

Review

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ANALYSES CRITIQUES

“Slouching Towards Dualism”⁽¹⁾, *On The Rediscovery of Mind*, David Sosa.

Every page of *The Rediscovery of the Mind* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1992) is evidence that John Searle is a sincere philosopher. He disdains the posing too common in academia, preferring to state and defend his views simply and directly.⁽²⁾ Unimpressed with fashions, he lets his good philosophical sense guide him where it will. In this book, Searle aims to debunk dominant traditions in the study of mind. He is against *both* materialism *and* dualism, arguing for his own “biological naturalism” as a preferable alternative. And he seeks to redirect attention toward the phenomenon of consciousness: “The study of the mind is the study of consciousness, in much the same sense that biology is the study of life” (227).

I can hardly expound Searle’s views more clearly than he does himself; I don’t intend to try.⁽³⁾ Instead this review will reflect critically on some of the positions Searle defends in *The Rediscovery of the Mind*.⁽⁴⁾ My hope is that this attention will help to characterize and distinguish one aspect of Searle’s position. In particular, I want to investigate the possibility of bringing pressure to bear on Searle’s biological naturalism—but from ‘the other side.’

Dissatisfaction with Searle’s position often derives from a stronger commitment to materialism than his view would permit. As for Searle’s own feelings about materialism, Chapter 2’s title, “The Recent History of Materialism: The Same Mistake Over and Over,” is telling. The philosophy of mind of the last fifty years suffers from a compulsive neurosis (31): a materialist thesis is advanced, but the thesis encounters difficulties, basically, it denies obvious facts that we all know about our minds. After some “desperate maneuvers” to save the thesis, a new development emerges, only to encounter new difficulties, which turn out to be the same old difficulties all over again (30). The deep objection to these materialist theses is that they leave out the mind (30). Searle would embrace *naïve* materialism; “the microstructure of the world is entirely made up of material particles” (27). But he rejects behaviorism, type-type and token-token identity theories, functionalism, and eliminativism. In effect, he rejects all

(1) After W.B. YEATS, “The Second Coming”: And what rough beast, its hour come round at last,/Slouches towards Bethlehem to be born? Originally in *Michael Robartes and the Dancer* (1921); now see *The Collected Poems of W.B. Yeats*, Richard J. FINNERAN, ed. (New York: Collier Books, Macmillan Publishing Co., 1989). And cf. Joan DIDION, *Slouching Towards Bethlehem* (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1968).

(2) He even provides some valuable observations about presentational style (4-5). There are also many remarkable turns of phrase. Here are just a few (beside those I quote in the main text, some others can be found on pp. xiv, 5, 17, 24, 76, and 247): “How, for example, would one go about refuting the view that consciousness does not exist?...Should I pinch myself and report the results in the *Journal of Philosophy*? ” (8); “If you are tempted to functionalism, I believe you do not need refutation, you need help” (9); “Philosophically speaking, this does not smell right to me and I have learned, at least at the beginning of an investigation, to follow my sense of smell” (199); “[Y]ou do not understand hammering by supposing that nails are somehow implementing hammering algorithms” (214); “I do not follow a rule: When you eat too much pizza, get a stomachache; it just happens that way” (240); and “If that amounts to having your cake and eating it too, let’s eat” (252, n.4 to Chapter 4).

(3) Given the chance, however, I should at least mention a few of the book’s highlights. The discussion of the “gut brain” in connection with Searle’s now familiar distinction between intrinsic, derived, and ‘as if’ intentionality is compelling; the material in Chapter 6 on the structure of consciousness and the argument in Chapter 7 for his “connection principle”—all unconscious intentional states are in principle accessible to consciousness (156)—would be worth more attention; Searle’s deployment in Chapter 8 of the notions of the “Background” and the “Network” in explaining the relationship between intentionality and consciousness are an important element in his overall view; and his remarks concerning (i) a crucial possible ambiguity in what may be the basic question in cognitive science, “how is it possible for unintelligent bits of matter to produce intelligence” (see Chapter 2, § X, pp. 55-7), and (ii) the need for an “inversion of explanation” in cognitive science (Chapter 10, § II, pp. 228-37) are both stimulating and suggestive.

(4) One position on which I will not reflect, partly because I do so elsewhere, is Searle’s unification of mind and language: “On my view, the philosophy of language is a branch of the philosophy of mind” (xi) and “the derived intentionality of linguistic elements—is grounded in the more biologically basic intrinsic intentionality of the mind/brain” (xi). While some of what lies *behind* Searle’s view here is attractive to me, I favor a deep distinction between the nature of linguistic representation and that of mental representation, and a corresponding limitation on the role of what Searle calls the “Background.” See my “Checking Searle’s Background,” *Teorema* vol. 18, No. 1 (Winter 1999: 109-123).

traditional materialist theories. Instead, he emphasizes the irreducible⁽⁵⁾ subjectivity of consciousness and identifies reluctance to accept consciousness as the deepest motivation behind traditional materialism (55).

In Chapter 9, for example, Searle extends his critique⁽⁶⁾ of “cognitivism”: the view that the brain is a digital computer (202). He raises an important issue for all cognitivist views. Cognitivism attempts to understand the mind computationally: “the mind is the program and the brain the hardware of a computational system” (200). Exploiting a distinction between *intrinsic* and *observer-relative* properties, Searle argues that syntactic features are not intrinsic to physical states and processes. “Computational states are not discovered within the physics, they are assigned to the physics” (210). Accordingly, there is a problem of universal realizability: the only sense in which the brain is a digital computer is a sense in which *anything* is a digital computer. “For any object there is *some* description of that object such that under that description the object is a digital computer” (208, emphasis added). But then it can’t be in virtue of being a digital computer that the brain produces consciousness; we don’t yet understand the mind by supposing it is a *program*. At the very least, a more substantial conception of what a program is would be required.

It should come as no surprise, then, that Searle’s fiercest opponents have been materialists who reject his criticisms of traditional materialist theories and who are not as impressed as Searle is with the ontological peculiarity of the mental. These are “naturalizers” who believe that “if intentionality and consciousness really do exist and are irreducible to physical phenomena, then there really would be a difficult mind-body problem” (2). Applying the dictum “the enemy of my enemy is my friend,” however, *anti*-materialists might wonder whether Searle’s position isn’t more comfortably viewed, notwithstanding his own claims to the contrary, as an instance of a modest *dualism* than as demanding a third position that rejects assumptions common to dualists and materialists. The middle ground Searle seeks may be unstable — perhaps the center cannot hold.

This would be anathema to Searle: he presents himself as no less opposed to dualism (a Cartesian “shibboleth”) than to traditional materialism (though it should be noted that this book contains disproportionate argumentation against materialism⁽⁷⁾). According to him, “consciousness is just an ordinary biological feature of the world” (85). “Humans are continuous with the rest of nature. But if so, the biologically specific characteristics of these animals — such as their possession of a rich system of consciousness... — are biological phenomena like any other” (90). In general, dualism is said to conflict with our contemporary scientific world view and cannot be taken seriously. But I wonder whether *this* might not be a false assumption of Searle’s own: is there no way to accept that humans are continuous with the rest of nature *without* supposing that consciousness is just another biological phenomenon?

Perhaps the traditional opposition between dualism and our contemporary scientific world view has been exaggerated — indeed perhaps it is *this* opposition, more even than that (emphasized and opposed by Searle and) supposed by many to hold between the mental and the physical, that is responsible for some of the lack of progress in our understanding of consciousness. Though Searle appears to reject this, it may be that much in his deepest insights would actually support such a position. Is Searle an *accidental* dualist?

According to Searle, philosophy of mind has traditionally tacitly presented us with a choice “between a ‘scientific’ approach, as represented by one or another of the current versions of ‘materialism,’ and an ‘antiscientific’ approach, as represented by Cartesianism or some other traditional religious conception of the mind” (4). But these options do not exhaust the field. They are both “profoundly mistaken” as a result of accepting an obsolete vocabulary and making false assumptions.

[M]ost of the standard authors are deeply committed to the traditional vocabulary and categories. They really think there is some more or less clear meaning attaching to the archaic vocabulary of “dualism,” “monism,” “materialism,” “physicalism,” etc., and that the issues have to be posed and resolved in these terms. They use these words with neither embarrassment nor irony. One of the many aims I have in this book is to show that both these assumptions are mistaken. (4)

And, later:

(5) “Irreducible” in a strong sense: Even functionalism, if it worked, would effect a reduction in the relevant sense. And his anti-reductionism opposes (at least the relevance of) “constitutive” supervenience (see pp. 124-6).

(6) See also Searle (1984).

(7) Searle himself admits (xiii, 3) that the relevant chapters devote more attention to materialism than to dualism.

Dualists asked, "How many kinds of things and properties are there?" and counted up to two. Monists, confronting the same question, only got as far as one. But the real mistake was to start counting at all....It is customary to think of dualism as coming in two flavors, substance dualism and property dualism; but to these I want to add a third, which I will call "conceptual dualism." This view consists in taking the dualistic concepts very seriously, that is, it consists in the view that in some important sense "physical" implies "nonmental" and "mental" implies "nonphysical." (26)

Accordingly, materialism is "really a form of dualism," indeed, in a sense, "the finest flower of dualism," says Searle. What he proposes is to reject the false dichotomy he sees at the heart of the dispute: to reject conceptual dualism.

Searle is likely right that the traditional terminology is problematic. But it may be that progress on that front can be made, in a way that leaves the traditional positions untouched, through judicious terminological relegislation. Hume said "[f]rom this circumstance alone, that a controversy has been long kept on foot, and remains still undecided, we may presume that there is some ambiguity in the expression, and that the disputants affix different ideas to the terms employed in the controversy." (8)

Searle, I think, would agree that there is some sense in which we could collect all the phenomena in the world that are *reducible to physical phenomena* in one camp and put all the phenomena that are not so reducible into another. It is, according to him, one of the "obvious facts about our own experiences" that "our conscious states have quite specific *irreducible* phenomenological properties" (28). The mental has a distinctive ontology, Searle would admit. "[T]he ontology of the mental is essentially a first-person ontology. That is just a fancy way of saying that every mental state has to be *somebody's* mental state. (9) Mental states only exist as subjective, first-person phenomena" (70). And, "[c]onscious mental states and processes have a special feature not possessed by other natural phenomena, namely subjectivity" (93). But that creates a distinctive ontological category. Though we needn't argue about whether such states can't still be physical or material — Searle is certainly right that physical objects *instantiate* them — we might now be interested in how that part of reality whose ontology is essentially subjective is related to the remainder.

Searle has a view about this relationship; some physical phenomena *cause* mental phenomena. It's because your brain is in a particular physical state (a state defined by purely physical properties) that your mind is in the subjective state it's in. He recommends we view the situation on the model of digestion; certain basic physical properties produce, as a causal result, digestion. Similarly, it seems to Searle "obvious from everything we know about the brain that macro mental phenomena are all caused by lower-level micro phenomena. There is nothing mysterious about such bottom-up causation; it is quite common in the physical world" (125-6); he offers also the example of the solidity of a piston.

Notice that Searle's biological naturalism holds that the brain states *could* exist *without* producing the consciousness they actually do. As a matter of contingent fact, the relevant brain states cause various mental states; but they might not. In rejecting type-type identity theories, for example, Searle finds it "easy to imagine that some sort of being could have brain states like these without having pains and [have] pains like these without being in these sorts of brain states" (39).

So the relation between the brain and the mind is supposed to be unproblematic: there is a causal "reduction" only in the sense that "mental features are caused by neurobiological processes" (115). But there is no ontological reduction — for reasons familiar from Kripke (1971), Nagel (1974), and Jackson (1982). The (essentially similar) argument those philosophers present against the ontological reduction of mentality to the physical is "ludicrously simple and quite decisive" (118). But it does not affect his claim that mentality is *caused* by physical states of the brain.

This leads to the heart of the issue on which I'd like to focus here. What exactly is the ontological relationship between the material and the mental? Is there, basically, only a single *ontological* category, the *material*, in terms of which all of reality can be, in some good sense, understood? Isn't just the denial of this claim already constitutive of a form of dualism?

Searle is sensitive to the idea that the failure of ontological reduction might lead to property dualism. We can separate Searle's "naive materialism": whether or not the microstructure of the world is entirely made up of material particles need not be the question. A different question is whether there are *properties* of minds that are neither reducible nor identical to any physical property. Searle rightly

(8) *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, § VIII.

(9) As he clarifies later, he means this "in a much stronger sense than the sense in which a leg must be someone's leg" (94).

distinguishes property ontological reduction from the ontological reduction of objects (113): the latter is a situation in which *objects* of a certain type consist of nothing but objects of another type. Chairs consist of nothing but a collection of molecules, for example. Property reduction, on the other hand, “is a form of ontological reduction, but it concerns properties” (113). Importantly, however, the notion of *consisting* that is natural to our understanding of the ontological reduction of objects is more mysterious when applied to properties. We have a natural part–whole model for the way in which chairs consist of molecules. But what is the way in which heat “consists of” the mean kinetic energy of molecular motions? I suspect, more strongly than Searle, that *this* question, the question of the ontological relations between reduced *properties* and the properties to which they are reduced, is a main ingredient in the mind-body problem.

“It seems to many people whose opinion I respect that the irreducibility of consciousness is a primary reason why the mind-body problem continues to seem so intractable” (116). Searle, on the other hand, thinks the irreducibility of the mental is actually a trivial consequence of more general phenomena and thus does *not* lead to anything like property dualism. The mental is irreducible only because when it comes to consciousness, what *interests* us is precisely the subjective experiences themselves, not the physical processes that cause them. Let’s investigate this more closely.

Consider the pattern of reduction that occurs with perceptible properties such as heat, sound, color, solidity, liquidity, *etc.* According to Searle, these features each have a “surface” aspect and an underlying microstructure (which we discover). When we “reduce” the property, we “carve off the surface features and redefine the original notion in terms of the causes that produce those surface features” (119).

[W]hen we have a theory of what causes these and other phenomena, we discover that it is molecular movements causing sensations of heat and cold..., and light reflectances causing visual experiences... We then *redefine* heat and color in terms of the underlying causes of both the subjective experiences and the other surface phenomena. (119)

This leads to, first, an analogy, and then to a crucial disanalogy, with consciousness.

[T]here is a set of “physical” facts involving the movement of molecules, and second there is a set of “mental” facts involving my subjective experience of heat, as caused by the impact of the moving air molecules on my nervous system. But similarly with pain ... there is a set of “physical” facts involving my thalamus and other regions of the brain, and second there is a set of “mental” facts involving my subjective experience of pain. (120)

That’s the analogy. Why then is heat reducible and consciousness not? “The answer is that what interests us about heat is not the subjective appearance but the underlying physical causes” (120). In fact, Searle admits (121) that we could “redefine” consciousness in terms of neurophysiological processes in a way analogous to our treatment of heat. But the point of such reductions is to carve off subjective experiences from the definition of phenomena such as heat. In the case of consciousness, on the other hand, it is the subjective experiences themselves in which we’re interested. Temperature and color, not to mention solidity and liquidity, allow for an appearance-reality distinction which is crucial to the reductive pattern: the phenomenon is defined in terms of its “reality” and the appearances are left out. But “consciousness consists in the appearances themselves”: “...we cannot make the appearance-reality distinction because the appearance is the reality” (122).

How might a property dualist respond to Searle here? He’s certainly right that the reduction of heat to molecular motion did not involve a concurrent reduction of the subjective experience of heat. And it is hard to judge whether that experience is essential to the phenomenon that was under investigation. A simple picture is that our concept of heat was the concept of a property that, precisely, normally *caused* experiences as of heat. But if that was our concept, then there wasn’t really any “carving off” of the subjective experience—it was already carved off by the pre-scientific understanding as a mere causal effect of the property in question. We can *continue* to think of heat as that which normally causes our experiences as of heat; but we now know what that cause is, we know more about it. The normal cause of our experience as of heat is (roughly) the mean molecular motion of the body with which we’re in contact. In any case, the *experience* as of heat remains unreduced. Indeed, that’s just an instance of the general lack of reduction of mental phenomena. This may just be more grist for the dualist mill. Rather than finding the example a useful way of understanding how the lack of reducibility is no spur to dualism, the dualist, on the contrary, finds it another case in point.

That makes the class of examples Searle chose less useful. Perceivable properties such as heat,

sound, color, solidity, and liquidity, are all cases where there might be some dispute about the role of subjective experience. Let's consider instead digestion, photosynthesis, and mitosis, processes to which Searle elsewhere (90) compares consciousness. There is no reducibility problem for digestion. The micro properties which are, as we might say, *causally responsible* for digestion are all there is to digestion, ontologically. This is the pattern of reduction by which the dualist is most impressed. "In general in the history of science, successful causal reductions tend to lead to ontological reductions" (115). But again, distinctively not so in the case of consciousness.

Of course, in the case of digestion, we know going in (no matter what our "constitution"!) that our experiences of digestion are not essential to the process itself. From the start, the subjective experiences are taken to be independent of the phenomenon. So the reduction is not conditional on our interests. The dualist point is that the very fact that in the case of consciousness, there *is* something to "carve off" — there are some things that, as it might be put, "resist capture in the nomological net of physical theory" (10) — indicates that there is, in some sense, fundamentally more than one kind of property. Mental properties are fundamentally of a different sort; although an object may be caused to have a mental property as the result of having certain physical properties, the mental property thereby caused is not a complex of, or a function of (except, of course, causally) any combination of physical properties.

Searle disagrees. According to him, again, "the irreducibility of consciousness is a trivial consequence of the pragmatics of our definitional practice" (122). But Searle's view here is surprising. It seems very unlike Searle's realistic spirit to make an issue like the reducibility of consciousness a pragmatic matter. One expects him to rail against any such idea: the irreducibility of consciousness is independent of anything like our definitional practices — it's a result of the essentially subjective character of experience, the *intrinsic* first-person ontology of consciousness, a matter of ontological facts that obtain whatever we might decide to do with our words. We can redefine "consciousness" if we want — but we can't redefine *consciousness*. So if the question is why consciousness itself is irreducible, then I doubt (and think Searle's own deeper views should lead him too to doubt) that our definitional practices have anything to do with it. The question remains: Is there a distinctive class of property, mental properties, whose obtaining cannot, in any good sense, be understood as nothing over and above the obtaining of (uncontroversially) physical properties?

Searle holds that "[w]hether we treat the irreducibility from the materialist or from the dualist point of view, we are still left with a universe that contains an irreducibly subjective *physical* component as a component of *physical reality*" (123, emphasis added). But I've been suggesting that the two occurrences of "physical" here are insufficiently justified. We certainly seem to have an irreducibly subjective component of reality—the issue is whether that's a physical component of physical reality. If it's irreducible, if any redefinition would "not really eliminate the subjectivity," then on what basis are these properties considered *physical*?

Let's be clear about what Searle is and is not saying. He does not deny that consciousness is "strange and wonderful" (123). And he notes that it is as empirically mysterious to us now as electromagnetism was under the Newtonian paradigm. But the irreducibility of consciousness, he insists, is *trivial*: it is a trivial consequence of our definitional practices and has no "untoward scientific consequences whatever" (124). Now, that the irreducibility of consciousness has no untoward scientific consequences might be agreed to by dualists. The fact that physical facts cannot be reduced to economic facts (whether or not we might turn the converse trick) has no untoward economic consequences. Economics is interested in economic facts and that there are facts outside its purview need not be seen as an untoward result. Similarly, the dualist would suggest, consciousness itself cannot really be studied through scientific means: but that's not an untoward consequence for science, only a limitation on its scope. And the scope of science is not itself a scientific question.

Can the dualist really hold that all of neurobiological and cognitive science in general are simply not studying consciousness? Are we to hold *a priori* that science cannot help us to understand consciousness? The dualist can be concessive. Of course science can study how consciousness is actually, as a matter of scientific fact, *realized* or *instantiated*. But because no physical state is, for example, *essentially* painful (while the state of pain itself of course is), therefore science does not study consciousness itself, only a correlate.

(10) Davidson (1970), p. 79.

Searle does, in passing, make a stronger claim. Although he does not develop the point in detail, he holds that “[n]o one can rule out *a priori* the possibility of a major intellectual revolution that would give us a new — and at present unimaginable — conception of reduction, according to which consciousness would be reducible” (124). (11) This is interesting; notice that Searle is not suggesting that the major intellectual revolution would itself give us a reduction of consciousness. That’s already been ruled out. We already know that consciousness is not reducible according to our current conception of reduction. Searle entertains instead the possibility of a change in our *conception of reduction*. If our conception of reduction changes, then, Searle suggests, consciousness could be reducible (I would say “reducible”) according to that new conception. But it’s hard to know what to say about this. (12) Since, as Searle himself says, this new conception of reduction is at present unimaginable, we can hardly judge whether this would refute dualism and confirm materialism or rather be irrelevant to that issue.

What I’ve been trying is to bring pressure to bear on Searle’s view from the opposite perspective than that from which he is usually attacked. (13) Searle’s intuitive and commonsense approach serves as a healthy check on materialist ideology run amok. As with much good philosophy, some of what he does is to remind us, in ingenious and compelling ways, of what we in some sense already know. He emphasizes and reemphasizes consciousness and its essential subjectivity and is adamant that our understanding of the mind has to amount to an understanding of subjective consciousness. Chapters 1-3 and Chapter 9 develop a substantial argument against all traditional forms of materialism on that basis. So materialism is his most natural and immediate opposition.

But Searle also notes that he has “never, implicitly or explicitly, endorsed” property dualism (13), and suggests the doctrine is “crazy” (13). Indeed, one of the aims of his book is to show that “one can give a coherent account of the facts about the mind without endorsing any of the discredited Cartesian apparatus” (14). *Property* dualism, however, may well escape what discredit accrues to the Cartesian apparatus.

Searle’s biological naturalism faces this issue: if there is (only a causal and) not an ontological reduction of consciousness to physical features of the brain, why aren’t there fundamentally two sorts of property? When someone gets a paper cut, or stubs her toe, or bumps his “funny bone,” there is a distinctive mental state. According to Searle, the state in question is caused — and it is a good research project for cognitive science to find out exactly *how* — by physical phenomena in the brain. But those physical phenomena are not *identical* to the mental state, they don’t *constitute* it, they’re not *equivalent* to it: there are some essential differences between the mental state and the physical states. The mental state, for example, is essentially subjective and exhibits a first-personal ontology and this distinguishes it from the physical states that are its cause.

So Searle may protest too much his anti-dualism. It may be that what needs reconsideration is not so much the traditional opposition between *material* and *mental* as the supposed opposition between property dualism and our contemporary scientific world view. Searle at one points notes that “[w]hen we come to the proposition that reality is physical, we come to what is perhaps the crux of the whole discussion” (25). I agree; and I agree again when he notes just below that

if we are going to call anything that is made up of physical particles physical, then, trivially, everything in the world is physical. But to say that is not to deny that the world contains points scored in football games, interest rates, governments, and pains. All of these have their own way of existing — athletic, economic, political, mental, etc. (26). (14)

(11) See also (228): “we should expect... that advances in knowledge will give us not only new explanations, but new forms of explanation.”

(12) It may just prompt the proverbial “if wishes were horses, beggars would ride.”

(13) Moreover, the perspective in question would *accept* much of Searle’s critique (100-4) of Nagel’s approach and some of his critique of McGinn (104-5). For example, consciousness is not a “stuff” and the claim that we know about consciousness through introspection is an epistemic claim in principle separable from the metaphysical issue of the relation between mind and body. The direction from which I’m trying to bring pressure to bear, however, remains impressed with the need to understand the relation (“the link,” unless that has a special meaning that goes beyond the ordinary) between consciousness and the brain.

(14) This passage connects with material on pp. 127-8 (e.g. “The second neglected topic is society”) and with the last line of the book in which Searle claims that “we need to rediscover the social character of the mind” (248). See his *The Construction of Social Reality* (New York: The Free Press, 1995).

(15) Though dualists could also be understood to defend the weaker claim that there are fundamentally *at least* two kinds of property, leaving open the possibility that there are others irreducible to these two.

A question that remains is whether all of these "ways of existing" aren't best understood as basically of two kinds (or combinations thereof), mental and physical. (15)

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On *The Construction of Social Reality*, Barry BARNES.

This review will probably be atypical in the context of this volume in being replete with philosophical errors: it is written by a sociologist and not a philosopher. One of its aims is precisely to recommend *The Construction of Social Reality* (London, 1995) as a work of great value and importance for sociology as well as philosophy, and to express the hope that it may catalyse cooperative interaction between the two fields. Searle has been led toward fundamental sociological problems by the unfolding of his own agenda, and has brought both sustained effort and the insight of his distinctive perspective to bear upon them with impressive effect.

It is true that Searle has himself almost completely ignored the literature of the social sciences in his book. He explains that there is little in the classical writings of sociology relevant to his concerns; but he would have found more in more recent literature, not least in the work of some of his compatriots, the role theorists of the 1950's, for example, and the great functionalists Talcott Parsons and Robert Merton. There is, too, salient material in the sociology, and later in the ethnomethodology, inspired by Alfred Schutz, work which claims to identify the deficiencies in earlier accounts of statuses and of institutions. There is also much of direct relevance in the field of the sociology of knowledge: I have myself been advocating a perspective very closely analogous to Searle's in this last context for the best part of two decades, and have indicated its value in understanding both institutional stability and the nature and distribution of social power. (1) But it is not just the lack of any direct connection with its literature that may discourage social scientists from engaging with this book. There is also its reductionism, its effort to establish a world view derivative of physics and the fundamental natural sciences, something which, (in Europe more than the U.S.) many social scientists have invested enormous effort in combatting. And there is the lack of a proper empirical grounding for its claims, and its rendering of speech acts in a reified propositional form. Many of those in the social sciences who study language use

(1) T. PARSONS: *The Social System*, Free Press, New York, 1951 is perhaps the best source for Parsons on statuses and institutions; and the work of Merton on self-fulfilling prophesies which is particularly relevant here is in R.K. MERTON: *Social Theory and Social Structure*, Free Press, New York, 1968. The unsung hero who perhaps first points to a fully recursive view of social reality is D. KRISHNA: «The Self-Fulfilling Prophecy» and the Nature of Society», *American Sociological Review*, vol. 36 no. 4 pp. 1104-7. A. SCHUTZ: *Collected Papers*, Nijhoff, The Hague, 1964 and H. GARFINKEL: *Studies in Ethnomethodology*, Prentice Hall, Englewood Cliffs, initiated the phenomenological and ethnomethodological approaches mentioned in the text. My own work on social order constituted as distributions of self-referring knowledge is published as B. BARNES: 'Social Life as Bootstrapped Induction', *Sociology*, vol. 17, no. 4, pp. 524-45, and B. BARNES: *The Nature of Power*, University of Illinois Press, Chicago, 1988.