

of 'God' in Western thought as performing the constitution of a peculiar God-theory. Sneller claims that Derrida names God as "an original dynamism" (Sneller 163). Despite his close readings, Sneller has difficulty contextualizing Derrida's arguments, which actually trace the sedimentations and compressions of others' arguments. As a result, his contribution does not necessarily read Derrida well.

Ruud Welten provides two outstanding essays. He presents Michel Henry's radical phenomenology, which paradoxically demands the abandonment of all theological assumptions while claiming that all phenomena are revelations that God is Life. Welten finds that Henry's idiosyncrasy promises a novel philosophical comprehension of religion. Welten also astutely elaborates Jean-Luc Marion's radical solicitation of Heidegger's onto-theological accusation, which misconstrues theology as necessarily a scientific objectivation of God. "Marion uses the notion of onto-theology on behalf of theology, trying to shield God's divinity. Heidegger uses the term on behalf of Being, trying to prove that it is not open to objectification. Onto-theology floats between philosophy and theology, which is where Marion's thought finds its home" (Welten, 194). Welten details Marion's profound attempt to overcome metaphysics with grace.

Overall, this volume provides excellent introductions to almost all of its nine thinkers. An established background in philosophy, particularly the 'Continental' sort, is key to receiving the most from the readings.

Michel Henry: Incarnation, Barbarism, and Belief

Michael O'Sullivan. Bern: Peter Lang, 2006.

ISBN: 3-03910-729-1. Pp. 214.

Reviewed by Michelle Rebidoux, McGill University

The publication of Michael O'Sullivan's book—the first in English devoted to the work of French phenomenologist Michel Henry (1922–2002)—is timely. Henry's work, though never without its fair share of criticism, has been widely known and followed closely for many years in France, as well as, among some of his closer intellectual disciples, in Germany and Italy. Only recently, however (more or less within the last decade), has his work started to attract attention from an English audience. Unfortunately, most of his later works, as well as a number of his middle works, including his four novels, remain untranslated. Secondary literature, too, while abundant in French, German, and Italian, has been generally sparse in English until recently. O'Sullivan's book is among the still fairly small yet rapidly growing repertoire of secondary writings on Henry, and it is the first full-length study in English, taking in the full range of Henry's thinking on topics as diverse as Marxism,

psychoanalysis, art, politics, and Christianity. O'Sullivan is careful to point out, however, that the topical range of Henry's thinking is ultimately rooted in a single, powerful and provocative thought—namely, the phenomenological effectiveness of auto-affective subjective life—which, in the context of the widespread popularity and even dominance of the emphasis on 'otherness' since the last quarter of the 20th century, poses a unique challenge to philosophy today, and to phenomenology in particular to which it falls to unfold this challenge. This challenge is a thinking of subjectivity in its bondedness to 'fundamental ontology' beyond both traditional philosophies of Modernity dependent upon a perspective of ekstastic representation and contemporary philosophies of 'otherness' which to a certain extent remain reactive to the tradition.

Following a brief general introduction to Henry's thought in chapter one, the precise relation of his thought to the phenomenological tradition—to Husserl as the founder of the phenomenological method, and to the concept of 'affectivity' in the work of Maine de Biran which Henry emphasizes and builds upon as the key to solving the aporia of the tradition—is dealt with by O'Sullivan at some length (albeit not always perfectly clearly) in chapter two. The main issue here is Henry's articulation and critique of 'ontological monism', the view (held traditionally in Western philosophy since the Greeks, Henry contends) that ekstastic representation is the only mode of phenomenality—to which Henry himself contrasts 'revelation', as 'auto-affectation', as the very ground of such ekstasis. Chapter three then appropriately takes up a concern with Henry's privileging of the unity and immanence of auto-affectation—i.e. an originary, pre-ekstastic impressionality—in its relation to and its defense against Derrida's deconstructive critique of ekstastic presence. Finally, chapters four through six focus upon Henry's specific concern with politics, his critique of 'Marxism' (in distinction from Marx' own thought), and of contemporary culture built upon an ontologically monistic worldview (chapter four); his critique of Freud and Freudianism, and his interest in the 'invisible' life active in the art of Kandinsky (chapter five); and the relation within Henry's late writings of phenomenology to Christianity (chapter six).

While presenting Henry's position generally well, O'Sullivan for the most part ventures no critical discussion even and especially of Henry's aspiration to make of his phenomenology of affective life a fundamental ontology. He does not rigorously articulate, for example, the precise phenomenological difficulties which Henry's own work faces (such as the problem of transcendental solipsism, for one thing), nor the distinct relation between Henry's early phenomenological writings and his late "Christian" writings in which Henry attempts to solve this problem through a 'phenomenology of Christ' as the 'prototype' in which all individual subjectivities come into being—in other words, in order to mediate between the immediacy of *individual* subjective life and fundamental ontology. Actually, O'Sullivan does point

out and is quite correct in emphasizing that Henry's late Christian writings "became a kind of 'illustration' of . . . the phenomenology of life that he had already elaborated", that "[h]is work did not undergo such a dramatic transformation from phenomenology into Christian theology", and that "it instead made the rather serendipitous discovery that many of its phenomenological motivations and strategies could be illustrated quite rewardingly through the well-known mysteries and narratives of Christianity" (p. 181). What O'Sullivan fails to say, however, is that no dramatic transformation occurred precisely *because* the phenomenological difficulties that afflict Henry's work in his very late writings are the *same* phenomenological difficulties with which he struggles right from the beginning. What Henry attempts to articulate with a theological move in his late writings, he had already articulated through a phenomenologically inadmissible onto-theological, or metaphysical leap in his earlier work. It is this phenomenologically inadmissible leap that O'Sullivan lets pass unnoticed.

In short, along critical lines O'Sullivan's book fails to adequately address the deeply problematic relationship between phenomenology and fundamental ontology in Henry's work. Overall, however, this book is the first of its kind in offering the reader a dependable and helpfully unifying expository survey of the entire range of Henry's work, an oeuvre which might otherwise appear somewhat dispersed in theme without the key to its inner orientation and deep interconnectedness. O'Sullivan nicely provides that key, as well as the interconnecting links between the range of themes.

After God:

Richard Kearney and the Religious Turn in Continental Philosophy

John Panteleimon Manoussakis, ed. New York: Fordham University Press, 2006.

ISBN: 0-8232-2531-3. Pp. 464.

Reviewed by Jeremy Wiebe, McGill University.

Who or what comes after the "death of God" and the God of Metaphysics? This is the question which Richard Kearney (Professor of Philosophy at Boston College) and the contributors to this book attempt to answer. John Manoussakis, former student and present colleague and collaborator of Kearney, edits and contributes to this volume that addresses many issues related to both the recent religious/theological turn in phenomenology and continental philosophy of religion. Richard Kearney's hermeneutics of religion, as outlined in his trilogy *Philosophy at the Limit*, and especially the volume *The God Who May Be* (2001), is the focal point of discussion. Many other continental thinkers whom Kearney engages such as Heidegger, Derrida,