

# The Fragility of Robust Realism: A Reply to Dreyfus and Spinoza

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Although the exact way to characterise the dispute between realism and antirealism has always been a contentious issue, the idea that realism is committed to some claim concerning the independence of the world from our beliefs about it has been a recurrent feature in many discussions of the topic. Hilary Putnam's well-known characterisation of so-called 'metaphysical realism', for instance, takes the position to consist in a commitment to the idea that there is one and only one true description of reality, to a correspondence theory of truth, and to the view that 'the world consists in some fixed totality of mind-independent objects'<sup>1</sup> In 'Coping with Things in Themselves: a Practice-Based Phenomenological Argument for Realism,' Dreyfus and Spinoza take up a version of this 'independence claim' as the characteristic and defining feature of realism, and attempt to defend a version of this thesis – and so, as they see it, a version of realism – on the basis of arguments that they purport to find in the work of Martin Heidegger. Not only do Dreyfus and Spinoza claim to provide a new defence of realism (and of a 'robust' realism at that), but they also present a reading of Heidegger as himself committed to this form of realism.

Dreyfus and Spinoza characterise their position as follows: 'we defend a robust realism that argues for the independence claim. We will argue that it is coherent to believe that science can in principle give us access to the functional components of the universe as they are in themselves in distinction from how they appear to us on the basis of our quotidian concerns or sensory capacities.'<sup>2</sup> In this respect, robust realism is similar to standard forms of realism that treat science both as aiming to give an account of the universe in terms of its own structure and constituent parts, and as capable of giving such an account. Dreyfus and Spinoza claim, however, that their defence of the independence claim requires the abandonment of what they also take to have been a characteristic feature of realism hitherto (though it is less obviously a standard feature of narrowly scientific realism), namely, the commitment to the idea that 'the universe has a single order' (the uniqueness claim) – a commitment evident in Putnam's characterisation in terms of the idea that there is one and only one true description of reality. Instead, Dreyfus and Spinoza argue for, and claim to accept, a position they term 'multiple realism' according to which 'the universe can function in a finite number of different ways, each having its own components or kinds.'<sup>3</sup> Robust realism is distinguished from another position that Dreyfus and Spinoza call 'deflationary' realism – a position supposedly exemplified in the work of Donald Davidson (although Heidegger is also said to have 'pioneered' the deflationary realist approach). Deflationary realism, according to Dreyfus and Spinoza, both maintains a commitment to the spirit of the uniqueness thesis by claiming that the universe has a unitary order such that every true description of the universe is compatible with every other true description, while also holding to a view of the objects of scientific and of the everyday as equally 'real'.<sup>4</sup>

The account of deflationary realism, and of the Davidsonian position supposedly associated with it, occupies only a small part of Dreyfus and Spinoza's discussion. It does, however, play an absolutely central role in that discussion, since the main problem that drives much of Dreyfus and Spinoza's argument for robust realism concerns the need to find a way of making sense of the independence thesis and the impossibility of doing that, according to Dreyfus and Spinoza, if one accepts any form of deflationary realism. The account of deflationary realism thus sets the agenda for Dreyfus and Spinoza's 'phenomenological' argument for realism. Indeed, their account of robust realism seems to depend on accepting many of the arguments in favour of deflationary realism as setting out the basic parameters within which any successful argument for a robust realism must operate. On this basis, deflationary realism, while apparently unavoidable at one level, gives way to robust realism at another. An obvious consequence of this strategy, however, is, that the premises on which the account of deflationary realism are based must also play a crucial role in the larger 'phenomenological' argument for realism – moreover, any fragility that attends the argument for deflationary realism must affect the argument for robust realism also.

There are, from the very start, a number of troublesome ambiguities in Dreyfus and Spinoza's account of deflationary realism. Although deflationary realism is said to be committed to the view that the objects of science are just as 'real' as the objects of the everyday, it is not entirely clear what is entailed by such a commitment. Nor is it at all clear how this commitment is compatible with the claim (made explicit in relation to Heidegger) that one can be a deflationary realist about the everyday and a robust realist about the scientific. A further difficulty attends Dreyfus and Spinoza's explicit characterisation of deflationary realism as a form of antirealism. While the rejection of the independence claim appears to be taken by Dreyfus and Spinoza as sufficient ground for such a characterisation, this seems to ignore the fact that deflationary realism also rejects any form of dependence claim of the sort usually associated with idealist or constructivist antirealism. Yet Dreyfus and Spinoza themselves emphasise that deflationary realism is committed to just such a rejection of both independence and dependence – on this account, they say, 'we cannot make sense of the question whether the totality of things could be independent of the totality of our practices or whether things are essentially dependent on our practices'.<sup>5</sup> If its rejection of the independence claim is taken as sufficient reason for viewing deflationary realism as a form of antirealism, then so, in exactly analogous fashion, could rejection of the dependence thesis be taken as a reason for viewing deflationary realism as a form of realism. There is nothing to choose one way or the other between these alternatives.

These ambiguities do not obscure, however, what is perhaps the central point in Dreyfus and Spinoza's account of deflationary realism, namely, the necessary inextricability of everyday practices with the objects of everyday concern. Deflationary realism, whether developed in the style of Davidson or Heidegger, supposedly begins with the practical and the everyday, arguing for the impossibility of understanding either the world, or the practices in relation to which the world is disclosed, independently of one another. It is on this basis that deflationary realism is able to deal with scepticism by showing, at least in the Davidsonian variant of this argument, that the sceptic cannot make her doubts intelligible without also being forced to give them up.<sup>6</sup> The impossibility of separating everyday practices from everyday objects seems to be accepted by Dreyfus and Spinoza (in this

respect, their claim that Heidegger is a deflationary realist about the everyday appears intended as a characterisation of their own position as well as Heidegger's), but they regard such a position as unacceptable when it comes to science. The reason for this, of course, is that they view any acceptable (ie. realist), account of science as committed to the independence claim – to the claim that science can, in principle, give us access to the universe as it is in itself rather than merely as it appears 'on the basis of our quotidian concerns or sensory capacities'. Everyday practice is supposedly incapable of providing such access because, on Dreyfus and Spinoza's account, there is no possibility, at the level of the everyday, of grasping things or practices independently of one another – as Dreyfus and Spinoza put the deflationary realist conclusion 'We can gain no perspective on our practices that does not already include things and no perspective on things that does not already involve our practices'.<sup>7</sup>

It is this combination of views – commitment to the interdependence of objects and practices at the everyday level, together with commitment to the independence of objects from practice at the level of the scientific – that leads Dreyfus and Spinoza to establish a way of separating the scientific from the everyday. Only then, it seems, can a deflationary realist account of science be avoided. The Heideggerian distinction between things as Zuhandenes and as Vorhandenes – between things as they are given within engaged, everyday, practical involvement (things as 'available' or 'ready-to-hand') and things as they are given independently of such involvement (things as 'occurrent' or 'present-at-hand') – is supposed to provide the basis for just such a separation. As elaborated in conjunction with certain other ideas – the strange and defamiliarised character of the objects of science, the contingency of scientific practice in relation to those objects, and an account of reference modelled on Kripkean rigid designation<sup>8</sup> – the Heideggerian distinction is presented as enabling an account of science as indeed capable of giving access to things as they are 'in themselves' and in a way that is impossible within everyday practice.

The distinction between things as Zuhandenes and as Vorhandenes, and the ideas through which it is elaborated, undoubtedly captures an important structural feature of our involvement in the world; what is open to doubt, however, is whether that distinction can provide a basis for the sort of separation of the everyday from the scientific that is required by Dreyfus and Spinoza's account. Certainly, the distinction seems, at best, to offer only partial support for such a separation. In this respect, it is important to emphasise that the distinction between things as Zuhandenes and as Vorhandenes is not a distinction between different beings or things, but rather between different ways in which things can be grasped or encountered – it is, as a consequence, the same things that are encountered in the two different modes. Recognition of this point alone provides reason to be cautious in making claims of the sort advanced by Dreyfus and Spinoza about the inability of everyday practice – or of the experience of the Zuhandenes – to give us access to 'things in themselves.' Indeed, inasmuch as the things that are encountered as occurrent and as available are the very same things in two modes, so our encounter with things as available must be viewed as giving us 'access', though in a very specific sense, to the only things there are, namely, the things themselves. The hammer that I use to drive home one nail, but whose shaft breaks when I mishit the next, is not two things, but one – and this is so even though I encounter the thing, and even though the thing is revealed, in two very different ways.

That I grasp something in purely practical terms, in terms of my active engagement, rather than in some more self-conscious, detached or explicitly conceptual fashion, does not mean that I therefore have no access to the thing in question. Of course, just what is to count as ‘access’ here is ambiguous, and Dreyfus and Spinoza offer no explicit clarification as to what sort of access is at stake in their discussion. There are certainly a number of different forms in which our ‘access’ to the world could be said to consist. One way to understand such access is in epistemic or cognitive terms, that is, in terms of a capacity to form true beliefs about the world or to accurately conceive of the world (this is most often the focus in discussions of realism); another form might be characterised as semantic, that is, in terms of the capacity to utter meaningful sentences about the world or to use words to correctly refer to things; yet another way is causal or practical, that is, in terms of the capacity to causally affect things in the world, to be affected by such things (this is indeed a prerequisite for our perceptual access to the world) and to be able to undertake certain practical activities in relation to those things – in this respect our access to things consists, in one sense, in nothing more than our being causally and practically embedded in the world. There seems no reason to regard only one such form of access, however, as the primary form or to view certain forms of access as somehow less adequate than others and all of them, of course, give us access to the things themselves, even though they do so in differing ways.

Inasmuch as these various forms of access give us access to the things themselves, so they give us different forms of access to the same things. Furthermore, as the different aspects under which a thing is accessible are united in the thing itself, so too are the different forms of access themselves interconnected. To be capable of forming true beliefs about the world is also to be capable of uttering meaningful sentences about the world and of correctly referring to things in the world; similarly, unless we are willing to accept some form of direct, non-causal intuition, or perhaps a theory of innate ideas, then being able to form true beliefs about the world also seems to depend on our causal and practical access to things. Moreover, on some accounts of meaning and of reference (including both Davidsonian theories of meaning and Kripke-style theories of reference) meaningful utterance, as well as the capacity to refer, always depend on practical and causal engagement with things. Dreyfus and Spinoza appear to give some acknowledgment to the interconnections at issue here, but in emphasising the strong discontinuity between the scientific and the everyday, they also seem to ignore the way in which those interconnections must obtain irrespective of any discontinuities at the phenomenological level.

Not only, of course, do the two modes of access to things that are exemplified in the Heideggerian distinction between *Zuhandenes* and *Vorhandenes* provide access to the same things, but it is the same creature that encounters things in these two modes. The interconnections at issue here thus reflect the integrated character of the thing, and so of the modes in which it is encountered, as well as the integrated character (both in mental and causal-physical terms) of the acting, thinking, experiencing creature. The phenomenological discontinuity between the experiences of the Zuhandenes and the Vorhandenes –or between the engaged mode of access to things that is characteristic of practical involvement and the disengaged, ‘detached’ access to things that is characteristic of science – should not be allowed to obscure the underlying logical and ontological

continuities that nevertheless also obtain between things as encountered in these different modes or between the various forms of 'access' to things (epistemic, causal, semantic and so forth) in which our 'access' to things, in general, consists, and on which these modes each depend.

Once one takes note of the way in which our engagement with things at both the scientific and everyday levels depend on interconnected modes of, for instance, practical, epistemic and semantic access, then one is also forced to recognise the impossibility of achieving any strong separation of the scientific from the everyday or of objects as encountered within the framework of science from objects encountered in the everyday – there are important differences between these two modes, but there are important similarities and continuities also. Indeed, our ordinary involvement in the world would seem typically to call upon both engaged and disengaged modes of access to things – everyday practice involves the encounter with things as both Zuhandenes and Vorhandenes. Scientific practice is, in this respect, no different: while scientific understanding is fundamentally directed at understanding things as they are in themselves, and so as disengaged from ordinary practice, scientific practice – the practice of analysis and conjecture, of experiment and observation, of explanation and description – is, like all forms of practical activity, nevertheless dependent on both disengaged and engaged forms of activity and encounter. The character of science as based engaged, as well as disengaged, modes of involvement is important for any understanding of the social and institutional character of science – something that Joseph Rouse, among others has emphasised. But the continuities between forms of scientific practice and the practices of the everyday, as well as the continuities between the ways in which objects are variously encountered and understood, are also crucial for understanding how science might emerge out of 'non-science'. As any consideration of the original emergence of Western science amongst the Greeks indicates, no matter how abstruse and apparently removed from our ordinary experience of things science might become, it is in our ordinary experience that it finds its roots, out of which it arises, and, to which, in the final analysis, it must return.

The possibility of robust realism, on Dreyfus and Spinoza's account, depends on being able to provide an account of science as capable of gaining access to things in a way that is severed from everyday concerns and practices. Consequently, an account that emphasises the continuities that obtain between the scientific and the everyday, even while it may recognise the discontinuities that are also involved, must appear, from this perspective, to undermine the possibility of robust realism in favour of a deflationary realist position through casting in doubt the possibility of such independent access. Yet, of course, this presupposes Dreyfus and Spinoza's original claim concerning the inability of everyday practice to provide any access to things as they are in themselves. In fact, as the consideration of the distinction between the Zuhandenes and Vorhandenes already suggests, it is not at all obvious either that everyday practice should be unable to provide such access or that science would be compromised in being able to do so if there were not a sharp contrast between the scientific and the everyday. Clearly what is necessary, then, is a closer examination of the argument that Dreyfus and Spinoza provide for the original claim at issue here – it is largely on this claim, and so on the soundness of the argument that is given in its support, that the case for robust realism, and against any broad form of deflationary realism, must rest.

The argument for the impossibility of everyday access to things in themselves – or for the impossibility of making sense of such an idea – is presented by Dreyfus and Spinoza as central to the deflationary realist position and as supposedly derivative of a more basic position they term ‘practical holism’ which they attribute to both Davidson and Heidegger. In the terms that Dreyfus and Spinoza employ, terms mostly derived from Davidson, practical holism consists in the view that ‘meaning is inextricably related to things and other minds’.<sup>9</sup> To elaborate on this a little, one can say that, for Davidson, the possibility of a creature having contentful attitudes or being capable of meaningful behaviour is dependent on the creature having a whole system of such attitudes and behaviour, on its being part of a community of creatures like itself (on its being part of a rational, language-using community), and on the attitudes and behaviour at issue being appropriately connected to things in the world.<sup>10</sup> One consequence of this position is that one cannot treat attitudes and behaviour – one cannot treat ‘practices’ as Dreyfus and Spinoza might put it – as being what they are independently of the world in relation to which they have content and meaning. On this basis Dreyfus and Spinoza infer the claim that ‘We can gain no perspective on our practices that does not already include things and no perspective on things that does not already involve our practices’,<sup>11</sup> and, immediately following this, they conclude: ‘Thus practical holism makes unintelligible all claims about both things in themselves apart from practices and the totality of practices apart from things’.<sup>12</sup>

Although we might differ over exactly how to characterise the details of the practical holist position, that position is not one that I would wish to disavow. In spite of the fact that the sort of holism espoused by Davidson, and elaborated in my own work, seems to have become a fashionable target for criticism in recent years (notably in the work of Fodor and LePore<sup>13</sup>), it seems to me that the position is essentially correct. It is a different matter when it comes to the conclusions regarding the independence claim that Dreyfus and Spinoza draw on the basis of holism, and to which they take holism to be committed: those conclusions simply do not follow from anything to which holism is committed and, indeed, holism itself seems to imply a quite contrary position.

While the sort of holism found in Davidson’s work, for example, does assert a form of dependence between the world, and the objects and events that make it up, and human attitudes and behaviour, it is quite unlike constructivist or idealist positions in that the dependence at issue is not a dependence of the world on the ‘mental’, but of the ‘mental’ on the world. Subjects can have contentful attitudes or be capable of meaningful behaviour only in virtue of being located within, and having access to, an objective world – an important consequence of this is that the concept of an objective world, along with access to that world, thereby becomes a prerequisite for the very possibility of belief, meaning and action. Thus Davidson writes that ‘So far from constituting a preserve so insulated that it is a problem how it can yield knowledge of an outside world or be known to others, thought is necessarily part of a common, public world’.<sup>14</sup> One might say, on the basis of such considerations, that the holist position makes a certain minimal form of ‘realism’ a condition of human belief and practice.<sup>15</sup> Indeed, it is important to realise that, because this position emphasises the dependence of the mental on the world, rather than the other way around, it need not be incompatible with the independence claim as Dreyfus and Spinoza initially state it – that is, with the claim that the order of the universe exists ‘independently of our minds or ways of coping’.<sup>16</sup>

Of course, Dreyfus and Spinoza might accept that holism is indeed compatible with independence in just this sense and yet still insist that we cannot have any meaningful access to the universe or the world that is independent in this way. Here they might point out that the independence claim, as it figures in discussions of realism, actually combines two separate theses, one ontological and the other epistemological. In Putnam's characterisation these two aspects are represented, respectively, by the claim that 'the world consists in some fixed totality of mind-independent objects' and the commitment to a correspondence theory of truth (assuming that it is, in principle, possible for the correspondence relation to be satisfied). While their initial statement of the independence claim focuses only on the ontological aspect, at other points it is clear that their view of the independence claim, at least when applied to science, combines both an ontological and epistemological aspect. Thus their characterisation of robust realism as committed to a version of the independence claim according to which 'science can in principle give us access to the functional components of the universe as they are in themselves' asserts both that the universe has a certain order 'as it is in itself' and that it is possible for science to provide 'access' to that order (in contrast to the Putnam characterisation which focuses on truth, Dreyfus and Spinoza give us no account of precisely what it is for science to give us access of the requisite sort and so they give no indication of how truth should be treated on their account).

Clearly, it is the second aspect of the independence claim, the epistemological aspect, that is of most importance in Dreyfus and Spinoza's account. Acceptance of the independence claim in its epistemological aspect, of course, entails acceptance of its ontological aspect also, but the reverse does not hold. It would be possible to accept the independence claim in its ontological aspect, but deny its epistemological side – to accept the independent existence of the world, but reject the possibility that we could have any epistemic access to that world – and holism could be viewed as instantiating such a position. In that case one might argue that the fact that holism does not rule out some sense in which the world can be said to exist independently of our attitudes and behaviour shows only that holism is compatible with the independence claim understood ontologically, but shows nothing about its compatibility with the claim understood epistemologically.<sup>17</sup>

It is because of their focus on the epistemological side to the independence claim that the idea of 'access' figures so prominently in Dreyfus and Spinoza's discussion. Yet, as I have already pointed out, the notion of 'access' is ambiguous and Dreyfus and Spinoza provide no account of the exact nature of the access that has to obtain for the independence claim to be substantiated. There is, moreover, an additional ambiguity that attaches to the idea of the 'independent' nature of the access at issue. In characterising the robust realist position, Dreyfus and Spinoza characterise the independence of access that such realism requires as a matter of having 'access to the functional components of the universe as they are in themselves in distinction from how they appear to us on the basis of our quotidian concerns or sensory capacities'<sup>18</sup> in discussing the deflationary realist position, the independence that is supposedly repudiated by that position is implicitly presented as a matter of having a perspective on things, or a way of conceiving of things, that 'does not...involve our practices' and that allows for the intelligibility of 'claims about ... things in themselves apart from practices'.<sup>19</sup> In both cases, the independence at issue can be viewed as a matter either of the independence of the

things on which a perspective is given or as a matter of the independence of the perspective itself, but in neither case is it made clear which form of independence is at issue.

The basic distinction at issue here could be put in terms of a difference between the means by which something is presented, or by means of which one is given access to a thing, and the thing that is so presented or to which one thereby has access. Dreyfus and Spinoza seem implicitly to assume that the independence that is required for robust realism, and indeed, for an adequate account of science, is an independence that encompasses both the independence of the thing from our practices and the independence from our practices of the means by which one has access to things. Indeed, they seem to view the former as dependent on the latter – we can only have access to things as they are independently of our practices if the means by which we have access to things is itself independent of our practices. There is, however, an obvious non sequitur here: if we take the case of belief, for instance, how one arrives at some belief has no necessary relevance to the question whether what one believes is true. Certainly, holism is committed to the view that any way we have of conceiving of the world or the things in the world, of knowing those things, or otherwise encountering or interacting with them, necessarily depends on our ways of conceiving, our ways of knowing, our ways of encountering or interacting, but this follows, in part, simply from the, almost trivial, fact that if we have a way of engaging with the world at all it is a way of engaging that is ours and that is tied to the possible forms of engagement that are available to us. But the dependence of our ways on engagement with things on us, and so on our existing practices, does not warrant any further inference to the claim either that the things that we encounter or with which we are engaged are dependent on us for their character or for the fact of their existence, or that our grasp of those things is only in terms of how they ‘appear’ rather than how they ‘are’. To take an example I have used elsewhere, a map of some portion of space depends on a particular set of interests on the part of the mapmaker, and the likely user of the map, as well as on certain conventional forms of presentation, but this in no way impugns the capacity of the map to accurately ‘describe’ some portion of objective space.

The argument that Dreyfus and Spinoza attribute to the deflationary realist, and which they present as demonstrating the impossibility, from the everyday perspective, of understanding things as they are ‘in themselves’ depends either on conflating the question of the independence of things with the independence of our means of access to things or else on treating the one as implying the other. Moreover, the style of argument they advance is not new, but is similar to a style of argument that has commonly been used to argue for the mind-dependence of objects, and which typically depends on much the same assumptions. Idealists have sometimes argued that one could not conceive of objects as existing independently of the mind, since to conceive of an object as supposedly existing in this way is already for the object to be before the mind in the very fact of its being conceived. Yet that the conception of an object is dependent on the mind – as all conceptions are – implies nothing about the dependence on the mind of the object that is conceived. The idealist simply conflates, as one might put it, the dependence of conception with the conception of dependence. Dreyfus and Spinoza do much the same – consequently they are led to suppose that there is no possibility of access to things ‘in themselves’ from within the framework of the everyday and that the defence of scientific realism must therefore depend on severing the scientific from our ordinary, everyday access to things. Yet as

Davidson says of language, our practices ‘do not distort the truth about the world’<sup>20</sup>, instead they are precisely what make it possible to utter truths at all. That science can indeed give us an objective account of the world – an account of the world ‘as it is in itself’ – is possible only because, and not in spite, of our being already ‘given over’ to the world in our ordinary practice.

Robust realism is only as robust as the premises on which it is based, and those premises, it seems, are actually quite fragile. This need not represent a great problem, however, since the fragility of the robust realist position is matched by a similar fragility in the arguments that suggest that robust realism is needed in the first place. Does this mean that we can, after all, rehabilitate some form of realism based around the independence requirement? Although Dreyfus and Spinoza give little attention to the question, the fact that traditional forms of realism have so often allied themselves with problematic accounts of truth – notably correspondence accounts – suggests that realism, at least as traditionally conceived, remains a position that must be incompatible with the sort of holistic approach that Dreyfus and Spinoza discuss and that I have also briefly sketched above. Yet this does not imply a capitulation to any form of antirealism, since the antirealist account of truth has no more to recommend it than that of the traditional realist. Instead, given the terms in which the realist-antirealist dispute has traditionally been posed, it seems wise to reject both sides of that dispute. This is, of course, the position that Davidson explicitly adopts<sup>21</sup> and it seems to me to be the position that best fits with both the details and the general character of the Heideggerian approach also. Davidson’s rejection of the realist-antirealist dispute stems from his rejection of the ‘myth of the subjective’ (a ‘myth’ often seen to be exemplified in Cartesianism and involving ‘a concept of the mind with its private states and objects’<sup>22</sup>) that Davidson appears to have in common with Heidegger. The rejection of that myth does not lead us to a position from which the idea of the world in itself becomes unintelligible, but is precisely a way of being able to make sense of how the world can indeed exist independently of us and nevertheless be accessible ‘in itself’.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See Putnam, Reason, Truth and History (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), p.49.

<sup>2</sup> Dreyfus and Spinoza, p.2.

<sup>3</sup> Dreyfus and Spinoza, p.2. It is not clear what force, if any, should be attached to the use of the modal ‘can’ in this characterisation of multiple realism. It seems, in fact, that Dreyfus and Spinoza are not committed to the weak claim that the universe ‘can function’ in this way, but to the stronger claim that it does so function.

<sup>4</sup> See Dreyfus and Spinoza, p.1.

<sup>5</sup> Dreyfus and Spinoza, p.4.

<sup>6</sup> For a more detailed discussion of the Davidsonian argument see my ‘Self-knowledge and Scepticism’, Erkenntnis 40 (1994), pp.165-184.

<sup>7</sup> Dreyfus and Spinoza, pp.4-5.

<sup>8</sup> See Dreyfus and Spinoza, p.22.

<sup>9</sup> Dreyfus and Spinoza, p.4.

<sup>10</sup> See Davidson ‘Three Varieties of Knowledge’, in A. Phillipps Griffiths (ed.), A. J. Ayer: Memorial Essays, Royal Institute of Philosophy, supplement 30 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), pp.153-166; see also my own account of the Davidsonian position in Donald Davidson and the Mirror of Meaning (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

<sup>11</sup> Dreyfus and Spinoza, pp.4-5.

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<sup>12</sup> Dreyfus and Spinoza, p.5.

<sup>13</sup> See especially Jerry Fodor and Ernest Lepore, Holism: A Shopper's Guide (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1991).

<sup>14</sup> Davidson, 'The Myth of the Subjective', in Michael Krausz (ed.), Relativism: Interpretation and Confrontation (Notre Dame: Notre Dame University Press, 1989), p.171.

<sup>15</sup> For this reason I argued, in Donald Davidson and the Mirror of Meaning, for a view of Davidson as still committed to a form of realism, even though he rejects the standard forms in which realism and antirealism are presented, see Donald Davidson and the Mirror of Meaning, pp.239ff.

<sup>16</sup> Dreyfus and Spinoza, p.1.

<sup>17</sup> Perhaps such a position is intimated by Dreyfus and Spinoza's otherwise somewhat obscure claim that 'the deflationary realist can sound like a scientist in saying on the basis of empirical findings that of course it makes sense to claim that some types of entities were there before us, and would still be there if we had never existed and others would not. But the Davidsonian says this on a background of meaning that makes any talk about nature as it is in itself incoherent' (Dreyfus and Spinoza, p.5).

<sup>18</sup> Dreyfus and Spinoza, p.2.

<sup>19</sup> Dreyfus and Spinoza, p.5.

<sup>20</sup> 'Seeing Through Language', in John Preston (ed.), Thought and Language, Royal Institute of Philosophy supplement 42 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p.17.

<sup>21</sup> See 'The Structure and Content of Truth', Journal of Philosophy 87(1990), p.309.

<sup>22</sup> Davidson coins this phrase in 'The Myth of the Subjective' where he writes of the subjective-objective dichotomy as having 'dominated and defined the problems of modern philosophy' and characterises this dualism as originating in 'a concept of the mind with its private states and objects' ('The Myth of the Subjective', p.163).

<sup>23</sup> Since I have taken the central point in Dreyfus and Spinoza's paper to be the arguments for robust realism, and against deflationary realism, so I have omitted any detailed discussion of the important issues concerning the reading of Heidegger (or, to some extent, of Davidson) that are raised in the course of Dreyfus and Spinoza's discussion. For the same reason, as well as the constraints of space, I have not addressed myself to the details concerning their account of 'formal designation', 'defamiliarisation' or 'multiple realism'.