



The unity of consciousness in Sartre's early thought: reading *The Transcendence of the Ego* with *The Imaginary*

Henry Somers-Hall

To cite this article: Henry Somers-Hall (2023): The unity of consciousness in Sartre's early thought: reading *The Transcendence of the Ego* with *The Imaginary*, British Journal for the History of Philosophy, DOI: [10.1080/09608788.2023.2192744](https://doi.org/10.1080/09608788.2023.2192744)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/09608788.2023.2192744>



© 2023 The Author(s). Published by Informa UK Limited, trading as Taylor & Francis Group



Published online: 20 Apr 2023.



Submit your article to this journal [↗](#)



Article views: 587



View related articles [↗](#)



View Crossmark data [↗](#)

The unity of consciousness in Sartre's early thought: reading *The Transcendence of the Ego* with *The Imaginary*

Henry Somers-Hall

Dept. of Politics, International Relations, and Philosophy, Royal Holloway, University of London, Egham, UK

ABSTRACT

The aim of this paper is to provide an interpretation for Sartre's account of the unity of consciousness in *The Transcendence of the Ego*. I will argue that it is only once *The Transcendence of the Ego* is read alongside other texts written around the same time, such as *The Imaginary*, that we can understand how Sartre believes it is possible for consciousness to be unified without an *I*. I begin by setting out the Kantian context that Sartre develops for his views, before looking at Sartre's arguments themselves. I then turn to some of the difficulties other readers have encountered with making sense of the arguments of the *Transcendence of the Ego*. I argue that it is only in relation to Sartre's account of what he calls the illusion of immanence in *The Imaginary*, that we can make sense of Sartre's account of consciousness, before reconstructing what I take to be Sartre's position drawing on Sartre's references to Bergson and Spinoza.

ARTICLE HISTORY Received 1 January 2023; Revised 9 March 2023; Accepted 15 March 2023

KEYWORDS Sartre; phenomenology; Bergson; Spinoza; consciousness

1. Introduction

In his early essay on Husserl's idea of intentionality, Sartre credits intentionality with "restor[ing] to things their horror and their charm" (IHP, 4–5). While it is undeniable that Husserl's notion of intentionality is fundamental to Sartre's thought, we can also note that in *The Transcendence of the Ego*, written at the same time, Sartre rejects one of Husserl's other fundamental ideas, the notion of a transcendental ego. Sartre argues that this rejection of the transcendental ego allows him to "bring about the liberation of the transcendental field, at the same time as its purification", (TE, 25) and by

CONTACT Henry Somers-Hall  henry.somers-hall@rhul.ac.uk  Dept. of Politics, International Relations, and Philosophy, Royal Holloway, University of London, Egham, TW20 0EX, UK

© 2023 The Author(s). Published by Informa UK Limited, trading as Taylor & Francis Group
This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>), which permits non-commercial re-use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited, and is not altered, transformed, or built upon in any way. The terms on which this article has been published allow the posting of the Accepted Manuscript in a repository by the author(s) or with their consent.

ensuring that intentional consciousness is fully and necessarily engaged in the world, proved both a solution to the problem of solipsism (TE, 28–9), and a basis for political action (TE, 29–30). For Husserl, acts of consciousness are unified insofar as they emanate from a transcendental ego. It is this ego that allows us to see each consciousness as belonging to the same subject. The rejection of the transcendental ego as the ground from which consciousness emanates is an important moment in the development of Sartre's existentialism. Once we see the ego as the result of our engagement with the world, rather than as the cause of our behaviours, we recognize that for human beings, our existence precedes our essence, rather than our actions emerging from a pre-existing psychological ground.

In this paper, I want to explore how Sartre believes that we can conceive of a unified consciousness without the presence of a unifying ego, developing the claim that it is only when *The Transcendence of the Ego* is read alongside certain key concepts from *The Imaginary*, written around the same time, that we can get a clear idea of Sartre's account of consciousness. While Sartre's arguments for a non-egological conception of consciousness have been widely considered inadequate,¹ I will argue that this is because these criticisms fail to note that Sartre uses his concept of the illusion of immanence, a concept already at work in his essay on Husserl's idea of intentionality, to develop a positive account of the relations between acts of consciousness that has its roots in the thought of Spinoza and Bergson. The illusion of immanence not only shows why thinking in spatial terms leads us to posit an ego to explain the unity of experience, but it also points us towards a positive alternative account of the unity of consciousness. The aim of this paper, then, is to argue that Sartre is, in fact, successful in these early works in providing a coherent account of the unity of consciousness without an ego. In Section One, I will set out the Kantian context that Sartre develops for his views, before looking at the arguments Sartre puts forward themselves. While Sartre's target in this essay is Husserl, the problem Sartre raises is expressed in terms of Kant's philosophy. For Kant, the transcendental unity of apperception makes a unified account of experience possible. Section Two will look at some of the difficulties with making sense of the arguments of *The Transcendence of the Ego*, focusing on some issues raised by Jonathan Webber and Stephen Priest. As we shall see, these objections can be seen as reiterating the kinds of issues that have been found with Hume's attempt to avoid positing a substantial self. Section Three will argue that it is only in relation to Sartre's account of what he calls the illusion of immanence, developed in his works on the imagination, that we can make sense of Sartre's account of consciousness, before

¹I will address Webber's criticisms in "Sartre's critique of Husserl" in detail below, but see also Morris, "Sartre on the Transcendence of the Ego" and Scanlon, "Consciousness, the street-car, and the ego".

Section Four sets out the account itself, drawing on Sartre's comments on both Bergson and Spinoza.

2. The transcendental ego and *The Transcendence of the Ego*

Sartre opens *The Transcendence of the Ego* with the following question:

We have to agree with Kant when he says that 'it *must be possible* for the "I think" to accompany all my representations'. But should we thereby conclude that an I inhabits de facto all our states of consciousness and really performs the supreme synthesis of our experience?

(TE, 1)

Sartre is referring here to Kant's transcendental deduction in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, where Kant is trying to prove that it is the subject that organizes the world we find around us. Kant argues here that one presupposition of having a unified field of experience is that I am able to lay claim to each element of the field of experience as my own. In effect, in order to have a complex experience, we do not simply need a set of experiences, but we need to be able to recognize that it is *the same* I that experiences each of these experiences in order to constitute them as a unity. If we walk around a building, this building is presented to us through a series of different perspectives of it. A condition of seeing these different perspectives as being perspectives of the same building, however, is that I am able to relate them together as being *my* perceptions of the building. Without this, we would simply have a series of fragmentary appearances. Without the unity of consciousness, these perspectives would not even be perspectives of different buildings. Rather, they would be appearances without any relation to anything, since they would be without any kind of unity whatsoever. Being able to say 'I think' in relation to our impressions, then, is a way of being able to show that all of these impressions are mine, and can thus be understood by me as related together.

Kant and Sartre both hold the claim that the *I think* must be able to accompany our representations. This claim is for Kant an analytic claim, which is simply that the world is in some sense unified. It is really this unity of appearances which allows us to say 'I think' in relation to different parts of it. Where we find a difference emerging is in terms of what guarantees this unity we find in experience. For Kant, the fact that we can say 'I think' implies that we ourselves are responsible for unifying representations into a coherent world. Behind this analytic 'I think', there is a synthetic subject responsible for unifying the world into a totality. Through this recognition of the analytic unity of the manifold (the fact that we can encompass this diversity with the analytic statement, 'I think ... '), the subject also comes to know the manifold as a synthetic unity. This in turn requires that the subject bring these different elements of the manifold together as a synthetic unity, and that he or she is

conscious of this synthesis. It is this synthetic activity that allows us to understand the subject as unified:

That relation comes about, not simply through my accompanying each representation with consciousness, but only in so far as I *conjoin* one representation with another, and am conscious of the synthesis of them. Only in so far, therefore, as I can unite a manifold of given representations in *one consciousness*, is it possible for me to represent to myself the *identity of the consciousness in [i.e. throughout] these representations*. In other words, the *analytic* unity of apperception is possible only under the presupposition of a certain *synthetic* unity.

(Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, B133)

Logically prior to the analytic 'I think', then, is a synthetic unity, the transcendental unity of apperception, which is a condition of possibility of asserting the unity of experience. For Husserl, as Sartre rightly notes, the transcendental ego for Husserl is given as a fact, rather than as a condition as it is for Kant, which remains after the phenomenological epoché, his equivalent of the Cartesian method of doubt. Nonetheless, the transcendental ego has a similar role in providing unity to Kant's transcendental unity of apperception. In *Ideas II*, Husserl writes that intentionality "takes its departure in the 'Ego', which evidently thereby remains undivided and numerically identical while it lives in these manifold acts"² (Husserl, *Ideas II*, §22).

The concern driving *The Transcendence of the Ego* can be summarized by the following question:

[I]t must be possible for the 'I think' to accompany all our representations; but are we to understand by this that the unity of our representations is, directly or indirectly, made a reality by the 'I think' – or are we to understand that the representations of a consciousness must be unified and articulated in such a way that an 'I think' can always be uttered in regard to them?

(TE, 2)

In essence, Sartre is going to reverse the direction of explanation that we found in Kant. While Kant and Husserl hold that thinking is unified by some kind of ego structure, Sartre is going to argue that rather than the 'I think' pointing to a subject unifying experience, we can in fact only posit an 'I think', because experience itself is already unified. His claim is that the unity of our representations is not a result of a synthesis by the transcendental ego, but that, if this unity can be grounded by some other means, this does

²Scanlon, "Consciousness, the street-car, and the ego", 333–4 notes that Husserl in fact has three different positions regarding the transcendental ego as this philosophy develops. The first is pre-phenomenological and sees the ego as simply an aggregate of experiences that have happened to the subject, the second sees the ego as a formal subject-pole, while his mature position involves a more complex and no-longer formal account of the ego. Scanlon's claim is that Sartre targets the second of these conceptions, that Sartre's own position is the first, and that Husserl's third mature position is not vulnerable to Sartre's arguments. I will argue here that these claims rest on a series of misapprehensions about Sartre's argument.

not exclude the possibility of the 'I think' accompanying all of our representations. In fact, it would make it possible, as it would form the set of representations to which the 'I think' is applied. Sartre presents two arguments here: a positive argument for his claim and a negative argument against the alternative. First, Sartre claims that we do not need the transcendental ego to unify experience as unity can emerge from consciousness itself. Second, Sartre argues that the transcendental ego in fact makes the unity of consciousness impossible. We will return to these arguments in Section Four once we have looked at the role of *The Imaginary* in interpreting them, but I want to give a summary of them now to orientate our discussion.

Sartre's first claim is that it is the unity of the object, which does not itself require a subject to make its unity possible that unifies experience. His claim will be that Kant has misconstrued a fundamental phenomenological fact, namely the durational experience of time, and so has derived conditions for the possibility of experience which do not relate to actual empirical experience. Sartre observes the fact that objects in time present a degree of durational unity that Kant does not recognize in his account of time in the transcendental deduction. Since consciousness is a relation to an object rather than a representation of it, the object is able to provide unity to consciousness. Consciousness thus "unifies itself by going outside itself" (TE, 3-4). In relating to objects, then, "it is consciousness that unifies itself, concretely, by an interplay of 'transversal' consciousnesses that are real, concrete retentions of past consciousnesses" (TE, 4). That is, the unity comes from the order present in the object which is transcendent to consciousness. "The object is transcendent to the consciousnesses that grasp it, and it is within the object that their unity is found" (TE, 4).

Sartre's second claim is that an ego would slip like an "opaque blade" (TE, 4) between our moments of consciousness. Sartre uses the same language in relation to images as objects within consciousness:

[I]t would have been understood that it was impossible to slip these material portraits into a conscious synthetic structure without destroying the structure, cutting the contacts, stopping the current, breaking the continuity. Consciousness would cease to be transparent to itself; everywhere its unity would be broken by the inassimilable, opaque screens.

(IPPI, 6)

As such, positing an ego in some sense breaks up consciousness. The difficulty with both of these arguments is that, as the stand, they are open to a wide range of interpretations, often in contrary directions. In the next section, I want to look at some of the ways in which these arguments have been read before moving on to the main claim of this paper, which is that Sartre's argument should be read in light of his concept of the illusion of immanence. While that concept concerns the limitations of traditional accounts of the structure of consciousness, I want to argue that they also

point to positive view of the way in which consciousness is organized that allows us to present a novel reading of Sartre's arguments here in *The Transcendence of the Ego*.

3. The problem of unity in *The Transcendence of the Ego*

To see why we might have a problem making sense of Sartre's arguments, I want to turn to a couple of interpretations of them in this section. This will open the way to seeing why Sartre's argument here can only be understood in the light of his account of the illusion of immanence. I want to begin with Jonathan Webber's claims about what exactly Sartre is trying to prove in *The Transcendence of the Ego*. Webber presents several arguments to show that Sartre's position only makes sense if we take him to be claiming to describe the *psychological* rather than *ontological* structure of consciousness. His claim is that if we simply take Sartre to be arguing that our psychological experience can be understood as meaningful ("a single coherent flow rather than a chaotic manifold" [Webber, "Sartre's Critique of Husserl", 160]) without recourse to the structures of a transcendental ego, then Sartre's argument is potentially sound, but that he cannot be making any deeper claims about the nature of consciousness at this point in his philosophical development. Webber presents the following series of objections against a more ontological reading of Sartre's argument.

First, Sartre "has not explained why my flow of experience includes just these possible experiences and no others. Why does my experience not combine distinct perspectives, either simultaneously or as it unfolds over time?" (Webber, "Sartre's critique of Husserl", 160). The question here, then is whether we can, without something like a transcendental ego to 'own' our experiences, understand the subject as unified. While Sartre claims that it is the object that unifies consciousness, this in itself does not seem to provide an answer to our problem here. If we see an object as constituted through a variety of perspectives on it, then it seems once again that insofar as objects are public and accessible to more than one subject, then it is only on the basis of an account of unified subjects that we can determine that a given consciousness of the object belongs to this subject rather than that. The object does not seem to be able to provide the unity we need, therefore, and here, we once again return to the Kantian point that the perception of a unified object presupposes that all moments are present to a subject. Second, Webber suggests that while the transcendental ego may not be present to experience, this does not rule out the possibility that there is something like a transcendental ego prior to experience. A description of experience does not, then rule out the need to presuppose the ego at another level of our analysis. Finally, Webber notes that Sartre is claiming that "the relation between the ego and conscious experience can be

described only “in exclusively magical terms” [TE, 15] and that the ego produces its qualities, states, and actions through “poetic production” that mostly takes the form of “magical procession” which “always retains a ground of unintelligibility” (TE, 19)” (Webber, “Sartre’s critique of Husserl”, 161). As Richmond, (“Introduction”, xiv) notes, by magical relations, Sartre here means relations that cannot be accommodated by ordinary causal thinking. The implication of this third argument, then, is that understanding the relation between consciousness and the ego as objective would entail assuming the existence of efficacious non-causal relations in the objective world.

Now, the first two of these criticisms Webber presents here recapitulate many of the criticisms raised against Hume’s view of the self (and indeed, by Hume himself in the appendix to the *Treatise*). Hume also attempted to understand consciousness without a substantial self. The difficulty Hume encountered is that if the self is defined as a bundle of sensations, then it seems difficult to determine why a self is *this* bundle of sensations rather than any other, or why, given the variability in our perceptions, we take our stream of consciousness to be one unified structure rather than several distinct individuals. Stroud, for instance, sets out a very similar analysis to Webber’s, but in this case of the problems for Hume of individuating the mind:

One question typically asked is ‘What criteria do we employ to identify persons as one and the same over a period of time?’ and that is usually understood to mean ‘What are the observable conditions the fulfilment of which logically implies that this is the same person as that?’ Hume claims, as we saw, that there are no such conditions. There are no objective relations or connections which bind perceptions together in one mind, although there are multitudes of ever-changing perceptions which, because of the operation of various principles of the imagination, we come to regard as constituting minds or persons. Therefore, there are no connections or relations, and a fortiori no observable connections or relations, such that, if they hold among a set of perceptions then it follows that it is one person. The very idea of a single, identical mind or person is a ‘fiction of the imagination’.

(Stroud, *Hume*, 132)

Stroud’s claim, ultimately, is that Hume illicitly presupposes the notion of a self in order to get his bundle theory off the ground, and Webber’s claim is in effect the same. The reason Sartre’s account here must be psychological for Webber is because the stream of consciousness presupposes some kind of prior unity, and while for a psychological account, we can posit this unity as being present on the prior ontological plane, if Sartre’s initial account is ontological, there is nowhere left to retreat to in order to establish the unity of the self.³

³We should also note here that as de Coorebyter suggests, there is some evidence that TE should be read in terms of the more obviously ontological project of Sartre’s early essay on intentionality. If we accept de Coorebyter’s claims, then it seems we are pushed to hold either that Webber’s reading is not correct, or that Sartre’s arguments here are not very strong: If we stick to the classic thesis that ‘intentionality’ was written late, we reduce this text to the ontology of 1943 [*Being and Nothingness*] and we

While Webber presents a Humean account of *The Transcendence of the Ego* here, Stephen Priest's reading returns us to something like the Kantian logic:

So, we have a new way of thinking of the unity of consciousness. Although it remains true that consciousness is unified through its intentional objects, it is true in addition that "It is consciousness which unifies itself". This is intended by Sartre as a complementary claim, not one which competes with the thesis that unity is provided by the object. After all, consciousness was not without any role in the constitution of the unity of its object. The several acts of consciousness have to be directed towards their intentional object not just so that we can speak of one and the same consciousness but so that we can speak of one and the same object. It would be fair to say that consciousness unifies itself before the object or in the face of the object, or the several acts of consciousness fuse into one single consciousness by being directed towards one and the same object, even though an equally legitimate way of thinking of this process is: the object counts as one and the same transcendent object for consciousness because the several acts of consciousness are directed towards it.

(Priest, *Subject in Question*, 40–1)

Here, Priest posits the unity of consciousness as emerging from a reciprocal relationship with the unity of the object. The difficulty is that here we seem to have here something like the relation between the transcendental unity of apperception and the transcendental object in Kant's account, with the object providing the focal point for the unity of various acts of consciousness, and the fact that these acts of consciousness are directed at the same object allowing them to be considered as belonging to the same self.⁴ It would be easy to see the relationship between consciousness and acts of consciousness being rather like the relationship between the transcendental ego and particular acts of consciousness, but if that were the case, Sartre's argument would become trivial, since it would amount to restating Kant's argument in different language.⁵ Other readings, such as that of

are condemned to seek the starting point for Sartrean thought in *The Transcendence of the Ego* taken in isolation – that is to say, in the question of the self. A very technical polemic with Husserl and psychology thus covers over a programme that is both vaguer and more ambitious, which bursts forth in all its magnitude when, on the contrary, one brings together 'Intentionality' with *Transcendence* (de Coorebyter "Introduction and notes," 10–11).

⁴Baiasu, "Transcendental Unity of Apperception," explicitly develops a (positive) reading that draws parallels between Kant's transcendental unity of apperception and Sartre's account of pre-reflective consciousness.

⁵Scanlon, "Consciousness, the street-car, and the ego" takes up both the Humean and Kantian readings of Sartre here as he believes Sartre presents two entirely different accounts of the unity of consciousness, one dependent on the unity of the object for consciousness, and one on the retention of past conscious acts: "Sartre offers two distinct explanations for the unity and individuality of consciousness. The first taken by itself is simply inadequate. The second, taken in conjunction with the first, is adequate but can be interpreted as an egological conception of transcendental consciousness" (335). Scanlon's reading suffers from not being able to explain why Sartre gives two "quite different conception[s]" (336) of unity immediately after one another in the same text. I will argue instead that we can view the object as involved in unifying consciousness only if we see acts of consciousness as modally distinct. As such, these are two moments in the same argument.

Williford, recognize, rightly I will argue, that Sartre's brief references to Spinoza are key to solving the problem of how Sartre construes unity without a central ego structure, though Williford himself is unable to explain the exact workings of Sartre's account here.⁶ In order to clarify Sartre's argument, we need to combine his claims with his analysis of what he calls the illusion of immanence in his work on the imagination.

4. The illusion of immanence

In this section I want to turn to another important moment of Sartre's early thought which I believe provides the key to thinking through what gives unity to the ego for Sartre. This is Sartre's claim that traditional models of consciousness suffer from an 'illusion of immanence', which Sartre develops in *The Imaginary*.⁷ Sartre writes that the origin of the illusion of immanence "must be sought in our habit of thinking in space and in terms of space", (IPPI, 6) and in fact states that Hume is the exemplar of a figure who operates under the illusion of immanence. The illusion of immanence, for Sartre, is largely responsible for our misapprehensions regarding the nature of consciousness, and as we shall see, one of these misapprehensions will be the need to posit an ego to unify consciousness. There are a number of aspects to the illusion of immanence, but here, I want to draw out two. The first aspect is that traditionally we see consciousness as a container for representations. In this sense, the illusion of immanence involves seeing our mental lives as a separate realm that corresponds to the world, rather than as an intending towards the world that Husserl takes it to be. While this illusion is important, there is also a second illusion which involves the way in which we understand relations between acts of consciousness. Here, Sartre borrows heavily from Bergson's account of the way we misconstrue our mental lives.⁸ This aspect of the illusion holds that we implicitly

⁶Williford writes that "[w]hatever we make of Sartre's appeal to Spinoza here, he is certainly saying that streams of consciousness are, in fact, individuated by their very nature and that no ego is needed to account for this fact" (Williford, "Pre-reflective Self-consciousness," 203). We will try to give a more positive account of this reference to Spinoza in Section Four.

⁷As de Coorebyter notes, Sartre himself saw *The Imaginary* and *The Transcendence of the Ego* as together providing a critique of Husserl. De Coorebyter quotes Sartre himself, written on 1st February 1940: "I needed four years to get through Husserl. I wrote an entire book (save the final chapters) under his inspiration: *The Imaginary*. It was in opposition to him, if truth be told, but as much as a disciple can write against his teacher. I also wrote an article against him: The Transcendental Ego" (De Coorebyter, *Transcendence of the Ego*, 129).

⁸Eshleman (2016) also notes the influence of Bergson on Sartre's account of illusion in thought, developing a list of six errors we make when we reflect on conscious experience (185–190), one of which is the illusion of immanence. I suspect our differences here are largely terminological, and he goes on to note that "the first four kinds of errors all relate to our natural proclivity to construe self-conscious experience in objectified, spatialized terms (a strategy Sartre adopts from Bergson)" (Eshleman, "Sartre's Error Theory," 188). I take the illusion of immanence, as "thinking in terms of space" (IPPI, 6) to be precisely this thinking in spatialised terms, and hence to be something like the genus to many of Eshleman's species of error.

understand the structure of consciousness on the model of the structure of the external world. Just as we understand the world in terms of discrete objects both distinguished and connected by holding different positions in a shared space, so we understand our mental lives as involving discrete ideas, impressions, or even acts of consciousness connected by sharing the same mental space. In *The Imagination*, Sartre makes clear that the illusion of immanence occurs when we bring to bear on mental phenomena an a priori framework of explanation that overrides the natural structure of our thought processes. *The Imagination* further notes that it is what Sartre calls the “atomistic conception of the image” that is behind the problems with our traditional understandings of thought. The *Imaginary* extends this analysis, writing that “[w]ithout any doubt, the origin of this illusion must be sought in our habit of thinking in space and in terms of space. I will call it: the illusion of immanence” (IPPI, 6). “The illusion of immanence consists in transferring the externality, spatiality, and all the sensible qualities of the thing to the transcendent psychic content” (IPPI, 53).

Sartre writes that,

existence-as-imagined [*l'existence en image*] is a mode of being quite difficult to grasp. Grasping it requires some straining of the mind, but above all it requires us to get rid of our almost unbreakable habit of construing all modes of existence on the model of physical existence.

(I, 5)

The result of this habit is that we tend to understand the image in the same terms as the perceived object. The first manifestation of the illusion of immanence derives from Husserl’s concept of intentionality. Sartre argues that we naturally see the notion of an image as having the same characteristics as what it is an image of, albeit possibly in an inferior manner. Sartre sums up this classical account as follows:

Pure *a priori* theory made a thing out of the image, but internal intuition teaches us that the image is not *the* thing. The data of intuition are thus going to be incorporated in the theoretical construction under a new form: the image is a thing, just as much as the thing it is an image of, but by the very fact that it is an image, it receives a sort of metaphysical inferiority in comparison with the thing it represents. In a world, the image is a lesser thing.

(I, 7)

The model here is much like Locke’s account, that sees mental impressions as signs for objective phenomena (Locke, *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, 4.iv.4). While Hume presents a scepticism about the external world, we still find this model operative, insofar as a correspondence between perceptions and the external world remains the criterion for knowledge. Sartre keeps the name, image, here, due to its longstanding use throughout the

history of philosophy, but his account of what an image is is a radical departure from this picture. Sartre's incorporation of Husserl's notion of intentionality allows Sartre to develop a different model to the correspondence model that we find in empiricism. Husserl sees consciousness as a form of relation to its object. Rather than see an image as a copy of a thing, it is rather a way of relating to a thing:

[T]o avoid all ambiguity, I repeat here that an image is nothing other than a relation. The imaging consciousness that I have of Pierre is not a consciousness of an image of Pierre: Pierre is directly reached, my attention is not directed at an image, but at an object.

(IPPI, 7)

As such, rather than perception and imagination relating to two different mental objects, they are two different ways of (potentially) relating to the same object in the world. Thus, when I close my eyes and imagine this piece of paper in front of me, it is the same piece of paper I relate to as I related to previously when I perceived it. The introduction of intentionality is clearly important here, and is one way in which we can understand an escape from the illusion of immanence: images are no longer within consciousness, but are a way in which consciousness relates to objects. As Sartre puts it in his essay on intentionality:

"All consciousness is consciousness of something". No more is necessary to dispose of the effeminate philosophy of immanence, where everything happens by compromise, by protoplasmic transformations, by a tepid cellular chemistry. The philosophy of transcendence throws us on to the highway, in the midst of dangers, under a dazzling light.

(IHP, 5)

Nonetheless, we cannot see intentionality alone as allowing us to escape from the illusion of immanence, since Husserl himself falls prey to it in positing a transcendental ego.

This brings us to the second sense of the illusion of immanence, which derives from Bergson, and involves thinking *in terms of* space. While the first sense was concerned with mental structures being understood by correspondence with external objects, this second sense concerns how we understand organization more generally. For Bergson, we have a tendency to think of the relations between ideas in the mind by analogy with relations between objects in space. By this, Bergson means that we tend to see thought as involving a series of discrete elements that could at least in principle be understood in isolation from each other. What allows them to interact is that we posit something like a neutral, homogeneous space as a container for them. Just as objects once situated in a shared space can be both distinguished (insofar as they hold different locations in that space) and related

(insofar as they share a space), we see mental phenomena as involving discrete mental states related together by sharing the same mental space. For Bergson, this spatial understanding of organization is to be contrasted with an understanding of the way phenomena present themselves in time where in the case of a melody, for instance, each note is determined by the quality of those that precede it. In order to clarify what Sartre means here, I want to introduce a quotation from Bergson, where he sets out his own account of the ways in which thinking in terms of space distorts our understanding of consciousness. Now, it would be wrong to claim that Sartre is developing a Bergsonian account of consciousness, but I would suggest that he takes very seriously Bergson's claim that there is a difference in kind between how relations are structured in space and time. Here is the quotation:

It was a matter of getting once more to the point where we could grasp the inner life beneath the juxtaposition of our states that we effect in a spatialized time. The experiment was within reach of everyone, and those who were willing to make it had no difficulty in getting an idea of the substantiality of the ego, as of its duration. It is, we were saying, indivisible and indestructible continuity of a melody where the past enters into the present and forms with it an undivided whole which remains undivided and even indivisible in spite of what is added at every instant, or rather, thanks to what is added. We have the intuition of it; but as soon as we seek an intellectual representation of it we line up, one after another, states which have become distinct like the beads of a necklace and therefore require, in order to hold them together, a thread which is neither this nor that, nothing that resembles beads, nothing that resembles anything whatsoever,—an empty entity, a simple word. Intuition gives us the thing whose spatial transposition, whose metaphorical translation alone, is seized by the intellect.

(Bergson, *Creative Mind*, 82–3)

Here we can begin to see the relevance of the illusion of immanence to the problem at the heart of *The Transcendence of the Ego*. Bergson's suggestion is that a model that sees the psyche in terms of an ego containing mental states emerges as a natural consequence of seeing mental states as atomized moments. As soon as we have understood representations in this way, we require a moment in excess of these elements to bring them into unity. In effect, we replace the natural unity of consciousness with a formal representation of unity, which in turn requires us to make a distinction of form and content. In the process, the original unity of consciousness becomes irretrievable. In *The Imagination*, Sartre makes the same claim that once we have divided mental phenomena into discrete moments, it is impossible to give them back their real unity:

it follows that the effort of psychologists has been similar to that of mathematicians who want to recover the continuum by means of discontinuous elements. They have wanted to recover psychic synthesis starting from

elements provided by the a priori analysis of certain metaphysico-logical concepts.

(I, 143)

We can see here, then, why the ego may act like an “opaque blade” in fragmenting consciousness.

Bergson’s concern in this quotation is to present a certain model of organization, with the claim being that a set of discrete elements require a homogeneous medium in order to relate them. This can be the contentless notion of the thread of the necklace or the homogeneous space within which objects are related, but we can also read it as the notion of substance within which discrete properties inhere, or even the ‘I think’ of Kant’s thought. The relation between the ‘I think’ and its representations mirrors that between a substance and its properties, and even when the synthetic transcendental unity of apperception stands above the category of substance, it still involves the gathering of the diverse under a central unity.⁹ We can extend this analysis to Husserl’s introduction of the transcendental ego, where the relation between the transcendental ego and the rays of consciousness mirror that between substance and properties.¹⁰ Ultimately, then, this is because the a priori framework that Sartre suggests is responsible for this error leads them into the error of assuming that there is only one way of understanding determination: a spatial form of determination.

Before we conclude this section, we can turn back to Hume’s own account of the difficulties in thinking the self as a unity. In an infamously cryptic passage in the *Treatise*, Hume sets out his own doubts about his account of the self as follows:

[A]ll my hopes vanish, when I come to explain the principles, that unite our successive perceptions in our thought or consciousness. I cannot discover any theory, which gives me satisfaction on this head.

In short there are two principles, which I cannot render consistent; nor is it in my power to renounce either of them, viz. *that all our distinct perceptions are distinct existences*, and *that the mind never perceives any real connexion among distinct existences*. Did our perceptions either inhere in something simple and individual, or did the mind perceive some real connexion among them, there would be no difficulty in the case.

[Hume, *Treatise*, Appendix §20–21]

⁹While Michelle Darnell, *Self in the Theoretical Writings of Sartre and Kant*, makes a powerful case for Sartre overlooking some of the subtleties of Kant’s account of apperception and inner sense in his criticisms, what the illusion of immanence shows is that Sartre’s more profound critique of Kant here is that wrongly seeing consciousness as relating to discrete a field representations means that from the outset we are forced to posit a point of unity that binds together acts of consciousness and hence overwrites consciousness’ existing unity.

¹⁰In this respect, I believe Scanlon’s distinction between the middle and later accounts of the transcendental ego is not relevant to Sartre’s account since Sartre’s criticism focuses on the *relation* between the transcendental ego and intentional consciousnesses rather than the nature of the transcendental ego.

We can see here the claim that once we have accepted the notion that perceptions are distinct existences without visible connection, we either cannot explain the self, or are forced to posit some ground within which the perceptions could be held together: either the mental space which keeps perceptions distinct but also provides a shared ground for their interaction, or the 'I think' of Kant and Husserl, which similarly provides an extra element to bind together the different perceptions. In each of these cases, determinations are 'immanent to' a homogeneous medium. We can further note that this notion of discrete elements, this time discrete acts of consciousness, is at play in both Webber's and Priest's readings of Sartre's arguments, which helps to explain why Webber reiterates many of the criticisms of Hume in his interpretation of Sartre's position, while Priest introduces a strongly Kantian moment into his reading of Sartre. We can note finally that Sartre's notion of the illusion of immanence cuts across both Bergson and Husserl's positions: Bergson for failing to recognize the intentional nature of consciousness, and Husserl for keeping intentional consciousness immanent to a transcendental ego.¹¹ Sartre's positive argument, then, will draw both on both Husserl's discovery of intentionality, and Bergson's discovery of the limitations of thinking in terms of space.

5. The unity of consciousness

Recognizing that the illusion of immanence concerns the way in which consciousness is organized as much as consciousness' relationship to objects allows us to provide a more sympathetic reading of Sartre's claims in *The Transcendence of the Ego*. In this final section of the paper, I want to look at how rejecting the illusion of immanence opens the way to seeing how consciousness is unified for Sartre. In the process, I want to return to the two arguments we considered in Section One seeing how we can make sense

¹¹Sartre argues that both of these philosophers fall prey to the illusion of immanence. While Bergson develops a more complex account of consciousness than traditional models, he fails to recognize the role of intentionality, and consequently confuses consciousness with its object: "Such is indeed the constant ambiguity of Bergsonian dynamism: melodic syntheses – but without a synthetic act; organisations without an organising power" (IPPI, 60). Husserl remains within the model of immanence since he ties intentionality to the transcendental ego. Once he has done so, he has to explain how the transcendental ego can relate to something different in kind from it. Husserl's solution is to posit a medium that shares the properties of both the transcendental ego and the object, and hence is able to mediate between the two. This medium, or *hyle*, ultimately becomes a mediating element that prevents consciousness from relating directly to its object. As it is a structure of the subject, Husserl essentially falls back into the illusion of immanence, with the *hyle* acting as a container for consciousness' relationship with its object. Sartre notes the way in which this undermines the transcendent character of intentionality in *Being and Nothingness*:

Husserl for the length of his philosophical career was haunted by the idea of transcendence and surpassing. But the philosophical techniques at his disposal, in particular his idealist conception of existence, removed from him any way of accounting for that transcendence; his intentionality is only the caricature of it. Consciousness, as Husserl conceived it, can not in reality transcend itself either toward the world or toward the future or toward the past. (B&N, 109)

of these with the focus on the nature of organization that the illusion of immanence gives to the question of the unity of consciousness.

I want to begin with Sartre's analysis of the individuality of the subject. In setting out how consciousness is able to be individuated without an ego, Sartre introduces an unexpected reference to Spinoza:

Consciousness (like Spinoza's substance) can be limited only by itself. Thus, it constitutes a synthetic and individual totality entirely isolated from other totalities of the same type, and the *I* can evidently be only an expression (rather than a condition) of this incommunicability and inwardness of consciousnesses.

(TE, 4)

Here, Sartre notes that the analogies between consciousness and Spinoza's substance allow us to understand how we can see consciousness as individuated, but also, I will argue, insofar as it is a synthetic totality, how it can be seen as unified without recourse to an *I*. While Sartre's reference to Spinoza is brief, I will argue that once we see it in the light of his discussion of the illusion of immanence and his references to Bergson's account of organization, we can give a plausible reconstruction of his positive account. The definition of substance normally cited here is that substance is "in itself and is conceived through itself, that is, that whose concept does not require the concept of another thing" (Spinoza, *Ethics*, Pt 1, def. 3). As one can imagine, there are substantial disanalogies between Sartre and Spinoza here, as Williford ("Pre-reflective self-consciousness", 201–2) and Coorebyter ("Introduction and notes", 180n18) both note. Consciousness, for Sartre, as intentional, is dependent on another thing, namely the world to which it relates. Similarly, while Spinoza's substance is infinite and singular, Sartre's consciousness is finite. Williford notes that we can perhaps make sense of this notion of consciousness as being one where we never encounter the limits of consciousness, rather as the surface of a sphere is finite yet without boundaries.

Without disputing the value of this reading of Sartre's reference, I want to point to another aspect of Spinoza's account of substance that is key here, and that is his account of modes. As we saw above, the Humean difficulties around unity emerged from seeing perceptions as distinct existences. Spinoza instead presents a view of substance where its modes can be distinguished, but are not really distinct from substance. Instead, they are modally distinct:

What is called a real distinction is that whereby two substances, whether of different or of the same attribute, are distinguished from one another; for example, thought and extension, or the parts of matter. This distinction is recognized from the fact that each of the two can be conceived, and consequently can exist, without the help of the other. Modal distinction is of two kinds, that between a mode of substance and the substance itself, and that between two modes of one and the same substance. The latter we recognize from the fact that, although either mode can be conceived without the help

of the other, neither can be conceived without the help of the substance of which they are modes. The former distinction we recognize from the fact that, although the substance can be conceived without its mode, the mode cannot be conceived without the substance.

(Spinoza, *Principles of Cartesian Philosophy*, 195)

Spinoza's model of substance here moves us away from seeing individual entities as being distinct substances. Here, we can see that the second, organizational, aspect of the illusion of immanence does not come into play, since we do not have a distinction between multiple elements and a space that they occupy. Rather, entities are modifications of a single substance and unable to be really distinguished from it. We could say that rather than the adjectival sense of the many we have with beads on a necklace, for Spinoza, the diversity of the world is encompassed in a singular noun form: substance as itself a multiplicity that contains within it differences. We can relate this to the nature of consciousness. Rather than individual acts of consciousness being really distinct from each other and hence requiring some kind of centre to hold them together as in the illusion of immanence, the reference to Spinoza suggests that Sartre has a different conception of the relation between acts of consciousness, and I would suggest that Sartre's conception here is that acts of consciousness are modally distinct, rather than really distinct. While Sartre references Husserl on *Internal Time Consciousness*, his claim that "to speak of 'a consciousness' is to speak of 'the whole of consciousness', and this singular property belongs to consciousness itself, whatever its relations to the *I* may in other respects be", (TE, 4) implies that we may have something more like a Spinozist modal distinction between consciousnesses here, then, where they can be numerically distinguished without being really distinguished.¹² Here, what for Kant would be a series of representations that require a central point of unity becomes a multiplicity of relations capable of self-organization as intentional consciousnesses form a

¹²Levy provides good evidence for the essential developmental role that Husserl's *Logical Investigations* plays for Sartre's early (and later) thought, with Husserl in the first edition of the *Logical Investigations* arguing against the need for a transcendental ego. Levi suggests that it was precisely the issue of unity that led Husserl to reject this earlier position:

Husserl explains what led him to modify his earlier position. The empirical ego, which he identified in the first edition of *Logical Investigations* with the stream of consciousness, is a transcendent thing that "falls" or is suspended with the phenomenological reduction. Yet the reduction does not eliminate the evidence of the *I am*. Even after the psychological or empirical ego has been bracketed, all conscious acts are experienced as emerging from a conscious center. And it is by virtue of emanating from this center and referring back to it that they are part of one conscious stream, a stream that is *mine*. (Levy, "Intentionality, Consciousness, and the Ego," 519)

The Transcendence of the Ego can be seen as attempting to fulfil the criteria set out by Husserl in this early work for a non-egological conception of consciousness while providing an account of the relations between acts of consciousness that does not ultimately impel us to once more posit a transcendental ego as Husserl eventually felt impelled to do. In this sense, Sartre takes himself to be providing a proper grounding for a 'transversal' account of consciousness.

unity without the need for the central spoke of the 'I think'. We find this same distinction in Sartre's account of consciousness:

The consciousness appears to itself as creative, but without positing as object this creative character. It is thanks to this vague and fugitive quality that the image consciousness is not given as a piece of wood that floats on the sea, but as a wave among the waves. It feels itself to be consciousness through and through and homogeneous with the other consciousnesses that have preceded it and with which it is synthetically united.

(IPPI, 14)

Here, the distinction is between two different ways in which we can see the connection between the sea and a set of determinations. In the case of the flotsam, we see the elements are positioned in the sea, but can be understood independently of its substance. We therefore have a situation much like Bergson's necklace, where the sea is simply the space where the piece of wood finds itself. The flotsam is distinct from the space it occupies. In the second case, we have a situation where the wave may be individuated, but it is not distinct from the ocean itself. Here the relation of the wave to the ocean is a modal relation much like Spinoza's relation between a mode and substance.

Now, as we have just seen, there are substantial disanalogies between Spinoza and Sartre, and these also affect the notion of a modal distinction. First, while substance is an absolute for Spinoza, it is, by definition, a substantial absolute. As we have discussed at length, consciousness does not have the structure we attribute to things, and we could perhaps argue that the relation of modes to substance itself is still too close to that between a substance and its predicates. Second, while Spinoza's absolute is atemporal, it is clear that for Sartre consciousness and its object are very much in time. Here, I think, once again, we can turn to Bergson to gain a deeper understanding of what a non-substantial absolute might look like. In *Creative Evolution*, he gives the following account of lived time:

Yet succession is an undeniable fact, even in the material world. Though our reasoning on isolated systems may imply that their history, past, present and future, might be instantaneously unfurled like a fan, this history, in point of fact, unfolds itself gradually, as if it occupied a duration like our own. If I want to mix a glass of sugar and water, I must, willy-nilly, wait until the sugar melts. This little fact is big with meaning. For here the time I have to wait is not that mathematical time which would apply equally well to the entire history of the material world, even if that history were spread out instantaneously in space. It coincides with my impatience, that is to say, with a certain portion of my own duration, which I cannot protract or contract as I like. It is no longer something thought, it is something lived. It is no longer a relation, it is an absolute. What else can this mean than that the glass of water, the sugar, and the process of the sugar's melting in the water are abstractions, and that the Whole within which they have been cut out by my senses

and understanding progresses, it may be in the manner of a consciousness?
(Bergson, *Creative Evolution*, 12–13)

Sartre himself cites this example approvingly in the *Imaginary* (IPPI, 8) when discussing the need to ‘learn’ the objects of perception as they unfold in duration. We can note that Bergson’s distinction between absolute and relative here is also a modal distinction, with Bergson claiming that elements of experience such as the glass of water in this case are abstractions from the flow of duration.¹³ As such, they are what we might call well-founded illusions which can only be understood in relation to the unfolding of the substanceless absolute of duration. While these abstractions are dependent on duration, they nonetheless differ from it, in much the same way that the model of the beads and the necklace differs from Bergson’s authentic model of consciousness, and the model of flotsam on the sea differs from the waves of the ocean.

Let us now conclude this section by returning to Sartre’s two arguments concerning the unity of consciousness without an ego now that we have examined some of Sartre’s claims about the organization of consciousness in more detail. There were two key arguments here – the first that the ego is not necessary for consciousness to be unified, and the second that the ego would actually prevent consciousness from being unified. We can answer the question of the unity of consciousness by pointing to the unity of the object, which does not itself require a subject to make its unity possible.¹⁴ For Sartre, consciousness “unifies itself by going outside itself” (TE, 3–4). “It is consciousness which unifies itself, concretely, by a play of ‘transversal’ intentionalities which are real concrete retentions of past consciousness” (TE, 4). The ego is not needed to unify consciousness as consciousnesses themselves traverse one another in such a way as to provide a decentred unity. Insofar as the object of perception has a structure whereby presentations are merely modally distinct, and consciousness is nothing but an intending towards objects, consciousness itself takes on the form of a singular multiplicity where acts of consciousness are only

¹³This modal reasoning provides a response to Webber’s third argument, that Sartre’s introduction of magical relations implies that the account he gives must be psychological, since it subverts traditional causal relations. In the *War Diaries*, Sartre claims that knowledge “supposes subject-object duality” (WD, 34) which is not present in the case of pre-reflective consciousness. As we can see here, the emergence of subjects and objects on the Bergsonian account is an abstraction. Assuming causal relations are knowable relations, this would explain why Sartre’s account in *The Transcendence of the Ego* sees relations between acts of consciousness as magical, since this is a corollary of the kind of modal account of consciousness Sartre adopts. c.f. Richmond, *Magic*, for an account of the non-causal nature of magical relations for Sartre, and the origins of Sartre’s concept of magic in, amongst others, the work of Bergson. Richmond argues here that magic is an existential structure of reality.

¹⁴The need for consciousness’ unity to depend on the unfolding of an object perhaps helps explain Sartre’s claim that all forms of imagination (which is defined as an intentional relation) require some present material object (as when the material canvas refers us to the absent figures portrayed in a painting). c.f. Webber, “Sartre’s Phenomenological Psychology,” 106–7.

modally distinguishable.¹⁵ Consciousness, then, simply is the correlate of the unfolding of time in these early works. Acts of consciousness operate rather like waves of the ocean. In this sense, while they are distinct enough for us to reflect on different acts of consciousness, there is no longer a question of the individual acts of consciousness being understood aside from their place within consciousness as a whole, and so the problems we discovered with the Humean interpretation of no longer arise. Just as a wave cannot be taken out of an ocean, so too each act of consciousness is tied to consciousness as a whole. We no longer have Humean distinct existences.

Turning to the second claim, Sartre argues that a notion such as an ego would slip like an “opaque blade” (TE, 4) between our moments of consciousness. If moments of consciousness are seen as really distinct, then we need to introduce a moment outside of them to unite them together, just as Bergson’s beads require the central thread to hold them together. Once consciousness is understood within this framework, we rule out in advance the possibility of it forming a transversal unity. To mention Husserl in passing here, we can note that for him, individual acts of consciousness still require the presence of a transcendental ego to unite them with each other. What this suggests is that a move to intentionality on its own is not sufficient. Time cannot play a constitutive role unless we stop understanding it as analogous to spatial extensity. We need a structural change whereby intentional consciousnesses are not seen as fully individuated, and hence requiring the thread of a transcendental ego to unite them. The important point Sartre makes is not about intentionality, but about the fact that understanding consciousness in time requires a new understanding of its organization, otherwise we reinstitute the structures of representation, as Husserl himself does when he is forced to introduce the *hyle* as a medium by which consciousness relates to its objects. This also shows the strength of the illusion of immanence in distorting our thinking here.

6. Conclusion

My aim in this paper has been to reconstruct the two roots to Sartre’s argument in *The Transcendence of the Ego*. While Sartre’s introduction of

¹⁵In Sartre’s analysis of intentionality, he notes this close interrelation of consciousness and its object: “But Husserl is not a realist: this tree on its bit of parched earth is not an absolute that would subsequently enter into communication with me. Consciousness and the world are given at one stroke: essentially external to consciousness, the world is nevertheless essentially relative to consciousness” (IHP, 4). Eshleman argues that in *Being and Nothingness*, this proximity of consciousness and its object should also be understood in approximately Spinozist terms, writing that “[Sartre’s] use of the phrases ‘being-for-itself’ and ‘being-in-itself’ or their abbreviated versions ‘for-itself’ and ‘in-itself’ should be read as shorthand for the complete phrases ‘the mode of being in-itself’ and ‘the mode of being for itself.’ In Sartre’s considered view, the universe contains only one kind of being that can be divided into different modal categories. When understood in this way, Sartre subscribes to a version of substance monism (materialism) conjoined with a modal pluralism (in a way perhaps distantly influenced by Spinoza)” (Eshleman, “What is it Like,” 33).

intentionality is fundamental here, if we are to fully understand how it is possible for consciousness to be unified without the ego, we need to turn to Sartre's comments on the organization of consciousness itself, and in particular on his criticisms of traditional models of consciousness. Thus, the *Transcendence of the Ego* finds Sartre navigating a path between Husserl and Bergson, each playing a part in Sartre's account of our relation to the world. On a final, speculative note, we may take up de Coorebyter's suggestion that *The Transcendence of the Ego* develops a "positive" (Coorebyter, "Introduction and notes", 28) account of our relationship to the world very different from the negative relation of *Being and Nothingness*, and perhaps push it further by noting that Sartre's conception of freedom itself in the *Transcendence* seems to owe much to Bergson. When Sartre writes that "every instant of our conscious lives reveals to us a creation *ex nihilo*. Not a new *arrangement* but a new existence", (TE, 27) we can note that a few pages after Bergson's account of the sugar water that Sartre cites, Bergson notes that an atomistic conception of the world can only give us *different arrangements* (a term repeated throughout *Creative Evolution*), but no real novelty. "What you call an unforeseeable form is only a new arrangement of old elements. The elementary causes, which in their totality have determined this arrangement, are themselves old causes repeated in a new order" (Bergson, *Creative Evolution*, 35). It is because time unfolds without parts, for Bergson, that there is genuine creation, since each new moment is a "radical recasting of the whole" (Bergson, *Creative Evolution*, 394). Bergson's account of creation here fulfils Sartre's somewhat unexpected definition of *ex nihilo* creation as the emergence of a state that has not previously been given.¹⁶ As such, at least in the 1930s, freedom itself for Sartre follows Bergson's claim that "[t]ime is invention, or it is nothing at all" (Bergson, *Creative Evolution*, 371).

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Jeffrey A. Bell and the anonymous reviewer at the *BJHP* for their comments, suggestions, and criticisms of earlier versions of this paper.

Bibliography

Works by Sartre Cited

- Sartre, Jean-Paul. "Intentionality: A Fundamental Idea of Husserl's Phenomenology". *Journal of the British Society for Phenomenology* 1, no. 2 (1970): 4–5.
- Sartre, Jean-Paul. *Being and Nothingness*. Translated by Hazel E. Barnes. New York: Pocket Books, 1978.

¹⁶"This mode of creation is indeed a creation *ex nihilo*, in this sense that the state is not given as having previously been within the Ego" (TE, 18–9). While Sartre is here talking about the ego, I am here assuming that he gives the same sense to creation *ex nihilo* when talking about consciousness.

- Sartre, Jean-Paul. *War Diaries: Notebooks from a Phoney War, November 1939-March 1940*. Translated by Quintin Hoare. London: Verso, 1999.
- Sartre, Jean-Paul. *The Imaginary A Phenomenological Psychology of the Imagination*. Translated by Jonathan Webber. London: Routledge, 2004.
- Sartre, Jean-Paul. *The Transcendence of the Ego*. Translated by Andrew Brown. London: Routledge, 2004.
- Sartre, Jean-Paul. *The Imagination*. Translated by Kenneth Williford and David Rudrauf. Abingdon: Routledge, 2012.
- Other Works Cited
- Baiasu, Sorin. "Transcendental Unity of Apperception and Non-Reflective Consciousness of Self". In *Comparing Kant and Sartre*, edited by S. Baiasu, 21–44. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015.
- Bergson, Henri. *Creative Evolution*. Translated by Arthur Mitchell. New York: The Modern Library, 1944.
- Bergson, Henri. *The Creative Mind*. Translated by Mabelle L. Andison. New York: The Philosophical Library, 1946.
- Coorebyter, Vincent de. "Introduction et Notes [Introduction and Notes]". In *La transcendance de l'ego et autres textes phénoménologiques, introduits et annotés par Vincent de Coorebyter*, edited by Jean-Paul Sartre, 7–76. Paris: Vrin, 2003.
- Coorebyter, Vincent de. "The Transcendence of the Ego: Reasoning and Stakes". In *The Sartrean Mind*, edited by Matthew C. Eshleman, and Constance L. Mui, 129–140. London: Routledge, 2020.
- Darnell, Michelle R. *Self in the Theoretical Writings of Sartre and Kant: A Revisionist Study*. Lewiston: Edwin Mellen Press, 2005.
- de Spinoza, Benedict. *The Ethics*, in *A Spinoza Reader: The Ethics and Other Works*. Edited and translated by Edwin M. Curley, 85–265. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994.
- de Spinoza, Benedict. *Principles of Cartesian Philosophy and Metaphysical Thoughts*, Translated by Samuel Shirley. In Michael L. Morgan, ed. *Spinoza: Complete Works*, 108–213. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 2002.
- Eshleman, Matthew C. "What is it Like to be Free?". In *Reading Sartre*, edited by Jonathan Webber, 31–47. London: Routledge, 2011.
- Eshleman, Matthew C. "A Sketch of Sartre's Error Theory of Introspection". In *Pre-reflective Consciousness: Sartre and Contemporary Philosophy of Mind*, edited by Sofia Miguens, Gerhard Preyer, and Clara Bravo Morandoo, 176–207. London: Routledge, 2016.
- Hume, David. *A Treatise of Human Nature*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2007.
- Husserl, Edmund. *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy: Second Book*. Translated by Richard Rojcewicz and André Schuwer. Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1989.
- Kant, Immanuel. *Critique of Pure Reason*. Translated by Norman Kemp Smith. London/New York: Macmillan; St Martin's Press, 1929.
- Levy, Lior. "Intentionality: Consciousness, and the Ego: The Influence of Husserl's *Logical Investigations* on Sartre's Early Work". *The European Legacy* 21, no. 5-6 (2016): 511–524. doi: [10.1080/10848770.2016.1169606](https://doi.org/10.1080/10848770.2016.1169606).
- Locke, John. *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, edited by Peter H. Nidditch. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975.
- Morris, Phyllis Sutton. "Sartre on the Transcendence of the Ego". *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 46, no. 2 (Dec., 1985): 179–198. doi:[10.2307/2107352](https://doi.org/10.2307/2107352).
- Priest, Stephen. *The Subject in Question: Sartre's Critique of Husserl in The Transcendence of the Ego*. London: Routledge, 2000.

- Richmond, Sarah. "Introduction." *The Transcendence of the Ego*, edited by Jean-Paul Sartre. Translated by Andrew Brown, v–xvii. London: Routledge, 2004.
- Richmond, Sarah. "Magic in Sartre's Early Philosophy". In *Reading Sartre*, edited by Jonathan Webber, 145–160. London: Routledge, 2011.
- Scanlon, John D. "Consciousness: The Streetcar, and the Ego; *pro* Husserl, *Contra* Sartre". *The Philosophical Forum* 2 (1971): 332–354.
- Stroud, Barry. *Hume*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul plc, 1977.
- Webber, Jonathan. "Sartre's Critique of Husserl". *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* 28, no. 1 (2020): 155–176. doi:[10.1080/09608788.2019.1591339](https://doi.org/10.1080/09608788.2019.1591339).
- Webber, Jonathan. "Sartre's Phenomenological Psychology of Imagination". In *The Sartrean Mind*, edited by Matthew C. Eshleman, and Constance L. Mui, 104–116. London: Routledge, 2020.
- Williford, Kenneth. "Pre-Reflective Self-Consciousness and the Autobiographical ego". In *Reading Sartre*, edited by Jonathan Webber, 195–210. London: Routledge, 2011.