

## Unity of Normativity Conference, Vienna, September 2020

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### Talk

The Phenomenological Argument for Essential Normativity

### Abstract

The question whether normativity is essential or reducible is of central importance to both ontological naturalists and the phenomenological tradition. Resistance against ontological naturalism within the tradition of analytic philosophy has been growing in the last few decades, mainly through the development of a heterodox liberal naturalism. However, a traditional line of critique against naturalism from the phenomenological tradition has been largely ignored by naturalists. Drawing on remarks of Husserl, Heidegger, Stein, Schütz, Schmitz, and Zahavi, I reconstruct an argument for the irreducibility of centering on the fundamentality of what phenomenologists have called “life-world”. The argument is transcendental insofar as it asserts that an essentially normative life-world is an enabling condition for there at all to be science and scientific theory which is a prerequisite for naturalistic reduction of normativity. The remaining question is – using the Münchhausen metaphor – whether naturalists can “bootstrap” themselves out of this normative “swamp”.

### Bio

I received my PhD from the University of Leipzig in 2017 and have been *Wissenschaftlicher Mitarbeiter* of the University of Potsdam since 2018 at the chair of theoretical philosophy of Johannes Haag. My work focuses on naturalism and the scientific image, Wittgenstein, philosophy of mind, social ontology, phenomenology and existentialism, generally trying to traverse and synthesize aspects of the “analytic” and “continental” traditions. My first monograph entitled “Naturalism, Quietism, and the Threat to Philosophy” will be published in 2021.