How Philosophy and Science May Interact:

A Case Study of Works by John Searle and Hernando de Soto .

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1. Science and philosophy

Many philosophers have taken philosophy to be an enterprise that is wholly independent of the substantial content of the sciences. Some such philosophers (especially rationalists such as Descartes and Hegel) have placed philosophy above science, claiming both that all philosophical problems can be solved independently of science and that science has to stay within a framework laid down by philosophy. Other such philosophers (especially the logical positivists) have placed philosophy below science, regarding philosophy as an enterprise which can at best contribute to sharpening the conceptual weapons that scientists are using in their struggle to capture the structure of the world. In my opinion, both views are wrong. In what follows I want to argue, in relation to the work of John Searle and Hernando De Soto, that philosophy and science are overlapping disciplines. Superficially, De Soto may look only like a social reformer, but his acute and innovative analysis of parts of the modern world makes him just as much a social scientist. I will show more precisely that philosophers can help scientists to see certain abstract ontological relations more clearly, and scientists can help philosophers to see more clearly what might be called the limits of the scientific significance of their philosophy.

The aim of the paper is four-fold:

(i) to clarify the philosophical-scientific idea that I think De Soto took over from Searle's speech act theory and ontology of social reality (section 3);

(ii) to show that De Soto could have learnt a little more from Searle, even though this extra insight would not affect De Soto's economic-political proposal (section 4);

(iii) to show, with the help of De Soto's economic-political proposal, that Searle's speech act theory contains an abstraction (so-called "misfiring acts" are disregarded), which, if not noted, would lead to an overestimation of how much help social scientists can get from speech act theory (section 5);

(iv) to show, again using De Soto, that Searle's ontology of social reality has, even from a purely ontological perspective, a too restricted character (section 6).

2. The views of De Soto and Searle

Real science, like real philosophy, is hard, and it may sometimes be hard not only to find a solution but even to state precisely what the problem is with which one is dealing. Usually, however, when the solution is found then the problem comes into sharper focus too. In relation to the work of De Soto and Searle that is relevant to us here (see the reference list), we have reached a point where it is easy to specify both problems and solutions. Here comes a brief presentation.

Hernando De Soto

Problem: What is to be done in order to make it possible for the poor in the Third World to create better and wealthier societies?

Solution: According to De Soto's analysis, poor people, at least the poor in the big cities of the Third World, are just as entrepreneurial as the respected entrepreneurs of the rich part of the world. The main cause of the poverty mentioned is not, therefore, to be found in the cultural attitudes of these poor. The cause is to be found rather in the institutional reality in which they live. Certainly, they live in capitalist societies, but their primary social setting is in a sense not capitalist enough. They both own and save; but what they own cannot be turned into capital. They own only in an informal way; their social setting does not contain the kind of property system that is a necessary requirement for real economic development. The thing to do is to turn these informal ownership structures into modern legally formalized property rights that make it possible easily to sell and buy what is owned. In such systems one can buy and sell things by means of making changes merely in some representations of what is owned. Therefore: impose a modern formal system of property rights on the assets that the poor in an informal way already own.

Background ideas: Material things that are formally owned can be seen, but the fact *that* they are owned cannot be directly seen. In order to come to know such a thing, one has to look at the corresponding ownership representations, at documents and records. In a sense, therefore, capital has a merely linguistic reality. It can be seen only in its representations; in itself it is invisible. This fact is part of "the mystery of capital". The idea that social facts and objects can have such a peculiar character, De Soto (2001, pp. 234-235) says he has become clear about through reading philosophers, Daniel Dennett, John Searle, Michel Foucault, and Karl

Popper, and some old classical economic thinkers such as Adam Smith and Karl Marx (De Soto 2001, pp. 38-42).

John Searle

<u>Problem</u>: How can there be an *objective* social reality (i.e., a world of money, property, marriage, governments, elections, football games, cocktail parties, law courts, etc.) in a world that consists entirely of physical entities?

<u>Solution</u>: According to Searle's general ontology, there is only one world, our spatiotemporal world. Everything that exists exists in this world. The existentially basic entities are material entities. Some material entities, however, at least human organisms, can have a very special feature. Apart from properties such as having a shape, having a volume, having a mass, and having causal capacities, they can also have intentional states. Intentional states differ from those studied by the natural sciences in being in a certain sense *directed* towards entities that (normally) are distinct from themselves. Perceptions, speech acts, and desires are examples of intentional states. In contrast even to physically directed magnitudes (vectors) such as velocities and forces, intentional states have *conditions of satisfaction*; for details about this contrast, see (Johansson 1992). When a perception is veridical it is satisfied, when an assertion is true it is satisfied, and when a desire has got its desired object it is satisfied. When a group of people have the same kind and object of directedness, there is a collective intentionality. In such a context (C), material entities (X) can be ascribed "status functions" (Y) such as being money, being owned, being married, etc. The logical structure of *institutional* facts (which make up a subset of all *social* facts) can be captured, Searle says, by the formula

- "X counts as Y in C."

There can be an objective social reality because (i) some material entities (human organisms) can have intentional states and, in turn, (ii) can by means of collective intentional states impose status functions on, in principle, any kind of material entity whatsoever. A certain person is a president because he is collectively counted as a president, and certain metal coins are counted as dollars because by virtue of collective intentionality they count as dollars in certain contexts. They are what they are counted as because, as institutional entities, they are created by what they are believed to be.

Background ideas: According to Searle, there can be no institutional facts without language. Therefore, his philosophy of language is important. He belongs to the so-called speech act theoretical tradition, founded by the Oxford philosopher J. L. Austin, to whose work Searle has added several lasting theoretical improvements and extensions. His views on intentional states are, at one and the same time, both a generalization from and an underpinning of his views about language (Searle 1983, "Introduction"); for an overview of Searle's development, see (Smith 2003b).

3. What De Soto may have learnt from Searle

As already mentioned, De Soto has said that he was helped in getting some of his ideas clear by reading Searle. In spite of this, he has not told us exactly and in detail which ideas he has in mind, but I will nonetheless make clear which ones I think it is. I will argue that what De Soto calls *The Mystery of Capital* can, using Searle's philosophy, be summarized in the sentence "Property rights are invisible and they can be created *ex nihilo*."

Every speech act, according to Searle (1979, chapter 1), belongs to one of five generic kinds of such acts:

1. **Assertives**, e.g., “The cat is on the mat”;
   used to tell people how things are.
2. **Directives**, e.g., “I order you to leave!”;
   used to try to get people to do things.
3. **Commissives**, e.g., “I promise to pay”;
   used to commit oneself to doing things.
4. **Expressives**, e.g., “I thank you for paying”;
   used to express feelings and attitudes.
5. **Declarations**, e.g., “I hereby declare the meeting open”;
   used to bring about changes in the world through one’s utterance.

The most important kind of speech act for the purpose of elucidating De Soto is Declarations. De Soto’s proposal can succeed only when and where some kind of authority, accepted by the poor in question, puts forward a declaration that can be given the Searlean form “X counts as Y in C.” Let me call it a *Searle-De Soto Declaration*:

We, the authorities, hereby declare that these hitherto informally owned assets (X) should in the future be (count as being) owned by means of the following formal property rights (Y) in the context of our society (C).

In the moment when such a declaration is made and accepted, the social world is changed. A new institutional fact has come into existence. However, in order to prepare the way for understanding the ontological structure of such a declaration, I will start with some words about a simpler case, the commissive speech act expressed by “I promise to pay.”

When I say “I promise to pay,” I put myself under an obligation; publicly, I commit myself. By my mere utterance and its being heard, a social fact, the existence of my promise, comes into being. If I want to create something in the material world, for instance a house, then I would need a lot of different kinds of material. But in order to create a promise no matter is needed; only language. Promises are, the existence of language being taken for granted, created *ex nihilo*. Wizards use language in the form of magical formulas in order to execute their magic tricks, and, says the Bible, God used language in order to create the world. He started by *saying* “Let there be light!”

My first Searlean point can be put like this: only Gods and magicians can create natural facts *ex nihilo*, but human beings can so create social facts (Searle 1989, pp. 535, 549).

Promise-generated obligations exist even after the speech act in question has been made. But where and how do they exist? Would the obligations exist even if the *whole* human race went out of existence? Answer: ‘No’. Would they exist even if everybody has forgotten that the promise has been made? Answer: Both ‘Yes’ and ‘No’. ‘Yes’, if it is regarded as possible that someone suddenly could once again remember it; ‘No’, if such a re-remembering is regarded as completely impossible. Obligations have some kind of vaguely defined conditions of existence. In order for an obligation to continue to exist, there must be some people that have some kind of dispositions to remember the promise in which it had its origin. If the promise was written down, then the existence of the corresponding piece of paper might suffice.

A promise-generated obligation is visible (audible) only at the moment when the promise is made, leaving aside this latter case, however, obligations can exist even at times when they are not visible at all or are merely indirectly visible in virtue of certain representations (for example in the forms of memories of the original promising act or of enduring written documents).

My second Searlean point can be put like this: Some social facts can exist even though they are invisible.

Obligations are normally invisible, and they are always created *ex nihilo*. The same two points can be made in relation to the consequences of many types of declarations, too; but with a difference that I will come back to later. A promise by an individual is in a certain sense a one-person affair, whereas declarations normally are many-persons affairs. When I say “I promise,” I put only myself under an obligation. But if I am the chairman of a board and say “I hereby declare the meeting open,” then I put all the members of the board under a vaguely defined set of obligations. When this difference between promises and declarations is disregarded, one can truly claim:

Property rights are invisible and they can be created ex nihilo

This claim is, in my opinion, both a philosophical-ontological truth and a social-scientific truth. It belongs to both philosophy and science. How is this possible? Answer: because these disciplines have overlapping research domains. In principle, this and similar truths can be discovered by philosophers alone, by scientists alone, and by a cooperation between philosophers and scientists; according to the scientist De Soto himself, he was, in fact, helped in his discovery by the philosopher Searle.

4. What De Soto could have learned, but did not learn, from Searle

The four philosophers mentioned by De Soto – Searle, Popper, Dennett, and Foucault – have something very abstract in common. None of them is a reductive materialist, and all of them stress the existence of some linguistic or conceptual kind of reality. But the differences between the four philosophers are also important. Put briefly and without argument: Searle alone among them is of the opinion that a linguistic reality can exist only on the basis of and in a mind-independent material external world. Popper’s so-called “World 3” has some clearly Platonist features; Dennett is an instrumentalist who tells us not to care about what the world really looks like since he thinks that we can freely choose to take on different kinds of “stances” (for instance, an intentionalist stance or a materialist stance) which then seemingly create a corresponding kind of world; Foucault is part of the French post-structuralist movement that claims that nothing at all (be it material entities, Platonic entities, or intentional states) can as such exist in the present, and that, therefore, we have to get rid of all “metaphysics of the presence.”

De Soto seems not to have been concerned with the differences between the philosophers he refers to. Implicitly, however, he gives the impression of being closer to Searle than to the others. In his books, the world, apart from capital, comes out very much like the common sense world we perceive and ordinarily take ourselves to be living in. And, among the philosophers mentioned, only Searle defends this view. The others, especially Dennett and Foucault, let their thoughts about linguistic reality lead them in a direction that makes them come into conflict with ordinary robust materialism.

5. What Searle could have learnt by taking Searle-De Soto Declarations seriously:

(I) An improved analysis of declarations.

Back to Searle-De Soto Declarations: *We, the authorities, hereby declare that these hitherto informally owned assets (X) should in the future be (count as being) owned by means of the following formal property rights (Y) in the context of our society (C).*

In order to be able successfully to make such a declaration, a lot of preparatory work has to be done. De Soto and the Institute for Liberty and Democracy have been working both with governments and with the poor people whose property system they want to transform. Through efforts of "enlightenment" they try to change the beliefs and desires both at the top and at the bottom of society. The kind of new institutional reality that a Searle-De Soto declaration can bring into existence can successfully be brought into and maintained in existence only if many people are in favor of it. Therefore, let us take a careful look at Searle's analysis of declarations.

As already stated, Searle distinguishes between assertives, directives, commissives, expressives, and declarations. In order for a speech act to belong to any of these kinds, there has to be an "uptake," i.e., there has to be at least one listener who understands the speech act in question. Situations when this is not the case have been discussed neither by Austin nor by Searle, and in principle I have no objections to such a limitation on a theoretical enterprise. A lot of other dimensions of speech acts, however, have been profitably investigated by Searle. In the table below, I have summarized some of the theses he advances in his classic paper "A taxonomy of illocutionary acts" (Searle 1979, chapter 1).

Kind of speech act:	Direction of fit:	Publicly expressed psychological state:	Conditions of satisfaction:[1]
1. Assertive	Mind-to-world (↓)	Belief	World in general
2. Directive	World-to-mind (↑)	Wish	Other people
3. Commissive	World-to-mind (↑)	Intention	Speaker in the future
4. Expressive	None (Ø)	Varies	None
5. Declaration	Both ways (↑↓)	None	The utterance itself

I agree with everything in the table except the last row, but I will give some explanatory comments to all of them.

1. A person who makes an assertive like "The cat is on the mat" is thereby necessarily *publicly* claiming that his mind has managed to fit the world in a certain respect, and he is necessarily also publicly expressing a belief to this effect. Whether he is lying or not is another matter that is outside the scope of what is publicly expressed. Note, though, that one cannot lie without claiming that one is not lying. The assertive "The cat is on the mat" is satisfied (true) if the cat in question is on the mat in question.

2. A person who makes a directive like "I order you to leave!" is thereby necessarily publicly trying to make the world fit his mind in a certain respect, and he is necessarily publicly expressing a wish to this effect. An order is satisfied when it is obeyed. Whether or not it *is* satisfied thus depends on other people.

3. A person who makes a commissive ("I promise to pay") is thereby necessarily publicly committing himself to trying to make the world in the future fit the present content of his

[1] Searle makes a distinction between "external" and "internal" conditions of satisfaction that I will not discuss here, though I find it problematic; see (Johansson 2003). If this distinction is used in the table above, rows 1-4 describe only external conditions of satisfaction, whereas in the fifth row external and internal conditions become identical. In the modified row 5 that I will propose at the end of this section, all conditions of satisfaction are external only.

mind. He is also necessarily publicly expressing a corresponding intention. A promise is satisfied if the speaker keeps it and fulfils its content in his actions.

4. A person who expresses a feeling or an attitude hereby publicly creates something – an expression – that has no direction of fit. Necessarily, though, a corresponding psychological state is (whether truly or falsely) publicly expressed. Since expressives have no direction of fit, they have no conditions of satisfaction either.

5. According to Searle, a person who makes a declaration like "I hereby declare the meeting open" is thereby necessarily publicly claiming both that he is trying to make the world fit his mind (↑) and that his mind already fits the world (↓). In the early paper I am summarizing, Searle (1979) claims that such a speaker publicly expresses no psychological state at all (see last row column three in the table); today, however (Searle at a workshop in Buffalo, April 12, 2003), he has the much more reasonable view that the speaker expresses *two* psychological states: a wish and a belief, i.e., there is one state for each arrow and direction of fit. In the example used, the speaker has then (i) a wish that the meeting will be opened by means of his declaration and (ii) a belief that this state of affairs is currently coming into existence. This change of opinion on Searle's part, however, has repercussions on what ought to be placed in row 5 under "conditions of satisfaction." Searle claims that the utterance itself makes itself satisfied, i.e., it makes itself both fulfilled (the wish) and true (the belief). How is such a feat possible? Searle himself has asked this question, too. I quote: "with the declarations we discover a very peculiar relation. The performance of a declaration brings about a fit by its very successful performance. How is such a thing possible?" (1979, p. 18). In his answer, he distinguishes between declarations that do and that do not require extra-linguistic institutions. With respect to the former, and those are the only ones of interest here, Searle says that:

> speaker and hearer must occupy special places within [some relevant] institution. It is only given such institutions as the church, the law, private property, the state and a special position of the speaker and hearer within these institutions that one can excommunicate, appoint, give and bequeath one's possessions or declare war (Searle 1979, p. 18).

Rephrased in a negative form, this view reads as follows: If speaker and hearer do not occupy special places within institutions such as the church, the law, private property, the state, then it is impossible successfully to excommunicate, appoint, give and bequeath one's possessions or declare war.

According to the whole tradition of speech act theory, speech acts that rely on extra-linguistic institutions can "misfire" (Austin's term). They do so when speakers or hearers do not occupy the right kind of places within the relevant institution. For instance, if someone who is not supposed to open a meeting of a certain organization says "I hereby declare the meeting open," then the meeting is not opened; the presumed declarational act misfires. Austin places misfires outside his area of investigation, and Searle follows suit. In the table above, the conditions of satisfaction for a declarational speech act is the utterance itself but this only because it is already assumed that the utterance does not misfire. The relevant portion of the table thus tells us merely that a *non-misfiring declaration* can be regarded as being satisfied by the declaration itself. Such a restriction, however, makes this part of speech act theory lose much of its significance for the social sciences.

Misfiring can be due to problems on both the speaker and the hearer side. If De Soto himself alone makes a Searle-De Soto Declaration, then it will certainly misfire, and the same goes for declarations made by the poor themselves. Is it then, contrariwise, the case that no Searle-De Soto Declaration made by a legitimate government can misfire? No, it is not. If it is immediately contested by riots and turmoil in the streets, then it is as much a misfire as a declaration made by a speaker who is not in a formal position to make it. Some more words about this.

When a promise is given, the promise exists as soon as the speech act is completed and heard, but its keeping, i.e., its (external) condition of satisfaction, lies outside the speech act; it lies in the future. The promise is connected with its satisfaction by means of an obligation. In analogy with this, my view is that as soon as a declarational speech act is completed, then a declaration exists, but its main conditions of satisfaction lie outside the speech act, namely in the acceptance of the declaration by the relevant group of people. I claim that acceptance is to declarations what keeping is to promises and obeying is to orders. Of course, the public acceptance of the declaration by the speaker comes with the utterance itself, but not its acceptance by the rest of the relevant collective. A declaration-generated new institution does not exist if the declaration is not accepted by others and, thereby, satisfied. The fifth row of the table above should be substituted by the following one:

Kind of speech act:	**Direction of fit:**	**Publicly expressed psychological states:**	**Conditions of satisfaction:**
5. Declaration	Both ways (↑↓)	Both wish and belief	Acceptance by all or most other persons involved

One reason why this view of declarations has not been discussed before is, I think, that speech act theoreticians have allowed themselves always to abstract misfires away from the domain of their research. However, it is impossible to make such an abstraction when one is interested in the analysis of problematic political declarations in the real world.

6. What Searle could have learnt by taking Searle-De Soto Declarations seriously: (II) The need for an ontology of desires.

When reading De Soto's two books, one becomes very aware of the fact that politics can be peaceful and consensual, peaceful and conflictual, as well as conflictual and violent. This last becomes particularly clear if also we consider the history of the Institute for Liberty and Democracy and its relationship to the Peruvian Shining Path guerilla movement (De Soto 2002, preface). Searle rightly stresses that language is a crucial factor in creating institutional reality. But his way of doing this implicitly neglects the conflictual side of institutional reality; see also (Smith 2003a).

Searle's general formula for the logical structure of institutional reality is

- X counts as Y in C;

but the formula below is, he says (Searle 1995, p. 104), more basic to the existence of institutional facts:

- We accept (S has power (S does A)).

Equally important, I think, is the following:

- *We* accept (S has power (S does A)), and we force *them* to accept the same thing.

Of course, Searle can reply that people who are being forced to accept something nonetheless accept, and that, therefore, his formula is more basic. However, there is still something missing. Quite obviously, a lot of human conflict has to do with conflicting human desires, and a lot of human consensus is due to harmonized human desires. I find it a bit astonishing that in a book like Searle's *The Construction of Social Reality*, which is concerned with the basics of the ontology of social reality, human desires are not mentioned and discussed at all. It is not even said that they are disregarded. Can something that so many social scientists take so seriously really be left out of account in a social ontology? I think not, and Searle seems nowadays to be close to such a view, too. In particular, I am thinking of his clearly stated Weberian view: "A monopoly on armed violence is an essential presupposition of government" (Searle 2003, p. 209). Violence rests on conflicting desires.

When, for instance, a new property system really has become institutionalized by means of an accepted declaration, it is also normally taken for granted that the system will last for some time. It is, I would say, taken for granted that conflicts among human desires will not make the property system fall apart at once. Searle claims that we cannot grasp the basics of the ontology of social reality without an ontology of language. I will claim that an ontology of human desires and their objects is no less indispensable. But is such an ontology possible?

Perhaps human desires and their objects are structured the way Wittgenstein thought that speech acts are structured, i.e., in such a way that a *theory* of the corresponding open-ended kind of phenomena is impossible. There is perhaps such a multitude of concretely different desires with only family resemblances between them that no taxonomy whatsoever can encompass this variation. This seems to be the view held by some social constructivists. However, just as Searle claims (1979, pp. vii-viii) that Wittgenstein is wrong and that there is a definite number (five) of generically different kinds of speech acts, I think that there is a definite number of abstract taxa of objects of human desires (Johansson 1995); let it be an open question whether there also is a connection between kinds of desired objects and kinds of desiring. The point here, however, is by no means to argue that I have found the right number; it is only to make probable that the search for such a number is as meaningful in relation to human desires as it is in relation to speech act.

I think that there are three rock-bottom desires (as contrasted with mere wishes and with unconscious instincts): a desire to have desires in general, a desire to have cognitions in general, and a desire to feel affections in general. The following list of eight different kinds of objects of human desires, divided into two families, captures the remaining cases:

OBJECTS OF DESIRE

EGOISTIC	ALTERISTIC
pleasure	benevolent objects
food	malevolent objects
sex	
shelter	
activity	
confirmation	

Since, to repeat, my intent here is only to make plausible that an ontology of human desires is possible, I will not explain and argue for all the proposed taxa, but confine myself to some brief comments. In particular, and in agreement with Searle (2001, pp. 191-192), I think the view that all desires are desires for pleasure is false. Of course, “food” embraces not only hunger but also thirst. I think there is a desire to be active (both bodily and intellectually) in general. A desire for pleasure is a desire on my part for pleasure on my part, and similarly for the other items in the left column – all of which are thus egoistic. A desire for another's pleasure is a case of benevolence, and a desire for another's displeasure is a case of malevolence. In general, benevolence is a desire for the satisfaction of another person's egoistic desires, and malevolence is a desire for the frustration of another person's egoistic desires.

As in all philosophical ontologies, we are here moving on a very abstract level, but there are nonetheless truths that can be found. Searle nowhere attempts to classify desires, but he has made some remarks about the structure of desires in general in introducing his views on "desire-independent reasons." According to Searle, desires have a world-to-mind direction of fit, and they can be directed towards things not only in the present or the future, but also in the past. True descriptions of desires include that-clauses ("X desires that …"), desires can be parts of larger desires, and one can rationally and consistently have inconsistent desires (Searle 2001, pp. 248-249). I would like to make four specific claims; the first one is made also by Searle (2001, pp. 157-158), and the other three are, as far as I can see, consistent with everything that he has written.

First, independently of whether the *object* of one of my desires is related to myself (ego → ego) or to someone else (ego → alter), the desire is always a desire of my ego. What one might call "trivial egoism" is logically prior to "real egoism." Thus trivial egoism is quite consistent with the existence of benevolence and altruism. In order to see the distinction between egoistic and alteristic desires clearly, one needs a concept of intentional state like that of Searle's. An ordinary property of an ordinary thing is just the property of this thing, but an intentional state of a person is not just a feature of this person, it also has directedness towards something. Egoistic desires have the structure *from* ego *towards* the same ego; alteristic desires have the structure *from* ego *towards* alter. When an alteristic desire is satisfied or frustrated in an ego, there is necessarily either satisfaction or frustration in an alter, too.

Second, egoistic desires are logically prior to alteristic ones (or: real egoism is logically prior to altruism). In a world with only egoistic desires many actions would still take place; but in a world with only alteristic desires, and no false beliefs to the contrary, no actions at all would occur. No person could then try to satisfy or frustrate another person's desire.

Third, every ontology of desires that contains both egoistic and alteristic desires implies a simple classification of persons into (1) ordinary people (people that can have both egoistic, benevolent, and malevolent desires); (2) psychopaths (people that can have only egoistic desires); (3) angels (people that can have only benevolent desires); and (4) devils (people that can have only malevolent desires). Ordinary people are easily caught in tragic situations in which they have to face irresolvable conflicts between their egoistic and alteristic desires. Perhaps devils live beyond the domain of the tragic, but for psychopaths and angels, too, there are tragic-like situations. Suppose P is a psychopath who is put in jail for something he (or she) has done, and that he is told that his sentence will be reduced if he is able to make himself a somewhat more empathetic person. For purely egoistic reasons P wants to become a little less egoistic, but his nature makes it impossible for him to satisfy this egoistic desire. Think next of an angel, A, who has learned about Adam Smith's theory of the invisible hand of the market. He (or she) wants to make other people happy by acting in an egoistic way in the market, but A's nature makes it impossible for him to satisfy this alteristic desire. In my opinion, the ontology of social reality needs only to take ordinary people into account.

Fourth, there are not only consistent and inconsistent desires, but also what we might call "super-consistent desires." Two desires are consistent if both can be satisfied; two desires are inconsistent if they pull you, like Buridan's ass, in two opposed directions; two desires are super-consistent if they are satisfied by the same action. For instance, if a friend who likes to cook invites you to dinner, then you can by attending the dinner satisfy both your egoistic desire for food and your alteristic desire to be benevolent towards your friend.

Searle wants to understand how there can be an objective social reality, but he has nonetheless not tackled the issue of what constitutes “the cement of society” (Elster 1989). I regard this as a flaw, even though I regard it as an excusable flaw. Probably, it is impossible for pioneers to take everything into account. But back to the question: What glues the individuals in a society together? Is it language? Is it desire-independent reasons? Is it egoistic calculations which bring the mutual benefit of social cohesion as a side-effect? I think that all such one-factor explanations are false. For language, desire-independent reasons, and side-effects of egoistic desires all play a role. But so also do benevolent desires, and so also the existence of super-consistency between benevolence and egoism.

In *The Construction of Social Reality* (1995), Searle does not discuss egoism and altruism at all; in *Rationality in Action*, he discusses them (2001, pp. 157-165), but only in order to contrast both egoistic and altruistic (benevolent) *desires* with altruistic *commitments* and the concomitant desire-independent reasons that speech acts can create. He regards benevolent desires as cases of “weak altruism” and altruistic commitments as cases of “strong altruism.” From a morally evaluative point of view, this might be an adequate use of the concepts “weak” and “strong,” but from a motivational point of view, I am sure it is the other way round, i.e., “weak altruism” is strongly motivational and “strong altruism” is only weakly so. Why do I mention this? Answer: Because I want to stress that, so far, Searle’s ontology of social reality does not contain any analyses of how motivations can give rise to social unity and social disunity, respectively.

De Soto has written:

> I am not a diehard capitalist. I do not view capitalism as a credo. Much more important to me are freedom, compassion for the poor, respect for the social contract and equal opportunity. But for the moment, to achieve these goals, capitalism is the only game in town. It is the only system we know that provides us with the tools required to create massive surplus value (De Soto 2001, p. 242).

Here, one might ask whether De Soto deceives himself when he thinks that he is able to have such benevolent desires. I think he is not, but all who thinks that human beings are completely egoistic have to deny it. What ontology of human desires one has makes a difference. It is worth noting that the founding father of market thinking, Adam Smith, was not at all of the opinion that all humans are completely egoistic. Already in part I, section I, chapter 1, first paragraph of his *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, published 1759, he writes:

> How selfish soever man may be supposed, there are evidently some principles in his nature, which interests him in the fortune of others, … Of this kind is pity or compassion, the emotion which we feel for the misery of others, … [It] is by no means confined to the virtuous and humane, … The greatest ruffian, the most hardened violator of the laws of society, is not altogether without it (Smith 1984).

He shared these views with his twelve years older friend David Hume, who in 1751 writes:

> We cannot without the greatest absurdity dispute that there is some benevolence, however small, infused into our bosom; some spark of friendship for human kind; some particle of the dove kneaded into our frame, along with the elements of the wolf and serpent. (Hume 1975, p. 271)

I have got the impression that Searle agrees with the views (and even sentiments) expressed by Hume, Smith, and De Soto in these passages. But nowhere in his writings on the ontology of social reality do we find any indication of this fact. Why? My guess is that it mirrors Searle's neglect of desires in his social ontology. There is more to social reality than language and all the things X that are "counted as Y in C." There are desires of various kinds, too.

7. Words of Conclusion

I am of the opinion that in Searle’s writings on the ontology of social reality there is: “a certain highly promising theory, dealing with a hitherto neglected but in fact very interesting and extremely important problem area, and this theory is not in a perfect shape at the moment” (Moural 2002, p. 78). Furthermore, I think there are a growing number of philosophers and social scientists with whom I share this opinion. I hope that most of these thinkers share also my view that philosophy and science are overlapping disciplines that can benefit from interaction.

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