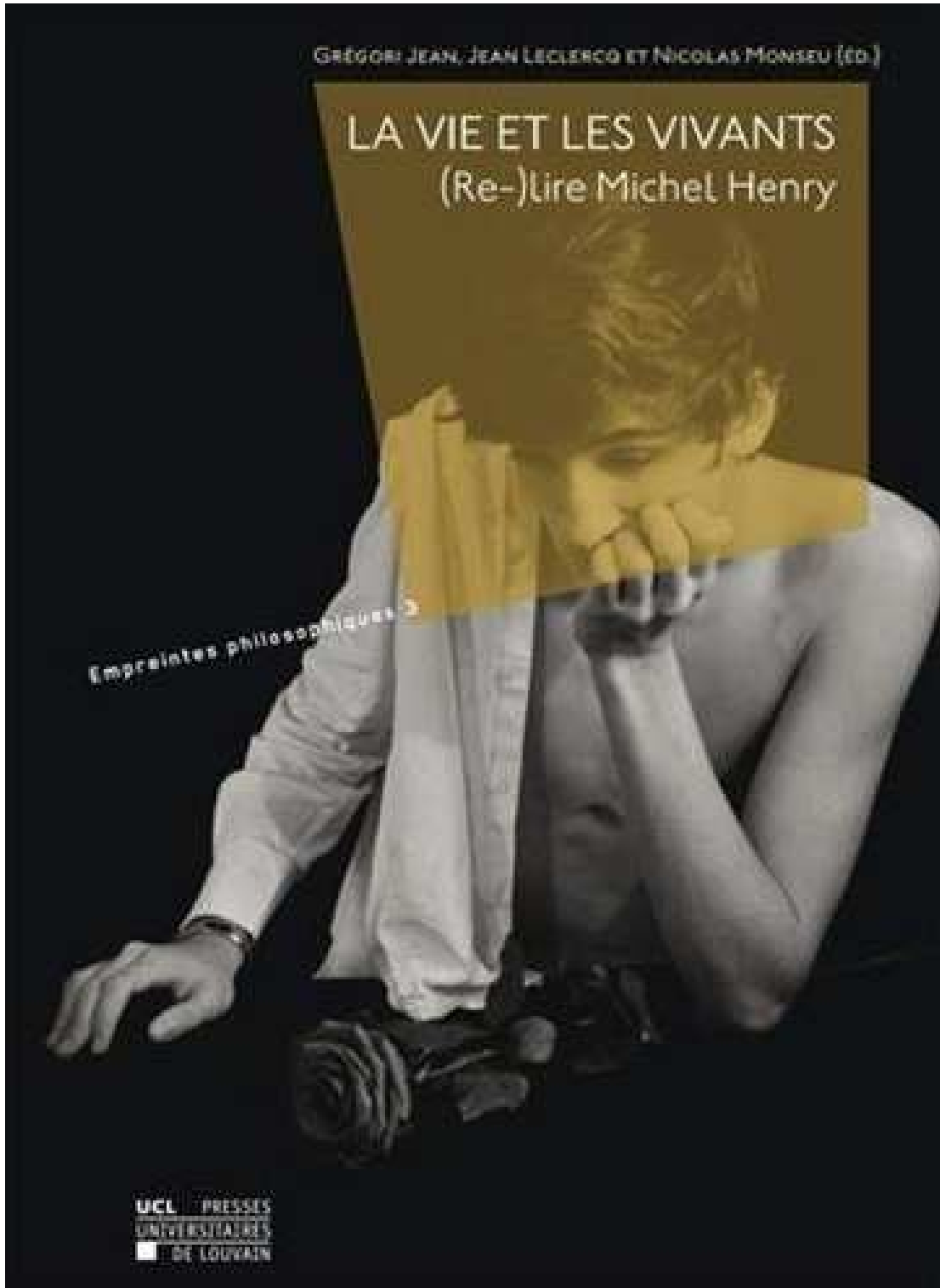


GREGORI JEAN, JEAN LECLERCQ ET NICOLAS MONSEU (ED.)

LA VIE ET LES VIVANTS (Re-)lire Michel Henry

Imprégnés philosophiques 3

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Matter and material phenomenology

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In his work, *Material Phenomenology*, Michel Henry shows that what separates him from Husserl is the possibility of a phenomenality in which what reveals itself, matter, coincides with *how* it reveals itself. In such a way, matter is not present as a function of a form that reveals it, rather reveals itself in the form in which it effectively phenomenizes itself, and affects itself. In our research work related to the Philosophy of Medicine, this phenomenality of matter, of being and of life has gained an immediate application to the phenomena of pain. Nevertheless, and in parallel to that possibility, a diverse range of questions emerged as to the exclusion of oneself from the phenomenality of the physiological processes of the body, relegated by Michel Henry to the strict domain of the empirical.

Our work continues to develop this research on the implications of the phenomenology of Life related to the phenomenology of pain and, simultaneously, presents and develops the hypothesis that the reification of biological processes has excluded these from the *material phenomenology*, and that not only can we not exclude them but without them a great proportion of human activity becomes incomprehensible. Indeed, where the phenomenology of life, its self-affectivity, is revealed to us through feeling, this always occurs accompanied by feelings of the body and in multiple modalities. The physiological processes, as processes of life, receive from feeling the necessity of existence and contribute to the revelation of Life in its effectiveness. Thus, if one seeks to ensure that the phenomenality of Life does not limit itself, as Michel Henry chooses to do, to the phenomenality of our subjective life — though reporting to a necessary existence, the effective donation of itself of Life — with the resulting deficits for the full comprehension of the human, one has to recuperate what has been consciously set aside: the life of the body in its processes, chosen by Life itself, the physiological processes.

The phenomenology of Life revealed in subjectivity does not differ from the subjectivity of Life revealed in the physiological processes — only the modes differ — and that is why Life reveals itself as irreducible both to the physiological processes and to the processes of subjectivity. Nonetheless, revealing itself thus to the subjectivity, Life gives it the power to interfere with and to be affected by the processes in which it is given to reveal itself. Correspondingly, the research under way contributes to the comprehension of subjective life, its powers and limits.

In this paper we shall articulate the questions related to the phenomenology of Life with the questions related to Medicine — pain, suffering, body, as they have been developed within our Research Project « What a body can ? ». We include a synthesis of several works presented by researchers to the Louvain-La-Neuve « (Re)Lire Michel Henry International Congress ».

Research on Michel Henry's work has been ongoing at the Portuguese Catholic University since 1980 with research findings swiftly taken up by the field of Medicine. The importance of the affective dimension of suffering in the context of pain medicine was undeniable as the extension of the affective phenomenality to the body was challenging. Some of these questions were expressed by the phenomenology of Life in the form of paradoxes¹. However, paradoxes do not cease to be challenges directed at the phenomenality of affective Life, by nature invisible : in Michel Henry, within the phenomenality of the *cogito*. Thus, we challenge the reduction of material phenomenology to the phenomenality of the *cogito*, as Michel Henry presents it : alongside its possibilities, exists a group of problems which solution is not innocuous to the empowering of those possibilities.

Let us see. One of its great possibilities is related to the extension of life phenomenality to the affective dimension of human experience in its modalities of suffering and fruition. Its contribution to the Medicine of Pain, even accepting the distinction between pain and suffering, affirms its irreducibility to a merely physiological mode of being². Pain is felt, and it is through the feeling that it reveals itself as our pain, in this way uniting us, as long as it remains our pain, to the biological process that is at its origin. The possibility of either adhering to or rather wanting to escape from pain tears open the closeted and private horizon of subjective phenomena. Such a possibility deserves our attention not only due to the theoretical interest of the question, philosophically identified as solipsism, but also due to the respective emerging therapeutic opportunities³. In Michel Henry, subjectivity is comprehended within the original phenomenality of a relationship between the I and itself, in which the I finds itself given to itself, without actually

¹ CMV, p. 244.

² This discussion was launched in Portugal, at the « Summer University », Arrábida, 1997, with Michel Henry in attendance.

³ Manuel Silvério Marques, *A Medicina enquanto ciência do indivíduo*, Lisboa, Faculdade de Medicina de Lisboa, 2002, p. 249.

having contributed to that. The tearing of solipsism and the originality of subjective life, while primordial relation, is the *situs* of all the life of the human being : happy or unhappy, productive or infertile, good or bad... Human life can only be understood over a foundation, within itself, of an original relationship that envelops it and makes it responsible. And it is under the paradigm of this relationship that the therapeutic activity takes root. The other reason is that this original relationship of the I with itself is expressed through the feeling of the life of the body : this body of senses, of organs, this living body.

The questions related to our first order of reasons concerning the interest in the phenomenology of affectivity, its applicability to therapy, inscribe themselves in the phenomenality of the I that, through feelings of itself, proves itself in excess of itself. In the phenomenality of this itself, its birth is originally co-birth : the birth of itself is contemporary to the birth of the other. In the phenomenality of the « pathos-avec »⁴, in the affective bond of the revelation of itself of Life within the Living, in the process in which this one feels itself being born, inscribes itself in the possibility of all birth, namely the birth of the being-with : the community. Born as communion, immersed in this communion, the original phenomena of this birth are comparable to hypnotic phenomena⁵, in which the other, Life, is born as I am born ; coinciding I with the other, with life⁶. Nevertheless, and here reside the ambiguities of the phenomenology of community in Michel Henry, how can the I despair of itself, in such a hypnotic state⁷ ?

A possible way out is the passage from this hypnotic experience to the possibility of becoming the master — the *compus sui* of Biran, in Michel Henry — as ownership of the experiences of oneself. Nevertheless, not only are the questions that identify subjective Life with Absolute Life themselves questioned here, but also the research field is inflected towards questions related to the body.

This oscillation between the autonomy of subjective life, namely its necessary existence, that springs from the passibility of I itself — the relationship of the I with itself is originally this passibility of itself as put by another — and the constant declination of this one in the body traverses all the work of Michel Henry. It either appears as the introduction to his work — *Philosophy and Phenomenology of the Body* that introduces to the *Essence of Manifestation* — or as a conclusion — *Incarnation* appears as a complement to the phenomenology of Life in *I am the Truth*. Nevertheless, in either of the cases, the question lingers intact : the phenomenology of life, as Michel Henry understands it, choosing the phenomenality limited

⁴ PM, part III.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 172.

⁶ Hence, for in the repetition of a phenomenon living — the phenomenon of transfer — resides its therapeutic possibility.

⁷ Nicole Hatem, « Le secret partagé : Kierkegaard — Michel Henry », dans *Michel Henry : pensée de la vie et de la culture*, Paris, Beauchesne, 2006, p. 195-210.

to subjectivity, excludes from itself not only part of the phenomenality of life but also the comprehension of one's own subjectivity of the I.

Let us refer again to the research undertaken by this project within the universe of the Philosophy of Medicine : the self-affections of the I, besides referring it also to the primordial intertwining of life with itself, refer it to the phenomena of the body, to its affections that, in this latter, are in themselves indicators of the quality of health. Hence, though following Spinoza, in Michel Henry, it is the body that legitimates the concept of soul, of subjectivity⁸, it is up to us to inquire about the legitimacy of the reduction of the phenomenality of that same body to the phenomenality of the affectivity of the senses, whose process is viewed as totally *indifferent*⁹ to the phenomenality of the physiological process for it is through the latter that the affections of the body occur. Hence is it through such process that we gain access to subjectivity ?

In this way, we move on from the possibilities of material phenomenology to the problems to which it becomes indifferent : where the phenomenology of pain does not reduce itself to a physiological process, can it be reduced, as Michel Henry does, to the phenomenality of the *cogito*¹⁰ ? Which *ego* is this that phenomenizes itself not just autonomously, but indifferent to the affections of its own body, affections directly connected to biochemical processes ? Is it the theory of the three bodies¹¹ not the confession of the failure of this attempt ?

We are not concerned here with the testimony, through subjectivity, of the cross-over of the phenomenality of Life with the phenomenality of the *compos sui*, but with the possibility of attending the subjective life from other resources implicated in that same life : the physiological processes. We shall see that this is one other form of phenomenality that helps to understand the phenomenality of private experience¹². Or, in the case that stands before us, to contribute to the betterment of the phenomena of private nature, like, for instance, memory or the loss of it, as in the cases of Alzheimer's disease. Is not that the nature of the medical act ?

Thus, the questions about the phenomenology of pain and the body in Michel Henry summon a much broader question : what matter is addressed by the *material phenomenology* and why does it exclude such matter from physiological processes, themselves implicated in the phenomenological fabric it intends to explain ?

We will note that this question does not hinder Michel Henry's intent : to view the phenomena of existence, namely body phenomenality, through the perspective of eternity or the necessity of existence, which was an intent expressed in his first

⁸ « Le concept d'âme a-t-il un sens ? », dans PV-I, p. 9-38.

⁹ EM, part III.

¹⁰ GP, p. 37-38.

¹¹ PPC.

¹² Florinda Martins, *Recuperar o Humanismo : para uma fenomenologia da alteridade*, em Lisboa, Principia, 2002, p. 152-157.

philosophical work, *The happiness of Spinoza*¹³, centred upon Spinoza's expression: « I will explain that which can lead us as if by the hand to knowledge on the human soul and on its supreme happiness »¹⁴. Thus, in Spinoza, the physiological processes in themselves imply that same perspective and, beyond that, allow us to better understand the private nature of subjective phenomena.

The main question present in the text « La phénoménologie de Michel Henry et les questions do neurologue Damásio »¹⁵ relates to the possibility of the laboratorial proceedings pointing in the sense of the comprehension of the body *sub specie aeternitatis*¹⁶! This question accompanies the path of both our research and its results: the declination in the body of intentional phenomenology and of the phenomena of representation puts the phenomenology of subjectivity on a new course, inscribing it in the affective life. And it was through the phenomenality of affection that subjectivity was able to overcome the narcissist phenomenality, in as much affection, in the immediacy of its donation, reports to an otherness that constitutes its actual essence.

Our question was whether the essence of affection, rather than fixating itself on a phenomenality of the subjectivity and its particular problems, would allow us to understand it in a broader universe, namely in the phenomena of the body and what these permit us to feel: corporeal diseases, ageing, cut away, as well as the diseases of the soul, with any narcissism and appeal, like the latter, to the possibility of a ransom for the Life of that which figures itself as contingent¹⁷. Furthermore, the phenomenality of the effective feeling of oneself does not occur without the performance of the multiple chemical processes originating in the body.

In his latest book, *Self comes to mind*, Damásio lays out the following question:

The ultimate consciousness product occurs *from* those numerous brain sites at the same time and not in one site in particular, much as the performance of a symphonic piece does not come from the work of a single musician or even from a whole section of an orchestra. The oddest thing about the upper reaches of a consciousness performance is the conspicuous absence of a conductor *before* the performance begins, although, as the performance unfolds, a conductor comes into being. For all intents and purposes, a conductor is now leading the orchestra, although the performance has created the conductor — the self — not the other way round¹⁸.

¹³ BS, p. 17.

¹⁴ Spinoza, *Ethics*, part II — « From the nature and origin of the soul ».

¹⁵ Florinda Martins, « La phénoménologie de Michel Henry et les questions du neurologue Damásio », dans DH, p. 424-431.

¹⁶ Yorihiro Yamagata, « Pathos-avec et propriété », dans DH, p. 321-332.

¹⁷ Carlos Hernandez, « Creio na ressurreição dos corpos », in *Bioética*, 2006, p. 85-87.

¹⁸ António Damásio, *Self comes to mind. Constructing the Conscious Brain*, Londres, William Heinemann, 2010, p. 23-24.

Therefore, where phenomenology attends to the how of the phenomenon appearing, it can not forget the phenomenality of matter through which the self appears to itself, and matter appears with it. And the paragon of the birth of Life, of its engendering, does not lose anything from the fact that it engenders itself in the game of biochemical signs, rather integrates itself into a universe of life, from which subjectivity has departed. And the First Self or the First Living comprehends itself in a wider universe than that one of the phenomenality of *cogito* ! The dignity of the I, of the Self accomplishes itself precisely when this Self comprehends itself in the engendering that engenders it, as conductor of the performance, in the course of the same performance ! The words of Michel Henry become concrete :

[...] the generation of a First Living in the Absolute Life is identical to the self generation of that Absolute Life. Thus this self generation accomplishes itself as the generation of a First Living, which is not a consequence, but rather a condition of the self generation. Thus being, Life can only prove itself in a first Self that is the revelation of Life. It proves itself, that is to say, it reveals itself¹⁹.

The reciprocal interiority of Life and the « *Archi-soi* » does not reduce Life to the Self, but, inscribing it in the revelation of Itself, the Self is destined to It as Its revelation. It is thus that the human can report its existence to Life and understand it from the viewpoint of eternity²⁰ ! However, this point of view only reveals itself in us in the process that Life itself has chosen in order to reveal itself thus : the feeling of Itself gives itself with the affections of the body and these are given in and through the physiological processes that Life has chosen to make itself fulfilled with.

António Damásio, in *Spinoza avait raison*²¹ and in *L'Autre moi-même*²², describes several pathological situations in which the loss of the sense of the body causes the loss of the sense of oneself. The empirical data corroborate the phenomenality of the revelation of life in its immediate donation of itself in the affections of the body, that we report to the Absolute Life, which thus actualizes and fulfils itself — the *conatus*, according to the phenomenology of Life. The phenomenality of revelation gives itself in the body and it is as body that life processes itself. What is that phenomenology of the *videre videor*, reduced to the *cogito*, without the mechanisms of the body that Life has chosen to become effective and reveal itself as vision ! ? The *conatus* is only an indicator of eternity as far as this latter designs the essence of God as necessary existence, in act ! In the body, in Earth as in Heaven !

¹⁹ AD, p. 153.

²⁰ Yorihiro Yamagata, « Pathos-avec et propriété », dans DH, p. 321-332.

²¹ António Damásio, *Spinoza avait raison. Joie et tristesse, le cerveau des émotions*, Paris, Odile Jacob, 2003, p. 193.

²² António Damásio, *L'autre moi-même. Les nouvelles cartes du cerveau, de la conscience et des émotions*, Paris, Odile Jacob, 2010, p. 250.

In Earth : earth which phenomenality resists against any reification. The new paralogisms of phenomenality report themselves to that indifference towards that which is physical, biological, chemical, as if it was given to us to taste ourselves outside the mechanisms Life has chosen to reveal itself through.

To understand the subjectivity, to understand ourselves as the conductor of a symphony, though phenomenologically engendered in the engendering of the symphony itself²³, means to understand ourselves, to understand the Self within the Whole of Life, that thus confides itself to it. The human being has Life as heritage. Hence, the physiological phenomena of the body are not the only ones to be recuperated : we have the universe as heritage. Life reveals itself in subjectivity but exceeding it in the same revelatory process. In the bond of Life with us, Life neither permits being captivated nor captivates us.

In our working group, the phenomenality of the « bond », as José Rosa sees it, develops this aspect of the phenomenality of Life as « pathos-avec ». And the phenomenality of feeling continues to develop itself in the sense of its salvation possibilities. Therefore, it is not strange to see the phenomenality of feeling connected to questions traditionally relegated to the boundaries of religiousness and to concepts that concerned nothing but the latter : revelation, *circumcessio* (or *circumincessio*), *pericoresis*... ! Propriety of oneself neither usurps nor annuls the other ; it is a primordial bond as is the original donation of oneself. Nevertheless, donation lived existentially in the body.

Fernando Silvestre Rosas Magalhães, with his thesis *Caro cardo salutis*, deals with the questions of a Christology of Incarnation. *Caro cardo salutis*. The question is : how is it possible, under the light of the Phenomenology of Life, to continue affirming, with Tertullian, in the work *De carne resurrectionis*, VII, that the Flesh is the place where salvation is received ? These theses unite salutary life and resurrection and are highly important theses within the Philosophy of Medicine, in which death appears as a constant provocation to health care professionals.

The work of Sofia Reimão — MD, neuroradiologist — *The Question of Medicine and Death as a Question* responds to this provocation, reflecting on an observation produced by Michel Henry in one of his stays in Portugal : « but I am going to die ! ». This observation obtained no answer from any of the people present, but plays a major part in our research.

And Carlos Hernandez — Psychiatrist, National University of Cuyo — argues that the formula of the Credo, « I believe in the resurrection of the bodies », should be read in the light of Biology, the Biology of resurrection. The Biology of resurrection has already recorded some developments, namely in the texts edited by Karin Wondracek, but still poses many challenges. We search in the compared phenomenology of the religious ways of life that integrate in themselves death and resurrection. This is the way travelled by Evanor de Castro, who, in his fieldwork, attends to

²³ Fernando Pessoa, *Livro do Desassossego*, Lisboa, Atica, 1982, fgr. 27, p. 29.

the possibility of a comparative lecture between material phenomenology and the Guarani culture and religiosity. We thus resume his contribution: based on a participative and phenomenological insertion in the Mbyá-Guarani village of Gengibre (located on the Indigenous Reservation of Guarita, Eral Seco, RS, Brazil) one can verify two possible relationships between the philosophy of Michel Henry and the Guarani religiosity. The first refers to the Michel Henryan category of Absolute Life with regard to the way the Guarani relate with the Word of Words. The second convergence proposal puts the immanence of the Absolute Life as a « learn to hear » the Word of Words. It is precisely this immanence of the Word of Words which is the force that is able to generate the whole, sustainable and extractionist relationship between the Guarani and mother earth. From this, one can verify the whole relationship of otherness experienced in the Mbyá-Guarani village of Gengibre when we identify their habits of collective and solidarity organization.

But the questions of life and death carry with them, for the Health Sciences, the taking care of the living. The work of Ângela Nobre verses on this subject. Bearing in mind the results achieved by the work of Manuel Silvério Marques at the Portuguese Oncology Institute Centre of Research, Ângela Nobre develops it in her studies. Within the Doctoral Thesis *Medicine as a Science of the Individual*, Manuel Silvério Marques thus integrates in the medical act the question posed by Francisco Sanches — a Portuguese Physician at the University of Montpellier (1573)²⁴ — : « How do you feel? Where does it hurt? » — these are probably the most commonly asked questions in every language in clinical encounters, before, during and after any kind of surgical treatment or medical prescription. Refusing unanimity in biomedical epistemology and accepting heterogeneity in clinical practice one proposes that inherent to the epistemic virtues of the clinician lies the ancient quest after *metron* as a measure for internal properties, felt as *aisthesis*, a sense of rightness, a visceral feeling, one — the first? — criterion for evaluating the adequacy of decisions under uncertainty. The proper metric was described by the Hippocratic writer in *Ancient Medicine as aisthesis ten somatos*. One suggests an interpretation of it as a kind of common gut feeling that must convene with intersubjective standards. That is, both the patient's and the physician's feelings and educated guesses must be co-reportive and not dissonant. *Does it harm?, does this action feel right?* — were and are the first interrogation that *qua* agent and *qua* surgeon, *iatroi* and / or *pharmakopolous* every doctor asks the patient and him/herself. One wishes to inquire if and what bases the emotions could be said to guide the ancient physicians towards the proper treatment, hoping to show how a forgotten bridge was built between the general and the particular and so resolving the paradox of the faculty of judgement.

The implications of the phenomenality of feeling, of affectivity, extend to therapeutic questions, in mental health. Karin Wondracek's intervention in our panel

²⁴ We thank the information given to us by Roland Vaschalde on this subject.

is thus resumed: this contribution discusses the enrichment of my therapeutic practice through my doctoral research on the contributions of Michel Henry to anthropology and the clinic. The introduction places my research in the context of issues raised by the dialogue between Sigmund Freud and Oskar Pfister, which pointed to significant differences in the conception of the human condition that are also reflected in the clinic, especially in the affective dimension. Part one summarizes the theoretical background, beginning with the genealogy of Western thought according to Michel Henry, demonstrating its effects on psychoanalysis, especially in its approach to affectivity, in dialogue with contemporary psychoanalysts.

Part two presents the impact of this research on the clinic. The discussion highlights the phenomenological and testimonial aspects, and with the help of three figures describes the modifications carried out in therapeutic practice.

The dialogue between psychoanalysis and the phenomenology of Life can be very enriching, especially in psychoanalysis' approach to the irrepresentable in the clinic. In the same field of research, Andrés Eduardo Aguirre Antúnez's labour summarizes as follows: therapeutic accompaniment is a modality of psychological treatment conducted either in the home or in some other environment outside the private consultancy or health institution. This type of attendance is recommended by psychiatrists and psychotherapists for a wide variety of patients who tend to withdraw from social contact or pose some degree of risk of suicide or depression. In São Paulo, Brazil, most therapeutic accompaniment follows either a psychoanalytic or, to a lesser extent, phenomenological orientation. Contact with the patient reveals a pure state of affection, with the corporeity of the therapist sensitive to that of his or her charge. Michel Henry's Phenomenology of Life strikes us as useful to obtaining a deeper reflection on human emotional life and the bases, origins and fundamentals of therapy. By accepting the presence of a companion in their suffering and pain, these patients also open themselves to joy and enjoyment, transforming that suffering into life-flow. While Therapeutic Accompaniment differs from psychotherapy, it does not oppose it, but rather contributes to a broadening of one's understanding of the other, being a field that is open to the input of Michel Henry's Phenomenology of Life as fundamental to all therapeutic endeavour.

Michel Henry's concepts unfold a vast field of study into what is most original in the foundations of clinical activity, namely a purely affective encounter. It is not in the area of theoretical abstractions that Therapeutic Accompaniment seeks its explanation, but in an understanding of originary affective experience.

More concerned with the social health of the « favelas » in Brazil, Marcelo Saldanha develops the question of aesthetics in the relationship with Theology. Every dialogue happens in some place and the one who speaks, does it from a floor, a space on which his feet gain support, an *ethos*. In our daily life, we chat in the

streets, in the corridors, but when we want to have deep conversations, it is in the interior of spaces that we open ourselves to dialogue. Michel Henry and Jürgen Moltmann, the philosopher and the theologian, speak, each of them, from his own respective ground. Some notes of a dialogue between concepts drawn from the works *I am the truth*, by Michel Henry, and *In the End, the Beginning — Brief Treaty on Hope*, by Moltmann, are proposed. The ground for the conversation between Michel Henry and Moltmann will be the fresco « The Final Judgement » by Michelangelo Buonarroti ». Marcelo Saldanha intends to find in this common ground the possibility of renewing some of the phenomena of social life in a town district in Brazil that has been relegated to the category of human trash : Hell, as historically described, is the place for a fruitless suffering, the suffering in death. A peripheral space to where *human garbage* is swept, in order to ensure that the sinners do not hinder with their filth the celestial neighbourhood in which the saved live in peace. This infernal and anti-Christian logic is quite easily seen in the barbarity of the great cities which strive to ban their ugliness to the peripheries. It is in the hell of exclusion that the good for nothing, the dead weight of organized society, those who, in the civilized calculus cannot be tolerated, as if they were numbers, are. The example chosen by Marcelo Saldanha is that of the intervention by BOPE (Battalion of Special Police Operations) in Rio de Janeiro, in one of the most well known « favelas », « Morro do Alemão » (the German's rock).

What had then been a prophetic appeal initiated a joint project between the Symbol Art Gallery and Brazil, through the Project Health Art. Today we know that along Marcelo's work many other artists reconvert human garbage into a work of art. The work of Carla Gonçalves, *The Garbage Woman*, and even Brazilian and United States cinematography are working in this same sense. The work of Marcelo Saldanha also builds bridges between aesthetics, in the phenomenology of Life, and the phenomenality inscribed in the biology of resurrection. When one asks oneself, *What a body can ?*, a complementary question comes to one's mind : what can a body in resurrection ? Resurrection is a most important dogma to Christianity. So important that Paul tells us, in chapter 15 of the *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, that without resurrection our faith is vain. If we look beyond the truth of the world, prisoner of the biologic finitude of the human being, we shall find resurrection, and this is the Life, the proof of Michel Henry's words, when he says that « the human who tastes and enjoys this Absolute Life, without beginning and without end, coinciding with it, will know no death »²⁵. Therefore, it is fundamental to view the judgement of resurrection as the acting of Life beyond biological death, where even the workers won over at the last instant will be entitled to their salary, as the parable of the vine workers, narrated by Jesus in chapter 20 of the *Gospel of Mathew*, tells us.

²⁵ CMV, p. 96.

Returning to Moltmann, for the risen Christ, there are no dead, just living, vivified by him. In resurrection, all of creation will be filled with mirth, and Christ will be the judge of peace, bringing « justice among the sheep and the sheep, between the lamb and the ram »²⁶, rebuilding relationships torn apart by evil and making true the words of the *Old Testament*: « The Lord will do justice between me and you » (*Genesis*, 16, 5 ; 31, 53. 1 *Samuel* 24, 13). This justice will be the justice of the courtyard, done by the Good Shepherd.

For the renovation of the social body, the correct policies and the correct economy are indispensable. The research carried out by Américo Pereira follows this trend. Beginning with the definition of fascism present in the work *Du communisme au capitalisme. Théorie d'une catastrophe*, as the « reduction of the individual » to « something insignificant » from the ontological point of view, attention focuses upon demonstrating the transcendental onto-anthropological dimension inherent to fascism, that consubstantiates itself as the denial of the « unique reality » of the human individual within its also unique reality, which is life. Fascism is, thus, always, a form of « essential bond to death », not in its metaphysical sense of fulfilment of one's own life, as its ultimate donator of sense, from an inherent finitude, but as a mere threat or accomplishment of an act of annihilation. Fascism, as a transcendental onto-anthropological category, ultimately always aims at the annihilation of humankind or at its reduction and enslavement to another form of life, master like and parasitic.

The only effective solution for preventing this tentative imposing transcendental annihilator of humanity resides in action inspired on fundamental principles for the protection of life, in its irreducibly individual sense, substantially individual, that promotes this same individual life. A sole possible way of granting the sheer possibility of the human person as something ontologically irreducible, ontological irreducibility that is the only foundation of all others : ethical, political, economic, etcetera.

However, for the political changes and economic crises occurring in Europe, new educational policies are needed. Cassiano Reimão develops the *implications of material phenomenology on educational projects*. Because life phenomenology does not marginalize any aspect of life and culture, under the auspices of Michel Henry's material phenomenology, he proposes to establish the perspectives for a project that aims at the integral education of man. At the beginning, the category of « otherness » is revealed, for the act of educating is a form of transmitting to *the other* a way of living and of understanding life, freely and responsibly, fully respecting the autonomy of subjective life. The construction of a personal project of life, as proposed by the educational act, through the organization of an axiological scale, pursuing « happiness », involves an « ethical » dimension that is not

²⁶ Jürgen MOLTSMANN, *No fim o início — Breve tratado sobre a esperança*, São Paulo, Edições Loyola, 2007, p. 177.

negligible. Education is, truthfully, an existential process of formation, of humanization, of culturalization, of personalization.

Ana Paula Rosendo specified the educational project as the transmission of a legacy. The research objective is to distinguish the specificity of education, aiming at perceiving what makes it singular and unique in relation to the other cultural manifestations, taking Michel Henry's phenomenology as its point of departure. Hence, this embarked on the premise that culture and social life come together inside the world as lived and are indispensable while experiencing oneself as feeling is also a feeling with. Though the possibility of experiencing is founded on adhesion to oneself, there is a demand for social life in the heart of any experiencing of life, because without the other there can hardly be an experience of oneself.

Thus, we consider education as a transmission of a cultural legacy, something we have inherited since times immemorial and which is simultaneously our ontological condition as children and as heirs of a certain number of cultural goods resulting from subjective practice. The whole praxis takes root in the body and it is from it that we feel the world in us, making it our own, as Michel Henry tells us « il n'y a pas de terre pensable sinon comme ce sur quoi nous posons ou pouvons poser le pied »²⁷. It's the idea of the original appropriation of the body (corpopriation), in which the body appropriates the earth and the world, and this idea is not socially apprehended, but constitutes itself as an *a priori*. Thus, every praxis has its origin in this appropriation of the body, and from it derive many spiritual goods and materials that constitute culture. Cultural transmission thereby serves a determining role in education. The question that arises is that concerning the way in which we should transmit this cultural legacy. This legacy, of which we have become the heirs, is transmitted through language, in its broadest sense, which includes all forms of communion with the other. In a first moment, we deal with the question of community life and the knowledge of the other, concentrating our efforts on the role that affectivity can have in the foundation of an educational community. Then, we raise the question of knowing how the usage of language is capable of weakening or strengthening the power the individuals possess of being deeply affected by that which they live. As proposed by Raphaël Gély²⁸, this is deemed to be essential, for, as Michel Henry tells us, « Premièrement, l'éducation n'a qu'un seul but : permettre à un Soi d'entrer en possession de lui-même, de ses potentialités insoupçonnées »²⁹. To educate takes on a very broad meaning, and it is part of our condition to be educated and to educate but the use of language is indispensable in this process. Another question for exploring concerns the way in which modernity has led to a dangerous alienation of this manifestation of life that is education.

²⁷ B, p. 82.

²⁸ Raphaël Gély, « A vida social, a linguagem e a vulnerabilidade originária do desejo », dans *O que pode um corpo*, Florinda Martins, Américo Pereira (coord.), Lisboa, UCE, 2010, p. 104.

²⁹ B, p. 213.

The questions related to education include scientific education, that which characterizes our society, and cannot be relegated to the mere field of barbarity. This concept is delineated in Michel Henry as well as in non rare sociology texts. Through it, one can distinguish science and technique from the ideology that, in the West, accompanies them. For a philosopher, to penetrate the 21st century means understanding the transformations of life, the growth of itself: within culture, of which science is a wholesome part! The phenomenological intertwining between subjective processes and physiological processes are presented in the first section of this paper. Now, we merely wish to exemplify them with two cases stemming from our research group activities: memory and bioethics.

For the first case, we would thank the contribution made by the researcher Cátia Teixeira, from Oporto's Saint John's Hospital. Her doctoral thesis on memory is difficult to read even for very well trained biologists. Reading it, one might say: « it is not written in our language ». However, what is said there relates to us: the acquisition of memory or its loss, namely Alzheimer's disease, its effects and the diminishing of quality of life. Hence, to relegate this scientific activity to the mere field of ideology sounds like cynicism, even deep hypocrisy. But Michel Henry recognized the importance of interdisciplinary work in phenomenology. He did it in the field of mental health³⁰. We extended it to matters of the laboratory.

One of the first tasks of the research group was to develop a way to render the algorithmic language operational. What used to be algorithmic language, after a long and rich practice of linguistic interdisciplinary work, was deeply transformed. Let us consider the case of memory:

The laboratorial study of memory takes as its principle that lesions to the hippocampus interfere with recent memories, leaving a great proportion of remote memories intact. Observations in this domain lead to the elaboration of theories on a possible reorganization of the stocking of memories at the level of the nervous system. A model is proposed in which new memories are rapidly codified by the hippocampus together with the various areas of the cortex. As time goes by, the reactivation of memories (both during sleep and vigil) leads to the strengthening of cortical connections and the hippocampus ceases to be essential to the existence of memory. Cátia Teixeira, in cooperation with other researchers from Canada, is contributing towards the possible certification of this model. This certification is achieved in the following manner: when a neuron (from a mouse) is activated, it expresses a protein — Fos. By counting the number of neurons expressing that protein in a given area of the brain just after a memory test (recent *versus* remote) one can perceive if that region is or is not relevant for memories³¹.

³⁰ « Souffrance et vie », in PV-I, p. 156.

³¹ Cátia Teixeira, Florinda Martins, « Questões à fenomenologia da vida », dans A felicidade na fenomenologia da vida, Florinda Martins, Adelino Cardoso (coord.), Lisboa, UCFUL, 2006, p. 233.

La vie et les vivants. (Re-)lire Michel Henry

After the acquisition of a common language emerges the philosophical discussion on the questions about the revelation of life that were pondered in the first half of this paper. Furthermore, there is another group of researchers dedicated to questions of bioethics. The research is gaining momentum in this area with the participation of Sofia Braga, from the Portuguese Oncology Institute, a medical expert in the field of oncology and laboratorial work.