

INTRODUCTION

This book discusses different topics from phenomenology to philosophy of language; the topics discussed belong to different areas of philosophy even if it is possible to find a *fil rouge* that enables the reader to achieve a transversal point of view.

If we consider the idea of a *basic antireductionism* common to the topics of this book, it can be seen apparently that a diversity of themes with which we are concerned disappears in favor of an *homogeneity of sense* which pervades the arguments treated.

An important achievement of these essays is the weakening of the idea of the immediacy of knowledge: in Harvey's and Hintikka's interpretation of Husserl's thought, the opposition to the immediacy of knowledge rests on the assumption that there would be a mutual infiltration between the precatégorial (sensible) and the categorial (rational) levels of experience so that the idea of a founding stratum of every possible experience could lose sense; Hintikka's and Harvey's suggestion is that we ought to *index*, through "hinge-concepts", the direction of the phenomenological analysis as a movement from the predicative level to a "rationally reconstructed" prepredicative one.

In the essay "Thing and Space in Husserl", the task of the theoretical reason is to show how the things conceived by the scientific and the natural thinking would be by-products of a *construction* upon the unitary and meaningful world of everyday experience: in this sense objective space is constituted through the concatenation of places available to me in my *kinesthetically* felt "near-sphere".

Sellars, from his point of view, denies that there would be a *basic level* at which knowledge would be a matter of an immediate encounter with its object, as if immediate knowledge were not inferred from any other knowledge. The major point of Sellars' view is the idea that numerous *tensions* are hidden in sense-datum theories, loyal to the myth of the Given, that can be characterized in these terms:

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- a) knowledge of *facts* versus knowledge of *particulars*;
 - b) *learned* versus *unlearned* cognitive capacities;
 - c) *factualism* about knowledge versus *non-naturalism* about knowledge;
 - d) inner episodes as *causal intermediaries* of empirical knowledge versus inner episodes as *epistemic intermediaries* of empirical knowledge.

Sellars fashions an account of sensation which construes this both *instrumentally* and *non epistemically*: sensations are neither the direct objects of knowledge, nor are they *primordial knowings*; they would belong to the *causal order* rather than to the *cognitive one*.

Sensations mediate and guide our perceptual knowledge of the world, even if this knowledge is not a *second-class knowing* inferred i.e. from the knowledge of items like color and sounds: our knowledge of the world is direct but mediated.

For this reason sensations cannot be considered like knowings: they are *states of perceivers* that are non epistemic in character and depending on external causes; sensations are a necessary condition of the intentional order, even if they do not belong to this order.

Wittgenstein, on his part, retains that the *many-dimensional* character of colour concepts makes them *ineffable*, so that every attempt goes wrong to reduce them to a more primitive ostensive game: colour concepts or colour words have a certain degree of *vagueness*, so that it results very difficult to achieve some sharpness or to draw boundaries; this task belongs to logic, not to the everyday language.

If we try to face the language game played by colour words, we cannot recur to “pen-and-ink” conceptual schemes even if some, as it were, “regularities”, some “unassailable” truths (e.g. the octahedron frame) must be presupposed to match colour issues. In our attempt to describe uses of colour-words, we must admit that 1) some sentences are often used on the *borderline* between logic and the empirical; 2) in philosophy it is not enough in every case to *say something* about an object, but also to learn *how to speak* about it.

What characterizes the following essays is also a certain degree of *antireductionism* and a mitigated use of an *a priori* way of looking to phenomenological or linguistic questions: in the case of the study on the prepredicative and the predicative layers of our experience of the world, the

antireductionist option is testified by the philosophical belief that the silent layer of the prepredicative experience has not the privilege of a full and immediate contact with reality, since every encounter of the world is *mediated* by culture, language, theoretical and practical habits which jeopardize the task of arriving at the “immediacy” of the experience; the *a priori* structures which preside over the experience of the world have an *hermeneutical load* due to the fact that every experience is already saturated with anticipations which are permeated by a certain degree of *typical familiarity* and *precognizance*.

In the essay “Thing and space in Husserl” the antireductionist line is showed by the importance of the Body, the lived body, for the constitution of the three-dimensional space, since thanks to my *Body* I am at the *center* of things and everything in my immediate surrounding is given a *location*. Husserl posits between the lived body and the objective space a *Sehraum*, a purely visual space, in order to make the objective space a *lived space*: the visual space has its own system of places (*Ortssystem*) which are never given without *kinesthetic motivations* which here, together with the pre-empirical qualities of things (size, color and so on), function as *a priori* constraints on our apprehension of the world. As regards Sellars the antireductionist character of his thought would rest in a way of approaching the philosophical enterprise which can be defined holistic: knowledge cannot be conceived as an accurate representing, the “mirror of nature”, since such accuracy would require a theory of *privileged representations* which cannot be approved; justification is not a matter of a special relation between ideas and objects, but of *conversation*, of *social practice*. The American philosopher maintains traces of a *priori boundaries* of our world experience in the sense of conceptual schemes, for example the *manifest* or the *scientific images* of the world, even if these patterns or set of categories we operate with are potentially *dynamic*, changing under the impact of both experience and reflection: in this sense he seems to be more Hegelian than Kantian.

In the essay on Wittgenstein, the antireductionist flavor of his thought manifests itself in the idea that in order to get clear the idea about the meaning of a term like “colour”, one does not have to find the common element present in all its applications, because such an approach would dismiss as irrelevant the concrete cases. Questions regarding the use of the term “colour” are very important for

they help clearing up relevant problems concerning, i.e., the relation between logic and experience, or language and perception. Such questions are so strongly linked that a reductionist approach is not able to tackle them.