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Dear Prof. Martinelli:

We, whose signatures are below, are the current instructor and students with the Honors Program at Ohio Dominican University (USA) in a course titled *HON 379: Critical Research and Writing*. The purpose of this upper-level Honors course is to consider scholarly research from the point of view of justice.

We have observed that a chapter appearing in a volume published by the International Semiotics Institute appears to fall short of adequate citation practices. It is:

Peter Schulz, "Subjectivity from a Semiotic Point of View," in *Nordic-Baltic Summer Institute for Semiotic and Structural Studies, Part IV. Ecossemiotics: Studies in Environmental Semiosis, Semiotics of the Biocybernetic Bodies, Human / Too Human / Post Human*, edited by Eero Tarasti, Richard Littlefield, Lotta Rossi, Maija Rossi (International Semiotics Institute, 2001): 149-159.

The chapter appears to consist substantively of texts pieced together from various authors without quotation marks, either with inadequate attribution or no attribution at all. The document accompanying this letter highlights select passages from the article that are taken verbatim or near verbatim from works by other authors.

As the document makes evident, the fundamental problem is that readers of the chapter have no way of knowing that sentences and paragraphs that appear to be written by Prof. Schulz are in fact verbatim and near-verbatim extracts from other authors. A range of citation problems appear to plague the chapter; even when at times the original sources are listed in the bibliography and referenced with an in-text citation, in the absence of quotation marks the reader has no way of knowing that the sentences are verbatim the work of authors other than Prof. Schulz.

For significant portions of the article, the writings of Pope John Paul II, Anthony Kenny, and Calvin Schrag appear in the article, and no reference to their work is given anywhere in the chapter. We believe that these three undocumented sources in particular constitute the core of the article.

We ask you to consider whether the conditions of academic plagiarism have been met on the basis of this evidence of suspected plagiarism.



Silverman  
p. 3

Finegan  
p. 1

PETER SCHULZ

## Subjectivity from a Semiotic Point of View

### 1. Preliminary Remarks

I would like to say something here about the concept of subjectivity from a semiotic point of view. Of course I am not the first to deal with this problem. Though subjectivity has received little attention by semioticians in the past, this situation has changed dramatically in the last decade. It is now by no means unusual to find articles or entire monographs dealing with subjectivity, written in English, French or other European languages. An interest in subjectivity in semiotics is no longer an eccentricity; one might even say that it has recently become fashionable. Semiotics involves the study of signification, but signification cannot be isolated from the human subject who produces and is defined by it. So if the topic needs no apology, some preliminary remarks on the sense of this ambiguous term might nevertheless be helpful.

Among linguists the notion of *subjectivity* concerns the expression of self and the representation of a speaker's – or, more generally, a locutionary agent's – perspective or point of view in discourse (cf. Stein & Wright 1995). Among other professional students of language, the word *subject* and its derivative *subjectivity* tend to evoke a grammatical association: subject as distinct from direct object, for example. In some contexts, *subjectivity* contrasts with objectivity in suggesting something "soft", unverifiable, even suspicious. The notion of subjectivity plays various roles in European languages (Lyons 1982: 101). While the English "subjectivity" has recently acquired a somewhat pejorative connotation, by virtue of its opposition with a positivistic interpretation of "objectivity", the French "subjectivité" and the German

Lyons,  
p. 101

"Subjektivität" do not necessarily carry this negative connotation of unreliability and failure to correspond with the facts.

Lecercle 19

Lecercle  
p. 95

Since Benveniste elaborated this distinction in a series of articles (1956, 1958, 1959, 1963), the French School of linguistics has focused on the dichotomy of *sujet de l'énoncé* / *sujet de l'énonciation*, where the grammatical subject, as bearer of subjecthood, is sharply distinguished from the speaker, as bearer of subjectivity. That this dichotomy is needed is beyond doubt. The grammatical subject is the subject that occupies a place in a sentence, and that either does things or has things done to it. This becomes interesting when the position of the grammatical subject is filled by the first-person singular pronoun, "I". What does the I-sayer say in saying "I"? Could it be identified with the Cartesian subject? Here, the noun *subjectivity* denotes the property of being what in the modern, post-Cartesian, philosophical tradition is called a subject of consciousness or a thinking subject. This is the property of being what Descartes himself referred to as a *res cogitans* and identified, as others have done, with the self or the ego.

Lecercle  
p. 1

Lyons  
p. 11

Alongside this philosophical sense of "subjectivity", to which I shall return, the term can also mean "the quality or condition of viewing things exclusively through the medium of one's own mind or individuality" (*Oxford English Dictionary*). For example, in talking about films or novels we often employ such expressions as "from our point of view". This is one way to introduce subjectivity. Subjectivity in this case has to do with our special way of "perceiving" and also, perhaps, with "feeling". In this way we refer to someone's perception. For it is clear that the term is not used to describe primarily what the film is about – a particular character, topic or theme – but rather, to explain how the film presents itself to us.

Branagan  
p. 1

There is a derived meaning of this sense of "subjectivity". Dealing with films or literature we may distinguish between what is told by the story and the telling of a story. Every kind of narrative text in a broad sense could be analyzed

from the angles of what is spoken of, told, seen, and heard, as well as from the point of view of a character inside the text. In this derived sense, subjectivity refers to the narration given by a character in the narrative. Subjectivity here refers to the perceptual context of every utterance within the text, whether the utterance is explicit or implicit. Thus we find subjectivity in every narration, each level of which implicates a subject that is not necessarily identical to the author of the narration (it could also be a fictional subject). Here I do not consider this coincidence of meaning between the "subjectivity" of the author as well as of the subject of narration as the condition of viewing things exclusively through the medium of one's own individuality.

p. 2

## 2. The Emphatic, the Reflexive, and the Substantive "Self"

Let me now address "subjectivity" in terms of how it concerns the mind or the consciousness of oneself with respect to the world. Subjectivity from this point of view seems to deal with what Thomas Sebeok defines as the "semiotic self":

"The notion 'semiotic self' registers and emphasizes the fact that an animate [sic] is capable of absorbing information from its environment if and only if it possesses the corresponding key, or code. There must exist an internalized system of signposts to provide a map to the actual configuration of events. Therefore, 'self' can be adequately grasped only with the concepts and terminology of the doctrine of signs. Another way of formulating this fact is that while living entities are, in one commonly recognized sense, open systems, their permeable boundaries permitting certain sorts of energy-matter flow or information transmissions to penetrate them, they are at the same time closed systems, in the sense that they make choices and evaluate impulses, that is to say, in their semantic aspect." (Sebeok 1989: viii)

The last part of Sebeok's statement seems especially interesting. How can we avoid the contradiction one may see here between the semiotic self as both an open and closed system? Although this description of the self seems to be a nicely precise point of departure for semiotic studies on subjectivity, it might be helpful to complete this description with a few remarks, in order to avoid difficulties with the concept of self. It could even be objected that the self in semiotics is a mythical entity. To deal with this objection, we first have to realize that there is a rather clear idea of the meaning of "self", if we consider the intuitively obvious distinction between the emphatic and reflexive senses of the term (cf. Kemmer 1995). The emphatic sense of "self" focuses attention on a particular participant, as the following sentences indicate:

- (1) I *myself* won't participate.
- (2) I wanted Marco *himself* to tell me.

On formal grounds, the emphatic sense of self is always stressed to some degree. Moreover, the emphatic "self" has the function of identifying a referent that is salient in the discourse, in contrast to other, potential referents that are just mentioned or might be mentioned.

The reflexive uses of "self", however, are necessarily unstressed, as the following examples show:

- (1) The old horse heaved *himself* out of the mud.
- (2) In those seventeen days he had earned *himself* more fame than in twenty years at the bar.

Sometimes there occurs a certain misunderstanding of the reflexive pronoun "self", especially if it is used in a "philosophical" sense. We find this,

for example, in the *Oxford English Dictionary*, which gives one meaning of the word "self" as follows: "That which in a person is really and intrinsically he (in contradistinction to what is adventitious); the ego (often identified with the soul or mind as opposed to the body); a permanent subject of successive and varying states of consciousness".

At one level, I would argue that this conception of the self constitutes a misunderstanding of the reflexive pronoun. To ask what kind of substance my "self" is, is like asking what the characteristic of "ownness" is, an attribute which my own property has in addition to being mine. When, outside philosophical reflections, I talk about myself, I am simply talking about the human being, Peter Schulz, and my self is nothing other than myself. In some way it is a philosophical muddle to allow the space which differentiates "my self" from "myself" to generate the illusion of a mysterious metaphysical entity distinct from, but obscurely linked to, the human being who is talking to someone.

The grammatical error which is the essence of the theory of the self may seem obvious when it is pointed out. But it is by no means easy to give an accurate account of the logic, or deep grammar, of the words "I" and "myself". It will not do, for instance, to say simply that "I" is the word each of us uses to refer to himself, a pronoun which, when it occurs in sentences, is synonymous with the name of the utterer of the sentence. This is not difficult to show. Julius Caesar, in his *Commentaries*, regularly described his own actions in the third person, using the name "Caesar". Let us imagine a language in which there were no first person pronouns, and in which everyone talked about themselves by using their own names. We can ask whether everything we can say in English can also be said in this language. The answer is clearly no. If Caesar wishes to deny that he is Caesar, then in English he can tell the lie, "I am not Caesar". In the special language no similar option is open to him. "Caesar is not Caesar" doesn't work, and neither does "the person who is speaking to you is not

Caesar", because in the special language, that sentence if spoken by Caesar is equivalent to the English sentence, "The person who is speaking to you is not I". The truth is that "I" does not refer to the person who utters it in the same way in which a proper name refers to its bearer, and neither does "myself". (That does not mean that these words refer to something else, say, myself.)

Kenny,  
p. 6,  
p. 7

I shall not pursue the grammatical issues further here. Certainly, the belief in a self is in one sense a grammatical error, which has different roots. One of these roots is the notion of the self in Cartesian scepticism. Descartes, in his *Meditationes*, convinces himself that he can doubt whether he has a body. He then goes on to argue, "I can doubt whether I have a body; but I cannot doubt whether I exist; for what is this I which is doubting?" The "I" must refer to something of which his body is not part, and hence to something which is not a part of the human being Descartes. The Cartesian ego is a substance whose essence is pure thought; it is the mind, or *res cogitans*. This is the self in the second of the philosophical senses identified by the *Oxford English Dictionary*, "the ego identified with the soul or mind as opposed to the body".

Silverman,  
p. 17, 18

It is well known that Peirce, too, criticized this conception of the Cartesian self (cf. Colapietro 1989; Singer 1984; Bernstein 1971; Thompson 1953). His critique of Descartes and of the prevailing Cartesianism of modern philosophy denied that we have the powers of introspection, of thinking without signs. All knowledge of the internal world is derived from hypothetical inferences drawn from knowledge of external facts. Peirce tells us that reality is accessible to man because man himself is a sign. This is one of Peirce's most radical assertions, and it is also one of his most important. Man – and by "man" Peirce means that which is constitutive of the human subject – does not only know the world through language; he is himself the product of language.

Kenny,  
p. 12,  
p. 14

There exists another misguided contributory to of the notion of self. It is found in empiricist philosophy, and it derives from a particular conception of introspection. The empiricist self is, by definition, essentially the subject of

inner sensation. The self is the eye of inner vision, the ear of inner hearing, etc. The self, as inner subject, can clearly not be discovered by the outer senses, which perceive only the visible, audible, tangible exterior of things. But can it be discovered by the inner sense either? It is well known that Hume failed to locate the self. For empiricism, the self is an unobjectifiable subject, just as the eye is an invisible organ.

p. 15

p. 16

### 3. *Subjectivity and the Irreducible in the Human being*

Pope John Paul II /  
Wojtyla, p. 209

Let me now come to the closing part of my reflections, which will be less analytical and more constructive. My point of departure is a well known text in Émile Benveniste's *Problems in General Linguistics*. Benveniste has already suggested a sense of subjectivity, which seems to me a promising point of departure for the description of "subjectivity" from a semiotic point of view:

Schrag, p. 122

It is in and through language that man constitutes himself as a *subject*, because language alone establishes the concept of "ego" in reality, in its reality which is that of the being.[...]

The "subjectivity" we are discussing here is the capacity of the speaker to posit himself as "subject". It is defined not by the feeling which everyone experiences of being himself ... but as the psychic unity that transcends the totality of the actual experiences it assembles and that makes the permanence of the consciousness. Now we hold that that "subjectivity", whether it is placed in phenomenology or in psychology, as one may wish, is only the emergence in the being of a fundamental property of language. "Ego" is he who says "ego". (Benveniste 1971: 224)

N.B.: the quotation  
preserves Schrag's  
omission of italics



Schrag  
p. 123

In this rather dense passage there are several things to be considered. Firstly, when Benveniste claims that "'Ego' is he who says 'ego'" he does not mean that the "I" is the causal result of a speech act. "I" is an index, an indicator that points to and makes manifest the "who" of the saying. The "I" as the one who is speaking is implicated in the saying. Secondly, in the sentence "'Ego' is he who says 'ego'", Benveniste underscores the word "says". This may indicate that saying is not only vocalization, the physiological process of uttering sounds; nor is it simply the execution of an individual speech act. It is the saying of something by someone. This "someone" is certainly the speaking subject, not in the idealistic sense of the pure presence of consciousness, but the subject immersed in the density of the life of "praxis" in the Aristotelian sense. So by the use of the pronoun "I" the idea of being a subject is formed: The speaking subject – the only one who can refer to himself as "I" – primarily manifests the idea of his existence.

Cola-  
pietro,  
p. 33

Pope  
John  
Paul II /  
Wojtyla  
p. 211,  
210

What is most important in the present context is the fact that the speaking subject, embodied in the life of praxis, is not situated beyond the boundaries of semiotic inquiry. The passage of the "Ego" seems to be important since it could be understood as an indicator of the primordial uniqueness of the human being, and thus for the basic irreducibility of the human being to the natural world. This assumption forms the basis of understanding the human being as a person. Traditional Aristotelian anthropology was based on the definition of *anthropos zoon noetikon* (*homo est animal rationale*). This definition fulfills Aristotle's requirements for defining the species (human being) through its proximate genus (living being) and the feature that distinguishes the given species in that genus (endowed with reason). At the same time, however, the definition is constructed in such a way that it excludes – at least at first glance – the possibility of accentuating the irreducible in the human being. In this definition the human being is mainly an object, one of the objects in the world to which the human being visibly and physically belongs. In this

perspective, objectivity was connected with the general assumption of the reducibility of the human being. The term *subjectivity*, on the other hand, proclaims that the human being's proper essence cannot be reduced and explained by the proximate genus and specific difference. In other words: Subjectivity is a synonym for the irreducible in the human being.

If it is correct to assume that subjectivity mainly concerns that which can be called the irreducible element in the human being, there are some consequences as well as further questions, which I briefly mention:

- (i) "Subjectivity", in the sense of the irreducible element in the human being, could be a plausible explanation of why the term "subjectivity" is often used in the sense of "individuality".
- (ii) The irreducible element should be understood as something which is present and is an hypothesis which works implicitly within the subject, who cannot objectivize it, although it does emerge in personal experience. Following from this point the question arises, In what kind of *praxis* does the subject experience itself as irreducible to the surrounding world? Is the process of semiosis, as Peirce has described it, a special kind of this human praxis?
- (iii) The irreducible element of the human being does not, however, mean anything that isolates the human being, nor that makes it impossible to recognize someone other than oneself.

Schrag,  
p. 125

The last point reminds us again of the passage from Benveniste, in the sense that the subject is implicated not as an isolated speaking subject but as a subject whose mode of being in discourse is essentially that of being able to speak with other subjects. In the saying of "I", the indexical posture of "I" is dialectically bonded with the posture of "you" as the one being addressed. I as speaker emerge in the presence of you as hearer. In other words and less

metaphorically: the speaking subject – the only one who can refer to himself as "I" – primarily manifests the idea of existence. And this idea is not confined to an individual (personal) experience: If I refer to myself with the pronoun "I" and then you refer to yourself with the same pronoun – it means that I and you have something in common; we have the same existential status. Given that you can refer to yourself by the same pronoun "I", by means of which I also refer to myself, it follows that we both are recognized as subjects – as persons with the same existential status. Thus the idea of being a subject acquires an objective meaning: the acknowledgement of a common experience. So the indexicality of "I" as speaker achieves sense only in relation to "you" as hearer. But this brings us to another topic: the issue of subjectivity and intersubjectivity from a semiotic point of view.

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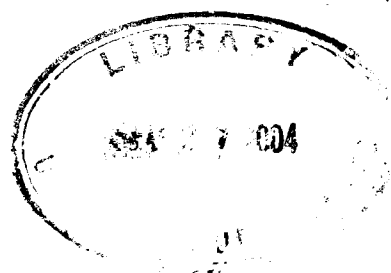
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<p>Peter Schulz, "Subjectivity from a Semiotic Point of View," in <i>Ecosemiotics: Studies in Environmental Semiosis, Semiotics of the Biocybernetic Bodies, Human / Too Human / Post Human</i>, Nordic-Baltic Summer Institute for Semiotic and Structural Studies, Part IV, edited by Eero Tarasti, Richard Littlefield, Lotta Rossi, Maija Ross (Imatra: International Semiotics Institute, 2001): 149-159, at 153-154.</p>	<p>Anthony Kenny, <i>The Self. The Aquinas Lecture, 1988</i> (Milwaukee, WI: Marquette University Press, 1988), 4-7.</p>
<p>in a misunderstanding of the reflexive pronoun. To ask what kind of substance my "self" is, is like asking what the characteristic of "ownness" is, an attribute which my own property has in addition to being mine. When, outside philosophical reflections, I talk about myself, I am simply talking about the human being, Peter Schulz, and my self is nothing other than myself. In some way it is a philosophical muddle to allow the space which differentiates "my self" from "myself" to generate the illusion of a mysterious metaphysical entity distinct from, but obscurely linked to, the human being who is talking to someone. The grammatical error which is the essence of the theory of the self may seem obvious when it is pointed out. But it is by no means easy to give an accurate account of the logic, or deep grammar, of the words "I" and "myself". It will not do, for instance, to say simply that "I" is the word each of us uses to refer to himself, a pronoun which, when it occurs in sentences, is synonymous with the name of the utterer of the sentence. This is not difficult to show. Julius Caesar, in his <i>Commentaries</i>, regularly described his own actions in the third person, using the name "Caesar". Let us imagine a language in which there were no first person pronouns, and in which everyone talked about themselves by using their own names. We can ask whether everything we can say in English can also be said in this language. The answer is clearly no. If Caesar wishes to deny that he is Caesar, then in English he can tell the lie, "I am not Caesar". In the special language no similar option is open to him. "Caesar is not Caesar" doesn't work, and neither does "the person who is speaking to you is not Caesar", because in the special language, that sentence if spoken by Caesar is equivalent to the English sentence, "The person who is speaking to you is not I". The truth is that "I" does not refer to the person who utters it in the same way in which a proper name refers to its bearer, and neither does "myself". (That does not mean that these words refer to something else, say, myself.) I shall not pursue the grammatical issues further here. Certainly, the belief in a self is in one sense a grammatical error, which has different roots. One of these roots is the notion of the self in Cartesian scepticism. Descartes, in his <i>Meditationes</i>, convinces himself that he can doubt whether he has a body. He then goes on to argue, "I can doubt whether I have a body; but I cannot doubt whether I exist; for what is this I which is doubting?" 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It will not do, for instance, to say simply that "I" is the word each of us uses to refer to himself, a pronoun which when it occurs in sentences, is synonymous with the name of the utterer of the sentence. This is not difficult to show. Julius Caesar, in his <i>Commentaries</i>, regularly described his own actions in the third person, using the name "Caesar" [...]. There might be a language, call it Caesarian, in which there were no first person pronouns, and in which everyone talked about themselves by using their own names. We can ask whether everything we can say in English can also be said in Caesarian. The answer is clearly no. If Caesar wishes to deny that he is Caesar [...], then in English he can tell the lie, "I am not Caesar." In Caesarian no similar option is open to him. "Caesar is not Caesar" will not do the trick. Nor will "the person who is speaking to you is not Caesar." For in Caesarian that sentence in Caesar's mouth is equivalent to the English sentence, "The person who is speaking to you is not I." The truth is that "I" does not refer to the person who utters it in the way in which a proper name refers to its bearer. Neither does "myself." This does not mean that these words refer to something else, say, my self [...]. I do not intend to pursue further the grammatical issues explored earlier. For though the belief in a self is in one sense a grammatical error, it is a deep error and one which is not generated by mistaken grammar alone. The error has a number of different roots: [...] root of the notion of the self is Cartesian scepticism. Descartes, in his <i>Meditationes</i>, convinces himself that he can doubt whether the world exists, and whether he has a body. He then goes on to argue, "I can doubt whether I have a body; but I cannot doubt whether I exist; for what is this I which is doubting? The "I" must refer to something of</p>

which his body is not part, and hence to something which is not a part of the human being Descartes. The Cartesian ego is a substance whose essence is pure thought; it is the mind, or <i>res cogitans</i> . This is the self in the second of the philosophical senses identified by the <i>Oxford English Dictionary</i> , “the ego identified with the soul or mind as opposed to the body”.	which his body is no part, and hence to something which is no more than a part of the human being Descartes. The Cartesian ego is a substance whose essence is pure thought, the mind, or <i>res cogitans</i> . This is the self in the second of the philosophical senses identified by the O.E.D. “the ego identified with the soul or mind as opposed to the body.”
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Peter Schulz, “Subjectivity from a Semiotic Point of View,” in <i>Ecosemiotics: Studies in Environmental Semiosis, Semiotics of the Biocybernetic Bodies, Human / Too Human / Post Human</i> , Nordic-Baltic Summer Institute for Semiotic and Structural Studies, Part IV, edited by Eero Tarasti, Richard Littlefield, Lotta Rossi, Maija Rossi (Imatra: International Semiotics Institute, 2001): 149-159, at 156-157.	Pope John Paul II / Karol Wojtyla, “Subjectivity and the Irreducible in the Human Being,” in <i>Person and Community: Selected Essays</i> , trans. Theresa Sandok (New York: Peter Lang, 1993), 209-217.	
the primordial uniqueness of the human being, and thus for the basic irreducibility of the human being to the natural world. This assumption forms the basis of understanding the human being as a person. Traditional Aristotelian anthropology was based on the definition <i>o anthropos zoon noetikon</i> ( <i>homo est animal rationale</i> ). This definition fulfills Aristotle's requirements for defining the species (human being) through its proximate genus (living being) and the feature that distinguishes the given species in that genus (endowed with reason). At the same time, however, the definition is constructed in such a way that it excludes – at least at first glance – the possibility of accentuating the irreducible in the human being. In this definition the human being is mainly an object, one of the objects in the world to which the human being visibly and physically belongs. In this perspective, objectivity was connected with the general assumption of the reducibility of the human being. The term subjectivity, on the other hand, proclaims that the human being's proper essence cannot be reduced and explained by the proximate genus and specific difference. In other words: Subjectivity is a synonym for the irreducible in the human being.	the primordial uniqueness of the human being, and thus in the basic irreducibility of the human being to the natural world [...]. This belief stands at the basis of understanding the human being as a person [...]. // Traditional Aristotelian anthropology was based, as we know, on the definition <i>o anthropos zoon noetikon</i> , <i>homo est animal rationale</i> . This definition fulfills Aristotle's requirements for defining the species (human being) through its proximate genus (living being) and the feature that distinguishes the given species in that genus (endowed with reason). At the same time, however, the definition is constructed in such a way that it excludes—when taken simply and directly—the possibility of accentuating the irreducible in the human being. // In [...] the definition <i>homo est animal rationale</i> , the human being was mainly an object, one of the objects in the world to which the human being visibly and physically belongs. Objectivity in this sense was connected with the general assumption of the reducibility of the human being. Subjectivity, on the other hand, is, as it were, a term proclaiming that the human being's proper essence cannot be totally reduced to and explained by the proximate genus and specific difference. Subjectivity is, then, a kind of synonym for the irreducible in the human being.	John Paul II / Wojtyla, 211  John Paul II / Wojtyla, 210  John Paul II / Wojtyla, 211

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