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# Normativity between the Scientific and the Manifest Image

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## Abstract

### Normativity between the Scientific and the Manifest Image Introduction

One of the most difficult problems for any proponent of the scientific image is normativity as such. Normativity in the general sense can be understood as the whole of normative relations between people. The main clash is between a natural-scientific explanatory view of normativity from *outside* versus a first-personal, embedded view on normativity from *inside*. In a nutshell, this difference can be framed as *scientific naturalism* about normativity versus a *phenomenological view* of normativity. The current orthodoxy in (Anglophone) philosophy is arguably scientific naturalism about normativity, i.e. the assumption that normativity can be reduced to entities which can be countenanced by the natural sciences, most notably physics, in the project to further eschewing the manifest image.

In this talk I construct a phenomenological-transcendental argument to the effect that the phenomenological view about normativity is actually logically prior to the naturalist view. In other words: any view of normativity from the "outside" presupposes a view of normativity from the "inside". Hence, the manifest image prevails.

### Part 1: The Ladder Assumption of Scientific Naturalism

Ontological naturalism (or: physicalism) states that the only things that truly exist are those entities which figure in the theories of future ideal physics (Field 1992, Papineau 2015, Spiegel forthcoming). This implies a reductive thesis:

Reductive thesis: Normative properties are nothing over and above physical properties.

Normative properties are not – as a matter of principle – part of the theories of (ideal) physics, making their reduction necessary.

However, normative properties are, in fact, part of the natural sciences *qua* their institutional character. Scientific research is essentially social. Therefore, a naturalist has to assume that the reduction of those normative properties is possible which are necessary for maintaining physical science and physical theories. I call this the ladder assumption:

Ladder assumption: Naturalism can reduce normative properties necessary for physical theories which in turn serve as a reduction base for normative properties in a naturalist reduction.

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Naturalists therefore have to assume that normative properties serve as a "ladder" which can be "cast aside" once a certain degree of natural-scientific progress has been made (cf. Wittgenstein's *Tractatus*, Wittgenstein 1921). The question then is whether the normative properties which are necessarily presupposed by scientific research as an institution can be reduced without harm – or whether this means for the scientific naturalist to cut off the branch he/she is sitting on.

## Part 2: The Phenomenological-Transcendental Argument for the Manifest Image

I shall argue that reducing normativity in favour of the scientific image is indeed like cutting off the branch we are sitting on. The argument presented here is based on elaborations of more abridged ideas found in Heidegger (1927), Buber (1923), Murdoch (1970) and Stein (1917) which seem to express the same idea. Namely, the idea that natural science itself is embedded in phenomenological life-world such that natural science is merely a *modus* of the life-world. I call this idea *immediacy*.

Immediacy: The immediate experience of the second person (the You) in the life-world is a necessary condition for (natural) science as such.

This implies that the ladder assumption has to be false. The thesis of immediacy expresses that the whole of normative properties figures as a constitution condition for natural-scientific theories (*a fortiori* for physical theories). Therefore, such normative properties have to be irreducible.

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