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## SARTRE, DELEUZE, AND THE TRANSCENDENTAL FIELD

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Deleuze describes Sartre as his ‘Outside’: ‘the breath of fresh air from the backyard’ (D 12). Aside from Deleuze’s earliest essays on Sartre, however, there is little in the way of explicit engagement with Sartre’s thought, and often what there is tied to specific events in Sartre’s own life: the piece, ‘He was my teacher’, for instance, was published a month after Sartre rejected the Nobel Prize, and the short text given to Jeanette Colombel shortly after the death of Sartre. Despite these seemingly tangential influences, Sartre in fact occupies a central place in the development of Deleuze’s transcendental empiricism, as well as his later account of the assemblage. In both cases, Sartre prefigures Deleuze’s own account of the transcendental field with his radical rejection of interiority (what Sartre calls ‘the illusion of immanence’). Here, I want to focus on Deleuze’s early work, where Deleuze navigates the two paths he sees out of the illusion of representation, namely Sartrean phenomenology and Bergsonism. In the first section, I want to set out some of the limitations Deleuze finds with traditional transcendental philosophy before turning in the second section to Sartre’s own reconfiguration of the transcendental field. In the third section, we will look at Deleuze’s own account of the transcendental field, drawing on some of the work of Deleuze’s close friend, Michel Tournier. The final section will look at how Sartre and Deleuze conceive of the role of the Other in the constitution of the self and their accounts of what consciousness would be like without the Other.

### **Representation and Transcendental Empiricism**

Let’s begin with one of Deleuze’s key claims about transcendental empiricism’s relation to other forms of transcendental philosophy. In the *Logic of Sense*, Deleuze sets up what he sees as the problem with traditional transcendental approaches to philosophy:

It is said that the definition of the transcendental as originary consciousness is justified, since the conditions of the real object of knowledge must be the same as the conditions of knowledge; without this provision, transcendental philosophy would lose all meaning and would be forced to establish autonomous conditions for objects, resurrecting

thereby the Essences and the divine Being of the old metaphysics. The double series of the conditioned, that is, of the empirical consciousness and its objects, must therefore be founded on an originary instance which retains the pure form of objectivity (object = X) and the pure form of consciousness, and which constitutes the former on the basis of the latter.

(LS 105)

Deleuze is here referring to the transcendental-empirical doublet that forms the heart of Kant's transcendental idealism. In the *Critique of Pure Reason*, in order to justify our application of judgements to the world, Kant argues that what makes possible our use of judgements is that on a transcendental level we have constituted the world in such a way that it is commensurate with our categories of thought. For Kant, the 'B' deduction of the *Critique of Pure Reason* begins with the claim that 'The I think must be able to accompany all my representations; for otherwise something would be represented in me that could not be thought at all, which is as much as to say that the representation would either be impossible or at least would be nothing for me' (Kant 1929: B132). Rather than Descartes' claim that this 'I think' is a source of thinking, Kant instead argues that the 'I think' is simply a marker of the unity of our experience of the world. The fact that we can say 'I think' in relation to a manifold of elements implies that these elements are already related together. Nonetheless, Kant argues in the transcendental deduction that this 'analytic' 'I think' presupposes a process of synthesis that makes possible the unity we find in experience. For Kant, what lies behind the analytic 'I think' is a synthetic point of unity, which Kant calls the 'transcendental unity of apperception' (Kant 1929: A108). How does Kant move between the unity we find in experience and the synthetic unity that makes experience possible? Kant makes the following claim about what it is to synthesise elements into a unity:

The same function that gives unity to the different representations in a judgement also gives unity to the mere synthesis of different representations in an intuition, which, expressed generally, is called the pure concept of the understanding.

(Kant 1929: A79/B104–05)

This assertion is central to Kant's argument from the analytic 'I think' to its synthetic ground since it allows us to move from formal logic of judgements to a transcendental logic that conditions objects. The understanding is able to guarantee that the structure of objects is congruent with the structure of judgement because it also conditions objects. Deleuze's criticism here is that Kant's claim that behind the analytic 'I think' is a synthetic 'I think' effectively reiterates the structure of the empirical at the level of the transcendental. He further claims that there is an implicit assumption in much of Western thought that for something to be determinate means for it to have a subject-predicate form, an assumption he calls the transcendental illusion of representation. This implies that any explanation of grounds will either repeat the form of what it grounds or else will be abysal and hence empty of determination:

What is common to metaphysics and transcendental philosophy is, above all, this alternative which they both impose on us: either an undifferentiated ground, a

groundlessness, Formless nonbeing, or an abyss without differences and without properties, or a supremely individuated Being and an intensely personalized form. Without this Being or this Form, you will have only chaos.

*(LS 105–06)*

It is easy to see this illusion at play in Kant's account of synthesis as the manipulation of discrete elements by a central point of organisation. What will interest Deleuze about such an account of the transcendental field is that it rules out in advance an account of the constitution of the subject since it is presupposed as what makes synthesis possible. It provides 'only the rational or rationalized caricature of the true genesis' (LS 98).

If representation did hold, then Kant's claim would be legitimate, since we would be torn between either having an abyssal conception of the origin of the subject or we would have to see all synthesis as replicating the kinds of empirical synthesis we find when we make knowledge claims. Such a model would be what Deleuze calls a 'sedentary distribution' (DR 36–37). Rather, Deleuze argues that the transcendental must be understood as a 'field' that differs in kind from what it grounds: 'Only when the world, teaming with anonymous and nomadic, impersonal and pre-individual singularities, opens up, do we tread at last on the field of the transcendental' (LS 103). How do we characterise such a field? Deleuze writes that a proper account of sense 'may occur only within a transcendental field which would correspond to the conditions posed by Sartre in his decisive article of 1937: an impersonal transcendental field, not having the form of a synthetic personal consciousness or a subjective identity — with the subject, on the contrary, being always constituted' (LS 98).

## Sartre

Sartre takes up phenomenology because he recognises that it allows him to surpass the model of representation that Deleuze criticises. Sartre's very early work concerns Husserl's concept of intentionality. This is the Husserlian idea that consciousness should be seen as a relation to an object (a consciousness of  $x$ ) rather than simply a container for representations as we find in traditional accounts, paradigmatically Descartes' understanding of consciousness as a thinking thing. Seeing consciousness as a container naturally pushes us towards the model of representation, since our relation to the world will be one of correspondence between an internal system of representations and a world. Insofar as with phenomenology, consciousness is a relation, knowing no longer needs to be the paradigm case:

Knowledge, or pure "representation", is only one of the possible forms of my consciousness 'of' this tree; I can also love it, fear it, hate it, and this surpassing of consciousness by itself that is called 'intentionality' finds itself again in fear, hatred, and love. Hating another is just a way of bursting forth toward him; it is finding oneself suddenly confronted by a stranger in whom one lives, in whom one suffers from the very first, the objective quality 'hateful'.

*(Sartre 1970: 5)*

Sartre develops a precursor to Deleuze's transcendental illusion of representation, which he calls the 'illusion of immanence'. This illusion 'consists in transferring the externality,

spatiality, and all the sensible qualities of the thing to the transcendent psychic content' (Sartre 2004a: 53). The key point here is that immanence for Sartre here has two uses. It refers to the tendency to understand consciousness as a container for representations, but also to the tendency to understand consciousness by analogy with things, with representations being 'immanent to' a central unity. We can see this operating clearly in the case of Kant – 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. In his *Transcendence of the Ego*, Sartre introduces a quotation from the poet, Rimbaud, that 'I is another', in reference to Kant's conception of the ego, a quotation that Deleuze himself will reiterate in his *On four poetic formulas which might summarise the Kantian philosophy* (KCP). Rimbaud elaborates on this claim by writing that '[i]f brass wakes up a trumpet, it is not its fault. This is obvious to me: I am present at this birth of my thought: I watch it and listen to it: I draw a stroke of the bow: the symphony makes its stir in the depths, or comes on to the stage in a leap' (Rimbaud 2005: 375, trans. modified). The claim here, then, is that thinking does not originate with the self but comes from 'the depths'. Sartre similarly reads the claim as follows:

The context proves that [Rimbaud] simply meant that the spontaneity of consciousness could not emanate from the *I*, the spontaneity *goes toward* the *I*, rejoins the *I*, lets the *I* be glimpsed beneath its limpid density, but is itself given above all as *individuated* and *impersonal* spontaneity.

(Sartre 2004b: 97–98)

Here, then, Rimbaud prefigures Sartre's own response to Kant. Kant's own argument rested on the statement that 'the I think must *be able* to accompany all my representations' (Kant 1929: B131–32). This statement raises the question of whether the *I think* actually does accompany all of our representations, or, on the contrary, whether in fact many of our representations occur without the presence of an *I*. Sartre fully recognises that for Kant, it is possible for the *I* to be lacking from empirical consciousness – I don't actually need to accompany my representations with an 'I think' at all times for them to be unified. This in turn raises two further questions:

First, does the movement from a representation not being accompanied by an *I* to being accompanied by an *I* lead to a change in the structure of that representation? And second, whilst the *I* must be able to accompany our representations, is this because the *I* makes possible the unity of our representations, or rather is it the case that our representations are structured in such a way that it is always possible to prefix an *I think* to them?

(Sartre 2004b: 34)

Sartre's claim here is going to be that once we move away from the 'atomistic conception of the image' (Sartre 2012: 144) that we find in the Kantian model of synthesis, we can see that consciousness does not need a central unity in order to organise itself. Rather, consciousness 'unifies itself concretely, by a play of "transversal" intentionalities which

are concrete and real retentions of past consciousness' (Sartre 2004b: 39). Sartre here relies on the fact that consciousness is purely a relation to an object. Insofar as the object itself is in duration, it cannot be reduced to a series of discrete moments but presents a unified unfolding in time. As such, there is no need for a transcendental ego to account for the unity we find in experience. Sartre is presenting here what Deleuze and Guattari will call a 'nomadic' image of thought, where static points are seen as abstractions from movement, rather than movement constituted from a series of static moments. Sartre talks about this as 'a form a melodic unity'. In the *Imaginary*, he writes that:

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.

(Sartre 2004a: 14)

Rather than determinations existing as representations tied to a central moment of unity, we have a very different mode of organisation here. Different modes of consciousness are organised like waves, which are not separate entities within a body of water, but modifications of its surface. Deleuze will refer to this as an intensive multiplicity, which has its roots in Bergson's conception of duration and Spinoza's modal account of substance, and both of these philosophers are reference points for Sartre too. This isn't the space to go into the nature of this multiplicity in detail, but here is an indicative quotation from Deleuze about intensive multiplicities that shows the parallels between Sartre's account and Deleuze's notion of the intensive:

As long as the wall is white, no shape is distinguished from or in it.... Let us return to [Duns] Scotus: whiteness, he says, has various intensities; these are not added to whiteness as one thing to another thing, like shapes added to the wall on which it is drawn; its degrees of intensity are intrinsic determinations, intrinsic modes, of a whiteness that remains univocally the same under whichever modality it is considered.

(EPS 196)

Just as the waves are only modally distinct from the ocean, then, and the degrees of whiteness are moments of one continuous surface, consciousness forms a unity without the need for a central spoke. As Sartre puts it, '[w]hoever says "a consciousness" says "the whole of consciousness"', and this singular property belongs to consciousness itself, aside from whatever relations it may have to the *I* (Sartre 2004b: 39).

If consciousness is capable of organising itself, then the ego is not going to be the ground for the unity we find in experience. Rather, it is a result that emerges when consciousness reflects on itself. In doing so, consciousness takes itself as an object, but it is not the same act of consciousness that reflects on itself. Rather, in reflecting, it reflects on a moment of consciousness that has just passed. 'It becomes positional only by directing itself upon the reflected consciousness which itself was not a positional consciousness of itself before being reflected. Thus the consciousness which says *I Think* is precisely not the

consciousness which thinks' (Sartre 2004b: 45). Ultimately, the ego, then, is a referent of conscious activity and not the activity itself. It is a collection of states and tendencies that is an object rather than a cause of our behaviour. The ego is thus an object in the world, albeit a special one, but one that is not, for instance, only accessible to ourselves. Here, then, we already have the double structure at the heart of the nomadic distribution. We have a field of things, but underlying this is something that cannot be captured by representation, namely the transcendental field of consciousness. This doubling of consciousness is elided by representation, which makes the structure of reflection self-transparent.

## Deleuze

I want to turn to Deleuze's critical response to Sartre in a moment, but before I do, I want to quote a passage on the transcendental field from the opening of Deleuze's last published essay, *Immanence: A Life* to show just how close he is to Sartre here:

What is a transcendental field? It can be distinguished from experience [*experience here is the Kantian term for a subject facing a world of objects*] in that it doesn't refer to an object or belong to a subject (empirical representation). It appears therefore as a pure stream of a-subjective consciousness, a pre-reflexive impersonal consciousness, a qualitative duration of consciousness without a self. It may seem curious that the transcendental be defined by such immediate givens: we will speak of a transcendental empiricism in contrast to everything that makes up the world of the subject and the object.

(PI 25)

This description of the transcendental field could have been written by Sartre himself, seeing it as prior to the constituted world of subjects and objects. In the *Logic of Sense*, Deleuze talks of the importance of the 'conditions posed by Sartre in his decisive article of 1937: an impersonal transcendental field, not having the form of a synthetic personal consciousness or a subjective identity — with the subject, on the contrary, being always constituted' (LS 98–99). Let's turn to these conditions now:

First, the transcendental field becomes impersonal, or, if you like, pre-personal, *without an I*.

Second, the *I* only appears at the level of humanity, and is only one aspect of the *me*, the active aspect.

Third, the *I Think* can accompany our representations because it appears as the foundation of unity which it did not help to create; rather, this prior unity makes the *I Think* possible.

Fourth, one may ask if personality (even the abstract personality of an *I*) is a necessary accompaniment of consciousness, and if one cannot conceive of absolutely impersonal consciousnesses.

(Sartre 2004b: 37)

These premises set out many of the major claims of Deleuze's transcendental empiricism. First, we no longer see the transcendental field as governed by the Kantian poles

of a transcendental unity of apperception and a transcendental object. While there is an ego that we discover in experience, this is a passive ego, constituted by the activity of consciousness, and so lacks a transcendental correlate. Sartre still holds to Kant's claim that we can reflect on the unity of our experience and accompany it with the statement, 'I think x', but this is a rational activity that rests on the a-rational transversal synthesis of consciousness itself. With the removal of the transcendental subject, we also have a reconfiguration of the transcendental object, with unity now given by the object being understood in terms of an intensive or durational unfolding rather than through the synthesis of representations around a central locus of unity. As such, there is now a difference in kind between the transcendental field, which operates in terms of processes, and the empirical world, which contains structures such as the ego. Here, then, we find something like the distinction between the intensive and the extensive that operates in Deleuze's own philosophy, with the transcendental and the empirical each having their own logics without being separate worlds.

Deleuze and Sartre part company on the final criterion here, namely whether one can conceive of an absolutely impersonal consciousness. For Sartre, the claim will be that once we recognise that the ego is a passive object in the world, then it becomes the repository of the personal aspects of our existence. This allows consciousness to become fully impersonal. This is important because if consciousness is completely empty of content, then there is no barrier to it engaging directly with the world. We do not have the problem that, for instance, Husserl faced, of having to explain how two different kinds of entities, the transcendental ego and things themselves, could come into contact given their different natures. In effect, Sartre's account of consciousness as 'ha[ving] no "inside"', as 'this absolute flight, this refusal to be a substance' (Sartre 1970: 5), appears to escape from the model of an 'image of thought' that Deleuze criticises, replacing a philosophy of interiority with a philosophy of the encounter. Deleuze, however, will argue that consciousness for Sartre is still too close to an individuated moment. For Deleuze, consciousness is personal, as what is important for him is not that the transcendental field is pre-personal, but that it is pre-individual. That is, what is logically prior to all individualised states of affairs is not itself individuated. Consciousness, whilst lacking content, is still an individual. As he notes, 'the pre-personal consciousness perhaps had no need of the I, but that it was not able to do without points of view or centers of individuation' (LS 344). In effect, here, we have the key disagreement between Deleuze and Sartre. What does it mean to think of synthesis outside of representation? For Deleuze, synthesis can occur free from any agent whatsoever. '[T]ime itself unfolds... instead of things unfolding within it' (DR 88). For Sartre, on the contrary, there is no synthesis without an active moment. As he says in relation to Bergson, he cannot conceive of 'melodic syntheses – but without a synthetic act; organisations without an organising power' (Sartre 2004a: 60). In effect, then, the question is whether the transcendental field needs to retain consciousness, as the consciousness of the process of the unfolding of duration (Sartre's position), or whether consciousness itself is secondary to this process of unfolding – that is, whether we can make sense of the transcendental field being constituted by time independently of time consciousness. In other words, the question is whether the other of the I, in Rimbaud's quote, must be understood as the consciousness of time as individuated within a consciousness or whether we can understand this other as the pure process of time itself.

In the background to this discussion is Michel Tournier's article, 'L'impersonnalisme', which Tournier published in 1946. As Dosse notes, Tournier and Deleuze were close friends, and during the Second World War, Deleuze and Tournier read *Being and Nothingness* together, taking it as their 'new Bible' (Dosse 2010: 93). In this article, Tournier sets out many of the moves that Deleuze himself will later make. Tournier notes that for Sartre, consciousness is understood purely in relation to a transcendent object, and similarly, for Sartre, we cannot understand the notion of an object separated from consciousness. 'Consciousness, for its part, is purely and simply the consciousness of being consciousness of this object: such is the law of its existence' (Sartre 2004b: 4). Tournier argues that if we are never aware of consciousness as separate from its object, then we may as well conceive of consciousness as itself an aspect of the object itself. Thus, Tournier writes that:

Since it appears, on the one hand, that an object exists only if the light [of consciousness] rests upon it, on the other hand, that this light has existence itself only through the objects that offend it, let us bring light into the definition of objects themselves, let us internalise it within objects, let us substitute for the image of objects illuminated from outside, that of objects inherently phosphorescent, this phosphorescence being essential to them: The source of light becomes useless. To move away from metaphors, let us identify consciousness and the thing of which it is consciousness, let us posit that *consciousness is its object* and the problem of knowledge will be solved; it will not even arise since the subject-knower will be abolished.

(Tournier 2023: 16)

Tournier's claim, then, is that given consciousness is always present, it is indistinguishable from the object, and so it should in fact be seen as a property of the thing itself. Deleuze makes this point in his essay on immanence when he writes that prior to the subject, it is 'coextensive' with the transcendental field, 'but removed from any revelation'<sup>1</sup> (PI 26). It is interesting to note at this point that this notion of consciousness as phosphorescence itself has a contested history. Bergson uses the term to criticise materialist theories whereby 'consciousness is attached to certain neurons, and is thrown off from their work like a phosphorescence' (Bergson 1944: 285), but this term is then taken up by Sartre to criticise Bergson:

There is no non-conscious for Bergson; there is only consciousness in ignorance of itself. There is no opacity that is opposed to light and receives it, constituting thus an illuminated object. There is pure light, phosphorescence, without illuminated material, though this pure light, everywhere diffused, only becomes occurrent by being reflected on certain surfaces that serve at the same time as screens for the other luminous zones.

(Sartre 2012: 41)

Here, then, Sartre criticises Bergson for not separating consciousness from its object due to a failure to grasp consciousness' intentional nature. Deleuze sees Sartre as picking up a fundamental division in our conceptions of consciousness (CI 227). For phenomenology, consciousness is a light that shines onto the exterior 'as if the intentionality of consciousness was the ray of an electric lamp ('all consciousness is consciousness of something...')

(CI 60). For Bergson, rather, '[t]hings are luminous by themselves without anything illuminating them: all consciousness is something, it is indistinguishable from the thing, that is from the image of light' (60–61). Here, then, we have the account of the transcendental field where consciousness is coextensive with it, much as Deleuze proposes in *Immanence: A Life*.

### Attention and the Other

Tournier himself argues that we must take up the model of consciousness as phosphorescence since the notion of consciousness is indistinct, precisely because it is always present, and hence there is no non-conscious state to contrast it with (Tournier 2023: 14–15). Sartre would respond to this criticism that consciousness is prior to the kind of categories by which we could represent it, that Tournier has hence confused consciousness of self with knowledge of self. (Sartre 1967) In effect, Tournier's argument merely restates Sartre's claim that consciousness cannot be represented, hence defined. Sartre, of course, has his own criticisms of the phosphorescent account of consciousness too. In his comments on Bergson, and his characterisation of Hume as sharing a phosphorescent account, Sartre suggests that such accounts are unable to explain how it is that consciousness is able to attend to some objects while others fall into the background – if consciousness is an illumination within objects, then how can we attend to (be conscious of) some objects rather than others? Deleuze's criticism of Sartre here focuses on Sartre's own account of attention, drawing it together with his account of the other. Deleuze's claim is going to be that ultimately, Sartre cannot provide an account of intentionality without an account of the other, since the ability to attend to one object rather than another requires the presence of other perspectives within the perceptual field. As such, Deleuze will argue that intentionality is a derivative phenomenon from a more primary Bergsonian form of consciousness. Let's see how this critique unfolds.

Deleuze declares that Sartre developed 'the first great theory of the Other' (LS 366) For Sartre, once again, our relationship with the other is not defined in terms of knowledge, since traditional proofs for the existence of other people, such as those that draw analogies between our own bodies and those of others to infer a similar analogy between my conscious thought and that of the other, only give me a sense that it is probable that the other exists. Furthermore, insofar as the other would be grounded in an inference from what I already know, all I really have here is an image of the other, limited in advance by my own categories of representation. Sartre argues rather that our engagement with the other exceeds our categories of representation, and operates in terms of an encounter. His claim is that this encounter with the other is actually constitutive of an aspect of ourselves, and it is this constitution of what Sartre calls our 'being-for-others' (Sartre 1978: 221–302) in the encounter that allows him to move beyond the representational proof of the other's existence. The classic example of this encounter for Sartre is shame, and Sartre gives the example of, through jealousy or curiosity, looking through a keyhole at a scene on the other side of a door. As Sartre notes, at first we find ourselves here purely engaged in our activity, namely the view of the scene on the other side of the keyhole. 'I am a pure consciousness of things, and the things, caught within the circuit of my ipseity, offer me their potentialities as a response to my nonthetic consciousness (of) my own possibilities' (Sartre 1978: 259).

Here, then, I am simply my jealousy, but in the mode of not knowing myself as such, and the room beyond the keyhole is simply a spectacle to be seen, just as the keyhole is an aperture to be looked through. There is simply a world within which objects are oriented as possibilities in relation to a situation. When I hear footsteps in the hallway, then my relation to my situation immediately changes. Insofar as the other sees me, I am no longer simply engaged in the world but come to see myself as an object in the situation of the other, governed by the distances and possibilities of their world. Sartre's claim here, then, is that a new aspect of my being is constituted here, and this is the ego as an objectification of my engagement in the world. Now, Sartre's point is that what the other refers to in their look is not simply an image of my being, but *is* my being and it is this recognition that I really am seen by the other that leads to the feeling of shame in this instance. '[S]hame is shame of *oneself*; it is the *recognition* that I really *am* this object that is looked at and judged by the Other. I can be ashamed of my freedom only insofar as it escapes me to become a *given* object' (Sartre 1978: 349). We can see some proto-Deleuzian moments here in this analysis of the emergence of ourselves as objects from a non-objective field. Similarly, we have here a prefiguration of Deleuze's account of the encounter as an escape from thinking in images that we find, for instance, in *Difference and Repetition*.

For Sartre, the fact that the encounter with the other is constitutive of an aspect of ourselves means that there cannot be a prior set of categories of the other, for such a set would mean that our engagement with the other would be conditioned by those categories. Deleuze nonetheless makes a distinction between two aspects of the other. While empirically, we may encounter others, this encounter is dependent on a deeper encounter with what Deleuze will call the *a priori* Other. (LS 318) As such, the look 'brings about only the effectuation or the actualization of a structure which must nonetheless be independently defined' (LS 366). Tournier once again is an important point of reference here. For Tournier, the key insight of Sartre's dialectic is that not only is my own ego constituted through the presence of the other, but more importantly, as Sartre argues in the *Transcendence of the Ego*, my own ego is not qualitatively different from any other ego. In order to know my own ego, I need to 'collect the facts that concern me and try to interpret them *as objectively as if I were dealing with another person*' (Sartre 2004b: 22). As such, "to know oneself well" is inevitably to look at oneself from the point of view of someone else, in other words from a point of view that is necessarily false' (Sartre 2004b: 22). To the extent that my ego is no different from any other and differs from the kind of consciousness we have discussed above, Tournier argues that my own ego itself is itself an other:

Now that I examine the crowd of others who populate the world, making possibilities abound around reality, I cannot fail to be struck by the singularity of one of them whom nothing seemed to distinguish at first from his brethren, but which is remarkable for a kind of closer intimacy which he maintains with the world and which is reflected in the violent repercussions of his appearance, in the being of the world. To recognize it we will call it *the Other* and we will say that it is that of others that I am or me. As for its emergence in the world, it is the main focus of our study; we will describe it as the 'Cartesian Cogito'.

(Tournier 2023: 17)

Once we take up this claim, we can make sense of Deleuze's claim about the importance of Sartre's conception of the Other. Here, the Other is not the Other of myself, since my own ego is just another of the 'crowd of others' that Tournier introduces. Rather, what is at issue here is the Other as a form of organisation whereby my own ego is 'given as an object' (Sartre 2004b: 22) alongside the egos of others in the world. The Other, then, is the field of object-like subjectivities, operating in terms of what Deleuze will call 'common sense' and 'good sense', and opposed to the originary moment of pre-representational consciousness. In effect, then, the Other is the extensive expression of the intensive transcendental field. While Sartre avoids seeing the Other as a particular individual, for Deleuze, it still operates within the framework of a logic of subjects and objects. 'Even a conception like Sartre's, in *Being and Nothingness*, was satisfied with the union of the two determinations, making of the Other an object of my gaze, even if he in turn gazes at me and transforms me into an object' (LS 307).

Let's work through these two moments, then, tracing the particular other to the *a priori* Other. Following Sartre once again, Deleuze argues that there is a distinction between the other that is my own ego and the other that I encounter in the world. Once the other exists, and I understand the world in terms of a field of egos, then 'the Other causes my consciousness to tip necessarily into an "I was", into a past which no longer coincides with the object' (LS 310). When I become a reflective subject, then, insofar as reflection cannot coincide with itself, I reflect on a moment that is already past in the very structure of reflection. 'If I cannot reenter into the past, it is not because some magical power puts it beyond my reach but simply because it is in-itself and because I am for-myself. The past is what I am without being able to live it. The past is substance. In this sense the Cartesian cogito ought to be formulated rather: "I think; therefore I was"' (Sartre 1978: 119). While the other that is my ego presents a past world, Deleuze, once again following Tournier, holds that the other Others present possible worlds. Deleuze writes that 'the Other is initially a structure of the perceptual field, without which the entire field could not function as it does' (LS 307). In what sense is the Other a possible world? Deleuze argues that Others, and in particular, the faces of others in the world, express other possible worlds to our own. A frightened face expresses the possibility of a world that differs from my own in being frightening. It expresses 'something I do not yet see' (LS 307) in the world. 'The ravaged face of a sick person moves us because it is *the possibility* of a world of fevers and nightmares, and our emotion is indistinguishable from this possibility, pity being an *abstract pain*, the pain of the Other' (Tournier 2023: 17). Often, we engage in the world without a particular Other, including the absence of our own ego structure. 'When I run after a tram, when I look at the time, when I become absorbed in the contemplation of a portrait, there is no I. There is a consciousness of the *tram-needing-to-be-caught*, etc.' (Sartre 2004b: 8). In one of his first essays, Deleuze presents an account of fatigue that makes the same point:

Signification is inscribed objectively in the thing: for example, there is fatigue, and that is all. There is this large round sun, this uphill street, this tiredness in the small of the back. As for myself, I am here for nothing. It is not me who is fatigued. I do not invent anything, I do not project anything, I make nothing come into the world.

(Deleuze 2002: 17)

In Sartre's own parallel case, here 'But I do not yet *think* of my fatigue; I do not apprehend it as the quasi-object of my reflection' (Sartre 1978: 454, trans. modified). Nonetheless, without the particular other, the *a priori* Other structure is still operative for Deleuze. As we saw, the face of the other expresses a possible world that is not our own. Deleuze is going to argue that the other also plays a role in structuring the perceptual field itself; as such, the *a priori* other injects into the perceptual field the idea of possibility that allows the encounter with particular others. It is this structuring of the perceptual field by the other that makes possible the process of attending that was so important to Sartre's critique of the phosphorescent account of consciousness.

To see how the *a priori* structures perception, we can turn to one of the most famous examples of Sartre, the case of Pierre in the café. Here, we arrive late to a café where we are supposed to meet Pierre. Sartre describes our action of scanning the café for Pierre as follows:

When I enter this cafe to search for Pierre, there is formed a synthetic organization of all the objects in the café, on the ground of which Pierre is given as about to appear. This organization of the cafe as the ground is an original nihilation. Each element of the setting, a person, a table, a chair, attempts to isolate itself, to lift itself upon the ground constituted by the totality of the other objects, only to fall back once more into the undifferentiation of this ground; it melts into the ground. For the ground is that which is seen only in addition, that which is the object of a purely marginal attention. Thus the original nihilation of all the figures which appear and are swallowed up in the total neutrality of a ground is the necessary condition for the appearance of the principle figure, which is here the person of Pierre.

(Sartre 1978: 41)

In trying to pick out Pierre, then, we bring certain objects to the fore from what Sartre calls the 'undifferentiated ground' of the café. Elements come to the fore and then fall into the background. Deleuze here focuses on the key notion of marginal attention, whereby consciousness is able to change the focus from one of these elements to the next. It is only insofar as I see the objects within the ground as possible objects of attention for other subjects that they become for me possible objects of perception, and hence the transition to them becomes possible. 'The part of the object that I do not see I posit as visible to Others, so that when I will have walked around to reach this hidden part, I will have joined the Others behind the object, and I will have totalized it in the way that I had already anticipated... In short, the Other assures the margins and transitions in the world' (LS 305). As such, it is once we see the perceptual field in terms of the *a priori* other that other virtual perspectives become possible. It is only on the basis of this other, for Deleuze, that the kind of attending that Sartre takes to be fundamental to consciousness and the intentional transcendental field becomes possible.

## Conclusion

We can see this difference between Deleuze and Sartre in the examples that they use to present the transcendental field. While Sartre's examples focus on human beings engaged in projects (Pierre in the café, the tram to be caught), Deleuze's examples deal with the

collapse of our projects, where action is no longer possible, and the field of perception itself begins to break down. Thus, the *Logic of Sense* gives us ‘the mortally wounded soldier who is no longer brave or cowardly, no longer victor or vanquished, but rather so much beyond, at the place where the Event is present, participating therefore in its terrible impassibility’ (LS 101). In *Immanence: A Life*, he describes ‘a disreputable man, a rogue, held in contempt by everyone, [who] is found as he lies dying. Suddenly, those taking care of him manifest an eagerness, respect, even love, for his slightest sign of life’ (PI 28). The ‘a’ of *Immanence: A Life* is central here, since it represents for Deleuze ‘a life, no longer dependent on a Being or submitted to an Act’ (PI 27). Here, then, we find a return from our modal existence to something more like a Spinozist substance, here reconceived as life no longer bound to any perspective. The Other, for Deleuze, not only institutes both our existence as an ego, as being-for-others, but also the very structure of intentionality itself. Sartre’s own account would be, then, an intermediary position on the way from representation to a full nomadism. Leaving aside the question of whether such a point of pure life is possible, or whether Deleuze has himself fallen into the error of taking a tendency of life for a state, we may perhaps conclude by asking whether this point that Sartre occupies between the indefinite article and the structures of representation is not the ethical point that Deleuze calls for: ‘just enough to extend the crack, but not enough to deepen it irremediably?’ (LS 157–58)

## Note

- 1 In his early work, Deleuze is concerned to fold consciousness back into things in order to develop a non-intentional account of the transcendental field. In a note on Sartre written shortly after his death, Deleuze instead focuses on the situation. He writes that it is ‘not just one concept among others, but the Pragmatic element which transforms everything, and without which concepts would have neither sense nor structure’, and defines a situation as an ‘assemblage of concepts’ (Deleuze quoted in Colombel 2005: 39–40). Here we find that Deleuze’s reading of Sartre follows Deleuze’s own development from a philosophy of the depths to a pragmatics. In this case too, however, there is an attempt to decentre consciousness, this time seeing it as an effect of the situation, rather than a phosphorescence of things.

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