

Analecta Husserliana

The Yearbook of
Phenomenological Research

Volume CXV



From Sky and Earth to Metaphysics

Edited by
Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka

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ANALECTA HUSSERLIANA
THE YEARBOOK OF PHENOMENOLOGICAL RESEARCH
VOLUME CXV

Founder and Editor-in-Chief:

ANNA - TERESA TYMIENIECKA

*The World Institute for Advanced Phenomenological Research and Learning
Hanover, New Hampshire, USA*

Published under the auspices of
The World Institute for Advanced Phenomenological Research and Learning
A-T. Tymieniecka, President

More information about this series at <http://www.springer.com/series/5621>

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Editor

From Sky and Earth to Metaphysics

 Springer

Editor

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The World Phenomenology Institute
Hanover, NH, USA

ISBN 978-94-017-9062-8 ISBN 978-94-017-9063-5 (eBook)
DOI 10.1007/978-94-017-9063-5
Springer Dordrecht Heidelberg New York London

Library of Congress Control Number: 2014952724

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Printed on acid-free paper

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Acknowledgements

This volume gathers selected studies from two international conferences: the 36th Annual Conference of the International Society of Phenomenology and Literature, *Drama Between Skies and Earth*, and the 17th Annual Conference of the International Society of Phenomenology, Fine Arts and Aesthetics, *Artistic Interpretation of the Sky Experience*. Both of the conferences were held in May 2012 at the Radcliffe Gymnasium, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts, USA.

We owe a special thanks to Patricia Trutty-Coohill, the Secretary General of our International Society for Phenomenology, Fine Arts and Aesthetics. Professor Trutty-Coohill took on the role of running the 2012 conferences, which were a great success.

As always, our conference participants and authors deserve to be thanked for their precious collaboration.

We also owe thanks to Jeffrey T. Hurlburt and Louis Tymieniecki Houthakker for their contribution in the preparation and editing of this volume.

Hanover, NH, USA

Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka

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Clockwise, from lower left: Bruce Ross, Raymond Wilson III, Bernard Micallef, Victor Kocay, Patricia Trutty-Coohill



Left to right: Aydan Turanli, Lena Hopsch, Rebecca M. Painter, Alira Ashvo-Muñoz, Archie Bhattacharjee, Anjana Bhattacharjee, Matti Itkonen, and Mary F. Catanzaro

Introduction: Some Remarks About Ontopoiesis as New Metaphysics

Francesco Totaro

Abstract Ontopoiesis is certainly a new metaphysics. We have to consider, previously, both the classical way and the modern way of metaphysics. It is important to recall that Parmenides declares the unconditioned positivity of being or he declares the being as unconditioned. Tymieniecka's thought is a metamorphosis of the phenomenology toward the life and the unfolding of the universal logos. In this direction, intentionality, truth and 'trascendentalia' become driving forces until the emergence of the divinity as fullness of the logos of life. My personal proposal aims to connect the ontopoiesis, taken as new metaphysics, with a development of the metaphysics of the unconditioned being. The productive effort intrinsic to the ontopoiesis could be better understood as a dynamic manifestation of all that can live in truth, goodness and beauty.

Keywords Ontopoiesis • Metaphysics • Phenomenology • Communication • Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka

An Inquiry

I would like to express some remarks about phenomenology and metaphysics; better: about ontopoiesis and metaphysics. And we could finally say: about ontopoiesis as new metaphysics.

In any case, we need an inquiry into metaphysics as such. What are the main features of metaphysics? Fortunately – or unfortunately – there are many ways of metaphysical thought. Let us look at the main ways in the history, at least of the West.

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The Classical Way of Metaphysics

First: the old way or the classical way. I know that professor Tymieniecka loves particularly Heraclitus and his dynamic metaphysics. But I would like to remember also Parmenides and his statement that being cannot not be. This statement is very important because it says being and not being or being and nothing (if you prefer: positive and negative); and, simultaneously or immediately, it says that the being prevails against and over nothing. In other words, Parmenides declares the unconditioned positivity of being or he declares the being as unconditioned.

This is crucial also for a right interpretation of Heraclitus, if we want to read the flux, about which he speaks, as the life of the positivity itself and not as the reduction of the positivity into nothing.

Thus, Parmenides offers us the legacy of an unconditioned principle, that is, a principle that we can recognize as the condition of any conditioned being and not as a consequence or a production of what is conditioned (in time and space).

The Modern Way of Metaphysics

Second: the modern way of metaphysics. This way is, initially, the metaphysics of the subject. The best result of the modern metaphysics of the subject is the elaboration of the categories of the consciousness, an elaboration that finally arrives to the statement of the intentionality of the consciousness itself.

In the statement of the intentionality, also the overcoming of the separation between being and appearance can find a place, a separation that had been the target of Nietzsche's critique of the dualism of the so-called Platonic-Christian tradition. After this critique, we can no longer establish a meaning of the world in a way which is the devaluation of our experience.

This result, beyond Nietzsche himself, could open the possibility of a metaphysics considered – as Dilthey stated in the conclusion of his famous book *Einleitung in die Geisteswissenschaften* – as a research of the sense. Husserl assumes this notion of metaphysics as a research of the sense and we can consider that this kind of metaphysics is at the core of Husserlian phenomenology.

But let me further reflect on this issue. In the framework of modern and contemporary philosophy, the critique of metaphysical tradition, which is accused of being disembedded from life and of being an objectifying kind of thought, can be dated back at least to Nietzsche and Dilthey, and it continued – even if with different nuances – in Husserl and Heidegger. The intuitive method, opposed to the deductive one, is at the core of those philosophies, which claim their belonging to life.

Anyway I would like to stress the fact that in any version of philosophies linked to life, the idea of metaphysics does not disappear, but rather assumes new and transformed forms: in Nietzsche there is surely a metaphysics of becoming, that ought to coincide with the being, without going out from the becoming itself;

Dilthey speaks about a metaphysics as a search for the meaning that ought to take the place of the classical naturalistic metaphysics; Husserl proposes a pure eidetics with a metaphysical air, and Heidegger, focusing on the thesis of the ontological difference, re-interprets the relationship between the Being and any single being as an event – *Ereignis* – which is never saturated through its expressions. Remaining in the phenomenological stream, it must be remembered that Max Scheler's legacy, in its turn, is widely metaphysical.

Actually, at a closer look, we are in the era of the post-metaphysical thought – borrowing this expression from the title of a famous essay by Habermas – in which, among possible developments, post-metaphysics itself hints at a post-post metaphysics, that is, a regenerated metaphysics, that ought not to encounter the problems of the old or degenerate metaphysics.

The qualifying trait of the new metaphysics ought to be its intrinsic vital character: metaphysics as metaphysics of life, in the life, for the life, and anyway never without life.

The Comparison with the Phenomenology of Life as a New Metaphysics

Here the comparison with Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka's phenomenology of life is open, being a phenomenology which is ontologically thought in its roots, and thus turns itself into a meta-phenomenology, or a new metaphysics.

At the heart of this thought lies a renewed inquiry into the sense. So, how to intentionate the sense, and what is or could be the sense that we have to intentionate? To answer this essential question, some fundamental concepts are to be kept in mind, in my opinion, such as the crucial notions of immanence and transcendence, totality and finalism, and all that can be useful to identify and to articulate the basic idea of ontopoiesis, in its dynamism and in its constructive perspective oriented to the creative discovery of the sense and, more deeply, to the sense of sense.

In this framework we have to limit ourselves to the analysis of a few fundamental traits of Tymieniecka's thought, that distinguish her from the phenomenological tradition, and give account of her metaphysical approach.

Intentionality

The first trait consists in a revision of Husserl's notion of intentionality. The re-modulation of intentionality proposed by Tymieniecka seeks to answer the following question: "Is intentionality really the exclusive basic factor in constituting our world as it manifests itself?"¹ To the limits of Husserl's intentionality, that

¹Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka, *The Fullness of the Logos in the Key of Life. Book I. The Case of God in the new Enlightenment*, in *Analecta Husserliana*, Volume C (Dordrecht: Springer, 2009), p. 21.

cannot arrive at a “crowning achievement of his quest for the certain and necessary foundation of all knowledge”, that is, to a “phenomenology of phenomenology”, Tymieniecka opposes a different and alternative end, crossing back the itinerary articulated through the procedures of reduction.

She thus arrives at a “specific modality of the universal logos that manifests itself to carry the inquiry along and which continues to interrogate events when the intentional vehicle fails”,² a modality which manifests itself, in its universal play, as a *driving force*, which is progressing towards its aims by an alternation of impetus and equipoise, “so that the progress of this force is punctuated”. In this way phenomenology radically turns itself into a vision of the processual dynamism, according to a specific articulation: “As this driving force ‘moves onward’ it reveals itself as a constructively oriented dynamis that breaks the already established current of becoming having an intrinsic endowment and answers a call already issued for the completion of the state of affairs given and that simultaneously launches a project of potential constructive continuation. With each impetus a constructive outline, articulations, links, etc. are projected. The consequent actualization brings the impetus from potentiality to a new balance in reality achieving a measure of equipoise therein as the deployed energies are constructively adjusted, attuned to their circumambient conditions”.

Landing to “the creative function of constitutive consciousness”, the intentionality of the *logos* realizes the instance of ultimate self-foundation as ontopoiesis, and thus as *logos of life*. Certainty and thruth of the *logos* lie in its potentiality for realization, with no need of further reductions.

Truth

This entails a redefinition of truth, that needs to be co-extensive to the whole process of the *logos*, and thus goes beyond the specifically human sphere: “although the constant search for ‘truth’ or adequation reaches its highest intellectual modality in the specifically human sphere of the cognitive logos, without which no course of individual – and a fortiori societal – enactment could be carried out, since specifically human, cognitive, intellection is the clearest and strongest instrument of individual life enactment, this constant search for truth sustains the entire dynamic/constructive spread of the logos of life in its various spheres, using all the varied modalities of each”.³

Consequently, the notion of truth entails a universal *generative power*. At the same time, since truth is always embedded in a plurality of spheres, none of which is prevailing, it develops itself through a variety of levels and, we could say, of prospective partiality: “As we may see, taking into due consideration this fundamental generative notion of truth as being immersed in all spheres of sense and being appropriately qualified by them, none of the partial perspectives may claim a pre-

² *Ibidem*, p. 22.

³ *Ibidem*, p. 122.

ponderant validity or claim precedence over the others. Each of the abovementioned conceptions of truth – and others – may hold a claim to only partial validity. And only together can the intellectual/cognitive conception, the contextual/interrelational conception, and the pragmatic/directional conception of truth adequately respond to the essential life situations of the human being from whom the question and quest for truth proceeds, for they express the three main concerns of human life involvement. Each of them plays its specific role in life situations within the sphere of sense that is in question”.⁴ It is also clear that the realization of truth within the entire field of the phenomenology of the ontoipoiesis of life excludes the renunciation to the truth in favor of *relativism*, that on the contrary we would fall into if we gave validity only to one of the spheres of truth, without taking the others into account.

Transcendentalia

A third trait that characterizes the ontoipoietic radicalization of phenomenology is the translation of transcendentals – that had already been analyzed by Husserl – from their cognitive dimension, to a more comprehensive existential and vital one: “the transcendental situation of the living being consists not in cognitive apprehension but in the vital positional situation of the living agent as the center of a band of vital attention as it pursues functional concerns – with all of its functions stemming from and oriented outwards by a “center” – a center open to receiving reactions, nourishment, etc.”⁵

Intentional horizons, that go beyond the mere cognitive dimension, are thus delineated: “We have then to recognize not only the horizons of our cognitive performances – which Husserl emphasized – *but also the horizons of the whole of experience of living beingness and of all its vital functions*”. The intentional push that goes through the whole movement of the *logos of life* completes itself in the social forms of living and finally goes beyond the narrow borders of the existential dimension too: “Constantly advancing in its progress, the logos is constantly strengthened and invigorated anew by existential or presentational acts from which surge new virtually present resources of force and direction. Having reached beyond the existential/evolutionary parameters of vitally significant (survival-oriented) horizons to the spheres of experience in communal/societal life, which find their basis in existential foundations, the creative logos now throws up spiritual and, lastly, sacral horizons of experience that actually surpass the now narrow confines of the existential horizon”.⁶ In this way an overturning of the supremacy of mind over life is realized, together with the extension of the transcendental from the world of life to the wider geo-cosmic framework: “The world of life, which man projects around himself, is indeed transcendental but not in its fundamental origins in constitutive consciousness/mind – with its specific centrality – but rather with respect

⁴ *Ibidem*, pp. 122–123.

⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 134.

⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 135.

to its *positioning within the dynamic web of the geo-cosmic architectonics of life. It is life-transcendental*".⁷

Ontopoiesis, Hermeneutics and Communication

The peculiarity of Tymieniecka's thought consists in the metamorphosis of phenomenology into a metaphysical construction that unfolds itself as ontopoiesis, that is, as the constitution of being, that corresponds to the self-reflexive character of its expression, which is manifold but teleologically oriented, and thus converging toward a sense that – going through the whole geo-cosmic flow – leads to the human and to the further emergence of the divinity as fullness of the logos of life. The path of ontopoiesis cannot be deductively demonstrated, but rests on a claim for self evidence, that is nevertheless able to feed itself with the results of cognitive disciplines, and can offer them, reciprocally, a frame of full understanding.

In the frame of ontopoiesis the different domains of knowledge would be understood better than the way in which they would understand themselves by themselves alone. We could also argue that the ontopoietic method is not only intuitive, but more precisely intuitive-hermeneutical, since the ontopoietic horizon aims at providing different disciplines with the coordinates, thanks to which they could gain the highest value.

In this way, phenomenology of life arrives at an omnicomprehensive cosmological frontier, not relying on a philosophical eidetics that would provide sciences with epistemic aprioris, but on a predisposition to assume their results, even running the risk that these limited realms of knowledge go beyond the empirical prudence upon which they usually rest.

Into the unity of ontopoiesis can flow any "positive" knowledge, if it becomes aware of its integration into the flow of anything which lives and of its *intelligence*.

In order to complete this brief outline, a supplement of analysis on the relationship between ontopoiesis and communication can be useful.

Ontopoietic metaphysics, or ontopoiesis as a metaphysics of *beingness* (and not simply *being*), calls forth *centres* of self-reflection, where the constitution or expression of the being can narrate itself. This means that the *communication of the being* intrinsically belongs to the ontopoietic vision. It overlaps with the dynamism of the being, that narrates itself through conscious beings, that in their concrete empirical condition show the signs of a transcendental event, that is equivalent to the ontological flow.

In the human sphere communication gains the qualitative difference that comes from the exercise of an "*imaginatio creatrix*", open to new forms of the existing, but the creating imagination, both in the esthetical, and the existential choices to which

⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 137.

it gives birth, is linked to the overall flow of the ontopoietic process, even if it produces a higher stage.

To sum up, ontopoiesis is also *communication*, and the subjects of communication mutually communicate their capacity to produce being, that is, to lead the being to manifestation and to make evident, for themselves and for others, what has manifested itself.

Once again, we could refer to Heraclitus' words. Exactly in his critique of the human beings, that are unable to understand the logos, emerges (in the first two fragments of the Diels-Kranz edition) the model of the right communication, that should consist in telling what equally goes through everyone, and therefore is riverbed and aim of a common striving. Communicating ought to be the disposition to tell the universality of the logos, from each one's own position, picking the transcendental in the part.

But it is also important not to separate the transcendental from the empirical. Therefore the attention to the methods and contents of positive inquiries regarding communication (particularly those regarding the evolutionary-biological researches on language – from Maturana and Varela up to Tomasello – and the neurological studies) is consistent with the epistemology that Tymieniecka associates to the ontopoietic set-up, provided that their deterministic inclinations are corrected.

The Unconditioned Principle

From the above sketched framework, it is clear that ontopoiesis constitutes itself as a new metaphysics, because it aspires to be an active search for the ultimate sense of reality, in its dynamic articulations and in the unity of its *telos*.

What is my conclusion with regard to such an aspiration? In this frame the research of sense, if it wants to put itself as a research of *the sense of sense*, that is, of the ultimate sense, can or, better, *must* open itself to a new consideration of the unconditioned principle, which is the legacy of the old or classical metaphysics.

On this road the ontopoiesis, taken as new metaphysics, or as the renewal of metaphysics, could affirm itself as a resumption and development of the metaphysics of the unconditioned being. Certainly not a static being, but a being alive because intrinsic to the life, so a being as dynamic and performing *beingness*. A beingness not depending on our production, because origin and *telos* of any production, overall of human production in its effort to escape the logic of instrumental reduction of things and mankind itself, and intended, on the contrary, in favour of the *manifestation* of all that can live in truth, goodness and beauty.

So our experience can become more and more, in knowledge and in action, in sciences and in passions, an increasing enlightenment of Logos.

Part I

On Communicative Being in Postmodern Times

Daniela Verducci

Abstract The urgency of the anthropological question of communication stimulates the attempt to pose again the metaphysical issue and to repeat the endeavor to “save the phenomena”, now that the philosophy of being of tradition seems to be at its last stage and unable to convey the transition toward the broadening of the horizon of meaning, which the new unknown mental, affective and practical experiences of Postmodernity, and even the new entities and procedures of the technological artificial-being urge. From the phenomenology of life of Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka significant steps have been already achieved toward the realization of a graft of a new subjectivizing metaphysics on the old objectivizing metaphysics.

Keywords Being • Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka • Communication • Postmodernity • Habermas

The present contribution was realized on the basis of some contents used by the Author to present the 3rd Post-Metaphysical Dialogue, entitled “About communicative being. In the post-metaphysical age”, held on 28 March 2012, at the Department of Philosophy and Human Sciences of University of Macerata and promoted by the author Daniela Verducci, as she is Professor at the Advanced Seminar of Contemporary Philosophy, in collaboration with Francesco Totaro, President of the International Society for Phenomenology and the Sciences of Life-Centre of Macerata, who also teaches Ethics of Communication at University of Macerata. There was also the participation of: Martin Schwartz, Professor Emeritus of Near Eastern Studies at Berkeley University; Olga Louchakova from the Institute of Transpersonal Psychology of Palo Alto; Yan Chunyou and Lin Guowang, both from Beijing Normal University and the Confucian Centre of Macerata University; Professor Anna Arfelli, Director of the Psychology of Development Centre at Macerata University; Francesco Alfieri OFM from Bari University and the Lateran University; and Benedetta Giovanola, who is teaching Ethics and Economics and Philosophy of History at University of Macerata.

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The question on the communicative virtues of being's conception, that the ancient and modern traditions left us, arises spontaneously as we realize that the anthropological question on communication is intrinsic to the current condition of thought, defined by J. Habermas as post-metaphysical (Habermas 1998). In fact, since the traditional horizon of being – both in ancient substance metaphysics and in modern subject metaphysics – has been considered as a mere datum of fixed habits, a dead inheritance, stiffened and not related to the present life, it became even more unable to receive and give a sense to the new forms of experience arising in the contemporary age, consequently even communication among men, nations, generations, disciplinary sectors, and life habits, became even more disturbed and jammed (Tymieniecka 2009, p. xxv).

It is becoming increasingly necessary to restore, at the basis of every movement of our humanity impoverished by the objectifying technological rationalism, the awareness and the attention for the mysterious but also effective inter-subjective “mutual understanding” (*Verständigung*), the Habermas one, which has an almost-transcendental-performative value, and which by now has showed itself as prior and preliminary to each accomplishment of communicative intentionality (Habermas 1990, pp. 82–98). Actually it designates the proto-being of man, his constitutive being-in-communication-of-sense with his fellow creatures, which brought to every phylogenetic advancement of homination (Tomasello 2000, p. 4) and which is strongly linked to the progress of human civilization for present society of communication too.

But is the being ($=\epsilon\tilde{\iota}\nu\alpha\iota$) (Parmenides of Elea 1985, Fr. 6) – such ultra-linguistic and ultra-symbolic formation, through which the theoretical integral horizon of wholeness was defined for the first time by Parmenides from Elea, and in which every phenomenon can find its place, and therefore can be preserved from dispersion – is the being of Parmenides able, in the multiple variations that the pluri-millennial philosophical tradition presents, from Parmenides' full sphere to Heraclitus' fire/becoming, from the supreme substance to the perfect being, to the unconditioned being, finally such a being that the tradition brought to us, is it able to convey the transition which is currently requested, the transition of the communicative being?

The question has a sense if we realize that both ontology or *metaphysica generalis* as the knowledge of being as such and *metaphysicae speciales* as the knowledge of things beyond the physical dimension, (Suarez 1998) have established and developed until now, taking for granted that the anthropological experience of being was pervasive and persistent, and therefore it was possible to structure on its basis the theoretical reckoning, supported by the saying of Parmenides: “For it is the same thing that can be thought and that can be” (Parmenides of Elea 1985, Fr. 3).

On the contrary, today the ontological dis-communicability affects the immediate experience (Baumann 2005), which not only has become extremely fragmentary and rambling, also causing mental pathologies which were less common in the past, but moreover it is even more unmindful and inattentive toward the communicating being, although every experience still develops on this basis. For this new disconnection of consciousness from the horizon of meaning, the ontological theorization appears as an application to a phenomenon, that is being, which became

antiquated and obsolete; in addition, there is no awareness that in the issue of the communicating being, not only the survival of philosophy comes into play, but also the possibility for the human being to control his productions and to use them to increase his being and the being of all the world.

But post-metaphysical concern cannot be satisfied by any positivistic attitude toward the abandonment of metaphysics, nor by the intention to consider it as an outdated stage of knowledge which has been supplanted by the positive scientific one (Tymieniecka 2009, p. xxiv). On the contrary, the metaphysical question is emerging again, and it is needed urgently to resume its endeavor to “save the phenomena”, now that the traditional philosophy of being – of the Ancient, Christian, Modern, Enlightenment, and Romantic tradition – seems to be at its last stage, and unable to convey the transition toward the extension of the horizon of meaning, which is solicited by the new mental, affective, and practical experiences of the post-modern age, and by the new entities and procedures of the artificial technological being. Nevertheless, we must operate to avoid the risk to lose the new emerging germination of transcendence: while we complain about the end of metaphysics and get exhausted for giving an appearance of vitality to its simulacra, we run the risk of depriving the new theoretical germination of the cures it requires to become stronger and to provide us with the new communicative horizon of meaning which we are looking for.

In this context, we follow the way of the anthropological-philosophical reflection (M. Horkheimer, J. Habermas, M. Scheler), but also the cultural and anthropological-evolutionistic reflection (L. Bolk, A. Portmann, M. Tomasello), which pointed out that it is the specie-specific quality of man that of knowing/having to institute the mediation through his own common horizon of being for everything that occurs at the stage of impulse-reaction dynamics, with which both plants and animals respond, adequately and typically, to the environment’s stimulations, (Scheler 1960, p. 228). According to Nietzsche, already our primitive ancestors referred to this anthropological property, when they named themselves with the word “man”, which means “the measurer” (Nietzsche 1997, § 21).

After all, it is precisely in a communicative perspective that, during the age of crisis and the present post-modern age, the new philosophical instance is defined: it is critical in an eminently constructive sense, since it does not intend to wish the decline of traditional metaphysics and ontology. The interest of the current love-for-knowledge is instead to achieve the re-opening of the traditional, objectifying ontological systematization in order to promote its integration with a metaphysics of the act or a meta-anthropological metaphysics (Scheler 1975). The latter is the conveyor of the subjectivation factors, according to which being is not only contemplated, but also its unexpressed potentialities are highlighted and conducted to realization: by the specific condition of being-of-transcendence peculiar to the human subjectivity, which develops according to the *logos* that holds everything together – “in logos omnia” – an ontological communication and an inter-personal and cosmic synergy can be established for “a new Enlightenment” (Tymieniecka 2009, pp. xxiv–xxvi).

From the phenomenology of life of Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka significant steps have been achieved already toward the realization of a graft of a new living/subjectivizing metaphysics on the old objectivizing metaphysics. This effect is achieved by the

innovative vision about the being and the man, introduced during the last forties by the phenomenology of life, which Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka elaborated after the results obtained by the “intuitive resowing” (Verducci 2010, p. 33) of the experience which the classical phenomenologists started from. Focusing her attention on the breaking point of intentionality and re-contextualizing the universe of human existence within the unity-of-everything-there-is-alive, Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka discovered that the acts of the living human individual express a specific type of constructivism, which is not merely comparable to a process-according-to-nature (Tymieniecka 1988, p. 4). In order to direct his virtualities toward a positive realization, in fact, the human individual, unlike the other living beings, needs both to find the reasons of his beingness and to avail himself of the principle of being, through which he can confer on his creations, that indispensable feature of humanly appropriate “objective” form, which makes them graspable and usable.

Of crucial importance at this point is that being so spontaneously put into play, does not limit itself to maintain the significance of “indispensable essential factor of all beingness”, in the sense of classical metaphysics, inasmuch as it “concerns beingness in its finished, formed, established or stabilized state”. Rather, in the measure in which it appears in the acts of the human living being, being manifests itself as “the intrinsic factor of the constructive process of individual becoming”. This means that, since “becoming is a process in its own advance, in qualification”, and since “the individual remains always in the process of becoming”, that is, he is continually proceeding toward what is not yet, being, engaged in the creative acts from which becoming proceeds, acts as the intrinsic stabilizing forerunner of the acquisition and transformation of form, that characterizes the natural evolution of individual life (Tymieniecka 1998, pp. 4–5).

Therefore, when life attains the level of the human creative condition, it no longer stops in reproducing itself, but in the acts of the living man it always interprets itself in existence, giving rise to forms of life that are not only new and previously unimaginable, but also congruent and adequate to the becoming being of life, of which only man possesses the cipher (Tymieniecka 2004, pp. xiii–xxx). Now the human being is not only who is able—at a specific ontogenetic stage—to operate as a meaning-bestowing-agent and producer of his-world-of-life, as Husserl proposed. On the contrary, man “creates according to being” (=ontopoiesis) (Kronegger and Tymieniecka 1996, p. 15) from the initial stage of his existence: he is born as an original ontological factor, since “his very life in itself is the effect of his self-individualization in existence through inventive self-interpretation of his most intimate moves of life” (Tymieniecka 1998, pp. 3–5). In the creative human acts, more than in the “cognitive processes of the human mind”, there is a manifestation of the “inward givenness of the life progress common to all living beings as such”, and it emerges also the logics at its basis: an expansive and evolutionary logics, of self-individualization of life, which reproduces in an autopoietic way in the pre-human constructivism, while it creatively-produces-being in the ontopoiesis at its human level.

Now that phenomenology asserted itself as a “universal praxeology of knowledge” (Cecilia 2002, p. 694a), the ontological frame turns out to be deeply reanimated and

the *Erlebnis* can become again a resource of the prime philosophy: again the being manifests itself as a unitary logos, more precisely, the being now appears such as a unique logoic force that from the inside of all the entities acts, animates and continuously enriches of connections the Parmenidean sphere and the Hegelian absolute Spirit. Since the self-individualizing onto-poietic logos is able to produce a communicational net among the phenomena, from the inorganic level of being to the organic and human one, it also weaves a “meta-onto-poietic” net made of innumerable metamorphical stages of transcendence, according to the perspective of *philosophia perennis*. This was already outlined by G. W. Leibniz: in order to rationally understand the truth of the prepositions-of-fact, he introduced the principle of sufficient reason, which, while establishing a foundational dynamic tending toward the infinite, made it possible to construct a solid ladder of truth in order to always better rise to the fullness of the logos.

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The Logos of Life: Autopoiesis, Ontopoiesis, and Meta-ontopoiesis

Elisa Tona

Abstract The present article has the purpose to point out the role of the Prime Philosophy in answering to the anthropological and ethical problems that the contemporary society makes arising. Living in a technological world where the human beings have lost their capability for the achievement of transcendent aims thus reducing themselves to an instrument of the blind world's progress, why and how can the philosophical knowledge bring them back to their authentic essence and existence? I here maintain that only a new Prime Philosophy can give value to the human being in his dimensional interality, for he is an ethical being who can become something that he is not yet. The Phenomenology of Life, founded by A. T. Tymieniecka, replies to these contemporary anthropological and ethical questions. Seizing the intentional level, the Phenomenology of Life has opened in the human experience a new givenness, set at the level of life: it discovered the phenomenon of the corporeal-conscious and so included in the human ontological statute the growing of Life, allowing the search of the wholeness of the constitutive elements of human individuals. In fact the living human being is capable to transcend himself, other individuals and the world, seizing a unitary sense through his capability of symbolization. Because of this natural factor of transcendence, human individuals are meta-ontopoietical subjects too. In conclusion the new anthropological model based on the Meta-Ontopoietical Capability of Human Beings points out the metaphysical role of the ethical functions of individuals and their ontological responsibility toward the other human beings and the world.

Keywords Ontology • Prime philosophy • Phenomenology of life • Horizon of meaning • Anthropology • Ethics

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The Need of a Prime Philosophy

A considerable progress of technologization, or technocracy, arising from the development of technical-scientific knowledge and its consequent connection with the economical apparatus, has been occurring in contemporary society. This complex and connected setting, whose unitary process overlaps with globalization, still has such an outstanding impact on human being and his existence, to completely change his state. Man is not seen as the subject of his doing, acting and being any more, but he turned out to be the object and instrument of technological progress. The human being and his specific essence of being subject are both in the service of scientific and technological knowledge and deprived of their typical and individual capacity “for controlling and directing toward an anthropological unitary purpose” (Totaro 2007, p. 193) the objective entities he elaborates and produces.

While during the course of history the technical producing and doing were anthropologically led and oriented toward the development of means for an even better and worthy life, now the *τέλος* has flattened on means; therefore, what before was a mean for the achievement of a wider aim including human existence, has now become the only end of life and human activity. The artifact is not considered as what is generated by the human capacity for producing and choosing the means, thus directing and enhancing nature toward its true identity. The human subject, whose complexity and anthropological richness are based on the possibility to create a specific vision of self and the world in order to start a becoming by which to arrange for himself something he does not possess, has lost the resources to achieve the ethical and ontological task of making the being happen (Totaro 2007, pp. 193–194).

Yet, only in the humans the insuppressible needs of finding a sense for the self, his existence and the surrounding reality, and of transcending toward a horizon of meaning to find the direction for his action and the order of the world are expressed. In fact the human being is an ethical subject since he embodies

the commitment of making the positivity of being happen in the existence. Making the positivity of being happen means, more precisely, conquering and extending conditions and opportunities, which are available in history or have to be pursued beyond the present's restrictions, so that everyone can realize the project of life he brings, in the fullness of his capacities and according to the most adequate choices for the search of a good life (Totaro 2007, p. 199; our translation)

In the present age characterized by a “collapse” of ends on means and the consequent reductionism of anthropological self-consideration, the consciousness of the intrinsic human need of both a prime philosophy and a research of meaning improving the human subject in his being at the same time essence/ideal form and existence/factual condition, is basically important. In fact these dimensions are anthropologically constitutive and linked by a constructive continuity in the temporality of human life. For this reason, the consideration of their authentic meaning implies the creation of a prime philosophy, which investigates its essential constitutive elements, yet considering what has now become evident, that is they can be realizable only in corporeality and temporality. Only in this direction the philosophical

knowledge will be able to generate a new prime philosophy which can restore the vital breath to humanity and the world.

It is thus about formulating a new ontological model representing the authentic human nature/condition that is of a being which transcends and transcends itself, making its being and the being of the universe happen. Among knowledges, philosophy has to go beyond every “actual knowledge” (=wirkliches Wissen) (Hegel 1967, § 5), since it is research of the principle of all things, that goes endlessly, in spite of the contrary purpose of Hegel; it has a basic role in reactivating the human responsibility toward oneself, the others and the world: in fact man is never a finished subject, rather he accomplishes himself little by little all over the time of existence, thus he can take upon himself the ethical commitment to outline horizons of meaning for the whole being, where he can find the way to realize what has to be but it is not yet.

From Consciousness to Life

The phenomenology of life, which started thanks to the Polish phenomenologist Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka, can be considered as the key of the philosophical and human turning point which leads to the rebirth of the humans in their philosophical authenticity. Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka’s intention in the practice of phenomenology of life has been the discovery of a new horizon of meaning adequate to the current age: in fact today more than ever we need a prime philosophy and meaning for the human, given that only man is able to give a meaning to what he is/has and to what surrounds him, thus surpassing the limits of reality. Tymieniecka, by applying the phenomenological method of direct intuition to the intentional structure of the constituent consciousness, purchased and described by classical phenomenology, discovers a new level of givenness: from such a sowing of the previous phenomenological inquiry a new horizon of meaning blooms, showing a self-individualizing life.

From the ancient need to “save phenomena”, already raised by Plato, until Hegel’s *Phenomenology of Spirit*, many phenomenological seeds were sowed on the ground of philosophical reflection, which during the 20th century not only finally gathered the fruits of the mature phenomenological plant, but through them it also fertilized the whole cultural contemporary context. From such disseminating crossbreeding a theoretical original web is emerging; to this web, as to a Prime Philosophy, the new scientific-technological knowledges which before were self-referential, are now connected, as well as the traditional philosophical thought, for which the new phenomenological theorizing is not an antagonist, aiming at representing rather the deepening and continuation of it, beyond crisis. (Totaro 2007, pp. 11–12; our translation)

As well expressed in the citation above, the phenomenology of life together with its philosophical turning point, doesn’t arise from nothing but from the seeds of previous philosophical and phenomenological analyses; it is a real germination-of-meaning which does not eliminate the precedent phenomenological ground, but rather it enhances and cultivates it, helping the *hinc et nunc* givenness