

Response to Reviewer 1 Comments

First of all, I would like to thank you for your detailed analysis of my article and for the effort you have put into it. In order to be able to respond to you effectively, I would like to detail each of my answers precisely in relation to each one of your suggestions:

Point 1: This paper evinces a strong and deep understanding of Michel Henry's work. It shows a very careful treatment of the themes of sexuality in his corpus—particularly *Incarnation*. At times, I wish a bit less time was spent following the contours of his argument, which is reproduced with considerable detail, and instead a bit more original contribution would be appreciated.

Response 1: Thank you very much for your kind comments. In my article, I have attempted to emphasize that the encounter with the other in Life does not occur through the dissolution of the living into Life as if it were a mystical access. Instead, it happens through a carnal disposition to assist the flesh of the other, thus facilitating the event of its own transfiguration within Life or, more precisely, within the flesh of the First Living. It is the sexual encounter that can play a crucial role in constantly renewing this disposition. This is why a phenomenological analysis of it is so important for a proper understanding of Michel Henry's phenomenology of Life.

Point 2: While you are directly following Henry's argument that women are "more marked by sexual determination" than men, the paper might be served by placing this rather strange (and I'd argue, ultimately indefensible) claim by Henry in question. It is nowhere clear in his work where this claim is phenomenologically grounded. And it appears rather to emerge from a failure to properly bracket his pre-phenomenological commitments. The result of this pre-phenomenological assumption is that Henry tends to repeat some fairly tired and misogynistic tropes about feminine anxiety, the unique "passivity" of women, and the particular "spiritual superiority" of women. These are claims which, despite the ostensible praise of the third, all ultimately serve to belittle women. Internally, they also sit rather poorly with his repeated insistence that in the night of love there is no man and woman. Importantly, for the present context, this portion of Henry's argument

does not seem necessary to make the ultimate argument of the paper. I'd recommend cutting those sections or addressing their problems.

Response 2: To your valuable comment I would argue that the superiority of women, as defended by Michel Henry, is based ultimately on the fact that women can give life to others in the most incredible and unexpected way: they can intervene in a privileged way in the process of the formation of new lives. On the contrary, man's desire to give life cannot be fulfilled by himself. I added this explanatory lines at the end of the second paragraph (section 4):

“Therein lies the spiritual superiority of woman, not precisely in an apparent unreal purity, but in her call to live from Life the dynamisms of her flesh fully given to herself and ultimately diversified in her own capacities and potentialities. Among these capacities or potentialities, it is necessary to highlight the capacity of women to intervene in a privileged way in the process of the formation of new lives. Only the corporeality of the woman can undergo the transformation or transfiguration of her own flesh. On the contrary, man's desire to give life is characterized by the radical impossibility of living this transformation in his own carnality”.

I hope that this clarification may help to attenuate a possible- although undeniable- misogynist conception in Michel Henry's approach to sexuality.

Point 3: This article seems to presume, on a few occasions, that the phenomenon of sexuality involves a "man and woman." While this is undoubtedly most often the case, phenomenology should be more vigilant to the eidetic possibility of queer sexualities, wherein things are more complicated.

Response 3: “Certainly, Michel Henry's treatment of sexuality does not consider the homosexual or queer experience of sexuality (Ducharme, 2014, p. 143) . Moreover, Michel Henry seems to take for granted that sexual desire is exclusively fulfilled by directing it to the other sex. While this perspective may be limiting, Michel's own phenomenology of sexuality demonstrates that in the intimate and essential experience of the sexual act, the opposite determinations of the sexes remain in the background. According to Michel Henry, during sex, two individualities become exposed to the event of their definitive transfiguration. Thus, although Michel Henry's phenomenology could be qualified as limited or not entirely free of prejudices, its merit lies in the fact that it doesn't exclude other

forms of sexual experience beyond the scope of this paper's analysis". I added this paragraph as a footnote in the body of the article.

Point 4: The content here is quite good, but is regularly phrased in a manner that appears overly complex, and that makes comprehension more difficult. Specifically, it is not the use of jargon or complex language, but circuitous sentence structures that complicate the text. It would be worth taking an editing pass to simplify some of the phrasing and present some of the more complex ideas in a more direct manner. For example, the sentence: "As a result of this reductive treatment, the second feature of a subjectivity abandoned to the presuppositions of worldly appearance appears as an inescapable correlate of masochism: sadism." is quite difficult to parse. Understanding would be eased with something like: "As a result of this reduction to worldly appearance, a second phenomenon appears as an inescapable correlate of masochism: sadism." There are many examples of this kind throughout.

Response 4: Following your instructions, I reworded these difficult phrases all along the body of the text:

-“Sexuality enables the potential to engage in a uniquely specialized form of action” (Revised text)- “Through sexuality is the production of the possibility to access a strictly peculiar and special kind of action” (Original Text)-page 1.

-“The impact on the projective possibilities of one's own consciousness declines when one realizes that the attraction towards another's body has its phenomenological origin in the abyssal depths (night)of one's own subjectivity” (Revised text)- “The impact on the projective possibilities of one's own consciousness declines when one realizes that the movement of attraction towards the body of the other has its phenomenological origin in the abyssal depths (night)of one's own subjectivity” (Original Text)- Page 2

- “Adding to the inherent paradox of this question is the fact that, according to Henry, lovers experience the impossibility of true unity through sexual practice, thereby witnessing the frustration of their desire to connect with each other through their bodies” (Revised text)- To the difficulty of this question, already paradoxical, we must add the fact that, for Henry, lovers experience, through sexual practice, the impossibility of uniting, thus seeing their desire to reach the other through the body frustrated” (Original Text)- Page 3.

- "Consequently, when examining the sexual act, one discovers the body engaged in its own erotic movement, simultaneously given and giving itself. Within this self-giving, which takes place in the lovers' night, one finds a merging of enthusiasm and self-denial (Florenski, 2010, p. 285) intertwined with determinations related to one's own sexual and bodily constitution. This constitution should not be viewed solely as a biological determination; rather, it is intricately entwined with the dynamism of Life, which, while continually bestowing itself, recedes to enable human beings to acquire (Henry, 2002, p. 151) new ways of embracing the gift of existence." (Revised text)- "It is for this reason that in the consideration of the sexual act, the body is discovered in its own erotic movement as both given and as giving itself. In this self-giving, which takes place in the lovers' night, both enthusiasm and self-denial (Florenski, 2010, p. 285) appear interwined in the determinations that are related to one's own sexual-bodily constitution. This constitution cannot be considered merely a biological determination, as if body and its consideration could be abstracted from its insertion in the dynamism of Life, which, while giving and giving itself, withdraws to let human beings acquire (Henry, 2002, p. 151) new forms of receiving the gift of existence." (Original Text)- Page 4.

- "In any case, lovers cannot renounce the attraction that brings them together in a sexual embrace or the desire to feel pleasure where the other feels it, which is the ultimate condition for all erotic relationships" (Revised Text)- "In any case, lovers are not capable of renouncing either the movement of their own attraction, which leads them to join through sexual embrace, or the desire to feel pleasure where the other feels it, i.e., in their pure capacity to feel it, which constitutes the ultimate condition of possibility of all erotic relation" (Original Text)- Page 4.

- "This means that sexual practice always has a real aspect: the paradoxical unity of two carnalities trying to feel pleasure where it is felt, experiencing themselves as entirely passive regarding their own existence" (Revised Text) - "That means that sexual practice always has a real content: the paradoxical unity of two given carnalities that, in their attempt to feel pleasure where it is felt, experience themselves as absolutely passive with respect to their own being" (Original Text).- Page 5.

-“In the immersion of the living being in this gap, an alterity emerges that deeply affects both my own body and how I perceive the body of the beloved”. (Revised Text)-“In the submergence of the living being in this hiatus, the emergence of an alterity is shaped that intimately affects both my own corporeality and my way of assuming the corporeality of the beloved” (Original Text)- Page 5.

- “Sexuality in Life is a path to alterity, considering the body without my influence or mediation.” (Revised Text)- Sexuality in Life is a way to alterity, to a consideration of the body not subjected to my own determinations or mediations (Original Text)- Page 5.

-“According to Michel Henry, even though all sexual relationships undeniably involve affective content, it is evident that lovers can choose to overlook the physical aspects during sexual activity. In doing so, they detach the other person's physicality from the ascetic vitality of their own flesh, instead attributing it to an illusion of power—the 'I can' of a self-centered subjectivity—which disregards all sensory, vital, and emotional elements of corporeality.” (Revised Text)- “Despite the undeniable and affective content of all sexual relations, it is clear, for Michel Henry, that lovers always have the possibility of omitting corporal determinations in sexual practice, leaving the carnality of the other rendered not to the ascetic dynamism of their own flesh, but to the illusion of a power (the “I can” of a self-possessed subjectivity) that conceives corporeality removing from it all sensitive, vital, affective elements” (Original Text).- Page 6.

-“When the illusion of never-ending eroticism encourages the transformation of a living body into an inert object, stripped of any dynamic appropriation subjectivity might have, we witness the underlying cause of nihilism as a vital phenomenon.”(Revised Text)- When the illusion of an endless eroticism favors the metamorphosis of a living carnality into an inert object rendered indifferent to any dynamism of appropriation that subjectivity brings into play, the ultimate root of nihilism as a vital phenomenon appears” (Original Text).- Page 6.

- “This act of self-profanation refers to the living person's surrender of his own carnality and the carnality of the other to the presuppositions of the worldly appearance. It involves two fundamental traits that help us understand the debt that the living person acquires by delegating to this appearance the last condition of possibility of their own showing”(Revised Text)- “This act of self-profanation

of the self (that is, the living person's surrender of his own carnality and the carnality of the other to the presuppositions of the worldly appearance) acquires two fundamental traits or features that allow us to delve deeper into the debt that the living person acquires by delegating to this appearance (that of the world) the last condition of possibility of their own showing" (Original Text).- Page 7.

- "Therefore, the essence of the self, as revealed in sex, lies in the corporeal existence of living beings who are perpetually and irrevocably given to themselves in their transcendental possibility, Life" (Revised Text).- "Thus, the essence of the self, which is revealed in sex, consists in the carnal matter of living beings which are already perpetually and irrevocably given to themselves in their transcendental possibility, Life (Original Text).- Page 9.

- "We cannot view masculine and feminine determinations in isolation. However, following Henry, it's worth noting that the paradoxical aspect of Life is emphasized in women (Henry, 2000, p. 296)". (Revised Text)- Nevertheless, although we cannot conceive the determinations of the masculine and the feminine as isolated, it should be pointed out, following Henry, that it is in the woman that the paradoxical sign of Life is accentuated (Henry, 2000, p. 296)". (Original Text)- Page 10.

- "Furthermore, women embody the paradox of experiencing their sexual determination as somewhat foreign to their relational capacity, despite being profoundly influenced by it" (Henry, 2000, p. 296)". (Revised Text). - "Moreover, woman consists in the very paradox that shows us how she experiences her own sexual determination as something alien or foreign to her own relational capacity, even though she is in fact more marked by it (Henry, 2000, p. 296)" (Original Text).- Page 10.

- "This results in a spiritual synthesis of heterogeneous elements constituting subjectivity (soul and body), which becomes even more paradoxical and qualitatively intense in women compared to men." (Revised Text).- "This leads to the spiritual synthesis of the heterogeneous elements which make up the being of all subjectivity (soul and body) to acquire in women a more paradoxical accent, with an intensity qualitatively superior to that which determines man's being" (Original Text).-Page 10.

- "In this context, according to Henry, women tend to be more sensual than men (Henry, 2000, p. 296)". (Revised Text)- "In this sense, according to Henry, she is more sensual than man (Henry, 2000, p. 296)". (Original Text)- Page 10.

- "This anguish serves as a direct testimony to the unique paradox underlying her existence. It also represents the lasting sign and authentic realization of a woman's diverse nature, as a spiritual reality distinct from the world and its revelation." (Revised Text)- "This anguish, on the one hand, is a direct witness of the special paradox that founds her being and constitutes, on the other hand, the indelible sign and the genuine perception given to woman of her own heterogeneous condition, as a spiritual reality not commensurable with the world and its peculiar revelation" (Original Text).-Page 10.

- "Thus, the reality of women makes clear that sexuality is not up to be interpreted by means of opposing or mutually exclusive determinations, but to be lived in its goodness "without a reason" (Henry, 2000, p. 285)". (Revised Text)- "Hence, women's reality points out that sexuality should not be analyzed in terms of opposing determinations but rather should be lived for its inherent goodness, "without a reason" (Henry, 2000, p. 285)" (Original Text).-Page 11.

- "In fact, when the dynamism of sexual practice is appropriated from Life, it reveals an "integration of the masculine and the feminine that transforms their elements" (Evdokimov, 2009, p. 186)". (Revised text)- "In fact, the dynamism of sexual practice, when it is appropriated from Life, speaks to us of an "integration of the masculine and the feminine that transforms their elements" (Evdokimov, 2009, p. 186)". (Original Text).- Page 11.

- "According to Henry, the erotic relationship presupposes the being in common in Life (Henry, 2000, p. 347) as a transcendental condition of possibility , and not the appearance in the world of two fleshs as confronted determinations". (Revised Text)- "The erotic relation, as portrayed by Henry, presupposes as a transcendental condition of possibility the being in common in Life (Henry, 2000, p. 347) and not the appearance in the world of two fleshs as confronted determinations". (Original Text)- Page 12.

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- "In this context, the intersubjective experience of sexuality calls on each individual to embrace its unique mode of revelation: Life's invisible Arch-passibility, leaving aside worldly existence". (Revised Text)- "In this sense, the intersubjective experience that takes place in the sexual phenomenon invites the effort of each subjectivity to live, concerned in the most intimate part by its peculiar mode of revelation: the invisible Arch-passibility of Life that leaves aside their coming into the world" (Original Text).- Page 12.

- "Furthermore, the consequences of the world's creation, whether viewed as processual or immanent, ultimately do not allow for the radical reversal or upheaval of that totality of being as creation". (Revised Text)- "In fact, the realization of what finally results from the creation of the world – whether this action is understood as processual or immanent– leaves no room in the end for the occurrence of that which supposes the radical reversal or upheaval of that totality of being as creation". (Original Text).-Page 13.

- "In fact, material objects become perceptible when our senses engage in a process of revealing and analyzing their sensitive features through successive intentional approximations (Henry, 2000, p. 327)". (Revised Text)- "In fact, material objects only become sensible to the extent that they lend themselves to that exercise by which our senses reveal and ponder their sensitive features in successive intentional approximations (Henry, 2000, p. 327)". (Original Text)- Page 13.

- "Against this background, Life becomes the encounter between the living and the world. Life itself enables the world to deeply engage in the humble and poor exaltation of its self-revelation, giving its unique singularity to living beings". (Revised Text)- "Against this background, Life becomes the encounter with the living and the world. making the latter capable of its radical involvement in the humble and poor exaltation of its self-revelation in the irrevocable donation to the living of its own singularity" (Original Text).- Page 14.

- "How do human beings deeply engage in their irrevocable self-giving? For Michel Henry, this is the essential question of human salvation, which is intrinsically related to the integration of human beings in their flesh, namely the incorporation of their own reality – and of the whole of reality – in the process of the coming of Life to the living (Henry, 1996, p. 152) and, in no case, under the

constancy of a mere factual life (Henry, 2000, p. 244) that develops its possibilities in the horizon of the world". (Revised Text)- "How do human beings open the way to their decisive involvement in their irrevocable self-giving? For Michel Henry, this is the indispensable question of the salvation of humanity: a salvation that is intrinsically related to the integration of man in their flesh, that is to say, the incorporation of their own reality – and of the whole of reality – in the process of the coming of Life to the living (Henry, 1996, p. 152) and, in no case, under the constancy of a mere factic life (Henry, 2000, p. 244) that develops its possibilities in the horizon of the world". (Original Text)- Page 14.

- "This process does not trap subjectivity in overwhelming passivity. Instead, it involves the insertion of the subjectivity of the living in the absolute coming of Life. On the one hand, it requires subjectivity to surrender to its own self-giving, in its poor and humble flesh always rendered to itself in the form of its completely irreducible and entirely singular self-impressiveness. On the other hand, this kind of insertion asks for help (Henry, 2014, p. 124) from subjectivity so that it may really come to recognize in its own factual life and that of other living beings the work of another revelation, that of Life. Unlike the isolating nature of destructive reasoning (conceptual analysis, calculating abstraction) (Henry, 2000, p. 348), revelation of Life unites subjectivities in their very possibility of relation, whose condition is that absolute Life that shapes them". (Revised Text)- "The assumption of this process does not lock subjectivity into a kind of insurmountable passivity, before which subjectivity could only drown. Quite the contrary. The insertion of the subjectivity of the living in the absolute coming of Life subordinates, on the one hand, the latter – the Ipseity – to its irremediable self-giving to itself; in its poor and humble flesh always rendered to itself in the form of its completely irreducible and entirely singular self-impressiveness. And, on the other hand, this kind of insertion asks for help (Henry, 2014, p. 124) from the latter so that it may really come to recognize in its own factual life and that of other living beings the work of another revelation, that of Life. This revelation does not isolate, as does the destructive activity of reason (conceptual analysis, calculating abstraction) (Henry, 2000, p. 348). On the contrary, revelation of Life joins subjectivities in their very possibility of relation, whose condition is that absolute Life that shapes them". (Original Text)- Page 14-15.

Point 5: The use of masculine and feminine pronouns is sometimes difficult to parse. It is unclear when they are being used interchangeably, when substantive gendered claims are being made, etc. In one instance, the couplet "he/she" is used so many times in one sentence that it is quite distracting ("it demands that he/she shows himself/herself in such a way that he/she appears as alien to his/her own capacity to feel, as alien to that original modesty (Henry, 2000, 89) by which his/her own corporeality is constituted as a living carnality."). It might be preferable to employ a grammatically neuter pronoun ("their") or to rephrase the passages to avoid the need of so many pronouns. At the very least, the text should *consistently* use masculine, feminine, or neuter pronouns in sections not dealing explicitly with gendered difference.

Response 5: Thank you very much for your remark. I followed your suggestion and I removed the couplet "he/she" replacing them for they or their when required. I also rephrase the words that you specifically outlined in your observation.

Point 6: There are many instances in which periods or spaces are doubled. A final grammar edit would be helpful.

Response 6: According to your indication, I removed the doublement of periods and spaces when required.

