Searle, Derrida and the Ends of Phenomenology

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1.   Searle vs. the rest of the world

In marked contrast to his anglophone peers, Searle has written extensively, and invariably critically, about deconstructionism, postmodernism and other parts of what is sometimes called (although not by Searle) "Continental Philosophy"[1]or CP. Anglophone, analytic philosophers have written very little, for or against, about what has been said within the different traditions of CP. Richard Rorty's enthusiastic embrace of CP and Searle's withering dismissals are perhaps the two best known results of contact between these traditions and analytic philosophy.[2] This is a striking fact. In many disciplines there has been a critical

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[1]   John Searle, "Reiterating the Differences: A Reply to Derrida", (*Glyph*, I, 1977), pp.172-208. This is a reply to Jacques Derrida, "Signature Event Context", (*Glyph*, I), pp. 172-197; Derrida replies to Searle's reply in "Limited Inc" (*Glyph*, 2), pp. 162-254. See also, John Searle, "The World Turned Upside Down", in Gary B. Madison, *Working through Derrida* (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1993), pp. 170-188; "Reply to Mackey" (*ibid.*) pp. 184-188; "Rationality and Realism, What is at Stake ?", (*Daedalus*, 1993), pp. 55-83; "Literary Theory and its Discontents", (*New Literary History*, 25), pp. 637-667; and "Postmodernism and Truth", (*TWP BE* (*a journal of ideas*)), 13, 1998, 85-87.

[2]   Susan Haack's *Manifesto of a Passionate Moderate* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998) concentrates more on what I take to be the distant effects of CP than on CP itself. Analytic philosophers outside the anglophone world have often criticised parts of CP with great and effective vigour. See, for example, Hans Albert, *Transzendentale Träumereien*, (Hamburg: Hoffmann & Campe, 1975); Jonathan Barnes, "Heidegger spéléologue", (*Revue de Métaphysique et Morale*, 95, 1990) pp. 173-195; Jacques Bouveresse, *Le philosophe chez les autophages*, (Paris: Minuit, 1984), *Rationalité et Cynisme*, (Paris: Minuit, 1984); Pascal Engel, *La Dispute. Une Introduction a la philosophie analytique*, (Paris: Minuit, 1997). Needless to say, such criticisms are rarely translated into English. An exception: Jacques Bouveresse, "Why I am so very unFrench", in Alan Montefiore (ed.), *Philosophy in France Today*, (Cambridge University Press, 1982), pp. 9-33. See also

reaction to the invasion of the humanities by what are after all philosophical claims. When Ranke's view that history could and should describe "what was really the case" was turned on its head, a minority of historians were not slow to react[3]. Similarly, when literary critics began to theorise away claims such as Arnold's - the aim of criticism is "to see the object as in itself it really is", some of their fellow critics reacted[4]. But philosophers did not follow suit.

The relations between Searle, Derrida, CP and phenomenology are complex. The writings of Derrida, the most influential figure within CP, are inseparably bound up with phenomenology and with the transformation of phenomenology effected by Heidegger. Indeed a large part of CP grew out of phenomenology. It has often been claimed that Searle's own contributions to the philosophy of mind advance claims already put forward by the phenomenologists, and Searle himself has given his own account of phenomenology, in particular of the role of idealism in phenomenology. In what follows I argue that the preoccupations of early phenomenology are often those of later analytic philosophers - a point that remains invisible so long as phenomenology is looked at from the point of view of what phenomenology became - but that Searle's philosophy of mind differs on most central points from that given by Husserl. On the other hand, Searle's criticisms of Derrida and of the philosophical parts of postmodernism do indeed have much in common with the criticisms put forward by the early phenomenologists and by Husserl himself of what they saw as phenomenology's gradual transformation and degeneration and of related irrationalisms. A grasp of these similarities will suggest the beginnings of an answer to the question why Searle's anti-Derridas and anti-postmodernisms are such splendidly isolated examples of the genre.

2.   What was phenomenology ?

Continental Philosophy Analysed, a special number of *Topoi*, (ed. Kevin Mulligan, 1991); *Philosophy and the Analytic-Continental Divide*, a special number of *Stanford French Review*, 17.2-3, (ed. Pascal Engel, 1993); *European Philosophy and the American Academy*, (ed. Barry Smith, 1994, *The Monist Library of Philosophy*, La Salle, Illinois: The Hegeler Institute).

[3]   Cf. Keith Windschuttle, *The Killing of History. How Literary Critics and Social Scientists are Murdering our Past*, (New York: The Free Press), 1996
[4]   Cf. Brian Vickers, *Appropriating Shakespeare. Contemporary Critical Quarrels*, (New Haven & London: Yale University Press), 1993.

Phenomenology in the narrow sense begins in 1900 with the publication of the first volume of Husserl's *Logical Investigations*[5] and of Pfänder's *Phenomenology of Willing*. The theoretical framework outlined by Husserl was accepted by a large number of enthusiastic, young philosophers in Munich. Roughly, the framework runs as follows. A properly theoretical philosophy of logic and of objects in general must begin within a general account of essences or types and of their possible instantiations. It must proceed from there to give specific accounts of the essences of meanings, propositions, judgings, reasoning and of various types of object - ideal objects, tropes, substances, parts and quantities. Formal logic and formal ontology and the philosophies thereof are to be distinguished from metaphysics (and thus for example from all realist or idealist claims about the existence of a mind-independent spatio-temporal world, and indeed from all claims about matters of fact). Claims about what does or does not belong to the essence of a proposition or some other whole provide the ground for, but are not identical with, modal claims. (For example, an emotion essentially has a representational base and so has one necessarily; a truth-bearer essentially contains a predicate and so necessarily). Clarification of what does or does not belong to the essence of this or that involves providing "logical analyses", "analyses of meaning", truths both analytic and synthetic a priori. Such clarification also involves developing central parts of a theory of knowledge and of a descriptive psychology or philosophy of mind. Husserl was, however, often sceptical about analysis where this means providing definitions, the necessary and sufficient conditions of an analysandum. His scepticism about analysis so conceived seems to have been a reaction against the analyses of Brentano and, especially, of Bolzano - perhaps the author of more biconditional decompositions than Frege, Russell, Moore and Wittgenstein together. Hence Husserl's frequent warnings to the effect that equivalences are not propositional identities. In what often seems to be his preferred sense of the word, to analyse is to describe what provides the ground for a proposition or other structure.

Many of the philosophers who adopted Husserl's framework applied it in the philosophies of mind, language and society to problems which belong neither to the philosophy of logic nor to formal ontology - the nature of perception, emotions, sentiments, the will, collective intentionality and communication.

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[5]   *Logische Untersuchungen*, (The Hague: Nijhoff, Husserliana XVIII, XIX/1, XIX/2, 1975-1984); trans. by J. Findlay as *Logical Investigations*, (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 2 volumes, 1970).

Husserl makes almost no metaphysical claims in the *Investigations*. But it seemed obvious to his earliest pupils that he was committed to realism about the external world, not least because of his extended defence of a sophisticated, naive realist account of visual perception. These pupils made up the schools of realist phenomenology of Munich - where Pfänder taught - and of Göttingen - where Husserl taught. Realism and anti-realism can, of course, be understood as formal claims, rather than as metaphysical theses in the sense already mentioned. Husserl's position in 1901 was that propositions dealing with ideal objects cannot simply be assumed to obey the law of excluded middle, where this law is understood as an ontological thesis (for every object and for every property, either the object has the property or it does not). This law, he says, holds only for temporal objects.

In a wider sense, phenomenology, or "descriptive psychology", comprehends the philosophies of all the pupils of the Austrian philosopher Franz Brentano - Meinong, Marty, Ehrenfels, Stumpf and Twardowski as well as Husserl.

Husserl inherited from Brentano a very strong version of the view that philosophy can and should be a theoretical science. Philosophy so conceived is seen as being perpetually threatened by practical motives and by the doctrine that philosophy is or should be a primarily practical discipline. The ideal of theoretical philosophy is regularly overthrown and as a consequence philosophy sinks into an abyss of obscurantism and nonsense[6].

The early realist phenomenologists and other heirs of Brentano were thus more than a little disturbed by a double shock which Husserl administered in 1913 (at the latest). First, in his *Ideas* of that year Husserl announced his conversion to a form of idealism, a metaphysical, spiritualist or dualistic idealism (sometimes described as a form of transcendental idealism). Secondly, it became apparent that Husserl's ability to practice theoretical philosophy was no longer what it had been. The extended analyses, descriptions and arguments of the young Austrian philosopher had given way to programmatic pronouncements and rhetoric of the sorts associated with the different neo-Kantian schools.

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[6]   Cf. Balázs Mezei and Barry Smith, *The Four Phases of Philosophy*, (1998, Amsterdam : Rodopi).

Critical reactions by admirers of the *Investigations* to Husserl's change of direction marked the beginning of a series of critical reactions to the way phenomenology as a whole was developing[7]. By 1927 (at the latest) it seemed that something had gone very wrong. What exactly ? First, the turn to idealism in one form or another was closely bound up with the increasing respectability of the philosophies of German Idealism. Secondly, the irrationalisms of Nietzsche, Dilthey and of Bergson had come to be seen by many as providing a more than acceptable alternative to the bloodless philosophies of mind and of logic of Brentano and his immediate heirs. The rest is history, or rather contemporary philosophy - Heidegger, Sartre, Merleau-Ponty, Derrida, Lyotard and Foucault. The rearguard action by the philosophers who were formed in the traditions of realist phenomenology and still endorsed a full-blooded version of philosophy as a theoretical enterprise (Moritz Geiger, Max Scheler, Nicolai Hartmann, Edith Stein, Ortega y Gasset and Roman Ingarden, all of whom drew on the work of Adolf Reinach, who died in the Great War), in particular the still unsurpassed defences of realism by Hartmann and Ingarden, did not succeed in making themselves heard above the din of two world wars. As Brentano had foreseen, the triumph of Dilthey and the obsession with the meaning of "life as a whole" would lead to a new dark age, a prediction Brentanians such as Oskar Kraus and Paul Linke, found to have become all too horrifyingly true[8].

3.   Phenomenology and Oxford philosophy - a lost cause ?

This sketch of the death of phenomenology proper is an unfamiliar one, at least for those accustomed to seeing the early Husserl merely as a precursor of, or Aunt Sally for, the later Husserl, Heidegger, Sartre or Derrida, a habit which blinds many commentators to the role of realist, theoretical philosophy in early phenomenology and a fortiorissimo to the latter's Austrian, anti-Kantian context. Before we turn to the relation between Searle and

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[7]   Perhaps the best of the many criticisms of Husserl's idealism by early phenomenologists is Theodor Celms' 1928 monograph, *Der phänomenologische Idealismus Husserls*, (reprinted in *Der phänomenologische Idealismus Husserls und andere Schriften 1928-1943*, ed. J. Rozenvalds, Frankfurt: Peter Lang). The best criticism of both idealist phenomenology and of Husserl's new way of doing phenomenology is by the great psychologist, Carl Stumpf (*Erkenntnislehre*, 2 vols. Leipzig: Barth, 1939, I 188-206), one of Brentano's earliest pupils and the man to whom Husserl had dedicated his *Investigations*. "Pure phenomenology", Stumpf says, is a "phantom, a contradiction in itself". Husserl's *Ideas* is "lacking in examples and the few examples provided are simply misleading" - a particularly cruel criticism since, at the beginning of his career, Husserl had dismissed a book by the influential neo-Kantian, Rickert, in similar terms.
[8]   In unpublished work ("Phenomenology and Idealism", forthcoming), Searle has argued that phenomenology is characterised by idealism and a failure to appreciate the role of logical analysis. If I am right, this is not true of early phenomenology, a current Searle does not mention.

phenomenology it will be useful to reinforce the point of the sketch by considering the immediate context of Searle's work: Oxford philosophy.

Searle is, as he likes to put it, an "Oxford chap". Now some of the best known philosophical problems, solutions and theses associated with Oxford philosophy are to be found in realist phenomenology and in other parts of the legacy of Brentano. And in each case the problems, solutions, theses and distinctions have some claim to be considered novel. This claim is easily documented across most areas of philosophy - the philosophy of language, of mind, epistemology, ethics, logic and metaphysics.

Grice's influential analysis of meaning in terms of what a speaker means or intends by doing something on a particular occasion extends a related analysis given by Brentano's pupil, Marty, in 1908. Austin's description of performatives and of such linguistic acts as promising is in many ways less thorough than Reinach's 1913 anatomy of what he calls "social acts" and of promising in particular. Ryle, (the author of eight pieces on the philosophers he called the "scions of Brentano" and very much at home on the Bolzano-Brentano-Husserl-Meinong railway line), was, like Husserl and Hartmann, a diagnostician of category mistakes and, like Hartmann, an adept of dilemmas. Two of his most influential positive theses concern the imagination and attention. In a number of places he defends an account of imagination in terms of make-believe and pretence. The forerunners of Ryle's account are the analyses of suppositions, make-believe seeing and other "non-positing acts" given by Husserl and Meinong at the beginning of the twentieth century. And, although Husserl and Ryle have very different views about the nature of mental phenomena, each defends a version of the "adverbial" theory of attention against theories of attention popular in the nineteenth century. The idea set out by Gareth Evans that visual perception is direct and yet involves non-conceptual content had already been extensively explored by Husserl before the first World War and then by many of his pupils.

Kneale defended the view that logical consequence is a strongly modal relation, Husserl that it is an essential and so a modal relation (that it is essentially necessary). Kit Fine, more recently, has developed a theory of the relation between essence and modality which is, as he points out, in central respects, that of Husserl. More recently still, Williamson has defended the view that knowledge is not built up out of belief. That neither cognition nor

knowledge are built up out of belief, conviction or "mere" judgement was also the view of Husserl, Reinach and Hartmann.

Bernard Williams' extended rejection of the claims of Kantianism and utilitarianism, like Scheler's critique of these, is rooted in an ethical psychology - for example, of shame, the subject of monographs by both Scheler and Williams. Scheler's *Ethics* is built around a detailed account of the moral sentiments and of the distinction between norms (universal ought-to-do's) and values (universal and individual) and the claim that values provide the ground for norms. "It is absurd", writes Scheler, "to make the medication of obligations and prohibitions our normal moral nourishment". Urmson's account of supererogation is anticipated by what Meinong and his pupils had to say on the subject.

Dummett's revision of Frege's account of thoughts, which ties them to utterances and utterance-types, is anticipated by Husserl's revision of his own earlier account of ideal thoughts during the first decade of the twentieth century. According to the revised view, subsequently developed by many of Husserl's heirs, thoughts are "bound" idealities, unlike such pure idealities as numbers. They are bound to the earth and linguistic and cognitive activity on earth (or, Husserl adds, on Mars).

I adduce this baker's dozen of examples - a list which it would be easy to extend - merely in order to make plausible the claim that there was considerable overlap between the concerns of Oxford philosophy and those of Brentano's heirs. It is essential to the plausibility of the claim that in the overlaps mentioned we do not find, on the Austro-German side, mere aperçus but, rather, extended analyses and arguments. And that, by contrast, the thirteen points mentioned do not loom large in the traditions of either Kantianism or of naturalistic materialism which formed the main rivals to early phenomenology. There is a widespread perception that the Oxonian contributions listed were novel contributions to philosophy; similarly the phenomenologists often claimed that in their most important contributions to philosophy they had seen what had invariably been overlooked. As far as I can see, there is a lot to be said in favour of the latter view, and in favour of the view that twentieth century Oxonian and Austro-German philosophy was both original and valuable.

But, of course, if Gilbert Ryle's proclamation that phenomenology was, from its birth, a bore, were correct, these views would have to be revised. Whether or not the spirit of early, realist phenomenology went to Oxford, to die or to live, it was certainly considered there to be one of the causes for which Oxford is famous. According to the ever quotable Ryle, the presuppositions of the phenomenologists made phenomenology a lost cause from the start (Oxford's "morgue anglaise"?)[9]. But, I suggest, the problems and solutions discovered by the heirs of Brentano and Bolzano in fact enjoyed and deserved a life of their own[10].

However, none of these thirteen innovations of the early phenomenologists was to be pursued, developed, criticised - if criticism presupposes comprehension - or even understood by the "thinkers" who took on the mantle of phenomenology in the eyes of the world.

4.   Phenomenology and Searle

It is often suggested that Searle's analysis of intentionality was anticipated by Husserl's *Logical Investigations*. I have lost count of the number of times I have been informed with a knowing shrug - in German, Italian and Californian - that what Searle says is 'all in Husserl`.

This is not the case. As Searle once said, on being introduced to a friend of mine, who (modestly, under-) described himself as a phenomenologist, "I am an analytic philosopher. I think for myself". And Searle's conclusions are not Husserl's. In fact, just as many analytic philosophers are proud of their ignorance of the history of philosophy, including that of analytic philosophy, so, too, in my experience, phenomenologists are often ignorant of the history of phenomenology. And the former at least have the excuse that they do philosophy.

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[9]   The story sketched here of the overlap between Oxford and Austro-German philosophies has a counterpart - the story of the quite different overlap between Cambridge and Austro-German philosophies, a story Ryle occasionally hints at.

[10]   Certain qualifications are, as always, in order. Thus Marty's account of utterer's meaning is clearly anticipated by the grandfather of Austrian philosophy, Bolzano, and Reinach's account of social acts is anticipated by Reid. And what I have called "overlapping concerns" between phenomenology and Oxford philosophy coexist with enormous differences - the phenomenologists typically assume they are describing essences they have "seen" and, like other heirs of Brentano, that mental states and acts have a structure all their own. The worlds of the phenomenologists and of Oxford philosophers are very different. But philosophical presuppositions are one thing and philosophical discoveries and work a quite different thing.

Searle's project of analysing and describing the structure of mind and intentionality in a way which does not lose sight of the first-person perspective is, of course, also a Husserlian project. Searle's descriptivist élan, which he shares with Wittgenstein and Austin, as well as with Brian O'Shaughnessy, is one of the most important similarities between his philosophy of mind and those of the Brentanian tradition. More particularly, the general project of analysing the contents and satisfaction-conditions of different attitudes is common to both Searle and Husserl. And, like Husserl, Searle distinguishes between the mode (which Husserl also calls the "quality" of an "act") and the content of psychological states and events.

But on almost every specific issue Searle's conclusions are very different from those of the early Husserl and his followers. First, and perhaps most importantly, Husserl, unlike Searle in *Intentionality*, allows for intentional, non-propositional attitudes or acts, as well as intentional, propositional attitudes or acts. (Searle, rightly I think, does not use the word 'act' the way the phenomenologists use '*Akt*', namely to refer to mental (psychological or 'spiritual') states or events.) According to Husserl, the most basic types of seeing, "simple", "direct" seeing, and of memory, as well as pleasure or admiration based on simple seeing, and even the act of referring within the context of a propositional attitude, all have non-propositional contents. And within the class of non-propositional contents Husserl distinguishes further between conceptual and non-conceptual contents.

Husserl was the first philosopher to defend the view that judging and belief, for example, represent states of affairs (*Sachverhalte*), which obtain or do not obtain, and which are wholly distinct from the propositional contents representing them. But he thought that an account of the "relations" of intentionality of such contents, of what is, for example, the case when a judgement corresponds to an obtaining state of affairs, and an account of the degrees of satisfaction, fulfilment or verification of such contents, had to be complemented by, indeed built on, an account of the way non-propositional contents latch on to objects and of the degrees of fulfilment of such contents. (Notice that what Husserl calls "satisfaction" or "fulfilment", (*Erfüllung*), is not what Searle calls "satisfaction". The latter corresponds rather to what Husserl discusses under the heading of "intentionality". Husserl's analysis of what he calls "satisfaction" is, rather, an account of verification and related phenomena.)

Secondly, in his accounts of seeing, seeing that, and of desire or will Husserl nearly always rejects attempts to put into the content of such an attitude any reference to a causal relation between a worldly item and the attitude. But the main claim in Searle's analyses of perception and of intention in chapters 2-4 of *Intentionality* is that seeing and intending have causally self-referential conditions of satisfaction. Husserl was undoubtedly familiar with Brentano's frequent resort to the category of such reflexive contents and with Bolzano's resort to such contents in his analysis of perception. But he was not convinced. Thus in his early philosophy Brentano specifies the content of intentional states of willing in terms of causal relations involving these states:

> Every volition or striving in the strict sense refers to an action. It is not simply a desire for something to happen but a desire for something to happen as a result of the desire itself.[11]

But this is not how Husserl understands the propositional content of desirings and willings nor seeing, simple or propositional, in the *Investigations*[12].

A third major difference concerns the nature of singular reference. On Husserl's view, producers and consumers of proper names typically grasp a sense expressed by the name. But, unlike Searle (and Frege), Husserl thinks that sense of this sort is, in the most basic cases, simple and involves no attribution or description but is based on non-conceptual contents[13].

Searle has himself claimed in discussion that his view about the nature of mind differs from that given by Husserl since his account is naturalistic.[14] In fact, although Husserl was to accuse the author of the first edition of the *Logical Investigations* of naturalism, the author of that text, in accordance with his metaphysical neutrality there, "leaves it open whether and how physical and psychic things ... are to be distinguished".[15]

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[11]   Franz Brentano, *Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint*, (Routledge, 1995), p. 257.
[12]   For one concession to theories like that of Brentano, see *Logical Investigations*, V §15 (a) and *Logische Untersuchungen* II 2, p. 885 (material not included in English translation). In later work Husserl sometimes accepts the view that at the very primitive level of motivated associations, in both perception and desire, causality is represented in non-propositional contents.
[13]   See, for example, *Logical Investigations*, IV §§3-4, VI §5.
[14]   Cf "biological naturalism", in Searle's *Intentionality,* p. 264.
[15]   *Logical Investigations*, V §4 (A).

Although, as we have seen, the early Husserl and Searle differ on each of what they doubtless took or take to be three of the most important questions within the descriptive parts of the philosophies of mind and language - Is intentionality always propositional? Do the contents of willing and perception contain a causal specification? Is the sense of a proper name descriptive? - Husserl's heirs did occasionally arrive at novel positions first set out with the required precision by Searle. This is true of parts of Searle's accounts of social entities in terms of collective intentionality and of the Background.

Thus Scheler, Walther, Hartmann, Ortega, Ingarden and Bühler argued that social and cultural entities, such as voting, money, tools, institutions and word-meanings are not merely "bound idealities", but are entities which depend on collective intentionality, on we-attitudes, both in order to come into being and for their continued existence.

Searle notes that one of the main forerunners of his account of the Background is Wittgenstein's *On Certainty*.[16] The analysis of primitive, ungrounded certainty was developed by many phenomenologists, in particular by Ortega in the 1930's. Thus Ortega argues that a theory of critical or founded beliefs must be built on an account of the primitive, unfounded beliefs we "count on", sometimes collectively and sometimes individually.

5.   Searle vs Derrida. The end of phenomenology and its beginning.

For many of us, Searle's patient and sometimes impatient criticisms of Derrida's deconstructions of Austin's account of speech acts and other bits and pieces of contemporary philosophy of language, invariably hit all the nails on their heads. But this impression is not, apparently, shared within the strongholds of postmodernism, "Theory" and CP. In view of the relative absence of attempts to defend Derrida, it is perhaps advisable to try to come to grips with Derrida in a way which does not retread ground covered by Searle. Clearly, Derrida and Searle have very different conceptions of what arguments in philosophy are and can do. Derrida vaunts his "rigorous arguments". Searle is apparently blind to this aspect of deconstructionism. And even Rorty writes that "Searle is ... right in saying that a lot of Derrida's arguments ... are just awful".[17]

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[16]   "Literary Theory and its Discontents", p. 666, note 6.
[17]   Richard Rorty, "Essays on Heidegger and others", (*Philosophical Papers II*, Cambridge : Cambridge, University Press, 1991), pp. 94-95.

Searle thinks that in interpretative disciplines understanding requires that we repeat in the "explanation of a phenomenon the very same intentional content that functions causally in producing the phenomenon to be explained".[18] Can we repeat the very same intentional content which produces some of the typical "effects" of a Derridean text ? In order to try to do so, in order to try to understand the end of phenomenology in Derrida's writings, we must go back to an idea to be found at the beginning of phenomenology, an idea which seems to have exercised a great attraction on Derrida.

One of Derrida's invariable starting points is the observation that many of the conceptual oppositions central to philosophy are or are correlated with axiological differences. Not only are the first terms of, for example, life vs. death, expression vs. indication, literal vs. metaphorical, grammaticality vs. agrammaticality, presence vs. absence, reality vs. appearance, speech vs. writing, often held to be conceptually prior to the respective, second term, each opposition is often held further to involve or be associated with an axiological claim: speech is good, writing is bad, speech is better than writing, and so forth. One common goal of Derrida's writings is to arrive at a different axiological characterisation of these oppositions (not one which is a mere reversal of the initial axiological characterisation). How might one try to get from the starting point - Derrida's observation about conceptual oppositions - to this goal ? One strategy is suggested by passages such as the following:

> I repeat, therefore, since it can never be repeated too often: if one admits that writing (and the mark in general) *must be able* to function in the absence of the sender, the receiver, the context of production etc., that implies that this power, this *being able*, this *possibility* is *always* inscribed, hence *necessarily* inscribed *as possibility* in the functioning or the functional structure of the mark. Once the mark *is able* to function, once it is possible for it to function in case of an absence etc., it follows that this possibility is a *necessary* part of its structure, that the latter must *necessarily be such that* this functioning is possible; and hence, that this must be taken into account in any attempt to analyze or to describe, in terms of necessary laws, such a structure. Even if it

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[18]   "Postmodernism and truth", p.86.

is sometimes the case that the mark, in fact, functions *in-the-presence-of*, this does not change the structural law in the slightest ....[19]

How should we go about understanding this and related passages ? As was noted above, Derrida's philosophy is inseparable from phenomenology. As have also seen, the central distinction of the phenomenologists is that between essences and their instances, actual and possible. Essentiality, according to Hussserl, involves but is not the same as necessity. An essential truth provides the ground for but is not itself a necessary truth. It is, therefore, not surprising that the concepts of necessary possibility and of essential possibility are prominent in Husserl's accounts of essence and modality (cf. *Ideas* §§86, 135, 140). And they are present, too, in all his applications of these accounts, that is to say, everywhere in his writings, and also in the work of his followers (for example in the work of one of the first logicians to defend principles of the modal logic S5, Oskar Becker).

If I am right in thinking that Derrida's very generous use of modal locutions and ideas is a repetition of locutions and ideas of Husserl, then part at least of what Derrida is getting at in the passage quoted and in many related passages[20] is crystal clear: if a written mark can (essentially) function in the absence of its producer, then this possibility is an essential and so necessary possibility. So far, so good. But it is still not, I suggest, possible to repeat the very same intentional content Derrida seems to be expressing in the passage quoted. The obstacle is Derrida's insistence that the necessity of certain possibilities is "inscribed" somewhere, "inscribed" in a "structure" ("this possibility is always inscribed, hence necessarily inscribed as possibility in the functioning or the functional structure of the mark"). The thesis that if a written mark can function in the absence of its producer, then this possibility is a necessary possibility is not strong enough to provide any sort of undermining of the distinction between presence and absence nor of any axiological distinction correlated with this. The apparently stronger thesis that necessary possibilities are "inscribed" somewhere remains simply unexplicated.

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[19]   "Limited Inc", p. 184; cf. also p. 195.
[20]   Cf. Derrida's references in "Signature Event Context" to Husserl on "the essential possibility of writing", "the structure of possibility" of an utterance (p. 184); Derrida's claim that "Austin does not ponder the consequences issuing from the fact that a possibility - a possible risk - is *always* possible, and is in some sense a necessary possibility" and his question "What is a success when the possibility of infelicity continues to constitute its structure?" (p. 189).

Perhaps some sense can be made of it. But neither Derrida nor his followers display any interest in this project. This is unfortunate, for Derrida often appeals to necessary possibilities and their "inscription" in order to undermine apparently straightforward distinctions. In an early paper he discusses Husserl's version of a Principle of Expressibility. As we have already noted, Husserl thinks that the content of simple seeing, remembering and imagining is not conceptual. As he (rather unfortunately) puts it at §124 of *Ideas*, such contents have a sense (*Sinn*) but no conceptual meaning (*Bedeutung*). But, Husserl claims, every non-conceptual sense can be conceptualised or even expressed, can "stamp" or "impress itself" conceptually. And the "can" here, he thinks, is that of essential possibility. In his discussion of the paragraph Derrida says that, according to Husserl, "sense in general, the noematic sense of every experience, is something which, by its very nature, must be already able *to be impressed* on a meaning, to leave or receive its formal determination in a meaning". So far, so good or, at least, so far, so Husserlian. But Derrida continues:

> Sense would therefore ("*donc*") already be a kind of blank and mute writing which is reduplicated in meaning.[21]

But can we really conclude from the essential possibility that a non-conceptual sense can be conceptualised, even expressed aloud or written down, that to see is to write? If we had any grasp of what it means to say that a necessary possibility is "inscribed" in the bearer of the possibility or in the bearer's essence, we could perhaps begin to evaluate this "conclusion".[22]

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[21]   Derrida, "Form and Meaning. A Note on the Phenomenology of Language" in: *Speech and Phenomena and other Essays on Husserl's Theory of Signs* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1973), p. 117; originally published as, "La forme et le vouloir-dire. Note sur la phénoménologie du langage" (*Revue internationale de philosophie*, LXXXI, 1967, pp. 277-299), cf. p. 288. The expression "principle of expressibility" is used by Searle for the principle "that whatever can be meant can be said", *Speech Acts. An Essay in the Philosophy of Language* (Cambridge : Cambridge University Press, 1980), p. 19. Searle's principle is, therefore, not the principle Husserl sets out in §124 of Ideas.

[22]   The importance in Derrida's writings of essential and necessary possibilities was pointed out, approvingly, by Silvano Petrosino in *Jacques Derrida e la legge del possibile* (Naples: Guida editori, 1983), pp. 158ff. My account of Derrida's merry way with modal concepts ("How not to Read: Derrida on Husserl", in *Continental Philosophy Analysed, Topoi*, 1991, pp. 199-208) made points which were already perfectly familiar to my two colleagues and friends, Jacques Bouveresse and Anne Reboul. It forms a part of a criticism of Derrida's grasp of Husserl's thought. For other criticisms, see Joseph Claude Evans, *Strategies of Deconstruction. Derrida and the Myth of the Voice* (Minneapolis, Oxford: University of Minnesota Press, 1991), Part I and his "The Rigors of Deconstruction", (in *European philosophy and the American Academy*, pp. 81-98), especially pp. 86-88.

Is Derrida's way with necessary possibilities peculiar to his writings on the philosophy of language (on Husserl, Austin, Searle) ? Not at all. Consider the following passage at the heart of Derrida's "*incontournable*" discussion of Lacan's interpretation of Poe's story "The Purloined Letter":

> It is not that a letter never arrives at its destination but it belongs to its structure to be able, always, not to arrive at its destination. And without this threat ... the circuit ("*circuit*") of the letter would not even have begun.[23]

Derrida appears to draw a number of substantive conclusions, couched in the vocabulary of psychoanalysis, from this claim. Similarly, in a discussion of a sentence found, between quotation marks, in Nietzsche's *Nachlass*, the German for "I have forgotten my umbrella", Derrida writes:

> Perhaps one day, with work and luck, it will be possible to reconstitute the context, internal and external, of this "I have forgotten my umbrella". Now this factual possibility will never prevent it being marked in the structure of this fragment ... that it can simultaneously remain whole and forever without any other context, cut off not only from the place ("*milieu*") of its production and from every intention and meaning ("*vouloir dire*") of Nietzsche..."[24]

Derrida's "conclusions", his claims to have undermined this or that venerable opposition, turn out again and again to have been arrived at by modifying a claim by Husserl - which, whether true or false, is comprehensible - to the effect that certain possibilities are essentially and so necessarily possible. The modification is the claim that necessarily possibilities are "inscribed" in the "structure" of their bearers. Why, we may wonder, have those who find Derrida's conclusions so agreeable made no effort to explain the modification ? One plausible explanation is that they lack the relevant theoretical interests.

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[23]   "Le facteur de la vérité", (in *La carte postale de Socrate à Freud et au-delà*, Paris: Flammarion, 1980, pp. 439-524), p. 472.

[24]   *Eperons. Les Styles de Nietsche* (Paris: Flammarion, 1978), p. 105. Searle criticises a related passage from *Eperons* in "Literary Theory and its Discontents", p. 661.

6.   Cant, cognitive values and realism

In his critical discussions of parts of CP, Searle concentrates his fire on *hypocrisy*, *anti-rationalisms* and *anti-realisms*. Much of what goes on in various humanities departments in the US, he writes, is "based on a quite specific form of hypocrisy and deception": "institutional structures, and particularly funding, are based on a traditionalist justification, but the actual money and effort are devoted to undermining traditionalist ideals".[25] These ideals, of course, are knowledge and understanding, their extension and transmission. There is, he writes, "an atmosphere of bluff and fakery that pervades much (not all, of course) deconstructive writing".[26] Now a natural, empirical question, about such claims is whether the widespread hypocrisy in question is not based on more enduring attitudes and behaviour, for example cant. Not just the "cant political" and "cant literary" Byron refers to but also philosophical cant. But then what is cant ? And what is cant philosophical and, more generally, cant theoretical ? The original title of the famous book by Sokal and Bricmont was *Impostures Intellectuelles* (englished as *Fashionable Nonsense. Postmodern Intellectuals' Abuse of Science*[27]). Are the impostures or deceptions they document merely that, or are they rooted in more enduring attitudes, such as cant ? The concept is no longer a very familiar one. Writing in 1972 about the "intellectual mode that once went under the name of cant", Lionel Trilling noted that the "disappearance of the word from the modern vocabulary is worth remarking".[28]

Writing about the US, Searle says: "ideals of truth, rationality, and objectivity, for example - are rejected by many of the challengers, *even as ideals*".[29]And he goes on to formulate six tenets of the "Western Rationalistic Tradition". Three of these tenets, as they stand, are not axiological tenets: the claims that reality exists independently of our representations, that meaning and communication make reference to language-independent objects and states of affairs, and that knowledge is objective. Two tenets might be thought to

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[25]   "Postmodernism and Truth", p. 87.
[26]   "Reply to Mackey", p. 188.
[27]   USA: Picador, 1999.
[28]   Lionel Trilling, *Sincerity and Authenticity* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1972), p. 169. Trilling makes this remark in the course of discussing David Cooper's introduction to the English translation of Foucault's *Histoire de la Folie.* Of the piece of cant which is the "view that insanity is a state of human existence which is to be esteemed for its commanding authenticity", he writes that to "deal with this phenomenon of our intellectual culture in the way of analytical argument would, I think, be supererogatory" (pp. 168-9).
[29]   "Rationality and realism, What is at stake?", p. 55.

deal with cognitive values: truth is a matter of accuracy of representations, logic and rationality are formal. These five tenets have "on a natural interpretation...the following consequence", the sixth tenet: "Intellectual standards are not up for grabs. There are both objectively and intersubjectively valid criteria of intellectual achievement and excellence".[30] Does this commit one to the view that such achievement and excellence are intrinsically valuable? Or to the view that truth or knowledge is intrinsically valuable? And if knowledge, say, is intrinsically valuable, what is the relation between this claim and the values of consistency, justification and clarity? There is one uncontroversial way in which value is added to true beliefs, knowledge and justification. They often acquire extrinsic value relative to the value of the realisations of our practical projects. But such value for me or for you or for this or that group is not intrinsic cognitive value. What is the relation between added cognitive value and the intrinsic value of knowledge, if there is such a thing ? And what is the relation between cognitive value and the cognitive emotions ?

Searle argues that realism is the foundation of his six tenets and that a commitment to realism is a part of scientific activity. On one way of understanding this claim it is open to familiar objections. Doing empirical science need not involve any philosophical commitments, either to idealism or to realism, as Carnap, for example, argued. But the way Searle understands "commitment" undercuts such objections. The system of six tenets does not function as a theory but rather as "part of the taken-for-granted background of our practices"[31]. By way of illustrating his claim that a commitment to realism belongs to the background of our practises, Searle considers the case where, ill, I call a doctor who turns out to be a deconstructionist doctor. What is the relation between what Searle calls in such cases "a breakdown in communication" and the extrinsic disvalue for me of the doctor's beliefs ? Arguably, the former involves the latter. But even if extrinsic, or added cognitive value is very important in ordinary life, might it not be the case that knowledge is intrinsically valuable ?

Most of the philosophical questions raised in the last three paragraphs were raised and answered by the early, realist phenomenologists. It is above all in his account of the nature of theoretical enterprises, in particular philosophy, and in his defence of such enterprises that Searle turns out to be of one mind with his phenomenological precursors. Some of the

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[30]   "Rationalism and Realism, What is at stake?", pp. 67-8.

answers given by the phenomenologists to the above questions complement what Searle says, others may be felt to correct what he says. From its beginnings phenomenology was intrigued by the relation between cognitive sentiments and cognitive value and, following in their master's footsteps, many of Brentano's heirs devoted many pages to criticising what they saw as threats to scientific philosophy and attempts to discredit cognitive values. This aspect of phenomenology, however, made much less of an impression than the strident and melodramatic postures struck by the logical positivists in Vienna.

7.   Cant philosophical and cant theoretical

Hypocrisy, and cant, bullshit, imposture, humbug, accommodation, falseness and fakeness, form a family of phenomena which, unlike their simplest relative, the lie direct, have not perhaps been analysed in analytic philosophy[32] as obsessively as in phenomenology. The phenomenologists were very interested in understanding sham (*unechte*) beliefs, sham desires, sham sentiments and emotions, sham behaviour and lives as well as the sham products, for example kitsch and pseudo-inquiry, of such attitudes and behaviour. Their main predecessors are the distinguished analysts of cant in the series which runs from Burke through Hazlitt to Shaw and Wilde. In the simplest cases, sham beliefs and sentiments are brought into being and maintained in being by wishful thinking: in *ressentiment*, as analysed by Scheler, the grapes, which were first judged sweet (good) come to be regarded as sour (bad) simply because of a perceived incapacity to obtain them. Similarly a change in impersonal evaluations based solely on one's perceived inability to live up to some ideal is an example of *ressentiment*; Shaw distinguishes a related case: the sloes, which are sour, are judged to be sweet (evaluated positively) simply because one already has them. (Hence Shaw's advice: "Take care to get what you like or you will be forced to like what you get".)

One early distinction between cant and hypocrisy is due to Hazlitt:

He is a hypocrite who professes what he does not believe; not he who does not practice all he wishes or approves ...Thus, though I think there is very little downright hypocrisy in the world, I do think there is a great deal of cant ... Though few people have the face

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[31]   "Rationalism and Realism, What is at stake?", p. 80.

to set up for the very thing they in their hearts despise, we almost all want to be thought better than we are, and affect a greater admiration or abhorrence for certain things than we really feel. Indeed, some degree of affectation is as necessary to the mind as dress is to the body; we must overact our part in some measure in order to procure any effect at all ... In short, there is and must be a cant about everything that excites a considerable degree of attention and interest, and that people would be thought to know and care rather more about them than they actually do. Cant is the voluntary overcharging or prolongation of a real sentiment; hypocrisy is the setting up a pretension to a feeling you never had and have no wish for. ("On Cant and Hypocrisy")

The very idea of a philosophy of cant and of the sham got a bad name when Heidegger, and then Sartre, launched accounts of "authenticity" (*Eigentlichkeit*) and inauthenticity in which *sui generis* philosophical anthropologies were served up with a decisionist rhetoric. (As a distinguished ex-Oxford philosopher once said: "Only portraits are authentic"). Perhaps this explains why the early phenomenology of fakeness was so quickly forgotten. While the *Weltanschauungen* of authenticity were being worked out and were winning adherents, however, the interest of the phenomenologists in sham attitudes and in cognitive values took a new turn. No less than three heirs of Brentano, Musil, Ortega and Nicolai Hartmann, turned their attention to understanding foolishness and stupidity.

Hartmann explored the variety of sham beliefs and sentiments and the self-deception they involve - in mass-suggestion, majority opinions, public opinion, political parties, the press, art, taste, life styles, conventional morality - in order to ask an important question. What, if anything, counteracts the spread of the sham ? His answer is that knowledge of all types and the pursuit of knowledge, in particular science, are the only spheres which are essentially free of sham, because of their essentially critical dimension and cumulative character. "There is no 'sham knowledge'"[33]. The pursuit of knowledge and an awareness of the intrinsic value of knowledge are, he argues, what works against all those "tendencies which turn although nothing turns with them". And, in particular, he notes that much of the "critique of science" which was so popular in Germany in the 1920's and 1930's - particularly,

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[32]   But cf. Susan Haack, *Manifesto of a Passionate Moderate*, pp. 7-31; Harry Frankfurt, "On Bullshit", in *The Importance of what we care about. Philosophical Essays* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), pp. 117-133.

[33]   Nicolai Hartmann, *Das Problem des geistigen Seins* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1962), p.379, p. 381.

we might add, in the Heideggerian milieu - involves the particular sort of sham sentiment introduced above, *ressentiment*.[34]

Searle and many other commentators have claimed that one of the driving forces behind much "Theory", postmodernism and many parts of CP is the desire to defend or propagate claims which are axiological and, for one reason or another, popular. If this is true, then cant philosophical and cant theoretical might be described as what happens when such claims are defended with an appearance of some genuine theoretical motivation by appealing to what look like reasons - by using "*donc*" and "*also*" - but which in fact have little or no theoretical content because their authors are at best indifferent to cognitive values. It is this sort of indifference that Julien Benda had in mind in talking of the "intellectual dandyism" of Bergson and Bachelard.

A real sentiment, for example, a commitment to the ethical and political value of tolerance, can be artificially prolonged by "arguing" that without relativism or subjectivism there can be no tolerance. The attractiveness of tolerance then comes to be seen as bound up with the attractions of relativism or subjectivism. In many parts of CP, bits and pieces of garbled theoretical philosophy, often from early phenomenology, have been employed to make plausible a variety of axiological claims, whether religious (as in Heidegger's supernatural naturalism or godless mysticism), ethical or political. But "making plausible" here stops well short of any sort of properly theoretical activity. Whether religious, ethical or political such claims often have an aesthetic dimension. Many of the profundities of CP have an appeal which stems from their sublime appearance[35] - there is nothing outside texts, writing is repressed and opressed, the voice of Being is struggling to be heard. Such profundities open up endless vistas, are difficult to manipulate and are politically, ethically or religiously attractive. They have the features of the sublime identified by Burke - they are deep, great or all-embracing - and attitudes towards them display the combination identified

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[34]   *Das Problem des geistigen Seins*, p. 400. Hartmann (p. 366f., p. 372) notes that his descriptions of sham forms of life overlap with those given by Heidegger in *Being and Time* and points out as quietly as the time (1933) makes appropriate, that what Heidegger opposes to such sham forms of life is not the shamless nature of knowledge but rather guilt, *Angst* and collectedness. It is indeed difficult to imagine Heidegger, for whom "science does not think", endorsing Hartmann's views.

[35]   On metaphysical pathos, the pathos of the obscure and of the esoteric and sublimity, see Arthur Lovejoy, *The Great Chain of Being. A Study of the History of an Idea* (New York: Harper, 1960), pp. 10-14.

by Burke as appropriate to the sublime: they attract and they repel. The sublime appearance can also, of course, turn out to be a case of the false sublime, of the grotesque.

8.   Cognitive value and realism

As we have seen, Searle locates his six tenets in the background of our practices. He also thinks that these tenets, since they are the conditions of intelligibility of our practices, "cannot themselves be demonstrated as truths within these practices. To suppose that they could was the endemic mistake of foundationalist metaphysics"[36]. This would have surprised the phenomenologists. Ortega, for example, thought that the commitment to cognitive values was an essential part of the primitive certainties which we rarely try to make explicit because we "count on them". Hartmann argued that the origin of our belief in a mind-independent reality is to be found in a variety of emotional experiences in which we run up against reality - as when our practical projects are frustrated or when we come to see that finding out whether p is very difficult. (The ways of truth, as the poet puts it, are hard and rough to work.) Hartmann locates the source of all sham beliefs and sentiments in a "lack of contact" with the things themselves.[37] But neither Ortega nor Hartmann thought that such claims ruled out the possibility of a metaphysics, whether realist or indeed anti-realist, in which a metaphysics of values, cognitive and non-cognitive, would be prominent.

The importance of a theory of cognitive values emerges if we bear in mind the fact that the view (for example of Sidgwick) that all cognitive value is extrinsic, that is to say, is merely added value, is one of the most popular views within postmodernism and CP. Scheler argued, and more frequently proclaimed, that only the most theoretical parts of science and (his sort of) philosophy had intrinsic cognitive value. For the rest, the value of science was the value of the domination of nature it made possible. His distinction was soon overlooked. From Heidegger to Foucault the idea that the value, usually negative, of science is a function of its internal relation to the domination of nature and to domination or power tout court swept all before it.

But whatever we think about these questions there is a relatively modest way of distinguishing between explicit and implicit commitments to cognitive values and realism

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[36]   "Rationalism and Realism, What is at stake?", p. 80.

which throws some light on the attitudes of CP and postmodernism towards cognitive values and realism.

Is the desire *to know whether p* a desire *that one knows whether p* as the desire *to smoke* is a desire *that one smokes*? Tumlirz, a pupil of Meinong, argued that there is an important difference between the two cases. To desire to know whether *p* need not involve thinking of anything under the concept of knowledge, whereas a desire to smoke, as opposed to a mere impulse or craving, must involve a representation of smoking. In a desire to know whether *p* the attitude is that of desiring-to-know; in a desire to smoke the attitude is just desire[38]. Similarly, we may add, neither astonishment nor wonder, the initiators of the disinterested desire to know, need contain any thought of knowledge. Not only do cognitive sentiments not necessarily involve thoughts about knowledge, we often attribute a commitment to cognitive values to people who have never thought of anything as having or not having cognitive value.

Contrast these cases with the Victorian Sage who asks himself every morning before breakfast: "What is my duty to Truth today ?" Such a Sage is a figure of fun, and rightly so. But curiously enough he has a precise counterpart who is not, in many circles, perceived as grotesque: the contemporary postmodernist who "attacks", "deconstructs", or mocks truth, reason, science, or, as he likes to put it - "truth", "reason" and "science". The Sage and the postmodernist Guru adopt practical attitudes towards truth and reason under those descriptions. The philosopher, of course, also talks at length about truth and reason under those descriptions. But his philosophical attitudes are theoretical. Everyone has practical attitudes towards values and virtues, ethical, aesthetic, political and cognitive. But such attitudes come in two very different kinds - they are pharisaical or non-pharisaical. The ethical Pharisee, as Scheler points out, is distinguished by the fact that he desires to be good under that description. The non-Pharisee desires, for example, to help his neighbour. Other things being equal, his intention is a good one. But he does not desire that he be good. Similarly, he is curious and, other things being equal, his intention is a good one. But he does not desire that he know.

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[37]   *Das Problem des geistigen Seins*, p. 390
[38]   One attractive alternative: If x desires to know whether p, then he desires that (if p, he knows that p and, if not-p, he knows that not-p).

The Sage, I suggest, is a cognitive Pharisee, an epistemic Pharisee. The Postmodernist is his pharisaical counterpart, not an epistemic Pharisee but an "epistemic" Pharisee. His motto is "Obscurity be thou my clarity". Just as the Sage may actually be quite indifferent to cognitive questions so, too, the Postmodernist may be unusually sensitive to a variety of such questions, in spite of his rhetoric. Unfortunately, although epistemic Pharisees are relatively harmless figures, the same is not true of "epistemic" Pharisees.

9.   **S*R*L in 1911**

Although, as we have seen, Husserl himself came to be considered as a less than wholly successful example of a scientific philosopher by his earliest followers and admirers, his little monograph, *Philosophy as a Rigorous Science*,[39] of 1911 (the year in which Russell baptised analytic philosophy and logical atomism and pleaded for a scientific philosophy - in French) contains many of the motifs which were to be taken up by the heirs of Brentano who took seriously the task of defending philosophy as a serious enterprise before the Second World War.[40] Husserl restates many points made by Brentano and even earlier by Bolzano, in their anti-Kants and anti-Hegels. But he also reacts to the contemporary situation and, for example, grapples with the increasingly influential hermeneutics of Dilthey, the ex-literary critic.

Husserl distinguishes those philosophies, especially his own phenomenology and naturalism, which see philosophy as a science, from philosophies which reject scientific philosophy - historicism, relativism, scepticism and *Weltanschauungsphilosophie*. He has two philosophical targets. First, traditions which do not take seriously philosophy as a theoretical enterprise. Secondly, traditions which attempt to do philosophy in ways of which he approves but which, he thinks, get everything wrong. Historicisms, relativisms and "*Weltanschauungsphilosophie*" are guilty of conceiving of philosophy as, in the first instance, a practical enterprise. What Husserl calls "naturalism", like positivism and pragmatism, is innocent of the first charge but, he thinks, wrong about both the mind and and about ideas or

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[39]   *Philosophie als strenge Wissenschaft* (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1980; this was first published in *Logos*, I, 1910-1911).

[40]   Both Kraus and Musil were particularly active in this respect. Since Bergson not only played an important role in transforming phenomenology but also contributed directly to the present shape of francophone philosophy it is perhaps appropriate to mention France's very own remorseless critic of Bergonism and associated irrationalisms, the Julien Benda already mentioned - like Musil, an essayist of the first order. And that philosophy in France was not only laid low but also brought into being by philosophers of Irish origin – which is to say by Bergson and Eriugena, respectively.

essences. All, historicisms and *Weltanschauungsphilosophie* and naturalism, are a danger to culture, a practical danger (§13, §93) and a danger to empirical science and philosophy. Historicisms take as their point of departure the fact that all theoretical activity is bound up with its historical and cultural context and advance to more or less ambitious claims to the effect that once such contexts are completely understood no place is left for the idea that the products of such activity are true or false. Husserl notes, presciently, the possibility of an extreme historicist who would say just this of the results of the natural sciences (§69).

Weltanschauungsphilosophie aims to satisfy "as far as possible our need for definitive, unifying, all-inclusive" knowledge (§73). It is a form of wisdom and so "is an essential component of that human habitus that comes before us in the idea of perfect virtue" (§76). Although there is a "radical vital need" (§89) for the sort of answers provided by *Weltanschauung* philosophies, scientific philosophy and science cannot help us meet this need. But nor can we wait for their answers.[41] Husserl insists on the importance of separating the two types of philosophy. The one is impersonal, the other is personal and involves teacher-pupil relationships.

In the present connexion perhaps the most important claim Husserl makes is that, although philosophy is often praised for its profundities, in fact

> profundity (*Tiefsinn*) is a symptom of chaos, which real science wants to turn into a cosmos ... Science proper, as far as its real theory reaches, knows no profundity (§95)

Husserl's philosophical contemporaries in 1911, the neo-Kantians and a variety of naturalists, positivists and materialists, were not, by and large, adepts of sublime profundities, as opposed to programmatic vacuities. But Bergson and Dilthey were beginning to have an effect, for example on Scheler, and very soon the Spenglers, Klages and Heideggers were to turn philosophy in Germany into a green valley of sublime profundities.

10.   Searle's splendid isolation

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[41]   Husserl and Musil were to arrive at similar solutions to this practical problem which might be summarised as: "Live exactly!" Musil discusses the problem under a number of headings, for example, "provisional morality", "inductive humility", "the passion for exactness".

Searle's critical campaign against parts of CP, I noted above, is something of a rarity. Why ? One plausible explanation, I believe, is that Searle's conception and practise of philosophy differ from the analytic norm. Two striking features of Searle's way of doing philosophy are his descriptivism and his "scientific", that is, "*wissenschaftliche*" approach to philosophy. By the latter I mean simply his conviction that philosophy can advance, has made progress and is doing so, that it can in principle begin to take on the form of a definite body of knowledge, and this in cooperation with empirical science. By "descriptivism" I mean Searle's interest in providing detailed and complete descriptions of mental states and social acts. Descriptivism involves taxonomy and much turns on getting the details right. Real realists have descriptivist leanings.

Neither Searle's "scientific" approach to philosophy nor his descriptivism have been common within analytic philosophy. The "scientific" approach is a very strong form of the idea that philosophy is through and through a theoretical and so a cumulative enterprise. Analytic philosophy, it is true, is invariably done *as though* it were a theoretical enterprise - arguments, distinctions, elucidations, analyses, objections, counter-examples, theory-construction, in particular the construction of formal theories are the rule or at least recognised as desirable. But this way of doing philosophy is not only compatible with a number of different positions about what sort of a theoretical enteprise philosophy is - for example with the view that philosophy's goals are theoretical but purely negative - but also with views to the effect that philosophy is not a theoretical enterprise, that its goal is practical, for example therapeutic, or that it is through and through aporetic or that philosophical progress is as absurd a notion as that of ethical progress.

Descriptive analysis has rarely occupied a central position within analytic philosophy. Perhaps the two most influential exceptions are the writings of Wittgenstein and of J. L. Austin and of their followers. In the case of Wittgenstein, description is subordinated to therapeutic goals (almost invariably - in his remarks on colour, for example, the goal recedes into the background). Austin's descriptions often have either negative, theoretical goals - that of playing Old Harry with this fetish or that absurdity - or, so it has often been thought, are not descriptions of anything of interest to a philosopher. In many quarters, Wittgenstein and Austin have given description in philosophy a bad name.

Description in philosophy cannot, of course, succeed without arguments, in particular arguments about counter-examples and about the consequences of descriptions. But the culture of the argument and even of theory-construction can flourish in the absence of all except the most exiguous descriptions. Remarkable arguments and sophisticated theories are compatible with the most primitive belief-desire-action psychologies.

Searle's conception of philosophy makes it natural for him to see parts of CP as a theoretical and a practical enemy and to do something about it. A philosopher who, however impressively theoretical his way of doing philosophy is, does not really take philosophy to be a growing branch of knowledge and does not really take cognitive values seriously will perhaps be less inclined to waste his time in quarrelling with CP.

Whatever the value of this hypothesis, it was a very similar combination of descriptivism with a conception of philosophy as a theoretical enterprise in the strongest possible sense which led Husserl, as well his early followers and also, for example, Musil and such heirs of Brentano as Linke and Kraus to grapple publicly with the beginnings of CP, a type of activity which, some polemical pieces by members of the Vienna Circle apart, was almost moribund until Searle came along.

Three years before his death Husserl wrote:

Philosophy as a science, as serious, rigorous, indeed apodictically rigorous science - the dream is over.[42]

Just what he meant has been the subject of conflicting interpretations. I believe he was still convinced that Brentano was right to claim that periods in which philosophy is taken seriously as a theoretical enterprise regularly give way to scepticism, then dogmatism and then mysticism and obscurantism in which preaching predominates. And that the point Husserl wanted to make in 1935 was that everything indicated that such a transition had already taken place. Philosophers who shared his approach to philosophy, Husserl saw, were few and far

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[42]   *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Philosophy* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1970), p. 389.

between.[43] The tragedy is, as Searle suggests[44], that Husserl's own turn to idealism played an important role in bringing this situation about.

Searle's role as a critic of the tail-ends of the phenomenological movement seems, I have speculated, to have been motivated by the very same outlook which led Brentano's early heirs to condemn what was happening to what they called "analytic phenomenology", an outlook by no means widespread within analytic philosophy. Whether or not this is the case, we may wonder whether analytic philosophy - Russell's dream - is still flourishing. Where, after all, are the young American Chisholms, Davidsons, van Fraassens, Hochbergs, Kripkes, Lewises, Putnams and Searles ?

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[43]   Certainly, the three most influential philosophers of the twentieth century - Heidegger, Wittgenstein and Derrida - all arrived at the view that what they were doing was, although intimately connected with, not a part of philosophy. All three proclaim their practical goals - all three aim to destroy and deconstruct ("*Destruktion*", "destroy", "*déconstruire*"). This point is, of course, consistent with the following difference between Wittgenstein, on the one hand, and Heidegger and Derrida, on the other hand. In reading the Austrian philosopher, one has good reason to believe, in the midst of the therapy and destruction, that he has a firm grasp of the relevant theoretical questions (if only because he was often the author of at least one distinguished answer to such questions).

[44]   "Phenomenology and Idealism", *op. cit.*