

# The syndrome of the house taken over\*

## A síndrome da casa tomada

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**Abstract:** To overcome the paradoxical situation in which the modern subject finds itself, on conceptualizing nature in such a way that its very presence *in* nature becomes inconceivable, modernity has supplied at least four alternatives: a) the first is to defend dualism (Descartes, Kant); b) the second option is to support a monism of nature (Spinoza, Hobbes); c) the third alternative is to defend a monism of subjectivity (Fichte); d) the fourth and last alternative is to support a dialectical monism (Schelling, Hegel). It is well known that, of these four alternatives to the self-interpretation crisis of modern subjectivity, the first ultimately had a more lasting influence on the philosophical scene, marking, point to point, this last breath of modernity that some call post-modern, which flows into the present situation of “hyperincommensurability” between subjectivity and nature, as diagnosed by Bruno Latour. The crisis of subjectivity thus becomes a crisis of philosophy, which ends up as a hostage to the *syndrome of the house taken over*.

**Keywords:** Dialectical monism. Crisis of modern subjectivity. Nature. Ontology. System.

**Resumo:** Com o intuito de superar a situação paradoxal em que se encontra, ao conceitualizar a natureza de tal modo que a sua própria presença *na* natureza resulta inconcebível, a modernidade apresenta ao menos quatro alternativas: a) defesa do dualismo (Descartes, Kant); b) apelo a um monismo da natureza (Spinoza, Hobbes); c) afirmação de um monismo da subjetividade (Fichte); d) ou, por fim, elaboração de um monismo dialético (Schelling, Hegel). É bem conhecido que, destas quatro alternativas à crise de autointerpretação da subjetividade moderna, a primeira terá a influência mais duradoura na cena filosófica, marcando, ponto a ponto, este último alento da modernidade que alguns chamam de pós-modernidade, e desembocando na presente situação de “hipercomensurabilidade” entre subjetividade e natureza diagnosticada por Bruno Latour. A crise da subjetividade torna-se, assim, crise da filosofia, que termina refém da *síndrome da casa tomada*.

**Palavras-chave:** Monismo dialético. Crise da subjetividade moderna. Natureza. Ontologia. Sistema.

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Modernity is permeated, from its inception, by a crisis of self-interpretation. We can explain the meaning of this crisis by extracting consequences from the mechanist turn in modern thinking, illuminated by the simple example given in Descartes' second meditation (*Med.*, p. 20ff). I refer to the waxen image that, when it has just been extracted from the honeycomb and exposed to fire, loses all of its initial qualities: if it is cold, it becomes warm; if it is solid, it liquefies; if it carries the pleasant aroma of flowers, now its perfume fades away. After so many changes, what is left of this object? What is in fact *this* that underlies all changes? Pure *res extensa*, Descartes will say. A thing, something that has a size and can thus be quantified.

The example is simple, but the consequences are radical. Descartes invites the readers to place themselves in the position of someone who crosses the threshold that separates the new view of the world not only from pre-modern understanding, but also from our own daily perception of the natural phenomena. Indeed, in daily life, natural events show themselves to us permeated by qualitative traits, by a certain texture, odor, color, that renders them familiar, convenient, appropriate to our own presence in the world as percipient subjects. This world that was previously available to subjectivity, the place where one "felt at home", after the modern turnaround, now becomes the situation of their exile.

There is nothing in nature but pure *res extensa*, something that can be determined based on mathematically described natural laws. Or, using Ashby's (1956, p. 24) conceptualization of cybernetics, from being the home of subjectivity, nature is reverted into a *determinate machine*, a machine ruled by *univalent closed transformation* processes. Natural processes are seen as transformations of a system that does not produce any new element compared to its initial state (closure), and whose behavior in T1 is entirely determined by its state at T0 (*univalence*).

What is the place of subjectivity in this world ruled by deterministic laws? The self-image of the thinking subject as a free being, besides bearing and instituting meaning, cannot be preserved if it is to be considered part of the nature-machine. However, if the subject is not part of nature, what is its ontological *locus*?

## Four alternatives

To overcome the paradoxical situation in which the modern subject finds itself, on conceptualizing nature in such a way that its very presence *in* nature becomes inconceivable, modernity supplied at least four alternatives. The first is to defend **dualism**, that is, to preserve the self-image of the subject *and* its new conceptualization of nature, but to split

these two poles into independent spheres. Descartes himself chooses to think of these poles as independent *ontological* spheres, in the famous metaphysical distinction between *res extensa* and *res cogitans*, between the determinate machine and the free, thinking subject. In Kant, on the other hand, dualism is instituted in the context of the *transcendental* opposition between our way of knowing objects as *phenomena* that can be subsumed to *a priori* synthetic judgments, namely, as events that can be subsumed to natural laws, and our way of thinking about our own cognitive activity as guided by non-objectifiable ideas (among them, the idea of the subject itself as *noumenon*).

The second option is to support a *monism of nature*, that is, to preserve the mechanist view and reinterpret the self-image of the subject in such a way as to integrate it to the nature-machine as a whole. It is the option of all of us who in some way intend to *naturalize* subjectivity, if by naturalization we mean the attempt to reinterpret our self-image in the context of the physicalist discourse, redescribing the subject as part of the causal weave of natural events. Thus, for Spinoza, human freedom should not be understood as the free exploration of a non-predetermined field of possibilities whence springs contingency. This would be pure illusion, according to the philosopher. We should, on the contrary, conceive it as a type of self-imposed necessity, as a self determination of the agent.<sup>1</sup> This is also the path taken by Hobbes, when he reinterpreted liberty as non-impediment<sup>2</sup> in the deterministic flow of the events described in his social physics. And it is the option of those of our contemporaries who seek to understand not only our free agency but also our capacity to produce meaning, or our way of being as agents (practically or theoretically) guided by discursively articulated priorities (or values), or, in short, human intelligence itself as a product of deterministic computer processes.<sup>3</sup>

The third alternative is to defend a *monism of subjectivity*. To deal with this impasse, we seek to reconstruct our concept of nature, with a view to integrating it in our self image. Possibly the most notable thinker who defended this alternative is Fichte. His “transcendental deduction” of our sense of objectivity in general, of the *a priori* structure that shapes

<sup>1</sup> According to def. 7 of *Ethics*, “that thing is called free which exists from the necessity of its nature alone, and is determined to act by itself alone” (Spinoza, *Et.*, p. 2).

<sup>2</sup> “By liberty is understood”, according to Hobbes, “the absence of external impediments; which impediments may oft take away part of a man’s power to do what he would, but cannot hinder him from using the power left him according as his judgement and reason shall dictate to him” (Hobbes, *Lev.*, p. 79).

<sup>3</sup> For the critique of the assumption that all computer processes are deterministic, and to defend the thesis that human intelligence can be simulated by chaotic computer processes (that deal with randomness), see. R. Kurzweil (2006, p. 475).

the intelligibility sphere in which our “representations accompanied by the feeling of need” (Fichte, *EE*, p. 423) are shaped, is entirely developed as a necessary moment in the process of self-determination of the subject seeking full self-knowledge and full freedom. Nature, thus, is still opposed to freedom, but now it is instrumentalized as part of a general theory of practical reason or of the free subject. The sphere of natural phenomena is a barrier (*Schranke*) in the terminology of Hegel’s Doctrine of Being, used as a resistance to be overcome by the activity of the I which intends to realize its own freedom in the context of moral Oughtness (*Sollen*). I believe that it is legitimate to see, in this permanent tension projected to the infinity between the theoretical I and the practical I, between nature and freedom, the most remarkable conceptualization of that deficit of self-interpretation of modern subjectivity, that was mentioned in the beginning. If philosophy is “its time apprehended in thoughts”, then Fichte’s idealism can be seen, for good and evil, as the crowning of modern philosophy.

The fourth and last alternative is, in a way, the most radical solution, since it launches itself against the core of modern thinking, requiring the reconceptualization of *both the poles of opposition*, that is, to support a **dialectical monism**. Obviously, what is at stake here is a global reconceptualization of the mechanist worldview. We owe the emphatic defense of this position to the daring of a young philosopher, who sought to build a new physics guided by the metaphor of the organism as opposed to the metaphor of the machine. The speculative physics of young Schelling sought to unveil the common principle of self-organization, based on which the desired unity between nature and subjectivity could be articulated. This project finds its mature realization, according to Schelling himself, in the philosophy of identity of 1801, when the sphere of objectivity (nature) and the sphere of subjectivity (spirit/culture) are understood as moments of a universal reason, differentiated only according to the degree of realization of one and the same logical structure (see Schelling, *Darst.*, p. 60). The dialectical monism of young Schelling was integrated from the beginning into the project of Hegel’s system. The linear causal weave of events described by the mechanics will be conceptualized in Hegel as a less developed stage of the Concept, to be overcome in the teleology, the phenomena of self-organization of life and, finally, the activity of self-determination of knowledge, which is the culmination of the dialectical process.

## The lasting influence of dualism in philosophy. Why?

It is well known that, of these four alternatives to the self-interpretation crisis of modern subjectivity, the first ultimately had a more lasting

influence on the philosophical scene – reinforced by the collapse of Marxism –, marking, point to point, this last breath of modernity that some call post-modern and flowing into the present situation of “hyper-incommensurability” between subjectivity and nature as diagnosed by Bruno Latour (1993, p. 61). How can this be explained?

An initial response comes from the simple finding that the strongly aprioristic model that provides a foundation for knowledge associated with the typical forms of philosophical monism, from Spinoza to Fichte, Schelling and Hegel, rendered these alternatives increasingly less plausible as the empirical sciences made stupendous progress. Philosophy lost its epistemic authority as a producer of objective knowledge, definitively giving up space to empirical knowledge. Thus pressed by the unchallenged advance of this empirical version of monism of nature – or, in its stricter version, *physicalism* – it would remain for philosophy, this “place-holder” (*Platzhalter*), in the words of Habermas (1996), to reemphasize the transcendental dualism between facts and norms, being and oughtness, and take up the original dualistic position again.

However, in this way one no longer sees what is most essential. The fact that modern “monisms” themselves, either when they emphasize only one of the opposites that are in conflict and thus renege their paradoxical complement (monisms of subjectivity or of nature), or when they force a possible conciliation of what cannot be conciliated (modern dialectical monisms), actually operate within the conceptual framework of the dualism they wish to overcome. Rarely has this dependence on dualism been explicitly spelled out or “brought to the concept” as it was in Fichte’s philosophy. As said previously, his philosophy can be considered the most sophisticated self-expression of modern philosophy, precisely by making explicit, in the core of its monism of subjectivity, the potentially infinite tension between I and non-I. This dependence on dualism had operated in the shadows or behind the back of the different monist “alternatives”.

The explanation given by Bruno Latour in *We have never been modern* appears the most plausible to me: dualism is not one option among others proper, but the touchstone of a culture that has operated, since the beginning, under the assumption of a non-explicit agreement, or of a Constitution that institutes the cesura, the cut between nature and subjectivity. Following the implicit rules of the modern Constitution, each of the spheres in conflict acquires rights and restrictions: the forms of knowledge that *represent*<sup>4</sup> human beings have the right to their own

<sup>4</sup> Latour here explores the ambiguity of the term “representation”, which may mean, on the one hand, the act of representing a subject in a given situation (as in the case of “political representation”), and, on the other, the act of representing the phenomena in the act of knowledge.

object of study and enquiry: the sphere of meaning, values and oughtness. On the one hand, there is an original restriction: these knowledge forms – including philosophy itself, already stripped of its classical claim to universal knowledge – have nothing to say about nature or about the impact of sciences on nature. On the other, the sciences proper are restricted by not being able to interfere in human issues, although they have the potentially infinite field of nature entirely at their disposal, without any restriction emanating from the subjectivity pole. On the one hand, the discourse of “humanities” may expand unlimitedly without being held back by empirical research; on the other, the technics can unlimitedly expand over nature, without being held back by ethical (and political) restrictions.

However, and also according to Latour, modernity is not founded only on a conceptual agreement, but on a concrete action. Its action continuously disavows the agreement: despite the conceptual cesura, the world as such remains the world as such. In it, the hybrids or “almost-objects” proliferate, namely, events that are neither pure natural phenomena, nor pure subjectivity. Modernity *conceptualizes* a schism – what Latour calls the moment of *purification* inherent to the modern Constitution, but at the same time, it *performs* the mixing (the moment of *proliferation*). Let us think about a human being with a neural implant, and Kurzweil’s somewhat joking question:

If we regard a human modified with technology as no longer human, where would we draw the defining line? Is a human with a bionic heart still human? How about someone with a neurological implant? What about two neurological implants? How about someone with ten nanobots in his brain? How about 500 million nanobots? Should we establish a boundary at 650 million nanobots: under that, you’re still human and over that, you’re posthuman? (Kurzweil, 2006, p. 374).

Modern culture constantly produces new hybrids, objects belonging neither to the pole of nature, nor to the pole of subjectivity, like the robot-man described by Kurzweil. At every new hybrid detected, it introduces a new conceptual cut, a new convenient schism, aiming at establishing the schism between the mind and the brain that pervades the philosophy of mind in contemporary thinking. Modernity, at each new act of proliferation, establishes a new purifying maneuver, and reproduces the aporia of dualism to the infinite.

The monist approaches described previously would, therefore, be only pieces on the dualist gameboard of modernity. And the same would go for its contemporary extensions: let us think, for instance, about the conflict

between the project of generalized physicalism<sup>5</sup> which emanates from the natural sciences, and its symmetrical counterpart in the versions of linguistic idealism, bringing together as disparate proposals as Apel's transcendental pragmatics (rightly conceptualized by V. Hösle as a kind of modified extension – taking up the consequences of the linguistic turn in philosophy – of Fichtean monism (Hösle, 1986), Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics, Rorty's neopragmatism and Derrida's deconstruction.<sup>6</sup> According to Latour, the

pre-postmoderns,<sup>7</sup> for their part, truly believe that speaking subjects are incommensurable with natural objects and with technological efficacy, or that speaking subjects ought to become so if they are not incommensurable enough already. Thus they cancel out the modern project while claiming to be restoring it, since they comply with the half of the Constitution that speaks of purity, but neglect the other half, which practices only hybridization. They imagine there are not – that there must not be – any mediators. On the subject side, they invent speech, hermeneutics and meaning, and they let the world of things drift slowly in its void. On the other side of the mirror, of course, scientists and technocrats take the symmetrical attitude. The more hermeneutics spins its web, the more naturalism does the same (Latour, 1993, p. 59).

## The crisis of subjectivity becomes a crisis of philosophy

However, let us not forget something very important, which makes explicit the role of philosophy in this scenario of modernity involved in immersing deeper into the paradoxical game of dualism. On examining the cesura established by the modern Constitution, I situated philosophy in the immanence of one of the fields in conflict, namely, on the side of the knowledge forms which represent human beings (the subjectivity pole), and in confrontation with sciences proper (the nature pole). This is a somewhat exotic role for a form knowledge that, since its inception, has claimed universality as its constitutive mark. Ever stranger is the

<sup>5</sup> See, for instance, the physicalism embedded in the recent, and in all other aspects remarkable, work of B. Greene: "the position that makes the most sense to me is that one's physical and mental characteristics are nothing but a manifestation of how the particles in one's body are arranged. Specify the particle arrangement and you've specified everything" (Greene, 2011, p. 34)

<sup>6</sup> Although Latour himself probably tended to place Derrida in the field of those who intend to render the language autonomous, situating it beyond the poles in conflict. Yet precisely for this reason, it is launched into the void.

<sup>7</sup> Latour has Habermas in mind here above. He is author who, like Fichte, and very close to Apel's linguistic idealism, spells out in his philosophy the modern dualism in the dichotomies between instrumental reason and communicative reason, between system and lifeworld. See. J. Habermas (1995, v. 2, p. 229ff).

fact that the board of the game of dualism itself was instituted from a strictly universal theoretical attitude, i.e., eminently philosophical. What accounts for this ambiguous relationship between modernity and philosophy?

Once again the appeal to the central assumptions of the modern Constitution may be revealing. It happens that the establishment of this Constitution, this *founding* act of modernity, is at the same time a requirement and an impossibility. The knowledge that institutes the demarcating line – i.e., philosophy itself – does not reside within any of the fields that are in a dispute. It does not reside in either of the poles, but transcends them. Precisely for this reason, it cannot be conceptualized since all of the modern conceptualization presupposes a prior establishment of that founding cut. The founding philosophical perspective of modernity is like the Kantian broken trace of the demarcating line between the thing-in-itself and a phenomenon: it is at the same time the most originary postulate of modern thinking and the mark of its unfeasibility. The modern Constitution not only loves to conceal itself, like the Heraclitean *physis*, but it also defines itself by its own concealment. Here is the exotic or even histrionic role of philosophy in modernity: it builds the board of a game from which, as a principle, it is excluded.

Following the logic of this dubious game, philosophy loses not only epistemic authority when what is at stake is objective knowledge, it is also displaced to the edges of the knowledge forms that represent man, close to the human “sciences”. It is only tolerated here (in the subjectivity pole) as a rather exotic knowledge and remembered there (in the sciences pole proper) as the distant birthplace of the natural sciences, the old mother who died millenia ago, of whom one has a tenuous memory, and who at least deserves that a few wilted flowers be deposited on her tomb. In fact philosophy, thus displaced and thrown to the Colleges of “Philosophy and Human Sciences”, completely loses its usefulness or even its viability. Only this exotic caricature remains of what in other times was called universal knowledge, or at least claimed to be universal. Here, at the edge of the human “sciences”, philosophy not only cannot do anything, it must not even raise its voice. Nobody must denounce the tragicomic role of this actor who, clearly viewed, dresses in the clothing of the dying, while manipulating the puppets from behind the curtains. Not for nothing was the task of raising the curtain given to an anthropologist...

The crisis of subjectivity thus becomes a crisis of philosophy, which does not miss the chance of reaffirming, loudly and clearly, to whomever still wishes to listen, on every new day its own new death. In the voices

of Heidegger, Wittgenstein or Cioran, “Compared to music, mysticism, and poetry, philosophical activity proceeds from a diminished impulse and a suspect depth, prestigious only for the timid and the tepid. Moreover, philosophy – impersonal anxiety, refuge among anemic ideas – is the recourse of all who would elude the corrupting exuberance of life” (Cioran, 1998, p. 141-2).

Indeed, from the beginning this was its natural path: to establish the modern Constitution and conceal itself: to ground while already sinking; to found while foundering...

## The syndrome of the house taken over

Now, in this late modernity, a double movement emerges. On the one hand, the continuous proliferation of Latour’s hybrids again renders the moment of purification implausible. The extravagant mask of the unpolluted Kantian subject falls for once and for all, as well as its counterpart in the fully autonomized language, without a referent, without an addressee, without a sender, of the extreme versions of post-modernism: “it is really difficult to imagine for a long time that we are a text that writes itself, a discourse that speaks to itself alone, a game of signifiers without signification” (Latour, 1993, p. 64). The hidden game of philosophy in its activity of forging dualisms loses its strength, while its explicit self-image remains increasingly fragile and dysfunctional. Deprived of an own object of investigation or of any sensible task, philosophy must reinvent itself as a knowledge from nothing to nothing. Given the impossibility of such a strange task, despite all the many conceptual turns taken by the philosophers in search of the legitimation of such an exotic knowledge, a knowledge that was different, in principle, from all forms of knowledge, *precisely because it does not have any object of its own*, philosophy ultimately becomes a hostage to the *syndrome of the house taken*, to use the beautiful image of a short story by Cortazar, the Argentinian writer, that begins like this: “We liked the house because, apart from its being old and spacious (in a day when old houses go down for a profitable auction of their construction materials), it kept the memories of great-grandparents, our paternal grandfather, our parents and the whole of childhood” (Cortázar, 1985). And the story goes on:

I’ll always have a clear memory of it because it happened so simply and without fuss. Irene [the sister] was knitting in her bedroom, it was eight at night, and I suddenly decided to put the water up for mate. I went down the corridor as far as the oak door, which was ajar, then turned into the hall toward the kitchen, when I heard something in the library or the dining room. The sound came through muted and indistinct, a chair being

knocked over onto the carpet or the muffled buzzing of a conversation. At the same time, or a second later, I heard it at the end of the passage which led from those two rooms toward the door. I hurled myself against the door before it was too late and shut it, leaned on it with the weight of my body; luckily, the key was on our side; moreover, I ran the great bolt into place, just to be safe. I went down to the kitchen, heated the kettle, and when I got back with the tray of mate, I told Irene: 'I had to shut the door to the passage. They've taken over the back part.'

We know the end of the story...: it remains only an empty house, full of noises...

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Uninstalled from its usual position, in which it had free transit through all spaces in the old house of knowledge, guided as it was by the very architectonic of knowledge, by the view of the ensemble, and now launched into the no-place of this "being next to" human sciences, without any object or function of its own, philosophy launches itself into a task without glory. Established in the old subjectivity pole, insisting on the game of a dualism which is already undergoing complete collapse, and seeing the continuous advance of empirical sciences on all environments of the old construct, philosophy fights desperately to preserve something that can be its own: an exclusive research topic. But at every new object it takes for itself, another is torn from it. The old matron will say: "particle physics can do a lot, but it is incapable of thematizing life", and the multiple philosophies of life appear (Bergson, Scheler) – until life is definitively torn from the new philosophy by the dissemination of Darwinism. Then she will say: "Darwinism can do a lot, it may even be able to explain everything, except for the mind", and the various lines of non-empirical psychological idealism gain strength (Neo-Kantianism, phenomenology, philosophy of the mind...) – until the mind is torn from philosophy by the cognitive sciences. Who knows then, maybe language, this undefiled core of new idealism could be the sought for object? But the empirical sciences of language appear... Finally, the last space remains, the entire broad territory of oughtness, of the normative disciplines: the matron will say: "natural sciences, and not they alone, all empirical sciences are only descriptive, never normative. The field of philosophy proper is, therefore, the sphere of pure oughtness". It happens that a "sphere of pure oughtness" is a perfectly empty sphere, a hollow replica of the normativity that *de facto* emanates from the concrete forms of sociability, or from the concrete modes of realizing knowledge. Obviously, it will not be long before this space, in

its non-fictitious aspects, is again stolen from philosophy by empirical research, giving rise to sociobiology, to the naturalized epistemology, to the naturalized ethics, and so on.<sup>8</sup>

## Dialectical monism today?

Based on this diagnosis, what could philosophy still do? Well, this is a misleading question, since it begins with the situation that has already been consummated in the distorted self-image that generated the crisis of philosophy. On the contrary, the idea of a universal knowledge and the claim to universality were never absent as the very weave that gives meaning and structure to the different fields of human knowledge. It is not by chance that the project of systematic knowledge remains more alive than ever, although developed outside the departments of philosophy, having as its point of departure this or that branch of a particular science. Thus, each of these authors implements an ascending dialectics, going from regional ontologies toward a general ontology. At this point, one ought to mention, among others, D. Deutsch, *The fabric of reality* (1998), A.-L. Barabási, *Linked: How everything is connected to everything else and what it means* (2002), and S. A. Kauffman, *Reinventing the sacred* (2008).

In this sense, I would like to go a different route from that taken by Latour himself in dealing with this crisis. By insisting on following the multiplication of the hybrids, Latour continues to play the game of the modern Constitution, re-writing it from the bottom up within the sphere of proliferation (Latour, 2005, p. 115ff). Thence the risk of a relapse in modern dualism, via the advocacy of a theory of agents that fluctuates between a fractured theory, a theory of ‘the thing in itself’, as multiple and dispersed (a theory of the *pluriverse*, in the words of Latour), and an idealized monist ontology, anchored as it is in the idea of a “common world that must still be collected and composed” (Latour, 2005, p. 118).

I would like to change the focus of our attention, renewing the question about the viability, today, of dialectical monism. Does the fourth way to deal with the crisis of modernity have anything to tell us? The answer is yes and no. *Yes*, for two reasons: a) in this specific type of *differentiated* monism we can find an intelligent answer both to dualism and to undifferentiated monism or physicalism; b) differently from what happened to Schelling and Hegel, nowadays we have a movement to generalize the theory of complex adaptive systems, whose implicit ontology shares well-known traits with dialectics (actually, it partly finds

<sup>8</sup> See also Marques, 2011, p. 244.

its root in the dialectical tradition itself (see C. Cirne-Lima, *Dialectics*), and allows a renewed dialogue with contemporary science.

But the answer is **no**, if we consider dialectical monism the approach bequeathed by the modern, without performing the appropriate and deep corrections (see E. Luft/C. Cirne-Lima, 2012).

At the beginning of this essay, it was said that dialectical monism is, up to a point, the most daring of alternatives to the crisis of modernity, since it requires the reconceptualization of both poles, namely, the elaboration of a new theory of nature associated with a new theory of subjectivity. However, one of the core deficits of modern dialectical monism, which will be recognized by the late Schelling, is the transmutation of the linear necessity of the mechanist causal weave into the circular necessity of self-determination of absolute reason (of the absolute identity in young Schelling, or of the Concept in Hegel). In brief: modern dialectics speaks the same language as Necessitarianism, only in another way and in another conceptual framework; If the metaphor of the organism still has something to tell us, if dialectical monism can still be a counterpoint to physicalism, then our point of departure must be the critique of the residue of Necessitarianism present in its core (see E. Luft, 2004).

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