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Life and Concept

Interpretations of
Michel Henry's Phenomenology

Vita e concetto

Interpretazioni della fenomenologia
di Michel Henry

edited by • a cura di

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EDIZIONI DI STORIA
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ABSTRACTS

LEONARDO SAMONÀ, *Life and Spirit. Hegel and Henry*

The phenomenology of life has a fundamental, difficult relationship with the Hegelian conception of the spirit. The 'immanent dialectics' of life is in opposition to the necessary passage of the Hegelian spirit for the manifestation meant as alienation. The essay attempts to highlight, not least through the analysis of the concept of suffering, not only the debt that Henry contracts with some aspects of Hegelian dialectics, but also the problematic consequences of his peremptory rejection of Hegelian belonging of the negative to the being.

JEAN LECLERCQ, *Michel Henry and the Issues of a 'Material Phenomenology'*

The paper examines the methodology Henry's approach to phenomenological pure life is based on. Given the phenomenological conditions of such approach the paper presents and discusses Henry's his critique of Husserl in order to determine the presuppositions that Henry's material phenomenology is supposed to have, and their implications.

STEFANO BANCALARI, *Phenomenological Models of Inter-Subjectivity: the Position of Michel Henry*

In this paper I would like to situate Michel Henry's position within the context of the phenomenological debate on inter-subjectivity. By distinguishing an a priori and an a posteriori approach to inter-subjectivity, I will try to demonstrate that Henry adopts the first solution. From this vantage point, Henry's *pathos-avec* appears to be much more closer to the notion of 'Mit-sein', than his harsh criticism against Heidegger would suggests – which exposes Henry's position to all the difficulties of the a priori model in general and of that of Heidegger in particular.

CARLA CANULLO, *Michel Henry Between Crisis and Critique. Philosophy in the Age of Barbarism*

Michel Henry was, fundamentally, neither a thinker of the crises, nor a philosopher of 'critical' thought. However, a critique of contemporary culture take place in his philosophy. In this paper, I will introduce certain characteristic themes of Henry's phenomenology, in order to establish a connection between barbarism and its critique. This connection will be established through a clarification of two specific radical reversals in our age; those of culture, on one hand, and psychoanalysis on the other. In order to investigate this connection, and in order to engage the general theme of a reversal, I will take a detour, in order to begin with what I will define as a 'forgotten overturning'.

FELICE CIRO PAPPARO, *Torment and Acceptance. Henry's Violent Reading of Nietzsche*

This paper tries to analyze and highlight some of the emblematic tangles of the Nietzsche's reading made by Michel Henry starting from his *phénoménologie de la vie*. By moving, in a clear and decisive way, towards the phenomenology of Husserl and Heidegger, in particular regarding the temporality matter, the French philosopher put himself in an hermeneutic condition that is at least problematic, not to say ambiguous, with Nietzsche who thinks about life issue concerning his concept of *Wille zur Macht*. Drawing attention on certain key words such as life, death, becoming, representation, immanence, very important for both the philosophers, present analysis wants to highlight some incongruities that necessarily come out in the Henry's reading, on a side, and, on the other hand, wants to clarify how the French philosopher has repeatedly shown himself related (perhaps by misrepresenting the original) with the Nietzsche thought.

FABIO GRIGENTI, *On Barbarism and Technique in Michel Henry*

This paper offers a brief analysis of Michel Henry's concept of technique. It starts from the famous definition of 'barbarism', as a peculiar character of culture in the techno-science era. In the last part, it focuses on the specific topic of the praxis. The paper concludes by pointing to a difficulty around the idea of 'machine' that Henry seems to use in his critical vision.

GIULIANO SANSONETTI, *The Phenomenology of Life in Debate: Between Michel Henry and Renaud Barbaras*

The paper focuses on the critical relationship between Renaud Barbaras' phenomenology of life and Michel Henry's *Material Phenomenology*. First, the

heritages of Henry's phenomenology in Barbaras' critique of Merleau-Ponty's interpretation of the phenomenological concept of 'flesh' are critically examined; hence, the reasons of Barbaras' denial of Michel Henry's interpretation of 'life' as 'self-affection' are outlined. Finally, in light of that opposition, the paper provides a reconstruction of Barbaras' concept of 'desire'.

GIUSEPPINA DE SIMONE, *Translating Michel Henry. Marginal Notes*

The paper originates from the Italian translation of Michel Henry's *L'essence de la manifestation* (1963). Translating this book is a real experience of a singular immersion in an intellectual research and in the progressive construction of Michel Henry's original philosophical perspective. This paper reinterprets such experience through some categories of the contemporary debate about the meaning and the possibility of translation: 'bring to', 'interpret', 'host and be hosted'. In addition to those categories, I will also introduce and discuss the categories of 'feel' and 'feel-with', as the transcendental condition of the translation of Michel Henry's philosophical works.

STEFANO SANTASILIA, *The Foundation Indigence. Michel Henry's Interpretation of Meister Eckhart's Thought*

Concerning the status of phenomenology, Michel Henry says that the phenomenality of the phenomenon is manifested, or rather it is done, because of its *Parousia*, the immanent self-revelation of the absolute Life as radical passivity or pathos. Such passivity is what Henry defines as self-affection: the appearing of being is its self-affecting. Passivity is the self-affection of the essence. Essence, being, is therefore what is given and received in this form of affection that is passivity. According to Henry, such an understanding, which is identically that of the internal structure of immanence and of the original essence of phenomenality, is precisely what was lacking to all modern and contemporary ontology. The only exceptional thinker who was capable to develop that comprehension of the essence of revelation was Meister Eckhart. Focusing on the connection between Henry's phenomenological reflection and Eckhart's mystical-philosophical reflection, the aim of this paper is to assert the truthfulness of the French phenomenologist's statement.

ROBERTO FORMISANO, *The Impossible Inheritance. Phenomenology and Philosophy of the Immanence from Fichte and Michel Henry*

The paper considers the relation between Fichte's philosophy (1804-1806) and Michel Henry's phenomenology of Life. It does so situating the concept of 'autonomy' with respect to the notions of Life and of manifestation of the Absolute both in Fichte's and Henry's thoughts of 'immanence'. This situation affords a crucial

distinction between two ways of thinking the phenomenological sense of immanent life of the Absolute. This distinction, in turn, affords an occasion for reflection on the general sense of Henry's radicalization of the phenomenological 'epoché' and on its consequences.

CLAUDIO TARDITI, *Michel Henry and the Project of a 'non Intentional Phenomenology'*

The paper provides a discussion of Henry's criticism of Husserl's account of transcendental phenomenology. Once emphasised how Husserl himself acknowledges a number of difficulties in describing his project of a transcendental phenomenology, I reconstruct Henry's assessments of Husserl's account of intentionality as the unique horizon of phenomenality. More precisely, Henry demonstrates that Husserl reduces phenomenality to visibility, namely to the exteriority of what appears in the world through an intentional sight. Rather, the source of intentionality is to be understood as the infinite process of revelation of life in its radical invisibility. As a consequence, in Henry's view, Husserl's phenomenology is to be developed as a non intentional phenomenology of life's revelation.