

(Review of the philosophical paper: *The Phenomenological Normativity of  
“The Self-in-Migration”:  
Husserlian-Henryan Approach*  
by Olga Louchakova-Schwartz, M.D., Ph.D.

By Marc Jean-Bernard, Phd.

C'est qu'il ne s'agit pas tant de voyager que de partir: quel est celui de nous qui n'a pas quelque douleur à distraire ou quelque joug à secouer ?

George Sand, *Un Hiver à Majorque*.

The theoretical importance, of a paradigmatic order, of Doctor Louchakova-Schwartz' article unifies in a proper way several intertwined fields of contemporary philosophical and scientific investigations:

- a) The *philosophical* thought of normativity of the Self-in-Migration (mainly through the phenomenological approaches of the late Husserl conceptuality, Michel Henry's *Phénoménologie matérielle*<sup>1</sup>, Zahavi's<sup>2</sup> interpretations of intersubjectivity and Taipale's theories on subjective primordial selfconstitution)<sup>3</sup>;
- b) The reciprocal relation between Philosophy and Medicine in the prism of a double description of the normativity of *health* combining symptomatological and curative accounts of both dissociative and regenerative possibilities;

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<sup>1</sup> Henry, M. (1990). *Phénoménologie matérielle*. Paris: PUF.

<sup>2</sup> Dan Zahavi (2006). *Subjectivity and Selfhood: Investigating the FirstPerson Perspective*. Cambridge, MA

<sup>3</sup> Taipale, Joona. 2014. *Phenomenology and Embodiment. Husserl and the Constitution of Subjectivity*. Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press.

- c) The complementary chiasma between philosophical analysis of the stratification of intersubjectivity and psychiatric/psychoanalytic interpretation of the games played by Self- Awareness (notably the cited Binswanger's Psychiatric Daseinanalyse)<sup>4</sup>;
- d) The necessary (phenomenological) symbiosis between Philosophical and anthropological/sociological investigations of interpersonal conventions, i.e between the determination of the "enfleshed empathy" and the social possible typifications;
- e) The internal relation between the aesthetic archetypes of Migration (evoked from the Ulysses' and Ovid's motives) and the general normative investigation, conceived from a conceptual confluence of these epistemic vectors. These types enhance the dynamic of *autopoïésis* among the existential possibilities of the Self-in-Migration.
- f) The implicit full range of the contemporary investigation on Theory of International Relations and Human rights, understood on the base of a philosophical approach of the true possibilities of conforming the most healthy possible *post-migration self*.

This schematic view on the seminal implications of the article, that are as well theoretical and therapeutic, includes the rigorous articulation demonstrated between generalization and formalisation in the husserlian sense (*Ideen*, 1913), and following the posterior modalities of the formal elaboration, in Husserl's corpus and in the phenomenological movement until particularly Michell Henry. In the frame of this first commentary I will underline the main thesis that seem to me essentials, adding few harmonics that I heard in the melodic exposition.

Choosing the phenomenology of the *Self-in Migration*, the article offers a *concrete* thematization (as would say Gabriel Marcel), in grade of revealing ressources, limits and compatibility between phenomenological, analytics and scientific models of understanding.

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<sup>4</sup> Binswanger, Ludwig, (1962) *Being-in-the-World*, Selected Papers of Ludwig Binswangers, New York, Basic Books.  
 Heidegger, Martin (2001 [1987]). *Zollikon Seminars: Protocols – Conversations – Letters*. (Edited by Medard Boss). Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press.

The first originality of the paper consists in respecting the qualitative aspects of mental states and the “world to mind connections”, not always considered by analytical philosopher. It is interesting to consider that Wittgenstein (always focused on the meaning and languages of suffering) stressed very early this necessary holistic and human perspective, against empirical simplifications. The first strong thesis of the formal orientation is certainly that “the normative structure of self-awareness can have variations, that is, a freedom of adaptive reconstitution within the normative limits.”. This topology allows the author to consider the spaces of variations of the normal and pathological attitudes, juxtaposing “two conditions of self-awareness, the so called “normal” self-awareness, and the self-awareness which is modified by the process of migration.” Along the seven gradually demonstrative sections of her analysis of the processes of self-awareness the successive thesis of the author are transversal and inspired by the critical spirit of the Husserlian *Krisis* and contemporary discussion. Concerning the philosophical and biological dimensions, their link appears carefully distant from reductionism: “Clearly, the biological, behavioral or historical normativity of migration doesn’t mean the normativity of self-awareness in such behavior, especially in terms of health. And even if the form of self-awareness specific to migration cannot be considered normative or healthy, upon uncovering the essence of this condition it may reveal itself as a form of “being in the world” The conceptual background of this conceptual distinction is not only related to Husserl, Binswanger and the Heidegger’s of Zölikon Seminar<sup>5</sup>, but also consonant with Wittgenstein clarification of psychological concepts from *Philosophische Untersuchungen* until *Über Gewissheit*.<sup>6</sup> In the clarification of *Normativity* in the analysis of *Self-Awareness*, the author develops and harmonizes the perspectives on essential structures of intentionality established by Husserl,

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<sup>5</sup> Heidegger, M. (2001). *Zollikon Seminars. Protocols- Conversations-Letters*. M. Boss (ed.). R. Askay & F. Mayr (trs.). Northwestern University Press: Evanston, Illinois  
 Boss, Medard (1977). *Existential Foundations of Medicine and Psychology*. Jason Aronson, Inc.

<sup>6</sup> Wittgenstein, Ludwig, 2001) [1953]. *Philosophical Investigations*. Blackwell Publishing.  
 Wittgenstein, Ludwig, *Remarks on the Philosophy of Psychology*, Volume I edited by G.E.M. Anscombe, and G.H. von Wright, translated by G.E.M. Anscombe, Volume II edited by G.H. von Wright, and Heikki Nyman, translated by C.G. Luckhardt and M.A.E.

Wittgenstein, L. (1969), *On Certainty*, ed. G. E. M. Anscombe and G. H. von Wright, tr. D. Paul and G. E. M. Anscombe, Blackwell, Oxford.

Merleau Ponty, Henry, Zahavi and Taipale, carefully including the phenomenological account of “varying semiotics imprints on both intentional and embodied aspects of self-awareness.”. The next path is of course the concrete symptomatology of migration’s consequences expressed in the dialogic experience, considered as an intentional revelation. Disappearing body self (biologically observable), depersonalization, temporary deficit of self-awareness, forgetfulness, conducing to a new transversal theoretical thesis: “I submit that the changes in self-awareness during migration are phenomenologically essential to migration, and medically is a normative condition which may lean towards either pathology or health. Following the constitution of the *Disappearing Self*, the author exposes a rigorous husserlian analysis of the two types of consciousness - the *intentional* and the *non-objectifying self awareness*, completed by the explication of the role of *self affective sentient phenomenological materiality* developed by all the work of Michel Henry, from *The Essence of Manifestation (II)* until *Material Phenomenology*<sup>7</sup>. The phenomenological account of embodied subjectivity and the eidetic consciousness is strongly connected to the thematic of the paper: normativity and medical normativity of health in migration:”With regard to medical normativity, the innate internal unity of both components in the field of consciousness should be viewed as a priori condition of wellbeing.” The use of the notion of *a priori* and the term of *foundation* are distant from any foundational purpose conducted in abstracto, but respond to the exigences of a revisable and consequent paradigmatic activity (in the sense of Nicholas Abraham). One of the most striking parts of the paper is certainly the section dedicated to *The Catastrophic Intersubjectivity of Migration*. This observation is not subjective, but corresponds to our six main fields of influence of the article, following its strong henryan motivation, densely resumed in a protocolar proposition: “Therefore, intersubjectivity can be viewed as the superimposition of the phenomenological materiality and its own reflective intentional thrust; in this superimposition, the world acquires the appearance of physicality”. At this point appears the nuclear point theoretic point of the article whose problematic cannot be developed in this context, but should be commented in ontological terms and also from a meta ontological implication of phenome-

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<sup>7</sup> Henry, M. (1963). *L'essence de la Manifestation*. 2 Vol. Paris: PUF.

Henry, M. (2000). *Incarnation: Une philosophie de la chair*. Paris: Seuil.

nological intentionality. The theory vector of the article is clearly oriented by the implication of henryan phenomenological materiality, with a rich contribution to the understanding of the intentional psychological concrete correlations, in their “corporeal, visceral quality” At this point the wide range of descriptive alterations of the “enfleshed empathy” upon migration meets specifically the last three orders of relevancy of the paper: the anthropological, the aesthetically and the socio-political ones. I will stress just the aesthetically dimension of the problematic as a privileged horizon for future developments the phenomenology and grammar of migration, exile and escape in all their literary, musical and plastic expressions. Effectively, the analysis of the “Catastrophic intersubjectivity of Migration” is internally connected to the hermeneutics of exile and escape, introducing as well a level of specific complexity in terms of hermeneutics of the arts. The profusion and multiplicity of modalities of psycho-aesthetic escapes from the XVIII Century until the so called *Decadent* fin de siècle period offers to phenomenology and grammar of the spaces of *Being together* an intense field of comparative studies. The first eloquent examples coming to our mind are obviously, apart from the classical references of Virgil and Lucretius, Baudelaire and Rimbaud. Of course Literary analysis developed this problematic in a critical but rich style, not always related to philosophical universality. In this sense the author certainly remembered the famous Rimbaud’s poem titled *Sensation*, where the poetic evocation of the “geography of happiness” focuses a point of sensuous convergence of embodied and verbal subjectivity. Of course, I refer spontaneously to French literature, even if we obviously can develop the same investigative motives with Oscar Wilde or Rossetti. But clearly the French literary exponents of evasion in its apocalyptic consequences, Barbey d’Aurevilly, The Goncourt, Lautréamont, Zola, Huysmans, Schwob, Lorain and so many others, stressed deeply the *pathological* significance of the protean migration of the personality, real, fictitious, or imaginary. *Catastrophic* is the right epithet applied to aesthetic escapism dedicated to convert the individual life in a work of Art (Chateaubriand). Here the tendency to typologies shared by poets, novelists and psychiatrists, specially in the field of “scientific” criminal anthropology, notably with the drastic thesis formulated by Cesare Lombroso’s *Uomo Criminale*. In the XXth Century, the most relevant example would certainly be Robert Musil, whose doctoral back-

ground under Stumpf is not a casualty. But Victor Hugo could accurately interrupt my digression saying after *The Miserables*, that « Une évasion, c'est une guérison ». It is precisely what the author underlined in one of the most hopeful sections of her article, *The Autopoietic Possibilities of the Self-in-Migration*.

This concise conclusion drew the possible line of of a *metanoia*, a conversion into a positive migrant's intersubjectivity, unifying "creativity and performance" .Of course, it is like in a musical musical *Strette*. It is a recapitulation, as well in the sense of the futuration of phenomenological contribution to human care, and in the sense of creative *Anakephalaiosis* including an equally transversal and seminal reference to meditation.

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