

This is a section of [doi:10.7551/mitpress/14852.001.0001](https://doi.org/10.7551/mitpress/14852.001.0001)

The Phoenix Complex

A Philosophy of Nature

By: Michael Marder

Citation:

The Phoenix Complex: A Philosophy of Nature

By: Michael Marder

DOI: 10.7551/mitpress/14852.001.0001

ISBN (electronic): 9780262374873

Publisher: The MIT Press

Published: 2023



The MIT Press

THE PHOENIX COMPLEX

THE PHOENIX COMPLEX

A Philosophy of Nature

MICHAEL MARDER

**The MIT Press
Cambridge, Massachusetts
London, England**

© 2023 Massachusetts Institute of Technology

This work is subject to a Creative Commons CC-BY-NC-ND license.

Subject to such license, all rights are reserved.



The MIT Press would like to thank the anonymous peer reviewers who provided comments on drafts of this book. The generous work of academic experts is essential for establishing the authority and quality of our publications. We acknowledge with gratitude the contributions of these otherwise uncredited readers.

This book was set in Adobe Garamond Pro by New Best-set Typesetters Ltd.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data is available.

ISBN: 978-0-262-54570-9

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

For Luis, part of our “infinite conversation”

I am that great phoenix [*bennu*] which is in Heliopolis [*Annu*], the supervisor of what exists.

Who is he? He is Osiris. As for what exists, that means his injury. *Otherwise said:* That means his corpse. *Otherwise said:* It means eternity and everlasting. As for eternity, it means daytime; as for everlasting, it means night.

—*The Ancient Egyptian Book of the Dead* (Spell 17)

[There is] a fable which says that among the first medicines was one from the ashes and nest of the phoenix, just as though the story were fact and not myth. It is to joke with mankind to point out remedies that return only after a thousand years.

—Pliny the Elder, *Natural History* (29.viii)

You have seen everything that has ever been; you testify to the passing and turning of the ages.

—Claudian, “The Phoenix” (27.104–105)

Every combustion process is a sacrifice of individuality. When the sun represents the ideal principle in relation to the earth, the earth, as it were, sacrifices itself to the sun, as it does in the volcanic process, although, like a phoenix, it again revives from the ashes by the power of its indwelling individuality and binds itself in a relation to the sun anew.

—F. W. J. Schelling, *System of Philosophy in General and the Philosophy of Nature in Particular*

One need only remember how the regimes of the one and nature gave way to the disparate which dislocated them, beginning with their respective establishments, to understand that their destitutions were always a phoenix’s tale. From the ashes of the Greek hegemony, the Latin hegemony emerges, and from the ashes of the latter, modern self-consciousness emerges. There is a thetic relapse without which no new regime could be put into place (yet which does not take up the destituted positions in any synthesis).

—Reiner Schürmann, *Broken Hegemonies*

Contents

Preface: Is a Philosophy of Nature Still Tenable? *xi*

- 1 THE PHOENIX COMPLEX** *1*
- 2 PHILOSOPHY'S THIRD PATH: PLATO/LEVINAS** *29*
- 3 ON PHYSIOPSYCHOLOGY—LIFE AND ENERGY:
ARISTOTLE/HEGEL** *59*
- 4 UNITY AND UNIVERSALITY: PLOTINUS/SHELLING** *89*
- 5 THE PHOENIX ACTS: HILDEGARD/SPINOZA** *127*
- 6 DEATH, REBIRTH, AND BEYOND IN HINDU TRADITIONS** *149*
- 7 GENERATIVITY AND GENERATIONALITY IN CONFUCIANISM** *175*
- 8 UNIVERSAL RESURRECTION IN RUSSIAN COSMISM** *197*
- 9 POLITICAL RENAISSANCE FROM THE ROMAN EMPIRE TO THE
THOUGHT OF HANNAH ARENDT** *219*
- AFTERWORD: ASHES TO ASHES . . .** *241*

Notes *247*

Index *279*

© 2023 Massachusetts Institute of Technology

This work is subject to a Creative Commons CC-BY-NC-ND license.

Subject to such license, all rights are reserved.



The MIT Press would like to thank the anonymous peer reviewers who provided comments on drafts of this book. The generous work of academic experts is essential for establishing the authority and quality of our publications. We acknowledge with gratitude the contributions of these otherwise uncredited readers.

This book was set in Adobe Garamond Pro by New Best-set Typesetters Ltd.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data is available.

ISBN: 978-0-262-54570-9

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1