

Searle's Monadological Construction of Social Reality

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ABSTRACT. One aim of this paper is to make visible the connection between Searle's views on social reality and his general ontology, and at the same time to show that some peculiar features of his analysis of social reality are a natural outcome of his general ontology. The paper contains five sections. In the first Searle's naturalism is philosophically situated and its *differentia specifica* explained. Then, Searle's view that intentional states exist only in brains is presented. One might say that, according to Searle, each mind is, although caused by a material brain, a Leibnizian monad. This view is related to an important, but neglected, distinction that Searle himself has made between *requirement* conditions of satisfaction and *required* conditions of satisfaction. In the third section, it is pointed out that, necessarily, sometimes there has to exist some kind of *relation* of satisfaction between the two kinds of conditions of satisfaction. Searle, however, has never really discussed what this satisfaction relation may look like. The upshot of all the remarks is that, fourth, Searle's general ontology automatically implies an ontology of social reality according to which a social fact can only exist as a scattered aggregate whose items exist in the brains of the people who constitute it. Finally and fifth, I try to think with Searle against Searle. His monadological view of social reality cannot, Searle notwithstanding, be regarded as being close to the direct realism of common sense. Searle's realism is an indirect realism. However, if Searle's view that intentional states exist only in brains is rejected, then the rest of his ontology has features that may take us closer to a direct realism. Such a move, which in one respect takes us closer to common sense, takes us in another respect away from common sense. The title of the last section is "Social Reality and the Impossibility of Common Sense."

John Searle's views on the basic structure of social reality are firmly rooted in his general ontology. One aim of this paper is to make this connection visible and to show that some peculiar features of Searle's analysis of social reality are a natural outcome of his general ontology. Another aim is to show that the problem of direct realism versus indirect realism is of importance for the ontological analysis of social reality.

I Searle's Naturalism

THE TIME IS RIPE FOR SITUATING SEARLE'S ONTOLOGY. It has to be compared with the views of some other philosophers in order for its *specifica differentia* to come out clearly. *Biological naturalism* is the label that Searle himself seems to prefer to describe his system, but *non-reductionist naturalism* and *non-reductionist materialism* are equally pertinent.¹ But one should be careful when using old labels like these, since they might convey the impression that Searle is merely defending old doctrines. This is not true. His ontology is a new kind of naturalism and materialism.

There are some great realist "lone thinkers" of the 20th century who had argued long before Searle that the world contains several non-reducible properties or levels, both mental and material, that at bottom are based on the material properties postulated by microphysics. I am primarily thinking of Samuel Alexander, Nicolai Hartman, Michael Polanyi, and Mario Bunge;² but none of these philosophers has put forward an ontology just like Searle's. In contradistinction to Searle, they all lack a worked-out theory of intentionality. This is especially true of Mario Bunge and his ontology. He has no concept of intentionality at all, and Bunge is the only one among the four "allies" who, just like Searle, has both a classical pro-scientific attitude and a wholly non-religious philosophy.³

On the other hand, Searle's analysis of intentionality is not in its main structure new, either. It is very similar to the concept of intentionality that was made famous by the phenomenological tradition. In particular, Searle comes close to Edmund Husserl's analysis of intentionality.⁴ In short: Searle's non-reductionist ontology is in its general outlines similar to Mario Bunge's, but Searle's analysis of intentionality is very similar to that of Husserl. Therefore, one way to situate Searle's ontology is to regard Searle as having placed the concept of intentionality within a scientifically based naturalism, a naturalism in which intentional states are regarded as products of biological evolution. Bunge, as already said, completely lacks a concept of intentionality. Husserl, at first, as a methodological device, suspended all judgments on the natural sciences and their implicit ontologies (the famous so-called *epoché* of phenomenology), but later on he came to embrace a kind of "transcendental ego idealism." Searle's philosophy, I want to stress, is very different from both Bunge's and Husserl's. Searle's combination of a non-reductionist naturalism and a Husserl-like analysis of intentionality is rather unique and very interesting.⁵

Like Searle, I think that our empirical sciences speak in favor of the following theses: (1) that the spatiotemporal world contains many non-reducible properties, (2) that intentionality is one such generic property, and (3) that intentional states are a rather late product of biological evolution. However, in spite of this, I also think that Searle's ontology contains serious lacunas and has problems that will be highlighted in what follows. In particular, Searle's ontology of social reality looks very curious, and his general ontology contains its own variant of a classical metaphysical problem to which Searle has not, as yet, paid due attention.

II Searle and the Location of Intentional States

A PERSISTENT THEME IN SEARLE'S WRITINGS from *Intentionality* onwards is the view that mental states, nonintentional as well as intentional, exist in brains. Here are some quotations ranging from 1983 to 1997; the italicizations are Searle's:

mental states are both *caused* by the operation of the brain and *realized* in the structure of the brain (and the rest of the nervous system).⁶

*Pains and other mental phenomena just are features of the brain (and perhaps the rest of the central nervous system).*⁷

*Consciousness, in short, is a biological feature of human and certain animal brains. It is caused by neurobiological processes and is as much a part of the natural biological order as any other biological features such as photosynthesis, digestion, or mitosis.*⁸

It is indeed the case that all my mental life is inside my brain, and all your mental life is inside your brain, and so on for everybody else.⁹

Collective intentionality is a primitive notion in the sense that it does not reduce to individual intentionality. This is consistent with methodological individualism because collective intentionality exists entirely in the heads of individual agents.¹⁰

Searle argues philosophically that mental states are non-reducible, but he presents his view that mental states exist entirely in our heads¹¹ as something that is in no real need of *philosophical* comment. He seems to think that science delivers this view, but, in fact, some philosophy is needed here, too. From Descartes and onwards there has been great consensus among ontologists to the effect that matter (if it exists) exists in both space and time, but that mental phenomena exist only in time because they lack spatial extension and location (if space and time exist). Any consistent biological naturalism that contains a realist view of mental states has to deny this old assumption, and Searle's own version of biological naturalism is certainly consistent. According to Searle, mental phenomena are spatially located, and located in the brain.

For every entity that exists in space one can ask, literally, what its spatial extension is. Searle has to face this question in relation to mental states. And he has answered it, if only implicitly. The quotations above afford us his answer for the upper limit: *The spatial extension of mental phenomena does not exceed that of the brain.* Also, at least once, Searle has stated a lower limit for mental spatial extension: *Single synapses, receptors and neurons are too small to have mental features.*¹² Both limits are regarded as limits discovered by a fallible science.

Obviously, some mental states (e.g., feeling happy and being thirsty) lack a well-defined spatial location because they lack distinct boundaries, and it may be argued that if mental states lack well-defined spatial locations then they cannot exist in space. Searle has commented upon this argument and said that "If we had perfect knowledge of how the brain produced, for example, thirst or visual experiences, we would have no hesitation in assigning these experiences location in the brain."¹³ But then he says that *even if* mental states lack well-defined borders, they can exist as "global features of the brain or of some large brain area such as the cortex," and "they would still be treated as global features of a spatial entity, viz., the *brain* or some brain area such as the *cortex*."¹⁴ As far as I can see, Searle has committed himself to the following three views:

- (a) all mental states are *localized* in the brain;
- (b) the *spatial extension* of mental states is not larger than the brain and not smaller than single neurons;
- (c) we do not know at the moment whether or not mental states have well-defined *spatial borders*.¹⁵

Searle's views on the spatial localization and the spatial extension of mental states have repercussions in other areas of his ontology. In particular, they affect his analysis of intentional states. I will present some of the points I want to make by means of a constructed dialogue between me (the interrogator) and Searle (insofar as I understand him).

First question: How do my mental phenomena, which are located in my brain, manage to relate to the world outside my brain?

Searle: By means of intentionality, as in thinking of a specific material thing or in perceiving it.

Second question: What kind of structure is at work when I am thinking of my old father who is about 600 miles away?

Searle: In the psychological mode of thinking you represent your father by means of an intentional content, and intentional states, like this act of thinking, have conditions of satisfaction (c-o-s). All representations are unities of a psychological mode and an intentional content, unities that have conditions of satisfaction.

Third question: Am I then in some kind of spatial contact with my father?

Searle: No, you cannot possibly be. You and your brain are here, but your father is far away. However, you are by means of your mental and intentional act directed towards your father. An intentional state has *two* kinds of conditions of satisfaction. One of them, the requirement c-o-s (i.e., the meaning of your thought), is spatially internal to your thought, whereas the other, the required c-o-s (i.e., the conditions that are required in order to make your thought have an actual referent, your father), is spatially external to your thought.¹⁶ We all know that we can think of persons and things that exist outside our thoughts and outside our brain.

Fourth question: When you and I are thinking of the same thing, what do we share?

Searle: Nothing spatially, but we are directed at the same thing. For some reason we happen to think of the same thing at the same time.

Fifth question: What kind of structure is at work when I am visiting my father and I perceive him in front of me?

Searle: In the psychological mode of perceiving, your father is represented by means of an intentional content. Representations, however, may differ in kind, and this kind of representation, which contains visual experiences, had perhaps better be called "presentation."¹⁷ Since presentations constitute a species of representation, they are unities of a psychological mode and an intentional content, and they have conditions of satisfaction. In this respect there is no difference between thinking and perceiving.

Sixth question: Do I then in this presentation have *direct access* to my father?

Searle: Yes, you have.

Seventh question: What do you mean? Am I in some kind of visual spatial contact with him the way I can tactually touch a thing?

Searle: No. Like all your mental states and events, this perception of yours is located in your brain. And, of course, your brain is spatially distinct from your father. But you are directed at your father. Furthermore, you are directed at your father as being the cause of your perception of him. Nothing of the sort appears in thinking. Presentational intentionality is causally self-referential. You may also put it like this: In veridical perception the required c-o-s, which are spatially external to the perception, cause the intentional state (the perception) with its requirement c-o-s, which are spatially internal to it. In your case, your father, who is external to your brain, causes your visual experiences, which are internal to your brain.

Eighth question: So, you make a distinction between having direct access¹⁸ and being in some kind of spatial contact?

Searle: Yes and no. *Yes*, because the intentional state in question is spatially separated from its intentional object. *No*, because direct access can be regarded as a special kind of spatial contact. Direct access is direct access to objects in space and time.

Ninth question: OK, but when you say that a certain perceiver has direct access to an external material object, you only mean that the perceiver perceives an intentional object that is a main and immediate cause of his perception. Is that right?

Searle: Yes.

Tenth question: When two persons, P and Q, look at each other, the following four statements are all true descriptions of the situation: (1) the *mental event* that is P's looking at Q is wholly located in the brain of P, and the mental event that is Q's looking at P is wholly located in the brain of Q; (2) the *intentional object*¹⁹ of P's looking is outside the brain of P, and the intentional object of Q's looking is outside the brain of Q; (3) P and Q have *direct access* to each other; (4) P and Q are not in any other relevant sense in *spatial contact* with each other. Have I understood your position?

Searle: Yes.

Searle has explicitly said that he thinks that his account of visual perception is "a version of 'naive' (direct, common sense) realism."²⁰ But in my view this claim cannot be justified. His realism is an indirect realism. In the unphilosophical moments of my life, I take myself in veridical seeing to be in direct visual contact with things that exist outside myself. As a philosopher, I think that self-consciousness is necessarily connected with spatial awareness. In order to be able to be aware of myself, I have to be able to perceive the bodies of other persons as distinct from my own body and at a spatial distance from me.²¹ However, despite this spatial distance, I take myself to be able to see across such distances. I am in tactual contact with a thing only when there is no space between my body and the thing in question, but I can be in visual *contact at a distance*. I am in visual contact with a thing as soon as there is nothing visible between me and the thing. In visual veridical perception I am, so to speak, outside of my body. People now and then talk about having "eye contact" with each other. In a similar sense we can also talk about having "visual contact" with material things. In a tactual contact our body is next to the thing we are in contact with, but in a visual contact this is not the case; and I do not think that the concept of visual contact is a metaphor. However, that there can exist anything that corresponds to it is denied in Searle's account of veridical perception.²²

In everyday life I situate some of my mental experiences in my head, headaches and thoughts for instance, but not my visual perceptions, not my "seeings." According to Searle, however, *all* my mental states, nonintentional as well as intentional, are situated within my head, or, more precisely, in the brain. A veridical perception, for instance, is not only partly caused by the brain of the perceiver, it is realized and *exists wholly in* the brain of the perceiver. A veridical perception is a macro property only of the brain, even though it is partly caused also by material processes outside the brain.

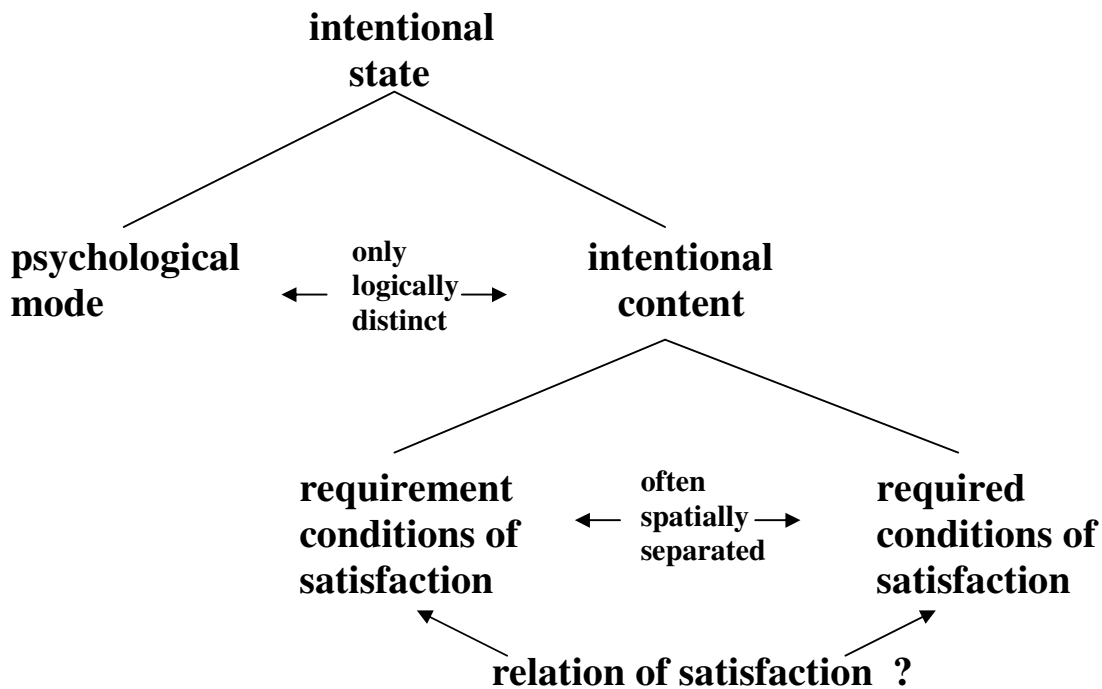
In section one I said that Searle's analysis of intentional states is similar to that of Husserl.²³ Now, I would like to stress a dissimilarity. Searle answers the question "Where in the spatiotemporal world of the natural sciences do intentional states exist?" by saying "in the brain." Husserl, however, explicitly refused to give this question a philosophical answer. It belongs to the kind of question that he thought philosophy should put out of action by means of his method of epoché.

Does Searle's answer then turn him into a property dualist? In one sense it does, but in another it does not. Searle regards intentional states as radically distinct from all kinds of "brute physical facts," and in that sense he is a property dualist.²⁴ But, nonetheless, he regards intentional states as being, like physical properties and relations, located in *space*; and in that sense he is not a property dualist.²⁵

III
Searle and the Relation of Satisfaction

AS WAS SAID IN THE CONSTRUCTED DIALOGUE IN THE LAST SECTION, intentional states have two kinds of main components. Just as all speech acts are unities of an illocutionary force and a propositional content, so all intentional states are unities of a psychological mode and an intentional content. The intentional content, in turn, necessarily has conditions of satisfaction, and there are two kinds of such conditions, requirement c-o-s and required c-o-s.²⁶ The psychological mode and intentional content of a particular intentional state are only “logically distinct,” in other words, only in thought can they be separated as being two aspects of the unity that is the intentional state in question. The requirement c-o-s and the required c-o-s, on the other hand, are not only logically distinct. They can be spatially distinct and exist independently of each other. When in fact this is the case, there must exist some kind of relation between them (see figure 1).

Figure 1:



If Searle had used Husserl’s method of epoché, he would have needed only requirement conditions of satisfaction, and then the question of what kind of relations there can be between *requirement* and *required* conditions of satisfaction would not arise. However, Searle’s ontological enterprise definitely needs two kinds of conditions of satisfaction.

Let me repeat what the distinctions now mentioned revolve around. I will use two examples. In the first, one is *thinking* to oneself that a certain material object has some specific properties; in the second, one is *perceiving* the same object with the same properties. Both these intentional states, the belief and the perception, are directed at the same state of affairs, the object-with-some-specific-properties. In the first case, however, one is directed in the psychological mode of thinking, and in the second case one is directed in the psychological mode of perceiving. The intentional content of one’s thought is the *meaning* of one’s thought

by means of which one represents the object. But the intentional content of one's perception is made up of the *visual experiences* by means of which the object is presented. The intentional content is what, or that which, makes one directed towards the object in question, be it meanings or visual experiences or something else; the psychological mode constitutes the way one is directed towards the object.

When one *thinks* of the object, the requirement conditions of satisfaction (= the meanings) are both logically internal and spatially internal to one's intentional state, which, in turn, is spatially internal to one's brain. However, the required conditions of satisfaction (= the existence of the object with its properties) are logically external to one's intentional state and spatially external to one's brain. If one's belief is true, the required conditions of satisfaction are its truth-maker. Similarly, when one *perceives* the object with its properties, the requirement conditions of satisfaction (= the visual experiences) are logically internal to one's intentional state and spatially internal to one's brain, but the required conditions of satisfaction (= the object with some specific properties) are external both to one's intentional state and to one's brain. If one's perception is veridical, the required conditions of satisfaction are its veridicality-maker.

A very important part of this analysis is the claim that in the case of thinking one is not *directed at the meanings*, nor, analogously, in the case of perception *directed at the visual experiences*. In both cases one is directed towards the object; in the case of thinking one is directed by means of a meaning, and in the case of visual perception by means of some visual experiences.

In intentional states like thinking of and perceiving external objects, the requirement conditions of satisfaction can be called *brain-internal c-o-s*. This is a fitting label, although Searle himself does not use it, since these conditions of satisfaction are spatially internal to the brain and its intentional states. The required conditions of satisfaction, on the other hand, can be called *brain-external c-o-s* since, mostly, they are spatially external to the brain and its intentional states. Always and everywhere, where there is an intentional state there are brain-internal c-o-s. However, there are not always external c-o-s. If one's belief is false, there are no external c-o-s. Similarly, if one's perception is illusory, then there simply are no external c-o-s. This is part and parcel of Searle's analysis of intentionality; a part with which, by the way, I fully agree.²⁷ According to this analysis, there can in case of false beliefs and illusory perceptions be no relation whatsoever between requirement c-o-s (= brain-internal c-o-s) and required c-o-s (= brain-external c-o-s). And the reason is extremely simple: there are no required c-o-s. On the other hand, in the case of intentional states like *true* beliefs and *veridical* perceptions there must exist (external) required c-o-s, that is, there must exist truth-makers and veridicality-makers, respectively.

Since the internal c-o-s of true beliefs and veridical perceptions always exist inside a brain but the corresponding external c-o-s exist outside the brain, and it is the external c-o-s that make the intentional states satisfied (true, veridical), there must in these cases exist some kind of relation between the internal and the external c-o-s. Note that I am *not* now saying that *all* intentional states have to be relational. Searle's ontology does not contain any Meinongian externally subsistent required c-o-s to which false, illusory, and fictional intentional states are related.²⁸ If the concept of relation is defined in such a way that a relation cannot possibly exist if not all of its relata exist, then Searle's analysis of intentional states is a non-relational one. If, on the other hand, one defines *relation* in such a way (like, e.g., Brentano²⁹) that one-term relations are possible, then, according to Searle's analysis, intentionality can be a one-term relation. I will use *relation* in the former sense.

What I am trying to make clear is that Searle's analysis of intentional states implies that the internal c-o-s of some intentional states, like true beliefs and veridical perceptions, have to be *relata* of relations whose other relata are the external c-o-s. There must in these cases exist a *relation* by means of which the external c-o-s *make* the internal c-o-s satisfied (true,

veridical). Searle has explicitly talked both about the satisfaction (or success) of intentional states and about *conditions* of satisfaction, but he has never used the term “*relation* of satisfaction” (again, see figure 1). Implicitly, however, he has put forward views on what this relation can be like.

The problem what kind of relations relations of satisfaction can be is the counterpart in Searle’s ontology to the classical metaphysical problem of how subjects by means of mental states can be related to the external world of objects. In my view, Searle’s non-relational concept of intentionality can only do half of the job that is needed. The other half must in the case of true beliefs be supplied by his remarks around the *correspondence* relation within the correspondence theory of truth (which he defends), and in the case of veridical perceptions by the relation called *direct access* that was mentioned in section two. In neither case, however, does Searle say anything really illuminating.

That a person in a veridical perception has direct access to a certain object means to Searle only that the person has an intentional state whose intentional object is a main and immediate cause of his perception. The relation of satisfaction (or: relation of making veridical) is here explicated as *only* a certain causal relation between two entities that are separated in space. However, since a veridical perception has two main causes, the perceived state of affairs and a brain state, Searle has to explain why the satisfaction relation only has one of these causes as a relatum. Something is at least missing in Searle’s analysis.

With regard to sentences, statements, and beliefs, Searle talks about a relation of correspondence. This relation, however, Searle often presents as a nominalist construction that makes the correspondence theory of truth a mere tautology:

We need a verb to name the variety of ways in which sentences when true, relate to facts in a way that makes them true; and that verb, among others, is “correspond.”³⁰

“Corresponds to the facts” is just a shorthand for the variety of ways in which statements can accurately represent how things are . . .³¹

The correspondence theory is trivially true, but it misleads us because we think . . . “correspondence” must name some very general relation of resemblance, or at least isomorphism, between statements and the complex entities that are facts.³²

The hardest thing to keep in mind in this whole discussion is that we are dealing with a small bunch of tautologies and their entailments.³³

Even if Searle were right in these his claims, and there is no general relation of correspondence, this fact would not solve “the correspondence question.” Instead it implies that there are many different kinds of satisfaction relations. And Searle has not said anything about any of these relations. Frederick Stoutland has noted that Searle uses *facts* in two different ways.³⁴ Sometimes, as in the last quotations, *facts* merely means satisfied (internal) truth conditions, but often *facts* mean some kind of objects in the world. Searle’s oscillation between these two meanings gives rise of course to a similar oscillation in his way of speaking about correspondence. Sometimes it is an empty relation (as in the quotations above); sometimes it justifies substantive inferences from true statements to the structure of the world. In the latter case true statements describe their independently existing truth-makers. Here comes another quotation.

The assignment of “true” to statements is not arbitrary. In general, statements are true in virtue of conditions in the world that are not parts of the statement. Statements are made true by how things are in the world that is independent of the statement.³⁵

It is quite astonishing that Searle, who has written a lot about the ontological nature and structure of intentional states and of social facts, refuses to take seriously some classical metaphysical questions about the nature of natural facts. I am primarily thinking of the questions of whether there can be negative, disjunctive, general, and hypothetical facts, questions that in Anglo-American philosophy have been discussed all the way from Bertrand Russell to David Armstrong. Searle dismisses them by relying on his empty notion of fact. He merely says: "For every true statement there is a corresponding fact because that is how the words are defined."³⁶ When Searle is *not* using his empty notions of *facts* and *correspondence*, his view is that if a statement is true then its (brain-internal) *requirement* conditions of satisfaction, which specify a state of affairs, are *satisfied* because the state of affairs that constitute the (brain-external) *required* conditions of satisfaction obtain.

In my view, the basic source of the ambiguity in Searle's analysis of the correspondence theory of truth is the fact that he has never regarded his own distinction between *requirement* conditions of satisfaction and *required* conditions of satisfaction as being of any importance. He made the distinction, but he has never really made use of it. From the start he looked upon the distinction as merely an innocent instance of "the usual process-product ambiguity,"³⁷ but from an ontological point of view there is much more to it.

A term that does have the usual process-product ambiguity is *construction*. It may denote the mental and/or material *process* of constructing, say, a house. Or, it may denote the ready-made material *product*, the house itself. Here, the product is the product of the process. But with respect to conditions of satisfaction for veridical perceptions and true beliefs, it is the other way round. The product, the (brain-external) required c-o-s exists quite independently of the process, the (brain-internal) requirement c-o-s. And when there is a causal process involved, as in veridical perception, it is the product (the brain-external c-o-s) that causes the process (the brain-internal c-o-s). This is an odd and very misleading way of talking about products and related processes.

Searle's way of handling his distinction between requirement conditions of satisfaction and required conditions of satisfaction is not innocent. It makes the *relation* of satisfaction invisible.

IV

Searle's Monadology

I STARTED THIS PAPER WITH A BRIEF COMPARISON between Searle and some contemporary philosophers. Now I will briefly compare Searle's ontology with that of Leibniz. This great old metaphysician occurs a couple of times in Searle's own writings. In *Speech Acts*,³⁸ Leibniz is mentioned when Searle is discussing substitution *salva veritate*; in *Intentionality*³⁹ and in *Minds, Brains and Science*,⁴⁰ Leibniz is used as a foil for Searle's own view that mental states can have physical causes. Leibniz believed that mental states can only be caused by other mental states. However, in spite of this difference, there is in another respect a very interesting similarity between Searle and Leibniz.

According to Leibniz, the world is made up of indivisible, but nevertheless complex, self-sufficient units that he called monads. Each monad is a kind of mental power point that produces perceptions, imaginations, thoughts, and other mental phenomena. No monad, however, can be part of, or be in contact with, any other monad. *Every monad is wholly enclosed within itself*. Since some of the monads correspond to what we usually think of as persons, Leibniz might be taken to imply that our common sense view that all of us in our veridical perceptions perceive the same world is in *every* respect mistaken. But that is not quite true. He claimed that there exists a Pre-Established Harmony between the monads.

There is a law to the effect that everything that is perceived in one monad is in some way *mirrored* in all the others. Of course, all the reflected images are numerically different and there is no common world in the ordinary sense. About the relation of mirroring itself, Leibniz had not much to say.

In Searle's non-reductive materialist ontology, our *minds*—but not our bodies—come out just as self-enclosed as they do in Leibniz's idealistic ontology. Since, according to Searle, minds are spatially enclosed in brains and two brains cannot be in the same place at the same time, neither can two minds. According to Leibniz, the whole world is an aggregate of monads. According to Searle, the whole *social* world is a scattered plurality of intentional states that exist in brains. Since Searle takes social reality to be observer-relative, he has to regard social facts the same way he regards all other mental phenomena, and that is as existing only in our heads. And he is as clear about this as an author can possibly be.⁴¹

Searle's general ontology entails that a social fact like a we-intention of a small community consisting of 25 persons can only exist as a scatter of 25 intentions, each existing in one brain. In each brain the corresponding intentional state has the intentional content "*We* intend to . . .". With respect to this analysis, Anthonie Meijers has correctly remarked that it is at least too weak. Searle's analysis of we-intentions does not take account of the fact that such intentions have to be "between" the persons involved, "out there in the open," and that the persons involved should have a "shared awareness."⁴² It could also be put like this: *A real we-intention has to be caused in the right way and contain some kind of mutual knowledge*. It is not enough that merely each of the persons who make up the community in question has a qualitatively identical we-intention, but that is the impression Searle conveys. If he had started to try to remedy this defect of his analysis, then he would have encountered Leibniz's problem with "mirroring." All the 25 we-intentions just mentioned have to mirror each other in some way; being qualitatively identical cannot be enough.

When there is a true we-intention, all the persons involved know that all the others have the same intention. And that means that they have to have *satisfied* cognitive intentional states directed towards each other. This means that Searle, in order to explicate the "mirroring" that a true we-intention requires, also has to say something about the relation of satisfaction. Searle's ontology contains, implicitly, a distinction between veridical and illusory we-intentions. I have a veridical reflective we-intention when I think "We intend to . . .," and all the others in my community have a similar intention; I have an illusory reflective we-intention when I think "We intend to . . .," and the others in my community do not have a similar intention. Searle, however, has not discussed this distinction. And my guess is that this depends on the fact that he has never, from an ontological point of view, taken relations of satisfaction seriously.

V

Social Reality and the Impossibility of Common Sense

SEARLE'S MONADOLOGICAL CONSTRUCTION OF SOCIAL REALITY differs drastically from our unreflective everyday conception of social reality. Naive realism is not monadological, but Searle's social ontology is. They are in conflict. I have mentioned this fact in section two, after the constructed dialogue in which I presented Searle's analysis of veridical perception of the external world. And this conflict does not disappear when we move from veridical perceptions of natural facts to veridical perceptions of social facts. On the contrary, it becomes even more challenging. I find it almost impossible to believe that I have never, neither in visual nor in tactual perception, been in direct contact with any of the persons that I like.

Applied to kissing and other nice things done intentionally together with a beloved one, Searle's analysis means the following. In such situations one's material body is literally in spatial contact with the beloved's body, but one's perceptions are wholly in one's own head, and the beloved's perceptions are wholly in the beloved's head. My mind is mine and her mind is hers, and never do they meet; not even partially!

Monadological thinking looks very strange when applied to human relations. Even though I do not think that common sense contains a completely true ontology or is a final epistemological arbiter, I think it is important to see clearly the conflict between naive realism and Searle's ontology. Social scientists, who in my experience usually are naive realists, may falsely think that Searle is merely bringing out into the open some details of views that they have embraced all along.

In the preceding sections I have tried to show that Searle's monadological analysis of social reality is an inevitable outcome of his view that all intentional states exist only in brains, and that his belief that he is close to common sense is due to his neglect of the relation of satisfaction that is implicitly present in his ontology. Searle's realism is in fact an indirect realism, whereas common sense, including the ontological common sense of social scientists, contains a kind of direct realism. One possible response here is merely to say: "Enlighten the social scientists of the true ontological nature of social reality." Another possible response is to take a new look at direct realism, and a quick such look is what will end this paper.

Interestingly enough, direct realism is not as far away from Searle's actual analysis of mind as it may seem. Searle is not a substance dualist; he does not regard consciousness as a "stuff." There is according to Searle no spiritual substance that is mixed with, blended with, dissolved in, or juxtaposed with parts of the brain. Mental states are macro level *properties* of physical systems. As pointed out in section two, Searle has taken it for granted that questions about the spatial location and the spatial extension of mental states are purely scientific questions. Furthermore, they are questions to which perceptual psychology and the neurobiological sciences have already found the answer: Mental states exist in brains. However, *if Searle drops "the mind-in-the-brain thesis," then nothing else in his general ontology contradicts the view that a visual veridical perception is a kind of property, a mental feature, whose spatial extension covers the whole physical system consisting of the perceiving brain, the perceived object, and the space in between them.* If veridical perceptions are like this, direct realism is true. The perceiver is in spatial contact with part of the perceived object.

If one's ontology says that mental phenomena are extended in space, one needs specific philosophical reasons in order to defend the view that mental phenomena of human beings are always spatially confined within the brain. Even if dreams and hallucinations are wholly located in the brain, other mental phenomena, such as veridical perceptions, may in principle have a much larger spatial extension. It may be that dreams and hallucinations should be seen as a *mind-body* problem, but veridical perceptions as more broadly a *mind-nature* problem. Veridical seeing is perhaps a mental property that emerges on and is spatially extended over the whole system of perceiver, perceived, and the perceptual causal chain. What such an hypothesis amounts to can be seen through the way it affects one of the classical arguments from illusion.

If we assume that veridical seeing is extended from the perceiver to the perceived, but that a corresponding dream is spatially confined to the brain, then dream-perception has to be ascribed an essence that is not identical with its appearance. The real spatial extension of a dream-perception differs from the perceived extension. In the argument from illusion against direct realism that is based on the existence of dreams and hallucinations, it is simply taken for granted that many dreams and hallucinations *are*, and not only appear to be, qualitatively identical with the corresponding veridical perceptions. But if mental phenomena are ascribed spatial extension, this presupposition puts the cart before the horse. If direct realism is true, then the spatial extensions of a veridical perception and a corresponding dream have to differ;

in other words, they cannot be qualitatively identical. A direct realism in which intentional states are regarded as matter-dependent properties is not refuted by the ordinary arguments from illusion. What is refuted is only the epistemological claim that we can infallibly know when we are in direct contact with an external thing or a person. In a direct realism, the perceived cohesiveness of social reality need not be declared an illusion in the name of a social monadology.

One important thing has, however, to be noted. Common sense seems to belong to the kind of mysterious entity in which the mending or curing of one deficiency automatically creates another deficiency. A philosophically and scientifically reflected direct realism cannot possibly save the whole of common sense. One of the curious consequences of such a realism, neglected by most direct realists, is that in veridical perception one is perceiving backwards in time. If, as modern science tells us, light takes time to go from an object to our brain, then we cannot possibly see the object as it is at the moment of the veridical perception.⁴³ The task here, however, is not to make a thorough discussion of direct realism, but to use the possibility of it to highlight Searle's thinking. What is the upshot?

Searle's ontology can be revised. His radical ontological claim that mental states have, *literally*, spatial extension opens up philosophical opportunities that Searle himself has not investigated. Some of these opportunities point towards direct realism. Pursuing them may take us towards a more plausible picture of the ontological structure of our social reality than what Searle has offered us. Today, it is impossible to say whether Searle's ontology is as a whole coherent although in conflict with the direct realism of common sense, or, whether apart from the latter conflict, his ontology is incoherent as well. As long as Searle has not offered us a more detailed analysis of the ontological nature of the relation (or relations) of satisfaction, we simply cannot judge.

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Notes

1. In the book, *The Mystery of Consciousness* (New York: New York Review Books 1997) Searle writes in the preface that “[t]he way out is to reject both dualism and materialism, and accept that consciousness is both a qualitative, subjective ‘mental’ phenomena, and at the same time a natural part of the ‘physical’ world” (xiv). To my mind, it would have been better if Searle had written *substance dualism* instead of only *dualism* and *reductive materialism* instead of only *materialism*. The distinction between *substance dualism* and *property dualism* will be discussed at the end of the next section.

2. See, e.g., S. Alexander, *Space, Time and Deity* vols. 1 and 2, London: MacMillan 1920; N. Hartmann, *New Ways of Ontology*, Westport: Greenwood Press 1975; M. Polanyi, *Personal Knowledge*, New York: Harper 1964; M. Bunge, *Method, Model and Matter*, Dordrecht: Reidel 1973.

3. See Bunge's monumental *Treatise on Basic Philosophy* vols. 1–7, Dordrecht: Reidel 1974–1985.
4. Cf. footnote 23.
5. The question of whether Searle's view that intentionality is not reducible to physical properties implies that Searle is a *property dualist* will be answered at the end of the next section.
6. J. Searle, *Intentionality*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1983: 265.
7. J. Searle, *Minds, Brains and Science*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press 1984: 19.
8. J. Searle, *The Rediscovery of the Mind*, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press 1994: 90.
9. J. Searle, *The Construction of Social Reality*, New York: Free Press 1995: 25.
10. J. Searle, "Précis of *The Construction of Social Reality*," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* LVII (1997): 427–28.
11. I will leave the nervous system out of account.
12. *The Rediscovery of the Mind*: 55–6.
13. *Intentionality*: 270–1.
14. *Intentionality*: 271.
15. Today, living in the world of quantum mechanics with its principle of uncertainty, we cannot even take it for granted that all material states have a well-defined spatial location.
16. *Intentionality*: 10–13 and 122.
17. *Intentionality*: 46.
18. *Intentionality*: 45–6.
19. Note that according to Searle: "Visual experience is never simply *of* an object but rather it must always be *that* such and such is the case." (*ibid.*: 40) I do agree.
20. *Intentionality*: 57.
21. This position, with roots in thinkers such as Kant, Hegel, and Mead, is well argued in J. Malpas, "Space and Sociality," *International Journal of Philosophical Studies* 5 (1997): 53–79.
22. Searle's conflict with common sense has at least one terminological consequence. He has to twist the ordinary concept of presentation. Normally, we talk of veridical perceptions as presentations *in contrast to* representations such as thoughts and pictures. Something cannot be *both* a presentation and a representation. But that is what happens in Searle's conceptual apparatus. In Searle's vocabulary, veridical perceptions are both presentations and representations; see the answer to the fifth question in the dialogue above.
23. Now I can add that Searle's distinction between *psychological mode* and *intentional content* corresponds to Husserl's distinction between *act quality* and *act matter* in *Logical Investigations*, vol. 2, New York: The Humanities Press 1970: part V: 20, and between *noematic how* and *noematic what* in *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and Phenomenological Philosophy*, Dordrecht: Kluwer 1982: 94 and 97.
24. Searle is fond of saying that consciousness/mind is *both* mental and physical (see, e.g., *The Rediscovery of the Mind*: 13, and *The Construction of Social Reality*: 9), but nonetheless he has been forced to make a mutually exclusive distinction between "brute physical facts"

and “mental facts” (see *The Construction of Social Reality*: 121). Mental facts are, in turn, divided into intentional and nonintentional ones.

25. I think this brings home the same point that David Sosa has expressed as follows: “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.” See Sosa, “Slouching Towards Dualism,” *Revue Internationale de Philosophie* 55, (June 2001): 257-63. The contemporary scientific world view demands that everything that exists exists in the spatiotemporal world, whereas according to Descartes’ substance dualism, mental substances exist only in time but not in space. If property dualism is defined as the analogous claim that mental properties exist only in time, then N. Hartmann, but not Searle, is a true property dualist. Hartmann, who was mentioned in section one, has an ontology in which the mental exists only in time, although it is for its existence dependent upon matter that exists in both space and time. However, I think there is no reason to restrict the concept of property dualism in this way. It seems to me as if unclear terminology is partly responsible for the overheated exchange between Searle and David Chalmers that followed upon Searle’s review of Chalmers’s *The Conscious Mind* (New York: Oxford University Press 1996); see Searle, Dennett, and Chalmers, *The Mystery of Consciousness*, New York: New York Review of Books 1997, chapter 6. In his book Chalmers wrote that Searle “is perhaps best seen as a property dualist” (376), and with that I can agree. On the other hand, Chalmers says that property dualism is not compatible with materialism; this is true only with respect to *reductive* materialism. To my mind, both of them can be called property dualists and non-reductive materialists. It is on top of this common ground that their quarrel about the reasons for panpsychism takes place.

26. *Intentionality*: 13.

27. The same goes for Husserl. See, e.g., *Logical Investigations*, vol. 2, New York: The Humanities Press 1970: part V: 11.

28. This view of Searle is criticized in H. Hochberg, *Complexes and Consciousness*, Stockholm: Thales 1999: 120–25.

29. For a very brief presentation of Brentano’s views on relations see S. Körner and R. M. Chisholm’s introduction (xiii–xv) to F. Brentano, *Philosophical Investigations on Space, Time and the Continuum*, London: Croom Helm 1988.

30. *The Construction of Social Reality*: 203.

31. *The Construction of Social Reality*: 213.

32. *The Construction of Social Reality*: 213–14.

33. *The Construction of Social Reality*: 214.

34. F. Stoutland, “Making True,” in R. Sliwinski (ed.), *Philosophical Crumbs*, Uppsala: Uppsala University 1999: 235–47. In particular, see pages 244–46.

35. *The Construction of Social Reality*: 219.

36. *The Construction of Social Reality*: 214.

37. *Intentionality*: 13; repeated in *The Construction of Social Reality*: 211.

38. J. Searle, *Speech Acts*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1969: 97 and 102.

39. J. Searle, *Intentionality*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1983: 267–69.

40. J. Searle, *Minds, Brains and Science*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press 1984: 44–45.

41. See the figures in *The Construction of Social Reality*: 26.

42. Meijers, *Speech Acts, Communication and Collective Intentionality*, PhD diss., University of Leiden, 1994: 44 and 58, 44, and 141, respectively.

⁴³43. I have written more extensively about this and similar problems in I. Johansson, “Perception as the Bridge Between Nature and Life-World,” in C. Bengt-Pedersen & N. Thomassen (eds.), *Nature and Life-World*, Odense: Odense University Press 1998: 113–37.