

On the Road with Heidegger: Review of the *Festschrift* in honor of Hubert Dreyfus

Wrathall, M. & Malpas, J. (eds.) (2000). **Heidegger, Authenticity, and Modernity: Essays in Honor of Hubert L. Dreyfus, Volume 1.** Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.

Wrathall, M. & Malpas, J. (eds.) (2000). **Heidegger, Coping, and Cognitive Science: Essays in Honor of Hubert L. Dreyfus, Volume 2.** Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.

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On October 15th 1999 Hubert Dreyfus turned 70 years old. Dreyfus is surely one of the leading North-American philosophers of our times comparable in influence only to such figures as Richard Rorty, Charles Taylor or John Searle. In line with these philosophers, Dreyfus' works cover large philosophical territories ranging from influential interpretations of Continental thinkers such as Kierkegaard, Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty and Foucault to groundbreaking criticisms of research on artificial intelligence and cognitivist philosophy of mind. Most Danish psychology students are familiar with Dreyfus' phenomenology of learning and his perspective on the development of skilled expertise, but this part of his work represents just one corner of a large and extremely rich body of research.

Perhaps the most significant contribution Dreyfus has made to the world of philosophy consists in his tireless attempts at closing, or at least reducing, the gap between Continental and analytic philosophy. This gap has plagued modern philosophy and the only proper way to reduce it, is to behave as if it does not matter. This is exactly what Dreyfus does as Rorty describes in the foreword to volume one of the *Festschrift*. Modern philosophy has increasingly become a specialized field where people work with well-defined subjects without a view to the larger issues. Dreyfus certainly resists this way of doing philosophy. He is able to discuss specialized questions (e.g. interpretations of Heideggerian sentences) as well as more global issues (e.g. about modernity and postmodernity) with equal clarity.

Volume 1: Heidegger, Authenticity, and Modernity

Mark Wrathall and Jeff Malpas have done an excellent job in editing the *Festschrift* in honor of Hubert Dreyfus, and the voluminous result is a two-volume collection of essays written by Dreyfus' colleagues, friends and former students. In total 29 essays fill the two volumes, and the authors include the aforementioned prominent philosophers Rorty (with a foreword), Taylor and Searle (who has been Dreyfus' sparring partner at Berkeley since 1968). 10 of the remaining contributors are Dreyfus' former students who have become influential philosophers themselves, which tells us something about Dreyfus as a source of inspiration. Dreyfus answers most contributors (especially the ones who disagree with him), and his responses enlighten us that the goal of philosophy is not to win an argument in order to put an end to dialogue, but rather to sustain the dialogue and hopefully become wiser along the way.

On the cover of volume one, Dreyfus is depicted in an open sports car, and the same picture adorns volume two but with one significant difference: Heidegger now sits next to Dreyfus with an inscrutable smile. This is a distinct indication of the fact that Heidegger's phenomenology has accompanied Dreyfus through his many years of philosophical research. Heidegger is possibly the most difficult 20th century philosopher, and Dreyfus' book *Being-in-the-World* is often referred to as one of the best and most accessible introductions to Division One of Heidegger's *Being and Time*. Both volumes of this *Festschrift* thematize Heideggerian phenomenology in different ways.

Heidegger's grand project consisted in restating the question of Being. He was not only interested in finding out what exists, but also in the meaning of Being as such. The answer to this ontological question was sought in *Being and Time* through an ambitious analysis of that entity which can ask the question of Being: Dasein. Heidegger criticizes the Western metaphysical tradition and its attempt to understand the world in terms of 'things' or 'substances', and he invents a whole new vocabulary to make us interpret Being anew within the horizon of temporality. Heidegger understands the ontological meaning of Dasein as 'care'; i.e. Dasein is *thrown* into a world in which it constantly *projects* itself understandingly; Dasein is always *involved* as being-in-the-world, and possesses the possibility of authentic existence through resoluteness. Existential resoluteness counteracts the tendency of falling into 'Das Man', where Dasein lives inauthentically according to the public way of interpreting Dasein.

Dreyfus has made Heidegger's thoughts less obscure than they seem, and he has profited from Heidegger's analyses of being-in-the-world to demonstrate that a primordial mode of human activity is the ready-to-hand mode where we understand and comport ourselves unreflectively in an equipmental world. The scientific attitude of explicit, rule-based understanding is a derived mode of being-in-the-world, and this analysis becomes Dreyfus' springboard for his critiques of cognitive reason (e.g. traditional artificial intelligence research or rule-based philosophical ethics). From his critique Dreyfus develops a positive phenomenological perspective on skills and human practices that does not depend on explicit rules, but rather on unreflective coping and practical engagement in the world. The only serious flaw in Dreyfus' reading of Heidegger concerns the fact that he thought, when writing *Being-in-the-world*, that Division One of *Being and Time* could be understood without the even more obscure Division Two, which contains Heidegger's controversial descriptions of Being-towards-death, seen by many as unnecessarily mysterious. Dreyfus now believes that Division Two needs to be addressed as well, and he has promised to include this in his upcoming revision of *Being-in-the-world*.

The first volume is entitled *Heidegger, Authenticity, and Modernity*. Heidegger's views on authenticity are intricate, given his rejection of Cartesian metaphysics and the idea of the self as substance. How can we be authentic, when Dasein is characterized existentially by *falling*, constantly becoming absorbed in the world of *Das Man*? **Taylor Carman** reads the concept of authenticity in Heidegger as a resistance to falling *while* falling. The resistance, or resoluteness, demands that we come to see ourselves in temporality and finite particularity. This is coupled with anxiety (*Angst*) because it implies mortality awareness. **Michael Zimmerman** follows up, and rejects the post-modern and social constructionist idea of "identity-morphing" (represented by Kenneth Gergen) as a refusal to face up to mortality. Zimmerman recommends that we surrender to anxiety and thereby experience mortal openness paving the way for authentic living. Zimmerman argues that mortal openness generates transpersonal awareness; i.e. an ethical recognition that persons have individual worth. This kind of awareness is seen as modernity's positive contribution to humanity, even if other modern phenomena - scientism, subjectivization - constitute a cultural loss. **Randall Havas** also refers to the ethical aspects of authenticity, and sees it as involving responsibility for a community, since we must make sense to the common world in order to be authentic. For Heidegger and Dreyfus identity is closely related to our doing ("we are what we do"), but the point is that the meaning of our doing is entirely a

communal matter. So authenticity is not a matter of radical autonomy (as existentialist readings of Heidegger assume), but rather of taking responsibility for one's life among others.

Béatrice Han gives a thought-provoking interpretation of the concept of truth found in Nietzsche where truth becomes related to character instead of methodology, and **Charles Guignon** likewise writes about the concept of truth as incorporated in a person's life through resoluteness. Resoluteness constitutes "the primordial *truth* of existence" in Heidegger's words. Resoluteness is what leads to authenticity; it involves the resistance to falling into *Das Man* while falling. The theoretical attitude of our times precludes the understanding of truth as embodied in a way of life, and this threatens to level all meaningful distinctions and make authenticity impossible, according to **Alastair Hannay's** essay. **Julian Young** speculates along similar lines and argues that modern technology and metaphysics "close" the world (by denying temporality as the horizon of Being) and make us homeless and inauthentic, while poetry "opens up" the world and makes us experience its meaningfulness. It makes us dwell in it, as Heidegger says. Also **Jeff Malpas** sees technology as leading to an impoverishment of our spatial being-in-the-world. Technology covers over the spatial ordering of things in the world instead of disclosing the world to us in a meaningful totality. And **Michel Haar** similarly discusses technology as "metaphysics completed". Technology is the practical realization of the principles of metaphysics, and both threaten to make human beings into resources. Finally **John Haugeland**, in one of the most thorough essays, gives an ambitious account of the main concepts of *Being and Time* in a way that opposes some of Dreyfus' points about that book.

The above essays approach the concept of authenticity and its relations to metaphysics, technology, and modernity, in different ways. The investigations are valuable to all social scientists that want to understand the human being in its world, and especially psychologists could profit from the analyses of authenticity, which counterbalance the contemporary social constructionist discourse on the subject where the concept is often more or less rejected. Heidegger, and Dreyfus along with him, gives room for the concept in a "post-metaphysical" framework. Furthermore if Heidegger and Dreyfus are right, the common understanding of the human being in scientific psychology with its focus on methodology, covers over the temporal character of our existence, and in the end will make authenticity very difficult to achieve. In so far as psycho-

logy focuses on truth via methodology it fails to understand its subject matter. This is one radical implication of Heidegger's existential phenomenology for psychology.

The four final essays of volume one tackle different subject matters of a more limited scope. **William Blattner** points to an important difference between Heidegger's concept of truth and the one found in pragmatic philosophy (*in casu* Dewey), which is overlooked in Rorty's influential interpretation of Heidegger and pragmatism (e.g. in his *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*). Both Heidegger and pragmatism endorse the primacy of practice in seeing man's primary relation to the world as one of doing. We understand the world through practical engagement, but truth is not for Heidegger that which is useful in problem solving, as it is for Dewey, but rather a disclosure of the world on the background of a basic, practical engagement in the world. **Dagfinn Føllesdal** (under whom Dreyfus wrote his dissertation) defends Husserl against Dreyfus' dismissal of him, and argues that Heidegger's philosophy is a direct continuation of Husserl's phenomenology instead of a radical break with it. Husserl's philosophy is still being interpreted in different ways, and this exchange between Dreyfus and Føllesdal is a moment in the debate rather than a final conclusion.

Dreyfus sometimes describes his relationship with his colleague John Searle as analogous to the one between Husserl and Heidegger with Dreyfus playing Heidegger to Searle's Husserl! Several essays concern this important philosophical confrontation. **David Cerbone** directs our attention to similarities and differences between Heidegger and Searle regarding their views on the existence of the external world and the possibility of a proof of this existence. They agree that the existence of the external world cannot be proved, but for different reasons. Searle thinks it is simply presupposed as a background to our meaningful actions and intentionality, but Heidegger refused any talk of us *presupposing* the existence of the external world. He saw this talk as part of the trap of traditional epistemology with its inner-outer dualism. Dreyfus supports Heidegger's perspective on Dasein as being-in-the-world as an attempt to dissolve the inner-outer dualism, while Husserl and Searle are more traditional mentalists believing in the existence of mental phenomena detached from lived practices. **Mark Okrent** in the final essay compares Heidegger and Donald Davidson, another influential philosopher (and also Dreyfus' colleague at Berkeley), concerning their views on intentionality. These four final essays represent detailed philosophical analysis in a more traditional vein, and they presuppose some knowledge of Heideggerian philosophy.

Volume 2: Heidegger, Coping and Cognitive Science

The first section of volume two is entitled *Coping and Intentionality*. Heideggerian coping refers to our practical, smooth responsiveness to circumstances in the world, which Dreyfus has made a key theme in his own phenomenological investigations. **Joseph Rouse** addresses Dreyfus' distinction between practical, skilful coping and explicit articulation, and claims that only one level exists: practical coping. Dreyfus believes that practical skilful coping is not based on rules, but Rouse radicalises this view and sees explicit articulation of rules in itself as an example of practical skilful coping! All skilled activity is thus in Rouse's pragmatic perspective linguistically permeated coping. Dreyfus in his response does not think that this undermines Heidegger's distinctions between different modes of being-in-the-world. Rouse fails to acknowledge the necessary distinction between linguistic coping in a local situation, which is not based on rules or prepositional content, and being in 'the world' as such. Dreyfus thinks that we do have desituating skills that enable us to consider objects within the world detached from their immediate surroundings, and even if this is not our primordial mode of being-in-the-world, it is a human possibility, and it involves an articulation that cannot be understood if we level the distinction between practical coping and explicit articulation, Dreyfus argues.

Theodore Schatzki expands the discussion of practical coping to include coping with other agents – social coping we might call it - and he regrets that Dreyfus has not overcome Cartesianism adequately in that Dreyfus still thinks that mental states are causally effective and imply thematic awareness. Schatzki contrasts this "Cartesianism" with his own Wittgensteinian approach to mentality. Dreyfus thereafter opposes Schatzki's reading of his works and says that no awareness need be involved in skilled activity, so background coping (with other agents) is largely unconscious. This ought to save Dreyfus from that philosophical predicate of abuse: Cartesianism. It is still very much in philosophical vogue to accuse one another of Cartesianism as can be seen from these essays.

Charles Taylor also discusses Cartesianism, or two features of it: foundationalism (the idea that our knowledge rests on undeniable basic facts) and representationalism (the idea that our knowledge of the world is somehow mediated by representations in the mind). Taylor rejects both ideas and advocates a version of holism, which asserts the impossibility of giving an account of the subject without reference to 'the world' understood in Heidegger's sense: as the meaningful structure in which Dasein lives. Taylor then opposes Foucault, even if he is in

agreement with him as regards the historical nature of human existence, but Taylor accuses him of promoting a liberal view of individual autonomy involving the self as a work of art (which is also close to Gergen's perspective mentioned above). Foucault overlooks the fact that human practices, while historical, always involve a view of the human good. We are able to articulate these human goods, and thereby understand our practices and ourselves better, Taylor says. Foucault did not believe in articulation of human practices, but rather in problematization.

Taylor and Foucault clearly have different ideas of what practices are, and these differences have different ethico-political aspects, which is something **David Stern** attends to in his essay. "The primacy of practices" has become a *credo* in many contemporary philosophical discussions, but we certainly need to figure out in more detail what these practices are (which is something psychologists also need to pay attention to). Dreyfus' answer is that they are the non-cognitive background to human understanding, and Stern does a good job in outlining the different ethical and political implications of "the primacy of practice" claim in Wittgenstein /Bourdieu, Hegel/Merleau-Ponty, Heidegger, Derrida, and Foucault.

John Searle in his essay tries to disclose the limits of phenomenological inquiry compared to his own analytical approach to philosophy. He contrasts the analytic idea of truth through scientific methods with the phenomenological idea of truth through disclosure, and argues that phenomenology can only give an account of how things *seem*, and not of how they really are. Dreyfus' response to this essay is by far the longest and most entertaining, and it gives us a peep to the long-standing conversation between these two significant philosophers. **Mark Wrathall**, in the following essay, defends Dreyfus against Searle, and argues that Searle's account of intentionality, while acknowledging the tacit background to human action, does not grasp the *temporal* structure of intentionality. Dreyfus certainly thinks that Searle is too much of a Cartesian mentalist, and it is this inadequate epistemology that forces Searle to restrict the truth concept to scientific methods.

The next section (*Computers and Cognitive Science*) contains four essays about Dreyfus' critical work on AI. **Daniel Andler** notes the importance of context in Dreyfus' work, and elucidates the concept by distinguishing 'situation' and 'background' as two kinds of context. He further finds that a new contextualism exists in contemporary cognitive science that approaches the insights in Dreyfus' phenomenology. Also **Sean Kelly** tries to show how parts of modern cognitive science, in this case neural network models, come close to a phenomenological understanding of human life. Kelly concentrates his discussion on Merleau-Ponty's idea of motor

intentionality. **H.M. Collins** in the following essay is not so generous toward computer simulation. While praising Dreyfus' early work on *What Computers Can't Do*, Collins finds this book too individualistic, and he believes that the reason for AI's failure (but has it really failed?) lies not so much in lack of embodiment (as Dreyfus argued) but more in lack of socialness. This critique is thus more Wittgensteinian than Heideggerian. Finally **Albert Borgmann** sees Dreyfus' ideas about embodiment and temporality as norms to be lived rather than necessary conditions of mentality. Today people with virtual characters on the internet do not live up to the norm of full embodiment, which is why Dreyfus' descriptions of the mental as embodied are inadequate *as descriptions*, but not as norms to be lived. If we live them, we will make ourselves more truly human, according to Borgmann. Only if we face up to our finitude and temporality can we be authentic, as many contributors argued in volume one.

The final section (*Applied Heidegger*) takes us beyond theoretical philosophy, and we see how Dreyfus' interpretation of Heidegger is useful in understanding actual practices. **Patricia Benner** employs Heidegger's analyses of care to understand nursing practices, and she warns us against a technological paradigm of nursing that in her view involves a quest for control. Heidegger has also inspired **Fernando Flores'** understanding of business practice, **Robert Solomon's** understanding of trusting, while **George Downing** is inspired by Merleau-Ponty's idea of the lived body in his account of emotions. Finally **Charles Spinoza** in one of the most provocative essays employs Heidegger's ontology to make us see and appreciate the divine in the form of angels or what he calls "living gods". Heidegger's thinking makes us capable of reenchanting the world by opening up to the fundamental features of existence. Marilyn Monroe is portrayed as a living god, because she could bring people into "sharpened affective states that enabled specific possibilities to appear and others to remain hidden" (p. 213). She was able to disclose the world to us. But in order to appreciate this divine dimension we need to surpass both modern subjectivism and post-modern irony.

All essays of both volumes are highly readable as individual contributions to philosophy, but as a whole the 29 essays stand as a very impressive investigation into the potentialities of existential phenomenology as worked out by Heidegger and Dreyfus. The analyses of authenticity, technology, metaphysics, modernity and truth are in many ways convergent, and direct our attention to surprising links in the world, for instance between metaphysics and technology. And even if the essays are actually more about Heidegger than Dreyfus, they stress the impor-

tance of continuously reinterpreting one's philosophical heritage. Such a reinterpretation is an accomplishment that no one has carried out as convincing as Hubert Dreyfus. One can only look forward to his continuous dialogue with the philosophical tradition in general, and Heidegger in particular, especially in the upcoming revised edition of *Being-in-the-world*.