

# The Phenomenological Illusion

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I was asked to lecture at the 2004 Wittgenstein conference in Kirchberg on the subject of phenomenology. This request surprised me somewhat because I am certainly not a scholar on the writings of phenomenological philosophers, nor have I done much work that I consider phenomenological in any strict sense. However, I was glad to accept the invitation, since I have had some peculiar experiences with phenomenology. Also, it seemed worth discussing this issue at a Wittgenstein conference because the recent revival of interest in consciousness among analytic philosophers has led to a renewed interest in phenomenological authors, since, of course, phenomenology is in large part concerned with consciousness.

I presented a lecture on the subject, the general thesis of which was that there is a type of idealism present in some of the leading phenomenologists, specifically later Husserl, Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty. It is idealism of a specific kind that I tried to define semantically—some-what different from the traditional idealism of Berkeley which is defined metaphysically, but close enough in family resemblance to the traditional conceptions of idealism to merit the term. The definition I used was this: A view is idealist in this semantic sense if it does not allow for irreducibly *de re* references to objects. All references to objects are interpreted as being within the scope of some phenomenological operator, such as *Dasein* or transcendental consciousness. I also argued that this form of idealism leads to certain structural limitations on what these phenomenological authors can achieve. The problem with the discussion in Kirchberg was that too much time was spent arguing about whether it is correct to interpret later Husserl and Heidegger as idealists in the traditional sense. For me that is not the interesting question. The mere fact of an ambiguity or unclarity in their position on the issue of idealism, the fact that it is not obvious that they are resolutely anti-idealistic and resolutely realistic, is sufficient for me to make the points that I want to make. In any case, the definition I gave of idealism led to confusion with traditional conceptions of idealism, so I am now for the most part abandoning the use of that term. Instead of “idealism” I introduce the notion of “perspectivalism” to mark the tendency of some authors to treat the perspective from which something is regarded—transcendental consciousness, *Dasein*, ready to hand, present-at-hand, etc.—as somehow part of its ontology. I have recast the article so as to make the issues about the interpretation of Husserl, Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty secondary to the main philosophical points. I want the substantive philosophical points to seem quite obvious. Whenever there is a nonobvious point about the interpretation of a text I will mark it as such. I want to emphasize at the start that *if phenomenology is defined as the examination of the structure of consciousness, I have no objections whatever to phenomenology*. My misgivings are about some specific authors and their practice of this method.

## I. The current situation in philosophy

Before beginning my discussion of phenomenology, I want to say a little bit about how I see the contemporary philosophical scene. There is exactly one overriding question in contempo-

rary philosophy. As a preliminary formulation, we can say the question is: How do we account for our conceptions of ourselves as a certain sort of human being in a universe that we know consists entirely of physical particles in fields of force. More precisely: Given that any sort of Cartesianism or other form of metaphysical dualism is out of the question, how do we give an account of ourselves as conscious, intentionalistic, rational, speech-act performing, ethical, free-will possessing, political and social animals in a world that consists *entirely* of mindless, meaningless brute physical particles. Most of the important questions of philosophy are variations on this single question. So, the question of free will and determinism is: How can we have free action in a universe that is determined in accordance with causal laws? The problem of ethics is: How can there be an ethical right and wrong in a world of meaningless physical particles? The question of consciousness is: How can unconscious bits of matter in the skull cause consciousness, and how can irreducibly subjective states of consciousness exist in an entirely “physical” world? The question in the philosophy of language is: How can brute physical sounds that come out of a speaker’s mouth constitute the performance of meaningful speech acts? The question for society is: How can there be an objective reality of money, property, government and marriage when all of these phenomena only exist, in some sense, because we believe that they exist? How is it possible that human beings can, by their subjective thought processes, create an objective social reality? And so on with other philosophical questions that are variations on the central question. I am deliberately putting these points in a very crude fashion; and, as analytic philosophers, you will all recognize that before we go to work on them, they would need much more careful statement. How, then, can we and should we approach this question or this set of questions?

Our question is, How does the human reality fit into the basic reality? And what is the basic underlying reality? Well, that is a complicated story, but two central features of it can be stated quite simply. We know that the basic structure of the entire universe consists in entities that we find it convenient (if not entirely accurate) to call “particles”, and these exist in fields of force and are typically organized into systems. We know furthermore that we and all living systems have evolved over a period of somewhere between three and five billion years by processes of Darwinian natural selection. It is a deep mistake to think that these two propositions are just theories of science. “Science” is the name of a set of procedures by which we have identified the truth, but once identified, the truth is public property. It does not belong to some special domain; indeed “science” does not name an ontological domain. These two propositions are now so widely accepted that it is hardly necessary for me to belabor them. I also want to add a third. In addition to the atomic theory of matter and the evolutionary theory of biology, we have to add the neurobiological basis of all human and animal mental life. All of our consciousness, intentionality, and all the rest of our mental life, is caused by neurobiological processes and realized in neurobiological systems. This is not as universally accepted as the first two propositions; but it will be, and for the purposes of this discussion I am going to take it for granted. These three propositions taken together—atomic physics, evolutionary biology, and embodied brain neurobiology—I will call propositions that describe “the basic facts” or “the basic reality”. So now our philosophical question can be posed more precisely: What are the relations between the human reality and the basic reality?

A preliminary difficulty with phenomenology is that the phenomenologists that I know cannot hear the question I am asking. They think it expresses some kind of Cartesianism, that I am opposing the human realm to the physical realm, *res cogitans* to *res extensa*. Indeed, Hubert

Dreyfus had said over and over that I am a Cartesian. This misunderstanding is so breathtaking that I hardly know how to answer it. The human world is part of one world, not something different. The question “How does the human reality relate to the more fundamental reality?” is no more Cartesian than the question “How does chemistry relate to the more fundamental atomic physics?” In a recent article Dreyfus writes: “We should adopt a richer ontology than the Cartesian one of minds and nature assumed by Husserl and Searle.” He adds that we should follow Merleau-Ponty in postulating “a third kind of being” (Dreyfus 1999, 21). This is not just a misunderstanding of my views on Dreyfus’s part, but reveals a very deep misconception. The assumption is that there are already two different kinds of being, mind and nature, and that we need to postulate “a third kind of being”. I do not have the space here to expose the full inadequacy of this conception, and for purposes of this discussion I can only say that the very terminology of “minds and nature” and “a third kind of being” makes it impossible to address many of the fundamental questions of philosophy. There is no opposition between minds and nature, because mind is part of nature, and there are not three kinds of being, because there are not two kinds of being or even one kind of being, because the whole notion of “being” is confused. To state my view simply, if you can use “being” as a noun (or worse yet “Being”) you are in serious intellectual difficulties. We know since Frege’s analysis of existential statements that it could not name anything.

Paradoxically, Wittgenstein helped to make possible a type of philosophy that I think he would have abominated. By taking skepticism seriously, and by attempting to show that it is based on a profound misunderstanding of language, Wittgenstein helped to remove skepticism from the center of the philosophical agenda and make it possible to do a type of systematic, theoretical, constructive philosophy of the sort that he thought was impossible. Skepticism has been removed from the center of the philosophical agenda for two main reasons. First, linguistic philosophy has convinced many people that skepticism of the traditional kind cannot be intelligibly stated (this is where Wittgenstein comes in); and second, more importantly, we know too much. The single most important intellectual fact about the present era is that knowledge grows. We now have a huge body of knowledge that is certain, objective and universal. You cannot, for example, send men to the moon and back and then seriously doubt whether the external world exists. The decline of epistemology as the central subject in philosophy has made possible a type of post skeptical, post epistemic, post foundationalist philosophy. This is the type of philosophy that I have always practiced. The theory of speech acts, the theory of intentionality, the theory of consciousness, and the theory of social reality (all of which are areas I have worked in) are precisely areas in which we seek general, theoretical accounts of a large philosophically puzzling domain. Notice, also, that there is no sharp boundary between philosophy and science in these domains. For example, the advent of cognitive science and the development of neurobiology have produced all sorts of cooperative endeavors between philosophers and scientists. In fact, cognitive science was invented in large part by philosophers and philosophically minded psychologists who got sick of behaviorism in psychology.

That is the question or set of questions. What is the appropriate method for attacking these questions? The answer about methodology is always the same. Use any method you can lay your hands on, and stick with any method that works. The methods that I have found most useful in my work are what I call the methods of logical analysis, and I will contrast those with other methods in a few moments.

## II. My experiences with phenomenology

Before launching into the main argument, I want to say a bit more of an autobiographical nature. When I first began work on a book on intentionality, I read some of the huge literature on the subject. The literature in analytic philosophy seemed to me feeble. The best work was supposed to be an exchange between Chisholm and Sellars on the topic of intentionality (Chisholm and Sellars 1958), but that exchange seemed to me to have a persistent confusion between intentionality-with-a-t and intensionality-with-an-s. Many sentences about intentional-with-a-t states, that is, many sentences about beliefs, desires, hopes and fears, for example, are themselves intensional-with-an-s sentences; because, for example, they fail the tests of substitutability (Leibniz's Law) and existential generalization. These are the two standard tests for extensionality. But the fact that sentences about intentional-with-a-t states are typically intensional-with-an-s sentences does not show that there is something inherently intensional-with-an-s about intentional-with-a-t states. It is common among people who use linguistic methods, to confuse features of the description of a phenomenon with features of the phenomenon being described. So I did not learn anything from the Chisholm-Sellars correspondence or, indeed, from Chisholm's collection which purports to make a connection between phenomenology and the issues that I was interested in. (Chisholm 1960)

So I turned to the phenomenologists, and the book that I was urged to read was Husserl's *Logical Investigations*. (Husserl 1970a) Well, I read the *First Logical Investigation*, and, frankly, I was very disappointed. It seemed to me that it was in no way an advance on Frege and was, in fact, rather badly written, unclear, and confused. So I abandoned the effort to try to learn something about intentionality from previous writers and just went to work on my own. It turned out to be a rather difficult task, the hardest I have ever undertaken in philosophy. After several years I produced the book *Intentionality: an Essay in the Philosophy of Mind*. (Searle 1983) When that book was published, I was flabbergasted to discover that a lot of people thought it was Husserlian, that I was somehow or other following Husserl and adopting a Husserlian approach to intentionality. As a matter of my actual history, that is entirely false. I learned nothing from Husserl, literally nothing, though, of course, I did learn a lot from Frege and Wittgenstein. There is a special irony here in that in the course of writing the book, I had several arguments with experts on Husserl, especially Dagfinn Føllesdal, who argued that Husserl's version of intentionality was superior to mine in various respects. No doubt there are interesting overlaps between my views and Husserl's. Indeed it would be surprising if there were no overlaps, because we are talking about the same subject. Such similarities are certainly worth exploring. But I want to call attention to crucial differences in method.

Another brush I had with phenomenology was with my colleague Hubert Dreyfus. Though he knew that I had read very little of Husserl, he became convinced that I was essentially repeating Husserl's views. Dreyfus tells me that he hates Husserl with a passion, and that he was, in his words, "playing Heidegger" to what he supposed was my Husserl. (Dreyfus 1999, 3) The result was a series of published criticisms of my various theories, that went on for years and years. Dreyfus has now conceded that my views are not like Husserl's, but the published criticisms continue and I will mention some of them later. Most of my interpretation of Husserl, Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty has been heavily influenced by Dreyfus. He has spent his entire professional life studying these and other authors in that tradition, and as we have taught together various seminars on these and related issues, I have been exposed to his reading of these

authors more than those of any other commentator. In what follows a perhaps disproportionate amount of space is devoted to Dreyfus, because I understand his work much better than I understand the authors he is writing about.

### III. The transcendental reduction, the *Wesensschau*, and how they differ from logical analysis

Two crucial features of Husserl's method are what he calls the transcendental reduction (or bracketing or the *Epoché*) and the intuition of essences (or *Wesensschau*). In the transcendental reduction you suspend judgment about how the world actually is; you bracket the real world and just describe the structure of your conscious experiences. But there are two ways to describe the structure of your conscious experiences. One would be a kind of naïve naturalistic account **where** you just describe how things seem to you. That is not Husserl's method. Husserl proposes that when we describe the results of the transcendental reduction, we should transcend naturalism and try to intuit the essence of what it is that we are describing. So we do not just describe how this particular shade of red seems to me, but we try to get at the essence of redness. That is the intuition of essences. So there are two features to the Husserlian methods: the transcendental reduction and the intuition of essences. These are not equivalent, and indeed they are independent; we could have one without the other.

These methods and logical analysis are somewhat related, but they are by no means identical. Let me describe logical analysis, as I understand it and practice it. The paradigm case of logical analysis, the one that had provided us with a model for literally a century, is Russell's theory of descriptions (first published in 1905). (Russell 1905) In the theory of descriptions, Russell does not ask himself what it consciously feels like when he utters the sentence "The king of France is bald"; and as I interpret him, he is not seeking a Husserlian *Wesensschau* either. He does not ask himself what his state of consciousness is; rather, he tries to describe the conditions under which the sentence would be true. He arrives at his famous analysis by analyzing *truth conditions*, not by analyzing his experience. This has provided the model for analytic philosophy since, and the way that I have applied it involves significant extensions beyond the Russellian paradigm. In the theory of speech acts, I did not ask under what conditions speech acts are true; rather, I asked under what conditions a speech act of a certain type, such as promising, is *successfully and non-defectively performed*. As in Russell's case, the idea was to get an analysis in terms of a set of conditions, ideally a set of necessary and sufficient conditions, for such concepts as promising, ordering, stating, or any other of the fundamental speech act notions. By the time I did that, I was fully aware, of course, of important doubts, raised by Wittgenstein and others, about the possibility of getting necessary and sufficient conditions because of vagueness, family resemblance, open texture, and other well-known phenomena. These however do not make the project of logical analysis impossible; they simply make it more difficult and more interesting. So, for example, the fact that there are marginal and dubious cases of promising or requesting, etc. does not make the project of logical analysis impossible, but it makes it more interesting and more complex.

When I went on to analyze intentionality, my method there, again, was to state conditions, in this case *conditions of satisfaction*. To understand what a belief is, you have to know under what conditions it is true. In the case of a desire, under what conditions it is satisfied. In the case

of an intention, under what conditions it is carried out, and so on with other intentional states. But, once again, the analysis is in terms of conditions. Intentional states represent their conditions of satisfaction, and like all representation, intentional representation is under *aspects*, what Frege called “modes of presentation”. Notice the contrast with Husserl, who wants to get an intuition of essences by examining the structure of his consciousness. For me, many of the conditions of satisfaction are not immediately available to consciousness; they are not phenomenologically real. I suspect also that Husserl had an ontological conception of representations as certain kinds of occurrent mental events. My conception is purely logical. Representations for me are not to be thought of as always like pictures or sentences; for me anything at all that can have conditions of satisfaction is a representation.

Though I did not realize it at the time, one of the effects of my book *Intentionality* was to begin making the subject of intentionality a respectable subject for analytic philosophers. Previous analytic discussions of intentionality either tended to be behavioristic, like Ryle’s, or linguistic, like Chisholm’s and Sellars’s. Traditionally, analytic philosophers have been reluctant to accept any irreducibly first personal account of anything. I presented a first person account of intentionality, real intrinsic intentionality, using the resources of logical analysis. Unlike Husserl, whose method is introspective and transcendental, my conception of intentionality is resolutely naturalistic. Intentionality is a biological feature of the world, on all fours with digestion or photosynthesis. It is caused by and realized in the brain.

In the case of social reality, my analysis is also in terms of conditions, though it is less obviously so. There, the question is: What are the constitutive features that make up institutional facts? What sort of facts about the world make it the case that I am married, or that I am a citizen of the United States, or that I have a certain amount of money, or that I am a professor at the University of California, Berkeley? All of those are institutional facts, and the idea is to uncover the ontology of those facts by uncovering what conditions are necessary and sufficient to constitute those facts as such. It is important to emphasize that the analysis is in no sense a causal analysis. I am not asking what *caused* these bits of paper to be money, but rather what facts about them *constitute* their being money. In my investigation of social ontology I have employed the methods of analysis that I used in other areas.

So, as a preliminary formulation, we can say that the method of Husserlian phenomenology is to describe the noema by giving its essential structure. The method of logical analysis is to state conditions—truth conditions, performance conditions, conditions of constitution, etc.

I said there was an overlap between the Husserlian methods of transcendental reduction and *Wesensschau* and the methods of logical analysis. The overlap arises simply because sometimes the intuition of essences gives the same result as the analysis of conditions. For example, I think both would give similar analyses of belief, at least of beliefs as they occur in conscious thought processes. The problem, however, is that sometimes they give different analyses. This came out years ago in my arguments with Føllesdal where I claimed that there are certain causal conditions on various kinds of intentional phenomena, but he denied those on the grounds that there was no immediate phenomenological reality to the causal conditions. An obvious example is the causal self-referentiality of many intentional phenomena such as perception, memory, and voluntary action. I will say more about these cases in detail later, but for the present the point is: *some of the most important logical features of intentionality are beyond the reach of phenomenology because they have no immediate phenomenological reality.*

Well, what, then, is the method of logical analysis which gets at these conditions, if it is not just describing the structure of experience? The answer is that it is an extension of the methods of linguistic philosophy. You ask, "What would we say if ...?" or "What would be the case if ...?" Grice gives a classic instance of this in his proof that there is a causal condition on seeing, even in cases where that causal condition is not experienced as part of the phenomenology of the visual experience. (Grice 1989) Thus, suppose I see an object, but a mirror is then inserted in such a way that I have exactly the same type of experience I had before, and I still take myself to be seeing the same object; but, in fact, the mirror image is reflecting a different but type-identical object. I am no longer seeing the object I was originally seeing because that object is not causing my visual experience. The proof is that we *would not describe* this as a case of seeing the original object. This is straight, linguistic philosophy; it is not phenomenological analysis. This is a crucial and decisive distinction between my notion of intentional content and Husserl's notion of noema. The noema can only contain things that are phenomenologically real. *On my view, phenomenology is a good beginning on the analysis of intentionality, but it cannot go all the way because there are all sorts of conditions which simply have no immediate phenomenological reality.*

It seems to me that the right attitude to this whole discussion is that we should use phenomenological methods where they are appropriate, and analytic methods where they are appropriate. It is as simple and trivial as that. *Properly understood, there is no conflict between analytic philosophy and phenomenology.* They offer noncompeting and complementary methods of investigation and anybody prepared to do serious work should be ready to use both. I think that is exactly the right attitude to have and if everyone agreed to it we could all go home.

#### IV. Some examples of the phenomenological illusion

But if we look at the actual practices of phenomenologists, there is a deep disagreement between the sort of philosophy I do and phenomenology. In discussing these issues with phenomenologists I have found that in the study of the philosophy of mind, where something is not phenomenologically real they often suppose it is not real at all, in the sense that it has no mental, intentionalistic or logical reality; and where it is phenomenologically real, then that is real enough. I call this the phenomenological illusion, and I will give several examples of it, beginning with problems in the philosophy of language.

1. *The Problem of Meaning.* The problem of meaning in its starkest form is to explain the relation of the physics of the utterance to the semantics. What fact about the acoustic blast that comes out my mouth makes it a speech act? This is the linguistic expression of the fundamental problem I mentioned earlier: how do we account for the human reality given the basic facts? This problem is the main problem in the philosophy of language: How do the (observer independent) processes in the mind create an (observer dependent) meaning? I try to answer this by presenting a theory of speech acts that includes an account of meaning. On Dreyfus's reading, Husserl's answer to that question is that we first identify meaningless brute phenomena and then consciously impose meaning upon them. This account seems obviously false, because normally no such prior identification or conscious imposition takes place.

So let us turn to Heidegger. According to Dreyfus,



Heidegger holds that there is no way to account for referring and truth starting with language as occurrent sounds coupled with occurrent representations. We saw in Ch 11 that Heidegger thinks that all sounds, from motorcycle roars to words are directly experienced as meaningful. So if we stick close to the phenomenon we *dissolve* [my italics] the Husserl/Searle problem of how to give meaning to mere noises, so that we can then refer by means of mere noises. (Dreyfus 1991, 268)

So the problem which forms the basis of philosophy of language and linguistics simply *dissolves*. There is no such problem. If Heidegger were right, a hundred and fifty years of discussion of this problem from Frege through Russell, Wittgenstein, Grice and Searle would be rendered irrelevant by a dissolution of the problem. But wait a minute. We know before we ever get started on philosophy that when I speak, acoustic blasts are coming out of my mouth and larynx. This is just a fact of physics, one of the basic facts I referred to earlier. We know also that I am performing meaningful speech acts. We know, again, before we ever get started on philosophy, that there must be an answer to the question “What is the relation between the acoustic blast and the speech act”, because, initially at least, the relation is one of identity. The production of that acoustic blast just is the performance of that speech act. We know, again before we ever get going on the investigation, that the production of meaning is entirely observer relative, entirely done by humans, because we know that without intentional human thought and action there is no meaning. Now why does Heidegger/Dreyfus fail to see these obvious points? I believe the answer is that they are suffering from the phenomenological illusion. Because the creation of meaningfulness out of meaninglessness is not consciously experienced as such (at least not typically), it does not exist. This is a clear example of the phenomenological illusion.

Let us state this point precisely. Because of the phenomenological illusion, the existential phenomenologist cannot state the problem of meaning nor hear the answer. According to Heidegger, there is no problem. The problem *dissolves* because we always already experience all sounds as meaningful. The Heideggerians suppose that if there were an imposition of meaning it would have to be done consciously by first identifying the meaningless element and then consciously imposing meaning on it. Unless the imposition of meaning is phenomenologically real, it does not exist.

2. *The Problem of Social Reality*. Let us turn now from language to society. The problem for language was how we get from sounds or marks to meaning. The problem (or one problem) for society is parallel. How do we get from the brute facts to the social and institutional facts? The phenomenologists cannot hear the first question because they think it is a phenomenological question, when it is not. The same difficulty afflicts the discussion of social reality. The question for society is: How do we get from, for example, the brute fact that this is a sheet of paper with ink marks to the institutional fact that this is a twenty dollar bill? I try to answer that question; as far as I can tell, the existential phenomenologists literally cannot hear the question. For Heidegger the question dissolves, because the object was “always already” a twenty dollar bill. So my objections to Heidegger’s account of meaning apply also to the account of social reality. Indeed, I cannot find a distinction in Heidegger between the role of tools such as hammers, where there is no deontology involved, and the role of tools such as money, which only makes sense given a deontology.

3. *The Problem of Functions*. Let us pursue this line of thought further. Once you take the basic facts seriously you are struck by an important distinction: Some features of the world



exist regardless of our feelings and attitudes. I call these *observer independent*. They include such things as force, mass, gravitational attraction, photosynthesis, etc. Other things are dependent on us because they are our creations. These include money, property, government, hammers, cars, and tools generally. I call these *observer dependent* or *observer relative*. All functions, and hence all tools and equipment generally, are observer relative. Obviously, the observer dependent facts of the world are dependent on the observer independent, because the observer dependent facts are created as such out of an observer independent or brute reality by human consciousness and intentionality, both of which are themselves observer independent. Thus meaningful utterances, tools, governments, money and equipment generally are human creations out of meaningless observer independent materials. So, a piece of paper is money or an object is a hammer only because we have imposed functions on them, the functions of being money or a hammer.

The observer independent is ontologically primary, the observer dependent is derivative. Now here is the interest of all this for the present discussion: *Heidegger has the ontology exactly backwards*. He says the ready-to-hand is prior, the present-at-hand is derivative. The hammers and the dollar bills are prior to the sheets of paper and the collection of metal molecules. Why does he say this? I think the answer is clear; phenomenologically the hammer and the dollar bill typically are prior. When using the hammer or the dollar bill, we don't think much about their basic atomic structure or other observer independent features. In short, Heidegger is subject to the phenomenological illusion in a clear way: he thinks that because the ready-to-hand is phenomenologically prior it is ontologically prior. What is even worse is that he denies that the ready-to-hand is observer relative. He thinks that something is a hammer *in itself*, and he denies that we create a meaningful social and linguistic reality out of meaningless entities. Rather he says we are "always already" in a meaningful world. Here is what he says:

The kind of Being which belongs to these entities is readiness-to-hand. But this characteristic is not to be understood *as merely a way of taking them*, [my italics] as if we were talking such "aspects" into the "entities" which we proximally encounter, or as if some world-stuff which is proximally present-at-hand in itself were "given subjective colouring" in this way. (Heidegger 1962, 101)

This seems wrong. If you take away the rhetorical flourishes in his prose, the view that he says is false, is the correct view. The characteristic of being money or a hammer is precisely a "way of taking them". Such features as being money or being a hammer are observer relative and in that sense the object is "given subjective coloring" when we treat it as a hammer. Heidegger's views are expressions of his rejection of the basic nature of the basic facts.

4. *Causal Self Referentiality as it Is Manifested in Perception, Memory, and Intentions*. As I mentioned earlier, if you examine the conditions of satisfaction of several forms of cognition, especially perception, memory, prior intention, and intention in action, you find that they all have a causal condition. They will not be satisfied unless they are caused by (in the case of perception and memory) or themselves cause (in the case of prior intention and intention in action) the rest of their conditions of satisfaction. To take the example I mentioned earlier, I do not see the object unless the presence and features of the object cause the experience of seeing the object with those features. Now this causal self referentiality is generally not available to phenomenological analysis, because you don't typically consciously experience the object as

causing you to see it or experience your prior intentions as causing your subsequent actions. This causal self referentiality of perception and action is revealed in logical analysis but not typically revealed in phenomenological analysis, because it is not phenomenologically real, in the sense that it is not always present to consciousness at the time of the actual experience. But it is real as a condition, because it is part of the conditions of satisfaction of the intentional phenomena in question. Of course, you can indirectly bring the causal conditions of satisfaction to consciousness. In the case of perception there is an experienced contrast between the voluntary character of visual imagination, where my intention causes the visual image, and my actual visual perception, where I experience the visual experience as caused by objects in the external world. In the case of action there is an experienced contrast between a normal action, where I am in causal control of my bodily movements, and cases where the bodily movements are caused by stimulation of motor cortex, as was done by the neurosurgeon Wilder Penfield in some famous experiments. (Penfield 1975, 76) So you can consciously get at the causal self referentiality, but only indirectly. The causal condition of seeing something red does not jump out at you the way that the redness does.

5. *Skillful Coping*. Another example of the phenomenological illusion comes out in Merleau-Ponty's discussion of skillful coping, which he calls "motor intentionality". (Merleau-Ponty 1962) The idea is that because there are all kinds of routine actions, such as walking or driving a car, that do not have the concentrated focused consciousness of intentionality, of the kind you get for example when you are giving a lecture, that therefore they have a different kind of intentionality altogether. If it feels different then it must be different. But if you look at the actual conditions of satisfaction there is no difference in the logical structure.

To see this, contrast doing a type of action as skillful coping and doing it as concentrated deliberate action. For example, normally when I get up and walk to the door I do it without special concentration or deliberation. Skillful coping. But suppose I do it and concentrate my attention on doing it. Deliberate action. The cases as described, though they feel different, are logically similar. In both cases I am acting intentionally and in both there are causally self referential conditions of satisfaction. I succeeded in what I was trying to do only if my intentions in action caused the bodily movements. It is a clear case of the phenomenological illusion to suppose that different phenomenology implies a different kind of intentionality with a different logical structure.

6. *Propositional Representations, Conditions of Satisfaction and Subject/Object Intentionality*. Dreyfus continually criticizes my conception of intentionality on the grounds that, according to him, it cannot account for Merleau-Ponty's motor intentionality, because, he says, such intentionality does not consist in propositional representations, does not have conditions of satisfaction, and is not "subject/object" intentionality. Rather, he says, it has "conditions of improvement" which are non-representational and non-propositional; and because the agent is in a skilled involvement with the world, it is not subject/object intentionality. An example of the sort of thing he has in mind, indeed an example he gives repeatedly when criticizing me, is this: when playing tennis I might have the "conditions of improvement", concerning my tennis stroke. Such conditions of improvement, he says, are not propositional, they do not have conditions of satisfaction, and they are not cases of "subject/object intentionality". I find this account confused, not to say self-contradictory; and I think once again, for reasons I will explain, it reveals the phenomenological illusion.

Let us go through it step by step. First step: He says skillful coping has conditions of

improvement that are not propositional. But the notion of a condition is already propositional, because a condition is always a condition *that such and such is the case*. Second step: the notion of a representation, as I use it, trivially applies to anything in this domain that has conditions, because a representation is simply anything at all that sets conditions, such as truth conditions, obedience conditions, conditions of improvement, and conditions of satisfaction generally. As I remarked earlier, representation for me is a logical, not a phenomenological notion. The expression “mental representation” does not imply “sentences or pictures in the head”. So both the cases of conditions of satisfaction and conditions of improvement are cases of propositional representation. Third step: all intentionality by definition is “subject/object intentionality” because all intentionality is a matter of a human or animal engaged with the world where the human’s or animal’s thoughts, perceptions, and behavior have conditions of satisfaction. The fact that conscious intentionality does not feel like a subject engaged with an object is irrelevant, and has no necessary bearing on its logical structure. Fourth step. All conditions of improvement are by definition conditions of satisfaction, because I can succeed or fail in achieving conditions of improvement. Conditions of improvement are simply a subclass of conditions of satisfaction, i.e. cases of my succeeding or failing in my efforts. In short, as I use these expressions, Dreyfus’s account is self contradictory. You cannot say that motor intentionality has conditions of improvement but is not representational, not propositional, not subject/object intentionality and has no conditions of satisfaction, because the very notion of intentional conditions of improvement implies: propositional, representational, conditions of satisfaction and subject/object intentionality.

Why are these points not obvious? I think the answer is the phenomenological illusion. In general these features are not present to the phenomenology. We do not, when playing tennis have a conscious experience of having propositional representations of conditions of satisfaction and we do not consciously think of ourselves as embodied consciousnesses in interaction with the world. The phenomenological illusion can even give us the impression that the tennis racket is somehow part of our body; and indeed when we are playing tennis or skiing, the tennis racket or the skis seem more like an extension of the body than they seem like instruments. But this, of course, is a phenomenological illusion. In fact there are no nerve endings in the tennis racket, nor in the skis; but if you get good at skiing or playing tennis it will seem almost as if there are. It does not seem like you are an embodied brain engaged with a world; rather it seems like you and the world form a single unity, and of course there is no propositional content running consciously through your head. But all the same, the entire logical apparatus of intentionality applies. If you describe the phenomenology and stop there, you miss the underlying logical structures.

From a biological point of view, what seems to be going on in these cases is this. It is simply more economical biologically, more efficient, and consequently has an evolutionary advantage, that we should engage with the world in ways that disguise the actual logical relations. Indeed, some recent work in neurobiology supports the view that lots of intentionality, even in vision, is unconscious. (Milner and Goodale 2002) There is nothing wrong with the lived phenomenology that leaves out many of the logical features. On the contrary leaving out all sorts of logical features has an enormous evolutionary advantage for us. What is wrong is mistaking the phenomenology for the totality of the actual facts. The phenomenological theory is based on an illusion generated by the fact that my skillful coping does not seem to involve a distinction between me and the world, does not seem to involve propositional content, and does not seem

to involve representations. But phenomenology fails us, if we are trying to get at the underlying reality that lies beyond the reach of the conscious. Dreyfus frequently points out that we need not know in advance what a perfect tennis swing is going to feel like. Quite so. Similarly we need not know in advance what a perfect turn is going to feel like in skiing, but all the same we have conditions of satisfaction whose content is that they are satisfied only if I make a perfect, or at least a better, turn; or only if I make a perfect, or at least a better, tennis swing.

8. *Causation and Constitution.* There is an interesting misunderstanding of my whole approach to these issues which I think also reveals the phenomenological illusion. I gave a "causal account" of the structure of action by finding that the conditions of satisfaction of both prior intentions and intentions in action had to contain a causal component. The prior intention causes the whole action, the intention in action causes the bodily movement, etc. (Though to repeat, in typical cases this will not be phenomenologically available.) Now interestingly, Dreyfus supposes that when I give an account of the structure of social reality, that it must also be causal, that I am giving a causal account of the fact that this piece of paper in front of me is a twenty dollar bill. On the contrary, I am giving a constitutive account. The question I am asking is, What fact about this piece of paper and other similar pieces of paper make them into money? I do not ask the question, What caused this piece of paper to be money? (I am not even sure what such a question would mean.) Rather, I ask, What fact about it constitutes its being money?

I was surprised that anyone could have this misunderstanding, especially because there is nothing in my text to support it, but I now believe that it follows from the phenomenological illusion. If there were a logical structure then it would have to be phenomenologically real, but if it is phenomenologically real then the brute part of the phenomenology, thinking that this is a piece of paper, would have to be the causal basis for the institutional part of the phenomenology, thinking that it is a twenty dollar bill. I now see that if you are subject to the phenomenological illusion it follows quite naturally.

## V. A diagnosis of the phenomenological illusion

So far I am reasonably confident that what I am identifying as mistakes are genuine mistakes, and that I have not misunderstood the authors that I am criticizing. But now I turn to a more speculative part of this article: What is the diagnosis of the phenomenological illusion?

I have said that any sane philosophy dealing with these issues in our epoch has to start with the basic facts. (This does not of course imply that there cannot be philosophical investigations of and challenges to the basic facts themselves.) Now, why exactly are they basic? Why, for example, are the facts of physics more basic than those of literary criticism or sociology? That is a question that is legitimately asked, and it has a clear answer. Literary and social facts are dependent on the facts of physics in a way that the facts of physics are not dependent on literature or society. Take away all the literature and all the social institutions, and you still have physics. Take away all the physical particles, and you lose literature, society and everything else.

One possible diagnosis of the sources of the phenomenological illusion is simply this: The phenomenologists I am discussing do not start with the basic facts. And given their presuppositions it is hard to see how they could. The actual approach they adopt is to treat the human reality as in some sense more fundamental, or as some of them would like to say, more "primordial" than the basic reality. The way this manifests itself in their writings is that they tend not to make

*de re* references. References to objects are interpreted as inside the scope of some phenomenological operator, such as transcendental consciousness or *Dasein*. Several people whose opinions I respect think it is unfair to characterize the result as “idealism”, but in practice at least it comes out as a kind of perspectivalism. Reality exists but only from a perspective.

In the case of late Husserl, all of his talk about the transcendental ego and the primacy of consciousness is, I believe, a part of his rejection of the idea that what I have been calling the basic facts are really basic. Consciousness for Husserl has an absolute existence and is not dependent on brain processes or anything else in nature. (Cf. Moran 2000, 136) Here are some fairly typical passages from *The Crisis of the European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology*: “This greatest of all revolutions must be characterized as the transformation of scientific objectivism—not only modern objectivism but also that of all the earlier philosophies of the millennia—into a transcendental subjectivism”. (Husserl 1970b, 68) Again, “rather, what is primary in itself is subjectivity, understood as that which naively pre-gives the being of the world and then rationalizes it or (what is the same thing) objectifies it” (Husserl 1970b, 69). Transcendental subjectivity for Husserl does not depend on the basic facts, rather it is the other way round. Another statement of this point occurs in the *Cartesian Meditations*: “the objective world, the world that exists for me, that always has and always will exist for me, the only world that ever can exist for me—this world, with all its objects, I said, derives its whole sense and its existential status, which it has for me, from me myself, *from me as the transcendental Ego*, the Ego who comes to the fore only with transcendental-phenomenological epoché”. (Husserl 1960, 26)

I think that Merleau-Ponty is an idealist in a rather traditional sense. Merleau-Ponty talks a great deal about what he calls the body and the importance of the body, but it turns out that the body he is talking about is not the flesh and blood hunk of matter that constitutes each of us but, rather, *le corps vécu*, the lived-body, by which he means the set of phenomenological experiences we have of our own bodies. Merleau-Ponty thinks the brain and the rest of the physical body are arrived at by a kind of abstraction from the *corps vécu*, but the *corps vécu* is basic and primary.

Well, what about Heidegger? It ought to arouse our suspicions that people who spend enormous efforts on interpreting his work disagree on the fundamental question whether he was an idealist.<sup>1</sup> For the purposes of this discussion, his lack of a resolute commitment to the basic facts is enough. Suppose you took the notion of *Dasein* seriously, in the sense that you thought it referred to a real phenomenon in the real world. Your first question would be: How does the brain cause *Dasein* and how does *Dasein* exist in the brain? Or if you thought the brain was not the right explanatory level you would have to say exactly how and where *Dasein* is located in the space time trajectory of the organism and you would have to locate the right causes, both the micro causes that are causing *Dasein* and its causal effects on the organic processes of the organism. There is no escaping the fact that we all live in one space-time continuum, and if *Dasein* exists it has to be located and causally situated in that continuum. Furthermore, if you took *Dasein* seriously you would then have to ask how does *Dasein* fit into the biological evolutionary scheme? Do other primates have it? Other mammals? What is its evolutionary function? I can't find an answer to these questions in Heidegger or even a sense that he is aware of them or takes them seriously. But taking these questions seriously is the price of taking *Dasein* seriously, unless of course you are denying the primordially of the basic facts.

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1. Blattner 1999 says he is an idealist. Carman 2003 says he is not.

A recent book by Richard Polt is very revealing in this regard. He tells us “Heidegger will not even consider a number of questions that the scientifically minded reader will want to ask”. These are the sorts of questions I have just mentioned. Why will he not consider these questions? “For Heidegger the ontological question is more fundamental than these ontical questions.” (Polt 1999, 43) I think Polt is right in his reading of Heidegger. Once you accept the basic facts, then *Dasein* has to be a derivative, dependent, higher level feature of nervous systems. You would have to say beings are primordial, *Dasein* and *Being* are derivative.

As far as I can tell (and I may be mistaken about this) *because of their failure to recognize the primacy of the basic facts, the phenomenologists seem to be unable to give a de re reading of references to objects*. They hear the references to the basic facts, about molecules, for example, as always already inside the scope of the “present-at-hand” (or some other phenomenological) operator, and they hear the references to hammers and money, etc. as always already inside the scope of the “ready-to-hand” (or some other phenomenological) operator. Look at the quote from Dreyfus above. “Heidegger holds that there is no way to account for referring and truth starting with language as *occurrent sounds* ...” But that is precisely how one has to account for meaning, reference, truth, etc. because we know before we ever start on the philosophical problems that the speech act is performed by making “occurrent sounds”, marks, etc. The inadequacy of existential phenomenology could not be stated more clearly: Dreyfus is in effect saying that the Heideggerian cannot state the solution because he cannot hear the question.

Perhaps the most subtle way the failure to give a *de re* reading emerges in Dreyfus’s commentary is in the recurring puzzling references to something he calls a “stance”. A typical passage is this: “but then, like Husserl but unlike Heidegger, Searle switches to a *detached logical stance* [my italics] and tells us: ‘The important thing to see at this point is that functions are never intrinsic to the physics of any phenomenon ...’” (Dreyfus 1999, 12) The puzzling thing about Dreyfus’s comment is that I did not switch from one stance to another at all; I just described the facts. It is a fact that an object is both a material object and a car, that a piece of paper is both a piece of paper and a dollar bill and so on. No difference in *stance* is required. When I say the piece of paper in my hand is a twenty dollar bill I am not switching from the “detached logical stance” (piece of paper) to the “concerned participant” stance (twenty dollar bill). I am just reporting a fact. To think I must be switching stances is as implausible in this case as to suppose that when I say, “My friend owes me twenty dollars”, I must be switching from the personal relation stance (my friend) to the economic stance (owes me twenty dollars). Why this talk about stances and switching stances? It took me a long time to see this but once you see it, it seems obvious: because of the primordially of *Dasein*, the stance becomes part of the ontology. The point of view becomes part of what is described. This is the point of all the puzzling talk about what things “show up” and it leads to a kind of relativism, as we will see.

On the same page, the following sentence occurs: “It seemed to me that both the external, logical, god-like claim that, for there to be a social world, the brute facts in nature must somehow acquire meaning, and the internal phenomenological description of human beings as always already in a meaningful world, were both correct but in tension.” (Dreyfus 1999, 12) The reference to “god-like” reveals that once again he thinks that the stance is part of the phenomenon, that the brute facts only *exist* from a certain stance or from a point of view, either god-like or “detached, logical”, as the case might be. Now, this is a very deep mistake, and it is a foundational mistake. Where brute, observer independent facts are concerned, there is no point of view built into their ontology. *The basic facts exist apart from any stance or point of view.*

The picture that Dreyfus seems to have is that institutional facts exist from one point of view and brute facts exist from another point of view. But that is wrong. Brute facts simply exist. No point of view is necessary. Institutional facts exist from a point of view of the participants in the institution and their participation in the institution creates the facts. But where Dreyfus cites a “tension” there is no tension. There is no tension at all in supposing that the piece of paper in my hand is both a piece of paper and a ten dollar bill. There is a philosophical problem, as to how human beings create an institutional reality by imposing status functions on brute facts. I ask the question, How do we get from the brute facts to the institutional facts? How does the mind impose status functions on the phenomena? The logical form of that question is: Given that there is a brute reality of observer independent phenomena, phenomena that have an absolute existence, independent of any human attitudes, stances, etc., how do such phenomena acquire status functions? The reference to brute phenomena is *de re*, it has wide scope occurrence. The problem is that the phenomenologist tends not to hear the *de re* occurrence. Thus Dreyfus hears the question as asking: From the detached logical point of view there exist brute facts, from the active participants point of view there exist institutional facts. What is the relation between them? Now there does seem to be a “tension” because there is now a problem about reconciling the detached logical point of view with the active participant’s point of view. Nothing has wide scope or *de re* occurrence. That is the perspectivalism that I have tried to identify.

## VII. Perspectivalism and relativism in Heidegger

The perspectivalism, which I am suggesting is the basis of the phenomenological illusion, comes out even more strongly in Heidegger’s discussion of realism. Here is a strange passage from Dreyfus’s book on Heidegger: “The Greeks stood in awe of the gods their practices revealed, and we have to discover the elementary particles—we do not construct them.” (Dreyfus 1991, 268) He also talks about how the Christian practices of the Middle Ages revealed saints. All of this is designed to show that Heidegger is not a relativist or an idealist, but rather that he “holds a subtle and plausible position beyond metaphysical realism and antirealism”. And what exactly is that position?

Nature is what it is and has whatever causal properties it has independently of us. Different questions such as Aristotle’s and Galileo’s reveal different natural kinds and different kinds of causal properties. Different cultural interpretations of reality reveal different aspects of the real too. But there is no right answer to the question. What is the ultimate reality in terms of which everything else becomes intelligible? (Dreyfus 1991, 264)

This has some strange consequences: “it follows from Heidegger’s account that several incompatible lexicons can be true, i.e., can reveal how things are in themselves.” There can even be “incompatible realities”. (Dreyfus 1991, 279-280)

What are we to make of all this? If you try to take it literally, it comes out as a mixture of falsehood and nonsense. It is just false to say that the Greek gods were revealed by Greek practices, because there weren’t any gods to get revealed. The Ancient Greeks were mistaken. (I speak with some epistemic authority here. I have actually been on Mt Olympus). One might as well say that Santa Claus is revealed by children’s practices on Christmas Eve. And it is non-



sense to speak of “incompatible realities” or “incompatible lexicons”. If by “incompatible” is meant “inconsistent” then only propositions, statements, etc. can be compatible or incompatible; and inconsistent statements cannot both be true. Not surprisingly Dreyfus gives no examples of how inconsistent statements can both be true. He speculates that Aristotelian final causes might be more “revealing”, but that does not give us what we need. If Aristotelian final causes exist, then theories that deny their existence are just plain false. It is not a case of incompatible statements both being true. Furthermore, if the basic facts are really basic, then they must provide the basis for “the ultimate reality in terms of which everything else becomes intelligible.”

So what is going on here? I think what makes apparent nonsense seem like philosophical insight is a relativism that derives from the underlying perspectivalism. The picture is that from the point of view (stance, practices, *Dasein*) of the Greeks, their gods really existed. From our point of view (stance, practices, *Dasein*), they do not exist. Similarly from our point of view, elementary particles exist, but maybe from some other point of view, they do not exist. But there is no ultimately right point of view from which we can say that one is right and the other is wrong. There is only *Dasein*, “the being in terms of whose practices all aspects of reality show up”. (Dreyfus 1991, 264)

Here is Heidegger’s text itself:

The proposition “2 times 2 = 4” as a true assertion is true only as long as *Dasein* exists. In principle no *Dasein* any longer exists, then the proposition is not longer valid, not because the proposition is invalid as such, not because it would have become false and 2 times 2 = 4 would have changed into 2 times 2 = 5, but because the uncoveredness of something as truth can only co-exist with the existing *Dasein* that does the uncovering. There is not a single valid reason for presupposing eternal truths. (Heidegger 1982, 221)

This is perspectivalism with a vengeance. The reference to numbers is not *de re*, to the numbers themselves, but only within the scope of the phenomenological operator *Dasein*. So everything becomes relative to *Dasein* and “[t]here is not a single valid reason for presupposing eternal truths”. The correct thing to say is this. Numbers are not temporal entities. Simple arithmetical equations are timeless and in that sense “eternal”. There is nothing exciting about this. It is trivial. I believe the fact that Heidegger denies such trivialities is a symptom of the perspectivalism I have been trying to identify.

In his book on Heidegger, Dreyfus tells us that the problems that I have been discussing dissolve, that there are no such problems. But here is what he says in a subsequent work: “That, thanks to human beings, a meaningful world somehow devolves upon a meaningless universe, is a contemporary given, accepted by analytic philosophers and phenomenologists alike.” (Dreyfus 1999, 20) I believe this sentence requires close attention. We were told earlier that there could be no problem about how meaning “devolved”, because we are always already in a meaningful world, and so the problem “dissolves”. Now Dreyfus is expressing gratitude: “thanks to human beings”. But what is it, *exactly*, that he is thankful for if nothing happened in the first place, if the problem dissolved because there never was anything to be thankful for? And what does “devolves” mean? (Actually, it is a translation of Heidegger’s “Zufall”.) And why “somehow”? Isn’t it the job of the philosopher to tell us exactly how? Is Heidegger/Dreyfus giving up on the philosophical question when they tell us it happens “somehow”? I give an answer to the question of how it happens. Dreyfus tells us first that it never happened

and now that it happened “somehow”. What does he think is wrong with my answer as to how it happened? He does not tell us. And why are the basic facts just a “contemporary” given and not an absolute permanent fact? “Contemporary” suggests contingent, not absolute.

What needs to be said is the following: There exists a meaningless universe and human beings are products of evolution in that universe. Human beings, by their individual and collective efforts, create the part of the world that contains linguistic, social and institutional reality. Now, why do existential phenomenologists seem unable to say this?

Any representation of anything is always from a certain point of view. So, for example, if I represent something as water, I represent it at a different level than if I represent it as H<sub>2</sub>O molecules. Same stuff, different levels of description. One of the sources of perspectivalism (the other one is epistemic) is to try to read the point of view back into the reality represented. From the fact that all representation is from a point of view, from a certain stance, it does not follow that the stance, point of view, etc. is part of the reality represented. Phenomenologists, at least in the writings that I am familiar with, do not seem to get this point. So when Dreyfus speaks of a “contemporary given”, he means given, but only from our contemporary point of view. He does not mean it is an absolute timeless truth that we contemporaries happen to have discovered.

The institutional, social and other similar facts, etc. have a relative existence. They exist only relative to human beings. But the basic facts do not in that way have a relative existence. They have an absolute existence. They are there regardless of what we think. Now, this is the point that the phenomenologists I am discussing do not acknowledge. All facts have to be relative to some point of view, some stance. In the case of the existential phenomenologists, it is relative to *Dasein*. In the case of the late Husserlians, it is relative to the transcendental Ego. But the reference to the basic facts is not wide scope; it is not *de re*. It is always inside one of the phenomenological operators. One favorite of these operators, by the way, is “show up”. Nothing ever has an absolute existence, not even planets or hydrogen atoms. They just “show up”. It is that point, the syntactical-semantic point, that makes it impossible for these authors to address the most important contemporary philosophical problems.

There is an objection one frequently hears that goes as follows: What I call the basic facts are just what happens to be widely believed at a certain point in history, a “contemporary given” as Dreyfus calls them. But they were not always believed in the past and it is quite likely that they will be superseded in the future. So there are no timeless absolute basic facts; there are just beliefs that people think are true relative to their time and place. This mistake is prominent in Thomas Kuhn, for example. (Kuhn 1962) But the answer to it is this. It is only on the assumption of a non-relative, absolute reality that it is worthwhile to change our opinions in the first place. We are trying to get absolute non-relative truths about an absolute non-relative reality. The fact that we keep changing our opinions as we learn more only makes sense given the assumption that our aim is the description of an absolute non-relative world. The fact of opinion change is an argument against relativism, not an argument for it. It is quite likely that our conception of what I have been calling the basic facts will be improved on, and that at least some of our present conceptions will become obsolete. This does not show that there are no basic facts, nor that the basic facts only have a relative existence, but that their absolute existence does not by itself guarantee that at any point in our history we have accurately stated them. The facts don't change, but the extent of our knowledge does.

## VI<sub>A</sub> Reply to Dreyfus

I want to conclude this discussion by briefly considering Dreyfus's latest criticisms of my views. (Dreyfus 1999) Dreyfus makes two criticisms. First, he says that my account neglects absorbed coping and that I have "reluctantly conceded" that such cases exist. Secondly, he says that my account of social reality neglects social norms and these are more basic than the institutional facts that I do consider. To me one of the interesting things about his account is that he uses examples which I originally presented to support my views as if somehow or other they were an objection, and that I had failed to remark on their existence. In the case of absorbed coping I presented in my first writings on this cases such as skiing, driving a car, or simply getting up and pacing about. (Searle 1983) In the case of social norms he presents the example of a tribe selecting a leader by simply informally treating someone with deference, respect, etc. Oddly enough, this is an example I gave in the original book. (Searle 1995)

What should we say to these objections? I have already discussed absorbed coping in the previous paragraphs so I will not repeat the discussion here except to say that the phenomenological difference does not show a logical difference. The causal self-referentiality of the conditions of satisfaction of prior intentions and intentions-in-action have the same structure for absorbed coping that they have for more concentrated intentional efforts. Indeed, I believe he misdescribes the examples. He says, for example, that when people move to a comfortable distance from other people in an elevator, they do so *unintentionally*; they have no intentions. I do not think that can be a correct description. This is a typical case of intentional action. It is not premeditated; there is no prior intention. And it may be done without even the agent's awareness that he is doing it, but all the same, it is not like the peristaltic contraction of the gut. It is clearly intentional.

So let us turn to "social norms". I believe that Dreyfus presents completely different sorts of things under the category of social norms, and it is because of the phenomenological illusion that he cannot see the differences. One of his favorite examples of a social norm is how far apart one stands in a normal conversation, where in different cultures different practices are followed. Other favorite examples are the informal selection of a leader by a tribe, or "gender differences" where people are treated differently depending on whether they are male or female. He presents all of these as though they were social norms in exactly the same sense, but I believe this is another example of the phenomenological illusion. Because in all these cases we simply behave in ways that feel or seem appropriate, he fails to note deep differences between them. In the case of selection of a leader or the case of gender differences where we treat people as "ladies" and "gentlemen", we have a deontology. When you treat someone as a leader or as a lady or a gentleman, you are according them a certain deontology. It is precisely this deontology which is the basic structure of institutional facts, and it is quite unlike how far apart you stand from someone in a conversation. On my account, "leader", "lady", and "gentleman", are all names of status functions and thus describe institutional facts. The fact that so and so in our tribe counts as our leader is a paradigm case of *X counts as Y*. As in earlier cases it seems that the phenomenological method cannot get at the underlying logical reality because it lacks the resources to go beyond the phenomenology to the underlying logical structures.

## VIII. Conclusion: The role of phenomenology

I have for the most part been discussing particular authors in the phenomenological tradition. But suppose we forget about these authors and ask, What is the right role of phenomenology in contemporary philosophy? It seems to me that phenomenology has an important role to play. Once we accept the basic facts, and once we see that the mind, with all of its phenomenology, is derivative of, dependent on, the basic facts, then it seems to me, phenomenology plays an essential role in the analysis of the sorts of problems that I have been addressing. First of all, we begin with the phenomenology of our ordinary experience when we talk about dealing with money, property, government and marriage, not to mention belief, hope, fear, desire and hunger. But the point is that the phenomenological investigation is only the beginning. You then have to go on and investigate logical structures, most of which are not often accessible to phenomenology. And, of course, in the course of the investigation, phenomenology plays another role: it sets conditions of adequacy. You cannot say anything that is phenomenologically false. You cannot say, for example, that every intentional state is conscious or that every intentional action is consciously intended, because that is phenomenologically false. The mistakes that I have been pointing out should not be attributed to phenomenology as a research program but to particular misconceptions of that research program.<sup>2</sup>

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