



Philosophical Anthropology

The Self, the Other, the Self as An/other: A Reading of Early Sartre

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ABSTRACT: This article critically examines the way in which Sartre dealt with the problem of alterity in his early works, proposing that Sartre presented an unsatisfactory account of alterity in his first philosophical work entitled *The Transcendence of the Ego*, though his study of imagination offers ample opportunities to re-examine the question of alterity and to arrive at a more adequate formulation of the way in which the self relates to the other. I therefore begin by demonstrating that the *Transcendence of the Ego* perpetuates the Cartesian tradition where the self is defined primarily in terms of thinking-that is, self-consciousness and immanence. Next, I turn to the Sartrean *Psychology of Imagination* to find another way of conceptualizing the problem. I inquire into his general theory of the imaginary consciousness defined as a 'picture consciousness' and argue that it reduces the alterity of the imaginary object to sheer absence. As such, the theory of imagination does not allow us to bring the fundamental character of alterity to light. Still, we uncover a more adequate way of dealing with alterity in the context of the imaginary life. I show that the notion of the 'picture itself' allows us to conceptualize alterity as the radical withdrawal of the other. Finally, I make evident that the imaginary subject is necessarily divided between itself and itself as another and due to that internal split, can grasp the alterity of another person.

The first properly philosophical work written by Sartre-*The Transcendence of the Ego* (1) -is an investigation into the problem of otherness, of alterity or-to use Sartre's terminology-of transcendence. Sartre develops the notion of transcendence in a radical opposition to that of immanence i. e. of a uniform and homogenous sameness. His ultimate aim is to arrive at the notion of immanence purified of any transcendent elements and to use that notion as a clue for his definition of subjectivity. That is to say, to the question: "What am I?" Sartre would reply: "I am an immanence without transcendence. I am a pure stream of consciousness without any contents. I am an absolute transparency without opacity. I am no more than the temporal unity of my life-which means-a pure self-contained flow that no alien element can interrupt or contaminate".

The idea of pure self-transparent subjectivity has a long history behind it. It originated in the philosophy of Descartes and was further developed by Husserl. The elaboration of the idea of the immanent subjectivity by Sartre needs therefore to be situated in the Cartesian and in the Husserlian tradition. For Descartes, I am defined as a "thinking thing," that is as

the unity of all the conscious acts. For thinking is "all that of which we are conscious as operating in us," (2) that is all the "actions" and "passions" (3) which belong to us as to their conscious subject. These conscious acts are part of us, that is to say, they are immanent to us. In that way I, the thinking thing, am defined primarily in terms of immanence.

Opposed to the field of immanence where the subjectivity is situated is the sphere of all that is other to me. The things that I am not - the surrounding world, the body, other people - are given to me in a mediated and indirect way. They never enjoy the direct givenness of the internal acts of thinking and can never be known in the way in which I know myself. The thing that I see - but am not - is always dubitable and might turn out to be an illusion but the fact that I am the seeing subject or the subject who "seems to see" cannot be questioned. (4) Thus, the otherness of the thing seen is a mark of its dubitability and so inferiority with respect to my immanent self.

Husserl's formulation of subjectivity follows in the footsteps of Descartes. For Husserl the subject is the unity of all the conscious acts directed to their intentional objects and accompanied by the I or the ego. The subject - albeit originally open upon the world defined as the intension of its conscious life - is not in its essence dependent on the world and would "survive the annihilation of the world". (5) That is to say, the subject is not grounded by anything other to her, the subject does not involve any alterity in her essence, she can persist even if there remains nothing other than herself. Such a self-sufficient subject is therefore defined primarily in terms of immanence - even though Husserl enlarges the domain of immanence to comprise not only the subjectivity but also everything that is given to us with an absolute certainty - i. e. the universal essences. (6)

Sartre joins in the praise of immanence. He embraces the idea of subjectivity as that which is given in a direct fashion to me, or, as he puts it - "without intermediaries". (7) And yet he finds that both Descartes' and Husserl's definitions of subjectivity in terms of immanence were not radical. The sphere of subjectivity delineated by them was still weighed down by a foreign element - that of the ego. In Sartre's view, the absolutely immanent subjectivity - the pure consciousness -, cannot be said to contain an actual subject underlying - in the sense of the Greek *hypokeimenon* i. e. that which lies under - the flow of my life. The ego - in the sense of the subject who thinks and who can in principle be distinguished from the activity of thinking - is *other* to pure subjectivity. The ego is transcendent with regards to my immanent life.

What is the ego then? The ego is a solidified self. Why such a solidification? It is due to the fact that *primo*: the pure subject actively engages in the world and becomes a subject of action - a labourer, a piano player, a philosopher. Being active means for Sartre being made dependent on a whole range of external determining circumstances, which affect my action and so affect me as the acting subject. I, as an agent, am defined by means of things like the material I am working with, the tools I am using (be they hammers or logical principles) and the results that I want to attain. In other words - I am defined by things whose sort of being is different from the being of the pure consciousness that I am. I am defined by things whose *esse* is different that their *percipi* - that is, things which extend beyond the mere appearance, which are more than what they appear to be. As the reader will see easily, the paradigm of a thing whose *esse* is more than its *percipi* comes from the field of perception. The objects of perception are more than the facets which they offer to view at a given moment, their being is not identical with the visible profiles.

Secundo: the pure subject conscious of its present life extends into the no longer present and the not yet present, into the past and the future. I have a personal history, I have also plans and projects to be realised in the course of my life. Now, the past and the present - insofar as they are not actually lived by me in the now, insofar as they belong to me without affecting me in a direct way, are *other* than the living present in which I, the conscious

subject, am immersed. That is to say: insofar as the being of my past and my future is more than what I am conscious of now, insofar as the being or the *esse* of my past and my future is more than their *percipi*, the past and the present are transcendent elements, they do not belong to the immediate lived experience I have of myself. For example, the hatred that I feel towards Peter is transcendent to the repulsion that overpowers me when I see him. The hatred overflows the instantaneity of the lived affect for it involves a history (I have hated Peter for a long time) and the future (I think that I will always hate him). (8)

What is the relationship between the transcendent element called the ego and the immanent consciousness? Put differently: how to define the way in which the pure subject relates to the otherness or the alterity at work in her life? The exact nature of this relationship is of great importance to our study, for - as we shall demonstrate in what follows - the relationship between myself (or my consciousness) and my ego serves as the matrix for the relationship between myself (or my consciousness) and the other. The other is to me no more than another transcendent ego. We must therefore inquire into the transcendence of my ego with regards to the immanent consciousness so as to throw light onto the way in which other people - or better, other transcendent egos - relate to my immanent consciousness. For the otherness of other people is an extension of the otherness of my ego.

In order to grasp the nature of the relation which holds between the ego and the pure consciousness we must ask the following: the otherness of my ego - is it an otherness in the midst of the subjective life such that the subject is split, internally divided, alienated from herself? Or is it rather an otherness external to the subjective life, an otherness which does pertain to the life of the subject but which does not affect that life in its essence, which does not penetrate into the life of the subject, which does not divide the subject and estrange her from her own life? Our analysis will make clear that the otherness of the ego is an otherness of the latter kind - i. e. an external and extraneous sort of otherness. The Sartrean subject is still Cartesian in that she is defined by means of terms like self-transparency and self-knowledge. Did Descartes not believe that I know myself better than I know all that is other to me? Yet, the vision of subjectivity such that the subject is not penetrated, contaminated or rendered opaque by otherness makes it impossible - as we shall proceed to argue later on - to account for the otherness of other people or of the other.

Let us begin with the otherness of my ego. Wherein does this otherness lie with regards to the pure subject? It lies in the difference between the sort of being of the subject or the pure consciousness and the being of the ego. The difference can therefore be qualified as an ontological difference. The ego is *other than* the consciousness and that is why it is *other to* the consciousness. Let us make that point more precise. The ego is transcendent to the consciousness - which means that it falls under the general category of the transcendent object. The ego - as we already noted above - is more than what it appears, it hides behind the appearance, it is not entirely given to view, it is opaque. As such the ego must - in Sartre's view - be classified together with material things which are inert and passive. The ego is not essentially different from physical things like trees or chairs... (9)

And yet, the ego does appear as a privileged sort of object. I identify it as *mine*, I take it to stand for the totality of my life, my personal style, my way of living. How is it possible to take this transcendent object - so much like a chair or a tree - to stand for my personality, my self? This has to do with a fundamental illusion - says Sartre. I trick myself into thinking that I have a personality, an identity and so on, so as to forget that I am no more than an impersonal subject, a mute and undefinable stream of consciousness... The ego is made of a different "stuff" than the consciousness is, the ego is an inert object akin to material things whereas the consciousness can best be defined as a sheer unhindered spontaneity. And yet the ego appears to me as not simply inert and passive - it appears as endowed with its own dynamism, as having spontaneity of its own. The ego appears as an

object that has "subjective" qualities. Yet the appearance of spontaneity, of activity etc. is only an illusion. It is an illusion that allows me to cover over the fact that, strictly speaking, I am nothingness and that nothing can define me.

The ego is transcendent to the consciousness insofar as it is different from the consciousness, its otherness to the consciousness consists in being other than the consciousness. Now that means: the ego is not another subject (in the way in which I am a subject), the ego is not another consciousness (in the way in which I am a consciousness). For the consciousness itself is not divided, it is not split between different consciousnesses. The consciousness is one, it is not other to itself - and the ego is an otherness that comes from outside and that does not affect the perfect immanence of the non-divided consciousness. Now, the impact of these remarks will quickly let itself be felt when we recall that Sartre takes the relation between the immanence of the consciousness and the transcendence or the otherness of the ego to function as a blueprint for the relation between the immanence of the consciousness and the transcendence or the otherness of the other. The other is simply another ego, she is so to speak, my alter ego.

In other words: the other is not another consciousness - whereas I am a consciousness, the other is not another subject - whereas I am a subject, the other is a transcendent object whose transcendence consists in the fact that she is different than me, that she appears to me as a solid self. Surely the other - or better the other's ego - appears - in the way my ego does - as endowed with spontaneity, as active, as subjective. Still, these appearances cannot but turn out to be - as they did in the case of my ego - mere illusions, tricks that I play with objects by projecting my own spontaneity upon them and thus creating a semblance of another spontaneity, another subject or another consciousness. Now that means that the entire argument put forward in the *Transcendence of the Ego* leads to postulate a kind of solipsism where I am surrounded by objects which appear to be other subjects but which are no more than opaque things called the egos. Surely Sartre insists on the fact that we need to *infer* that behind every ego there is a consciousness - and yet this argument fails for we have absolutely no means of encountering the other consciousness itself and so no means of ascertaining that there is another consciousness "behind" the ego.

The subject or the consciousness - at least the one presented in the *Transcendence of the Ego* - can conceive of other objects but it cannot conceive of other consciousnesses. The consciousness or the subject can conceive of other egos - be it my ego, be it the ego of another person - but it cannot conceive of another subject. It cannot conceive of another consciousness insofar as it is an enclosed, self-contained consciousness for which the very amalgam "other" and "consciousness" is simply unthinkable. (10) In order to grasp another consciousness, my consciousness would have to grasp itself as another - that is to say, it would have to experience itself as being different from itself, as withdrawing from itself, as opaque to itself. It would have to - in other words - to experience an otherness in the midst of the conscious life, an otherness that comes from inside, an otherness that virtually splits the consciousness up. An otherness that remains an otherness *of* the consciousness and not of a transcendent object, an otherness which implicates what is other *to* the consciousness and not what is other *than* the consciousness. Only such an internally divided consciousness can grasp an other consciousness, that it, the consciousness of another person.

Can we find an account of a divided consciousness which apprehends itself as another and which can therefore apprehend another subject in the work of Sartre? We believe that his study of imagination, or as he puts it, of the imaginary consciousness, opens the way to a novel approach to subjectivity where the subject is both "itself and another". (11) In order to make that evident we shall *primo*: demonstrate that the object of the imaginary consciousness - that is the thing or the person represented by the image (12) - necessarily

appears as an otherness. That is to say, the object of the image is "given in its absence" - (13) it hides itself at the same time as it unveils itself, it withdraws and resists appropriation. *Secundo*: we shall demonstrate that it is only to a subject who is already divided between herself and an other - or herself as an other - that the alterity of the imaginary object can manifest itself to.

Let us begin with the question of the alterity of the imaginary object. Our analysis will show that Sartre's general theory of imagination grounds the alterity of the imaginary object in the actual absence of that object. In other words, there is an otherness in the midst of the imaginary representation insofar as the image involves - that is to say, represents or depicts - something or someone who is not actually there. By means of the image we make - as if by magic - an absent friend appear, by means of the image we render a distant being present - even though only in a quasi or an as-if way. This quasi or as-if sort of presence of the imaginary object points to the fact that the object appears as inaccessible, that its givenness to the imaginary subject is permeated by a sort of nothingness: the image does no more than visualise and render intuitive the non-being of a dear person, just as the image of the deceased person makes her absence and her irrevocable departure sharply felt. (14) Now, such an intuitive grasping of the nothingness, of the withdrawal and so of the alterity of the object can - in the eyes of Sartre - be effectuated only in the actual absence of the object. The friend who is present cannot retain her alterity.

The above remarks reveal that for Sartre the image is first of all a sort of a picture - that is to say a visual representation of something or someone. The "something or someone" represented by the picture can in an analogous fashion be termed the original of the picture - that is to say, the being that serves as the model of the pictorial representation. The original is the subject of the picture, the original is that which the picture renders present. And it is the absence of the original that motivates and makes possible the production of images or pictures: I call upon the image of someone because I cannot make her present in person or in flesh and blood. I imagine because I cannot actually see (with the real and not with the imaginary eyes) the object that I want to render present. (15)

We see that in his account of imagination Sartre takes the notion of the picture as a clue. To be more precise we should say that in his account of imagination Sartre takes the Husserlian theory of the picture consciousness as a clue. It was Husserl who elaborated on the question of how the picture - for example, the portrait of my friend - appears to my consciousness. (16) It was Husserl who developed the notion of the picture (*Bild*) that makes the absent subject (*Bildsobjekt*) appear. It was Husserl who analysed the way in which the picture-consciousness animates the material of which the picture is made and fantasises the picture-subject (e.g. my friend) into it. It was Husserl who intended to arrive at a general theory of imagination using the theory of the picture-consciousness as the guideline. Such a theory of imagination was to involve the notion of the physical picture (the portrait, the photograph etc.) *and* the notion of the internal picture or the image devoid of any material content and yet functioning in the way the physical picture does. In that way fantasy was argued to have the same structural character as the physical picture-consciousness. Finally, it was Husserl who abandoned the project of identifying pure fantasy with the picture-consciousness. The notion of the immaterial or non-physical picture that pure fantasy apparently involved turned out to be a contradictory construct. For if the picture is to render its object (the picture-subject) present in an *intuitive* way, it seems necessary that the picture have a material content. (17)

Sartre made the move that Husserl refrained from making. That is to say, Sartre did identify the pure fantasy with the picture-consciousness and argued that there are mental pictures at work in fantasy. Only the mental pictures are not immaterial. The mental pictures do have a content, they are physical - but their physicality is not immediately evident. We cannot

immediately experience the physical character of the mental picture as we can in the case of the physical picture properly called. The mental picture cannot - unlike a piece of canvas or of photographic paper - be touched or smelt. I can burn a photograph of my lover but I cannot do so with the mental representation I have of her. Still, I *must* assume that the mental image is a picture and involves a material content. I am impelled to do so by the fact that the mental image is as much a representation of - say, my lover - as the photograph or the portrait of her is. The mental image and the external picture share the function of representing the absent object - in this case my lover. When I see the absent lover with my mind's eye, I am in (the quasi or as-if) presence of my lover just as when I look at her photograph or her portrait. Surely the mental representation is less accurate, it lacks detail, it even appears less complete than a rough sketch. (18) Still, it remains undeniable - as far as Sartre is concerned - that the *functional* character of the mental image is exactly analogous to the physical picture. In that way he believes himself justified in inferring that the mental image, which represents the absent object in the way the physical picture does, must have a content in the way the physical picture does. The mental image is therefore a picture and the theory of the picture consciousness can be used as a defining theory for imagination as a whole.

Note that the determining concept here is that of representation. The function of the picture - be it mental or external - consists in representing the original. The picture renders the absent original present. Now the representational theory of imagination defined as a picture-consciousness presupposes that the subject of the picture - the original - must be actually absent. The alterity of the original which appears by means of the picture consists in the fact that it is not actually in the picture, that it is not given in its presence, that it is not there. The alterity of the original is defined by means of an absence that is no more than a sheer absence - an accidental state of affairs or to speak like Husserl - a real predicate. The actual absence of the original is the condition of there being pictures and the otherness or the alterity of the original, which appears by means of the picture, consists in the objective absence of the original. Should the original be present - say my lover comes back home after a long journey - I shall no longer make use of pictures, I shall no longer produce mental images of her. (19) I shall be in the presence of the original - that is to say, I shall be in the possession of the original that is within reach and for that reason is no longer an other. The lover who is present no longer withdraws, the presence of the lover cancels out her alterity.

It is evident that the representational theory of imagination proposes an inadequate conception of alterity. Alterity depends here on the fact that the present picture (or the image) represents the original that is actually absent. Imagination defined as the picture-consciousness assumes or presupposes that the original of the picture is actually absent and it defines the withdrawal, the inaccessibility and the alterity of the original in terms of its real absence. Now, such an absence cannot serve as a term with which to approach otherness because it is not a fundamental sort of absence, i. e. it does not point to the radical withdrawal of the other in her otherness but merely to the fact that she is temporarily not present in person. Her presence in person deprives her of her otherness, her presence turns her into an object that can be possessed, occupied, consumed. Her presence comes in place of her bygone absence and so deprives her of her alterity.

Is there a place for a more adequate treatment of the question of otherness or alterity in the Sartrean account of the imaginary life? Can we find an account of imagination that would be more satisfactory to the one we have presented above where imagination is defined in terms of the representational picture-consciousness theory and where the alterity of the original represented by means of the picture is defined in terms of sheer absence? We can indeed find a place for a more adequate treatment of the imaginary life and of the question of the alterity of - what we called above - the original. Sartre's remarks on the relevance of

the theory of imagination to the aesthetics open the way to a novel approach to the question of otherness or of alterity in the context of imaginary life. Specifically, the challenge that non-representational art poses to the representational theory of imagination is of great significance here. For non-representational art involves pictorial representations that do not refer to some absent original. The original - if one can still use that term in the context of the artistic products that do not intend to represent anything - is not some entity distinct from the picture and depicted by that picture. The original is not distinct from the picture for the picture does not - properly speaking - represent anything other than itself. The picture refers to itself and not to an absent original. And yet there is an alterity at work in the picture - an alterity that does not have to do with sheer absence. Or an absence still - but of a more fundamental kind.

What kind of absence and what sort of alterity do we have in mind? In order to clarify that we need to inquire further into the way a non-representational picture - or better a non-representational work of art in general - renders its subject present. We shall demonstrate now that in the case of non-representational art it is not the actual absence of the picture-subject (or the original if we retain the terminology used above) that makes it possible for the picture subject to be "given in its absence," to appear in a quasi way, to appear as a withdrawing other but it is the attitude adopted by the spectator with regards to the picture which turns the picture into an object that envelops a fundamental sort of otherness. In other words, it is the way we are in front of the picture that lets the picture function as a picture - and not simply a stretch of canvas covered with paint -, it is also - to put it in more general terms - the way that we are in front of anything at all that can turn that thing into a sort of a picture, a picture of nothing else than... itself. It is therefore our imaginary attitude that lets things appear to us - in their presence - and retain their essential alterity. What kind of attitude is it?

The attitude can best be approached by means of the aesthetic appreciation of the work of art. What lets a work of art be a work of art for me, how do I let the picture function as a picture? In order to let the picture function as a picture I need to adopt - what Sartre calls - an unrealising attitude in front of it. That is to say, I must deprive the picture of its real being, I must not see it as a real thing belonging to the real time and space. I must take it out of the context of reality, I must, so to say, take it out of the world and regard it as a phenomenon that is not determined by the sequence of events taking place in the world. For example: when I listen to Beethoven's 8th symphony, (20) I do not hear the musical themes as taking place in the real time - at the same time as my friend Peter is visiting his friends. The time in which Peter is out on a visit is not the same as the time of the symphony. The former is real, the latter is not. The former is the time recorded by the historians, the latter is the time that appears only when the audience listens to a piece of music. The former envelops a before and an after, the latter does not extend beyond the limits of the actual symphony. Nothing comes after the symphony - the end of the symphony is the end of its time.

Similar remarks could be made concerning a ballet. The dance is not grasped as a real event, as a sequence of real gestures performed on the stage. To see the ballet as a work of art., we need not regard it as a mere execution involving bodies of a certain weight and resistance. In fact, it is only when we regard a poorly executed piece of dancing that we remain fixated on the real event of the dancer moving the body who tries - but does not succeed - to become a work of art. A clumsy dancer makes it impossible for me to unrealise her dance, to let it become something beautiful. A clumsy dance reminds me that the body is an inert heavy thing subject to the principles of gravity. What I see is no more than a tedious exercise in the lifting of the weight of her own body, I see the bodily movements in their oppressive and non-transcended reality.

In the case of poor ballet dancing, I am unable to adopt the aesthetic attitude that lets a work of art function as such. The attitude has to do with unrealising a given thing (a piece of music, a dance, etc.) and turning it into a picture. As a picture, the work of art will be endowed with the qualities that we have already enumerated above: it will appear and withdraw at the same time, it will hide beyond the appearance, it will envelop a mystery. It will - in other words - manifest an essential otherness. Only here the otherness has nothing to do with the absence of the original - for as we said above - there is no original represented by the picture, there is no absent object that the picture intends to bring into a quasi sort of presence. The alterity, the otherness, the unworldly and unreal being of the work of art does not consist in the fact that the original or the picture-subject is not here. It has to do with the way in which the present object appears to me and is grasped by me. Insofar as I adopt an unrealising attitude in front of it, I am in the presence of an object that withdraws, that hides beyond the appearance, that is always out of reach. The actual absence of the object is not presupposed and is not required for the alterity of the object does not consist in its absence. The object is grasped as absent - that is as withdrawing, as unreal - even though it is present.

The remarks concerning the non-representational art allow us to arrive at the following conclusion: the alterity of the imaginary object does not consist in the actual absence of the original or the picture subject, the alterity of the imaginary object follows from the attitude adopted by the spectator in front of the picture. That means that we can adopt the imaginary attitude in front of an object that is present and let its alterity, its otherness, its unreality shine forth. In that way we can turn anything into a picture - even though in that case the picture will not be a representation or an imitation of the original for the original will be the same as the picture... That is to say, the imaginary attitude allows me to regard anything - any "original" - as a "picture," even though the "picture" coincides with the "original," the "picture" is the "original". It might be more appropriate then to speak here of a "picture of itself," for the object regarded as a picture depicts nothing else than its own self. It functions as an imaginary object, it hides beyond the appearance and manifests its alterity - and yet it is grasped in its presence, it is here, it is open to view. Its actual presence does not cancel out its alterity, its otherness. Its being as a picture means - being present and yet withdrawing, being within reach and yet out of reach, being here and yet moving beyond.

An object grasped as a picture of itself envelops a sort of absence - and yet the absence at work here is of a more fundamental sort than the sheer or actual absence analysed above. The absence of the object that is grasped as a picture of itself has to do with the radical withdrawal of the object that no presence can substitute itself for. The absence has to do with the fact that the object appears as if it were behind or beyond its appearance, as if its actual presence was always permeated by a lack. I am in presence of an object and yet I cannot encompass it, possess it, delimit it. The picture always conceals what it depicts, the depicted is always elsewhere than the picture itself. There is an absence that I am confronted with - but no getting closer to the object will ever compensate for that. (21)

Can we concretise the notion of the picture of itself, can we refer to some examples of what a picture of itself would be? Sartre mentions the case of the beautiful woman who appears distant even though she is present. The beauty of the woman turns her into a picture - she seems to become a pictorial representation of her very self and for that reason appears as if she were "behind herself". In that way the beautiful woman turns into an absolute other: she hides behind the picture, she is not there where she appears to be, she inhabits an "elsewhere" - a white spot on the map that will never be defined. As such, the beautiful woman appears as "untouchable" and "out of reach". (22)

The way in which a person - in the case under discussion a woman - can turn into an absolute other can also be well exemplified by the so-called Lady - the idealised object of

the cult of the troubadours. The troubadours practised the so-called courtly love, which involved a complex and highly ritualised code of behaviour. (23) The troubadour praised the Lady, gradually progressing through the stages of increasing intimacy. Now what is striking about courtly love is - on the one hand, the frenzy of the admirer and on the other - the abstract and rather arbitrary character of the Lady. The Lady is not loved for her real qualities and the values she represents, she is in fact stripped of any of her real features and functions as an ideal, as a Lady in general. That is why many commentators noted that all the troubadours seem to be addressing the same woman... (24) Abstracted from her real being, transformed into something unreal - in the way a symphony or a ballet becomes unreal when it is grasped as a work of art -, the Lady becomes a distant and inaccessible other. Her presence is merely pictorial and phantom-like, she is absent in her presence, she can never be possessed. That is why the Lady can be an inhuman partner: there are no limits as to what she can demand from her admirer as a proof of his devotion to her... (25) The troubadour can expect no sympathy and no mercy from the Lady.

We have developed the notion of the picture of itself as the imaginary object endowed with an essential otherness or alterity. We have shown that the alterity of the imaginary object is of a fundamental sort in that it does not consist in the sheer absence of the original represented by the picture but has to do with the fact that the original is the picture at the same time or that the picture is the picture of itself. In that way the special sort of picture - the picture of itself - functions as the object of the imaginary consciousness (or the picture-consciousness, if we retain the Husserlian terminology) which manifests an alterity of an essential kind. More specifically, it allows us to conceive of the alterity of another self. The person apprehended in the imaginary way as a picture of itself is not other to me because she is other than me in the way the above discussed ego is necessarily transcendent to my consciousness. Instead, the alterity of the person apprehended in the imaginary fashion consists in the fact that she is grasped by me in such a way that she is not reduced to a mere object (in the way the ego is an object) but is apprehended as another self.

How is that possible, how can I apprehend another self? What kind of subject do I have to be in order to grasp the alterity of the special object called the picture of itself? We saw in the first part of our study that a non-divided, homogenous subject cannot by definition apprehend the alterity of another self. It remains to demonstrate now that the imaginary subject is necessarily a divided subject who can therefore apprehend the alterity of another self. That is to say, the imaginary subject - before she is confronted with another self grasped as a picture of itself - must already a subject split between herself and herself as an other.

The split comes out clearly in the imaginary experiences like that of dreaming, daydreaming or reading. Take the example of reading where, as Sartre observes, I identify to some extent with the hero - that is I become (if only in an unreal fashion) the hero, I live the adventures of the hero as if they were mine. (26) Such identification is often facilitated by the fact that the novel is written in the first person. Now how is such identification possible? How can I, the real reader of the novel, become the unreal hero of that very novel? Do I somehow join in the imaginary world of the novel and leave the real world behind? In that case I would have to take the imaginary world of the novel to be a real world. Yet what I do is to live in the imaginary world in an as-if fashion - I feel as if I were the hero without ever taking myself to *be* the hero. I live in the imaginary world without leaving the real world. I live in both worlds at the same time. Now in order to live in both worlds at the same time I must be divided into the real and the imaginary subject, I must be both the reader and the hero, I must be myself and the other. Only as divided between myself and the other can I live the adventures of the imaginary hero in such a way that I always retain a minimal distance from the hero, that I never absolutely take myself to be or exist as the hero.

The experience of dreaming also exemplifies the division of the subject into the imagining and the imagined subject. Only here the sense of belonging to the imaginary world is much more pronounced. In the dream I live myself as the other from inside so to say - that is I as the real subject come very close to the unreal subject and tend to lose myself in it. Still the distance between the two subjects - albeit minimal, necessarily persists. Should the two subjects coincide and become indistinguishable, I would no longer be dreaming, I would be delirious. In order to realise that my imaginary adventures were "just a dream" I need to remain divided between myself and myself as the (imaginary) other.

Our short study on the self, the other and the self as an other has thus been brought to the end. Our reading of selected texts by Sartre has demonstrated the following: even though the study of the "transcendence of the ego" is unable to properly account for the alterity of the other, the study of imagination prepares the ground for a more adequate treatment of the question of alterity. Specifically, the notion of the picture of itself - the object of the imaginary consciousness that envelops an otherness of a fundamental kind and the argument concerning the division of the imaginary subject into the imagining and the imagined subjects allows us to approach the problem of alterity in a novel and concrete fashion. They allow us to make evident that the imaginary object - the picture of itself - is properly speaking an other, and that the imaginary subject, in virtue of being divided between itself and itself as an other, is a kind of subject that can apprehend the otherness of another self.

Notes

(1) *La Transcendence de l'Ego - Esquisse d'une description phénoménologique*, Paris, Librairie Philosophique J. Vrin, 1992, abbreviated henceforth as TE.

(2) *Principia philosophiae I*, §9.

(3) Descartes distinguishes two sorts of conscious acts: those of which I am the source - the actions and those which affect me but which have their source outside of me. See *Les Passions de l'Ame*, First Part, Article 1.

(4) For a detailed discussion of that point see M. Henry's *Généalogie de la psychanalyse: Le commencement perdu*, 1985, PUF, chapter 2: "Videre Videor".

(5) Id. *I*, §49 "while the being of consciousness, of any stream of mental processes whatever, would indeed be necessarily modified by an annihilation of the world of physical things its own existence would not be touched." *Cartesian Meditations*, §11 ".... I, with my life, remain untouched in my existential status, regardless of whether or not the world exists..."

(6) Husserl takes the usual conception of the immanent as what belongs to the subject - i. e. the life of the consciousness - to be naive, for it assumes that only the inner experiences can be immediately self-given and can be indubitable. He therefore proposes the concept of the genuine (reelle) immanence which comprises not only the life of the consciousness but all the universal essences that are absolutely given even though they are not actually immanent. See *The Idea of Phenomenology*, 1990, Kluwer, pp. 2-7, 22-32.

(7) *L'Existentialisme est un humanisme*, Gallimard, 1996, p. 57.

(8) TE, pp. 45-46.

(9) TE, p. 70.

(10) "... [la conscience de Pierre] n'est pas seulement réfractaire à l'intuition, mais à la pensée. Je ne puis *concevoir* la conscience de Pierre sans en faire un objet (puisque je ne la conçois pas comme étant *ma conscience*). Je ne puis la concevoir parce qu'il faudrait la penser comme intériorité pure et transcendance *à la fois*, ce qui est impossible. Une conscience ne peut concevoir d'autre conscience qu'elle-même." TE, p. 77.

(11) "Je suis moi-même et un autre," *L'Imaginaire*, Gallimard 1996, p. 331. Abbreviated henceforth as I.

(12) The intentional object of the imaginary consciousness is not the image itself but the object that the image renders present. The image is no more than the relation between the imaginary consciousness and the object to be represented - eg. my friend Peter. " La conscience imageante que j'ai de Pierre n'est pas conscience de l'image de Pierre: Pierre est directement atteint, mon attention n'est pas dirigée sur une image, mais sur un objet." I, p. 22.

(13) I, pp. 346-350.

(14) "... si l'image d'un mort que j'aimais m'apparaît brusquement, il n'est pas besoin d'une « réduction » pour que je sente un choc dsagréable dans la poitrine: ce choc fait partie de l'image, il est la conséquence directe de ce que l'image donne son objet comme un néant d'être." I, p. 33.

(15) "... c'est sur le terrain de la perception que je veux faire apparaître le visage de Pierre, je veux me le 'rendre présent'. Et, comme je ne puis faire surgir sa perception directement, je me sers d'une certaine matière qui agit comme un analogon, comme un équivalent de la perception." I, p. 42.

(16) E. Husserl, *Phantasie, Bildbewusstsein, Erinnerung, Husserliana XXIII*, Den Haag, M. Nijhoff, 1980.

(17) In order to make the picture-subject appear, we have to *see* the picture for it is *in* the picture that we 'find' the subject. Therefore the picture must be an object that can be observed, studied, looked at closely, etc - that is, the picture must be a material object. For a more detailed discussion of that point see L. Claesen's article *Présentification et fantaisie* in ALTER N° 4, 1996, pp. 132-134.

(18) I, p. 40.

(19) "Si Pierre apparaît en personne, [la conscience d'image] disparaît." I, p. 54.

(20) I, p. 368.

(21) We must add - even though it is beyond the scope of the present study to elaborate on this point - that the notion of the picture of itself introduced by Sartre at the end of his study and discussed by us above allows us to re-interpret the picture-consciousness theory. The picture of itself - the object of the perceptual fantasy - can be argued to serve as the basis for the picture that represents or depicts something else than itself. In that way the perceptual fictum termed by Sartre the picture of itself would turn out to be presupposed in the representational picture-consciousness theory; the picture of itself would be a necessary condition of there being representational pictures.

(22) I, p. 372.

(23) On that see eg. J. Kristeva's *Histoires d'amour*, Denoël, 1994, p. 347-348.

(24) We are referring here to Lacan's *VIIIth Seminar on Ethics*, notably the Xith chapter: Courtly love as anamorphosis.

(25) Hence the abusive trials to which the troubadours were subjected. The Lady could demand from her admirer for example that he "blow into her cesspit" (Lacan, 161-163).

(26) I, pp. 330-331.