our consciousness must be able to abstract itself from all that exists and step back into the area not connected to the present. But to do so, he should be able to possess such an experience in the first place.

Thus whatever may be the explanation which we give of it, Pierre's absence, in order to be established or realized, requires a negative moment by which consciousness in the absence of all prior determination, constitutes itself as negation. If in terms of my perceptions of the room, I conceive of the former inhabitant who is no longer in the room, I am of necessity forced to produce an act of thought which no prior state can determine nor motivate, in short to effect in myself a break with being. And in so far as I continually use negatives to isolate and determine existents – i.e., to think them – the succession of my “states of consciousness” is a perpetual separation of effect from cause, since every nihilating process must derive its source only from itself. In as much as my present state would be a prolongation of my prior state, every opening by which negation could slip through would be completely blocked. Every psychic process of nihilation implies then a cleavage between the immediate psychic past and the present. This cleavage is precisely nothingness. At least, someone will say, there remains the possibility of successive implication between the nihilating processes. Thus the condition on which human reality can deny all or part of the world is that human reality carry nothingness within itself as the *nothing* which separates its present from all its past. But this is still not all, for the *nothing* envisaged would not yet have the sense of nothingness.

This statement, in its turn, allows Sartre not to agree with Bergson: “non-being always a ppears within the limits of a human expectation”.

Let us summarise Sartre's approach.

The ability of the person to take a questioning stance regarding things in existence and define them consequently presupposed Nothing. In such stance, one can assume that something exists or that it does not, and any definition in the form of “this is that, but not this” implies negation. Consequently, for Sartre the source of nothing is the person.

The nothing is the innate feature of the person, expressed by the freedom. Freedom makes choices and actions of the person undefined, not determined by past characteristics. The person’s time is present; the subject is real without connection to the himself of the past.

Sartre highlights the nothingness within the person by the example of the person on the verge of the cliff, the feelings (fear, alarm, thrill, dismay, panic etc.) he/she is experiencing was born by the realization that there is nothing that prevents falling/jumping.

Another example by Sartre is the compulsive gambler who decided to quit gambling. He made a promise to himself never to gamble the day before, however, today he feels that there his past promises have no compelling power, past decision are invalid and have no power in present. If one wants to resist the temptation, the process of reasoning is to be repeated time after time. The freedom (of choice) continuously breaks any past constrains and one has to restore them by choice every time.

Every person is capable of self-delusion, but also can promise to be sincere to himself (such promise is impossible to fulfil; it can only exist as an impossible ideal). However, according to Sartre, these concepts (self-delusion and sincerity) are quite similar to each other; he even argues that it is impossible to provide meaningful distinction between them.

What if I haven’t written or published a single book, but consider myself as an especially talented writer? Is it even possible to somehow distinguish the presumed talented writer from the graphomaniac? These “inner” characteristics of the person are ultimately undetermined. These characteristics are not “external” and easily defined . Moreover, these characteristics are personal beliefs of the person, the way he sees himself. Therefore, they cannot be regarded as “true” (sincere) or “false” (delusional), unless some consequent events or action allow such distinction. Consequently, the person that readily admits certain flaws tries to abstract himself from his past characteristics and create new entity, new self ”from scratch”.

Consequently, the quest “to be oneself” is unachievable, because nobody really knows what this ‘himself” really specifies. It is “Nothing” that stands between the human being and its essence.

If for Heidegger person is able to see the world (as a whole) only if he/she steps into nothing (this nothing should be present in a person in order for him to have his (own) world) for Sartre accentuates that nothing is the element of world itself. Contrary to the opinion of Heidegger, Sartre tend to agree with Hegel, who characterized the spirit as negativity. Sartre maintains that “nothing is included in the world itself, in its core as a worm”. The embedded negativity of the world equals to freedom, and human possess ability to exercise it, and is “doomed” to it. Therefore, nothingness is the hole in the being and it (as well as lack) enter the world through “for-itself”. Sartre defines the freedom in general terms: “The For-itself is always beyond its past and can only assume it through an act, that recuperates it only by placing it at a distance from himself”.[[217]](#footnote-217) For Sartre human being is an instrument of indeterministic existence, which runs contrary to Hegelian view of human being as Absolute’s organ of self-cognition. The person introduces freedom to the world; consequently, fundamental anthropology replaces fundamental ontology. Hegelian thought assigned reflectivity to the person, providing opportunity for the Absolute self-inquiry, Kojève’s ideas highlighted human ability to act. In case of Sartre, he underlined the introduction of freedom by the person, which makes it unpredictable and spontaneous.

This phenomenological concept of Nothingness runs counter to the view of Nothingness as the “primordial abyss” from which “existential being is drawn out” by Heidegger. According to Sartre, metaphysical inquiry can take place only before the existent being. In his view, “Nothingness can nihilate itself only on the foundation of being; if nothingness can be given, it is neither before nor after being, nor in general way outside of being. Nothingness lies coiled in the heart of being – like a worm”.[[218]](#footnote-218) “Nothingness is a hole in being” may serve as a short recap of Sartre’s ideas. Therefore, it is consciousness that nihilates the being.

Ability to make a choice implies the absence of restrictions to human activity, as each choice of the person creates a new existence. However, without any binding principle these creations should become a score of separated acts. Then, how can self-identification be possible? Strangely enough, Descartes comes to his aid here. Despite the fact, that Sartre’s rejection of the Cartesian tradition, he still attempted an existential “reading” of Descartes in his article “*Cartesian Freedom”* (1957). He regards “methodical doubt” as the ability to say “no”, thus, the freedom of choice. In *Being and Nothingness* he writes: Descartes following the Stoics has given a name to this possibility which human reality has to secrete a nothingness which isolates it – it is *freedom*”.[[219]](#footnote-219) Therefore, the permanence of negation becomes the principle that unifies the activity of consciousness. Sartre regards self-isolation as the process of liberation of the person. If being in-itself is self-identical and self-sufficient, then, according to Sartre, “the self therefore represents an ideal distance within the immanence of the subject in relation to himself, a way of *not being his own coincidence*, of escaping identity while positing it as unity”.[[220]](#footnote-220)

Sartre deconstructs these ontologically baseless capacities of the subject and it is very important in the analysis of the works of Kojève and Heidegger (as will be shown below). For Sartre, as well as for Hegel, Kojève, and Heidegger, the ontological status of the person can be identified as the presence of an intraworld negativity, which serves as a basis for fundamental anthropology.

Let us see now what difference can be found between the approaches to the negativity in Hegel and Sartre.

Hegelian “Spirit” is a complex structure comprising negation and mediation. According to Hegel, (self) cognition occurs gradually through encountering and overcoming of contradictions. Hegel distinguishes between spirit and life. Spirit is able to face the negativity; it is aware of death, but does not turn away from it. To be more precise, death is the simple negation of existence for what is alive and spirit is able to overcome this negativity.

Hegel writes:

The essence of the spirit, is therefore freedom, the identity of the absolute negativity of the concept with itself. It can distance itself from everything external and from its own externality as well as from its being, and thus bear infinite pain, the negation of its individual immediacy; in other words, it can be identical for itself in this negativity. This possibility is its self-contained being in itself its simple concept, or absolute generality itself.[[221]](#footnote-221)

Sartre connects this ability to withstand negativity with the ability of the Spirit to make a decision, thus, to abandon its present existence and choose a different one: “It is evident that non-being always appears within the limits of a human expectation”.[[222]](#footnote-222)

However, the further development of Hegelian thought does not lead to such notion directly. According to Hegel, Spirit belongs to the Universal, hence his ability to contradict death. Any individual, subjected to simple and unconditional negation (death), dies. However, Spirit is linked to the Universal, not only through its thinking. Therefore, Spirit is much more than individual, it is manifestation of the Absolute Spirit. On the contrary, Sartre highlights the individual human subjectivity which is always alone: “But we, on the contrary, have seen that being is an individual venture. Similarly the appearance of the for-itself is the absolute event which comes to being”.[[223]](#footnote-223)

Hegelian subject is subjected to contradictions, but all them are ultimately surpassed, thus remaining only in “sublated” form. Consequently, Hegel predicts inevitability of synthesis after negation, which contradicts to the view of existentialists. If the contradictions in Hegelian negation are not removed, it (and Spirit as well) acquires new meaning. Both Hegel andSartre speak about a certain movement of Spirit (consciousness). However, if Hegel talks about this as a movement from in-itself to in-itself-and-for-itself, then Sartre insists that consciousness is always consciousness that is for-itself. Being in-itself is the way a thing exists. “In fact being is opaque to itself precisely because it is filled with itself. This can be better expressed by saying that being is what it is. […] We shall see that the being of for-itself is defined, on the contrary, as being what it is not and not being what it is”.[[224]](#footnote-224) In other words, Hegel proposes systematic transition, whereas Sartre wants a sudden shift. Consciousness is always co-knowledge that is the knowledge of oneself (though in its initial revelation it is also non-thetic, non-judging). As Sartre writes, consciousness is “not a unity which contains a duality, not a synthesis which surpasses and lifts the abstract moments of the thesis and of the antithesis, but a duality which is unity, a reflection which is its own reflecting”.[[225]](#footnote-225)

According to the Sartre, there is the gap in the consciousness, as what is present in relation to oneself already cannot be its own.

 Let us note first that the term in-itself, which we have borrowed from tradition to designate the transcending being, is inaccurate. At the limit of coincidence with itself, in fact, the self vanishes to give place to identical being. The self can not be a property of being-in-itself. It is not the subject, since the subject without relation to himself would be condensed into the identity of the in-itself; The self therefore represents an ideal distance within the immanence of the subject in relation to himself, a way of not being his own coincidence, of escaping identity while positing it as a unity - in short, of being in a perpetually unstable equilibrium between identity as absolute cohesion without a trace of diversity and unity as a synthesis of multiplicity. This is what we shall call presence to itself. The law of being of the for-itself, as the ontological foundation of consciousness, is to be itself in the form of presence to itself.[[226]](#footnote-226)

This contradiction of this construction (named “spirit” by Hegel, while Sartre did not designate any particular term to it) is inherent and cannot be eliminated. Therefore, one cannot “become oneself”, as what is for-itself cannot become “self”.

If the in-itself were to found itself, it could attempt to do so only by making itself consciousness; that is, the concept of *causa sui* includes within it that of presence to self - i.e., the nihilating decompression of being. … Consciousness is in fact a project of founding itself; that is, of attaining to the dignity of the in-itself-for-itself or in-itself-as-self-cause. But we can not derive anything further from this. Nothing allows us to affirm on the ontological level that the nihilation of the in-itself in for-itself has for its meaning - from the start and at the very heart of the in-itself - the project of being its own self-cause.[[227]](#footnote-227)

What a person (consciousness, existence) is aiming to become, is given to him as certain absence (nothing) or “value” in Sartre’s terms.

There is ethical anguish when I consider myself in my original relation to values. Values in actuality are demands which lay claim to a foundation. But this foundation can in no way be being, for every value which would base its ideal nature on its being would thereby cease even to be a value and would realize the heteronomy of my will. Value derives its being from its exigency, and not its exigency from its being. On the contrary, it can be revealed only to an active freedom which makes it exist as value by the sole fact of recognizing it as such.”[[228]](#footnote-228)

The “for-itself” reflects itself as a defect, because it is what it is not in reality. If it was complete, then it could not exist. This completeness appears to consciousness at the very moment when it establishes itself as “for-itself”, however, value of consciousness is the absence of such completeness. As Sartre writes:

 Man first of all exists, encounters himself, surges up in the world – and defines himself afterwards. Far from being a screen which would separate us from action, it is a condition for action itself.[[229]](#footnote-229)

Human reality is its own surpassing toward what it lacks; it surpasses itself toward the particular being which it would be if it were what it is”[[230]](#footnote-230). “If what consciousness apprehends as the being toward which it surpasses itself were the pure in-itself, it would coincide with the annihilation of consciousness. But consciousness does not surpass itself toward its annihilation; it does not want to lose itself in the in-itself of identity at the limit of its surpassing. It is for the for-itself as such that the for-itself lays claim to being-in-itself.[[231]](#footnote-231)

In such doctrine God is paradoxical “for-oneself”, who reached completeness, having become itself, without ceasing to be “for-itself”. However, Sartre argues that such “for-itself” is impossible; more precisely, it is inconceivable and non-representable.

If being exists as over against God, it is its own support; it does not preserve the least trace of divine creation. In a word, even if it had been created, being-in-itself would be inexplicable in terms of creation; for it assumes its being beyond the creation. This is equivalent to saying that being is uncreated. But we need not conclude that being creates itself, which would suppose that it is prior to itself. Being can not be *causa sui* in the manner of consciousness.”[[232]](#footnote-232) “The being which is the foundation only of its nothingness surpasses itself toward the being which is the foundation of its being. But the being toward which human reality surpasses itself is not a transcendent God; it is at the heart of human reality; it is only human reality itself as totality.[[233]](#footnote-233)

Sartre argues that Hegelian triad is infeasible: thing (in-oneself); consciousness (for-oneself); value (“in-oneself-and-for-oneself” as the unattainable limit). Such a logical consequence is incorrect since the value of “for-itself” is “co-substantial”: the presence of value is the condition of being for the “for-itself” (and vice versa).

But it must be noted here, that while the For-itself lacks the In-itself, the In-itself does not lack the For-itself. There is then no reciprocity in the opposition. In a word, the For-itself remains non-essential and contingent in relation to the In-itself, and it is this non-essentiality which we earlier called its facticity. In addition, the synthesis or value would indeed be a return to the thesis, then a return upon itself; but as this is an unrealizable totality, the For-itself is not a moment which can be surpassed. As such its nature approaches much nearer to the “ambiguous” realities of Kierkegaard. Furthermore we find here a double play of unilateral oppositions; the For-itself in one sense lacks the In-itself, which does not lack the For-itself; but in another sense the In-itself lacks its own possibility (or the lacking For-itself), which in this case does not lack the In-itself.[[234]](#footnote-234)

In Hegel, spirit returns to itself through its encounter with the Other, which in the first instance is things. As Spirit progresses, the Other takes the form of another person and then there appears another as an universal individual. Hegel believed that different consciousness might eventually become one. He is talking about evolution, the logic of becoming; but from the very beginning of this consideration, he does not adopt a viewpoint from any of the evolving consciousness, instead he chooses a point where consciousness finds itself at the very end of the path.

In *Being and Nothingness*, Sartre admits huge Hegelian influence on the formation of his own understanding of the problem of the Other, and highlights the development of Husserlian phenomenology to Hegelian “Phenomenology of Spirit”, which was a step forward in his eyes. It was from Hegel that he took the idea that “…the appearance of the Other is indispensable not to the constitution of the world and of my empirical “Ego” but to the very constitution of my consciousness and self-consciousness”.[[235]](#footnote-235) Others must acknowledge me. “In fact this certitude would be true only to the extent that its own existence for itself appeared to it as an independent object”[[236]](#footnote-236). “Thus, the “moment” which Hegel calls being for the Other is a necessary stage of the…self-consciousness; the road of interiority passes through the Other”. [[237]](#footnote-237)

Such quite a primordial relation to the Other establishes and supports the cogito itself. Sartre’s understanding of the Other, borrowed from Hegel, thereby contrasts to the traditional understanding of the subject as autonomous and self-sufficient. In fact, what Hegel calls “unhappy consciousness” is quite close to how Sartre describes human being for-itself: as Jill Gilbert notes, “unhappy consciousness is itself the consciousness of this contradiction, it identifies itself with the changeable consciousness, and takes itself to be the unessential Being.”[[238]](#footnote-238) Hegelian though highlights the desire of self-consciousness to unite with the Absolute. “Unhappy consciousness” is unhappy, according to Hegel, because it still has not realised that it holds the general (Absolute) within itself. Hegel regards Absolute Spirit as a certain universal thinking, and provides a more consistent and truthful way (in his view) of uniting the singular self-consciousness to it. From Hegelian perspective, a follower of the atheist Sartre will be “unhappy” in this way.

Thus the being of consciousness, since this being is in itself in order to negate itself in for-itself, remains contingent; that is, it is not the role of consciousness either to give being to itself or to receive it from others. In addition to the fact that the ontological proof like the cosmological proof fails to establish a necessary being, the explanation and the foundation of my being – in so far as I am aparticular being – cannot be sought in necessary being.[[239]](#footnote-239)

Hegelian view of human history sees it as already finished and same goes for his view of the Spirit. His viewpoint on the developing of World Spirit or individual consciousness is the same, as he sees them as the accomplished whole. Therefore, he sees all the development as linear movement from plurality to unity, which serves as elimination of differences. However, if any consciousness cannot be “translated” into another (as we see in Sartre), then any question about another can be asked only through my individual *cogito*. Adopting this point of view, Sartre claims that another is the necessary condition “my” inner world existence.

Let us reiterate once again the difference between the models of Sartre and Hegel. From the point of my individual consciousness, I may conceive the Unity but I cannot become the whole and reason it from the point of view of myself and another.

If for Hegel, the human being is unhappy due to his own unreason, until he realizes that he belongs to the Absolute and that the Absolute thinks itself through him, then for Sartre, the human being is simply unhappy. Although he is embedded in existence, the human being is separated from the world by all the breadth of his negation. He is part of existence; however, he is the empty undefined part, not knowing about itself. He is that paradoxical part of existence, where there is no existence.

In some respect, this is the logical outcome of those interpretations of the human being that we find in the philosophies of Hegel and Sartre. In Hegel, the human being makes the world definite, the Absolute, in the end, learns about itself, becomes something definite; in Sartre the human being makes the world undefined by bringing freedom into it, and that means chaos and arbitrariness, too. These interpretations quite naturally follow from those dispositions of the essential nature of the human being, which we can find in both thinkers. Hegel, who is still partly in the classical philosophical paradigm, is not ready to reject the idea of cognition. As we saw earlier, the Human being is the being that inevitably makes mistakes, but he begins by thinking, and through this thinking the Absolute ultimately comes to itself. On the contrary, Sartre’s existentialism is not prepared to define the human being in terms of thought and thinking. From now on, the human being is pure existence – he simply is, exists or, at least, is there. It exists first, and thinks only afterwards. Existence is not encompassed by a thought (idea, concept, essence). If existence has an essence, it is not thinking, but freedom – the remarkable ability radically to change affairs as they actually are, while nothingness provides no grounds on which to make any decision. However, such an ability, as we showed above, is comes with a high degree of uncertainty, and in fact the human being is this fundamental uncertainty, this non-transparency, the abyss and darkness of his own freedom. The human being does not know himself and it is because of this that the world as a whole, free world, exists. Yet only the human being bears this freedom, and without the human being there would be no freedom at all. That is why according to Sartre, the world of things is alien to the human being – they painfully resonate with the darkness and uncertainty of the human being. Being in contact with things, the human being immediately feels the lapse in himself – himself as a lapse (a lapse in existence). If Hegel’s human being endowed the world with wholeness, Sartre’s human being gifts it with disunity: he splits the world. For this reason, he cannot determine its connection to existence. The price we pay for making the world undefined, and through it, free, is the uncertainty in ourselves – I do not belong either to the world or to myself, I only disappear into the emptiness, factually always being it already.

Turning to Heidegger below, I will examine his attempt to provide an account of the human being (Dasein) as more fully part of the unity of the world. Is it possible for the human being to become a part of the world without losing its basic existential character? If the nature of the human being is negative and its existence in the world can be described only in terms of a certain downfall, or a gap in existence, on what grounds does it retain a connection with things in existence? How is the human being connected to things in existence? Can human existence be made more confident, more rooted into its existence, which is always already the existence of the world itself?

**Chapter 4. Heidegger: Subject is Dasein**

Heidegger has combined the bright parts of existentialism with phenomenological method, and has slightly changed or rather sharpened its focus. The formula “the human being is the organ of self-cognition of the Absolute Spirit”, supplemented by *the principle of intentionality,* will lead to another formula: the human being, wishing to find the subject in himself, finds object-existence in himself.

Instead of the conventional notion “subject”, Heidegger uses a special term “Dasein” and offers a nonconventional interpretation – being-there - which is different, for example, from the Hegelian sense of “being at large”. The main idea of the existential analytic of Dasein as fundamental ontology consists, as I will show, in the fact that the person should not be considered as self-consciousness or as a subject of cognition opposed to the cognizable object but he should be contemplated phenomenologically as “there is being” and that existential structures (existentials) should be revealed. This does not at all mean considering the person once again as a subject and subject consciousness realizing itself: indeed, Dasein is a certain way of being, and its specificity lies in the fact that it can in some way *know* about itself. Such an interpretation differs radically from the modern idea of the subject which, as we showed at the beginning of this research, leads to stable epistemological and ontological paradoxes. In *Being and Time* and the lecture courses of the period, Heidegger dwells not on being but, first of all, on “existential comprehension”. The latter allows Dasein to individualize, i.e. to become specific as a person, but in no way means its subjectivity. This also allows us to consider the person as a particularly ontological, though unique, phenomenon – he is given completely to being and is himself being, or a “phenomenon of being”. The existence of the person is distinct from that of all other entities by virtue of the fact that its being comprises the question “what is being?”.

Heidegger tried to step outside the limits of the theoretical subject of modernity and to “deconstruct” it, calling as he did so on the principles of the philosophy of life and existentialism. He pays attention to the fact that human subjectivity manifests in a quite specific way: it is never apprehended essentially as a subject of cognition and, in this context, it is not constructed but is *itself* an existential condition of any construction. He understands subjectivity as reality that “is present” in any human act but which is inseparable from them, and “participates” in the creation of any product of human activity without being *reduced* to them. It is always *possibility*, not exhausted by any imaginable realization; and it is *openness* for any form and method of existence without being specified or determined by them. Heidegger explains that his philosophy is an attempt to contemplate our being *“before”* (in some sense as a transcendental condition of possibilities) it was expressed in different forms of activity and thinking, i.e. “*before”* the person became a subject, and the world appeared before him as object. Therefore, by claiming that the essence of Dasein is revealed in existence, Heidegger considers existence simply as the *being* of Dasein.

Heidegger believes that phenomenology should be a method of explication of the being and phenomenology for him, as it did for Husserl, means “the primary notion of method”. Therefore, phenomenological method is the only way to approach the statement of the question of being. Heidegger stresses: “Ontology is possible only as phenomenology”.[[240]](#footnote-240) However, Heidegger does not adhere to the phenomenological point of view of Husserl or to that of any other phenomenological. Contrary to Husserl, Heidegger considers the phenomenon not as a product of transcendental subjectivity but as the being of the existing entity. Therefore, according to Heidegger, the notion of sciences of the person is not applicable to Dasein: philosophical psychology, anthropology, ethics, policy, literature, biography, and history can provide information on separate aspects of Dasein and even be “existentially authentic” but they cannot take the place of the ontological analysis of Dasein structure. Ontology deals with *a priori* structures and conditions of being. It is just these *a priori* structures, referred to as existentials, which are comparable to the categories of Kant, with the difference that the question is just *a priori* conditions of being and not only cognition as is the case with transcendental idealism.

So, how is Dasein introduced and how does intentionality work here? As is well known, phenomenology understands intentionality as a direction of consciousness towards the object. Consciousness cannot be empty – it is always a thought about something. It is easy to demonstrate – just try to think *about nothing* – it is impossible, as the thought “about nothing” is indeed the thought “about something”. Whereby this thinking about something is not a feature or property of the thought but its principal constituent as without direction thought has no structure. The mechanism of intentionality, as Kojève showed, is perfectly in agreement with the dialectic principle of the “concrete”- the object does not exist by itself, and my thought is non-existent, however there is always the “object-activated-by the thought” and the “thought-thinking-object”. In the following quotation Kojève actually speaks about Hegel, however it can be easily applied to Heidegger’s view:

In reality, true cognition does not have anything in common with “Reflection”, as peculiar to pseudo-philosophy (that is pre-Hegelian philosophy) and pseudo-science (Newtonian), which reflect *upon* the Real, being located *outside* it, in general not clear where; with Reflection which aims to give “the vision” of the Real from the point of view of the cognizing Subject (who is considered to be autonomous whereby, that is independent from the Object of the cognition), from the point of view of such a Subject, who, according to Hegel, is only artificially isolated and an aspect of cognized or disclosed Reality.[[241]](#footnote-241)

Through intentionality, subject “unlocking” is manifested – de-subjectivation in Heidegger’s terms. “De-subjectivation” is understood to be the refusal to understand the subject transcendentally, following Descartes or Kant. The subject is neither a “cogito” (I am the one who is thinking), nor the “transcendental unity of apperception” (I am the one who is thinking through all my experiences) as thought is never correlated *to itself*. As phenomenologists repeatedly point out, intentionality is not a property of the subject but rather the subject itself. There is no subject without intentionality. This clarification is important; one should not regard the subject as something separate and autonomous, which on occasion can direct thought to objects. In fact, the subject or a subjective experience starts only when there appears a restraining focus at the side of the subject, which retroactively (retrogressively) constitutes the side of the object. Perceiving and the things perceived are always *mutually retained* in a single act of bonding and never precede each other. By virtue of this introduction of intentionality into the very core of the subject, the traditional terminology of philosophy may be reviewed, and one can stop talking about the “subject”, which is a notion that carries with it a series of wrong associations.

Intentionality is neither objective nor subjective in the usual sense, although it is certainly both, but in a much more original sense, since intentionality, as belonging to Dasein’s existence, makes it possible that this being, the Dasein, comports existingly towards the extant. With an adequate interpretation of intentionality, the traditional concept of the subject and subjectivity becomes questionable.[[242]](#footnote-242)

Instead of the term “subject”, Heidegger suggests using “Dasein”, which means “being-there” or “being-here”; Dasein is *a specific type of existence*, and its specific character lies in what it makes evident. This latter circumstance allows its personification, which in no way denotes its autonomous subjectivization. The person is Dasein, and not the subject. And this allows treating a human being specifically as an ontological, though unique, event – it is wholly and without any residue given over to existence, and is existence itself. This means that its experience is originally constituted by existence-in-the world.

Dasein does not need an appeal to itself… On the contrary, these are only things and in nothing else, and only I-things that surround him on a daily basis, where Dasein finds itself. It does not need any specific observation or spying for I-existence, in order to possess being self, but in a direct passionate distance and loyalty of Dasein to the world, being self in Dasein is glowing and reflecting from things. This [provision] is not at all a mystery, it does not envisage personification of things, but merely points to some elementary phenomenological circumstance of here-existence, the circumstance that must be seen before any intricate verbalization of subject-object relations and facing which one must measure the freedom of notions as compared to it, and not vice versa — to shield oneself from any phenomena with the help of some construction made up of notions.[[243]](#footnote-243)

This is a remarkable state of affairs in all respects: we closely encounter with ourselves in the real life, pushing off things, and therefore we become unlocked for ourselves in our own sameness. Sameness (or I-myself) is always here-there for Dasein, — without inner perception (reflection).

Therefore, from the very beginning, the human being belongs to existence. As a peculiar way of existence, the way it stands out from all other types of existence and from all the other things in existence is connected to the fact that in its existence, there is a question that concerns existence itself. Hegel would say in this connection that the existence itself governs the person thinking about existence. Heidegger thinks very much the same: “The thought, to put it simply, is the reasoning of the existence. The Genitive has a double sense here. The thought is the reasoning of the existence as by coming true, thanks to the existence, it belongs to the existence. It is the reasoning of the existence at the same time because it listens to the existence by obeying it. The thought is that it is, in accordance with its essence, as a listening-obeying thing in relation to existence. There is a thought — and that means: the existence in its history is originally attached to its essence”. And further on:

Metaphysics is fenced from that simple and significant circumstance that the human being belongs to himself only because he hears the requirement of the existence... due to this fact he has a language as his shrine protecting the ecstasis peculiar to him. Only the human being is empowered with such a type of existence, which is not only the possibility of reason, in it, the essence of the mankind essence keeps the source of its definition[[244]](#footnote-244).

Therefore, Heidegger substantiates his ontology based on the phenomenological method. Consequently, only the person can be the matter of phenomenal description, however the context is different from European metaphysics. In *European Nihilism* Heidegger argues the classic metaphysics is erroneous in attribution of thinking to the person, and thereby turning it into intellectualism, bringing the essence of the person to cognition and overlooking its being of thinking. For Heidegger, the world is the world of Dasein, which exists as Being-in-the-world. If in transcendental idealism reality as a whole dissolved in the forms of the cognition, in Heidegger’s philosophy the whole world was inseparable from human existence. Heidegger describes the world as it is perceived by the consciousness of the person *before* any reflection.

So where and how does negativity feature in Heidegger`s philosophy?

In Hegel’s dialectic, negativity was understood as the condition of continuance, unfolding of the world in time. Dialectical ontology envisages Existence as Totality, the unity of two dimensions – the Identical (substantial) and the Temporal (negative).

Heidegger’s proposal is even more radical. It articulates the key intuitions of existentialism – the exteriority of existence, the difficulty of capturing it philosophically.

According to Heidegger, metaphysics was the thinking of entity since the ancient time:

 As metaphysics, it is by its very essence excluded from the experience of Being; for it always represents beings only with an eye to that aspect of them that has already manifested itself as being[[245]](#footnote-245).

In “Overcoming Metaphysics”*,* Heidegger develops the idea of the “retreat of metaphysics”, and argues that it has exhausted itself. Heidegger analyzes the essence of this end in detail: *such* metaphysics, which speaks about entity as entity, is an event in being itself, and overcoming metaphysics is performed as overcoming the being[[246]](#footnote-246).

Another direction of thought that is alternative to metaphysics also has ancient origin, as the following fragment from Parmenides states:

Thinking and the thought that it is are the same.

For not without what is in which it is expressed,

will you find thinking…[[247]](#footnote-247)

There is also the inscription: “If you go right, you will obtain truth” and “If you go left, you will lose truth”. “The path of truth” by Parmenides means that you will obtain eternal, unchanged, and permanent, because being is what always is and there is no not-being. Alternatively, losing the truth represents “The path of opinion” as you will lose thought, you will lose being because here there *is* and there is not.

From this point and on the European thought chose the first path, resulting in metaphysics. However, Heidegger returns to that moment, and he chooses another road, where there is birth and death, segmentation of space and streaming of time, in which one can “experience the oblivion of Being”.[[248]](#footnote-248) This choice is the “overcoming of metaphysics”. By being on this path, the person (thought) should learn the “experience of being in Nothingness”. This is the reason why *Nothingness* appears in Heidegger’s theory.

Thinking, for Heidegger, must not conceive of an entity as being but conceive of *truth* of being.

Indeed, existence is consistently neither a thing, nor a notion, even if it is ultimately due to the existence of a thing, that the world as a whole *exists.* However thoroughly we examine this or that existing thing, we will still not be able to find any existence in it; we cannot point out to existence in the same way as we can point out the colour or the shape of the object, since existence is not a colour or a form. Existence appears to be like a *zero predicate* that adds nothing to the object and is not its property. The persistent desire to predicate existence springs from the obvious understanding of the fact that an imagined or a possible object is something different from an actual object. Nevertheless, how is this happening? The actual object does not help us answer this question as in the object we are always dealing with the thing in existence, whereas we are interested in the existence itself, which eludes us. With these apophatic characteristics in mind, there appears temptation to announce it as “Nothing” (as a synonym to negativity). “…As soon as we want to grab the existence, it always happens so that we get our hands into emptiness. The existence we are questioning here is almost the same as nothing, even although we would resist every minute, guarding ourselves from the necessity of saying that all things in existence *allegedly do not exist*”*[[249]](#footnote-249)*. Does this mean that the existence itself is no more than nothing? Not quite.

Primarily, existence is continuous (temporal). Therefore, nothing (negativity) penetrates into the world, which is to say, into existence. This construction might confuse us as the dialectic works with negativity as with the existence of non-existence. Heidegger, nevertheless, noted that nothing does not prevail but makes the existence insignificant. Specifically, it underpins the temporal (historical) structure of the world.

Eventually Heidegger returned to his former understanding of being as concealed behind entity and this “concealing non-concealment” can be revealed only in questioning of being. Entity persists constantly, thus, is not identical to being. This notion is very important, since there is no change in permanent existence, and without change there is no new being in actual reality. In the most cases, such permanence produce “new” born of ignorance of the person, which tries to understand their surroundings. However, in such situation one would eventually come to understanding of permanent order. Therefore, real being does not exist permanently, and then it does not, it is something new, creating *historicity*. The world is not finished and stable, it is prone to fundamental changes. Paradoxically, both being “is not” and nothing “is not” but both take place. Both being and nothing are present in the individuality. In other words, through the person (individuality) negativity enters the world, in fact making it itself and *highlighting* its Being it consequently illuminates the simple things in this world.

Therefore, nothing has its representative in existence or, if you like, the impersonator is the person himself. It is thanks to the human being in the world that there is nothing and vice versa: thanks to nothing there exists a human being. But why specifically a human being?

To answer this question, I shall retrace the development of the phenomenon of *Nothingness*.

Strangely enough, *Nothingness* appearsthrough the direct attention to an entity (as existing thing) from any rational discourse (for example, science). Heidegger writes: “That to which the relation to the world refers are beings themselves – and nothing further”.[[250]](#footnote-250) The majority of rational discourses, especially science, are directed at understanding of entity, existing things, ignoring or rejecting non-entity (nothingness). Nevertheless, some implication of *Nothingness* appears in the process of thinking, and most are dismissed. The process of thinking inevitably invokes some of the questions like “What is it if there is no entity?” or “What was before the entity?”. These questions are also ignored by discourse, even in metaphysics which follows famous axioms of Parmenides. Heidegger argues that a genuine philosopher, specialist in phenomenology, should not dismiss anything that accompanies the thought and its subject, and the environment of disputed ideas. Any thought directed to an entity creates repercussions and implications on periphery of the involving non-entity. Nothingness is ever close, despite the common preference not to notice it. Being casts the shadow of Nothingness. For the rational discourse that seeks sense, nothingness is nonsense. However, in the process of understanding the *essence*, science needs this nonsense. That is why Heidegger discovers the *necessity of Nothingness,* this nonsense from the point of view of scientific rationality. While our life is based on science, this contradiction (the necessity of nonsense) can be traces in it.

Once the question has arisen, it needs an answer, but any answer is plagued with contradictions. First of all, the questioning of *Nothingness*, transforms it into *Something*, which is not possible as something is not nothing. Moreover, answer to such question in the form “Nothingness *is* …” is meaningless. Consequently, logic thinking or *reasoning* about *Nothingness* will fail due to the contradiction in its nature. Therefore, *Nothingness* leads to the negation and can not be subjected to critical thinking. However, this is just one more contradiction, as thinking *negates*, but if negation is a specific act of thinking, then thinking already deals with negation and uses it to the utmost. Therefore, negation as an act of Nothingness is substantial part of thinking, that cannot be denied or taken away. Consequently, the question of primacy arises - whether negation is *Nothingness* or negation is consequential function *of Nothingness*? According to Heidegger, the answer to this question is yet to be found and substantiated. However, he claims that there are serious reasons to believe that *Nothingness* is more primary than “no” and “negation”. At the very least, no formal paradoxes or difficulties associated with the question of *Nothingness* can prevent one questioning it, which leads to the paradoxical notion that Nothingness exists. So, given the fact, where we can find it?

The step after determination of the nature of *Nothingness* is the analysis of *experience of* *Nothingness* to locate its position. The question if nothingness always accompanies any questioning of Being. However, while the latter tried to avert attention from Non-being, Hegelian thinking equalized them, adopting the view that real productivity of Being is possible by virtue of Non-being, its negation of some conditions in favor of the other.

Nothingness reveals itself in the experience in the process of comprehension of “entering into the world”, understanding of his ability to non-follow the logic of this world, and the fact that the world persists in existence with or without him. When the perception of this fact is settled in our mind, everything around us becomes empty and obscure. Our mood confronts us with *Nothingness*; this is the mood of horror. This is not anxiety or fear related to specific phenomenon that can be prevented or avoided, but a fundamental horror without source, horror of undetermined, horror when you lose control and then you lose yourself. Nothingness is introduced to the person by such horror. “In the lucid vision sustained by fresh remembrance we must say that that in the face of which and concerning which we were anxious was “properly” – nothing. Indeed, the nothing itself – as such – was there”.[[251]](#footnote-251)

What is the essence of such presentation? We discover the irremovable weakness of the whole set of entities, and, in turn, our vague and ambiguous position in relation to entities as a whole, i.e. *annihilation*. However, it is not the elimination of an entity; it is not a negation; this annihilation realizes and preserves *Nothingness*. Heidegger writes: “Nihilation is not some fortuitous incident. Rather, as the repelling gesture towards the beings as a whole in their slipping away, it manifests these beings in their full but heretofore concealed strangeness as what is radically other – with respect to the nothing”. [[252]](#footnote-252) The possible truth was revealed, that, perhaps, this world means nothing, it is no more than a transient form of Nothingness, it is spawn from Nothingness and will eventually return to it – essentially cycle of Nothingness itself. This discovery of personal transiency causes existential melancholy, which then spreads on the whole world and all its entities. Yes, the reason of us being here is unknown, but the same goes for the whole world. It *just* exists. However, *does it really exist* in all its profound *simplicity?* May it be that Nothingness is manifested through this ontological occasionality, just a temporal modulation of Nothingness, its emergence and disappearance defined by the environment, which is Nothingness. Perhaps everything is even more prosaic and terrible, i.e. the world is Nothingness, and everything that happens in it is also Nothingness. Fundamental notion of Heidegger’s philosophy appears at this stage of thinking about Nothingness, as he claims that *human being* is related to the entity as a counter to *Nothingness*. In Heidegger’s theory, nothingness reveals true being; the phenomenon of nothingness reveals the entity to the person which allows the person to consider it: “The nothing does not remain the indeterminate opposite of beings but unveils itself as belonging to the being of beings”.[[253]](#footnote-253) Heidegger describes this “belonging” of Nothingness to the being of the entity by the concept of Dasein, human being having individuality. The definite individuality of the person that determines the mode of human being is based on Nothingness. *Nothingness* is an integral characteristic of human being. The person isan assistant to *Nothingness,* *its conductor and medium*. The human being “extends” into *Nothingness*, and *Nothingness* opposes the entity as quite Other.

The essence of the person, his definite individuality is formed by the Synthesis of Being and Nothingness, because “without the original revelation of the nothing, [there is] no selfhood and no freedom”.[[254]](#footnote-254) The life of the person is confined to the certain space, but he can keep or give place to *Nothingness,* and this special place would become the space of annihilation, the apophatic space. And the person enters the world from this very place; he sees the world from the viewpoint of Nothingness, and the world opens up before him only because he comes to it. But from where? From the depths of Nothingness. In the name of whom does the person talk of the world? In the name of Nothingness. Heidegger notes: “The nothing itself nihilates”.[[255]](#footnote-255) Therefore, Nothingness not only provides a temporal structure of the world but it provides the presence of entity, i.e. physical things and phenomena in the world. “The nothing does not merely serve as the counter concept of beings; rather, it originally belongs to their essential unfolding of such. In the Being of being the nihilation of the nothing occurs … Dasein can relate itself to beings only by holding itself out into the nothing and can exist only thus”.[[256]](#footnote-256) Consequently, person acts as an “agent” of Nothingness in the being. Being of entity unlike human being is not historical, and the important aspect of the latter is its acknowledged impermanence. And this conscious knowledge enables existence or transcendence of the person, who can fall outside his limits and, at the same time, find himself in the world. Person’s capability to transcend oneself (to exist), to differ from oneself, allows us to raise the question of being. This question can be asked only from the viewpoint of non-being, i.e. Nothingness. That is the reason of person’s interest in this Nothingness. Therefore, as the person is only a certain way of being, then the person is just this annihilating dimension of being. *Thus, fundamental anthropology is possible only due to the binding of the human with the negative.* Any human being is able to regard an entity and see into it only through initial phenomenon of Nothingness. The disclosure of an entity as such for the human being (Dasein) is conditioned by Nothingness. Self-awareness of Dasein comes from Nothingness, which annihilates the temporal entity in being (unaware of its impermanence) using the person (annihilating hypostasis of its Dasein) for it. Heidegger writes: “In the structure of thrownness, as well as in that of project essentially lies a nullity”*.*[[257]](#footnote-257) And it is a basis for a possible nullity of *non*-proper Dasein in abandonment that it always exists in reality. “Care itself, is in its essence thoroughly permeated with nullity. Care, the being of Dasein, thus means, as thrown project: being the (null) ground of a nullity”.[[258]](#footnote-258) The person’s ability “to raise the question of being” his involvement in Nothingness. From his position he can either “advance” to Being from the area of Nothingness, or retreat from Being to the area of Nothingness. Therefore, Heidegger says that “Da-sein means: being held out in the nothing. Holding itself out into the nothing, Dasein is in each case already beyond beings as a whole ”.[[259]](#footnote-259)

But if we can raise the question of being and yet cannot define it in any way, and if being remains elusive for us, how is this possible? An entity cannot be given to a person just because he annihilates in substance and can never conform to the being of the entity or “catch’ it. However, it is only because Dasein is the experience of annihilation in entities that entities can be discovered at all; i.e. things and the whole stock of the world as well as its Dasein. “ Only in the nothing of Dasein do beings as a whole, in accord to with their most proper possibility – that is, in a finite way – come to themselves ”.[[260]](#footnote-260) This is due to the fact that when entering Nothingness or, rather, being always there, the person can see the world (entities) from outside; he can see things.

In the clear night of the nothing of anxiety the original openness of beings as such arises: that they are beings – and not nothing. But this “and not nothing” we add in our talk is not some kind of appended clarification. Rather, it makes possible the revelation of beings in general. The essence of the originality of nihilating nothing lies in this, that it brings Da-sein for the first time before being as such.

Only on the ground of the original revelation of the nothing can human existence approach and penetrate beings.[[261]](#footnote-261)

Here “daylight of being” appears, i.e. a moment of reflection, understanding of oneself, a path being as such. This “daylight” is a perception of one’s own nullity, of one’s own being as such, which is a condition for understanding of any entity. One can be but as a thing (*there are* things but they do not exist), i.e. *without knowing* being and entities. Or one cannot be and annihilate but then an openness appears allowing the movement from Nothingness to an entity or entities, the openness for the discovery of an entity and our knowledge of it. I address myself and “become” existence, attitude to myself, “real” being. “Human existence can comport itself towards beings only if it holds itself out into the nothing. Going beyond beings occurs in the essence of Dasein”.[[262]](#footnote-262) The person is thus emptiness of some kind, a “hole in being” (as noted later by Sartre), which can house the whole world. In this case, while the entity preserves occupancy, the person does not know that he is Nothingness but Nothingness reveals itself in the experience of the disclosure of Dasein.

How can one explain the relationship between human being and negativity. Here, Heidegger is ready to repeat the whole existential tradition: A person (and in a broad sense, any meaningful phenomenon which is always individual) cannot be defined through attribution and identification because it thereby loses its uniqueness or personality. Therefore, its distinctness is induced in another way, namely, through the negation or waiving of any identification with the given value, through underlining its *dissimilarity* from others, through an annihilation which declares itself, as noted by Heidegger, in repulsing and driving away. This agrees with what Sartre wrote about the existence of the person, which always precedes his being as an entity. The person, individuality, being by definition a specific one, creates itself in conditions of complete uncertainty about itself; the person does not know itself but it makes itself. There never *is* a person as individuality (there are no semi-finished products anywhere with which one can check), therefore the person lacks himself always. This motivation leads us to Hegel and Kojève: “the person is that whom he is not and he is that whom he is”.[[263]](#footnote-263) This famous phrase of Kojève’s summarizes an idea that is both his own and Hegelian: the person is particular only because he is finite and mortal. He is that new entity that emerges and must disappear. But the mortality of the person, principled and essential for his humanity, for the opportunity of being a person, belongs to Nothingness and, if you prefer, is Nothingness itself. This defining principle provides a space for a human being in which any individual can be established by waiving a conformity with the given. Heidegger writes: “The nothing is neither an object nor any being at all. The nothing comes forward neither for itself, nor next to beings, to which it would, as it were, adhere. For human Dasein, the nothing makes possible the manifestness of beings as such”.[[264]](#footnote-264)

The formation of Personality begins in the space of Nothingness, where the fulfilment of specific *conditions* created a definite individuality. The first stage is nihilation, related to the prohibition, everything that should not be accomplished or fulfilled. Its first condition is a value choice through restrictions. Nihilation and negative choice place some actions in nothingness, which leads to a perception of the value of an entity. This stage provides the perception of oneself as oneself, and, therefore, is obligatory stage in the formation of any individuality. Personality has to possess definite individuality, which is the second condition. To establish the being of his world, person reveals his self-sufficiency and self-identity, instead of nihilation. Self-identity is achieved by isolating himself from the world, leaving the world outside as something other, as not-I, thus, he must define what is he, and what is not, and separate from the latter. Therefore, this process of separation from the works is equal to negation. The part of the world that is defined as “I” reveals his selfness and uniqueness. Having become a Personality by acquiring individuality, the person enters the world as a phenomenon, which is the third and final condition. Internal self-perception of the person regards continuous disintegration of time as an experience. In the reflection of our personality, we oversee our inner conditions, in their changeability, irreversibility, and transience, constituting the phenomenology of the inner feeling. These states are temporal, and by assuming those which do not exist any longer. I can become the unique guarantor of the reality of these states, which took place at some earlier time.

Activity of the person defines its selfness and individuality. is the person is self-contained in-itself and for-itself, can have relation only to itself (self-identity), lives only here and now, and cannot live there and then. The individuality is limited only by negation, but even these limitation tend to “diffuse” into being. This boundary of negation marks everything through the process of interaction and definition of being within these boundaries. This thought is similar to the Sartre’s idea of freedom: the person is bound to unconditional and unrestricted freedom. Through the process of negation (act of freedom) the person becomes individuality, therefore, this freedom is produced by Nothingness. Person interacts with the world – changes it, objectivizes and substantiates, and these acts of creation define the person.

*Nothingness* is not restrictive and limiting, instead it creates a field for creation and, in the long run, is a cause of creation. “We must prepare ourselves solely in readiness to experience in the nothing the pervasive expanse of that which gives every being the warrant to be”.[[265]](#footnote-265) Therefore, *Nothingness* just becomes an experience of being. Heidegger writes:

That thinking whose thoughts not only cannot be calculated, but are in general determined by that which is other than beings, may be called essential thinking. Instead of calculatively counting on beings by means of beings, it expends itself in being for the truth of being. Such thinking responds to the claim of being, through the human being letting his historical essence be responsible to the simplicity of a singular necessity, one that does not necessitate by way of compulsion, but creates the need that fulfills itself in the freedom of sacrifice.[[266]](#footnote-266)

Existential thinking not only conceives the truth but also expresses it for the truth of being, for establishing itself in being.

That is why a new understanding of the identity of thinking and being appears and, consequently, a new understanding of fundamental anthropology: existential thinking is something distinct and quite definite relating to values, culture, history, and generally speaking the dimension of anthropology.

The person in being exists so that, being built into the world of nothingness, he illuminates this world as a collection of entities. It seems that it is just the person who implies being. But inasmuch as this being is never an entity but only a condition for the possibility of entities, and makes room for entity, then it can be perceived as nothingness, emptiness, vacancy, or a gap in being – what the person actually is. A different matter is that this is the most productive vacancy (failure or “gap” in the terms of Heidegger). Due to this vacancy, the world goes towards itself and finds itself in the capacity of the world through the person. Metaphysics, metaphysical feeling inherent to the person, his metaphysical demand and capacity for metaphysics are the traces of that important work carried out by the person in his being. As Heidegger writes:

Going beyond beings occurs in the essence of Dasein. But this going beyond is metaphysics itself. This implies that metaphysics belongs to the “nature of the human being”. It is neither a division of academic philosophy nor a field of arbitrary notions. Metaphysics is the fundamental occurrence in our Dasein. It is that Dasein itself”.[[267]](#footnote-267)

Thus, negativity in the form of human existence is present in the world, in reality, and creating this world, due to several inter-related components of its Dasein. First of all, because it is human existence that is historical and finite (Dasein is also defined as “being-towards-death”[[268]](#footnote-268)). This is related to the fact that the human being and the dimension of human are constituted by temporality. Temporality in its turn allows the human being to exist – to go beyond their boundaries, to be in the world and not to be enclosed in itself. It allows the human being to find itself in the world. On the contrary, Existence, which is the ability to go beyond oneself, somehow to transcend oneself (transcendence is understood here not “classically” but rather in a linear fashion as secured solely by the structure of the temporality of the human being as existence in the mode “always-already-in front of-oneself”) allows the question of being to be posed. However, it is possible to pose the question of existence only from the point of view of non-existence, from the point of view of something which is not existent (and only *non-existence*, that is *nothing* can be literally as such) as a meta-linguistic distance is required. That is why the human being is closely related to this nothing. And as a person, as we said it, is only a certain way of existence, this person is that area or modality of existence regarded as being nothing.

The essence of the originally nihilating nothing lies in this, that it brings Da-sein for the first time before beings as such. Only on the ground of the original manifestness of the nothing can human Dasein approach and penetrate beings. But since Dasein in its essence adopts a stance toward beings – those which it is not and that which it is – it emerges as such existence in each case from the nothing already manifest [[269]](#footnote-269).

The overall structure in general, leaving behind the intermediary steps, will be as follows: nothing is to be nothing in existence (as existence is temporal), yet nothing achieves this by virtue of the human being (due to specificity of Dasein), which allows the existing being (in its non-existing part) to ask about itself, that is to know itself in a certain way.

The main peculiarity of the human being, attesting to his direct connectedness to Nothing, is the ability to “question existence”, that is to take distance from it. This retreat is only possible only into the region of “Nothing”, or vice versa, advancing to existence is only possible from the region of “Nothing”. In connection to this, Heidegger will say that “the human being is pushed into Nothing”. Existence cannot be given to a person because he is in an important sense non-existent in existence: he can never coincide with existence, nor grasp it – making such attempts, he is destined always to fall through the emptiness (we can put it more clearly in Plato’s terminology taken over by dialectic: human Dasein “always becomes but is *never “existent*”). However, it is because the subject is an experience of being non-existent in existence that things in existence become open for him – things and the whole stock of the world. This is explained by the fact that coming into the region of “Nothing” or, rather, being always there, the person can see the world (things in existence) from outside, he can see things. Accordingly, we cannot comprehend existence as we are located in the area of nothing, in the emptiness of existence, which Heidegger will call a “glimpse of existence” – the things in existence can only be seen from there, although existence itself is not seen. In some respect, two possibilities are represented in the world. It is possible *to be,* but as a thing (things exist); that is, not knowing things in existence. Or it is possible not-to-be, being nothingness, whereupon there opens a prospect of moving from nothing to things in existence, the discovery of things in existence and knowledge about them. The person represents, therefore, a certain emptiness, a hollow in existence in which the whole world might be held. The property of being filled up with things in existence remains, the person does not know that he is nothing, but when the things in existence “precipitate”, nothings opens up in experience, which to a certain extent coincides with the discovery of existence[[270]](#footnote-270).

In view of the abstract nature of this reasoning, we can summarize it as follows, distilling the core meaning:– the human being is a particular mode of existence, which is constituted by negativity, and which allows for existence to have a specific structure in order that things in existence can come to themselves. The specific nature of the existence of human beings lies in the ability to exist, and that is to exceed his own boundaries, which is embedded into his unique ability to question the existence. This means that *fundamental ontology* owes its structure to the human being and therefore might be defined as *fundamental anthropology*.

Interpretation of Hegelian thinking, especially negativity is important in the development of Heidegger’s philosophy. Heidegger rejects the metaphysics, and tries to trace the origin of the thought for the appropriate replacement. Therefore, on his path to “original thinking” he draws from Hegelian understanding of existence. Heidegger repeatedly interpreted Hegelian thinking through the question of the meaning of existence.[[271]](#footnote-271) He argues that interpretation is possible only if “every step of Hegelian thought in every region of his system”[[272]](#footnote-272) is followed. While he engages in the interpretation in numerous works, Heidegger advises caution to avoid empty discussion as the result of detailed reproduction of any part of Hegelian system. His hermeneutic understanding fills these parts with content, in order to see “…*the very existence of this principle, this origin*”. The essential question of existence should be addressed from the standpoint of Hegelian assumptions. According to Heidegger, concept of “negativity” in Hegelian thinking should be questioned and analysed, since it reveals the essence of its reasoning.[[273]](#footnote-273)

Heidegger argues that historical influence of Hegelian thinking is difficult to assess, because “entities are, quite independently of experience by which they are disclosed…, and the grasping in which their nature is ascertained”.[[274]](#footnote-274) Hegel accomplished the “completeness” of the system and achieved “the impossible ideal” of human intelligence. But according to Heidegger, identity of Hegelian system shouldn’t be considered as something ultimately finished. Hegelian philosophy should be understood as a process of happening or developing. The Heidegger’s methodological idea implies that having to repeat the journey that resulted in the complete philosophical system of Hegel we will reach something new.

In his consideration of Hegel, Heidegger discusses several concepts that are key in his early approaches to Hegelian philosophy, and remain relevant throughout the course of discussion. In his early works, he defined these as: the relation of being and nothing; ontology and time; thinking and history. In fact, Heidegger formulated the most important points of contradiction with Hegel as follows: “And when Hegel at last defines Being as the “indeterminate immediate” and makes this definition basic for all the further categorical explications, he keeps looking in the same direction as ancient ontology”.[[275]](#footnote-275) However, it is not possible to deduce the definition of being as “indeterminate immediate” from the equivalence of being and nothing. Therefore, Hegel “categorially missed life, existence and process”[[276]](#footnote-276), and, consequently, history. Therefore, “it is necessary to question radically <...>, the existence itself”.[[277]](#footnote-277)

Heidegger does not accept Hegelian understanding of connection between being and time Heidegger accepted the Hegelian concept of time, seeing it as the most consistent definition of metaphysical tradition. In Hegelian thinking the most abstract and negative temporal characteristic is associated with “now”. This “now” is pure negation (“not-yet-now”, “no-longer-now”). Notion of time as pure duration enhances the understanding of “now” as a singular moment, turning it into evolution. According to this definition of time, history is understood as the deployment of the world in the temporal structures. This process is manifested through being (or consciousness), since the formal structures of time and Consciousness are identical. Both being and time are, in essence, pure negativity, however, their self-identity relies on content. Heidegger argues that such relation is not related to the nature of existence, being subordinate to the relation of “occurrence”. Hegelian thinking regards time as abstract form for “existence of existence”, while subject exists through being, and at this point metaphysical understanding of negativity becomes necessary. Negativity formulates content of identity. Hegel assumes that identity cannot exist without a negative form, while Heidegger argues this aspect of Hegelian system is relic of traditional metaphysics and indication that the indication that Hegel is not radical enough in his pursuit of negativity.

Heidegger argues that in answering the question on the nature of time, one should discuss its internal nature, not trying to include it into external logical constrictions or subordinate it to another essence. Heidegger tried to regard Hegelian concept of time as a singular moment negativity that eventually vanishes in the Absolute. This view created unresolved ontology of self-sufficient reality, where a separate subject is present in existence. Hegel regards subject to be internal, not external, which always exists historically in the world and actually sustains this world by bringing history into it. However, this assumption was not enough for Heidegger. Although a subject contributes to negativity and incorporates it in the World, it is more likely that the World delegates the responsibilities of historical division to the subject, subordinates it to itself and actually totally controls them. There is a certain established way known to Existence (where the logic of historicism plays out), which the Absolute firmly and confidently sustains, using it to realise the pre-determined scenario of a person – as a tool of its recognition. According to Heidegger, in Hegel’s system the metaphysical principles of Christian belief are transformed into the pre-established way of the Absolute (the way to oneself). In this way, the new European principles of a privileged subject simply grow into the instrumental prominence of a person – as before, he is a special one and equipped in advance with all that is necessary. The difference is that now he is no longer “hovering” above the world, but firmly rooted in it. However, it seems that this rootedness is not enough for Heidegger. It is also necessary to deprive a person of the privileges apportioned to him by Existence (Hegel). It would be incorrect to relate this to Heidegger’s hostile attitude towards the nature of a human being, but it could instead be attributed to the rigorous way in which he follows the logic of negativity – if the Human being is translated by negativity, then it (negativity) cannot be connected with the warrants, pre-establishment or with an approved plan. Conveying negativity cannot just mean following orders.

Heidegger claims that his starting point in the analysis of Hegelian philosophy is located inside, not outside.[[278]](#footnote-278) He argues no thinking yet would overcome Hegelian philosophy, as there could not be “a *higher* point of self-awareness of the spirit”. Therefore, this point of view has to be found within Hegelian thinking as “an unconscious ground, forever inaccessible to consciousness.” Moreover, Heidegger specifies that this point is more essential that mere critical judgement of Hegelian ideas. “There is no ontology, since the leading question does not circumscribe any domain; and there is no metaphysics since the new thought no longer takes its departure from beings present to hand…”[[279]](#footnote-279). By this notion Heidegger implies the his truth of Existence, “being” freed from the metaphysical constrains and relation to the “being of things in existence”. Heidegger declares the following: “Dasein is itself by virtue of its essential relation to Being in general.”[[280]](#footnote-280)

Consequently, Hegelian concept of “nothing” and its connection to “existence” provides no more than such “restricted” understanding. “Negativity” in Hegelian philosophy, as Heidegger believes, is flawed as something unquestionable and matter-of-course, “this is not an ontological statement about the nature of reality”.[[281]](#footnote-281) “Unquestionability… is first disclosed in and through discourse.”[[282]](#footnote-282) This certainty restricts and limits philosophical questioning through which the “negativity” can reveal itself. This failure to question or impossibility of questioning became the main topic of the treatise on “negativity”.

At first sight, “*negativity* must find its *purest* and *decisive* form in nothing”[[283]](#footnote-283). However Heidegger argues that “negativity” cannot be traced from Hegelian “nothing”, because it is almost identical to “being”, this “nothing” is not differentiated and not appropriate for negation. Heidegger supposes that the “existence” reveals the “essence” of “negativity”. As Dobrez writes, “Nothing is merely the nugatory, equating it with the non-existent…, we should rather equip ourselves and make ready for one thing only: to experience in Nothing the vastness of what which gives every being the warrant to. That is Being itself.”[[284]](#footnote-284) In the very beginning of his “Logic”, Hegel removes any difference between being and nothing. There is no difference between “nothing” and “being”, since they are *the same*. This paradox can be seen as empty abstractions of Hegel, that has no essence, but everything is more complicated. It seems that the second statement naturally originates from the first, whereas in fact between them is abyss. The source of *difference* between nothing and being is something which is not obvious. It is not something we can just omit. The absence of answer from Hegel suggests that he was unable to comprehend negativity on the assumption of nothing. As “the nothing is undifferentiated “zero”…and reason in Hegelian form, conceived of the nothing as unified and thinkable negativity”.[[285]](#footnote-285) Consequently, he did not address the negativity of “one” to “another” relations. The unconditional negativity is not bound by “one”, “another” or “one-another”, and remains “unresolved”. Hegelian tradition is trying to substantivize it, allowing the initial synthesis of nothing and being.[[286]](#footnote-286)

Heidegger argues that insight into the *origin of difference* can provide an answer to question on the *origin of negativity*. More importantly, Heidegger adheres to the assumption that “negativity” is not drawn out of “nothing”. Hegelian “negativity” implies difference; therefore, it *cannot* be revealed in identity of nothing to “existence”. While repeatedly referring to the non-differentiation of “being” and “nothing” in Hegelian thinking, Heidegger admits the existence of certain “difference”, that reveals the “negativity” as being present in existence. This difference is essential for differentiation of “existence” and “things in existence”. However, Hegel embraces the “unconditional self-certainty”, leading to “absolute knowledge” and surpasses this difference, making it possible to identify “being” and “nothing”.

Hegel equated “existence” to “all things in existence” in general, which follows his idealistic metaphysics. This means that “time is the horizon for all understanding of Being …and by mediation, that is by the past and the future…”[[287]](#footnote-287). It is impossible to pose the question on “negativity” due to abovementioned unquestioned “difference”. Heidegger regards “negativity” as a certain “energy” of the reality. This form cannot be derived from something that *already exists*. Hegel states that there is no “difference” between “being” and “nothing”, which makes it difficult to grasp “pure negativity”. As Karin De Boer points out, for Heidegger, “The more thinking becomes the unconditional guideline, the more decisive presentness …Thus absolute idealism manifests that beings are given here even more priority over beingness”.[[288]](#footnote-288) Consequently, Hegelian “difference” originates in “thingness”, containing itself as the identical “nothing”. “On this basis, however, the pure relation of the I-think-unity … thus becomes unconditional”.[[289]](#footnote-289) Heidegger argued that this “difference” is “absolute negativity”, and it correlates with the maintained “no-thing” and “other”. “When Hegel regards absolute knowing as absolute reality, he expresses the idea that thinking has become the unconditional guideline for determining the being of beings”.[[290]](#footnote-290)

Thus, *this unconditional differentiation* (negativity) is existence (being), however, it differentiate from “absolute reality” (world of things and essences), not from “nothing”. Existence is the complete negation of the Absolute, however, Absolute is Existence to the extent, thus, negativity functions as distinguishing feature of Existence to itself. Consequently, negativity is the mismatch of the Absolute with itself.

Chasing negativity Heidegger recommends to repeatedly question the “unquestionable” concepts, ones that were seen by metaphysics as too obvious for doubt. To question on nothingness for Heidegger means questioning the truth in “existence”. Heidegger describes this process as “leap into questioning” should not be delayed by long preparation lest it remains no more that empty words.[[291]](#footnote-291)

Heidegger concludes his interpretation as follows: “Philosophy as absolute, as unconditional must somehow include negativity in itself.[[292]](#footnote-292) In his view Hegelian thinking was not able to fully consider negativity, thus does not involve nothing. Heidegger argues that Hegelian negativity is devoid of doubt and therefore “unquestionable”.

Heidegger seeks the answer to the question “on Existence itself” through negativity and nothing, while for Hegel negativity was unquestionable. Hegelian definition of human being as a thinking animal bound by general implies certainty of negativity. “Western metaphysics thus sublimates and subsumes the metaphysical negation and dialectical negativity… This Western metaphysical sublimation or subsumption of “nothingness” and non-being culminates with the speculative dialectical recuperation of deconstructive negativity … (whether the Pre-Socratic “being” or the Christian Neo-Platonic God)”.[[293]](#footnote-293) This follows from the obviousness of metaphysical understanding. And this self-evidence paradoxically holds sway over any attempt by the person to negate, to doubt things in existence or, on the contrary to guarantee and justify its connection with them. It turns out that the modern European model of uncritical acceptance of a paradoxical statement on the privileged role of the subject, who is always related to existence in a special way (and existence is always fitted for such a subject) returns in a new role. Introducing a human being within existence and attributing a negative potential to it is not enough. Courage is also required (or submission) when trying to ascertain it he fundamental uncertainty of human existence in the world, and consequently, of existence itself. Because Hegel is oriented toward the system of the Absolute he cannot agree with this and therefore he misses negativity, human nature and existence.

As Levin writes, “for Heidegger, to think being requires in each instance a leap, a leap into the groundless from the habitual ground upon which for us being always rests”.[[294]](#footnote-294) This glimpse serves as non-basis (abyss), absolute nihilation of all things in existence. The philosophy of Heidegger or being-historical thinking argues that “nothing” and “abyss” (Abgrund) is more than a bare negation of things in existence, not “nihilation”, but the “Existence” itself.

If we now summarise somehow everything that has been said above regarding Heidegger’s approach, we can come back to the question with which the chapter on Sartre finished. The question was posed there whether it was possible to retain for the human being their fundamental affinity with nothing, negation, without losing a connection with existence? Sartre’s position in this question was inclined to the view that the human being is lost and lonely in confronting existence, as existence has nothing to do with the human being. The world of things is calm and indifferent to everything that relates to the human being – his passions, joys and sorrows. Even though the human being brings freedom into the world, and therefore, in some respect, does a lot for this world, there is no affinity between the world and the human being. They are still alien to each other. We also saw that this is connected to what, according to Sartre, the human being does in the world – he brings freedom, however due to the chaotic and undefined nature of the latter, the existence of the human being in the world also appears undefined. The world of things could share their determinant stability, however to the extent that the human being brings uncertainty into the world himself, such a relation turns out to be impossible. Instead, the human being brings instability into the world, where he must himself live. The world cannot help him acquire any harmony or a sense of unity with itself, and their relations are strange: the human being makes the world unstable, where nothing is guaranteed and nothing is there to catch hold of. This differs considerably from the Hegelian variant of the interiorization of human negativity. In it, the human being is reliably connected with the world, he is integral to it and indeed the most certain part. If in Sartre, through a human being, the world becomes somewhat insane, then in Hegel, through a human being, the world becomes totally sane, more integral, connected, united and embodied – it becomes itself, the Subject knowing about itself.

What is Heidegger’s view on the role of human negativity in this context? His position can be read as a kind of mid-point between of Hegel and Sartre. As in Sartre, the existence of the human being for Heidegger is existential, torn away from any certainty whatsoever, or any warranty of existence (the human being does not know why he is here and cannot say “I should be here”, “I must exist”, “the world cared and will care about my existence”). However, despite this, according to Heidegger, the grounds for rootedness of the human being in the world are stronger than in Sartre. The significance of the human being is more substantial and serious. It is because the human being gives place to things in existence. He brightens it and gives it existence. When human being negates in the world she or he generates this world. And therefore, the connection of the human being with the world turns out to be more substantial and more important than in the scenarios, which the new European philosophies at times appeared to be, whether as the Cartesian subject in Descartes or the transcendental subject, caught up in the Copernican Revolution. The human being grants existence to things in existence, reaching it from the field of Nothing. Here one can see a return to classical subjectivism (and even solipsism) in philosophy, according to which there is no world without a human being. However, it goes without saying that Heidegger is far from taking this path. The creative role of the human being in Heidegger leads to the only and absolute real world, this is not the illusionary world disappearing together with the human being, and leaving the real world in self-contained solitude, without need for any human being (observer) at all. This world is the only one. However, this world has not been created by the human being, who only reveals it (and this very revelation coincides with the world, and is not added to it), by standing in Nothing, being immersed in it and from there, illumining the world. Therefore, the human condition is to remain in the shade, yet to throw light forward, to be in the gateway, between, yet be able to reach from this emptiness to things in existence. In Heidegger, the human being is the freedom of the world, which comes to itself from the depth of its own Nothing.

**Conclusion**

As I come towards the conclusion of this thesis, it may be clear that the order in which the authors were introduced was deliberate: we started with Hegel and ended with Heidegger. This arrangement was not conditioned by arbitrary choice but in to illustrate the method of an *existential reading of Hegel* to which only Heidegger brought real virtuosity. In doing so, Heidegger had to disagree essentially with Hegel, however the general vector of the humanization of negativity, initiated by Hegel and transformed into a philosophical program by Kojève, was not only preserved by Heidegger but also developed by him in a most profound way. Perhaps, it only Heidegger finally made a person out of negativity by demonstrating not only their formally logical but also their properly existential affinity.

Let me once more reconstruct all steps of our account, laying out its internal logic.

I began with the presentation of a key philosophical problem, namely, the paradox of the ontological status of a cognizing subject. In philosophy, a subject of cognition is conceived as an absolute instance of knowledge which is faced by the whole world as an object. We do not know everything entirely and always but, within philosophical reflection, there is a supposition that one should. But “everything” means the world as a whole, or the whole of reality. Where then is the subject of cognition situated, if the whole world stands before it as an object? Does it mean that the subject lays claim to be, as Schopenhauer wrote, some “winged angel's head without a body” (*geflügelter Engelskopf ohne Leib*),[[295]](#footnote-295) some ghost or phantom whose anthropological foundations are rooted in uncertainty? Unfortunately, in the Neo-European space of the world and above all in epistemology, a similar scheme was put in place. It represented a sort of legal paradox: it was not customary to ask how it was possible, but it was customary to deduce plentiful and productive epistemological consequences. The legalization of this paradox can be explained by setting it in the context of the Christian culture in which Western metaphysics lay the person is connected to God, and this connection allows him to transcend to the world, at least when performing acts of cognition. Cognition is transcendence one could reply in this way to the charge that the cognizing subject is paradoxical, however, this would be to rely on belief not logic. Since philosophy mostly follows logic, it had to look for other ways to substantiate this idea. It became more complicated to continue conceiving of the subject as soaring outside of the world, and the decline of Christianity and the erosion of its credibility in philosophy played a significant role in these complications. Nietzsche’s famous concept of “the death of God” had immense philosophical consequences, and one of them was the refusal of special divine privileges for the subject of cognition. The subject had to look for a new refuge. Soon not the celestial but the terrestrial world became its home. Being itself, total and all-enveloping, became its only refuge. Immanence in philosophy meant just such a step that is, a refusal of the transcendent in favor of the infinity and finality of the immanent, and in such conditions the subject of cognition had to redefine itself.

Again, this turn had many philosophical consequences, one of which was a curious plot that determined many lines of philosophical thought in the 20th century; namely, that of fundamental anthropology. The person has come to be treated not only an integral part of the world, outside of which one simply cannot jump, but also as a part without which the world could not exist. Containing the person in the world is essential for the world itself. Moreover, this is by no means to support solipsism. When we say that the person is essential for the development of the world, we do not assume the schema in which only the subject is real and the world as it is perceived exists only within the active perception of the subject. That is not so. The world as well as the subject are perfectly real, but the conditions of their mutual belonging do not presuppose a division. They always mutually presuppose each other and are in an intentional binding.

At the heart of this philosophical model, a key role in the development of the idea of fundamental anthropology is played by the concept of negativity, with all its mysterious and rich philosophical potential. The interiorized subject proved to be a manifestation of negativity. For it turned out that there is a way of staying in the world that was assigned to the subject, according to which the person not only exists in the world but also does not exist in it, negating the whole entity; the person is no mere a part of being but its negating part, and only in this way and no other way can the person take the place of a subject, just as the world can take the place of a world that is given to the person and which can be conceived.

It is this model which underlies my research, and I have tried to trace its possible examples and methods of construction. In this way, I addressed the creative activity of four major philosophers; namely, Hegel, Kojève, Sartre, and Heidegger, whose work was of far-reaching importance for philosophy in the twentieth century. Each of them made an inalienable contribution to the development of the idea of the anthropologization of negativity, which was itself of great importance for the project of fundamental anthropology.

Hegel is at the head of this list because he made the first move toward the construction of both the project of fundamental anthropology itself and the idea of the anthropologization of negativity. Hegel demonstrated two basic principles. The first concerns the statement of identity between the subject and the object, and the second concerns the binding of negativity with the person. This initial move became a sort of admission ticket for Hegelian philosophy; if we do not accept the elimination of dualism - the division between the noumenal world and the phenomenal world, i.e. cognizable and noncognizable – then we shall understand nothing in the whole of his system. The second principle, also fundamental, consists in the fact that Hegel brought negativity to the foreground of ontology and showed how it could be connected with the person. The person perceives in the world and makes mistakes because he always possesses an incomplete range of knowledge, but he can not only develop it in the world but also use it in the course of self-knowledge.

For the academic generation to which Kojève and Sartre belonged, it was typical to draw attention to an idea associated with Heidegger; namely, that of finitude. According to Heidegger, Dasein is temporal internally due to its finitude: “the being of Dasein is being-towards-death”.[[296]](#footnote-296) Despite the fact that we cannot directly experience death (except to observe the death of an other), it manifests itself by a sensible absence which possesses, nevertheless, quite a real presence. In some sense, this idea is of a piece with the Hegelian negativity revealed by Kojève. Thus, as noted by Oliver Marchart, Heidegger’s idea of finitude was traced back the Hegelian dialectic that first led to the emergence of the “anthropological” theory of negativity, lack, and wish. Dialectics then became a starting point for the ontologies of lack which followed it.[[297]](#footnote-297) Thus, Kojève offered an anthropological version of Hegelian philosophy: it implied division of the *universum* into two kingdoms; namely, difference or negativity, referred to as the human dimension of being, and identity, typical of the world of nature. In other words, history (which, according to Kojève, should come to an end) is dialectic while nature is not. Thus, we obtain a dualistic ontology which was illustrated brilliantly by the philosopher himself in the following way:

However, as Vincent Descombes rightly noted, this ontology was dualistic only at first glance. What we are dealing with is not two meanings of being, but rather being and nothing, and it is between these that the dialectic occurs. Descombes notes: “In short, being signifies identity in nature, and difference in history”.[[298]](#footnote-298) Therefore, the “dualistic ontology” is no longer what it appeared to be. One way or another, the status of the person as “annihilating in being”, imprinted later in the work of Kojève’s follower Jean-Paul Sartre who called the person just “hole in being”[[299]](#footnote-299). The privileged status of the person is provided by the excess of freedom. In addition, freedom as Kojève conceives it acts, in fact, as an equivalent to negativity; that is, it can exist solely as the negation by the subject of the existing givenness in a broad sense: “Freedom does not consist in the choice between two givennesses: it is negation of givenness as givenness, what we are ourselves (as animal or embodied tradition), and as givenness of what we are not (and what is the natural and social World)”.[[300]](#footnote-300) The ability of the human being to exist as an agent of negativity (or Nothingness as its source) is, according to Kojève, a ticket of mission to the world of creative action. What does the person create?, History. Nature as a kingdom of identity, in Kojève’s view, lacks history and is non-dialectic, while the person is time (i.e. variability, formation, negativity). Understanding negativity as a source of free, creative human action enables Kojève both to evade the meditative approach of Heidegger and to strengthen the Hegelian idea of history. The fundamental antagonism of history arises from the dialectic of slavery and supremacy: the master is in no way more powerful, but he is able to accept his finitude and to risk life in a struggle for recognition, thus forcing the slave to recognize him as master. It should be noted that the Kojeviandivision of being into two opposed spheres, i.e. human and natural, that served as a pretext for Kojève to assign the epithet “dualistic” to his ontological construction which was demonstrated later by the title of Sartre’s *Being and Nothingness* was adopted by one of the participants of his seminar, Jean Paul Sartre, who in his article *Cartesian Freedom* stated the following: “It is just in negation driven to extremity that we prove to be free”.[[301]](#footnote-301) The three interrelated and fundamental components of Kojevian philosophy are as follows: the negativity of freedom, the humanistic nature of Nothingness (the person proper as a human being annihilating in being), and the positivity of being (nature).

Finally, the Heideggerian way of anthropologizing negativity can be considered particularly fundamental. In fact, the human being becomes the conductor of ontology in himself. Things in existence are there, because the human being negates them – this is the formula of Heideggerian “existential metaphysics” (if one can name his approach in this way). To see, to bear witness to things in existence, the human being must step back into non-things in existence, into non-existence, but, factually, as Heidegger tells us, he is always already there. The human being is the envoy of non-existence, its guardian and representative, and this gives him the possibility to create things in existence, as present. In this act of revealing things in existence, the ontological event comes true – the person opens the world for the world itself. This step is almost heroical and sacrificial Christian-like – the human being dies for the sake of existence of the world. If the human being lived eternally, were immortal, the world itself would not exist. Stones, sand and trees do not create the world, the human being, aware of their mortality, does. The non-existence of the human being reveals the existence of the world. The human being is non-existent, for the world to exist.

If we now consider the wider significance of this research, there are several points to note.

First, I tried to show that the question concerning the conditions of cognition, which at first sight might seem quite abstract, leads to an increased interest in questions relating to human nature. The human being began to be understood not only as one who thinks and questions (and in doing so transcends), but also as a creature of flesh and blood; not only as a being with *ratio*, but also as a body, with emotions.

Secondly, we note that the oblivion of human existence and the attempts to dissolve it into various social, cultural, linguistic practices (structuralism and post-structuralism) or into different physical processes (positivism and physicalism) had an earlier short period of Renaissance of the Human Being-Subject. During this period, which we considered, the human being was thought as something for ontology, as something, without which the world cannot exist. Rich in variations, the history of reductions of the human being will start later. However, a certain line going from Hegel to Heidegger, will reinforce the irreducible nature of human being. The human being cannot be reduced, and in this sense is fundamental. It is the unique and integral prerequisite of all things in existence.

Hence, the third idea of my research. I tried to show that the role of the human being in world creation is substantial, and not accidental. This to a certain extent metaphysical message can be considered the last attempt to glorify the human being. After that, a period of endless belittling, suspicions, if not to say humiliation of the human being begins. It goes without saying that there were reasons for that – the famous statement of Adorno questioning “whether one can live after Auschwitz” also meant rethinking the role of the human being. After the experience of the world war, the destruction of the ideals of humanity and a loss of confidence in the human being are all too evident in the wake of the colossal shocks that the world had survived. Throughout this time, the human being was spoken of with dignity, s it is he who participates in the arrangement of existence, shaping and defining it. One cannot talk about the world and the human being as if the world and the human being owed nothing to each other, and their encounter were accidental. The world is impossible without a subject.

Summarizing these findings, one can see that the reconstruction of the logic set out is significant for us today. These days, positivist and naturalist approaches tend to prevail. Their ontologies, as a rule, are based on the positivist principle of contingency – it is possible, the appearance of the world is accidental, it is possible that appearance of the human being in it is also accidental; however, even if the existence of each of them is not accidental, it is certain that the world might exist perfectly well without the human being. The world does not need the human being to be, however the converse is not true – the human being needs the world. From such a perspective, where the world is more primordial, the role of the human being and the subject does not look so obviously as in the approach that I have considered. In this respect, the approach that I considered appears to be an alternative to those ways of thinking the human being that are widespread today.

The views set out in this research allow one to restore a form of humanism that was first developed in Western-European thought and which has since the second half of the twentieth century begun to fall into oblivion. The idea of a fundamental anthropology and the way that it shapes the idea of an anthropologization of negativity allow one to see the grandeur of the human being, his non-randomness in the world creation, his inclusiveness into the world. This approach differs markedly from the prevailing value of modern naturalism, according to which the human being embodies only natural forms – real and substantial at their basis. Different versions of evolutionary epistemology insist on the isomorphism of the human and biological (natural) – the human is only the continuation of the biological, a certain form of the biological. The argument in favour of such an interpretation is the biological unity of not only the human being, but also all living creatures on the Earth. It is true that many thinkers in the twentieth century maintained that the true essence of the human being is social. However, the supporters of biological reductionism point out that the social dispositions of the human being might be determined biologically. The general positivist vector of research in the recent decades, the powerful impetus to which originated from the works of R. Dawkins and E. Wilson and which led to the appearance of a whole trend of “evolutionary psychology”, clearly leads to the biologisation of the anthropological and its reduction to the uniform procedure of nature. According to such an approach, social instincts do not differ much from instincts of any other kind; they are the same universal and characteristic not only for the human being, but also for other animals, in the behaviour of which such socialised features can be distinguished as recognition of territorial boundaries, status differences etc. It is curious that such a position according to which there exists a universal biological nature, is the same for the human being and for all living things. Indeed, as it seems, it is the idea of eliminating the transcendent, and thus also a refusal of dualism, that is most evident in the programs of positivism, so prevalent today. In part, this confirms my earlier statement that immanent ontologies permeate modernity and are the key to most theories, approaches and ideas. However, the positivist immanentism is clearly different from what I have proposed in my research. Indeed, in certain respects it is the exact opposite of what this research jas presented. So what is this difference?

Mainly, I wanted to show how an alternative may lie in that immanentism where what is most human, all that unique and special, is simply dissolved – wears off and is lost. Classical metaphysics, since it first appeared in the modern European period, has constantly glorified the human being. However, this emergence, as I have shown, owed its existence to dualisms of various kinds and to the general doctrine of transcendent. The modern world, refusing excessive and non-evident dualisms and transcendent entities, is left homogeneous and factually monotonous. One version of this monotony of the world is positivism, which blends human being with Nature.

My research is an attempt to reconstruct an alternative path. If the world becomes homogeneous, this does not mean that positivism is inevitable. It turns out that the human being can be returned to the world and implicated in the single order of things in existence without anything being lost; that is, without any levelling down or dissolution of human being, preserving its privileged status. The human being belongs to the world and rests in it, however its “island” is separated, the territory of the human is a special “region of existence”. It is to accomplish such an account that a unique category of negativity is necessary – the last echo of a complex metaphysics in a simplified world. Negativity, combined and connected with the human being, shows one simple thing – although the human being is placed into the world, he cannot be found in it alongside and equal to things and objects. The human being is not a thing among other things. Its existence in the world is not material. However, it still exists. From the point of view of the existence of things, the human being is nothing. One cannot find one’s consciousness in the world, nor one’s freedom or subjectivity (“The subject does not belong to the world” as Wittgenstein wrote). Rather, the human being ise a certain gap or a blank in existence and therefore there is nothing left but to call it nothing, philosophical negativity, yet a nothing or negativity whose traces in the world are grandiose – they are productive and revealed precisely in the world of things. The sense of negativity addressed in this research is not simply negativity; it is actively creating negativity, and this is the essence of its anthropocentricity. It is that the radical difference lies between the philosophy of negativity and positivism, even though both these approaches are inspired by philosophy’s turn towards immanence. Positivism (and naturalism) considers the world to be immanent, but by considering only things in existence, it factually turns the human being into a thing. Philosophy, thematising negativity, removes from negativity, and therefore from the human – the human being is not substance, but pure existence; he is present (immanently belongs to existence), but exists unlike things (it is that non-existing area of existence that allows the existence to take place as knowing about oneself).

Our journey in the footsteps of negativity in the 20th century, where human being and the world are crossed, each inferred from the other, is now complete.

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44. CPR: A20/B34. [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
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48. *Ibid.* A253/B309. [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
49. *Ibid.* A110. [↑](#footnote-ref-49)
50. *Ibid.* A20/B34. [↑](#footnote-ref-50)
51. *Ibid.* A255/B311. [↑](#footnote-ref-51)
52. *Ibid.* B69. [↑](#footnote-ref-52)
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54. Augustine. *De Civitate Dei*. XIV.28. CCSL 48. Turhhout: Brepols. 1948, p.451. [↑](#footnote-ref-54)
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57. In addition to the philosophical connotation, Nietzsche refers to the decline of Christianity as a cultural phenomenon. What is meant here is that Christianity and experience of religious faith do not have the role they used to play in life space of contemporary people. The faith experience provides the human being, first of all, with *different optics* for contemplation of the world, where the key word is "distancing". In the past, people had to stay in two dimensions: sacral and secular; the first one provided them with *meanings*, while the second one made it possible to put them into effect. The hierarchy of the realms implied semantic distancing from the secular realm, for *teleologically* the subject was involved in the sacral realm – it was the realm where his *ultimate goals* were rooted. As a result, a person of Christian culture was metaphysically oriented – he served what was unreal and axiologically illusive in the earthly world. The meaning-setting by the believer has a transcendental origin, mostly due to the nature of the meaning, as the meaning is outside of what it is given to ("the meaning of the world – outside the world"). The subject of Christian faith transcends the world, perceiving everything sub specie aeternitatis, and the loss of the religious stance means, first of all, the loss of the values that did not belong to the daily life serving only itself and confined to the limits of the world. In F. Nietzsche’s "death of God", the detranscending ("one-dimensionality") means desacralization – "disenchantment of the world", in which there is no place for mystery, i.e. to a certain extent, this means that everything became secularized in the contemporary world. The experience of daily life routine fills up everything; *the contemporary person is devastatingly non-metaphysical* – if all daily chores are removed from his life space, he will be left in total semantic emptiness. In general terms, critics insisted on non-reducibility of the metaphysical modality of the human soul. Even in the times of "decline of the metanarrative" the human being looks for and finds new objects of transcending worship. It is manifestation of the *residual* metaphysical resource, which can be directed to anything – to ideologies, sectarianism, fetishism, etc. [↑](#footnote-ref-57)
58. BN: xxi-xxii [↑](#footnote-ref-58)
59. We will note the following article from works of the kind that has been recently published: Steinbock, J. Anthony. “Normes, histoire et phénoménologie chez Hegel et Husserl: esprit et ‘générativité’”, In: Bouton, Christophe. *Penser l'histoire. De Marx aux siecles des catastrophes*. Paris: Editions de 1'éclat. 2011. [↑](#footnote-ref-59)
60. IRH. [↑](#footnote-ref-60)
61. One of the most time-consuming steps on the path towards Absolute cognition, which is, however, necessary, is that no matter how much we insist on the completeness and comprehensiveness of the Absolute, we will not achieve confinement within the Absolute alone; we are forced to admit that a non-Absolute, or Other also exists apart from the Absolute. This argument can be justified in many ways. Firstly, we can say that if there is A, then there should be non-A, and this logic should also work in the case of Absolute. The less formal justification will lie in pointing out the need for the Absolute *development*, as it contains a subjective base. If the Absolute had been just an object, it would be possible to insist on its self-replication and self-repetition, but because it is subjective and as long as subjectivity implies the movement, we can talk about its development. However this development involves the transition from existent things to non-existent. Consequently, there is a certain ambiance around the Absolute, that is not the Absolute itself, but represents an area where the Absolute can spread or transform - it is the Other of Absolute. Finally, and thirdly, Time cannot be excluded from the Absolute because Absolute is not just an empty abstraction, but something very real, in particular it is the whole world, including physical world, with all its contents and attributes. However, one of the essential characteristics of the real world is its duration; therefore, the Absolute is also temporal and this implies a transition from one states to others, which, once again, confirms the existence of some space not coinciding with the Absolute. This argument seems quite plausible, but, nevertheless, leaves us in a situation of apparent contradiction due to the fact that the Absolute is not quite the Absolute, or even not the Absolute at all, subject to something existing apart from the Absolute. After all, the Absolute is all-embracing matter by definition. How is it possible to save the situation? Hegel assumes that though Other is other in relation to the Absolute, however, it is a part of the Absolute from the very beginning. Absolute hardly knows all about itself immediately. In particular, it doesn't comprehend immediately the identity of subject and object. It can, for example, *think* through the person creating false philosophical theories dividing the world into two parts. In short, the existence of Other is provided by non-recognition or misrecognition of onerself in Other. However, this Other after all is a part of the Absolute itself, some interior space of its transition. Simply put, the Other is an area of ​​the Absolutethat is not recognized by the Absolute as its own property, or, if you will, as a part of the individual self. The Other is a kind of *unconscious* Absolute, without undermining the integrity of its subject-object unity. The area of non-recognition or misrecognition of the Absolute is nothing but its *own* Other. (The idea of ​​Absolute “unconsciousness” was actively developed by J. Lacan and followed by S. Žižek, and significant rapprochements were found between psychoanalysis theory and Hegel’s phenomenology of spirit). [↑](#footnote-ref-61)
62. PS: 47. [↑](#footnote-ref-62)
63. *Ibid.* [↑](#footnote-ref-63)
64. IRH: 174. [↑](#footnote-ref-64)
65. In its purest form this idea of ​​Hegel was presented in his next passage:

«1) Originally the object is quite straightforward, existing object - such it is to sensory consciousness. But this spontaneity does not contain any truth; we should further come over to a significant being of an object.

 2) If the essence of things becomes an object of consciousness, then it is no longer sensuous, but perceiving consciousness. At this stage, individual things are put in relation to the universal - but only theoretically; therefore no true unity of the individual and the universal take place here yet, but only a mixture of both these sides. Therein lies a contradiction, which leads further on to the third stage of consciousness, namely,

3) to the rational consciousness, where it finds its solution, because here the subject is reduced or raised to the phenomenon of some self-related existent internal. This phenomenon is a living creature. Initiation of this living creature consideration is the very moment for self-consciousness activity; for an object turns into something subjective once it is processed by a living creature - here consciousness reveals itself as a material object, go through reflections from the object into itself, appears to be subjective for itself [↑](#footnote-ref-65)
66. PS: xiv. [↑](#footnote-ref-66)
67. IRH: 171. [↑](#footnote-ref-67)
68. McIntyre, Ronald & Smith, David Woodruff. “Theory of Intentionality”. In: Mohanty J.N. & McKenna, Wiliam R. (ed.) *Husserl Phenomenology: A Textbook*. Washington: Center for Advanced Research in Phenomenology and University Press of America. 1989, pp. 147-179. [↑](#footnote-ref-68)
69. Husserl, Edmund. *Logical Investigations, Vol. 1*. Dermot, Moran (ed.), Findlay, J. N. (trans.) Oxford: Routledge. 2001, p. 261. [↑](#footnote-ref-69)
70. This philosophy would look completely solipsistic in such statements (phenomenology is often criticized for this reason, though it certainly has a reason which was admitted by F. Husserl) apart from the important clause - no things exist without me as well as I do not exist without things. Solipsism implies independence of consciousness as an instrument or receptacle for things. Although the philosophy of solipsism says that things exist through immersiveness towards the perceiving consciousness (insofar as they are perceived), nevertheless solipsistic consciousness of solipsistic subject could exist safely even if no things exist in the field of its perception. In other words, the philosophy of thing's solipsism do not constitute the consciousness, but, on the contrary, the consciousness constitutes the things. Contrary to this cognitive asymmetry, phenomenology insists that not only there are no things outside consciousness, but there is no consciousness apart frфom things. Restoring symmetry, phenomenology also hopes to overcome the constantly threatening solipsism. However, it is a debatable issue whether it is succeeds successfully. [↑](#footnote-ref-70)
71. Follesdal, Dagfinn. *An Introduction to Phenomenology for Analytic Philosophers*. Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins Press. 1972, p. 423. [↑](#footnote-ref-71)
72. Apel, Karl-Otto. *From a transcendental-semiotic point of view*. Manchester: Manchester University Press. 1998. p. 67. [↑](#footnote-ref-72)
73. *Ibid.* [↑](#footnote-ref-73)
74. Husserl, Edmund. *Logical Investigations, Vol. 2*. Dermot, Moran (ed.), Findlay, J. N. (trans.) Oxford: Routledge. 2001, p. 68. [↑](#footnote-ref-74)
75. *Ibid.* p. 100. [↑](#footnote-ref-75)
76. Husserl, Edmund*. Cartesian Meditations*. Cairns, Dorion (trans.) The Hague/Boston/London: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers. 1960, p. 57. [↑](#footnote-ref-76)
77. Lyotard, Jean-François. *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*. Bennington, Geoff, and and Massumi, Brian (trans.) Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984, p. 24 [↑](#footnote-ref-77)
78. PS: 123. [↑](#footnote-ref-78)
79. IRH: 171. [↑](#footnote-ref-79)
80. *Ibid.* [↑](#footnote-ref-80)
81. It can be thus seen that Hegel who is often proclaimed as the summit of religious philosophy would be more appropriately ranked among atheistic philosophers. It must be mentioned though that our point of view has its small, yet seemingly reputable following. In the first place, Kojève himself: ‘There is, however, no doubt that Hegel himself rejects the thought about an *otherworldly* God. According to Hegel, the very notion that the Absolute resides *outside* the spatiotemporal World, *on the other side of* humankind and History, is a characteristic feature of Religion. It is this idea that prevents Theology (even Christian) from becoming Hegel's true Philosophy, or Science; this very idea ― on the existential plane ― translates into the bane of the religious Man,’ ‘and so, Hegel's 'dialectic,' or anthropological philosophy is ultimately the philosophy of death (or equally, atheism).’.L. Shestov also believes that ‘…the Hegelian god is only disguised godlessness.’ Without renouncing either religion or the divine, Hegel rather deducts them from his own system. However, the vast majority of all other philosophical systems and teachings were in actual need of the transcendentally-philosophical God, be it the ‘non-deceiver’ (Descartes), the mundane keeper of the world's synchronicity (Malebranche), the author and creator of the predefined harmony (Leibnitz), or the transcendental guarantor of pure necessity (Kant). And yet, the Hegelian system was the first to show that one may not need that Deus ex machina, for the system to be quite complete in its own right. In a certain sense, it was made possible at the price of a paradoxical implication of the Hegelian philosophy: even if the transcendental exists, it is pure immanence. By virtue of this implication, it is Hegel, and not Nietzsche, who should be acclaimed as the tacit author of the formula ‘God is dead’ (at least, with reference to the Christian understanding of God).

Be it as it may, the work of these two thinkers made it possible to put up a serious challenge against the philosophy of duplication and dualism. From now on, it is no longer necessary to make reservations concerning dissimilarity of cognitive strategies when talking about the true world and the imaginary one, about reality and illusion, time and eternity, phenomena and noumena, the world of things and the world of ideas, etc. Wherever the philosophical thought may venture in following the lead of these two thinkers, it will base itself upon the idea of one dimension. This status quo, dubbed by G. Deleuze as the ‘surface’ (‘there is no depth, no height ― there is nothing, except the 'autonomy of the surface' where events, meanings, and effects manifest themselves, irreducible either to the depths of objects, or the high Ideas’), will become the key thesis of the immanentist philosophy, which we take as the basis for our work. In doing so, the challenge and the objective will now lie in an attempt to determine the fate of the subject, should the immanentist project prove right. Alongside with this similarity, one might detect several distinctions between the approaches of Hegel and Husserl. These distinctions will also help to correlate the above-mentioned approaches on the question of the nature of negativity in the future. [↑](#footnote-ref-81)
82. PS: 337. [↑](#footnote-ref-82)
83. Lyotard, Jean-Francois. Phenomenology. Beakley, Brian (trans.) New York: State University of New York Press. 1991, p.65. [↑](#footnote-ref-83)
84. *Ibid.* [↑](#footnote-ref-84)
85. Malabou, Catherine. *The Future of Hegel, Plasticity, Temporality and Dialectic*. London and New York: Routlege. 2005, p.163. [↑](#footnote-ref-85)
86. Hyppolite, Jean. *Logic and Existence: The Cultural Politics of Drugs, Alcohol, and Addictive Relations*. New York: SUNY Press. 1997, p. 69. [↑](#footnote-ref-86)
87. *Ibid.* p.20-21. [↑](#footnote-ref-87)
88. IRH: 171. [↑](#footnote-ref-88)
89. “Preface to the New Edition: Why Lacan is not a Heideggerian” In: Žižek, Slavoj. *The Ticklish Subject: The Absent Centre of Political Ontology*. London: Verso, 2008, pp. vii-xxi. [↑](#footnote-ref-89)
90. IRH: 174. [↑](#footnote-ref-90)
91. PS. 111 [↑](#footnote-ref-91)
92. *Ibid.* 175-176. [↑](#footnote-ref-92)
93. *Ibid.* 176. [↑](#footnote-ref-93)
94. Lauer, Quentin. *A Reading of Hegel's "Phenomenology of Spirit*. Fordham: Fordham University Press. 1993, p. 40. [↑](#footnote-ref-94)
95. IRH: 177. [↑](#footnote-ref-95)
96. Lyotard, Jean-François. Phenomenology. Beakley, Brian (trans.) New York: State University of New York Press. 1991, p.68. [↑](#footnote-ref-96)
97. *Ibid.* p.68 [↑](#footnote-ref-97)
98. Merleau-Ponty, Maurice. *The Primacy of Perception: And Other Essays on Phenomenological Psychology, the Philosophy of Art, History, and Politics*. Evanston: Northwestern University Press. 1964, p. 14. [↑](#footnote-ref-98)
99. Hegel, F.W. Georg. *Reading Hegel: The Introductions*. Singh, Aakash & Mohapatra, Rimina (ed.) Melbourne: re.press, 2008, p.13. [↑](#footnote-ref-99)
100. IRH: p.146 [↑](#footnote-ref-100)
101. Hubner, Kurt. *Myth-Revelation. Philosophy of Science*. Munich: Myth-Revelation. 2007. [↑](#footnote-ref-101)
102. Gossman, Lionel. “Orpheus Philologus: Bachofen versus Mommsen on the Study of Antiquity.” *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society*, Vol. 73, No. 5, 1983, pp. 1-89. [↑](#footnote-ref-102)
103. Hubner, Kurt. *Myth-Revelation. Philosophy of Science*. Munich: Myth-Revelation. 2007. [↑](#footnote-ref-103)
104. Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy.* Blackmask Online. 2003, http://www.blackmask.com [↑](#footnote-ref-104)
105. Colli, Giorgio. *La nascitá della filosofia*. Adelphi: Piccola biblioteca Adelphi. 1975. [↑](#footnote-ref-105)
106. Vernant, Jean-Pierre. *The Origins of Greek Thought*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press. 1984. pp.103-104. [↑](#footnote-ref-106)
107. *Heidegger's Hidden Sources: East-Asian Influences on His Work* by Reinhard May, 1996. [↑](#footnote-ref-107)
108. Huizinga, Johan. *The Autumn of the Middle Ages*. Payton, J. Rodney & Mammitzsch, Ulrich (trans.) Chicago: University of Chicago Press. 1997, p. 261. [↑](#footnote-ref-108)
109. BT: 1. [↑](#footnote-ref-109)
110. Heidegger 1962 — Heidegger, Martin (1927) Sein und Zeit(Erste Hälfte), Husserl, Edmund (Hrsg.) *Jahrbuch für Philosophie und phänomenologische Forschung. Band 8,* Max Niemeyer Verlag, Halle an der Saale, S. 1–438 (English Translation: Heidegger, Martin (1962) *Being and Time,* Macquarrie, John & Robinson, Edward (Transl.) Blackwell, Oxford). The cited pages are given according to the original pagination of the seventh edition of *Sein und Zeit,* reproduced in the marginal pagination of English translation of 1962. [↑](#footnote-ref-110)
111. Ibid.,3 [↑](#footnote-ref-111)
112. Ibid., 4 [↑](#footnote-ref-112)
113. Ibid., 5 [↑](#footnote-ref-113)
114. Ibid., 4 [↑](#footnote-ref-114)
115. Ibid., 25-26 [↑](#footnote-ref-115)
116. Ibid., 11 [↑](#footnote-ref-116)
117. Ibid, 1 [↑](#footnote-ref-117)
118. Ibid, 12 [↑](#footnote-ref-118)
119. Heidegger 1962 — Heidegger, Martin (1927) Sein und Zeit(Erste Hälfte), Husserl, Edmund (Hrsg.) *Jahrbuch für Philosophie und phänomenologische Forschung. Band 8,* Max Niemeyer Verlag, Halle an der Saale, S. 1–438 (English Translation: Heidegger, Martin (1962) *Being and Time,* Macquarrie, John & Robinson, Edward (Transl.) Blackwell, Oxford). The cited pages are given according to the original pagination of the seventh edition of *Sein und Zeit,* reproduced in the marginal pagination of English translation of 1962.4 [↑](#footnote-ref-119)
120. Heidegger 1962 — Heidegger, Martin (1927) Sein und Zeit(Erste Hälfte), Husserl, Edmund (Hrsg.) *Jahrbuch für Philosophie und phänomenologische Forschung. Band 8,* Max Niemeyer Verlag, Halle an der Saale, S. 1–438 (English Translation: Heidegger, Martin (1962) *Being and Time,* Macquarrie, John & Robinson, Edward (Transl.) Blackwell, Oxford). The cited pages are given according to the original pagination of the seventh edition of *Sein und Zeit,* reproduced in the marginal pagination of English translation of 1962. 8. [↑](#footnote-ref-120)
121. “The question of Being does not achieve its true concreteness until we have carried through the process of destroying the ontological tradition. In this way we can fully prove that the question of the meaning of Being is one that we cannot avoid, and we can demonstrate what it means to talk about ‘restating’ this question” (Heidegger 1962, 26). [↑](#footnote-ref-121)
122. “Understood as a fundamental trait of the beingness of beings, "will" is the equating of beings with the actual, in such a way that the actuality of the actual comes to power in the unconditional attainability of pervasive objectification” (Heidegger 1998c, 231). [↑](#footnote-ref-122)
123. BT: 12. [↑](#footnote-ref-123)
124. *Ibid.* [↑](#footnote-ref-124)
125. Perhaps, no other philosopher influenced M. Heidegger so deeply as Aristotle (this is noted by many commentators of Heidegger). As Heidegger, himself writes in the article ‘My Way to Phenomenology’, “Ever since 1907, Brentano’s dissertation ‘On the manifold meaning of being since Aristotle’ (1862) had been the chief help and guide of my first awkward attempts to penetrate into philosophy. The following question concerned me in a quite vague manner: If being is predicated in manifold meanings, then what is its leading fundamental meaning? What does Being mean? (Heidegger)

Heidegger’s position, the most important for understanding with regards to Aristotle’s philosophy is also the manuscript 'Phenomenological interpretations of Aristotle', prepared for Paul Natorp, who, having read in 1922 this work of 33-year-old Heidegger, experienced a certain shock as the manuscript was the 'entrance ticket' for Heidegger into the professorship of University of Marburg. [↑](#footnote-ref-125)
126. Heidegger, Martin. *An Introduction to the Phenomenology of Religion*. 1920; Heidegger, Martin. *Augustine and Neoplatonism*. 1921. [↑](#footnote-ref-126)
127. PM: 65. [↑](#footnote-ref-127)
128. ###  J.-P. Sartre. Existentialism Is a Humanism. Lecture given in 1946. In: Existentialism from Dostoyevsky to Sartre, ed. Walter Kaufman, Meridian Publishing Company, 1989; Translator: Philip Mairet;. 25

 [↑](#footnote-ref-128)
129. BN: 313. [↑](#footnote-ref-129)
130. BT: 12 [↑](#footnote-ref-130)
131. Malabou, Catherine. *The Future of Hegel. Plasticity, Temporality and Dialectic*. London and New-York: Routledge. 2004, p. 80. [↑](#footnote-ref-131)
132. Karalis, Vrasidas. *Heidegger and the Aesthetics of Living*. Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing. 2008, p.193. [↑](#footnote-ref-132)
133. Vattimo, Gianni. *After Christianity*. D’Isanto, L. (trans.) New York: Columbia University Press. 2002, p.8. [↑](#footnote-ref-133)
134. Moran, Dermot. “Heidegger’s Critique of Husserl’s and Brentano’s Accounts of Intentionality”, *Inquiry : An Interdisciplinary Journal of Philosophy*, Volume 43, 2000, pp. 39-65. [↑](#footnote-ref-134)
135. Regarding the term “anthropology” envisaging one way or an other the term “humanism”, one cannot but pay attention to the complex and ambiguous attitude of Heidegger to it. In the famous “Letter on Humanism” (this is the text of the letter prepared for publication in 1947 to the French philosopher Jean Beaufret–about appearance in 1946 of the pamphlet by Sartre “Existentialism and Humanism”) Heidegger, first, assumes that the essence of human activity has not bee thought ovthrough adequately, even though philosophy had been talking much exactly about this activity. Heidegger is ready to admit as justified the concerns over returning the humanity (humanitas) to the human being (homo). “The essence of humanity is grounded in the reality of our standing”. And the understanding of the human being and their essence differ considerably –depending, as Heidegger thinks, on special metaphysics. However, although “...any humanism remains metaphysical”, the cardinal question regarding the relation of existence to the human essence is not posed. Humanism even prevents it from being posed. Heidegger, following Hegel and Marx, talks about alienation, calling it ‘homelessness’, which “becomes the destiny of the world”. This prompts Heidegger again to criticize traditional humanism. There are many nuances in Heidegger’s criticism of traditional humanism. Heidegger is not happy with the thoughtless apologia of the human being and their actions being far from perfection. The thinker objects against the image of humanism, which appeared in a certain historical epoch (this was the epoch of Roman republic), and which was thoughtlessly applied in later epochs. Nevertheless, there is something common in all types of humanism, for Heidegger: the understanding of a human being as a rational being, a rational animal. “The designation of the essence of man is not wrong. But it is conditioned by metaphysics”. And traditional metaphysics, as we already know, should be questioned itself. Heidegger understands what sensitive question he touches upon, when he appeals for a revision to the old humanism and a breakthrough to a new humanism. “Because we are speaking against ‘humanism’, people fear a defence of the un human and a glorification of barbaric brutality... Because we are speaking against ‘values’, people are horrified at a philosophy that ostensibly dares to despise humanity’s best qualities”. However, he stipulates that the sought-for contrast to ‘humanism’ by no means assumes an ‘apology of inhumanity’ and “to think against ‘values’ is not to maintain that everything interpreted as a ‘value’ – ‘culture’, ‘art’, ‘science’, ‘human dignity’, ‘world’ and ‘God’ is valueless”. But in what lies the pathos of the criticism and ‘turn’ to the new ‘humanism’ (if Heidegger in the end would agree to keep this term)? The main thing is perhaps in the following. “But in that way, the essence of man is thought little of and its provenance is not thought of, the origin of its essence which, for historical humanity, always remains the future of its essence. “In what it says thinking leaves inconspicuous traces in language. They are as inconspicuous as the tracks left by the farmer who walks slowly through his fields”. The last word of Heidegger philosophizing is not following the traditional humanism or ‘absolutist’, arrogant and elitist philosophical style, despising the simple manifestations of human life, and considering the simple human existence – the very original one and not yet loaded with anything (values, expectations, meanings etc.). [↑](#footnote-ref-135)
136. IRH: 24. [↑](#footnote-ref-136)
137. It goes without saying, other interpretations of ‘negativity’ are possible, apart from the Hegelian one, but it is the Hegelian definition of negativity that I am introducing in this research as the fundamental notion. [↑](#footnote-ref-137)
138. Nichols, H. James. *Alexandre Kojeve: Wisdom at the End of History*. Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers. 2007, p.15. [↑](#footnote-ref-138)
139. Keenan, Dennis King. *Hegel and Contemporary Continental Philosophy*. Albany: State University of New York Press. 2004, p.27. [↑](#footnote-ref-139)
140. IRH. [↑](#footnote-ref-140)
141. The central item of this proof is in the fact that any knowledge of the world is not meta-knowledge as the human being was let down from the heaven to the world, which was already wholly ready; the human being was born by this world which required time for it (history). The human being that appeared in the world starts cognition of the world as totality but the world as such becomes as such together with the human being. Thus, the world as an object does not exist until a human being appears in it again (as the world without a human being is not the world yet), but when he appears in it, the world cannot be the object again, as now it is the Absolute Spirit that happened to be so. [↑](#footnote-ref-141)
142. Wartofsky, W. Marx. *Feuerbach*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 1982, p. 276. [↑](#footnote-ref-142)
143. IRH: 170. [↑](#footnote-ref-143)
144. Deleuze introduced this term for the first time. [↑](#footnote-ref-144)
145. Heinrich, Dieter. *Hegel im Kontext*. Suhrkamp. 1971. [↑](#footnote-ref-145)
146. Hyppolite, Jean. *Logic and Existence: The Cultural Politics of Drugs, Alcohol, and Addictive Relations*. New York: SUNY Press. 1997. [↑](#footnote-ref-146)
147. Wahl, Jean. A Short History of Existentialism. Williams, Forest & Maron, Stanley (trans.) New York: Philosophical Library. 1949. [↑](#footnote-ref-147)
148. IRH: 155. [↑](#footnote-ref-148)
149. PS: 185. [↑](#footnote-ref-149)
150. *Ibid.* p. 186. [↑](#footnote-ref-150)
151. *Ibid.* [↑](#footnote-ref-151)
152. *Ibid.* p. 200. [↑](#footnote-ref-152)
153. *Ibid.* [↑](#footnote-ref-153)
154. *Ibid.* [↑](#footnote-ref-154)
155. Hegel, W.F. Georg. The Philosophy of History. Sibree, J. (trans.) Kitchener: Batoche Books. 2001, p.10. [↑](#footnote-ref-155)
156. PS: 98. [↑](#footnote-ref-156)
157. IRH: 187. [↑](#footnote-ref-157)
158. *Ibid.* p. 188. [↑](#footnote-ref-158)
159. *Ibid.* [↑](#footnote-ref-159)
160. *Ibid.* [↑](#footnote-ref-160)
161. Johnson, S. Greg &‎ Stiver, R. Dan. *Paul Ricoeur and the Task of Political Philosophy*. Lexington: Lexington Books. 2012, p.78. [↑](#footnote-ref-161)
162. PS: 16. [↑](#footnote-ref-162)
163. *Ibid.* p.17. [↑](#footnote-ref-163)
164. Ibid, p.581 [↑](#footnote-ref-164)
165. Niemoczynski, Leon. “21st Century Speculative Philosophy: Reflections on the “New Metaphysics” and its Realism and Materialism”. *Cosmos and History: The Journal of Natural and Social Philosophy*, Volume 9, No 2, 2013, pp. 13-31. [↑](#footnote-ref-165)
166. Hegel, W.F. Georg. The Philosophy of History. Sibree, J. (trans.) Kitchener: Batoche Books. 2001, p.152. [↑](#footnote-ref-166)
167. Hegel implies in this case quite specific examples. As an example, significant stages in the history of mathematics are noted by rewriting the system of analytical mechanics. Thus, Newton's 'Mathematical Principles' were revised even in ‘Analytical Mechanics’ of Lagrange (1788), then by Hamilton (1834). It seems that where the knowledge is only systemized, and the idea of theoretical knowledge is specified, it is changed (is factually negated). Thus, the mechanics of material point was reworded into the generalized theory of a mechanical system conditions or the theory of movement of the figurative point in phase space. Only in this way this it might be in accordance with quantum mechanics. The ontology of material points and forces gave way to probabilistic ontology of the system conditions governed by the laws of conservation and symmetry, etc.
 [↑](#footnote-ref-167)
168. Alexandre Kojève (1902-1968), as well as his student Georges Bataille (1897-1962), belong to the generation of three “Н” (Hegel, Husserl, Heidegger) – the times of reception of Hegelian philosophy and phenomenology in France in the 1930s. After leaving Russia in 1920, Kojève settled in Germany, where later, under Jaspers’s guidance, he defended his thesis on the end of history and the unity of the divine and the human nature of Christ in Vladimir Solovyov’s philosophy. Thanks to Alexandre Koyré, Kojève acquainted himself with Hegel's philosophy, which influenced him a lot. As a result of him studying the system of the German thinker, the course devoted to the interpretation of *The Phenomenology of Spirit* was prepared, which the French philosopher delivered from 1933 until 1939. The abstracts of the lectures in the version of one of the people attending the seminar, Raymond Queneau, were published in 1947 – in the very same year as the French translation of *The Phenomenology of Spirit* was published; which cannot but lead to the idea that Kojève, in essence, introduced Hegelianism to the French intellectuals of the period. An explosion of interest in the system of the great German thinker led to the fact that from the 1930s until the 1960s dialectics ‘became such a lofty concept that it would have been offensive to request a definition. For thirty years it was almost the God of negative theology – beyond formulation, it could only be approached through the explanation of what it was not’. The Russian Revolution and Lenin’s recommendation to become familiar with Hegel’s works also had a great impact on the appearance of Hegelian Renaissance, as these works were considered to be fundamental for the formation of Marxism. Afterwards, when the intellectual landmarks changed, and three other thinkers came on the French stage – Nietzsche, Marx and Freud, representing the ‘school of suspicion’, - the admiration of Hegel changed for the criticism of dialectic reasoning; but even those thinkers that expressed the disapproving attitude to dialectics, could not be free from it because they were connected to it by the subject ties. [↑](#footnote-ref-168)
169. Descombes, Vincent. *Modern French Philosophy*. Scott-Fox, L. & Harding, J. M. (trans.) Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 1981, p. 39. [↑](#footnote-ref-169)
170. IRH: 202. [↑](#footnote-ref-170)
171. Descombes, Vincent. *Modern French Philosophy*. Scott-Fox, L. & Harding, J. M. (trans.) Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 1981, pp.78-79. [↑](#footnote-ref-171)
172. Sartre, Jean Paul. “Cartesian Freedom”. Michelson, Anette (trans.) In: *Literary and Philosophical Essays*. New York: Collier Books. 1955, pp. 183-190. [↑](#footnote-ref-172)
173. Descombes, Vincent. *Modern French Philosophy*. Scott-Fox, L. & Harding, J. M. (trans.) Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 1981, p. 22. [↑](#footnote-ref-173)
174. Descombes, Vincent. *Modern French Philosophy*. Scott-Fox, L. & Harding, J. M. (trans.) Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 1981, p. 21. [↑](#footnote-ref-174)
175. IRH: 172. [↑](#footnote-ref-175)
176. *Ibid.* p. 174. [↑](#footnote-ref-176)
177. *Ibid.* p.3. [↑](#footnote-ref-177)
178. *Ibid.* p. 199. [↑](#footnote-ref-178)
179. PS (Ch. ‘Independence and dependence of self-consciousness: Lordship and Bondage’) [↑](#footnote-ref-179)
180. *Ibid.* p. 166. [↑](#footnote-ref-180)
181. *Ibid.* p. 7. [↑](#footnote-ref-181)
182. *Ibid.* p. 8.’’ [↑](#footnote-ref-182)
183. *Ibid.* p. 202. [↑](#footnote-ref-183)
184. IRH: 107. [↑](#footnote-ref-184)
185. *Ibid.* p. 187. [↑](#footnote-ref-185)
186. *Ibid.* p. 187. [↑](#footnote-ref-186)
187. *Ibid.* [↑](#footnote-ref-187)
188. *Ibid.* p. 174. [↑](#footnote-ref-188)
189. *Ibid*. p. 175. [↑](#footnote-ref-189)
190. Selcer, J. Daniel. “The Discursivity of the Negative: Kojeve on language in Hegel”, Animus. Volume 5, 2000, pp. 181-191. [↑](#footnote-ref-190)
191. Sinnerbrink, Robert. “Sein und Geist: Heidegger’s Confrontation with Hegel’s philosophy”, Cosmos and History: The Journal of Natural and Social Philosophy, Volume 3, No 2-3, 2007. [↑](#footnote-ref-191)
192. IRH: 159. [↑](#footnote-ref-192)
193. Selcer, J. Daniel. “The Discursivity of the Negative: Kojeve on language in Hegel”, Animus. Volume 5, 2000, pp. 181-191. [↑](#footnote-ref-193)
194. The weakest point of this seemingly convincing argumentation is the attitude to *time.* If we accept the statement on identity of nature, then it will come out that in the nature there is no time. Kojève will say that time (history) is real only for the human world. The nature does not have any history. This proposition might seem not convincing enough and in many aspects as counter-factual. Kojève’s logic, as a matter of fact, is so as to say: 'the time' of nature is structured according to Aristotle, - strictly speaking, it is cyclical. The time of the person is structured dialectically on the contrary. But in this respect, the question regarding their correlation and synchrony remains open. Kojève would respond that no synchrony is required–nature is always at rest, it *exists*, the overall dynamics occurs on part of a person and history. As far as nature is concerned, it is involved in this process only as an inert material. [↑](#footnote-ref-194)
195. IRH: 231. [↑](#footnote-ref-195)
196. *Ibid.* p. 231. [↑](#footnote-ref-196)
197. Action, according to Kojève, is condensed in two spheres: in the first, the human being is opposed to the nature, by trans forming it, and this transformation represents *labour*, and in the second one, the human being is opposed to another human being, antagonizing him, and this counteraction is the *struggle.* These additional connotations of Action, which are introduced by Kojève, help one better to understanding the revolutionary potential of quite an extensive part of neo-classical philosophy, which was most directly influenced by Kojève’s interpretation of Hegelianism. [↑](#footnote-ref-197)
198. IRH: 223 [↑](#footnote-ref-198)
199. IRH: 214-215 [↑](#footnote-ref-199)
200. Ibid. p. 222. [↑](#footnote-ref-200)
201. Ibid*.* p. 221. [↑](#footnote-ref-201)
202. BN: lv. [↑](#footnote-ref-202)
203. BN: 330. [↑](#footnote-ref-203)
204. Sartre, being a pupil of Kojève, is ready to accept only the anthropological but not the physio-philosophical version of the dialectics of nothing. In this respect, he criticizes the ‘official’ approach of Hegel, i.e. not the one that one most evident in *The Phenomenology of Spirit*. [↑](#footnote-ref-204)
205. Bergson, Henri. *Creative evolution*. Mitchell, Arthur. New York: Henry Holtand Company. 1911, p.288. [↑](#footnote-ref-205)
206. Heidegger, Martin "What Is Metaphysics?" (1943), McNeill, Wilhelm (Ed.), *Pathmarks*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, p. 92). [↑](#footnote-ref-206)
207. BN:9-11 [↑](#footnote-ref-207)
208. BN: 90. [↑](#footnote-ref-208)
209. *Ibid.* p. 21. [↑](#footnote-ref-209)
210. It is clear that from both an ethical and ontological point of view that we are dealing here with a conception directly opposite to the conception of fate. In its turn, in order to accept the idea of fate, it is enough to rely on formal logic, according to which, there might not be any new events in the world (from the point of view of the world itself), and this means that all events exist beforehand. Correspondingly, the principle of the ontologization of the negative is in essence the only way to resist the idea of fate without doubling the world. In this case, the new event is possible not only for the end observer but for the world itself. But in order for this to happen, it needs to arise from the real nothing. Moreover, in case of the idea of fate, it is impossible to talk about a personal responsibility of the subject. Oedipus, strictly speaking, cannot bear responsibility for his actions, as they would happen anyway. Only if we leave a real freedom for a person to introduce new events in to the world can responsibility be attributed to his actions.

As a consequence, the ethical freedom of a person constitutes an additional reason for alarm. “My freedom is anguished at being the foundation of values while itself without foundation. It is anguished in addition because values, because they are essentially revealed to a freedom, cannot disclose themselves without being at the same time “put into question”, for the possibility of overturning the scale of values appears complementarily as my possibility”. [↑](#footnote-ref-210)
211. # One of the ways to get rid of alarm is to narrow the range of possibilities as far as possible. For example, it is possible to say that the choice of a certain profession is conditioned by the fact that we do not have any proper aptitudes or talents for other professions. The possibilities might be also reduced by means of converting them into a necessity. These methods can hardly help, not least because the subject remains the one who brings sense into what is happening, and nobody can prevent him being free in that.“… There exist concretely alarm clocks, signboards, tax forms, policemen, so many guard rails against anguish. But as soon as the enterprise is held at a distance from me, as soon as I am referred to myself because I must await myself in the future, then I discover myself suddenly as the one who gives its meaning to the alarm clock, the one who by a signboard forbids himself to walk on a flower bed or on the lawn, the one from whom the boss's order borrows its urgency, the one who decides the interest of the book which he is writing, the one who finally makes the values exist in order to determine his action by their demands. I emerge alone and in anguish confronting the unique and original project which constitutes my being; all the barriers, all the guard rails collapse, nihilated by the consciousness of my freedom”.

 [↑](#footnote-ref-211)
212. *Ibid.* p. 68. [↑](#footnote-ref-212)
213. BN: 5. [↑](#footnote-ref-213)
214. BN: 31-32 [↑](#footnote-ref-214)
215. *Ibid.* p. 30. [↑](#footnote-ref-215)
216. *Ibid.* p. 123. [↑](#footnote-ref-216)
217. Bouton, Christophe. *Time and Freedom.* Evanston: Northwestern University Press. 2014, p. 219. [↑](#footnote-ref-217)
218. BN: 21. [↑](#footnote-ref-218)
219. BN: 24-25. [↑](#footnote-ref-219)
220. BN: 77. [↑](#footnote-ref-220)
221. EPS. Part 3, par. 300. [↑](#footnote-ref-221)
222. BN: 7. [↑](#footnote-ref-222)
223. BN: 619. [↑](#footnote-ref-223)
224. BN: xli. [↑](#footnote-ref-224)
225. BN: 76. [↑](#footnote-ref-225)
226. BN: 76-77 [↑](#footnote-ref-226)
227. BN: 620 [↑](#footnote-ref-227)
228. BN: 38 [↑](#footnote-ref-228)
229. BN: 133 [↑](#footnote-ref-229)
230. BN: 89. [↑](#footnote-ref-230)
231. BN: xli. [↑](#footnote-ref-231)
232. BN: xl. [↑](#footnote-ref-232)
233. BN: 89. [↑](#footnote-ref-233)
234. BN: 94. [↑](#footnote-ref-234)
235. BN: 235. [↑](#footnote-ref-235)
236. BN: 319 [↑](#footnote-ref-236)
237. *Ibid.* [↑](#footnote-ref-237)
238. Jill Gilbert, ‘Contingency as Pedagogy: Burbridge on Hegel and Contingency.’

Lampert, Jay & Robinson, Jason (ed.) *Philosophical Apprenticeships: Contemporary Continental Philosophy in Canada*. Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press. 2009, p.128. [↑](#footnote-ref-238)
239. BN: 81. [↑](#footnote-ref-239)
240. B&T p. 31 [↑](#footnote-ref-240)
241. IRH: 172 [↑](#footnote-ref-241)
242. Heidegger, Martin. *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*. Hofstadter, A. (trans.) Bloomington: Indiana University Press. 1982, p. 65. [↑](#footnote-ref-242)
243. Kuzmin A. (2006) M. Heidegger’s Project for the Optical Interpretation of Reflexion: The Time, the Reflexion and the Logos. In: Tymieniecka AT. (eds) Logos of Phenomenology and Phenomenology of the Logos. Book Four. Analecta Husserliana (The Yearbook of Phenomenological Research), vol 91. Springer, Dordrecht*.* [↑](#footnote-ref-243)
244. *Ibid.* [↑](#footnote-ref-244)
245. Heidegger, Martin "What Is Metaphysics?" (1943), McNeill, Wilhelm (Ed.), *Pathmarks*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, p.55 [↑](#footnote-ref-245)
246. *Ibid.* [↑](#footnote-ref-246)
247. Fr.8, 34-36. S.M. Cohen, P. Curd, C.D.C. Reeve (eds), *Readings in Ancient Greek Philosophy* (Hackett Publishing, Indianapolis & Cambridge, 1995), p.39. [↑](#footnote-ref-247)
248. PM: 282. [↑](#footnote-ref-248)
249. PM: 88. [↑](#footnote-ref-249)
250. PM: 84. [↑](#footnote-ref-250)
251. PM: 89. [↑](#footnote-ref-251)
252. PM: 90. [↑](#footnote-ref-252)
253. PM: 94. [↑](#footnote-ref-253)
254. PM: 91. [↑](#footnote-ref-254)
255. PM: 90. [↑](#footnote-ref-255)
256. PM: 91. [↑](#footnote-ref-256)
257. Heidegger, Martin. *Being and Time*. Stambaugh, Joan (trans.) Albany: State University of New York Press. 1996, p. 263. [↑](#footnote-ref-257)
258. *Ibid.* p.263 [↑](#footnote-ref-258)
259. PM: 91. [↑](#footnote-ref-259)
260. PM: 95. [↑](#footnote-ref-260)
261. PM: 90. [↑](#footnote-ref-261)
262. PM: 96. [↑](#footnote-ref-262)
263. IRH: 72 [↑](#footnote-ref-263)
264. PM: 91. [↑](#footnote-ref-264)
265. PM: 233. [↑](#footnote-ref-265)
266. *Ibid.* p. 236 [↑](#footnote-ref-266)
267. PM: 96. [↑](#footnote-ref-267)
268. The life of Dasein is defined by Heidegger as being-towards-death, but it would be more correct to define it as the *existence of death* (in spite of Epicurus’ statement that there is no death when we exist, the death is not non-existent at all, it does exist – this is a special type of existence, which is the existing of the human being, i.е. Dasein). [↑](#footnote-ref-268)
269. *Ibid.* p. 31 [↑](#footnote-ref-269)
270. Heidegger prescribes even more “awful” features to ‘Nothing’. When a person finds himself to be emptiness, and that is that he was always part of it and not the container for things in existence, he is seized with Horror (Nothing), which is, by the way, does not have anything to do with fear but rather reminds of a “benumbed peace”. [↑](#footnote-ref-270)
271. Sinnerbrink, Robert. “Sein und Geist: Heidegger’s Confrontation with Hegel’s philosophy”, Cosmos and History: The Journal of Natural and Social Philosophy, Volume 3, No 2-3, 2007. [↑](#footnote-ref-271)
272. Houlgate, Stephen. *The opening of Hegel’s logic: from being to infinity*. West Lafayette: Purdue University Press, 2006. p. 107. [↑](#footnote-ref-272)
273. ###  Dahlstrom, O. Daniel. “Thinking of Nothing: Heidegger’s Criticism of Hegel’s Conception of Negativity”. In: Houlgate, Stephen & Baur, Michael. A Companion to Hegel. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell. 2011.

 [↑](#footnote-ref-273)
274. Stepanich, V. Lambert. “Heidegger: Between Idealism and Realism”, *The Harvard Review of Philosophy*, Volume 1, 1991, pp. 20-28. [↑](#footnote-ref-274)
275. Carney, C. John, *The Phenomenological Argument for the Existence of God*. New York: The Edwin Mellen Press. 2001, p.33. [↑](#footnote-ref-275)
276. Heidegger, Martin. *Hegel’s Concept of Experience*, Gray J.G. (trans.) New York: Harper & Row, 1970. [↑](#footnote-ref-276)
277. Heidegger, Martin & Jaspers, Karl. Briefwechsel 1920-1963. München: Piper. 1992, S. 57 [↑](#footnote-ref-277)
278. Heidegger M. *Gesamtausgabe. III. Abteilung: Unveroffentlichte Abhandlungen. Vortrage. Gedachtes. Band 68. Hegel.
One can note several peculiarities in it and there would be suggestions of why it was exactly in this shape that it was submitted for publication. It is noticeable that some parts of the text representing a more extensive* narration are devoted to Hegel’s influence, the state of philosophy (in the very general sense) during the Hegelian period until the early 20thcentury, and also to the starting point of Heidegger’s research, which he marks as ‘Fraglos’. Heidegger clearly sees the target audience and is trying to appeal to it in that the starting point of philosophical thinking after Hegel should be questioning of what is left beyond the metaphysical reasoning and was perceived as self-evident. The text itself represents questions and suppositions regarding understanding of Hegelian 'Logic'. Those drafts, which are also assumptions of the supposed lectures, can also be considered as questions which are to be thought over and talked through. There is every like lihood that there search that Heidegger had in mind, was not completed by him and only remained at the level of initial points of questioning, formulation of a general approach to the research and designating possible ways of searching answers to the posed questions. The problem of “negativity” is not solved in this text. However, the definition of “energy”, i.e. actuating operant force or an activity influencing the development of thinking would be just enough to understand the initial points of Hegel’s philosophy and comprehend the “return to existence” via passage through “metaphysics” as Heidegger thought. It seems that this text or as it was called Heidegger’s treatise in the afterword, is aiming not simply at the analysis of the presented abstract but also suggests going along the way that was just outlined. [↑](#footnote-ref-278)
279. Rockmore, Tom. *On Heidegger’s Nazism and Philosophy*. London: University of California Press, p.184. [↑](#footnote-ref-279)
280. PM: 85. [↑](#footnote-ref-280)
281. Rae, Gavin. “Much Ado about Nothing: The Bergsonian and Heideggerian Roots of Sartre’s Conception of Nothingness”. *Human Studies: Theoretical/Philosophical Paper*, Volume 39, Issue 2, 2016. pp. 249-268. [↑](#footnote-ref-281)
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283. PM: 87. [↑](#footnote-ref-283)
284. Dobrez, L.A.C. *The Existential and its Exits: Literary and Philosophical Perspectives on the Works of Beckett, Ionesco, Genet and Pinter*. London: Bloomsbury, 2013, p.110. [↑](#footnote-ref-284)
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286. ##  [Keane](http://www.tandfonline.com/author/Keane%2C%2BNiall), Niall. “Negativity, Finitude, and the Leap in Heidegger's Contributions to Philosophy”*, Journal of the British Society for Phenomenology*, Volume 47, 2016, p. 309-328.

 [↑](#footnote-ref-286)
287. Heidegger, Martin. Gesamtausgabe. III. Abteilung: Unveroffentlichte Abhandlungen. Vortrage. Gedachtes. Band 68. Hegel. [↑](#footnote-ref-287)
288. De Boer, Karin. *Thinking in the Light of Time: Heidegger’s Encounter with Hegel*. Albany: State University of New York Press. 2000, p. 292. [↑](#footnote-ref-288)
289. *Ibid.* p.291. [↑](#footnote-ref-289)
290. *Ibid.* p.291. [↑](#footnote-ref-290)
291. Heidegger, Martin. Gesamtausgabe. III. Abteilung: Unveroffentlichte Abhandlungen. Vortrage. Gedachtes. Friedrich-Wilhelm von Herrmann (Hrsg.) Frankfurt am Maine: Vittorio Klostermann Verlag. 1979, S. 213. [↑](#footnote-ref-291)
292. Heidegger, Martin. Erläuterung der “Einleitung” zu Hegels “Phänomenologie des Geistes”. Frankfurt am Maine: Vittorio Klostermann Verlag. 1942. [↑](#footnote-ref-292)
293. Meyer, Eric D. Questioning Martin Heidegger: On Western Metaphysics, Bhuddist Ethics, and the Fate of the Sentient Earth, Plymouth: University Press of America, 2013, p. 51. [↑](#footnote-ref-293)
294. Levin, David Michael. *The Philosopher’s Gaze: Modernity in the Shadows of Enlightment*. London: University of California Press, 1999, P. 174. [↑](#footnote-ref-294)
295. Schopenhauer, Arthur. *The World as Will and Representation*, Payne, E.F.J. (trans.) New York: Dover. 1969, p. 99 [↑](#footnote-ref-295)
296. B&T: 234 [↑](#footnote-ref-296)
297. Marchart, Oliver. “The absence at the heart of presence: radical democracy and the ‘ontology of lack’”. In: Tonder, Lars & Thomassen, Lasse (ed.). Radical Democracy: Politics Between Abundance and Lack. Manchester: Manchester University Press. 2014 [↑](#footnote-ref-297)
298. Descombes, Vincent. *Modern French Philosophy*. Scott-Fox, L. & Harding, J. M. (trans.) Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 1981, p. 37. [↑](#footnote-ref-298)
299. BN, p. 147 [↑](#footnote-ref-299)
300. IRH: 222. [↑](#footnote-ref-300)
301. Sartre, Jean Paul. “Cartesian Freedom”. Michelson, Anette (trans.) In: *Literary and Philosophical Essays*. New York: Collier Books. 1955, pp. 183-190. [↑](#footnote-ref-301)