

## **Subject: Construct or Acting Being?** **The Status of the Subject and the Problem of Solipsism** **in Wittgenstein's *Tractatus***

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### ABSTRACT

In his *Tractatus* and *Notebooks* 1914–1916, Wittgenstein develops some themes concerning the nature of the subject, transcendentalism, solipsism and mysticism. Though Wittgenstein rejects a naive, psychological understanding of the subject, he preserves the idea of the metaphysical subject, so-called “philosophical I”. The present investigations exhibit two ways of grasping the subject: (1) subject as a boundary (of the world); (2) subject (I) as the world. The author of the paper aims to analyze different methods of conceiving the subject, both logical and transcendental. Then he discusses the naturalistic or reductionist consequences of solipsism which were derived by Wittgenstein. Moreover, he refers to the concept of “subject of will” introduced in the *Tractatus*. Finally, the author puts a question whether the metaphysical subject is a boundary of the world identified with the subject of will. While trying to answer this question one can point to the essential difficulties of Wittgenstein’s standpoint. These difficulties become especially evident if we examine Wittgenstein’s statements concerning mysticism. The category of subject seems to gain a new dimension when reconsidered in this context. In the conclusion, the author offers an interpretation inspired by Schopenhauer’s conception of the double aspect of the subject that is to overcome these difficulties.

The question of the subject occurs only in the final part of the *Tractatus*. After presenting the ontological fundamentals of the world, constructing the theory of representing reality and introducing more or less technically significant remarks about logic, Wittgenstein advances a few mysterious theses, in which a crucial role is played by the subject. Those parts of the *Tractatus* which discuss the subject constitute a culminating point of his work. The subject seems to be the most important and complex problem here, even more complex than the issue of objects and/or logi-

cal form. Approaching the question of the subject one should not forget that this issue is closely connected with another one, that of boundaries.

My intention is to begin by pointing out a few ways of understanding the subject, which occur not only in the *Tractatus*, but also in the *Notebooks 1914–1916*. The fundamental concept here is the so-called “philosophical I” or “metaphysical subject”. A detailed analysis will be conducted in the following ways: (1) Kantian transcendental; (2) logical and (3) the so-called “dynamical” or mystic, determined by Schopenhauer. These three ways are based on the three different sources which inspired Wittgenstein — Kant’s transcendentalism, collaboration with Russell and Frege, and Schopenhauer’s *The World as Will and Representation*. The basic aim of this paper is to show that a coherent interpretation of Wittgenstein’s standpoint consists in showing that the subject of the will and the subject of knowing are the two aspects of the metaphysical subject. Moreover, I try to decide in what sense Wittgenstein understands solipsism; in particular, whether the solipsism in the *Tractatus* can be described as a transcendental solipsism.

## 1. TRANSCENDENTALISM, SOLIPSISM, REALISM

I would like to begin my consideration of Wittgenstein’s views on the problem of the subject with the following quotation from the *Notebooks*:

This is a way I have travelled: Idealism singles men out from the world as unique, solipsism singles me alone out, and at last I see that I too belong with the rest of the world, and so, on the one side nothing is left over, and on the other side, as unique, the world. In this way idealism leads to realism if it is strictly thought out (15.10.1916).

The analysis of the subject can be carried out on three levels: (1) transcendental or idealistic; (2) solipsistic; (3) realistic or naturalistic. The question of whether there is any higher level of analysis, I will leave open for the time being.

Referring to the first point, a transcendental grasping of the subject is presented in the following theses:

The subject does not belong to the world but it is a limit of the world (5.632);  
The limits of my language means the limits of my world (5.6);  
Logic fills the world: the limits of the world are also its limits (5.61);  
Logic is not a theory but a reflexion of the world. Logic is transcendental (6.13).

The subject in transcendental understanding constitutes the boundaries/limits of the world in that sense, that it is a set of conditions which determines all possible experiences — that is the world. The fact that this transcendentalism “singles men out of the world” one should understand in such a way that the boundaries are marked from the inside, that is from the inside of the world, and they are marked by man (as a species). The boundaries of my language should be understood as the boundaries of thoughts, which one can recognize as objective in the sense that they are shared by the whole of mankind; in that sense the subject is removed from the centre of the world to its periphery. As Kant would say: the empirical I is substituted by the transcendental I, that is, by the transcendental unity of apperception (*transzendente Einheit der Apperzeption*). Transcendental unity of apperception, as the subject, shows its new aspect in Wittgenstein’s philosophy as the logic or boundaries of language. Hence, logic is conceived here not as a language, but as its boundaries, which means — in other words — a “transcendental scaffolding of the world”. This expression reveals the other side of logic — its immanence, because it “fills the world”. The same is true for the transcendental subject, which is a boundary of the world and, at the same time, it penetrates the world, because the world is shaped by it.

From the solipsistic point of view the question of the subject looks a bit different. In solipsistic theses (5.62; 5.621; 5.63) Wittgenstein states:

This remark provides a key to the question, to what extent solipsism is a truth. In fact what solipsism means, is quite correct, only it cannot be said, but it shows itself. That the world is my world, shows itself in the fact that the limits of the language (the language which I understand) mean the limits of my world (5.62);

The world and life are one (5.621);

I am my world (The microcosm) (5.63).

In those theses, (similarly to the transcendental level), Wittgenstein begins with I as the centre and then goes on to the description of the world as my world. It is a method of “isolating the subject” (5.631). It consists in showing that there is no subject in the world which is the domain of facts. One can understand the fact of “disappearing of the subject” in two ways: (1) as “dissolving of I/the subject in the world”, in the sense that it shows a strict identity of I and the world or (2) as a process of contracting I/self to a “dimensionless point”. If we take the first case into consideration, then the “dissolving of the subject” can be understood in the way offered by neutral monism, which was accepted by W. James and B. Russell. According to this theory, the subject/self is another way of organizing/arranging neutral material, so-called “bare data”.

Hence, the subject and the world are like two sides of the same coin. The objective side is “the world”, the subjective/psychical side is I/self, which is described by Wittgenstein as “realism”, and, in one way or another, might be understood as the disappearance of the subject. It seems, however, that this result should be finally determined as naturalism or reductionism, because in these cases the image of reality does not differ from the description of the world given by the natural sciences.

Summing up what has been said above: idealism shows itself as a kind of realism, that is naturalism. Wittgenstein tries to present solipsism as such a version of idealism, which is not a traditional subjectivism, but rather naturalism. What else can we say about this result? It is a recapitulation of Hume’s way — that is the subject disappears. However, it is necessary to make a proviso here, which was formulated by Wittgenstein himself: “In fact what solipsism means, is quite correct, only it cannot be said, but it shows itself” (5.62).

That main idea of solipsism refers to the sameness of the subject/I/self and the world, that is, precisely to that which, according to Wittgenstein, cannot be expressed. Arguing against such a possibility, Wittgenstein refers to the basic distinction in his own philosophy: firstly, what we can say (*sagen*) and secondly, what we can only show (*zeigen*). Therefore, we can show that solipsism is true, but we cannot say it. The question is: why? The answer can be found in another of Wittgenstein’s fundamental ideas: the identity occurring between myself and the world is an inner relation. This relation cannot be expressed, much like it is impossible to express a common logical form for both a sentence and fact. If we were able to stand outside a sentence and fact, and grasp their common logical form (which, according to Wittgenstein, is impossible), the situation would be analogous to the one presented in the thesis of solipsism, which contains the suggestion that the statement of identity of the subject/self and the world compels us to acknowledge that we have an ability to go beyond ourselves and the world (to transcend ourselves and the world). On the one hand, that seems absolutely impossible, on the other, thesis 5.641 proclaims the opposite:

There is therefore really a sense in which in philosophy we can talk of a non-psychological I.

The I occurs in philosophy through the fact that the world is my world. The philosophical I is not the man, not the human soul of which psychology treats, but the metaphysical subject, the limit — not a part of the world (5.641).

It seems that while thesis 5.62 does not permit us to speak of the self/I in solipsism, thesis 5.641 allows for such statements. So we have

aporia. Therefore, particularly in this context, the last thesis of the *Tractatus* becomes slightly ambiguous: "Whereof one cannot speak, thereof one must be silent" (7). O. Neurath has already observed that it is not clear what exactly is excluded by this thesis (Haller 1989). It appears as if theses 7 and 6.54, namely:

My propositions are elucidatory in this way: he who understands me finally recognizes them as senseless, when he has climbed out through them, on them, over them. (He must so to speak throw away the ladder, after he has climbed up on it).  
He must surmount these propositions; then he sees the world rightly (6.54)

show that different theses can be mutually incompatible. Thus Wittgenstein allows for a minimal degree of incoherence, "a minimal degree of nonsense" (Burkhardt 1990).

## 2. THE MYSTIC WAY AND THE METAPHYSICAL SUBJECT

From transcendentalism it is possible to follow a different path and instead of naturalism find mysticism at its end. Now I will move to the presentation of the argumentation which supports the mystic way. This argument is based on the radically metaphysical interpretation of the subject as a dimensionless point. This interpretation is essentially related to Wittgenstein's mysticism which is present in the final part of the *Tractatus*. The metaphysical subject is not — according to this approach — a suitable construct, which makes it possible to talk about a given point of view or perspective, which one can adopt. On the contrary, the subject assumes a privileged, nearly a God-like point of view. Thesis 6.45 assumes such a metaphysical subject:

The contemplation of the world *sub specie aeterni* is its contemplation as a limited whole. The feeling of the world as a limited whole is the mystical feeling (6.45).

The metaphysical subject is no longer the boundary of the world — it is the transcendent subject. Thesis 6.45 *de facto* expresses a mystical experience. It should be noted here that the mystical experience is a kind of the fact which cannot be easily ignored. Therefore, the experience can provide a serious argument for the acknowledgement of the metaphysical subject in a strict sense.

Now I am going to put forward the following interpretation: the metaphysical I is essentially and originally the subject of the will. The subject is, it can be said, a cosmic force, one which is blind, unconscious,

but creative. Hence, it creates. What that force creates is the world, which is the totality of facts. The world should be understood as the phenomenal limitation of that force, its boundary, and simultaneously the representation of its will. The world and facts amount to the “objectification of the will” (after Schopenhauer). The next stage of the process is a kind of dialectical game between the subject of the will and the world, that is facts. In this mutual dialectical reference between the subject of the will and the world consciousness appears. As to how precisely this occurs, Wittgenstein says nothing. However, Schopenhauer presents a speculative solution to this problem. Here, the German philosopher refers to the metaphor of creating sounds (Schopenhauer 1924, vol. 2: 195). He compares a vibrating string to the subject of the will, a sound box to the empirical world, and the sound itself — which is created by the interaction of the string and the box — to consciousness. The subject of the will then becomes the transcendental I or self, that is, the transcendental unity of apperception. In other words: it is a condition of the world’s possibilities, of which we become conscious. In this way a double aspect of the metaphysical subject is revealed: as the “subject of the will” and as a “knowing subject”. The “knowing subject” is secondary, which is why Wittgenstein says that there is no subject of knowing (cf. 5.631).

In order to reveal this double aspect of the metaphysical subject, it is necessary to see the world as a boundary. An amazing analogy occurs between the formulation given by Wittgenstein and the one given by Schopenhauer, for example:

- (1) The world is a mirror of the will (Schopenhauer).
- (2) Logic is a mirror of the world (Wittgenstein).

Now it becomes obvious that the will (= subject of the will) is primary; but logic as a boundary and also as the subject of the world is something derived, secondary. Schopenhauer, however, holds that the identity of the subject of the will and the subject of knowing is something which cannot be fully understood. It is “essentially a wonder” (*kat egzzechon*) (Schopenhauer 1924, vol. 2: 195). It is a postulate, an absolute presupposition (in the sense given by Collingwood). From Wittgenstein’s point of view, acceptance of this identity would be the consequence of the mystical experience, mentioned in the *Tractatus*: “the contemplation of the world [...] as a limited whole” (6.45). Only in that experience one can discuss identity as two aspects of the subject. This can be done thanks to the Overwhelming (*Umgreifende*) (after Jaspers), which connects the two aspects: the will and knowing as two sides of the subject.

In Wittgenstein’s approach to the question of the subject it is possible to distinguish two opposing ways: (1) from within (immanent way);

(2) from outside (transcendental way). The first approach consists in “determining the boundaries from the inside/within”. J. Hintikka called it “semantic solipsism”, because following that way one comes to a boundary, which is logic (Hintikka 1996: 98). The other way, on the contrary, consists in looking from the outside, which refers to mystical experience. Two different and opposing conceptions of the subject evolve two approaches from these. In other words: these two approaches assume two different ways of understanding the subject. Semantic solipsism, it can be said, excludes mysticism and, just the other way round, mysticism rejects solipsism. Is it possible to make these two approaches coexist?

Let us now look even closer at these two ways. The approach from the inside, that is semantic solipsism (A), allows us to reach only the boundaries, which cannot be overcome, since this is forbidden by logic. The mystical approach (B), however, assumes the possibility of overcoming those boundaries. In other words, it allows the possibility excluded by the first way. How should this aporia be solved? We have an alternative here about which we can ask the following question: which part of the alternative should be chosen — A or B? Should we choose between them at all? If we choose A (semantic solipsism), then we automatically reject B (mysticism) as worthless. If we choose B (mysticism), then, by analogy, we have to reject A (solipsism). However, since in the *Tractatus* Wittgenstein presents both approaches — assuming that he treats both equally seriously and that his standpoint is coherent — we should accept both parts of the alternative. In other words, the whole alternative has to be accepted, because it is not alternative denial, but just the nonexclusive alternative.

By pointing out these two ways Wittgenstein wanted to demonstrate that thinking based on logic has its limits. However, what can be found within those boundaries does not exhaust the whole. In order to explain clearly, what kind of wholeness we are talking about one should once again return to Schopenhauer. The solution, which can be accepted, is based on the interpretation of *The World as Will and Presentation*. The semantic approach, which is essentially an immanent approach, corresponds to the pure knowing subject. This subject does not exist in a full, strict sense — both Wittgenstein and Schopenhauer agree on this point. This subject is only a construct, a perspective, “a geometrical eye, but not a physical eye” (Pears 1993). The mystical approach, however, corresponds to the subject of the will. Both philosophers acknowledge that it does exist in a full, strict sense. Hence, one can conclude that the subject of the will is responsible for the mystical experience and an approach from the outside, which is incompatible with logic. However, we have to

agree that such an approach and experience exist. Mystical experience as a kind of going beyond the world of facts, that is the world of presentation, could be achieved only on the way, which is based on something that itself is not a presentation. That “something” is the will or the subject of the will. But because this way cannot be represented, we can only “speak” about it outside of logic: thus, we should always remain cognizant of this conflict between logic and mysticism.

### 3. WHAT KIND OF SOLIPSISM?

The two approaches presented — semantic solipsism and mysticism — reveal two interpretations of the ontology of the *Tractatus*: one naturalistic, the other, metaphysical. The *Tractatus* ends the first, metaphysical period of Wittgenstein’s philosophical activity and it announces an anti-metaphysical, naturalistic turn, which has come to be called Wittgenstein’s late philosophy. As we compare the *Tractatus* with the *Notebooks*, we observe that in the earlier *Notebooks* we find decidedly more mystical and metaphysical threads than naturalistic ones. Yet, even in the *Notebooks* mysticism and solipsism are not understood in the same way as they are in philosophical and religious tradition. One can thus put forth the thesis that Wittgenstein’s implicit intention was to bridge the chasm between solipsism and naturalism, on the one hand, and between mysticism and transcendentalism, on the other hand. Evidence to support this thesis can be found in the conversations that Wittgenstein had with Weisman, in which Wittgenstein talks about a constant and stubborn attack on the limits of language (*Anrennen gegen die Grenzen der Sprache* in: Wittgenstein 1980: 68). This tendency in Wittgenstein’s thinking is expressed, as some commentators point out, in what can be called “transcendental solipsism”. At first glance, this description appears incoherent, even contradictory. However, it is worth recalling that Husserl, too, has described his standpoint in the *Cartesian Meditations* in this way. If it turns out that two thinkers — Wittgenstein and Husserl — who are so different in their starting points and philosophical methods, encountered the same questions, which can be called “transcendental solipsism”, then it should be acknowledged as an authentic, deep problem worthy of a more precise investigation of the stages of its evolution.

What does this problematic situation called transcendental solipsism consist of? This question refers back to the problem of the subject, to the question of the sphere of that which is subjective, and to the way of un-

derstanding of the term “transcendental”. Thus, Wittgenstein’s transcendentalism should be considered against the backdrop of Kant’s transcendentalism.

The problem of solipsism in the *Tractatus* can be more clearly explained against the background of the critique of a naive-psychological or empirical understanding of the subject. This critique was carried out by Wittgenstein in thesis 5.5421, while the next theses appear as a consequence of this critique. Wittgenstein derives his conclusion about the non-existence of the subject in the psychological sense from a critique of the traditional concept of judgement. Considering the act of judgment he observes that the formula “A believes that  $p$ ” is the same as “ $p$  believes  $p$ ” (cf. 5.542). Hence, one can conclude that A is identical with  $p$ , which means that A is, in each following act of judgment, always something different. The subject symbolized by A and  $p$  would show itself as a constantly changing complex mental state. Therefore, Wittgenstein rejects the previously mentioned psychological understanding of the subject or soul, because: “A composite soul would not be a soul any longer” (5.5421). We recognize these different mental states as our own — my state of consciousness, my experience. What allows me to call these states *my* states? This question is in the essence a question about the unity of my experience.

Wittgenstein’s approach to the problem of the unity of experience recalls one from Kant’s philosophy. In the *Critique of Pure Reason* Kant distinguishes: (1) empirical apperception from (2) transcendental apperception. Empirical apperception can be understood as a soul complex mental state. Transcendental apperception, in contrast, is what can be termed the pure “I think”, which is simple, unchangeable and accompanies each presentation (*Vorstellung*). Transcendental apperception is, of course, not something that we can find in the world or in our experience. It is simply “the transcendental unity of apperception” — a kind of supercategorical unity. This is Kant’s answer to the question of the foundation of the unity of experience. However, in Wittgenstein’s case this kind of answer seems, at first glance, insufficient. If there is no knowing and presenting I — as thesis 5.631 declares — what, then, is responsible for bestowing this unity and for attributing different mental states to it? If there is no psycho-physical I (self), what is responsible for this feeling of unity? If we reject the possibility that this feeling of unity is a pure illusion, Wittgenstein’s system offers another answer: the unity of experience that decides that the experience is called “my” is imposed by the subject of the will (cf. Nb. 21.07.1916). This subject of the will is not given to the consciousness in an explicit way (or directly). However, as we

know, Kant also was not quite satisfied with this explanation of the sources of the unity of experience. He pointed to the transcendental imagination and transcendental schematism, which coordinate the work of the intellect and sensibility:

Synthesis in general [...] is the mere result of the power of imagination, a blind but indispensable function of the soul, without which we should have no knowledge whatsoever, but of which we are scarcely ever conscious (A78/B103).

The schema is in itself always a product of imagination (A140/B179).

This schematism of our understanding, in its application to appearances and their mere form, is an art concealed in the depths of the human soul, whose real modes of activity nature is hardly likely ever to allow us to discover, and to have open to our gaze (A141/B180) (Kant 1958: 71, 110)

If we translate these formulations to Wittgenstein's system, we obtain the following result: the sphere of pure logic (categories and propositions) and the sphere of sensibility (sensible presentations and facts) must be connected by means of something else. In Kant's philosophy it is imagination and schematism, in Wittgenstein's standpoint in the *Tractatus* it is logical form and the subject of the will. This argument shows once again that the reduction of the transcendental subject to logic as the boundary of the world is not enough. The metaphysical subject should be accepted in a stronger sense, that is, as the subject of the will, which lies outside logic, outside ordinary language, and which can be "perceived" or discovered through mystical experience.

There is yet another important point bound to the feeling of unity in *my* experience. This is an unavoidable perspectivism, that is our experience is always experience from a given point of view, grasped in a certain perspective. This perspective is essentially always limited, finite. It is closed to other perspectives. Hence, in the first approximation, the solipsism that Wittgenstein talks about would be the solipsism determined by a certain perspective, because this perspective cannot be changed. We are, each of us, closed in it, or — precisely speaking — in the world presented by this perspective.

Although one cannot really or factually assume another's perspective, one can imagine it, think about it, feel it. This is probably what Wittgenstein means in the following excerpt from the *Notebooks*:

Only remember that the spirit of the snake, of the lion, is your spirit. For it is only from yourself that you are acquainted with spirit at all.

Now of course the question is why I have given a snake just this spirit.

And the answer to this can only lie in the psycho-physical parallelism. If I were to look like the snake and to do what it does then I should be such-and-such.

The same with the elephant, with the fly, with the wasp.

But the question arises whether even here, my body is not on the same level with that of the wasp and the snake (and surely it is so), so that I have neither inferred from that of the wasp to mine nor from mine to that of the wasp.

In this solution of the puzzle why men have always believed that there was one spirit common to the whole world?

And in that case, of course, also be common to lifeless things too (15.10.1916) (Wittgenstein 1961: 85e).

The purely theoretical possibility of taking a different perspective can be understood as a transcendental step and the entire standpoint as a transcendental solipsism. This is one interpretation of Wittgenstein's standpoint in the *Tractatus*. This conception sheds the light on the role of a body or an organism. An organism or a body is a kind of tool, to which each of us has privileged access, and it is a way of realizing the perspectival positioning of the world as *my world*. But Wittgenstein's standpoint expressed in the notes quoted above deserves the name of solipsism, first of all, because it points to the presence of one (only one!) spirit of the world, which is transcendental in relation to different perspectives, which are empirically accessible to individual people, animals, organisms.

This interpretation can be treated as an introduction to the proper understanding of another very important thesis of the *Tractatus*: "I am my world. (The microcosm)" (5.63). It is almost certain that Wittgenstein, in speaking about I as the microcosm or my world, contrasts it with the world or the macrocosm. Without this opposition the term *microcosm* would be superfluous. But in this case it is difficult to accept that the microcosm is only and exclusively a "dimensionless point", a "geometrical eye, but not a psychical one". Hence, the microcosm would be something between I, treated as a point, and the world, that is the macrocosm. This situation is presented by means of metaphor about the eye and the visual field:

*Where in the world is a metaphysical subject to be noted?*

You say that this case is altogether like that of the eye and the field of sight. But you do *not* really see the eye.

And nothing *in the field of sight* can it be concluded that it is seen from an eye. (5.633)

Therefore, the visual field would correspond fairly precisely to the meaning of the term "microcosm". The trouble is, however, that Wittgenstein himself criticizes the field schematic presented in this picture, because it does not have the suggested shape. If it had just the shape, it

would also have the physical boundaries, but it does not actually have the boundaries. Wittgenstein states this univocally in thesis 6.4311:

Our life is endless in the way that our visual field is without limit.

However, the conception of the microcosm as something between the “geometrical eye”, as the I/subject, and the macrocosm, that is the objective world, seems fundamentally correct.

However, microcosms are different, because in each particular case a body supplies instruments, which produce an individual concrete experience that is the microcosm, the above mentioned perspective. Wittgenstein’s conception of the microcosm in and the relation “microcosm — macrocosm — I/subject” can be approached by referring to Leibniz’s monadology. The microcosm can be understood as the interior of a monad, precisely speaking — as a series of perceptions, as its inner states, which represent that which can be found outside (in the macrocosm). In comparison, the subject or I is something simple, unchangeable and it is this, that Leibniz calls “apperception”. In a similar way the principle “one — many” can be understood as a manifold contained in the mental state, which is coordinated with the apperception that is the one and the simple. But it should be emphasized that apperception is wholly outside the world. Perceptions, on the other hand, are something complex, psychical and are constituents of inner experience that is the microcosm.

The distinction “microcosm — macrocosm” agrees not only with Leibniz’s monadology, but it supplies further arguments for Wittgenstein’s theory of the act of judgment. In the previously quoted thesis (5.5421) Wittgenstein criticizes the analysis, incorrect in his opinion, of sentences like “A judges that  $p$ ” as a relation between object “A and the state of affairs  $p$ ”, and at the same time proposes an assumption of a different relation:

But it is clear that ‘A believes that  $p$ ’, ‘A thinks  $p$ ’, ‘A says  $p$ ’, are not of the form ‘ $p$  says  $p$ ’: and here we have no co-ordination of a fact and an object, but a co-ordination of their objects. (5.542)

What is at stake is a coordination of the psychical fact to an external, physical fact. What is evident is that the first fact belongs to the microcosm, the second — to the macrocosm. More interesting is Wittgenstein’s statement that this coordination and picturing occurs by means of a correlation of objects, that is constituents of a psychical fact to the objects (constituents) of a physical fact. The consequences of the state-

ment are far-reaching. It should be asked, what are these objects, that is the constituents of both facts? Let us take into account elementary facts. They consist of, in the case of the domain of physical fact, objects in the sense of simple objects (cf. thesis 2.02), that is they represent the substance of the world. How should the constituents of a psychical fact, which is a picture of a physical fact, be understood? As soon as it is also elementary fact, it should consist of simple objects/elements. What are the elements or constituents? This question is embarrassing for Wittgenstein. In the *Tractatus* he gives no answer, not even a hint. He mentions it briefly in his letter to Russell:

(2) [...] But a *Gedanke* is a *Tatsache*: what are its constituents and components, and what is their relation to those of the pictured *Tatsache*?" I do not know *what* the constituents of a thought are but I know *that* it must have such constituents which correspond to the words of language. Again the kind of relation of the constituents of the thought and of the pictured fact is irrelevant. It would be a matter of psychology to find out.

(4) Does a *Gedanke* consist of words? No! But of psychical constituents that have the same sort of reality as word. What those constituents are I do not know (Wittgenstein 1961: 129).

It seems that Wittgenstein underestimates the difficulties connected with the nature of the constituents of psychical facts or thoughts. The fact that he does not mention this at all in the *Tractatus* is evidence that he did not find a good solution to the problem. Russell did encounter a weak point in Wittgenstein's theory. Therefore, the origin or sources of the difficulties and doubts raised by Russell should be sought in Russellian logical atomism and in his theory of sense data.

Wittgenstein believes that thoughts are born in a mysterious way, somewhere in the depths, outside of our consciousness. That means that the process of representing external facts through thoughts occurs out of our control. We "see" ready thoughts and we are conscious of them as mental pictures, but we are not conscious of the mechanisms, which lead to this result. In contrast, that which is common to thought and fact is a logical form, which has its basis in objects. So another interpretation is possible for the coordination of objects of psychical states to objects of external facts. According to this interpretation, there are only objects of one kind, which are common to both facts. The facts are, in a sense, pictures of the same objects as the substance of the world. This situation consists in a double representation of the same objects and states of affairs. It should be underlined that the thesis 5.5421 of the *Tractatus* excludes the interpretation (in a literally sense). Nevertheless the problem remains.

The microcosm that Wittgenstein speaks about in the thesis 6.31 is filled with that which is directly given, or — as Russell would say — with sense data. The directly given sense data are to a degree private, thus one can speak about “my world”. Wittgenstein follows the path determined by Russell: transcendental solipsism consists, in this case, of overcoming the world directly given to consciousness, to the world of facts and objects. Russell solves the problem of subjectivity by means of the theory of descriptions, which guarantees a way out of the subjectivity of direct experience. Descriptions guarantee knowledge, which is intersubjective. Intersubjectivity in Russell’s philosophy is realized through presupposed references, which are like Kantian transcendental object, or things in themselves. The theory of descriptions can be thus interpreted as a Russellian version of transcendental solipsism. Wittgenstein’s objects play a role similar to Russell’s assumed references, therefore one can think that the Wittgensteinian problem of the relation “microcosm/macrocosm” and that of the picturing of facts by mental pictures undoubtedly have sources in Russell’s philosophy. It is worth mentioning that the first theory of propositions, which Russell presented in *The Principles of Mathematics*, stated that propositions consist of the objects they speak of, that is the objects of a proposition are its constituents. This standpoint was a radical realism in a directly platonic sense. When Russell weakened his support for such radical realism, he presented several theories of judgment, which are known as the ‘multirelational theory of judgment’. In the theories, developed in the essay *Knowledge by Acquaintance and Knowledge by Description* (Russell 1963: 152n) and in *The Theory of Knowledge* (Russell 1992: 105n), he presents the theory of the act of judgment, in which the objects of judgment are not its constituents. According to this approach, constituents of judgment or an act of judgment are now sense data and universals, which are at the same time directly given. Reality divides into two domains: the domain of that which is directly given and internal, and of that which is external. According to Russell, the external domain, that is the external world, is a construction of sense data and universals or that which can be inferred on the basis of data of the internal domain. Wittgenstein’s approach is similar: he accepts the division of reality into the external world (macrocosm) and the internal world (microcosm). However, he does not accept the psychological theory of judgment as an act of judgement in the Russellian style. In other words, Wittgenstein does want to preserve the logical theory of proposition, similar in some degree to the one Russell announced in *The Principles of Mathematics*. It matters a great deal to Wittgenstein to not blend psychological and epistemological matters with the domain of logical

and ontological considerations. (Therefore, the symbol for the subject should be removed from the proposition's formula). R. Jager's observation is very appropriate here: he noticed 'a seed of solipsism' in Russell's theory of judgment (Jager 1972: 90). That seed, as it later appeared, was to germinate in Wittgenstein's mind and from then on solipsism was to become one of the main philosophical problems for him. If in Russell's first theory propositions determine the boundaries of the world, or more precisely reality, then this was determined by a radical rationalism and platonism of the early theory. In Russell's early theory, however, the problem of limits or boundaries was not disclosed, because the judging subject was not taken into account at all. The problem of boundaries of the internal world, the problem of the private character of sense data, and hence also the problem of solipsism and scepticism appear in Russell's later theories in connection with the idea of logical atomism. Russell formulated his theories during the years 1911–1914, which coincides with a period of close collaboration with Wittgenstein. It seems, then, that Wittgenstein also tried to overcome solipsism and scepticism, but in a different way than Russell. Therefore, Wittgenstein's standpoint in the *Tractatus* is not a defence of solipsism; his aim is to overcome a classically understood solipsism. Such an attempt cannot be successful, according to Wittgenstein, if a subject is conceived in a psychological and empirical way as something equivalent to the things in the world. Only if the subject is transcendental, conceived as the boundaries of the world or even in a metaphysical sense as something outside the boundaries, can it fulfil the task of overcoming classical solipsism. The subject is to be found neither in the microcosm nor in the macrocosm, but outside of both of them. Moreover, the subject conceived in this way is the only one; hence, one can conclude that that means a transcendental solipsism standpoint. The subject is also the bearer of sense, since as Wittgenstein notes:

The sense of the world must lie outside the world. In the world everything is as it is and happens as it does happen. *In* it there is no value — and if there were, it would be of no value.

If there is a value which is a value, *it* must lie outside all happening and being-so. For all happening and being-so is accidental.

What makes it non-accidental cannot lie *in* the world, for otherwise this would again be accidental.

It must lie outside the world (6.41).

In the light of the quotation and the above considerations, it is difficult to agree with Hintikka's interpretation. According to the Finnish

philosopher, the objects in Wittgenstein's sense would be sense data (Hintikka 1996: 90n.). This interpretation is extremely empirical and phenomenal, which seems to disagree with the metaphysical theses of the *Tractatus*. The fundamental objection to Hintikka's interpretation is as follows: If sense data were actually examples of objects (of course, in a Wittgensteinian sense), then Wittgenstein would have stated it directly. Besides, sense data are not simple and we should remember that simplicity is a necessary condition of being an object in the Wittgensteinian sense. One can also observe that objects as bearers of logical form, which is a priori, transcendental and necessary, cannot be identified with sense data, which are something accidental, because of their being in the world. Objects should be acknowledged as belonging to the domain of sense understood as something transcendental (cf. thesis 6.41). Hence, they are directly accessible to the subject or I — on this point Hintikka is right. But, this does not mean that objects can be identified with sense data. Rather, sense data point to objects (simple objects) and their combinations, i.e. states of affairs. Thanks to this distinction, we can speak about transcendental solipsism in Wittgenstein, because only by means of sense data of the direct experience do we have access to objects as the substance of the world, that which is transcendental.

The sense of Wittgenstein's transcendental solipsism appears more clearly in the light of Husserl's standpoint, which relies on the concept of intentionality. Sense data (*hyletic data*), together with the noetic acts by which they are formed, are essentially transparent and intentional, that is they point to something outside themselves. Likewise noemata, as the next step and the result, contain contents, which go beyond the subjective sphere. Thanks to that, Husserl proves in *Cartesian Meditations* and in *Formal and Transcendental Logic* how solipsism achieves a transcendental dimension, that is transcendental solipsism appears as the triumph over and negation of classical solipsism. In all acts of cognition, i.e. in noesis, the reference that transcends the direct given content is presupposed. The content is from the subjective sphere or *Lebenswelt*. In this way Husserl overcomes the barrier monadism — intersubjectivism. One can admit that Wittgenstein's transcendental solipsism is, like in Husserl's phenomenology, the overcoming of classical solipsism and ultimately turns out to be intersubjectivism. Husserl goes farther than Wittgenstein. His transcendental solipsism overcomes intersubjectivism, because all intentional acts of my transcendental I (Ego) refer eventually to the Other transcendental I, to the Second I. Husserl talks about Other transcendental Egos (in plural form). Wittgenstein, on the contrary, talks about one spirit of the world. Thus, Wittgenstein remains a consequent

transcendental solipsist, while Husserl is considered a transcendental intersubjectivist. The difference between the standpoints of these two philosophers can also be conceived in other way. Microcosm and *Lebenswelt* can be different for each subject in the psychological sense — both philosophers agree on this point. But, ultimately, these different microcosms refer, according to Wittgenstein, to the one and only transcendental or metaphysical subject. In Husserl's view, on the contrary, different *Lebenswelts* are associated with different, mutually irreducible transcendental subjects — that is the transcendental Ego is multiplied.

On the other hand, however, there are some statements in the *Tractatus*, that can be understood in a quite different way, i.e. they deny the possibility of crossing the barrier of subjectivity, and thus deny the possibility of going outside the limits of solipsism and monadism. When Wittgenstein states that "The riddle does not exist" (cf. 6.5), he takes into account that there are no limits to overcome, in particular the limits solipsism deals with. In an epistemological and semantic setting that means that the data of direct experience or the content of the microcosm (*Lebenswelt*) do not refer to any "outside", to any transcendence. This tendency, which, too, is presented in the *Tractatus*, can be determined as the standpoint of semantic solipsism. It should be conceded that there are, too, essential presumptions for the interpretation put forth by Hintikka. Wittgenstein's semantic solipsism can be understood as: (1) a thesis about the lack of transcendental references of expression, which is different from direct data (microcosm); (2) a thesis about the impossibility of reflection on semantic relations, that is a thesis about the rejection of metalanguage. It seems obvious that a consequence of these two theses is the refutation of transcendentalism of any kind. To sum up: semantic solipsism implies naturalism.

In the *Tractatus* Wittgenstein also proclaims a decidedly antinaturalist thesis: "The sense of the world must lie outside the world" (cf. 6.41). If we are to accept that Wittgenstein did not intend to express nonsenses or paradoxes, that is his actual aim was to limit nonsense to a "minimal degree", then the radical version of semantic solipsism cannot be right. Searching for a way out of this awkward situation one can point to a version of solipsism, which lies somewhere in the middle, between transcendental solipsism and semantic solipsism. This standpoint may turn out to be methodological solipsism. This is known, above all, from the work by R. Carnap *Die logische Aufbau der Welt*. This solipsism can be treated as a development of the standpoint neutral monism. The subject appears here as something in a second move, and this being still not decided as to whether it has a status of the metaphysical being or not (Car-

nap 1961, 88). The problem of the relation between Wittgenstein's view of the subject in the *Tractatus* and Carnap's is too broad for the present discussion.

#### 4. CONCLUDING REMARKS

The status of the subject remained a constant and fascinating problem for Wittgenstein. Already in the *Notebooks* he stated: "The I, the I is what is deeply mysterious!" (cf. 5.08.1916) and "[...] the nature of the subject is completely veiled" (cf. 2.08.1916). In the *Tractatus* Wittgenstein sketched basically two opposite ways of considering the subject or I: the immanent way and the transcendent or mystic way. This first way leading to naturalism or neutral monism finds its formulation as semantic solipsism. On the other hand, the mystic way is based on the assumption of the irreducible metaphysical subject, which can be treated like the subject of the will in Schopenhauer. In the *Tractatus* one can observe the attempt at an intermediate solution, which can be called transcendental solipsism. In this case the subject is treated as a boundary of the world. We are allowed to recognize this boundary as a transcendental point, which is opposite to the world. This point, this perspective is superindividual. Depending on what kind of status we attribute to the point, this standpoint (that is transcendental solipsism) can be closer to metaphysical mysticism or closer to naturalism. This means that, whether the transcendental subject as a boundary of the world is to be treated as a construct or as an acting subject of the will depends on the solution. As I have tried to show, transcendental solipsism can take (in a strong version) the form of intersubjectivism (as a development in the style of Husserl) or (in a weak version) as methodological solipsism as Carnap presents it. Inevitably, the conclusion that semantic solipsism and the radical naturalistic way cannot be right presents itself. In other words, the limits of language that Wittgenstein mentions in thesis 5.6 cannot be definite. The second-to-last thesis of the *Tractatus*, in which the necessity of going beyond the theses of logic (language) in order to properly see the world is discussed, negates the idea that limits should be recognized as ultimate. Wittgenstein's later philosophy confirms this and indicates that limits or boundaries are something illusory. In *Philosophical Investigations* Wittgenstein stresses that the aim of philosophy is "to show the fly the way out of the fly-bottle" (cf. § 309). If we want to disclose the illusory character of these boundaries, we should take into account the paradoxes that will occur. We should not, however, let this situation hold us back from taking such a step.

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