

# Phenomenality and Finitude: Michel Henry's Theory of Immanence

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## Preview

In the following essay, I will examine the connection between phenomenality and finitude, a problem developed by Michel Henry in *The Essence of Manifestation* in the context of a close dialogue with Heidegger and Kant on the theme of time and self-affection. Henry's consideration of Kant's transcendental philosophy, and of his conception of time as self-affection, appears in § 24 of *The Essence of Manifestation*, in the context of what Henry himself terms the "problématique" of *The Essence of Manifestation* as such, the "critique of ontological monism." It does so, then, in the context of Henry's "interpretation of the essence of phenomenality... within the fundamental ontological presuppositions of monism," in which Henry situates, and develops, the decisive problem of the receptivity of transcendence. The conclusive moment of this critique is provided by Henry's ontological interpretation of Kant, through a point-by-point "contrelecture" of Heidegger's own *Kant und das Problem der Metaphysik*. This constitutes only a final moment (or even a "simple repetition") of a long critical path, that was always directed to the "essential interconnection of being and human finitude," the "coappartenance" that, in the wake of Heidegger, contemporary phenomenological ontology would establish between the essence of phenomenality and finitude, on the basis of the transcendence of *Dasein*. The determination of the structure of the latter, which is the true task of Henry's 'ontological interpretation' of Kant, is initiated already in the first part of *L'essence de la manifestation*, which thus will be the focus of my analysis herein. My intention is to reconstitute the methodological and theoretical foundations on which rest, ultimately, the *phänomenologische Aufweisung*—in the Heideggerian sense of a "démonstration phénoménologique" and a "mise en lumière"—of the internal incoherence of the ontological presuppositions of monism, as constitutes the *pars destruens* of this foundational work of Henry's phenomenology.

## Phenomenality and Finitude: Michel Henry's Theory of Immanence

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Why, in my philosophy of the originary *Wie*, is there still a need for a phenomenological problematic? Why must this be 'clarified'? In Heidegger, Being conceals itself (as a result of the connection between finitude and transcendence). In my view, as well; but [the manner of Being's] concealment is completely different.<sup>1</sup>

In the following essay,<sup>2</sup> I will examine the connection between phenomenality and finitude, a problem developed by Michel Henry in *The Essence of Manifestation*<sup>3</sup> in the context of a close dialogue with Heidegger and Kant on the theme of time and self-affection. Henry's consideration of Kant's transcendental philosophy, and of his conception of time as self-affection, appears in § 24 of *The Essence of Manifestation*, in the context of what Henry himself terms the "problématique"<sup>4</sup> of *The Essence of Manifestation* as such, the "critique of ontological monism."<sup>5</sup> It

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<sup>1</sup> Michel Henry, Ms. A 5268, "Tâche de la phénoménologie" ["The Task of Phenomenology"], Fonds d'archives Michel Henry, UCL, Louvain-la-Neuve (Belgium): "Pourquoi dans ma philosophie du *Wie* originaire existe-t-il encore [un] besoin d'un problème phénoménologique, pourquoi faut-il 'élucider'? Chez Heidegger, cela s'explique parce que [l'] être est caché (à cause [du] lien finitude-transcendance). Chez moi aussi; mais caché, il l'est tout autrement."

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<sup>3</sup> Henry, *The Essence of Manifestation*, trans. Girard Etzkorn (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1973) [Henry, *L'essence de la manifestation* (Paris: PUF, [1963] 2003)].

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, § 1 and *passim*.

<sup>5</sup> The critique of ontological monism is set out in the first two sections of the *Essence of Manifestation*—the *pars destruens* of Michel Henry's researches—the aim of which is to unmask the premises that have directed (and direct) the development of Western thought "since its origins in Greece" (*ibid.*, § 11, 74 [91]). Within the frame of 'ontological monism,' Henry gathers together

does so, then, in the context of Henry’s “interpretation of the essence of phenomenality... within the fundamental ontological presuppositions of monism,”<sup>6</sup> in which Henry situates, and develops, the decisive problem of the receptivity of transcendence. The conclusive moment of this critique is provided by Henry’s ontological interpretation of Kant, through a point-by-point “*contre-lecture*” of Heidegger’s own *Kant und das Problem der Metaphysik*.<sup>7</sup> This constitutes only a final moment (or even a “simple repetition”) of a long critical path, that was always directed to the “essential interconnection of being and human finitude,” the “*coappartenance*” that, in the wake of Heidegger, contemporary phenomenological ontology would establish between the essence of phenomenality and finitude, on the basis of the transcendence of *Dasein*. The determination of the structure of the latter, which is the true task of Henry’s ‘ontological interpretation’ of Kant, is initiated already in the first part of *L’essence de la manifestation*, which thus will be the focus of my analysis herein. My intention is to reconstitute the methodological and theoretical foundations on which rest, ultimately, the *phänomenologische Aufweisung*—in the Heideggerian sense of a “*démonstration phénoménologique*” and a “*mise en lumière*”—of the internal incoherence of the ontological presuppositions of monism, as constitutes the *pars destruens* of this foundational work of Henry’s phenomenology.

I argue that Henry’s “*contre-lecture*”<sup>8</sup> in the *The Essence of Manifestation* is based in particular on a rebuttal of Heidegger’s thesis concerning the *Zusammengehörigkeit* of phenomenality and finitude in the ground of *Dasein* as *In-der-*

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those philosophies that identify, in the constitutive transcendence of Being, “the unique direction of inquiry and of encounter where something can show itself and hence be found by us” (*ibid.*).

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, § 22, 170 [206].

<sup>7</sup> Martin Heidegger, *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*, trans. Richard Taft (Bloomington/Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1997) [Heidegger, *Kant und das Problem der Metaphysik*, in *GA III*, ed. Friedrich-Wilhelm von Herrmann (Frankfurt am Mein: Klostermann, 1991)].

<sup>8</sup> This thematic context, and thesis, has been advanced and affirmed by several scholars. See, e.g., Mario Lipsitz, “Sur Kant et le problème de la métaphysique dans *L’essence de la manifestation*,” in *Michel Henry. Les dossiers H*, eds. Jean-Marie Brohm and Jean Leclercq (Lausanne: L’Âge d’Homme, 2009), 281-90; Julia Scheidegger, “Kant-Heidegger-Henry: Geschichte und Ontologisierung,” in *Sein, Existenz, Leben: Michel Henry und Martin Heidegger*, eds. Stephan Grätzel and Frédéric Sçyler (München: Alber, 2013), 85-105. More generally, on the relation between Henry and Kant, see notably Garth W. Green, “La signification de l’auto-affection. La critique de Kant chez Michel Henry,” in *Vivre la raison. Michel Henry entre histoire des idées, philosophie transcendante et nouvelles perspectives phénoménologiques*, eds. Roberto Formisano, Fabio Grigenti, Ilaria Malaguti and Gaetano Rametta (Paris: Vrin, 2016), 125-39. See also Gabrielle Dufour-Kowalska, *L’art et la sensibilité. De Kant à Michel Henry* (Paris: Vrin, 1996); Garth W. Green, “Kant and Henry: An Inheritance of Idealism and a ‘Turn’ for Phenomenology,” *Analecta*

*Hermeneutica* 4 (2012), accessed February 27, 2016: <http://journals.library.mun.ca/ojs/index.php/analecta/article/view/711/611>; François Calori, “La vie perdue? Michel Henry lecteur de Kant,” in *Michel Henry. Les dossiers H*, 244-57 (recently republished with the same title in *Lectures de Michel Henry*, eds. Grégori Jean and Jean Leclercq [Louvain-la-Neuve: Presses universitaires de Louvain, 2014], 293-310); John Llewellyn, *The Hypocritical Imagination. Between Kant and Levinas* (London/New York: Routledge, 2000), 153-69; Michael Kelly, “Self-Awareness and Ontological Monism: Why Kant is Not an Ontological Monist,” *Idealistic Studies*, 32 (2002) 3: 237-54; Sophia Kattelmann, “Die Kantischen Hauptfragen

*Welt-sein*. The definition of *Dasein* is a central point of Heidegger's, and Henry's, ontological interpretation of Kant. The aim of my paper is to show how, and in which way, Henry reaches his own definition of *Dasein* by recalling—and reversing—Heidegger's arguments. Only by clarifying the presuppositions of Henry's definition of *Dasein*, and its structural belonging to the truth of Being, will it be possible to understand his resolution of the problem of the receptivity of transcendence, i.e., the resolution of the fallacy of ontological monism. In this context, Henry's ontological reading of Kant appears as the last step of a long critical process—to establish, in Heidegger's phrase, “the essential connection between Being as such (not a being) and finitude in human beings.”<sup>9</sup> Thus, the clarification of the presuppositions of Henry's conceptualization of self-affection will imply a repetition (*Wiederholung*) of the ‘key moments’ of this critique. To this task I now turn.

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In modern philosophy, the problem of Being is associated to a theory of knowledge. The essence of finitude, then, was commonly confused with that of receptivity, and thus related to ontic knowledge. Here ‘receptivity’ means ‘the reception of a being.’ Such ‘a being’ (*das Seiende*) represents the ‘*terminus ad quem*,’ genuine limit, ultimate boundary, and, at the same time, the *telos* of knowledge as such. In this perspective, finitude means the finitude of knowledge. The latter concerns not the self-revelation of the power of knowledge, but rather concerns, always and only, the revelation of a pre-existing (and independent) reality, independent therefrom. It is precisely this opposition between reality and knowledge that provides the content of knowledge, understood as the reception of an exterior object, offered to knowledge in or under the form of affection. Resting, uniquely and totally, on an object—insofar as it is made accessible to consciousness through sensible affections—knowledge is founded on the reception of an already existing being. Thus, as first founded on the mediation of (ontic) receptivity—which establishes its dependence and, at the same time, its insuperable passivity with respect to reality—knowledge reveals its essential finitude in its constitutive incapacity to ‘create’ its own objects.

This (ontic) comprehension of finitude is reiterated when, in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant introduces the definition of the essence of human knowledge. In defining knowledge through intuition,<sup>10</sup> Kant distinguishes divine knowledge (*intuitus originarius*) from human knowledge (*intuitus derivativus*) by means of

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und eine lebensphänomenologische Antwort darauf,” in *Wer braucht Kant heute?*, eds. Eduard Graf et al. (Dresde: TUD, 2007), 135-47.

<sup>9</sup> Heidegger, *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*, § 39, 155 [220-2].

<sup>10</sup> See, e.g., Immanuel Kant, *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, A 19, B 33. (As is customary, citations are to the A [1781] and B [1787] pagination of the *Akademie* edition) [Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. and ed. by Paul Guyer and Allen W. Wood (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1997), 155].

the “creative” capacity of the former. This difference is set out by means of a distinction between two types of objects, rather than by two different modes of intuition. Divine knowledge—“infinite” for Kant—grasps being “*im Entstand*.” Here, being becomes accessible in it—not only the object as it appears in intuition, i.e., the simple ‘result’ of its intuition, but also the origin thereof (i.e., the act through which divine knowledge makes the being accessible to itself). Thus, knowledge of being *im Entstand* is not the simple knowledge of a being as given, as a simple result of an unknown process. It is the knowledge of this process as well as its result grasped in the act of its giving. Therefore, divine knowledge—and not being—establishes the possibility of the knowledge of being and of its access to objects. Kant considers human knowledge “finite”—as exclusively *receptive*—in opposition to such a divine knowledge. Human knowledge is able to know the object only “*als Gegenstand*”: the object becomes accessible as posited in front of (*gegen*) knowledge. In this case, knowledge knows the object, but without a full comprehension of the origin of its givenness, without the manifestness or evidence of the latter. The finitude of human knowledge is thus characterized by Kant with respect to the insurmountable inaccessibility of this *noumenon*, which affords access to determinate being only *als Gegenstand* and through the *intuitus derivativus* that binds knowledge to the horizon of objective phenomena. Kant’s distinction between *Entstand* and *Gegenstand* represents an advance upon the traditional and ontic comprehension of finitude.

As the further results of the *Critique of Pure Reason* attest, human knowledge is not only receptive; it is also and at the same time capable of a certain ‘spontaneity.’ This aspect of Kant’s account is evident in Kant’s assertion that the reception of being *als Gegenstand* does not rest only in the object of knowledge. It is the subject—as transcendental—that posits, through the *a priori* pure forms of knowledge, the phenomenological conditions for the givenness of a being as an object. Although unable to grasp that being *im Entstand*, human knowledge discloses its character as ‘spontaneous’ in its capacity to determine autonomously the possibility conditions of phenomenal appearance, and thus the conditions for the reception of being as an object (*Gegenstand*). The essence of finitude is thus discovered to dwell not only in the simple reception of being as an object (*Gegenstand*), but in the unity of receptivity and spontaneity characteristic of the transcendental subject. In this context, Kant’s determination of this unity of receptivity and spontaneity configures a non-ontic comprehension of finitude; it evinces that human knowledge does not consist merely of the simple, immediate relation to a being/object, but rather in the constitution of the possibility-condition of any ontic relation whatever. In this constitution—i.e., its opening of the horizon in which a knowledge and an encounter with a being is possible—resides the ontological character of finitude. For this reason, it is possible to assert—with Henry—that finitude, in its essence, is not an ontic category, but rather a categorial determination of the Being of beings: “*finitude is... an ontological category; it*

*finds its foundation in essence, insofar as that which springs forth in the work of the latter is the finite horizon of Being.*"<sup>11</sup>

The reduction of the ontological meaning of finitude to that of the opening of the transcendental horizon of Being is one of central theses of Heidegger's 1929 interpretation of Kant. Since finitude defines the eidetic character of this opening, Heidegger states at the end of *Kantbuch* that "there is and must be something like Being where finitude has come to exist."<sup>12</sup> Reduced thus to the ecstatic opening of the transcendental horizon of Being, finitude reveals its eidetic determination in the context of the mode of phenomenalisation of being as truth (ἀλήθεια).<sup>13</sup> Being—as Heidegger's famous sentence reports—is "always the Being of a [being]."<sup>14</sup> Its phenomenalisation process is realized in such a way that, in opening the finite horizon of Being, it discloses a being as a phenomenon. But the horizon—that is, the reality that the phenomenalisation of Being constitutively entails—is what produces the very structure of human reality—what Heidegger terms the constitutive transcendence of *Dasein*. If Heidegger can state that "*ursprünglicher als der Mensch ist die Endlichkeit des Daseins in ihm*,"<sup>15</sup> it is because the determination of the ontological meaning of finitude—as an eidetic structure of the essence of phenomenality—leads to the affirmation of the essential mutual belonging of Being and *Dasein* in ontological truth.<sup>16</sup> To problematize the essential link between phenomenality and finitude, as Henry would attempt to do in *The Essence of Manifestation*, is thus to "ground" "the problem of finitude in its relation to the essence of phenomenality, to Being as such."<sup>17</sup> This implies a determination of the essence of phenomenality—namely, its mode of phenomenalisation—as an ecstatic opening of a horizon. It is for this reason that Henry's ontological *contre-lecture* of Kant cannot renounce the preliminary reconstruction and analysis of the 'monistic' concept of transcendence, the source of the range of Henry's critiques.

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<sup>11</sup> Henry, *The Essence of Manifestation*, § 22, 172-3 [210] (Emphasis in original).

<sup>12</sup> Heidegger, *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*, § 41, 160 [228].

<sup>13</sup> See Henry, *The Essence of Manifestation*, § 36, 277 [346], note 2: "Thus it is that with Heidegger— Henry writes, discussing Heidegger's conception of the transcendental relation of Being and being, on the foundation of *Dasein* transcendence—"where the ontological possibility, namely the mediation itself, truth understood in an ontological sense, is explicitly interpreted in the line of Kant as the possibility of ontic knowledge, in such a way that 'if ontological knowledge discloses the horizon, *its truth lies in letting a being be encountered within this horizon*" (Emphasis added). The internal quotation refers to Heidegger, *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*, § 25, 87 [124] (Translation modified).

<sup>14</sup> See Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (Oxford: Blackwell, 2001), § 3, 29 [Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, in *GA II*, ed. Friedrich-Wilhelm von Herrmann (Frankfurt am Mein: Klostermann, 1977), 9].

<sup>15</sup> "More original than man is the finitude of the *Dasein* in him" (Heidegger, *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*, § 41, 160 [229]; italics original).

<sup>16</sup> See Heidegger, "The Principle of Identity," in *Identity and Difference*, trans. Joan Stambaugh (New York/Evanston/London: Harper and Row, 1969), 23-41 [Heidegger, "Der Satz der Identität," in *GA XI. Identität und Differenz*, ed. Friedrich-Wilhelm von Herrmann (Frankfurt am Mein: Klostermann, 2006), 31-50, esp. 45].

<sup>17</sup> Henry, *The Essence of Manifestation*, § 15, 126 [155].

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In *The Essence of Manifestation*, Henry advances the concept of “phenomenological distance” in his first characterization of the meaning of transcendence. This concept expresses the fundamental assumption of ontological monism: the essence of phenomenality consists in ‘distanciation’ (*Ent-fernung*).<sup>18</sup> This is understood as an opening of inner visibility to that light “whereby something presents itself to us as a ‘phenomenon.’”<sup>19</sup> Assimilated in this way to the structure of the world (*Welt*),<sup>20</sup> phenomenological distance first, and essentially, defines both the possibility condition of ontic manifestation, and the mode and manner of this structure’s process of phenomenalisation. It is “the ontological power which gives us access to things, it is this access itself, an access in and through remoteness.”<sup>21</sup> Phenomenological distance prefigures, already in its first characterization, the very essence of consciousness, the phenomenalisation of the transcendental horizon of Being as existence (*Dasein*). Thus, already at the beginning of the first section of the *Essence of Manifestation*, Henry initiates the clarification, explication, and analysis of the presuppositions of ontological monism. The concepts employed in order to explain the general significance of the latter, through the concept of phenomenological distance, appear to confirm the debt, or at least the provenance, of Henry’s critique of Heidegger’s *Daseinsanalyse*. Henry does not disguise, in any case, his usage of these technical terms, or his employment of this literary style.

Henry’s formulation of the ‘monistic’ conception of transcendence begins to depart—gradually, progressively, and importantly—from the paths already traced by Heidegger’s phenomenological ontology as soon as Henry attempts to define this ‘ontological dimension of existence’ more closely. Henry’s specifications of the ontological sense of the mutual belonging of *Dasein* to Being on the ground of this distanciation of Being, as represented by the ecstatic opening of Being as phenomenal, i.e., truth (ἀλήθεια), evince this departure, and difference. Here Henry locates an *already radicalized* concept of transcendence.<sup>22</sup> Through his critique of the (not only Heideggerian) concept of transcendence, then, the ‘destruction’ of ontological monism in the *Essence of Manifestation* will bring a novel ‘liberation’ (*Freilegung*) of the invisible and immanent domain of the essence of manifestation as affectivity, as in-ecstatic pathos.

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<sup>18</sup> “*Ent-fernung*,” as Heidegger characterises the *Dasein* constitution as *In-der-Welt-sein*: see Heidegger, *Being and Time*, § 22-24 (In the English translation, see also note 2, 138).

<sup>19</sup> Henry, *The Essence of Manifestation*, § 9, 61 [75].

<sup>20</sup> “The concept of phenomenological distance—Henry writes—is not merely ‘bound’ to that of the ‘world,’ *the unfolding of this distance is, in reality, one with the arising of the world in its purity...* It is the original working of transcendence that unfolds the horizon. It is ‘remoteness,’ but understood as Heidegger does, ‘in a signification which is both active and transitive.’ [Distance is] *the ontological event which brings forth the horizon...*, it unfolds the ultimate horizon of visibility within which everything can become visible for us” (*ibid.*, § 9, 62-3 [76]).

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 63 [77].

<sup>22</sup> Transcendence is thus liberated *not only* from the pre-eminence of (the) being, but also from the factual life of consciousness.

This critique is initiated by the elaboration in § 10 of the concept of ‘alienation.’ “Being,” Henry writes, “exists only... as alienated Being.”<sup>23</sup> Again; “Being is a phenomenon only when it is at a distance from itself.”<sup>24</sup> Insofar as phenomenal, Being is submitted to the εἶδος of a phenomenological distance. In order to appear, it must—as indeed must each and every transcendent phenomenon—be posited at a distance from itself, objectify itself, make itself ‘other’ to itself. Being must exteriorise itself. But since its phenomenalisation is what makes of Being a being, this distanciation cannot be understood<sup>25</sup> as a simple ontic objectification. In this *processus* of estrangement, as constitutes the phenomenalisation of Being, “Being-estranged as such is not the being but is that which permits it to manifest itself.”<sup>26</sup> Understood ontologically, alienation here defines the ecstatic opening of the finite horizon of Being, the phenomenalisation of Being as the self-distanciation and self-exteriorization of Being, the opening of the phenomenal and ecstatic dimension of existence (*Dasein*). In this way, the ontological concept of alienation confirms, yet again, the structural belonging of existence to the truth of Being.

This constitution, once explicated in light of the eidetic determination of the structures of phenomenological distance and alienation, results in the discovery of the significance of this mutual belonging, in the affirmation of exteriority, or alterity, of existence with regard to Being.<sup>27</sup> If the phenomenalisation of Being structurally implies existence, this is because it is the self-exteriorization of Being from itself. This in turn implies that non-ontic reality, in which Being must be able to realise its own manifestation as truth, defines *eo ipso* an-‘other’ reality through its relation thereto. Being is a ‘being-alienated’ from originary Being, as the horizon configures a reality ‘external’ to it.<sup>28</sup> For the same eidetic reasons that existence—as an ecstatic opening, a self-distanciation of Being from itself—belongs constitutively to the manifestation of Being, understood in light of phenomenological distance, the finite horizon of Being itself appears as ‘other,’ as ‘distinct’ from Being in itself, because ‘exterior’ to it. According to Henry, the phenomenal becoming of Being implies, in the end, a “splitting of Being,”<sup>29</sup> a sort of ‘doubling,’ or internal differentiation in ontological phenomenalisation, between the constitutive movement of the exteriorization of Being and the effective reality produced by it. This splitting of Being is thus an “insurmountable”<sup>30</sup> eidetic determination of the essence of phenomenality. This

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<sup>23</sup> Henry, *The Essence of Manifestation*, § 10, 71 [88].

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 66 [81].

<sup>25</sup> As is typical, according to Henry, for the modern philosophy of consciousness: see *ibid.*, § 14.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, § 15, 124 [153].

<sup>27</sup> In this perspective, see Henry’s analyses in *ibid.*, § 31, 237 ff [294 ff].

<sup>28</sup> “It is in the form of a horizon that the essence manifests itself to itself. The identity of the essence and its content [i.e., the transcendental horizon of Being projected by essence] is an identity-in-difference if the milieu of exteriority is also that of a radical otherness. If it is the essence which manifests itself to itself, it always manifests itself as other than itself, as the very thing which is other” (*ibid.*, § 15, 238-9 [295]).

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, § 10, 71 [87].

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*

“dualism of Being,” Henry writes “[...] belongs to the very definition of the internal structure of phenomenality and appears in this way as a prescription of the eidetic order, as an absolutely universal condition, identical to the essence of manifestation as such.”<sup>31</sup>

The insurmountable alienation of Being means that no ‘synthesis’ (and so no knowledge or experience), established on the basis of its opening, can solve this constitutive hiatus. Henry writes that “alienation is not merely one eidetic structure among others, it is the very structure of essence insofar as it is absolute essence.” Indeed, “*the suppression of alienation is an impossibility of the eidetic order, and the idea of such a suppression constitutes an absurdity from the ontological point of view.*”<sup>32</sup> It is not by chance, then, that Henry, in order to clarify the meaning of the alienation of Being, elects to refer to Fichte. He refers especially, however, to his 1806 *Religionslehre*, entitled *Die Anweisung zum seligen Leben*.<sup>33</sup> “Fichte’s commentary on the beginning of the Gospel of John—he writes—“is located in this perspective,” and even “serves as a repetition of the ontological presuppositions” established already by Henry.<sup>34</sup> Henry finds in Fichte the same explication of the ontological meaning of the alienation of Being, reading his interpretation of God as *Verbum*.<sup>35</sup>

It is not correct to continue to distinguish, in God, Being and existence... because existence is the Being of Being and –for this very reason– because existence is the Being of this Being; this Divine Being is posited outside of it as a Being outside of its Being. *The unity of Being and existence has as its consequent the division of Being, its auto-separation from itself and, as Fichte says, “its expulsion outside itself.”* That which in the Being of God is exterior to him... is not at all something which in reality is foreign to the Being of God; it is the Being of God himself precisely insofar as he is, namely insofar as he exists.<sup>36</sup>

According to Fichte, and according to the phenomenological reading given by Henry, the unity of Being and existence in God is not a simple identity, but rather an internal difference, figured as, and through, a phenomenological distance. Founded on the same exteriorization of Being, this difference between Being and existence is also and no less the form of their unity. This form of unity is the transcendence of Being, its alienation.

This understanding of unity and difference, or unity in difference and as the ground thereof, is recognised by Fichte as a specific mode of Being’s existence.

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<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 68 [83].

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 71 [88] (Emphasis in original).

<sup>33</sup> Johann Gottlieb Fichte, *The Way Toward the Blessed Life; or, The Doctrine of Religion*, in *The Popular Words of Johann Gottlieb Fichte*, 2 vols., trans. William Smith (Bristol: Thoemmes Press, 1999), vol. II, 289-496 [Fichte, *Die Anweisung zum seligen Leben oder auch die Religionslehre*, in *Fichtes Werke*, vol. V, ed. I.H. Fichte (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1971), 397-580].

<sup>34</sup> Henry, *The Essence of Manifestation*, § 10, 68-9 [84].

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 68-70 [84-6].

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 69-70 [85-6] (Emphasis added).

This is for him a religious understanding<sup>37</sup> of their co-implication. Although distinct from a properly scientific understanding (i.e., from philosophy), religion is already, for Fichte, a determinate mode of ontological understanding. As the determination of God's essence from a religious point of view evinces, this understanding affirms and conforms to the meaning of externalization as an eidetic structure of the phenomenalisation of Being. Thus, the religious characterization of existence (*Dasein*) is explained as an "image of Being... that which is designated under the title of image is nothing other, as far as Being is concerned, than its own exteriority in relation to itself."<sup>38</sup> Henry once again highlights that "the 'image' is the name of existence considered as a manifestation of Being."<sup>39</sup> It is Being contracted to a self-distance, Being posited 'in front of' (*vor-gestellt*) itself, the projection of the milieu of visibility, from which emerges the representation of Being. Since it is only the projection (*Vor-stellung*) of Being as such, the non-ontic representation of the horizon of light in and by which all manifestation becomes possible, existence is as such, in its ontological structure, the representation thereof. What Henry terms "the representation of Being"<sup>40</sup> is, in this perspective, what Fichte understands as constituting existence, and what he conceives as "Being outside its Being."<sup>41</sup> This is the manifestation of Being itself, its originary opening. The representation of Being is itself the alienation of Being, its pure exteriorisation. Being-alienated constitutes the very manifestation of Being as transcendence. This is the ontological structure of *Dasein*.

The ontological structure of existence (*Dasein*) is the representation of Being, just as the representation of Being is the ontological structure of existence. Although the representation of Being constitutes the ontological structure of existence, it is not an operation of consciousness, or an operation of the finite existence of humanity as *Dasein*. Actually, the representation of Being is not a representation in the ordinary sense of the term. In fact, this representation cannot be—not only because Being never gives itself to knowledge as an object, or as a correlate of a vision, but also because this representation designates neither a determinate act of conscience, nor a phenomenological reality of a factual life. Representation—as that which makes possible the determinate life and flow of consciousness—belongs to the exteriorization of Being, and to its structure. If, however, representation is linked—even in its ontological determination—to existence, this is because, as a distancing and self-projection of Being, representation defines the event in and through which consciousness is constituted, in its essence, as a horizon and as a non-ontic reality, an opening to the comprehension of Being. As a structure of existence, however, the representation of Being does not at all consist of the manifestation of Being to consciousness. To this kind of manifestation, indeed, representation must be opposed, as a condition is opposed to a conditioned. In its ontological signification, representation

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<sup>37</sup> See Fichte, *The Way Toward the Blessed Life*, vol. II, 374 ff [470 ff].

<sup>38</sup> Henry, *The Essence of Manifestation*, § 10, 67 [83].

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>40</sup> See *ibid.*, § 18, 144 [175].

<sup>41</sup> See Fichte, *The Way Toward the Blessed Life*, 340 [440].

designates the *absolute* character of the manifestation of Being, insofar as *it appears to itself* in the form of an originary exteriorization. The comprehension of the absolute character of the representation of Being evinces the reason why Henry defines the character of ontological alienation as “insurmountable.” For the representation in which Being achieves its manifestation is so little consequent upon a determined act of consciousness that it rather determines the structure of the latter, and accomplishes the conditions in terms of which consciousness can direct itself to, and represent, objects—in and by means of the horizon of visibility that it itself is *qua* ecstatic opening.

The decisive implication of this distinction lies in the fact that every endeavour to establish, on the basis of the power of understanding and its transcendence, the possibility of a ‘re-composition’ of the fundamental division between Being and existence (as in Hegel’s philosophy, or in Heidegger’s more ‘open’ philosophy, according to which hermeneutic phenomenology considers the facticity and the concrete being-in-the-world of *Dasein* a constitutive moment of its unveiling) is illegitimate. In this situation, no *Umkehrung* of consciousness (not even that privileged reversal by which it distances itself from the care for beings in favour of the pure truth of Being, of the ontological structure of exteriorization itself) could realise the representation of Being, since phenomenalisation is what makes possible this *Umkehrung* itself.<sup>42</sup> Therefore, for Henry, the complete comprehension of the Being of a being obtained through *Dasein*—even the most rigorous and coherent—“is a determined mode of the life of consciousness.” This “has nothing to do with... existence... in its universal essence”<sup>43</sup> or with “the self-manifestation of Being” as such, with its originary exteriorisation. As was clear already in the context of Henry’s understanding of Fichte, the representation of Being defines the structure of the alienation of Being, the structure of its manifestation as an exteriorisation, the re-presentation (*Vorstellung*) of Being, its horizontal objectification, its movement of ecstatic opening. Arising neither from

a determinate act of consciousness, nor from a determinate mode of being-in-the-world, representation is the facticity of Being, understood phenomenologically. Actually, understood as a subjective genitive, “the representation of Being” defines the characteristic mode of Being’s phenomenalisation as transcendence. In conformity with the sense of phenomenological distance elaborated above, what the manifestation of Being necessarily finds in its realization as representation (a *Vorstellung*, a ‘projection’ of the absolute in the form of originary exteriorization,

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<sup>42</sup> See Henry, Ms. A 3238: “Existence [de l’être:] non plus être en extériorité, mais ce qui ne saurait être dépassé. Ne pouvant se dépasser, ne peut non plus revenir sur soi, se poser, se déduire, se comprendre. Impossibilité de se dépasser est celle de l’origine de l’être immanent. Existence qui, liée à elle-même, peut se dépasser est indépendant à l’égard de ce qui se produit dans le dépassement, i.e., l’existence dans l’extériorité, [la] représentation de soi, [le] concept.” [The existence [of Being] is no more a Being in exteriority, but is that which can not be exceeded. It is unable to exceed itself. Nor it can come back on itself, posit itself, deduce itself, understand itself. This impossibility of its exceeding itself is the origin of immanent being. The existence that, bound to itself, can exceed itself, is independent in relation to that which is produced in this exceeding, i.e., existence in exteriority, [the] representation of itself, [the] concept.—*Trans.*]

<sup>43</sup> Henry, *The Essence of Manifestation*, § 18, 144 [174].

the objectification of the horizon) is, therefore, existence. This latter term, though, is to be taken advisedly, as “existence as it is in itself and not as one understands it.”<sup>44</sup>

This “existence such as it is in itself” is the self-manifestation of Being; it is the result of the latter, and of its self-exteriorization. The exteriorization of Being is what constitutes the ontological structure of existence, understood in the eminent sense of the representation of Being. Such a structure is defined as ‘ontological’ because, insofar as it is entailed by the truth of Being, as an ecstatic opening of the horizon, this structure pertains constitutively to this mode of phenomenalisation, to this exteriorization of Being and to its originary alienation. Being is as alienated-Being; its ‘image.’ As such, existence is considered “in itself,” independently of the modes of understanding that, in and by the world, *Dasein* can realize in its facticity with regard to the being of beings, and therefore with regard to its own being. Thus, every mode of *Umkehrung*, the “attending to Being” and “not attending to Being,”—to recall expressions Henry borrowed from Heidegger’s reading of Hegel in the *Holzwege*<sup>45</sup>—designate only the determinate modes of the life of consciousness.<sup>46</sup> These indicate being only insofar as represented within factual life, and not insofar as a direct representation of Being in itself, its own effective realization of its originary exteriorisation. This implies the non-belonging of the factual life of existence to the phenomenal becoming of being.

This opposition between the ontological representation of Being and those representations of Being that existence gives itself in the light of the world establishes a clear opposition between the ontological structure of *Dasein* and its factual life, its effective being-in-the-world. The significance of this opposition is that of a reduction—a delimitation of the appurtenance of existence in the exteriorization of Being to that single existence ‘as it is in itself,’ i.e., its ontological structure. The implication of existence, in and through the originary exteriorization of Being, concerns only the structuration of the opening of the world. This opposition forbids, then, conceiving the concrete life of existence and its manner of “attending to Being” or “not attending to Being” as directly linked to, or as part of, the phenomenal becoming of Being. For this reason, after having depicted “attending to Being” or “not attending to Being” as “*existentiell determinations*,”<sup>47</sup> Henry explicitly states that “the *existentiell determinations* are inessential.”<sup>48</sup> Indeed, the inessential character of the ‘*existentiell determinations*’ is referred to the process of the effective realization of the essence of phenomenality, as transcendence. As determined modes of the factual life of existence, the possibilities characteristic of factual existence—however well-grounded with

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<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, § 19, 153 [186]. Also see *ibid.*, § 37, 289 [360].

<sup>45</sup> See Heidegger, “Hegel’s Concept of Experience,” in *Off the Beaten Track*, trans. Julian Young and Kenneth Haynes, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 86-156 [Heidegger, “Hegels Begriff der Erfahrung,” in *GA V. Holzwege*, ed. Friedrich-Wilhelm von Herrmann (Frankfurt am Mein: Klostermann, 1977), 115-208].

<sup>46</sup> See Henry, *The Essence of Manifestation*, § 18, 146-51 [177-83].

<sup>47</sup> See *ibid.*, 148 [179].

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*

respect to derivative modes of being in the world—produce nothing with respect to the phenomenal becoming of Being, i.e., to the effectual realization of ontological representation.

When Michel Henry states that “all existentiell understanding in general presupposes existence itself,”<sup>49</sup> he is claiming that existentiell determinations are derived modes of existence, with respect to the originary exteriorization of Being. To ‘presuppose’ existence here means; to find, in its ontological structure, in “*the original manifestation of Being to itself*”<sup>50</sup> as an ecstatic opening of a horizon, its own, proper foundation. Indeed, the “*existentiell understanding finds its foundation in the ontological understanding of Being.*”<sup>51</sup> Though identified with the structure of *Dasein*, a genuinely ontological understanding is opposed to the existentiell understanding. In the same way, an opposition is established between the determination of the ontological meaning of the Being of existence as representation, and the ecstatic character of its opening and its facticity. Although established on the basis of an ontological understanding—i.e., on the exteriorization of Being as that in which existence finds as always already deployed the structure in terms of which its factual life is only a derived mode—the existentiell understanding is opposed to its own foundation because of its external relation to the phenomenal becoming of essence that makes it possible, as a function of its non-appurtenance to the phenomenalization of its phenomenality.

This opposition between ontological understanding and existential understanding is explicit in § 18:

*The ontological understanding of Being is radically independent with regard to every existentiell understanding. Whether or not the existentiell self-understanding of existence be... an ‘authentic’ or ‘inauthentic’ mode of existence changes nothing of the original nature of existence or of the ontological understanding of Being in its universal structure. The radical independence of ontological understanding with regard to every existentiell self-understanding of existence leads us to establish an absolute opposition between that which existence is in itself and the manner whereby this existence... understands itself.”*<sup>52</sup>

This affirmation of the independence of ontological understanding and existentiell understanding, then, has the sense of a phenomenological reduction, which limits the mutual appurtenance of *Dasein* with the effective phenomenalisation of Being as transcendence, the structure of *Erschlossenheit*, and *Dasein*’s ecstatic opening. Correlatively, this also implies the exclusion of *Dasein*’s factual life from the effective becoming of the essence of phenomenality. Indeed, within the fundamental ontological problem-context of *The Essence of Manifestation*, *Dasein*, in its being-in-the-world, does not contribute to the phenomenal becoming

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<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 150 [182].

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, 151 [183] (Emphasis in original).

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.* (Emphasis in original).

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.* [184] (Emphasis in original).

of Being because of its existence, strictly speaking, as a function of its mere existence, its merely being-there. Instead, *Dasein* contributes only as a ‘simple image.’ In this way, and finally, Henry’s affirmation that, the way through which existence, whether authentic or inauthentic, can factually understand itself, “changes nothing of the original nature of existence,”<sup>53</sup> is justified. With regard to the premises of ontological monism—as depicted above—it is most definitely not through a determined mode of *Dasein*’s being (in the world) that the ontological comprehension of Being is revealed. According to the insurmountable character of the alienation of Being, no mode of comprehension that existence can employ, in the light of the world and on the basis thereof, would be able to either accomplish or even modify any relation to the ground that connects existence to the truth of Being. Existentiell understanding can accomplish nothing with regard to its foundation, as its power of understanding is extraneous to the essence of phenomenality and its phenomenal becoming. In the [existentiell] realization of this power is included—only, exclusively—the ontological structure of *Dasein* as the ‘representation’ (*Vor-stellung*) of Being.

In the thematic context of the *Essence of Manifestation*, the ontological understanding of *Dasein* designates existence ‘as it is in itself,’ the opening of the pure transcendental horizon of Being. This is opposed to the ‘manner that existence understands itself,’ as above. Existence is only the ‘structure’ of *Dasein*, an abstraction from its factual life. In the terms of *Sein und Zeit*, this would define *Dasein* solely through its character as a project (*Entwurf*). In this context, the *Erschlossenheit* constitutive of Heidegger’s *Dasein* appears in effect disjunct from the other structures that constitute the totality of the *In-der-Welt-sein*—e.g., the *In-sein*, the *Sein-bei*, the *Verfallen* etc. These, then, would fall, from a strictly ontological point of view, into the ‘inessential determinations.’ It is for this reason that Henry can rebut Heidegger’s preliminary determination of *Dasein* as ‘a being.’ He can complete this critique definitively<sup>54</sup> because he preserves only the ontological and ecstatic ‘opening’ characteristic of Heidegger’s *Dasein*.

Reduced to the moments of overcoming and opening—and thus freed from every ‘implication’ in the world—the ontological Being of *Dasein* that emerges from Henry’s analysis is no longer identifiable with its innerworldly determinations, with its *In-der-Welt-sein*. This fact attests to a clear counterpoint to Heidegger, even before the accomplishment of the critique of ontological monism. Henry’s conceptualization of the structure of *Dasein*, as opposed to its factual life, evinces a problematisation of the unity characteristic of *Sorge*—in the sense of a *Sich-vorweg-schon-sein-in-der-Welt als Sein-bei (innerweltlich belegendem Seienden)*.<sup>55</sup> This further implies the problematisation of the unity

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<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>54</sup> Henry’s critique of Heidegger, at the beginning of § 12, begins with the question: “Why cannot *Dasein* be grasped in the purity of its radical ontological meaning as the very essence of transcendence?” Henry answers; “Because the Being of the latter is *inevitably understood upon the foundation of that which is adventitious to it*” (Henry, *The Essence of Manifestation*, § 12, 97 [119]; emphasis added).

<sup>55</sup> See Heidegger, *Being and Time*, § 41.

of temporality as proposed by Heidegger, as *Gleichursprünglichkeit*—constituted of future, past and present—and as that on which the *Zusammengehörigkeit* of Being, and understanding of *Dasein*, is possible. On one hand, the opposition between existence ‘as it is in itself’ and ‘as it understands itself,’ and that between ontological understanding and existentiell understanding, anticipate the idea of an internal differentiation and a ‘doubling’ of temporality (in the sense of an opposition between the temporality of Being and the temporality of a derivative Being-in-the-world).<sup>56</sup> On the other hand, from a methodological point of view, these oppositions, in conformity with the phenomenological distance and its related terms, problematize the very possibility of phenomenology, such as, e.g., Heidegger’s phenomenological ontology.

The division between the original exteriorization of Being and *Dasein*’s factual modes of understanding, on the basis of its being-in-the-world, implies a final characteristic: *an interdiction upon every hermeneutical ontology, upon all hermeneutical access to Being*. Thus, the way in which existence can understand its proper being can itself have nothing to do with the genuine phenomenalisation of Being and its effective realization. The dynamics of *Faktizität* (and the structure of the *In-der-Welt-sein* that grounds them) cannot pertain to the phenomenalisation of Being. For these reasons, it follows that—in spite of the indications of *Sein und Zeit*—it is not the analysis of a determined mode of being, and a particular comprehension of *Dasein*, that provides for phenomenology the μέθοδος, “a way of legitimizing access”<sup>57</sup> toward the determination of the internal structure of originary phenomenality, considered as it is in itself. Independently of all that unfolds within the world, access to Being can be sought only in the ontological sphere of its appearance—sought not on the basis of an analysis of the conditions of its possibility, but directly from the mode of its phenomenalisation (which mode constitutes, as we have seen, the being of *Dasein* as well). If—in clear opposition to Heidegger, and in accordance with the ontological presuppositions of monism— this access must be thought in an inter-determination with Being, it is by means of a new, general determination of the ontological significance of finitude that this μέθοδος must now be sought.

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Once the ontological structure of *Dasein* is reduced to the ecstatic opening of the world, once the correlative structures of *In-sein* and *Sein-bei* as characterise *Sorge* and constitute *In-der-Welt-sein* are bracketed, and once the factual existence of *Dasein* is left outside the domain of ontological analysis, we can return to, and comprehend, Henry’s ontological reading of Kant. The analysis of the link between finitude and receptivity in Kant—first expressed in conformity with tradition through the opposition between the *intuitus originarius* and the *intuitus*

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<sup>56</sup> This is precisely Henry’s ‘*contre-lecteur*’ of the ontological interpretation of Kant’s transcendental philosophy, as indicated above.

<sup>57</sup> See Heidegger, *Being and Time*, § 7/c.

*derivativus*—evinced “the inessential character of Kantian distinction between *Entstand* and *Gegenstand*.”<sup>58</sup> The opposition between an intuition able to create its own objects of knowledge, and an intuition subjected to a receptivity the origin of which is unknown, allowed Kant to legitimate, and to clarify, the finitude of human knowledge. Nonetheless, as Henry suggests, “the true problem is not of knowing whether or not a being precedes the power of knowledge; the problem is one of understanding how this being, whether knowledge creates it or not, can be manifest in it.”<sup>59</sup>

The problem concerns our *mode of access* to beings. However, in its ontological meaning, the manner in which beings are given to us obtains, more originally than in the case of our mere receptivity, in the ecstatic opening of the horizon. Thus, for Henry, Kant’s opposition between *Entstand* and *Gegenstand* is ‘inessential’ because, in the end, it is only a determination of two distinct modes of objective reception. This opposition fails to capture the essence of finitude, that phenomenalisation through which the perception of being as an object (*Gegenstand*) is first possible. The (monistic) reduction of the essence of phenomenality to transcendence confirmed the determination of finitude, in its non-ontic meaning, as constituting an element internal to the phenomenal becoming of essence.<sup>60</sup> Henry writes; “finitude has an ontological meaning. It deals with the internal structure of the original and pure essence of phenomenality insofar as this essence realizes itself only in the process whereby it objectifies itself under the form of a finite horizon.”<sup>61</sup>

Finitude belongs to the essence of phenomenality as that in which this essence finds its effective phenomenological realization. This can be considered independently of those realities, the accomplishment of which represents a final phenomenological condition. However, as the analysis of the opposition between the ontological understanding and the existentiell understanding evinced, this independence of Being from those realities made possible by its exteriorizations is not restricted to the single transcendental relation to a being. It also involves its foundational relation to the concrete life of *Dasein*. In the subtraction of all factual elements from the mode of realization of transcendence, the general conditions required for the resolution of the crucial *Fragestellung*, concerning the receptivity of the transcendence of Being, emerge clearly. Henry’s ontological reading of Kant constitutes the development of these premises.

The bracketing of the phenomenological dimensions established in and by the exteriorisation of Being allows the *Essence of Manifestation* to pose, and then to legitimate, the autonomy of transcendence, or what Henry termed the *Selbständigkeit* of essence. Considered independently of every ontic or existential element, Being must thus show itself in its self-effectuation, without any element foreign to its originary exteriorization, its effective realization. Thus;

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<sup>58</sup> Henry, *The Essence of Manifestation*, § 22, 172 [210].

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>60</sup> See *ibid.*, 173 [211]: “As long as this essence is interpreted as that of transcendence, the pure effective phenomenality which it promotes must as such be finite.”

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, § 15, 127 [156].

If, as has been shown, the phenomenal becoming of the pure essence of phenomenality resides in the manifestation of the horizon, the question of the internal possibility of this becoming, which confers upon essence its reality, is concentrated in the problem of receptivity. The answer to this problem alone will make the *Selbständigkeit* of the essence comprehensible.<sup>62</sup>

But how is the meaning of this ‘ontological receptivity’ to be understood? Henry emphasizes that “the answer to the question of the possibility of the receptivity of Being first orients itself toward the precise delimitation of the nature of the reality to be received.”<sup>63</sup> Thus, the exclusion of the facticity of *Dasein* from the thematic context of the phenomenalisation of Being implies the exclusion of every mode of existentiell understanding (i.e., every mode of understanding that *Dasein* can realize from within the horizon constituting its own structure, and so in the light of the world) from ontological receptivity. The issue here recalls the distinction between what is legitimately ‘ontological’ and what is not, as considered above.<sup>64</sup> The opposition between ontological understanding and existentiell understanding (on the basis of their unity and foundational relation, interpreted in accordance with the εἶδος of transcendence) leads Henry to identify receptivity, as ensures the effective realization of Being, with the reception of the finite horizon of Being, considered independently of what this realization makes possible.

According to the ontological reading of Kant’s philosophy, the deployment of the possibility-conditions for ontic manifestation, i.e., the ecstatic opening of the transcendental horizon of Being, is effected by means of the unity of the spontaneity of understanding and the receptivity of sensibility. The fulfilment of this “original unity of receptivity and spontaneity,”<sup>65</sup> characteristic of the faculties of theoretical knowledge, situates the specific character of transcendental imagination, which not only opens the horizon, so as to form the exteriorization of transcendence, but also and at the same time must secure the receptivity thereof. In Kant, the imagination (as a *facultas imaginandi*, the power to represent objects even “without the presence of the object”<sup>66</sup>) pertains to the faculty of intuition.<sup>67</sup> The receptive power of the imagination must be understood as *intuitive*, not as is sensibility and its empirical intuition (as always an intuition of a determinate content), but as is pure intuition (as non-empirical, non-objective and thus non-ontic). Pure intuition is not the reception of a being *per se*; it is rather the condition for the possibility of the reception of any ontic manifestation, the receptivity of the pure form, empty of specific content, that is produced through

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<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, § 22, 170 [207-8].

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, § 23, 174 [213].

<sup>64</sup> See *ibid.*, § 15, 122 [150].

<sup>65</sup> Heidegger, *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*, § 29, 107 [153].

<sup>66</sup> Kant, “Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View,” trans. Robert B. Louden, in *Anthropology, History, and Education*, eds. Günter Zöller and Robert B. Louden (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 278 [Kant, *Anthropologie im pragmatischen Hinsicht*, in *Kant’s gesammelte Schriften*, Akademie-Ausgabe (Berlin: Reimer, 1917), vol. VII, § 28, 167].

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*

the ontological synthesis of the higher faculties of *a priori* pure forms, i.e., sensibility and understanding.

For Heidegger, in the context of his ontological interpretation of the problem of the schematism in Kant, the reception that results from the work of the imagination is explained as a *Versinnlichung* of the transcendental horizon of Being. Heidegger notes that “in order that a being offer itself as such, the horizon in which its encounter could be effected must manifest itself... If the horizon is to fulfil its function, this form must offer a certain perceptibility (*Vernehmbarkeit*). We term ‘perceptible’ that which is susceptible to being received, immediately, in and by pure intuition.”<sup>68</sup> We first and for our part must pose the question of how an ‘immediate’ intuition can produce itself on a non-ontic level, given that intuition presupposes a mediation that consists essentially in an ecstatic opening of the phenomenological domain of exteriority. How can the possibility of an intuition ‘before’ the effectual phenomenological accomplishment of this opening be justified?

It is true that, understood as exceeding the accomplishment of this ecstatic opening, this ‘immediate intuition’ of the transcendental horizon of Being does not correspond completely to Heidegger’s thesis. The pure intuition of the horizon in Heidegger does not happen before the fulfilment of the ecstatic opening, but with it, and at the same time. Heidegger writes that this reception of pure intuition “is *in itself* a formative act of self-giving, of that which gives itself.”<sup>69</sup> If, therefore, the manifestation of the pure horizon of Being must consist—as the ontological interpretation of Kant’s schematism requires—in a ‘making sensible’ of the horizon of transcendence itself, the problem—“the true problem”<sup>70</sup> for Michel Henry—is to understand how the fact that the formative act of opening the horizon can constitute, at the same time, its own receptivity as a form of intuition.

Effectively, intuition—not only sensible intuition, as a reception of objects, but intuition in general—always defines a mode of receptivity, according to which the preliminary opening of exteriority, and difference, positions an essential presupposition. On the one hand, in Heidegger, intuition presupposes this ecstatic opening. The phenomenalisation of the pure form of exteriority makes possible the reception of an object through affection, as given in and through this exteriority, and as the reception of something ‘other’ and ‘exterior’ because provided from within this exteriority, and within the non-objective form of a horizon. Intuition, however, also presupposes the ecstatic opening, in the same way and sense that *Dasein* does, with regard to ontological truth,<sup>71</sup> as intuition requires this pure exteriorization, in order to constitute the essence of phenomenality.

In order that an intuition be constituted, a sphere of exteriority must already and as such obtain. Intuition presupposes transcendence, as the foundation of the process of phenomenalisation. As Henry affirms; “intuition finds its

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<sup>68</sup> Heidegger, *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*, § 19, 60 [90]; Trans. modified. See also Henry *The Essence of Manifestation*, § 23, 177 [216].

<sup>69</sup> Heidegger, *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*, § 28, 99 [141] (Emphasis in original).

<sup>70</sup> Henry, *The Essence of Manifestation*, § 23, 182 [222].

<sup>71</sup> See Heidegger, *Being and Time*, § 44/c.

foundation in transcendence.”<sup>72</sup> However, in the context of a definition of principles that is developed in opposition to those elaborated by Heidegger’s ontology, the phrase “to presume transcendence” clearly cannot be understood in the ontological-existential perspective of Heidegger’s *Sein und Zeit* (§ 44). Henry’s analysis establishes how intuition presumes the phenomenalisation of the horizon as what makes its receptivity possible. But the fact that intuition presupposes the opening of the horizon implies that it is not in intuition that phenomenalisation realizes the effectual fulfilment of its transcendental condition.<sup>73</sup>

On the contrary, and as the eidetic analysis of transcendence in the clarification of the presuppositions of ontological monism showed, every foundation established in and through transcendence functions in such a way that what is established in this transcendence cannot contribute to the phenomenal becoming of essence, as a result of ‘insurmountable’ eidetic motives. To the degree that the essence of intuition lies in transcendence, defined as the process by which the originary essence of phenomenality posits itself in its self-exteriorization in the form of a horizon—intuition cannot be asked to secure the effectual realization of its own ground. Heidegger’s thesis that transcendence “must itself be able to make the horizon intuited”<sup>74</sup> is rejected by Michel Henry, as a result of his decisive determination of the εἶδος of transcendence. This determination forbids any attempt to establish a ‘circular’ interdependence between foundation and reality, and the powers established in it.

As a pure ontological determination, transcendence must be able to provide from out of itself, autonomously, the first principles of its own manifestation. Not only must transcendence show itself to possess an account of its relation to its own ground, it must also *effectively be* its own ground, i.e., Being in its concrete effectuation. It must be this independently of the effects of its phenomenalisation process, within the sphere of exteriority, difference, and alienation. For if transcendence cannot find its effective fulfilment in an intuition (ontic or otherwise), it is, according to Henry, because “at the moment when intuition, which is interpreted as finding its foundation in this objectification [i.e., the ecstatic opening of the finite horizon of Being], intervenes in order to render this objectification possible, the thing conditioned paradoxically presents itself as the condition of the condition.”<sup>75</sup> It is for this reason that the basic problematic of *The Essence of Manifestation*—the clarification of the essence of phenomenality according to the ontological presuppositions of monism—“the circular character of the problem of schematism” must be overcome.<sup>76</sup> The overcoming of this circularity, its destruction, is required by the εἶδος of transcendence itself, in order to ‘free’ (*freilegen*) its phenomenological essence.

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<sup>72</sup> Henry, *The Essence of Manifestation*, § 23, 178 [217].

<sup>73</sup> See *ibid.*, § 35, 269 ff [335 ff] (Translation modified).

<sup>74</sup> Heidegger, *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*, § 19, 63 [91].

<sup>75</sup> Henry, *The Essence of Manifestation*, § 23, 179 [218].

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, § 23, 185 [226].

This surpassing of the ontological interpretation of the schematism implies a critique of the thesis elaborated by Heidegger in his reception of Kant. This thesis is that time, understood as “self-affection,” legitimates the *Versinnlichung* by providing the principle for the receptivity constitutive of the phenomenalisation of transcendence as an ecstatic opening of the transcendental horizon of being. In § 24 of *The Essence of Manifestation*, Henry advances this reinterpretation of the ontological reading of Kant by introducing a doubled distinction. The first begins from the two-fold meaning of self-affection. In one sense, ‘self-affection’ proposes an ‘affection by self,’ which indicates the mediation within the process of affection, while the second begins from an ‘affection of self,’ which indicates the object of affection. To this distinction, Henry establishes a correlative distinction within the concept of time. Time is considered as ‘that which affects (*affection par soi*),’ and as ‘that which is affected’ (*affection de soi*). Time, Henry suggests, “first designates self-affection (*par soi*). Insofar as it designates self-affection, the self-affection of time means that it is time itself that affects itself... It is time itself,

under the form of the pure horizon of Being.”<sup>77</sup> Within the ontological interpretation of the schematism, and as self-affection, time simultaneously both effects, and is subjected to, affection. As imagination and inner sense, time is what, in the unity of spontaneity and receptivity, opens ecstatically the transcendental horizon of Being. That which is received, from within the receptivity of the horizon, as auto-affection, is time itself.

On the basis of this distinction, Henry defines ‘pure time’ as the activity of imagination; “the horizon of succession originally formed by the pure determinations of future, past, and present,”<sup>78</sup> the “pure imaginative power which unfolds the transcendental horizon of Being”<sup>79</sup>—thus, time as inner sense. Regarding pure time, however, Henry underlines that it “*is not real time*.”<sup>80</sup> Pure time, indeed, “has in itself no reality because by itself it neither forms itself nor manifests itself.”<sup>81</sup> This lack of reality, characteristic of pure time, reveals that, as inner sense—qua *forming* activity and *not* as receptive—pure time cannot assure reception of the transcendental horizon that is produced. For this reason, Henry specifies, within his determination of pure time, its realization—the affection *by* self—in what he terms “original time.”<sup>82</sup>

In the context of the ontological interpretation of *Versinnlichung* of the transcendental and finite horizon of Being, this ‘original time’ corresponds to the mode of realization of transcendence. This temporality is charged with receiving

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<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, § 24, 187 [229].

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, 191 [234].

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, 190 [232].

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, 191 [234].

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>82</sup> “That which objectifies transcendence is the horizon of pure time. That which makes transcendence possible by assuring the reception of that which it develops, namely, pure time itself, is original time” (*ibid.*).

the product of exteriorization, as effected by the imaginative power of pure time. As Henry writes; “the affection by self of time, which signifies the opening by original time of the horizon of pure time, is possible only insofar as this horizon is received by original time itself, that is, affects it.”<sup>83</sup> This distinction between pure time and original time is a repetition, a *Wiederholung*, of the distinction within the internal structure of the imagination, between its power of spontaneity and its power of intuition. Henry confirms this, in affirming the necessity of giving “a precise phenomenological meaning”<sup>84</sup> to the double nature of ecstatic temporality, too.

If the distinction between that which affects and that which is affected within the activity of transcendental imagination remains undeveloped in Heidegger, it is because these two characteristics of transcendental consciousness share the common character of temporality. Time assures the identity of these two action modes of affectivity, and so the unitary character of self-affection. For Henry, though, this distinction between pure time and original time does not constitute a merely conceptual or formal difference; its sense is not the designation of the same reality by different terms. On the contrary, the duplicity of time corresponds to the existence of two different phenomenological domains. It is thus a concrete distinction that concerns the effective reality of essence.

Pure time is distinguished from original time; the first yields time qua imagination, as spontaneous and active, while the second yields *intuition*, as always receptive. Henry clarifies this aspect of the ontological interpretation of the schematism as follows; “in time, understood as intuition, resides the possibility of the effective formation of the transcendental horizon of Being, the realization of the essence of phenomenality in the phenomenal becoming of this essence.”<sup>85</sup> Similarly, he argues that, “to the degree that time is by its nature intuition, it is possible as self-affection. What matters in the time that makes the essence of manifestation possible is not its temporal character, but its intuitive character.”<sup>86</sup> Through the distinction between pure time and original time, Henry recalls the distinction operative in the analysis of the internal structure of pure imagination, between its powers of spontaneity and intuition. At the root of this distinction lies the opposition established above between intuition and its ground, the problem of *The Essence of Manifestation* as such. Pure time is distinct from original time because the time that effects the ecstatic opening of the finite horizon of Being is itself real as long as it is received by ‘another,’ receptive time that, for properly eidetic reasons, does not and can never be pure time. If this receptive temporality, as realizes the activity of pure time, is defined as intuitive, it must receive something that is from its perspective ‘other,’ a different ‘reality’ that is yet already accomplished in its manifestation. This reality is already provided in and by the pure form of exteriority, formed through pure time and accompanies its reception.

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<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, 190-1 [233].

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, 192 [236].

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, 194-5 [239].

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, 193 [237] (Emphasis in original).

Understood in light of their constitutive functions, then, pure and original temporality evince a mutual belonging, or structural *Zusammengehörigkeit*, to the εἶδος of alienation. The danger of a comprehension of originary time in terms of a ‘monistic’ concept of transcendence leads Henry to establish the non-belonging, the exclusion, of original time from the phenomenalisation of transcendence. As intuition, indeed, original temporality pertains to the domain of, and is grounded in, transcendence. Insofar as transcendence represents that which is independent of intuition, transcendence is unable to find its effective fulfilment either in, or by, the activity of original time. For this reason, according to Henry, original time cannot play the role assigned to it by Heidegger in his analysis of the schematism. It is not, for Henry, “the time of affection, simultaneously a time which affects and a time which is affected, in such a way that this latter makes *the effective phenomenological formation of pure time possible*, viz. affection” that “constitutes the uttermost possibility of affection and, as such, that what is most essential in the essence of transcendence.”<sup>87</sup> Recalling an expression employed above, original time presupposes the ecstatic opening, as the ground on which it finds the condition for the possibility of its being and its activity. It does so in the same way that intuition presumed transcendence, understood as a process of phenomenization that is always already accomplished, achieved, independent of the modes of receptivity that might obtain therein. In the same way as did all existentielle understanding, or representation in the everyday sense of the term, so intuition (that original time is in its constitution) becomes distinct, even opposed, to the receptivity constitutive of the ontological reality that it finds, and so it becomes outside the phenomenal becoming of that reality, and therefore foreign to its phenomenal becoming.

Evidently, with this last result, Henry’s critique of ontological monism is accomplished. For if original time cannot ensure the original receptivity of essence, understood through the ‘monistic’ concept of transcendence, nor can pure time and its imaginative power resolve the indeterminacy into which ontological receptivity fell. This becomes clear as soon as all focus and effort is no longer placed exclusively upon the preservation of the ecstatic character of the essence of phenomenality as conceived in ontological monism, and as soon as the essence of phenomenality reveals itself thereby as irreducible to the constitution of such ecstatic temporality. From this theoretical moment results the inaccessibility of the ontological reality of phenomenality (insofar as this is analysed in accordance with the εἶδος of transcendence, and criticized in the first part of the *Essence of Manifestation*), and thus the failure of the monistic determination of the ‘fundamental ontological question’ (*Seinsfrage*). The exclusion of pure and original time from the internal dynamics of the process of phenomenalisation of the essence of phenomenality entails the impossibility of a μέθοδος, a legitimate way of access to the determination of the reality of this manner of manifestation, as defines the originary truth of every ecstatic opening and the only legitimate connection between phenomenality and finitude.

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<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, 193 [236] (Emphasis in original).

It is in the context of the elaboration of the ‘monistic’ concept of transcendence that Henry is able to contest the very conditions for any (onto-) phenomeno-logical hermeneutics, and to find for the first time the theoretical conditions that provide legitimacy to the critical approach of the *Essence of Manifestation*. In that context, then, Henry is able to position and to determine the question of *Selbständigkeit*. In this way, Henry is able to set out the theoretical (pre-) conditions that support and legitimate the critical path of *The Essence of Manifestation*. He is then, and finally, able to separate phenomenality and finitude definitively, and to de-monstrate the inessential character of the onto-existential and onto-temporal acceptance of *Dasein* for a fundamental ontological critique. As Henry suggests:

“when it is a question of reality [of the essence of phenomenality] *there is no more finitude*.”<sup>88</sup>

Liberated of the structure of every ecstasis, only auto-affection, reduced to immanence, remains for the effective realization of the essence of phenomenality. In-ecstatic, immediate, immanent, invisible, the self-affection that is reduced to pure affectivity provides the only possible way to enter into the internal structure of the absolute. The phenomenology of *The Essence of Manifestation*, then, cannot be considered, as Heidegger’s can, as an ‘integrated’ unveiling of the realization process of the manifestation of Being and its essential phenomenalisation. The phenomenology of *The Essence of Manifestation* is instead a mode of thought *that arises, and supervenes*, on the basis of a phenomenalisation and a manifestation always already accomplished in itself, and realized. For this reason, Henry’s phenomenology can only be interpreted as transcendental; it is established on life, but lies outside of its phenomenal becoming and its originary process of realisation. It is a “*critique of all revelation*”<sup>89</sup> aimed at the discovery of “a mode of philosophizing which does not in any way prejudice essence.”<sup>90</sup>

*Translated by Garth W. Green and Alessandro Chiessi*

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<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, § 37, 287 [357] (Emphasis in original).

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, § 7, 43 [55] (Emphasis in original).

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, 43 [56].