


## Article

# Michel Henry's Notion of *Bodily-Ownness* in the Context of the Ecological Crisis

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**Abstract:** Despite the suspicions of Gnosticism that have been cast against Michel Henry's phenomenology, the truth is that his approach in no way belittles the earth, the nature we inhabit. The purpose of this article is to sketch an eco-phenomenology from Henry's notion of *bodily-ownness*. In this sense, I show how Henry defends an intimate and intrinsic connection between the human and nature that risks being severed by the imposition of scientific ideology. In doing so, an integral ecology emerges from Henry's radical phenomenology. On the one hand, human beings shall abandon their selfish way of life, in the sense of ceasing to want to dominate, control and transform the world at will. On the other hand, they do so in order to regain their original connection with nature, where they exist in a radical passivity in which life is given to them and is realized more fully as a person in harmony with the earth. In this sense, contrary to some current ecological movements, the ecology that arises from Henry's approach does not set human beings against nature. In fact, in order for nature to be respected, human beings do not have to disappear, withdraw or stop progressing in the life proper to them.

**Keywords:** Michel Henry; eco-phenomenology; *bodily-ownness*; scientism



**Citation:** Lind, Andreas Gonçalves. 2022. Michel Henry's Notion of *Bodily-Ownness* in the Context of the Ecological Crisis. *Religions* 13: 834. <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel13090834>

Academic Editor: Philip Goodchild

Received: 26 July 2022

Accepted: 6 September 2022

Published: 7 September 2022

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## 1. Introduction

As Michaël Staudigl affirms, Ricoeur's very well-known statement that phenomenology is no more than the history of the Husserlian heresies best applies to the work of Michel Henry (Staudigl 2012, p. 340). In fact, Henry's approach seeks to develop a so-called "radical phenomenology," which calls into question the principle of intentional consciousness. In this sense, one may argue that Henry privileges the first principle of phenomenology to the detriment of the others, namely intentionality. Instead of this, Henry focuses on the principle that Husserl is said to have inherited from the Marburg school: "so much appearing, so much being" (Henry 2004a, p. 14). By interpreting this principle as a radical identity between manifestation as such and what is manifested, Henry's radical phenomenology ends up focusing on the phenomenon of the self-affection of a life that manifests itself entirely within its own ipseity (Henry 1973, pp. 648–55).

In this way, the material phenomenology of life<sup>1</sup> leads us to the description of two absolutely heterogeneous modes of appearing. In the first place, there is the appearing of immanent life, without ekstasis or intentionality of an outwardly oriented consciousness, of a life that experiences itself as self-affection. Secondly, we have access to the appearing proper to the external world relative to an intentional consciousness: this is always a "consciousness of something" (Henry 1973, p. 89). And, for this very reason, this intentional consciousness, the only one that Husserl described, is not only second to self-affection, but also remains at a distance from the object it perceives. In doing so, this kind of consciousness is always distinct from the external world and its elements.

Therefore, one can understand the reason that allows Henry not to think of life from a category that is prior to it, because there is an originary experience that does not take place

in the world, nor in time, and that precedes all cognitive representations of the *cogito*—i.e., the “self-affection” or the “auto-affection” (Henry 1973, p. 188).

His phenomenology of life is denominated with the adjectives “material” (or, in the Greek, “hyletic”) and “radical,” in the sense that Henry seeks to find, in the primordial self-affection of the subject, the primordial *hylé* where the first phenomenological principle applies radically in absolute terms (Henry 2008, p. 8): i.e., what appears does not merely represent what it is; it does not offer an image of what is outside the *cogito*. It is precisely the opposite: in the case of self-affection, what appears corresponds exactly to what is; the joy and suffering that the *ego* experiences are exactly what affectively appears to him or her within his or her own flesh (O’Sullivan 2006, p. 30).

Consequently, the first axis of development of this type of phenomenology—or, in Ricœur’s terminology, “phenomenological heresy”—has to correspond to the description of the original *pathos* in various shades of joy and suffering. This is the phenomenal description of a living *ego* that experiences the pure affection of self in a flesh that is his or her own. Throughout his final Christic Trilogy,<sup>2</sup> Michel Henry extends his phenomenology along this first axis to the description of the access to a purely immanent God, the origin of a cosmic life.

However, it seems to me that Henry’s work has left us another axis from which one can develop his radical phenomenology of life. This is the link between the two modes of appearing. In other words, it is a matter of knowing how the appearing of the world merges into the first appearing proper to immanent life.

Indeed, one should note that in the final phase of his work, namely when he proposed “a philosophy of Christianity,” Henry developed above all the first axis we have just mentioned above. That is, he focused almost exclusively on the first mode of appearing, so as to thematize as much as possible the experience of self-affection until he determined it as the experience of a “filiation” that links the *ego* to the absolute Life, which is God, who engenders him or her (Henry 2003a, p. 129).

Nevertheless, it seems to me that the first Henry, especially in his writings on Marx and culture, allows us to develop the second axis, which he left unfinished, by applying it to the emergence of ecological sensitivity that we tend to experience nowadays. Such is the purpose of this article.

First, I must eliminate the suspicions of Gnosticism that hang over radical phenomenology. Then, with the help of the same type of phenomenology, I seek to deconstruct the positivist primacy of technoscience that has led us to the current ecological and environmental crises. And, finally, I show how the Henryan notion of *bodily-ownness* that appears in the first works allows us to elaborate an ecological humanism that aims at the articulation of the respect for nature with the integral development of the human person.

## 2. The Phenomenological Hierarchy between Immanent Life and the World

By regarding immanent subjectivity as an arch-phenomenon that precedes all intentionality oriented towards an ekstasis, Henry has come to be read, in certain circles, as a neo-gnostic, in the sense of belittling the world and the human body (Hatem 2004).

However, as Christina M. Gschwandtner notes, at the end of *I Am the Truth (C’est moi la vérité)*, Henry laments the fact that technology extends its dominion to “the whole planet.” It is in this sense that the Fordham professor asks about radical phenomenology’s interest in non-human life (Gschwandtner 2012, pp. 116–25). Now, if there is concern for all life forms, including non-human ones, and for the planet in its entirety, it is hard to hold the view that Henry would be a covert Gnostic, in that he would see the external earth as essentially evil by nature.

In my understanding, the suspicion of Gnosticism also vanishes when we understand that, within radical phenomenology, the world of ekstasis has a legitimate place provided, if it does not subvert the original hierarchy between the two modes of appearing. Henry criticizes only the forgetting of the primordial appearing of immanent and affective life and not exactly the simple possibility of an ekstastic appearing, as a true Gnostic would affirm.

In this way, the world cannot appear, to the *cogito*, as if disconnected and detached from the immanent life that phenomenologically precedes it. In other words, in phenomenology, ekstasis takes place whenever it allows the self-development of immanent life. It is from the potency of the original revelation of life that the world must appear to the *ego* without eliminating his or her own affective subjectivity.

It is important to understand exactly what Henry is criticizing. It is not the world as such or its possibility of appearing. The problem concerning the intra-worldly ekstasis only occurs when life is reduced to relations between objectified and external bodies. It is for this reason that Henry fully states that “insofar as subjectivity is the experience of the world or, rather, is this experience, it is not only the pure and simple experience of the own self, the mute self-affection in which there is for it nothing other than itself; there is also for it the world” (Henry 2003b, pp. 25–26).

The phenomenological description, which runs through Henry’s work, focuses on the experience of a power that characterizes immanent life. For the foundation of a legitimate experience of the world, one must begin with the *ego*’s experience of being a primordial *I Can* (Henry 2015, pp. 172–83). It is, indeed, from this power that everything else can be resented by the *ego*. It is thus a matter of beginning with self-affection, i.e., the invisible and acosmic life, and then moving on to hetero-affection, that is, to the phenomena of the world, without ever forgetting that primordial *pathos* of the *cogito*.

Henry’s phenomenological description shows how this forgetting is possible. Insofar as the experience of *I Can* characterizes my own life, I easily fall into the illusion of judging my own self to be in possession of all sorts of powers. From this “transcendental illusion” (Henry 2003a, p. 147), the *ego* judges him or herself able not only to foresee and transform reality, but also to create all kinds of beings. The *cogito* becomes, therefore, the “Master of the Being” (Henry 2004c, p. 15). Basically, experiencing my own life as a fundamental and primordial power, the *ego* then takes him or herself as the source of reality, forgetting, in this way, the absolute Life that generated him or her and on which he or she passively depends.

At the bottom, forgetting the primordial passivity in relation to the original absolute Life, the *ego* seeks to confirm the unlimited possibilities of his or her fundamental *I Can*. This is why he or she begins to aspire to dominate everything. And since the same *cogito* can only nourish this sense of fully active domination over all reality from what he or she sees and what he or she understands through the representation of intentional consciousness, it is natural that this *ego* ends up absolutizing the phenomenality of intra-worldly ekstasis, as if this were the only way in which everything can appear. Everything, including the invisible life, is then reduced to the exteriority of the world. It is the same as saying that everything is reduced to the sphere of vision and the rational domain.

It is only this absolutization of the phenomenality of ekstasis, and not the world as such, that Henry criticizes. Adopting Kierkegaardian terminology, Henry calls this absolutization the “leap into sin” (Henry 2015, p. 198). Whether it is pornographic voyeurism, the economic exploitation of the subjective labor of the living individual, or modern scientism dominated by Galilean technical rationality, the problem is always the same: the *ego* absolutizes the mode of the world’s appearing and turns exclusively to intra-worldly phenomenality, in order to maintain the illusion that he or she can see everything, can understand and perceive everything, and can even control and construct every reality.

The problem of this leap, that Henry is not ashamed to say is a “sin,” consists in the subversion of the original “hierarchy” between the two essential modes of phenomenality (Henry 2014, p. 101; Henry 2012, p. 47–51): invisible life in the beginning and, then, the world without erasing the same previous life. Let us not forget, in this respect, that Henry is above all a phenomenologist, and not a metaphysician: he is thus telling us about what appears to the *cogito* and the order in which phenomena occur.

### 3. The Deconstruction of the Primacy of Technoscience

It is now worth understanding what happens when people absolutize the ekstastic mode of phenomenality, forgetting or downplaying the *pathos* that characterizes their inner

life. In fact, in wanting to dominate all reality from its action and knowledge, the *ego* ends up forgetting the immanent and pathetic dimension of his or her own life. In order to achieve this domination through the power of representation, the *ego* orientates him or herself more and more exclusively towards the realities of the external world, towards things outside him or herself, thus absolutizing the phenomenality of ekstasis. In doing so, the original hierarchy, of life that appears primarily in self-affection without distance or transcendence, is subverted: the world becomes the original horizon, thus erasing immanent life.

In this context, one should note how Henry interprets Modernity. He considers that Modernity, marked by Galilean rationality, has imposed in the West a techno-scientist paradigm that is characterized by this subversion of the original hierarchy between the two modes of appearing. Insofar as modern science is essentially understood as “the mathematical science of nature that abstracts from sensibility” (Henry 2004b, p. 39), the affective dimension of immanent life tends to be overshadowed (Henry 2004b, p. 26). In this way, even the contemplation of a landscape may lose its affective dimension when, by the absolutization of Galilean reason, the universe is reduced to the mathematical mindset of Modernity.

It is thus clear that, for Henry, it is not so much scientific knowledge that is put into question. Let us not reduce the French phenomenologist primarily to a simple technophobe or to a promoter of a romantic return to a pre- or non-technological culture. Henry simply condemns scientism, the ideology according to which the only possible knowledge is scientific, eliminating all others. Such an ideology submits life itself, in its immanent affectivity, to the principles of ekstasis. This is why scientism produces “barbarism,” destroying culture in all its forms, namely in its aesthetic-artistic dimension.

Rather than remaining in its own limited sphere, science, conceived by the ideology of scientism, has positioned itself as the only true access to reality from the Galilean rationality that is reduced to the phenomenality of ekstasis. According to such an ideology, knowledge is not only reduced to what is obtained through the scientific method, but human beings are considered capable of dominating the world and the future on the basis of their supposedly universal reason and the technology that emerges from it. The primacy of technology, which reduces all appearances to the second mode of phenomenality, imposes itself as the dominant culture.

In this sense, Henry notes how all other approaches, especially those of the humanities, tend to be belittled or even disappear. Linked to this is the fact that the affectivity and passivity that characterize life at its most original are forgotten and neglected.

Henry deconstructs this type of culture, dominated by scientism. Such deconstruction is done through the revelation, in strictly phenomenological terms, of the *ego* in his or her radical and original passivity. It is from this passivity that the subject receives the life that characterizes his or her own flesh, i.e., his or her own affective subjectivity.

In this way, as we have seen above, scientific reductionism rests on the illusion of an *ego* that is entirely active and fully the master of the powers that his or her life holds. Basically, this illusion of the *ego*—we have already said—is understandable by the feeling of a power effectively conferred to him or her. The subject feels that he or she can effectively move in the world and transform it with his or her own power. However, in relation to the feeling of the power of a subject who reveals him or herself as an *I Can*, there is a Life in capital letters, the only one that is capable of engendering the *ego*. This is the absolute Life that precedes the *ego*, who only recognizes it when he or she experiences radical passivity.

Henry concludes his work, with his Christic Trilogy, by describing this intrinsic connection between the finite *ego*, that I am, and the God who is identified with “absolute Life” (Henry 2012, p. 114). In phenomenologically describing the experience of this link, between God and the son, which is the human being, the phenomenologist is forced to make a distinction that characterizes the explicit Christian reflection of his philosophical production, especially in the late Trilogy (Rivera 2011, pp. 205–35). It is a matter of

describing two distinct, though co-implicated, types of self-affection. This distinction between finite life, with a lower case, and infinite Life, with a capital, is thus established.

First, I access myself, my own life, my own subjectivity. This is the self-affection of my own flesh. But insofar as I do not generate my own life, and I feel thus placed in existence, or more precisely in Life, I discover that my self-affection is characterized by an “original” and “radical passivity” (Henry 1973, p. 468; Henry 2008, p. 132) which is forgotten by the person who has fallen into the illusion of scientism. This type of self-affection is a matter of experiencing oneself as an *ego* in the “accusative,” since I do not hold the power to engender myself. The radical passivity I experience implies that I am not the “First Living” (Henry 2003a, p. 106). So, the self-affection of the finite *ego*, which I am, is revealed in a “weak sense” (Henry 2003a, pp. 107–08).

Secondly, there must be another Life, distinct from mine which is capable of carrying out this process of engendering: a Life which self-engenders herself into the First Living. To this absolute Life applies the “strong sense” of the concept of self-affection. In other words, my self-affection in the weak sense assumes self-affection in the strong sense as its condition of possibility.

However, for those who assume the culture of scientism, they forget, that is, they cease to be able to experience, to feel this passivity that originates from a connection to a greater Life that precedes us.

Scientism is thus deconstructed, not by the possibility of what science allows us to know and to do in the world, but by the fact that it leads us to a denaturation of our human essence, as children endowed with affective flesh. The deconstruction of the scientific paradigm develops from the description of the transformation—or, more precisely, denaturation—of the *ego* that assumes techno-scientific logic as its way of life. In doing so, this deconstruction consists in the description of the inauthentic life that characterizes the culture determined by techno-scientism. In fact, technology leads to barbarism insofar as it denaturalizes the living *ego* by rendering him or her insensitive, disincarnated, disembodied, impassible and, ultimately, inanimate and incapable of loving.

We understand thus how Henry’s approach denies all conceivable Gnosticism. And, in doing so, it can lead us to an eco-phenomenology which is also an integral humanism. At a quick reading it might seem that there is no room for an ecology within the radical phenomenology of life. In fact, Henry seeks above all to show how technology kills the immanent life that inhabits us human beings, emptying the *pathos* that characterizes it in its acosmic dimension. Insofar as it is a matter of recovering the experience of an invisible and acosmic life, the route that radical phenomenology takes may seem to be removed from any kind of ecological concern.

However, when one stops interpreting Henry’s phenomenology as a new Gnosticism, it becomes possible to conceive an eco-phenomenology from his approach. To do so, one must note how the power of technology can lead to “transcendental egoism” (Henry 2003a, p. 256; Henry 2012, p. 130) that consists in the ambition to fully control the universe of things (Henry 2004b, pp. 51–53) It is this dominance of an exclusively active and totally outward-oriented *ego* that Henry criticizes.

Henry uses the notion of “transcendental egoism” to classify the forgetfulness of immanent life, of the affectivity that is proper to it and of the passivity of filiation that characterizes us as dependent subjects. This forgetfulness is the other side of the coin of techno-scientist logics: on the one hand, the erasing of life; on the other, the submission of nature to a subject who believes himself to be all-powerful to the point of controlling everything.

Therefore, respect for nature is thus imposed as a condition of possibility for human beings to rediscover their essential condition as children of absolute Life. Thus, as Gschwandtner has rightly noted, Henry has inevitably appealed to a respect for nature that is external to the human being.

#### 4. The Notion of *Bodily-Ownness* as Harmony between the *Ego* and the World

It is in the fifth chapter of *Barbarism* that Henry leaves us a lapidary sentence against any kind of Gnosticism: “The natural being, in this world, is already inseparable from the signification of ‘life’” (Henry 2004b, p. 79). In this sense, it is worth clarifying that, although the two modes of appearing are absolutely heterogeneous from one another in terms of their phenomenality, there is nevertheless a possible connection between the two. This connection between immanent original life—for the subject who experiences him or herself as a living flesh—and the world outside him or her is fundamental to the elaboration of a radical eco-phenomenology of life, which I seek to outline here.

The crucial notion for the elaboration of such an eco-phenomenology, developing the axis of the foundation of the world’s phenomenality from invisible life that Henry left undeveloped, consists in the neologism *bodily-ownness*—in French, *corpsappropriation*. It is a term, rare in Henry’s total body of work, which appears in the second chapter of *Barbarism*. In this context, while describing the horizon of techno-scientific logic, Henry states that:

Body and Earth are joined together by Co-belonging (*Copropriation*). It is so original that nothing can ever occur in a pure Outside, as an object, for a theoria, as something that would be there without us—except as the history of this original Cobelonging (*Copropriation*) and as its limit mode. We will call this original Cobelonging (*Copropriation*) a *Bodily-ownness* (*Corpsappropriation*). It is so original that it makes us the owners of the world. This does not occur after the fact due to a decision of our own or a given society’s adoption of a specific behavior toward the cosmos. It is a priori, in virtue of the corporeal condition of our “*bodily-ownness*” (*corps-propre*) (Henry 2004b, p. 45).

The term “*bodily-ownness*” thus designates a “Co-belonging”. In this sense, one may understand it to be a mutual appropriation of the *body* and the *earth*. Insofar as the *ego* experiences this original Co-belonging in his or her immanent and affective flesh, the earth (and not already properly the pure external world) is experienced in this connection and not in a pure ekstasis.

Henry wrote *Barbarism*—in the original French version, *La barbarie*—in 1987, after the two voluminous tomes on Marx published in 1976. In *Barbarism*, Henry pursues thus his reflections on Marx and on culture. It is a question of understanding the way the natural world is connected to *ego*’s invisible life. In order to express that this nature is experienced subjectively, and thus not absolutely external to the *ego*, Henry stops talking about the “world,” and starts using the term “earth.”

This connection manifests itself from the revelation of immanent life and its self-development. It is individuals alive, hungry, thirsty, with affection, with fatigue coming from the effort of their work, who develop their immanent and affective tones from the potencies of life, experiencing the world and its elements united to themselves, as Marx describes in his critique to the objectivation of life by ideologies and by the capital (Henry 1983, pp. 20, 61, 78). In the experience of subjective effort, the resistance that the natural earth imposes is integrated, as well as the subjective satisfaction in the act of consuming food. Thus, it is always the immanent life of the *ego* that is touched. And this impact always corresponds to a form of “*bodily-ownness*” (Henry 2004b, p. 79).

Similarly, as Henry describes in *Voir l’invisible*, a work on Kandinsky’s art, published in 1988, a year after *La barbarie*, the artist communicates invisible affections from his immanent life in the paints placed and seen by viewers on a canvas, in which similar affective tones “resonate” in the intimacy of the flesh of all the persons who maintain contact with the artistic work (Henry 2005, p. 74).

There is, therefore, and must be, for Henry, a “lifeworld” (*monde de vie*) to which corresponds the “*bodily-ownness* (*corpspropriété*) nature” (Henry 2004b, p. 76). There is an affective feeling of a connection with nature that also has a character external to the human being. One should note that, in order to express this connection, Henry employs the terms “earth” and “lifeworld,” rather than “world” alone. Consequently, *bodily-ownness* nature

not only signifies the intrinsic connection of the human being with his or her body to the earth, but it is also the foundation of all transformation of the lifeworld. For Henry, this *bodily-ownness* has an original, or even transcendental, character. In fact, as he clearly states in the third chapter of *Barbarism*:

Original nature defined as *Bodily-ownness* (*Corpsappropriation*) realizes itself in the actualization of the subjective potential of living Corporeity, and in fact, it is this actualization. This lifeworld is not the world of intuition but the world of praxis. It is the world as the effect of praxis but, more essentially, as its exercise (Henry 2004b, p. 48).

The “world of science,” as diametrically opposed to the “world of life,” marked by scientism, subverts this intimate connection of the human person with nature, insofar as it subverts the original *bodily-ownness* between the subjective body of the *ego* and the earth (Henry 2004b, pp. 40, 102).

For Henry, it is clear that this subversion consists of an artificial way of actualizing *bodily-ownness* on the basis of the domination and control that technology makes possible (Henry 2014, p. 18). This mode of *bodily-ownness*, which is not the original one, is perverse, because it separates the earth from the affective subjectivity that the *ego* experiences. It reduces the earth and its elements to things which in essence we can totally know and represent, but not experience affectively.

The subversion of technology does not stop there: not only does the subject lose the affective plenitude that he or she could resent in the original Co-belonging to the earth, but he or she also forgets the primordial affective essence of his or her *ego*.

The original *bodily-ownness* described by Michel Henry corresponds, thus, to an affective phenomenon that, despite being understood from immanent life, expresses the connection between a living individual and the earth. One may call this connection *harmonious*, because it is an experience of the earth and its elements without subjugating them through scientific knowledge and technological power.

Thus, the eco-phenomenology that springs from Henry’s approach does not consist in a description of non-human animal life, even though it is possible to describe non-human forms of life using radical phenomenology, as Gschwandtner has already shown (Gschwandtner 2012, pp. 116–38). It is rather an approach that focuses mainly on the interaction of human life—understood as the life experienced by the *ego*—with the surrounding earthly environment in the phenomenon of *bodily-ownness*. In a certain way, even despite the transcendental and acosmic character of life that emerges in Henry’s phenomenology, both the body and the earth are intrinsically connected to life. Immanent life gives meaning to the experience of the earthbound body. Moreover, this subjective body is always a revelation of immanent life.

In this sense, if an ecology emerges from the radical phenomenology of life, it presents two fundamental characteristics that allow it to be distinguished and situated in relation to the different current ecology movements:

(1) On the one hand, respect for nature, which Henry calls “earth,” is due to the fact that human subjectivity attains affective plenitude, which is the essence of its flesh, in harmonious corporeal connection with the planet and its beings. In other words, nature is not respected, insofar as the domination and transformation of the world through technology destroys the essence of the human person as an affective and essentially passive being. Caring for nature, therefore, has to do with abandoning the “transcendental egoism” that closes the *ego* within the horizon of reason that gives to him or her the power to dominate everything in the exteriority of the world.

(2) On the other hand, the radical eco-phenomenology of life does not see the human being as competing with nature. This conflict between Human and Nature is only established in a *bodily-ownness* which is perverted by the absolutization of techno-scientist ideology. Therefore, it is not necessary to eliminate or limit the development of human life in order to respect nature. On the contrary: respect for nature allows and presumes the flourishing self-development of human immanent life.

## 5. Conclusions

When the primacy of technology imposes itself to the point of distorting the affective and passive nature of the human being, who holds himself to be the master capable of generating all reality, our societies risk coming closer to *Aliahova*: the fictional city imagined by Henry in *L'Amour, les yeux fermés* (Henry 1976). This novel, which won the *Renaudot Prize* in 1976, describes a highly developed city. We are then in the urban environment where nature is no more seen. One may say that the original *bodily-ownness*, between human subjective body and earth, has been forgotten. And so, despite the power of its technology, the prestige of its illustrious university, the majestic architecture of its buildings, the economic prosperity of its institutions, *Aliahova* ends up falling into ruin. Through his narrative, the author seeks to make us feel that this cultural downfall is due to ideologies which are capable of annihilating the lives of individuals in favor of frigid scientific objectivity.

Once abandoned to the ideology of scientism, the human person denaturalizes him or herself and, moreover, separates him or herself from the nature of the earth, wanting to dominate it. Consequently, nature is destroyed at the same time as the human being falls into ruin, for he or she loses the capacity to attain his or her fullness in the affection of his or her immanent flesh.

In this article, I have shown how Henry defends an intimate and intrinsic connection between the human and nature that risks being severed by the imposition of scientific ideology. Therefore, let all suspicions that have been cast upon his phenomenology of neo-Gnosticism be dispelled. Moreover, on the basis of this connection, which Henry calls “original *bodily-ownness*,” it is possible to develop an eco-phenomenology.

Such an eco-phenomenology is an integral ecology, in the sense that respect for nature does not come at the expense of respect for the development of human life. In other words, in order for nature to be respected, human beings do not have to disappear, withdraw or stop progressing in the life proper to them. If human beings must abandon their selfish way of life, in the sense of ceasing to want to dominate, control and transform the world at will, they do so in order to regain their original connection with nature, where they exist in a radical passivity in which life is given to them and is realized more fully as the person they are in harmony with the earth.

**Funding:** This research was funded by the Portuguese Foundation for Science and Technology, grant number UIDB/00683/2020 (Center for Philosophical and Humanistic Studies).

**Conflicts of Interest:** The author declares no conflict of interest.

## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> Henry's phenomenology is designated by the author himself with both the adjective “material” and the qualitative “radical” (Henry 2004a, pp. 156, 202).
- <sup>2</sup> “Christic Trilogy” is a syntagma used in secondary literature to refer to the set of Michel Henry's last three works: *C'est moi la vérité* [1996]; *Incarnation* [2000]; and *Paroles du Christ* [2002] (Brohm 2009, p. 333).

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