

How to Marry Phenomenology and Pragmatism. Scheler's proposal

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1. Introduction

A common view of early twentieth century philosophy correctly distinguishes three movements or tendencies, phenomenology, pragmatism and the beginnings of analytic philosophy, and claims that early phenomenology and pragmatism are two radically opposed philosophical positions. Early phenomenology, it is said, is in the tradition of the logical objectivisms of Bolzano and Frege. It is only with the writings of Heidegger that phenomenology and pragmatism begin to be on speaking terms.

This last claim is simply wrong. Between 1911 and 1927, Max Scheler – after Husserl the most influential early phenomenologist – developed an occasionally carefully thought out and occasionally crazy philosophy of empirical science and common sense as well as a philosophy of philosophy which incorporates and develops many claims to be found in pragmatism. The three most important sources for his views are an incomplete manuscript from 1911-12, “The Theory of the Three Facts“, a paper from 1913-14, “Phenomenology and the Theory of Knowledge“, which were first published in 1933, and a 1926 monograph, *Knowledge and Work. A Study of the Value and Limits of the Pragmatic Motive in the Knowledge of the World*.¹ But

¹ The two papers, unlike Scheler's monograph, have been translated into English (Scheler 1973, Scheler 1973a).

the ideas in these three publications are also discussed and modified elsewhere in his *œuvre*.

Scheler's reaction to pragmatism consists of two main concessions and two main disagreements, each of which is framed with the help of a distinction he made more of than any of his contemporaries or successors. In what follows I present and evaluate the distinction, the concessions and the disagreements. The distinction is between the world of common sense and the world of science (§2). The two concessions to pragmatism are that the objects of common sense and the objects of empirical science are indeed relative objects (§3). His version of the first concession is that the objects of common sense stand in a relation of "existential relativity" to human beings and their environment. One aspect of this relation is the interdependence between human bodies, drives, action and perception. This interdependence, Scheler argues, was first correctly analysed by philosophers and psychologists of a pragmatist persuasion and it is an interdependence which he vigorously develops and defends (§4). His version of the second concession is that the objects of science are also existentially relative, not to human beings but to living beings. His first disagreement with pragmatism is the claim that truth and knowledge are neither relative nor relational but absolute and that pragmatic accounts of meaning are misguided (§5). His final disagreement with pragmatism concerns philosophy. The objects of philosophy are not relative but absolute and there are non-contingent, essential, philosophical truths.

Scheler's concessions to and disagreements with pragmatism sometimes correspond to disagreements and concessions to be found in his *Auseinandersetzung* with a fourth philosophical tradition, which he was one of the first to identify and criticize, *Lebensphilosophie*, the philosophy of life (Nietzsche, Bergson, Dilthey, Simmel, Klages).²

² See Scheler 1955. Simmel is indeed the author of one of the earliest pragmatist accounts of truth.

2. The Natural World View vs The Scientific World View

Long before Husserl's explorations of the *Lebenswelt* in the *Krisis*, Heidegger's pronouncements about *Alltäglichkeit* and "In-der-Welt-Sein" in *Sein und Zeit* and Wittgenstein's musings about the world-view of common sense in *Über Gewissheit*, Scheler provides a detailed anatomy of what he calls the natural world-picture (*natürliches Weltbild*) and the natural world-view (*Weltanschauung*). He criticises his fellow phenomenologists for neglecting the philosophy of the scientific world-picture and thus the relations between the latter and the natural world-picture³ and attempts to remedy these lacks. By "science (*Wissenschaft*)" Scheler, unlike Husserl, refers only to inductive or empirical science⁴.

"World-view" is often used as a catch-all term. But Scheler uses it to refer to the intellectual counterpart of an *ethos*, that is to say, variations in affective relations to values, and distinguishes both from their religious counterpart, belief in what is taken to be holy. *Weltanschauung* is taken quite literally by Scheler to refer to the structure of the intuiting of the world.⁵ In his later writings, the category of the natural world-view is replaced by the distinction between the "absolutely natural world-view" and relative natural world-views.

³ Scheler 1957a, p. 494. One early phenomenologist who takes up Scheler's challenge is Moritz Geiger (1930). The scientific conception of the world (*Weltauffassung*) propagated by Neurath, Carnap and Hahn in their 1929 manifesto displays a parallel lack of interest in the natural conception of the world. And, like Husserl's *Krisis*, the manifesto is often melodramatic. Scheler's two papers "The Theory of the Three Facts" and "Phenomenology and the Theory of Knowledge" are his *Krisis*, minus the melodrama. In 1926 Scheler points out that philosophy has only recently realised that what has been called "theory of knowledge" usually dealt only with one sort of knowledge, that of the positive sciences, and often with only one or two of these (Scheler 1960, p. 200).

⁴ Scheler 1954, p. 76.

⁵ Scheler 1966, p. 303.

Differences

Natural perception, natural intuition of the inner and the outer worlds, natural experience (*Erfahrung*) and natural thinking, the natural judging, inferring, testing and experimentation which comprise common sense (*gesunden Menschenverstand*),⁶ and natural language all differ in many respects from scientific observation, experience, thinking, judgement and language. The latter are artificial. They are artificial because science consciously aims to employ only signs and conventions which determine univocally all relevant facts (“the principle of the univocal determinability of all facts” by signs), and to choose “as few of such signs and forms of connexions of such signs as possible and the maximal set of facts and connexions between these” (“the principle of economy”). The two principles are essential to the constitution of the “institution” called “science” and thus to the theory of science, which is no part of the theory of knowledge but a domain of application of the latter.⁷ Observation and induction in everyday life therefore differ absolutely from observation and induction in science.⁸

Values, one might think, belong to the natural world-view, if anywhere. But as we have noted, Scheler assigns our affective relations to values to the category of an ethos and not to the intellectual category of a world-view. Values, then, belong to any combination of an ethos and a natural world-view.

Another component of the natural world-view, in addition to natural perception and natural language, is a type of intentionality Scheler calls practical counting on (*rechen mit*). This type of intentionality occupies an “intermediate sphere” between

⁶ Scheler 1957a, p. 453. Natural perception and natural language are perspectival (Scheler 1957a, p. 452).

⁷ Scheler 1957, p. 412, Scheler 1957a, p. 463. The two principles go back to Mach.

⁸ Scheler 1966, p. 71, Scheler 1957a, p. 452.

what is naturally perceived and what is naturally thought. What belongs to this sphere is what is “considered and felt to be in no need of justification and to be such that it could not be justified”.⁹ Counting on the obtaining or non-obtaining of states of affairs, in this way, on the existence of the pen I am writing with, for no reason whatsoever, is a close relative of what Husserl around the same time calls “naïve certainty” and an ancestor of what Ortega y Gasset and then Wittgenstein call ungrounded beliefs or certainties.¹⁰

The two ontological categories of states of affairs and things occupy quite different positions in the natural world-view and the scientific world-view, if Scheler is to be believed:

The distinction between the natural and the scientific view rests much more on the *direction* in which we proceed, from...the state of affairs to the thing or conversely. In the natural world view, we move from things to states of affairs; in the scientific world-view we start by leaving the question of things, events and forces undecided and proceed from states of affairs to things.¹¹

It would be “too much to say that every scientific observation must be preceded by a definite question...Observation is not merely a means to answer questions; often, a so called accidental observation leads to quite new questions”. The scientist has in mind certain states of affairs and observes in order to determine whether they obtain. Things and events are observed only as constructed bearers of such states of affairs, whereas in the natural world-view what is primarily given are things and events.¹²

Scheler distinguishes two extreme positions about the relation between the objects, concepts and experience peculiar to science and those peculiar to common

⁹Scheler 1960, p. 61, Scheler 1966, pp. 154, 137-8, 148, 153.

¹⁰Cf. Mulligan 2006.

¹¹Scheler 1957a, p. 456, cf. Scheler 1973a, p. 230

¹² Scheler 1957a, p. 453.

sense. According to the first view, science is an extension of the natural world-view and grows out of it :

Scientific experience is only the *completion*, the progressively finer and more exact development, of natural experience. Science should never detach itself from its native soil (*Mutterboden*) if it does not want to fall into the void.¹³

According to the second view, the “scientific” (*scientifistische*) doctrine, “science represents a *total break* with the natural world-view”.¹⁴ The first view is the view wrongly held by his fellow phenomenologists. And indeed the metaphor of the native soil of the natural world-view will be prominent in Husserl’s later writings. And Scheler does accept a claim also developed by Husserl:

Whatever theories one has, one always returns to the “natural world”...It is the medium in which we live.¹⁵

Indeed he thinks that one must “guard against importing theories” into the natural world-view. “It is nonsense to ask whether the common man believes in matter”.¹⁶ The second view is the view which was later endorsed by Ludwik Fleck, by French critics of phenomenology and famously popularised by Thomas Kuhn.

Scheler’s own position takes over elements from both views. It consists, to begin with, of two claims. He argues at length that science represents in many respects an almost total *break* with the natural world-view but that mechanical physics and associationist psychology do indeed draw on some features of the natural world-view. His second claim, a claim overlooked by the two views, is that there are structures and forms which are common to both the objects of science and to the objects of common sense. One central objection to the continuity view is that “the

¹³ Scheler 1957a, p. 493, cf. Scheler 1973a, p. 276.

¹⁴ Scheler 1957a, p. 501, cf. Scheler 1973a, pp. 285-6; cf Scheler 1957a, p. 462, Scheler 1957, p. 411f..

¹⁵ Scheler 1957a, p. 451, cf. Scheler 1973a, p. 225.

¹⁶ Scheler 1957a, p. 452, cf. Scheler 1973a, p. 226.

facts of the natural world-view" cannot verify scientific concepts and meanings intentions

because the facts of the natural perspective are themselves accessible to explanations with the help and under the presuppositions of scientific concepts.¹⁷

Scheler seems to think that this objection is in several respects a good one: "science practises continuous criticism of the natural world-view and its claims"; it explains a variety of natural, perceptual illusions and destroys a number of common-sense assumptions and categories.¹⁸ However the discontinuity view overlooks the existence of objects and forms or structures which are to be found in the domains of *both* science *and* the natural world-view. This is true of ideal objects such as numbers, continua, spatial figures and magnitudes and of forms or structures such as "thing, causal effectiveness (*wirken*), force, causality, real-unreal, space and time"¹⁹.

Thus both an atom and a chair exemplify the form "corporeal thing" and consist of the same strata: visual thing, tactile thing [sic], materiality, mutual externality, spatiality, and temporality...The object of the subtlest scientific concept of force contains the same phenomenon of causal efficacy which I intuit in the natural world-view in a water-fall when it hits a heap of stones.²⁰

Meanings, too, are common to science and everyday life although they may have different definitions in each case²¹, as are essential truths about signs and representation. The forms and object which are common to the domains of science and the natural world view cannot, he claims, be explained by science²² (appealing to a type of principle to be found everywhere in his philosophy, to which we shall

¹⁷ Scheler 1957, p. 402, cf. pp. 494, 496ff..

¹⁸ Scheler 1957a, p. 494ff..

¹⁹ Scheler 1957, pp. 403-4.

²⁰ Scheler 1957, p. 404.

²¹ Scheler 1957a, p. 461-2.

²² Scheler 1957, p. 403.

return). But he also seems to think, as we have noted, that many features of the natural world-view *can* be explained by science.

Although there are objects which are common to both world-views, Scheler also asserts of many objects that they are and can only be the objects of one of the two world-views. Scientific facts and things, such as atoms, electrons, forces and constants “are never to be found in the facts of the natural world-view, nor can they be 'abstracted' from it“. The objects of the natural world-view, the human milieu or environment, “contain nothing of the types of radiation with which physics has made us acquainted”²³. Indeed,

The sun of the human environment (*Milieu*sonne) is not the sun of astronomy; meat which is stolen, sold, etc. is not a sum of cells and tissues together with the chemical and physical processes taking place in them...These milieu things (*Milieudinge*)...are things which lie in and are to be found in the "direction of the natural world-view".²⁴

3. Existential Relativity, its Nature & Variety

At the bottom of all the concessions Scheler makes to pragmatism is a relation or tie he calls existential relativity (*Daseinsrelativität*). The objects of the natural world-view and of the scientific world-view are existentially relative. The objects of science stand in the relation of existential relativity to living creatures, to free persons endowed with a *Leib*; they are “vitaly-relative“ (*vital-relative Gegenstände*)²⁵. The objects of different parts of science, in particular, of mechanical physics and of associationist psychology, stand in relations of existential relativity to different features of living creatures. It is in his philosophy of mechanical physics and

²³ Scheler 1957, p. 402.

²⁴ Scheler 1966, p. 153, where Scheler also notes that milieu things are unities of value. Cf. Scheler 1957 460-463.

²⁵ Scheler 1957, pp. 400, 428-9.

associationist psychology that Scheler endorses variants of what we have called the continuity view concerning the relations between science and common-sense. In his philosophy of mechanics he distinguishes a number of views defended by pragmatists or philosophers with pragmatist tendencies which he defends. As we shall see in §5, he also thinks that the same philosophers completely fail to understand knowledge and make do with mere substitutes for knowledge.

The objects of the natural world-view stand in the relation of existential relativity to normal human organisation; they are *menschrelative* objects.²⁶ A more specific version of this relation is required to understand the relation between human beings, natural perception and its objects. The versions of this relation to be found in pragmatism, as we shall see in §4, meet with Scheler's enthusiastic approval. There are he thinks, types of objects

which are existentially relative to normal human organisation, including all contents of the natural world-view of man, the visual thing (*Sehding*) the moon and the sun in the sky, or all normal illusory objects...²⁷

To say that the objects of science are relative to organisms is to say that they are objects which

are such that some living movement might by acting upon them produce some sort of alteration in the environment which seems to be vitally valuable.²⁸

It is to endorse a very strong, "interventionist" thesis :

the selection of facts and truths which are called scientific is already dominated by a principle which has nothing to do with the knowledge of the world and which we may now call the *principle of setting possible technical goals*.²⁹

²⁶ Scheler 1957, p. 428, cf. Scheler 1973, p. 198.

²⁷ Scheler 1957, p. 400.

²⁸ Scheler 1957, p. 428, cf. Scheler 1973, p. 199.

²⁹ Scheler 1957, p. 428-9, cf. Scheler 1973, p. 199.

These goals are the manipulation of objects. To say that the objects of the natural world-view are existentially relative is to say that they, too, are subject to this principle. For the selection of contents which go to make up the natural world-view is determined by what has vital significance, not, as before, for *organisms* in general but for *man* :

Science emancipates itself from the limitations of this existential relativity to man...[S]cientific cognition concerns...only that "aspect" of *any possible environment* knowledge of which is required to gain mastery over whatever... belongs to the sphere of what is existentially relative to life.³⁰

The objects of science, then, are existentially relative to embodied Martians, embodied sun-dwellers.....or embodied human beings.

The two scientific theories to which Scheler devoted most attention in developing his account of existential relativity are mechanical physics and associationist psychology³¹. The concepts of the former *are* based on something which is given in the natural world-view:

The intuitive materials [of mechanics] are already present in the make-up of every natural perception and in the structure of any vital milieu as what is independently variable, because they are what is primarily "given". But the constructions of all particular mechanisms, which we carry out with these materials...are free constructions of the mind which...in their totality alone yield a "plan", according to which movement and steering of nature...by free persons endowed with a *Leib* is *in principle* possible.³²

The notion of a plan, he says, can be understood by reference either to particular goals (technology) or to any goals whatsoever (science). The claims in the passage just quoted have a history which Scheler traces from the "English" physicists, Lord Kelvin, Maxwell and Oliver Lodge (only Sir Oliver would have admitted to being

³⁰ Scheler 1957, p. 429 cf. Scheler 1973,p. 199.

³¹ Scheler's "derivation" of associationist psychology is to be found in Scheler 1966, p. 421-468.

³² Scheler 1957, p. 429.

English) through the Austrian physicist Boltzmann, the German physicist Hertz to “so called *pragmatism* (James, Schiller, Bergson)”.³³

Pragmatism, Scheler says in 1926, has seen that “the cognitive goals of positive natural science and explanatory psychology” are practically co-conditioned. But, he adds, there is nothing anthropomorphic about science. Its goal is to understand all phenomena of the external and internal world as dependent functions of a formal mechanism. Scientific knowledge is translateable into the language of all possible sensory organisations. And, as pragmatism has seen, the principle of selection for scientific facts is essentially biological. Science reduces nature to a formal mechanism because it is only to the extent that nature is a mechanism that it can be manipulated and controlled. Scheler contrasts what he calls his “relatively pragmatic conception” of the formal-mechanical theory of nature with a number of other conceptions, historical and contemporary, of the mechanical theory of nature, in particular materialist accounts, but also the sensualist accounts of Hume, Kant and Mach. The “pragmatism of methods (methodological pragmatism)” was the first correct theory of mechanics, “an important achievement”.

The methodological pragmatists were not philosophical pragmatists but physicists who were pragmatists about theoretical physics. They are the already mentioned group of physicists and “perhaps” early Einstein. Unlike Mach, they take the formal-mechanical reduction of natural phenomena to be necessary (and not a historical stage in the development of science). They think that this reduction is not univocal: for any group of natural phenomena there are indefinitely many “mechanical models” (Maxwell)³⁴ which will explain it equally well. Unlike Mach, they think that it is always possible to construct a model which will explain phenomena. Like Mach, these pragmatists deny that their models depict a definite

³³ Scheler 1957, p. 421ff..

³⁴ Cf. Scheler 1966, p. 420.

reality behind natural phenomena. Like the philosophical pragmatists, they think that axioms, mathematical and non-mathematical, are neither true nor false and enjoy no self-evidence, that they are cleverly selected implicit definitions. The “philosophical significance of this point of view” has “hardly been clearly recognised”. Only three of the points Scheler makes in his long defence of this claim are relevant here.

That to understand nature is to imagine a mechanical model which allows us to bring about or imagine bringing about natural phenomena as strictly identical phenomena is an insight of Maxwell’s which Scheler applauds. Boltzmann, he adds, makes the point even more clearly in his comment on his own mechanics, in which those presuppositions are chosen, in accordance with the principle of economy, which allow the simplest possible derivation of known facts and theories :

Not logic, not philosophy, not metaphysics decides in the final analysis, whether something is true or false, but the deed (*die Tat*)...Only those inferences which have practical success are correct.³⁵

A second point made by Scheler is that the thesis on which the methodological pragmatists insist, that any mechanical model may be replaced by an infinite number of models which, from the point of view of explanation, are as good as it, “the non-univocality of models”, is incompatible with the ontological primacy of movement. For the latter would require that formal-mechanical explanation be univocal, that one model could provide the right explanation. Movement, he therefore argues, enjoys only an epistemic and not an ontological primacy in formal-mechanical explanation.

The third point I want to draw attention to is Scheler’s argument that the views of the method pragmatists “necessarily preclude a mechanical explanation of organisms and vital processes”. On many views, this in turn entails vitalism. Scheler writes :

³⁵ Boltzmann 1905, p. 384; Scheler quotes this passage but gives the wrong reference at Scheler 1960, p. 263. Boltzmann here quotes Goethe: “Im Anfang war die Tat”, a line Wittgenstein was also to quote.

If non-univocal mechanical models are only 'constructed' in order to make nature something which can be mastered and guided by a spontaneous vital movement, but not to make nature 'known' as ontic (and then univocal, absolute) grounds and causes of natural phenomena, then the totality of these models...is existentially relative and knowledge of nature epistemically relative to the possible (relatively) free mastery of an organism as such.

But, Scheler finds, it is “a self-evident principle of the general theory of knowledge” that if a type of object is existentially relative to a type of act and its bearer, then the act-cum-bearer type cannot be explained by the same ontological and epistemic principles which explain the object³⁶.

We shall consider Scheler's view of the relation between “mechanical explanation” and knowledge in §5. Here it is important to draw attention to a fatal obscurity in Scheler's account of existential relativity. What is it to be existentially relative ? Many of Scheler's replies to this question suggest that it is a principle of epistemic access :

All objects which are essentially such that they can only be given in acts of a certain “form”, quality and direction are relative objects, *existentially relative*.³⁷

Existential relativity has nothing to do with so called subjective relativity³⁸. Since (as we shall see in §5) there is, according to Scheler, no relativity of knowledge but rather *absolute knowledge of existentially relative things*³⁹, what is relative is the existence of objects, on the one hand, and the “limits of knowledge relative to a definite type of knowledge and bearers of knowledge”, on the other hand.⁴⁰ As the reference to

³⁶ Scheler 1960, pp. 271-2.

³⁷ Scheler 1957, pp. 398-399.

³⁸ Scheler, 1957 p. 401.

³⁹ Scheler 1979, p. 109.

⁴⁰ Scheler 1957, p. 401. There are “no limits of knowledge as such” but different types of knowledge have limits (Scheler 1957, p. 402).

bearers of knowledge indicates, existential relativity as a principle of epistemic access cannot be characterised merely in terms of types of epistemic access but must also be characterised in terms of different types of bearers of such access. The objects of mechanical physics and associationist psychology can be given only to embodied cognizers⁴¹. But there is no particular type of sensory organisation the latter must have.

As a principle of epistemic access, existential relativity can be understood in two ways. As we have seen, Scheler wants to say that the sun I see is not the sun studied by the astronomers. He therefore seems to be committed to rejecting the very plausible principle that if x perceives y and $y = z$, then x perceives z . When he talks of what is perceived or given or known Scheler, like other phenomenologists, invariably has in mind what is perceived as it is perceived. Thus he says

The objects of the natural world-view, the moon as *Sehding*, are existentially relative to human organisation – *as far as the phenomenological content (Gehalt) of these objects is concerned* – and to communities.⁴²

One may well think that a version of the theory of existential relativity which allows that to perceive y is to perceive z , if $y = z$ is superior to the version which disallows this.

Scheler often seems to be tempted by the view that relations of existential relativity are not only epistemic but also ontological principles. The temptation is palpable in his claim, summarised above, that what is vital cannot be mechanically explained. And we shall come across another example of the temptation in the next section. Nearly all of Scheler's examples of existential relativity are described by him

⁴¹ Scheler 1957 pp. 400, 405.

⁴² Scheler 1957 p. 404, emphasis mine – KM. Although Husserl has a very similar approach to perception, he clearly endorses the view that the thing seen in ordinary life is the very same thing the physicist investigates (Husserl 1950 §52).

as instances of a great truth at the heart of phenomenology: the essential interdependence of types of act and types of object. Examples of this interdependence are the couples knowledge and truth or fact, conjecture and probability, perception and the present, (immediate) memory and the past, feeling and value and so on. The right-hand members in each couples are what might be called formal objects. Each of them is expressible by a connective. In the couples appealed to by Scheler in his account of existential relativity formal objects other than value are not prominent and the acts referred to are characterised mainly in terms of the properties of their bearers (organisms, humans). Nevertheless the nature of the correlation between the members of each of all these couples is, according to Scheler, the same, the mutual dependence of ideas: the essence of perception and of the present are interdependent, the essence of vital movement and of non-vital movement are interdependent, and so on.⁴³

Now suppose it is true that, for example, the essence of perception and of the present are interdependent. It does not follow at all that what is perceived is relative to or dependent on perception or its essence. Similarly, suppose that, as Scheler's interventionism has it, the essence of vital movements of an organism and the value of non-vital movements within the organism's sphere of mastery are interdependent. It does not follow at all that non-vital movements are relative to or dependent on organisms or their essence. As far as I can see, Scheler never discusses these rather simple objections.⁴⁴

⁴³ Cf. Scheler 1966 pp. 114-5. "Essential dependence" is nowadays often used to refer to a different type of tie.

⁴⁴ The philosophy of Heidegger is profoundly indebted to Scheler's account of existential relativity (and indeed to much else in Scheler). Heidegger talks of "levels of discoverability" rather than of types of existential relativity (Heidegger 1978 p. 213ff., 213 ; Scheler GW 9 p. 198ff.. ; cf. Gabel 1990 pp. 44-5). Scheler, one of Kant's most persistent and impressive critics, thought that his theory of existential relativity had been anticipated by Kant (Scheler 1995 p. 198, Scheler 1979 p. 107ff..).

4. Perception, Embodiment, Action & Drives

“The pragmatic-motor theory of perception”, Scheler says, is the “most secure element in pragmatism”⁴⁵. He also calls it the “drive motor theory of sensation and perception” and says that as “a comprehensive theory” it was first developed by “pragmatically inclined philosophers”, albeit in many different forms. The philosophers he refers to are Maine de Biran, Bergson and Münsterberg, the German psychologist who, thanks to an invitation from James, taught at Harvard⁴⁶. The theory is developed by Scheler in many publications from 1911 on. The basic claim is that sensation and perception are *conditioned* by drives and action. Pragmatism correctly sees that “the primary relation of man – indeed of all organisms – to the world is not at all theoretical but practical”⁴⁷. “The sensory functions and their organs are not instruments of any disinterested theoretical knowledge of nature but processes of regulation and modification of our acting on nature”. To think otherwise is “a peculiar mystification” of sensory organs and functions “which must be completely destroyed”.⁴⁸

That perception and action are inseparable was argued for by Husserl in 1907⁴⁹. Scheler’s account innovates in several respects, in its emphasis on the role of drives and other affective phenomena such as interest in perception, and in the attempt to think through the consequences of the abandonment of the constancy hypothesis, the view that sensations are proportional to physical stimuli. Perception, on his account, is to be understood in terms of movement, actual and potential, the living movements

⁴⁵ Scheler 1960, p. 226

⁴⁶ Scheler 1960, p. 283.

⁴⁷ Scheler 1960, p. 239.

⁴⁸ Scheler 1957a, p. 438.

⁴⁹ Cf. Mulligan 1995.

of the perceiver and the movement of what is perceived.⁵⁰ These innovations are all based on the rôle of the living body (*Leib*) in perception and Scheler's analysis of the peculiarities of bodily consciousness, as opposed to sensory, psychological and mental consciousness, and of the relations between organisms and their milieux. He is indeed the first philosopher of embodied perception.

The objects of natural perception are milieu things, things belonging to an environment, and milieu processes, which are "existentially relative, property-relative and relative as far as their effects are concerned to organisms". From this claim Scheler infers that the objecthood of the objects of natural perception is "fundamentally and completely different from" that of the objects of the physical world⁵¹. This looks very like the fallacious step from a claim about epistemic access to an ontological claim to which we have already drawn attention.

He refers to numerous results from physiology, psychology and psychopathology which, he thinks, confirm the theory⁵². But he goes much further than his sources when he claims that

the coming about of a perception is always co-conditioned by some degree of involuntary-spontaneous behaviour of the organism – which manifests itself psychologically in passive attention and the drive impulses which regulate this, and physiologically in motor innervations... Without some degree and direction of drive-like attention, without a grasp of value, without the beginning of a motor process, perception, no matter how simple, cannot take place⁵³.

⁵⁰ Scheler 1960, p. 62.

⁵¹ Scheler 1960, pp. 283-4.

⁵² For example, the different perceptual constancies, he argues, are practically conditioned (Scheler 1960, p. 240). In "the object of the natural world-view only that part of the [phenomenological] content is given which can have a *sign-function* for the bodily states connected with experience of it, which in turn are the starting-points for *action* directed to the object" (Scheler 1957a, p. 436)

⁵³ Scheler 1960, p. 284. Contemporary philosophy of perception has enthusiastically endorsed the intimate relation between perception and action described by Husserl and Scheler. Unlike psychology, it has been much more circumspect about the idea that perception is penetrated by affectivity.

The theory does not of course deny that there is perceptual knowledge. But knowledge

of the milieu has biological significance for an organism only if the real process which makes causally possible such knowledge...also introduces a process, a reaction which leads to the obtaining of an advantage or the avoidance of a disadvantage. But then if such processes occur, the occurrence of knowledge is irrelevant.⁵⁴

"Pragmatism", Scheler says, "correctly teaches that every sensory perception is necessarily connected with a definite practical-motor set (*Haltung*), at least with the beginning of a psycho-motor process". But both Bergson and Münsterberg⁵⁵ think that this set is the *sole* necessary ground for the perception that is its consequence. They fail to see that "a drive-like or intentional drive-impulse conditions and guides *both* the coming about of willing and acting *and* the coming about of sensory perception."⁵⁶

5. Meaning, Logic, Truth, Knowledge & Philosophy : Pragmatism's Errors

Pragmatism, Scheler argues, in spite of his enthusiastic endorsement of many pragmatist ideas, is wrong about meaning, logic, truth, knowledge and philosophy. Indeed he refers to its "total falsification" of "the formal ideas" of knowledge (*Wissen*), apprehension (*Erkenntnis*) and truth⁵⁷ and to "the false principles of pragmatic logic".

⁵⁴ Scheler 1957a, p. 439.

⁵⁵ Münsterberg 1900; Bergson 2008.

⁵⁶ Scheler 1960, p. 231.

⁵⁷ Scheler 1960, p. 228.

Sense, Meaning & Logic

In 1926 Scheler identifies two cardinal pragmatist theses in Peirce's 1878 paper "How to make our ideas clear" and subsequent developments by James and Schiller. One of these concerns sense or meaning, the other truth. To the question "What is the sense and the meaning of a thought?", Peirce and James reply, as the latter puts it :

...the tangible fact at the root of all our thought-distinctions, however subtle, is that there is no one of them so fine as to consist in anything but a possible difference of practice.⁵⁸

Scheler also attributes to Boole ("the first logician of pragmatism") a thesis about sense and a thesis about truth. The first is that "two propositions which lead to the same actions have identical sense (*sinnidentisch*)". The second "that a proposition is true if it determines an action which has useful or life-promoting consequences. These two theses, Scheler claims, "are without any doubt false, indeed countersensical". He also refers to them as "two logical principles", two "false principles of pragmatic 'logic'". But, as we shall see, Scheler thinks that pragmatism is guilty of other misunderstandings of logic as well.

Scheler distinguishes three different interpretations of Peirce's thesis about sense or meaning. He notes that the title of Peirce's paper suggests that Peirce was not of the opinion that the sense and meaning of a thought *consists* only in its practical consequences but rather that consideration of these consequences can lead to greater clarity about the sense and meaning of the thought.⁵⁹ But the "radical interpretation" of Peirce's claim, to be found in James and "the real pragmatists" (whom he does not

⁵⁸James 1979, p. 18, Scheler 1960, p. 228.

⁵⁹Scheler 1960, p. 213. Scheler was right (but perhaps not because he had actually read Peirce). Although early Peirce identifies knowing the meaning of an expression and knowing its effects on our senses, "at other times Peirce distanced himself from the suggestion that the content or meaning of a hypothesis is *exhausted* by its observational consequences" (Misak 1995, p. 99).

identify), is that the practical consequences of a thought are identical with its sense and meaning, that the representation of these consequences is identical with knowledge of this meaning.

But the understanding of "consequence" here displays "considerable ambiguity". There are scholars "close to pragmatism" who think that "the sense and meaning of a thought coincide with the logical consequences one can obtain from it". The identification of sense with logical consequences is, he says, a "milder" identification than the identification of sense with practical consequences.⁶⁰ He therefore distinguishes between logical and practical "fruitfulness" of thoughts. Friends of the former refer to many different criteria of such "logical fruitfulness", the unity of our picture of the world, the capacity a thought has to allow the derivation of already confirmed or proven theories and systems. This way of understanding "consequences" must presuppose the laws of pure logic, which are therefore not themselves justified in a pragmatist fashion. Such a "pragmatist derivation" of the laws of logic, "as is undertaken by real pragmatism", requires the introduction of a genetic theory according to which logical laws have been formed through a history of trial and error and are passed on either thanks to social tradition (James) or inheritance (Spencer). Peirce's view about sense requires that this genetic theory be correct. This theory is, Scheler notes, of course, incompatible with the view that logical laws "can be traced back to" ontological insight into essential connexions which is independent of all inductive experience, just the sort of view Scheler and other phenomenologists espouse⁶¹. In the case of non-logical axioms Scheler opposes to the view that they are "implicit definitions" which have proved their worth (Schlick for scientific axioms, Poincaré and Hilbert for mathematical axioms) the view

⁶⁰ Scheler 1960, p. 233.

⁶¹ Scheler 1960, p. 214.

of the phenomenologists, first expounded and defended by Geiger, that there are self-evidently true essential axioms rather than merely fruitful axioms.⁶²

According to a *second interpretation* of Peirce's thesis about sense and meaning it simply coincides with Leibniz's »principe d'observabilité«, a principle employed by Aristotele, Locke, Berkeley, Mill, Mach, Einstein and Poincaré. James formulates this principle (in a version due to Ostwald) :

In what respects would the world be different if this alternative or that were true? If I can find nothing that would become different, then the alternative has no sense.⁶³

This interpretation of Peirce's thesis about the sense or meaning of a thought Scheler calls "empiricist", and one variant of it "sensualist". It is not yet a pragmatist thesis, he claims, and becomes so only if the changes in experience, observation or sensation occasioned by the thought are taken to be the final stage of an action we have brought about. "This pragmatist interpretation of the 'principle of possible observation", which yields *the third interpretation* of Peirce's thesis, is required if the motor theory of perception and sensation is true. For then the action or impulse to act, which is the precondition for observation, "is an act of verification...of the thought, which itself becomes a sort of...plan for this action". This interpretation involves a break with both empiricism and rationalism. For pragmatism rejects the view of sense according to which it is something distinct from different judgment acts⁶⁴ but also the idea that there are facts which precede their discovery. Before it becomes the object of knowledge the world is an indeterminate, plastic mass into which man, thanks to the "indivisible dynamic process of thought project-action-

⁶² Geiger 1924.

⁶³ James 1979, p. 27, Scheler 1960, p. 215.

⁶⁴ Scheler 1960, p. 216.

sensation and observation-new action“, helps to form or construct a world of sense and facts. “Pragmatism denies...every type of ontological order“⁶⁵.

Peirce’s thesis, if it is supposed to hold of all types of thought, is false under each of the three interpretations considered, argues Scheler. “The ‘sense’ of a proposition is by no means identical with the logical consequences which result from it. This stands in obvious contradiction to the indubitable logical principle according to which a proposition may be the consequence of different propositions“. Nor “are we able to apprehend ‘all’ consequences of a proposition“. Indeed according “to Peirce’s theory, with every new proof (and there are always *many* proofs for one proposition), the *sense* of the proposition would have to change, although a proposition which has a completely univocal sense can be proven in arbitrarily many ways“.⁶⁶ There is no room in pragmatist logic for inferring :

there would only be a reading off of the conclusion from a total picture *constructed* according to the premisses...Faced with any picture one can make an unlimited number of judgements which are fulfilled by this picture.⁶⁷

If it is false to identify the sense of a proposition with its logical consequences, it it is “doubly false“ to identify it with its “practical fruitfulness“ since there is no doubt that quite different theoretical presuppositions about the course of the world can lead to the same practical modes of behaviour and that the same presuppositions can lead to quite different types of practical behaviour – “depending on the goals the

⁶⁵ Scheler 1960, p. 216. On the relation between the “dynamic process“ of thought-action-observation-new action and the claims inspired by the pragmatist, F. P. Ramsey that there is an internal relation between success and true (correct) belief, cf. Mulligan 2017 forthcoming.

⁶⁶ Scheler 1960, p. 217. Cf. “Does the sense of the proposition change when a proof has been found? The new proof gives the proposition a place in a new system“. (Wittgenstein 1976 VII, p. 10).

⁶⁷ Scheler 1960, p. 217.

realisation of which our acting is supposed to serve, goals which are never univocally determined by mere knowledge".⁶⁸

The second interpretation of Peirce's claim about sense or meaning is no less acceptable as a determination of the *sense* or *meaning* of a sequence of words : a proposition which has no measurable consequences would be at best

undecidable with respect to truth and falsity, but this does not rob it of its univocal sense. The laws of sense, senselessness and absurdity are very different from the laws governing the difference between true and false.⁶⁹

More importantly, Scheler adds, there are many types of thoughts, meanings and propositions the consequences of which cannot change anything in the world of observation and experience. These include all the propositions made true by the essential connexions which, as a phenomenologist, Scheler thinks he can intuit. If these had observable consequences, they would not be objects of *a priori* knowledge. In particular, the categories already referred to, which are common to both the scientific world-view and to the natural world-view and to their objects belong here. Nevertheless, the principle of observability is important. Scheler indeed relies on the pragmatist interpretation of this principle, which is "essential" if *his* demarcation problem is to be solved, if we are to "decide whether a question or its sense...is a question belonging to positive science or not", because it is, for example, a philosophical question :

For it is precisely the specific task of all positive science to *eliminate* all questions of essence...in order to retain...all those questions for the settling of which an *activity* can be specified which decides...by letting the expected reaction by the world (to *our* action) decide.

The pragmatic interpretation of the principle of observability (which, as we have seen, Scheler takes to follow from a combination of the principle and the motor

⁶⁸ Scheler 1960, p. 233.

⁶⁹ Scheler 1960, p. 217.

theory of perception) shows clearly that “the principle is *not* at all capable of delimiting our ability to know the world”.⁷⁰ Questions about sense or meaning which cannot be settled by observation and measurement should be “radically eliminated” from “the domain of positive science”. Like a vociferous Viennese positivist, Scheler asserts in 1926 that this elimination should be insisted on much more rigorously than is currently the case “in mathematics and theoretical physics”. Indeed, any question at all “which cannot be decided by possible observation and measurement together with mathematical inference is no question belonging to positive science”⁷¹. Unlike such a positivist, Scheler does, of course, think that there are questions about sense and meaning and answers thereto which cannot be settled by observation and measurement. “Positive science...delimits the metaphysical domain of questions ever more exactly». ⁷² There are, then, limits to science, as there are “‘limits’ of the natural world view”.

One version of the pragmatist philosophy of meanings, a “logical theorem of pragmatism”, is formulated as follows in 1926:

[M]eaning consists in the *rule of use* (*Anwendungsregel*) for a verbal sign or of a standing sign for it. Thus if I say “this meadow is green” no independent “meaning” is supposed, on this view, to inhere in the verbal signs “meadow” and “green”...meanings which would only be intuitively “fulfilled” by perception of the green meadow. Rather, what we call the meaning of the words “meadow” and “green” is supposed to *consist* in nothing but the drive-motor tendency to produce the word “green” as a pure sound-complex on perceiving things which resemble each other in the green colour and the sound-complex “meadow” on perceiving things which resemble each other in the features which meadows have.

⁷⁰ Scheler 1960, p. 219.

⁷¹ Scheler 1960, p. 209

⁷² Scheler 1960, p. 234.

Scheler had already formulated and criticised accounts of meaning in terms of use in a critical discussion of positivist and pragmatic views in 1915:

What we “use” or “apply” words for, how a word is “used”, “applied” in a group – the so called “linguistic use” (*Sprachgebrauch*) – all this has nothing to do with the *essence* of a word. The word itself “means”, “signifies” something, “has” its sense, which – however vague its constitution – *prescribes* its possible application, its use, or delimits the sphere of its possible application. For this reason there is an *essential* difference between the change of meaning (*Bedeutungswandel*) of a word and mere modifications (*Wechsel*) of the use of words...⁷³

The falsity of the use doctrine as formulated in 1926 is, he says, shown by the obvious fact

that the very same perceptual content “green meadow” can equally well fulfil [verify] an unlimited number of quite *different* judgement contents with different senses and quite *different* meanings (green surface, coloured surface, grass etc.).⁷⁴

Scheler also argues that experiments by Gelb and Goldstein show that there is world of difference between pronouncing “red” in the presence of perceived red objects – a reproductive reaction - and employing a word with a meaning, in particular a word with what Bühler called a representative function, in particular a naming function, in the presence of objects of the right sort, in order to name these. The results of Gelb and Goldstein “show very sharply the error of the pragmatist-nominalist theory of concepts”. They show that already in the case of simple qualities “meaning and perceptual content stand in reciprocal, dynamic relations to each other and that word-meaning “is not built up in a summative fashion on already ready and unchanging sense-impressions”. They therefore show that “the pragmatic theory of meaning is false”.⁷⁵

⁷³ Scheler 1955a, p. 179.

⁷⁴ Scheler 1960, p. 235.

⁷⁵ Scheler 1966, p. 236.

Nevertheless there is a grain of truth in this pragmatic or use theory. To the extent that pragmatism accepts the motor theory of perception it correctly asserts that the degree of *differentiation* of the meaning-sphere of a subject or group, the selection from the “objective sphere of meanings” effected by a subject or group, the vagueness or exactness of its word-meanings, depends in the first place not on the subject’s sensory perception but on the articulation of the perspective provided by its interests. “The more intensive are interests and needs, the greater is the wealth and exactness of meanings (as subjective intentions)”⁷⁶. This perspective determines not only the degree and type of articulation of a subject’s meanings but also the subject’s perceptual world and so, too, the fit between the articulations of the two spheres. But although pragmatism can make intelligible the selection of subjectively thought meanings it can throw no light on the origin of objective or subjective meanings or on the reciprocal determination of the spheres of perception and of subjective meanings. Because of the phenomenon of reciprocal determination it is wrong to think that subjective meanings develop one-sidedly on the basis of perception⁷⁷.

Truth

The second cardinal pragmatist thesis Scheler identifies in Peirce’s 1878 paper and subsequent developments is a new definition of truth, which Scheler formulates as follows: “A proposition whose sense and meaning has been established...is *true* if the imagined behaviour which the proposition occasions turns out to be *zweckmäßig* i.e.an intention is realised by this action, a wish is satisfied, an expectation is

⁷⁶Scheler 1966, p. 238.

⁷⁷Pragmatism correctly attaches great importance to the non-representational roles of assertions, such as expression and steering but, Scheler claims, wrongly denies that there is a process of differentiation of thinking and doing subsequent to which judgement loses its exclusively “pragmatic” character (Scheler 1960, p. 239).

fulfilled". It is, he says, a definition which was developed in particular by Schiller⁷⁸. As we have seen, he attributes a similar claim to Boole. Scheler simply asserts that truth is absolute and not relational or relative and that the new concept of truth of the pragmatists is "complete nonsense".⁷⁹ He doubtless thought that the arguments given by Husserl in the "Prolegomena" to the *Logical Investigations* in favour of the absoluteness of truth were decisive.⁸⁰ He does not indicate why he thinks that, according to pragmatism, truth is relative or relational.

From the fact that the objects of science and of the natural world-view are existentially relative, it does not follow, Scheler argues, that the truths of science are relative or relational: the "truth provided by science is, like every "truth", absolute truth".⁸¹ Nor does any form of pluralism about truth follow from the existential relativity of the objects of the propositions of science and everyday life. The truth of scientific propositions, of everyday propositions and of philosophical propositions is truth of the very same sort, the only sort there is.⁸²

He outlines two doctrines or assumptions to which he thinks pragmatism is committed and which motivate pragmatism's false conception of truth, scientism (*Scientifismus*) and instrumentalism. *Scientism* replies to the question about the nature of knowledge and truth by presupposing the methods and tasks of positive science and asserting that truth and knowledge are what the methods of science lead to. It does not first determine what truth and knowledge are in order to then ask to what

⁷⁸ Schiller 1903, Scheler 1960, p. 220.

⁷⁹ Scheler 1960, p. 206

⁸⁰ Although the pragmatist account of thinking has been worked out in part very well, Scheler says he will set it aside because "its fundamental mistakes of principle" have already been the object of the remarkable refutations given by Husserl in his *Logical Investigations*.

⁸¹ Scheler 1957, p. 428, cf. Scheler 1973, p. 199.

⁸² Scheler 1957, p. 428, cf. Scheler 1973, p. 198.

extent science can attain truth and knowledge, what is worth knowing for science, and to what extent extra-scientific types of knowledge, for example, philosophical, religious or artistic, exist. Scheler does not here mention the knowledge peculiar to the natural world-view. But presumably it belongs here, too, on his view.

Instrumentalism, instead of allowing methods to be determined by objects, asserts that it is

the method which first creates certain objects...that the word truth is to be identified with the results of "correct" thinking, that is to say, thinking *in accordance with certain norms*. According to this definition, these norms cannot themselves again be said to be "true". Truth is supposed to consist in the fact that one proceeds in accordance with these norms.

Scheler opposes to instrumentalism the proposition that

one may and can call thinking "correct" only thinking which leads to the truth and which proceeds from propositions or axioms which are *evidently true*. This is the standpoint of a logic which is based on *ontology*.⁸³

Knowledge and its Substitutes

A fundamental pragmatist claim, Scheler thinks, is that

all knowledge is genetically merely a result of a kind inner acting and of a preparation for transformation of the world, and thus has to subserve acting both teleologically and from the point of view of the theory of value.⁸⁴

This is wrong, he argues, because knowledge is a primitive relation of participation between a subject and, in the central cases, an obtaining state of affairs. Late Scheler has, most of the time, a "knowledge-first" view of knowledge. But he also says that the "most general philosophical error of pragmatism" is not its falsification of the nature of knowledge but its misapprehension of the fundamental

⁸³ Scientism and instrumentalism, Scheler argues, are common to both pragmatism and neo-Kantianism.

⁸⁴ Scheler 1960, p. 200.

distinction between essential knowledge and knowledge of contingent facts, a misapprehension due to the fact that it is "a new form of empiricism". The interrelations between acting and knowledge on which pragmatism rightly insists concern only the realm of contingent facts and knowledge thereof.⁸⁵

Pragmatism, Scheler says, rightly rejects versions of the view that knowledge is some sort of picturing or depiction in "immaterial pictures".⁸⁶ Knowledge is not any sort of depiction of things or of the relations between things, as Hertz thinks in his *Mechanics*. Scheler quotes Hertz's famous words to the effect that "the consequences of our pictures of things" must be "pictures of their consequences". But there is a related view of knowledge defended by the methodological pragmatists which is also false. "Pragmatism" rejects depiction but keeps hold of "the actual or merely thought consequences of thought or intuition, and the possible modification of the world thanks to these". This led to (what Scheler calls) Boole's view, already mentioned, of the sense of a proposition. And, analogously, to the idea that intuition is adequate when it provides the best point of attack for our actions. But, objects Scheler, "the idea of knowledge in itself" contains no reference to acting" nor does the idea of acting contain any reference to knowledge.⁸⁷ This claim, he argues, is often confused with a related, true claim, overlooked by pragmatism: that there is an essential correlation between what a creature can know about contingent facts and the objects on which it is capable of acting meaningfully. But this correlation concerns not knowledge and acting as such but certain objects of knowledge and acting.⁸⁸

⁸⁵ Scheler 1960, pp. 232, 233.

⁸⁶ Scheler 1960, p. 227.

⁸⁷ Scheler 1960, pp. 228-229.

⁸⁸ Scheler 1960, p. 230. Pragmatism is also said here to overlook the generalisation of Scheler's version of the drive motor theory of perception, that acting and knowledge are both grounded in the subject's affective intentionality.

Scheler says that already in 1905-6 a well-known and common theory in natural science (*Naturforschung*) asserts that

although our thoughts do not resemble (*gleich*) things or are not similar to things, at least the relations between things (*Beziehungen der Dinge*) are the same as the relations between thoughts.⁸⁹

In 1913-1914 he formulates a view which, he says, could be adopted by a “consistent ‘pragmatist’” and which combines this theory and the already mentioned principles of univocal and economic determination of facts, in other words a view which draws on Hertz, Boltzmann and the already mentioned “English” physicists. We may imagine that a huge system of signs provides us with connexions of signs which univocally determine

every fact and all relations of the facts to each other without it being the case that in the ‘picture’ (*Bild*) of the facts (in the sense of mathematical ‘Abbildung’ (mapping)) any *knowledge*...is to be found. To determine univocally and order economically has *nothing at all to do with knowledge*. If the content of the world is in this sense univocally determined and every complex relation of facts amongst themselves represented (*dargestellt*) by combinations of these signs and their operational laws, [these] function in a way analogous to the way the rules of games such as chess function.

But this huge system of signs *would* make it possible to

project (*entwerfen*) a symbolic *model* of any complex fact which is to be brought about and to picture (*verbildlichen*) with its help what ought to belong to parts of the realisation of this project, and to predict what will have what effect...If instead of known objects and their relations, there are symbols which are univocally correlated (*zugeordnet*) with these objects and their relations, this is everything a practical goal can require. And yet this symbol system would contain no knowledge-that (*Erkenntnis*). Of course, such a sign system for the univocal ordering of the world exists only as an ideal.⁹⁰

⁸⁹ Scheler 1975, p. 40. The view goes back to Hertz and Lotze.

⁹⁰ Scheler 1957, p. 414-415.

The ideal described here by Scheler resembles in some respects the ideal of another careful and admiring reader of Hertz and Boltzmann, Wittgenstein⁹¹.

6. Conclusions

I have already indicated what I take to be the main weaknesses in Scheler's doctrine of existential relativity. His objections to pragmatist views about meaning, sense, truth, logic and knowledge are in large measure well-known, classical and often repeated objections to pragmatism⁹². The main exceptions to this claim, it seems to me, are his novel discussions of the philosophy of mechanical explanations and his argument that mapping, modelling and isomorphisms can never constitute knowledge, however useful they are. Behind Scheler's account of the objects of science and common-sense as relative objects stands the view endorsed by all early phenomenologists that philosophy provides knowledge of absolute objects, of objects which are not existentially relative, and of their connexions. Phenomenological experience grounds both artificial, scientific experience and natural experience. The natural world-view and the scientific world-view merely borrow bits and pieces from this stock of knowledge. This view of philosophical knowledge is now to be found only in pockets of contemporary analytic metaphysics.

Early phenomenology, as we have seen, *was* on speaking terms with pragmatism. But Scheler's reaction to pragmatism is an example of the philosophical genre in which a philosopher attempts to show that some position or claim is false but nevertheless contains a grain or more of truth. Scheler rarely refers to specific

⁹¹ Wittgenstein rejects the view, dear to the phenomenologists, that there are predicable essential connexions. But he regularly makes points also made by Scheler concerning the rôle of states of affairs in science, the philosophy of limits, the institution of science, the nature of scientific propositions, mechanics and plans, and Life. Cf. Mulligan 2012.

⁹² They go back to the early criticisms made by phenomenologists such as Reinach in 1910 and Russell in 1908 and 1909 (Reinach 1989, Russell 1910, 1910a).

formulations by pragmatists. His formulation of positions he describes as pragmatist often go well beyond what pragmatists actually say. In particular, he formulates clearly on behalf of the pragmatists positions which were to play an important role in later twentieth century philosophy, such as the use theory of meaning. But Scheler is proposing a marriage between phenomenology and pragmatism in which the former wears the trousers and exaggerations belong to the nature of such proposals.

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