

Carl B. Sachs

*Phenomenology vs the Myth of the Given: A Sellarsian Perspective on Husserl and Merleau-Ponty*

Department of Philosophy

Marymount University

U.S.A.

e-mail: csachs@marymount.edu

I argue that phenomenology should take seriously what Wilfrid Sellars calls “the Myth of the Given”. Phenomenologists have either ignored this idea or misunderstood it. I argue that the Myth of the Given, if understood correctly, could be an objection to phenomenological method. Specifically I argue that Husserl’s static phenomenology is vulnerable to a Sellarsian criticism. However, I also show that Merleau-Ponty is not vulnerable to a Sellarsian criticism because of how he navigates the relationship between phenomenology and science. This shows that the question as to whether phenomenology is vulnerable to the Sellarsian criticism is more complicated than has been assumed by phenomenologists or their critics.