

Is Lacan's Theory of the Mirror Stage Still Valid?*

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Lacan defended that the mirror stage represents the genesis of the self and self-consciousness in human mind. The self is formed from the image of other and not by a way of an internal auto-development. Before this stage, a sense of self as a unified entity and restricted from others and the environment does not exist. In the past few years, several psychologists and philosophers of mind have maintained that this model is wrong. According to them, the self exists since birth, to a minimal extent, they called it the minimal self. Its development is registered in the body itself, such that there exists, from the beginning, an innate body scheme and body image. The author's claim is that there are no empirical bases to assert that Lacan's theory is false. Some recent psychological experiences, summarized in a paper of Talia Welsh, go in order to indicate that there is no minimal self in newborns. The neuroscientist Damasio supported that in evolution mind appears first than consciousness. So the author thinks that Lacan's theory (as the author interprets it), according to which self-consciousness does not exist in the early stages of mind and appears only in the mirror stage, seems to be true.

Keywords: mirror stage, minimal self, imitation in newborns, no-self

Introduction

In this article, the author evaluates Lacan's (1949/1977) theory of the mirror stage in accordance with the current theories of minimal self. The author's research field is "philosophical psychology", and for that reason, it does not contain experimental data obtained, but reflections on experimental data from other researchers. First, the author will expose what appears to be the essence of Lacan's (1949/1977) mirror stage. Then, the author will compare the most recent theses about minimal self. This will be followed by a discussion on empirical evidence from the different theses. Finally, the author will conclude by affirming that Lacan's thesis is not scientifically outdated, and it can still be explored.

Lacan has not received much attention in the realm of analytic philosophy. According to Gillet (2001), "Perhaps the reason is that his ideas are presented in a way that is somewhat perplexing and impenetrable...". However, at least at this phase, Lacan is perfectly comparable to modern theories on the genesis of the self and the mirror stage. This does not necessarily mean that the theories are compatible. The author believes that the current interest in the first person in Anglo-American philosophy of mind may establish a connection with phenomenology and psychoanalysis.

Lacan's Theory of the Mirror Stage

The term "mirror stage" was coined by Wallon (1931) to describe a development phase, despite the fact

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that several authors, starting with Darwin (1977), had already made observations regarding the phenomenon. Lacan began with Wallon (1931) but gave the concept with a different meaning in several aspects. It is a paradigm for child development in infants between six and 18 months. For Lacan, it signifies the birth of the ego/self¹ correlated to the birth of the other. It can be said that the mirror stage is the signal of the presence of self-consciousness. Interest in the mirror stage is still active, but new paradigms in psychology, neuroscience, and philosophy of mind have questioned the validity of the theory on this subject from traditional authors (Mearleau-Ponty, 1964). Nevertheless, those authors did not refer directly to Lacan's theory, which seems to make it pertinent to evaluate the theory of this influential psychoanalyst.

The mirror stage is not an experience that is purely optical, but as previously stated, a paradigm for child development and formation of the self. The mirror is not necessarily a mirror, but a specular image as in the example of another child that is seen as a whole. Mother's face is also a mirror for the child. But it is a fact that Lacan in this phase of his thinking insisted in the visual character of mirror's experience. Lacan build on the feeling of jubilation observed in a child when he recognizes that the image he sees in the mirror is his² own.

This jubilant assumption of his specular image by the child at the *infant* stage, still sunk in his motor incapacity and nursing dependence, would seem to exhibit in an exemplary situation the symbolic matrix in which the *I* is precipitated in a primordial form, before it is objectified in the dialectic of identification with the other, and before language restores it, in the universal, it functions as subject. (Lacan, 1949/1977)

Afterwards, the child also looks at his mother, so that she can confirm that the image belongs to him. Jubilation has an observable, behavioral side, but what occurs in the mind of the child? Lacan's interpretation is that the child recognizes himself through that exterior image. But why is there such jubilation? What the image represents for the child, according to Lacan, is the idealized image of himself and his body. Lacan sustained that the child is born prematurely before his body becomes properly coordinated as a whole. In accordance with adult memories, the body is felt in a fragmented, shattered way.

This fragmented body—which term I have also introduced into our system of theoretical references—usually manifests itself in dreams when the movement of the analysis encounters a certain level of aggressive disintegration in the individual. (Lacan, 1949/1977)

This prematurity experienced by human beings establishes a dependence on parents during a longer period than other mammal species, and it is at the origin of the human being's emotional specificity.

In man, however, this relation to nature is altered by a certain dehiscence at the heart of the organism, a primordial discord betrayed by the signs of uneasiness and motor unco-ordination of the neo-natal months. The objective notion of the anatomical incompleteness of the pyramidal system and likewise the presence of certain humoral residues of the maternal organism confirm the view I have formulated as the fact of a real specific prematurity of birth in man. (Lacan, 1949/1977)

One should also stress that the feeling of fragmentation does not exist for the child before recognition of the mirror image (Chieza, 2007). The feeling of unity acknowledged in the image and that of internal

¹ Lacan never used the term "self", instead used the term "ego". Arnold H. Modell affirmed in *The Private Self* (p. 14): "Freud avoided the pitfalls of 'unscientific' subjectivity by conceptualizing the self as an objective structure, the ego". The self is the side of experience while the ego is the objectification for an external observer. As Modell said (p. 14): "The self experiences anxiety whereas the ego responds to a signal of unpleasure that is automatic and unconscious". The author is assuming that Lacan's ego theory includes also a self theory. By "self", the author understands here self-consciousness, it means, the sense of "self" as an entity separated from others and from the environment.

² In this text, the author will use the masculine neutral.

fragmentation are simultaneous. The child anticipates his future unification in the image and that fills him with jubilation.

Wallon's (1931) conception was that acknowledgment of the mirror image is a projection of the proprioceptive system. In other words, there would be an evolution from within. For Lacan, on the contrary, the self is born exteroceptively. He liked citing Rimbaud's (1871) famous sentence "Je est un autre (I am another)". The child begins by recognizing the image as another, but oddly perceives it as being an image of himself. It is through the perception of the other that the child arrives at a sense of self. The presence of the other will always be present at the origin of the consciousness of the self. The self is never a complete self. It only exists in the function of the other. Self and other are correlatives, but it can be said that it is the other that is primary.

Lacan would always conserve this aspect of the self ("ego", in his own language, see Footnote 1) in his theory, also known as the ego in psychoanalytic terms. The self that is formed in the mirror stage is not the truth, but the last reality of the subject. It always encompasses this aspect of identifying with an image. It is somewhat fictitious, but it is a fiction that is useful and adaptive. However, it can still be an obstacle at times for the subject who searches for truth beyond identification with the significant others that he will meet throughout his life.

It can therefore take these conclusions, for the time being, on Lacan's theory on the formation of the self: the self does not exist at the beginning of life. The child is not self-conscious until the age of six months. The self only begins to appear through an image that is exterior to the child. The self is formed through the perception of the other to which it will become irremediably connected.

Minimal Self

How do current theories tackle some of these questions? A concept that has been truly developed today by several researchers (Parnas & Sass, 2010; Rochat, 2010; Zahavi, 2005a; Gallagher, 2000, 2006) is the minimal self. What is the minimal degree of existence of a sense of self? Gallagher gave a fairly clear definition:

Phenomenologically, that is, in terms of how one experiences it, a consciousness of oneself as an immediate subject of experience, unextended in time. The minimal self almost certainly depends on brain processes and an ecologically embedded body, but one does not have to know or be aware of this to have an experience that still counts as a self-experience. (Gallagher, 2000)

Other authors have created similar concepts, although with differences that the author does not wish to elaborate here: the episodic self (Strawson, 2008), the core self (Damasio, 2010), or the ecological self (Neisser, 1988). Gallagher (2000) also defined the opposite concept of narrative self: "A more or less coherent self (or self-image) that is constituted with a past and a future in the various stories that we and others tell about ourselves".

There are also other concepts, such as Damasio's (2010) autobiographic self which presents differences, but once again they do not seem important for what the author wants to express here.

Some proponents affirm that certain philosophical problems can be resolved by making this distinction between minimal and narrative self. Thus, the well-known problem of the non-self which reverts to Hume (1940/1967) can be solved if there makes the above mentioned distinction. In this case, these proponents affirm that denying the existence of the minimal self means denying the phenomenal consciousness itself, since the entire conscious state implies a sense of the minimal self. Zahavi (2005b), who is one of the most important proponents, sustained that this self may not be given reflexively, thus retaking the concept of Sartre's

(1934/1957) prereflexive self-consciousness.

For Lacan and other authors, the phenomenal consciousness, the qualia, and the character of what it is like always implicate that there is a previous sense of a first person and the self. Nonetheless, it is disputable that this can be verified in the first month of life. It seems conceivable to the author that there are pure feelings without a self, no matter how minimal it may be. They are theoretically separable. In the author's opinion, in order to be able to speak about the self, we have to think not only in terms of what likeness or sensations are, but also from a point of view of the first person that is sufficiently different from others and the environment. For this point of view to be worthy of being designated as a self, it should also have a certain substantiality and a certain temporality, as minimal as they may be. Otherwise, what is the point of speaking about "self" even if it is a core self or a minimal self? In this sense, the author believes that the mentioned researchers added something to phenomenal consciousness (or phenomenality if we do not want the controversial use of the term "consciousness") with the concept of minimal self. In either case, these researchers actually attributed the capacity of differentiation and some substantiality of the self to the first stage of consciousness.

Current researchers seemed to agree that empirical data show that the self does not arise abruptly but that there is a progression from its minimal forms to the extensive or narrative forms. Rochat (2003a; 2003b) identified five stages. Beginning with the rudiments of differentiation, he considered that an infant has an ecological self in the first six weeks of life (he used Neisser's term in this article): "A feeling of the body as a differentiated, situated, and agentive entity in the environment". Lacan did not know the term "minimal self", and for that reason, he could not have referred to it. However, the conception of the emerging self that he had in the mirror phase is still a minimal self not a developed self, which leads us to believe that for him the previous stages are purely unconscious (in the sense of not being self-conscious) and undifferentiated from environment. This kind of vision was not only his, but also was actually the most common one among the authors from that period. James (1980) famously defined the initial stages of life as, "The baby, assailed by eyes, ears, nose, skin, and entrails at once, feels it all as one great blooming, buzzing confusion". So the author is claiming that in Lacan, there is no innate minimal self, as it was defined above by Gallagher (2000), before the mirror stage.

Lacan would have agreed with several current authors for whom consciousness and the self start with the body, but his position on this question is different. Gallagher and Meltzoff (1996) studied the question of the body scheme and body image, and concluded that these two concepts are confused by the classic authors. Even the great Merleau-Ponty (1964) did not make a clear distinction on the subject, despite the fact that there is some awareness about it. According to these authors:

We can characterize the body image as inclosing perceptions, mental representations, beliefs, and attitudes, where the intentional object of such perceptions, beliefs, etc. (that they are directed towards or that they are about) is one's own body. The body schema in contrast, involves certain motor capacities, abilities, and habits that enable movement and the maintenance of posture. It continues to operate, and in many cases operates best, when the intentional object of perception is something other than one's own body. (Gallagher & Meltzoff, 1996)

The body schema has more to do with the know-how while the body image is the consciousness of the body and the intentionality directed towards the body. According to Gallagher and Meltzoff (1996), both the body schema and the body image are innate. They contested the idea that it is impossible due to the incomplete myelination, which would not allow motor functions and perception to connect. On the contrary, as we shall see further ahead, they questioned the idea that those two systems are different and it would be necessary to have a translation between them—a translation that the child's nervous system would not be able to achieve

before six months of age. Everything would be different, however, instead of a translation mechanism, it can be thought about a “supramodal perceptual mechanism”, that is, a way to process equivalent information for vision and body movements. In that case, nothing impedes the child from possessing mechanisms at birth that are capable of supporting either the body schema or the body image. The capacity to understand the other, as a different body, but at the same time, being capable of having similar sensations is related to the body schema and the body image. If the child already possesses them at birth, then it would be possible to sustain the idea that the child is already innately equipped to make a minimal differentiation from the other. What the child understands is mainly the action of the other that he can reproduce itself. If we admit the existence of a supramodal mechanism, there would be no difficulty in understanding the transformation of that perception of the other's action into one's own action.

What would Lacan thought about Minimal Self?

These ideas deviate from Lacan's perspective. As we have seen, he did not take into account that the child may possess an innate body image. On the contrary, its formation is based on the perception of the other. Furthermore, he sustained that it is the mental image that is going to organize the body schema, since it does not exist yet or if it exists, it is still quite distorted. As we have seen, he referred to the stage prior to the mirror stage as that of body fragmentation. He, therefore, included himself in those who think that there is a neurophysiological prematurity in the human baby. In all actuality, Lacan was completely opposed to the idea that the discovery of the other is based on proprioception, that is, the body image (consciousness of the body) exists first and through this image that one can know “other minds”. This idea has served to go beyond what Husserl (Merleau-Ponty, 1964) defended which knowledge the other was obtained through inference (Merleau-Ponty, 1964). The existence of a body image would allow us to go beyond that: There is no inference, there is an experience of the self through the experience of the other. This idea has been supported by findings in neuroscience concerning mirror neurons that would be innate. In this particular aspect, modern authors have extended Merleau-Ponty's ideas (not those of Lacan) in which the perception of the other is an exteriorization and serves as a model for the body schema to form itself from the model of the other.

According to Lacan, the child is fascinated with others, which being an other is also himself. During this period, the child who attacks a peer affirms being attacked by him. It is from this period that the child competes with the other, the image of himself: “One of us must disappear”.

This moment in which the mirror stage comes to an end inaugurates, by the identification with the imago of the counterpart and the drama of primordial jealousy (so well brought out by the School of Charlotte Bühler in the phenomenon of infantile *transitivism*), the dialectic that will henceforth link the *I* to socially elaborated situations. (Lacan, 1949/1977)

The beginning of the sense of self in Lacan starts with the recognition of the other. It is not present, therefore, from the moment of birth, because it is shaped by the perception of the other and will never stop being determined by the presence of the other. There is no such thing as an isolated, pure self even if minimal. The self is always the self through the other.

Merleau-Ponty (1964), within Sartre's (1934/1957) philosophical thought, also stated that the presence of the other's look on oneself causes apprehension (Rochat & Zahavi, 2010). That is why the mirror is not only a purely cognitive experience and the human being has felt a certain mystery in mirrors, accompanied by a

certain dosage of anguish. The other invades the world of the I/self and the I/self starts existing for the other and not only for himself. However, this concept is not as radical as Lacan's, because it appears to conceive the existence of the self as logically and empirically independent from the other. The other disturbs the person but the existence of a consciousness of himself is independent from its presence. It enters the world of the I/self, but the I/self exists first. On the contrary, Lacan considered that what comes in the first place is not the self, but the other through which the child gains consciousness of himself.

Thus, Lacan's theory of the self and the other does not keep with current predominant theories in several aspects. Can we then affirm that this is a question of fashion or the *Zeitgeist*? That is not how those proponents present the new conceptions of self. Psychologists sustained that it was the data from experiments and observations that led to their conclusions. However, not all psychologists believed that the data enable us to interpret that the sense of self is inscribed in the neurons. First and foremost, let us look at the evidence presented.

The study of the self that interests us here implies knowing the first person data. Parents along with other people treat children as if they were endowed with a sense of themselves and the other, and that could be important for the creation of those exact feelings. However, what is the child's viewpoint of himself in the first person? To what extent is the child's self—a projection of his own self? In other words, is it a projection necessary for the child's development, which does not correspond to the child's own internal experience? Surely we can observe children's movements, their smiles and cries, etc., some of which seem to imitate those of adults. However, the so-called traditional psychologists did not consider this to be enough to attribute a self to children before the age of six months. In their opinions, this is a series of exploratory reactions that will be reinforced by their parents and the environment. But, this does not imply any sense of self, not even the minimal self that this study has been referring to.

Experimental Evidence

Lacan's neurobiological evidence mainly comes from the psychology of form (*Gestaltpsychologie*)³ and neurophysiology. The latter would confirm his hypothesis on the human being's prematurity through the previously referred thesis of insufficient myelinization. This thesis is refuted by Gallagher and Meltzoff (1996) who believed that it does not prevent the existence of a minimal self in newborns.

As for the psychology of form (*Gestaltpsychologie*), Lacan retracted from the theory that animals are genetically predisposed to recognize and attracted to animals of the same species. It should be noted that Lacan believed that there is a discontinuity between human beings and animals (Chieza, 2007), however, he believed that the possession of certain forms is common to them. The unconscious image that permits recognition of an other of the same species is prior to self-recognition. It is the image that leads to the self and not the self that possesses images. The image allows us to anticipate unification in the other which is not yet possessed in the self.

Besides this evidence, Lacan still trusted the patients' verbal descriptions. He thus gave the patients' language with the capacity to retrospectively reconstruct their trajectory. That is why he trusted the fragmented

³ That a Gestalt should be capable of formative effects in the organism is attested by a piece of biological experimentation that is itself so alien to the idea of psychical causality that it cannot bring itself to formulate its results in these terms. It nevertheless recognizes that it is a necessary condition for the maturation of the gonad of the female pigeon that it should see another member of its species, of either sex; so sufficient in itself is this condition that the desired effect may be obtained merely by placing the individual within reach of the field of reflection of a mirror (Lacan, 1949/1977).

descriptions that we referred to because they correspond to something experienced during the mirror phase (not before). This is valid from the therapeutic point of view because what matters are the representations of the subject. However, if we want to know the mental state of the newborn, these memories become debatable evidence because they can be imaginarily reconstructed.

Lacan's evidence can reinforce his ideas, but it is not accepted today as being scientifically irrefutable. The data that have been obtained directly through the observation of newborns give much more confidence to current researchers who seem to be on the right track. By relying upon Welsh (2006), the strongest evidence that there is a self in the initial stages of life is called "infant imitation". The imitation of another person's movements, especially the non-visible movements of the body, presupposes a minimal recognition that the other is an other and that the person is going to imitate him. In order to have such ability, the child needs to possess a previously defined body schema as well as a body image. If the self only begins to form its rudiments around six months, it can be concluded that the child is incapable of imitating before that age. We could admit from a traditional psychological point of view that the newborn might have a body schema. However, possession of the mental image (according to the current definition) is not accepted in any shape or form by those psychologists. The child should be capable of translating visual stimuli into motion stimuli in order to imitate. This includes the parts of his body that are not visible. However, this seems impossible, as previously stated, given the insufficient myelination. Nevertheless, if we verify the hypotheses on trans-modal mechanisms and the mirror neurons, it would be theoretically explainable that there could be a true imitation and a subsequent sense of self and the other in the initial stages of human life.

It is, however, undisputed that it can be observed that the child does movements that seem to copy that of adults. According to traditional psychologists, these movements are not imitation but exploratory reactions to the environment, some of which are reinforced by adults. It is therefore about behavioral learning and does not presuppose any consciousness of the self or any intention of imitation that is comparable to that of the adult. That is, there is a certain agreement in relation to the facts that are observed but not to their interpretation.

Meltzoff (Gallagher, 2006) contested these traditional opinions by carrying out several experiments in which, according to his interpretation, he proved that certain movements are imitated, such as opening the mouth, rotating the head, and sticking the tongue out. He sustained to prove not only that there is imitation in the direct presence of the model, but also that it can be deferred thus proving the participation of memory. With this, Meltzoff believed that the possibility of it having to do with reflex had been eliminated. These are always specific (for example, sticking the tongue out). If it is proven that imitation is a general mechanism, then it would have been shown that it cannot be a reflex.

Despite the fact that the researchers were convinced that there are no shortcomings in their demonstrations, several psychologists whose theories are summarized in Welsh's (2006) article sustained the opposite by affirming that there is no evidence and concluded that the self is innate. Welsh refuted, based on experiences of the researchers, a strong claim and a weak claim. The strong claim affirms that there is imitation in the early stages of life (which proves there is a minimal self). The weak claim holds that although there is not real imitation in babies, there is proto-imitation. Because Welsh's (2006) both claims are false. The author is not going to present her full argumentation here, as the author said, based on psychological experiences. The author will mention only a few conclusions of experiences here. One is that several researchers have presented researches that they can verify that imitation only occurs in the case of tongue protrusion, but not head rotation or the opening of the mouth. Furthermore, tongue protrusion occurs with the same frequency in other situations

other than imitation of the adult. It has also been verified that this disappears as the child grows, leaving space for other exploratory behavior. All of these suggest that tongue protrusion is only a specific reflex that may eventually be reinforced by adults. It is not imitative behavior.

Alternative explanations are suggested for what is called "imitation" in newborns. These explanations are not to be accepted, because a given behavior that is intelligent has to be the behavior of a self. We can designate the behavior of bees as being highly intelligent, but we are not willing to accept that they have a self. The proponents of those alternative explanations sustain that the behavior designated as imitative in infants is actually self-regulatory mechanisms that are socially reinforced and lead to a self-consciousness. Imitation is a type of behavior that is inscribed in an unconscious social biofeedback. First, child's self-regulates are assigned to himself and only then can he begin to manifest self-consciousness and a sense of the other.

What about the weak claim is: Can we then consider that what exists is not imitation in the full sense of what older children have but merely a form of proto-imitation? In other words, can we defend a weaker thesis which states that even though we are dealing with imitative behavior, it is not yet completely imitative as in the case of older children? Welsh (2006) argued that this is not the case and presented several studies that showed that if the self is prior to social interaction, then it will be expected that with some social rudiments the child will develop a well-organized sense of self, including time dimension (We are speaking about the narrative self). However, those studies showed how tenuous and fragile the sense of self is, even at the age of three. Before this age, children do not have, for example, a strong sense that the events that they experienced in the past were actually lived by themselves. Although this is not a conclusive proof, if it is true that the self has such a slow evolution which reinforces the idea that does arise later and that the socio-cultural and linguistic factors should play a significant role.

The author only intends to make philosophical psychology and that is the reason why the author will not get into the analysis of experiments, therefore trusting, just as Welsh, that they were carried out successfully according to the standards of experimental psychology. These critical experiments on the innateness of the self, valorizing social, cultural, and linguistic aspects in detriment of the clearly biological ones, are more in tune with Lacan's theory of self, at least in the author's interpretation. As we have seen, for Lacan, the period that precedes the mirror stage is lived in a state of unconsciousness⁴. Self-consciousness is only acquired through the perception of the image of the other. The image that gives origin to the self remains unconscious even if it exists cognitively.

Lacan subsequently centered his theory on the symbolic dimension (language) in which the mirror stage would be included. By focusing only on this initial period (1932-1953), despite the importance given to the other, the author believes that Lacan causally attributed the formation of self to biology. Effectively, the initial recognition of the other that the child will come to sense as being himself, as his unified future body, occurs because of the unconscious cognitive images that are inscribed in his nervous system. The human being is an animal with a disordered imagination but possesses forms in the sense that Gestalt psychology has defined them. These forms have led us to unconsciously search for contact with the other of the same species, with the mother's look being particularly important, she is the one who confirms the mirror image for the child. Thus, although the child is not born with self-consciousness, the possibility to develop one is inscribed in its biology. Self-consciousness is not purely learned through an external reinforcement, because it is in a certain sense

⁴ In the sense that consciousness is self-consciousness (For other conceptions, see Block, 1995).

already inscribed in biology. What can be said is that the presence of the other is always implicit⁵.

Lacan did not attempt to explain the “why” for the formation of self-consciousness. Nor did he explain the existence of what we today call phenomenal consciousness⁶. The explanation for “the why” of the existence of consciousness has become the biggest problem in the contemporary philosophy of mind. The author believes that Lacan would have considered it as a problem that should be abandoned and that we should only explain “how” self-consciousness arises in ontogenesis.

In his recent book *Self Comes to Mind*, the neuroscientist Damasio (2010) sustained that mind is constituted by mental images which in turn corresponds to neural patterns. These images can be produced and manipulated by the brain in the absence of consciousness. In fact, this is what would be the case in evolution. Mind appears first and it only becomes conscious when the self is formed, also by the brain. What makes the conscious mind is the presence of a self, an owner, and a protagonist. We can see some parallels between this theory and Lacan's⁷. At the level of ontogenesis, there is also a period in life when there is no self-consciousness and self, only mental images. Of course, we cannot imagine this period, because we have already had consciousness and self. But we need not imagine that we are like machines in the early stages of life.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the author affirms that Lacan's theory on the genesis of the self and the mirror stage cannot be dismissed as false. It is true that the current trend is to consider the sense of self as arising interoceptively, being inscribed in neurology. Much evidence has been gathered to demonstrate this theory. Nonetheless, there is a lot of evidence that seems to indicate that the conclusions on the existence of any sense of self at birth are precipitated and forced. Lacan's theory from this period seems to the author to be entirely coherent and applicable in the analysis of the phenomenon of self-consciousness. Data from neuroscience would, in the meantime, be very useful in helping us decide on these questions and this science, along with the lines of what Lamme (2006) has done, with an attempt to define conscious mental states only with neurological data. In that case, we could know whether children's neural states prior to the mirror stage are compatible or not with a minimal sense of self and the other.

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⁵ This is not contradictory to the idea that Lacan did not believe that self-consciousness were innate.

⁶ Block distinguished “phenomenal consciousness” from “self-consciousness”. The author will not discuss it here, but the author thinks that without the sense of self we should not speak in terms of “consciousness” but only in “unconscious mind”.

⁷ The author is not saying the *imagos* in Lacan are exactly the same as the images in Damasio. The author is just showing there is a parallel between two theories that conceive a mind without subjectivity.

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