Jack Reynolds. *Phenomenology, Naturalism, and Science: A Hybrid and Heretical Proposal*. Routledge 2018. 220 pp. $145.00 USD (Hardcover ISBN 9781138924383).

Jack Reynolds' new book argues for the 'potential compatibility of phenomenology and naturalism' (20), once we are prepared to admit that 'a certain dream of transcendental phenomenology is over' (6) and replace that dream with a 'minimal phenomenology' (20), instead. Reynolds' projected minimal phenomenology rejects the 'strong methodological separatism' (26) championed by Husserl's epoché and reduction and sides with more empirically-oriented phenomenologists, such as Merleau-Ponty (85-111), as well as advocates of the 'naturalizing phenomenology' program (Francisco Varela, Evan Thompson, et al.), who oppose idealism and see the relationship between empirical research and phenomenology as one of mutual enhancement and corroboration.

The kind of phenomenology-compatible naturalism Reynolds has in mind, however, is radically distinct from scientism, in both its ontological and methodological dimensions. In the wake of Putman and McDowell, Reynolds supports what has been called 'liberal' or 'liberalized' naturalism, which is characterized by a rejection of scientific naturalism, but also 'appropriate respect for the findings and methods of the natural sciences' (40). As Reynolds readily acknowledges, respect is a vague notion, but it can be clarified as a relationship involving 'interaction and the capacity for critical engagement from both sides' (41).

Reynolds' book consists of a metaphilosophical first part (17-112) and a second part that applies the perspective defended in the first part to three major phenomenological themes: time (115-142), body (143-182), and others (183-215).

In the first part of the book, after outlining his position, as described above, Reynolds tackles the vexed question of Husserl's instrumentalism in the philosophy of science and engages recent arguments both pro (Wiltsche) and contra (Meillassoux) Husserl's putative instrumentalism (53-84), i.e., the view that unobservables in physics are theoretical constructions, rather than existing entities, as so-called scientific realism (the mainstream position nowadays) has it. In very brief compass, while both sides of the dispute see a 'showdown' between phenomenology and scientific realism as necessary, Reynolds believes such showdown can be avoided (54) arguing that 'any plausible version of scientific realism will be associated with a mild form of epistemic correlationism that is grounded in ordinary experience and is at least potentially compatible with phenomenology' (76). In arguing against Wiltsche's defense of anti-realism (63-70), Reynolds is ambiguous as to whether he believes Wiltsche is right to attribute to Husserl instrumentalism about unobservables. The issue is complex, since in Husserl one can find textual evidence in support of both scientific realism and instrumentalism. Regrettably, Reynolds does not take into consideration Lee Hardy's balanced and largely convincing proposal in his recent book on Husserl's philosophy of science, namely, 'that Husserl was indeed an instrumentalist, but that his instrumentalism is restricted to an interpretation of scientific laws, not theories. His phenomenology is in fact consistent with a realistic construal of scientific theories' (*Nature's Suit: Husserl's Phenomenological Philosophy of the Physical Sciences*, Ohio University Press 2013, 4). However, this should be good news for Reynolds, since Hardy's view is compatible with his own, and would even allow him to take Husserl on board with the pro-realist phenomenologists. In short, according to Hardy, Husserl points out that scientific laws operate with idealized entities (frictionless planes, linear motion, etc.) that, strictly speaking, do not exist in the world. This is true at both the micro and the macro levels. Scientific laws are, thus, indeed, tools for research rather than faithful expressions of how the world is like. Scientific theories, by contrast, can and should include references to entities that actually exist in the world, and when they delve into

the microphysical structure of matter, they inevitably posit entities that cannot be observed, but, as Reynolds aptly emphasizes, might become observable as our technology develops (64).

The third and last chapter of the first part offers a close reading of Merleau-Ponty, aiming to show how the French philosopher 'was committed to a weak version of methodological naturalism,' such that his engagements with empirical science are 'an essential aspect of his work, rather than being simply of instrumental significance' (104). The chapter deliberately focuses on *Phenomenology of Perception* and offers, among other things, a helpful discussion of divergent views on Merleau-Ponty's reliance on empirical materials in recent scholarship. The guiding thread of the chapter is Merleau-Ponty's take on some of the key notions of Husserl's phenomenology, such as the phenomenological reduction, eidetic intuition, genetic phenomenology and the parallelism between transcendental phenomenology and psychology. With the exception of the puzzling equation of genetic phenomenology and the necessity of a phenomenology of phenomenology (95)—two tasks that are obviously distinct, at least in Husserl's work—the chapter is an enlightening read and does an excellent job of marking subtle distinctions between the two philosophers, who are all too often quoted in one breath, as it were, when it comes to issues such as embodiment and historicity. One question that remains unaddressed, and would be of paramount importance in order to clarify the meaning of the attribution of some kind of naturalism to Merleau-Ponty, is the sense of nature his writings endeavor to articulate. Clearly, Merleau-Ponty's ambition, especially in his later writings, is to unearth a dimension of nature of which the empirical sciences as well as dualistic philosophies only scratch the surface. Some of the results of the empirical sciences can be an entryway into the dimension of 'wild being,' as he famously calls the pre-dualistic level of nature, but certainly do not provide either a method or a conceptual toolkit to explore it.

The three chapters on time, body and others offer concrete examples of how Reynolds' minimal phenomenology works in tandem with empirical research.

In all three cases Reynolds provides discussions of the ways in which scientific findings lead to enhancement or revision of phenomenological theses, and vice versa. For instance, phenomenologists have been influential in advocating a shift away from non-temporal models of the mind (123); moreover, with phenomenology, we can effectively contrast attempts to 'reduce temporal experience to static and non-temporal properties' (134). Furthermore, Reynolds claims that we can make sense of the famous *Leib/Körper* distinction by appealing to something like emergence' (143), thereby alleviating the charge of spookiness, which orthodox physicalists often level against the notion of emergence. (On this count, I must confess that I am less optimistic than Reynolds. I believe emergentism doesn't provide the appropriate conceptual framework to articulate the kind of ontological pluralism phenomenology necessarily defends.) Finally, phenomenological approaches to social cognition have raised legitimate doubts about both so-called theory of mind and simulation theory. On the other hand, a close look at neuroscientific findings should prompt phenomenologists not to be too dismissive on the idea of sub-personal processes actually happening and supporting our sense of having a direct experience of the other's subjectivity (206).

Reynolds' book is a first-rate piece of scholarship and a welcome addition to the growing body of literature on phenomenology and naturalism. The suggestion that phenomenology and naturalism may finally be ready to bury the hatchet and move forward in a more cooperative mood is wise and deserves to be taken seriously on both sides of the old dispute. My only reservation concerns Reynolds' at times excessive contrast of the Husserlian anti-naturalist transcendentalism and the more open-minded approach of later, non-, semi- or quasi-transcendental phenomenologists. I believe Husserl would be in agreement with much of what Reynolds says in the book, with one exception. While reading the book, I have wondered whether it would have been possible to think of a

fourth chapter in the 'applied' part titled *Transcendence*, besides *Time*, *Body*, and *Others*. True, the three special topics covered by Reynolds are excellent areas for collaboration between phenomenology and empirical research, but does that generalize to all the philosophical topics traditionally explored by phenomenology, and, most importantly, to the key problem of phenomenology, at least for Husserl, namely, transcendence? I have reasons to doubt it.

Husserl would argue that if we take seriously the problem of transcendence, i.e., how it is possible for me to be conscious of an existing world of objects that are unitary and distinct from the manifold appearances in my consciousness, we *have* to work out a perspective and a philosophical method that is in principle different from the perspective and working method of the empirical sciences. This is not because the empirical sciences are somehow flawed, but because they do not have to worry about the very *access* to the domain of their objects of inquiry. The *epoché* and reduction are methodological devices that should enable us to meaningfully pose and tackle the problem of transcendence, which is presupposed by all empirical sciences. Here, we have two options. We either stipulate that the problem of transcendence isn't a real problem, as much post-Husserlian phenomenology has been tempted to do, or we only admit in our picture as much naturalism as the subject-matter allows, which can be a great deal in certain areas of phenomenological and scientific inquiry, but significantly less, or none at all, in other areas. As far as the problem of transcendence is concerned, I am still persuaded that Husserl is right in invoking a kind of methodological separatism from science, and I have the impression that Reynolds would be more inclined to opt for the no-problem approach to transcendence. But is transcendence really a pseudo-problem? Be that as it may, I believe that a more piecemeal approach to the collaboration between phenomenology and naturalism is advisable, and while it makes very good sense in the areas of research explored by Reynolds, there are other areas of philosophical inquiry that are more impervious to such collaboration, and rightly so.

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