

PHENOMENOLOGY OF LIFE
FROM THE ANIMAL SOUL TO THE HUMAN MIND
BOOK II

ANALECTA HUSSERLIANA
THE YEARBOOK OF PHENOMENOLOGICAL RESEARCH
VOLUME XCIV

Founder and Editor-in-Chief:

ANNA-TERESA TYMIENIECKA

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

For sequel volumes see the end of this volume.

PHENOMENOLOGY
OF LIFE
FROM THE ANIMAL SOUL
TO THE HUMAN MIND
Book II
*The Human Soul in the Creative
Transformation of the Mind*

Edited by

ANNA-TERESA TYMIENIECKA

The World Phenomenology Institute, Hanover, NH, U.S.A.

Published under the auspices of

The World Institute for Advanced Phenomenological Research and Learning

A-T. Tymieniecka, President

 Springer

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data is available

ISBN 978-1-4020-5181-6 (HB)

ISBN 978-1-4020-5182-4 (e-book)

Published by Springer,
P.O. Box 17, 3300 AA Dordrecht, The Netherlands.

www.springer.com

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*In memory of
the phenomenologist Stephan Strasser
a great scholar and a noble friend
(Catholic University of Nijmegen
1947–1975)*

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This volume of studies, like the previous one (Volume 93), is dedicated to the memory of Stephan Strasser, great scholar and friend of The World Phenomenology Institute. It gathers papers read at our Fifty-Fifth International Phenomenology Congress, which was held on August 17–20, 2005 at The Radboud University in Nijmegen, The Netherlands. It was at this University, formerly the Catholic University of Nijmegen, that Stephan Strasser taught Phenomenological Psychology.

As one of the Counselors on the Board of The World Phenomenology Institute he has worked with us and supported the Institute from its inception until his death. We owe him innovative ideas and wise counseling, as well as dedicated friendship.

The participants in the conference — authors in the present collection — who have come from various parts of the world, deserve our heartfelt thanks. We would also like to thank Springer Publishing for their help with the copy-editing and proof reading of this volume.

A-T.T.

THEMATIC STUDY

CREATIVE IMAGINATION IN THE CONVERTING
OF LIFE'S SENSIBILITIES INTO FULL HUMAN
EXPERIENCE

The human condition comes into its own only, as we have pointed out before,¹ when *Imaginatio Creatrix* emerges and progressively reaches the realization of its full potential, bringing in the freedom to interrogate and the powers of creative invention.

When we come to stand back and ponder it, we are amazed at how the onto-poietic unfolding in self-individualizing life for so long “tacitly” and obscurely carried our various functional spheres and then how, of a sudden our beingness was extended from the sphere of feelings towards ideas, projects, and community. The radiating wealth of our circumstances became suddenly apparent. Life suddenly resonated with countless voices, shimmered with myriad shades, assumed all manner of shapes. The life that comprises us became something we could envisage. After submersion in the vegetative-vital-organic spheres, we surfaced into the glaring light of the spirit. Within the sphere of the spirit, we find at last ourselves *free and empowered*. In “our” body-flesh-psyche-consciousness we become the focus of cosmic forces, the center of the universe.

For us, “living” means being alive in this realm of empowerment. Here the living individual raises itself above the enactment of the virtualities inherent in its onto-poietic sequence and acquires personal stature as self. This is obviously a new phase in our condition. It is attained with the emergence in our constitutive system of *Imaginatio Creatrix*. Two major steps follow on that, the genesis of the specifically human mind and of the human person. At this point the great metamorphosis of sense is accomplished and we have, indeed, reason to inquire anew into the continuity in the innumerable steps taken in the onto-poietic unfolding of self-individualizing life, into the continuity that is the condition, the proto-condition, of this progress.

But let us emphasize beforehand that this extraordinary distinction between the phase of the simpler, strictly vital/natural sense of life restricted by the

functional dependencies of the individual's selection of nutrients, habitat, etc. within its ontopoietic sequence and its circumambient conditions and the phase of the freely resounding symphony of the human significance of life and existence does not pitch one against the other. On the contrary, it is our thesis that all the moves of life—whether vitally subservient or imaginatively floating above the necessities of existence—are carried by the same *logos* of life. The multiplicity of its diversification of sense—whether ontopoietic and vital or creatively informed—are each and all transmitted, modulated, harmonized by the thread of sentience. *Sentience* is the innermost core of the *logos* of life, the intentionality of *vis viva*. Let me emphasize again that sentience, as the prerequisite of the *logos* of life, constitutes its innermost thread, which infinitely ramifies with respect to the constructive aims of the *logos*.

We will now succinctly outline the *logos*' most significant arteries of sense, which pass each into the others through virtual capacities that shape sense via bodily organs and psychic antennae and creative conscious speculation.

1. FROM THE LIVING AGENT'S VITAL CONSTITUTIVE SYSTEM (THE BRAIN) TO THE HUMAN MIND

We have been surveying all these spheres of the human condition, how the feelers, hooks, antennae thrown out by living beings are accompanied by an ingrown self-individualizing beingness inscribing its autonomous selfhood within the cosmos. In the realm of universal law, living beings come to lay down their own basic rules of life enactment.

In summarizing the main knots or phases of metamorphosis marking the growth of autonomy in living beings, we have dwelt on the arc of its body-flesh-psyche-spirit progression, on the continuity in this progression, and in particular on the fabric that builds toward the emergence of the specific *novum* of sense in each.²

In the "brain" we have the great apparatus bringing together the entire functional network of the human physical-organic-corporeal-psyche unity. This apparatus is intrinsically tied to the living agent and is for it a platform for the expansion of its powers. In its performance the brain plays a preparatory role in the stablishing of the fully autonomous living beings that appear only with the emergence *sua sponte* of *Imaginatio Creatrix*. The highest level of animal development is the platform for the appearance of what we acknowledge to be human beings. For the last phase of the transformation-metamorphosis of life, *the logos prepares its own transformation into the creative logos*, which derives its dynamism and direction from human beings.

At this juncture the human being is empowered by the creative logos to invent and forge, *which transforms the human condition itself*. All of this occurs, of course, in strict coordination with the givens of nature/life.

The course of life was from its incipient moment carried by individual living beings, each following its very own onto-poietic sequence. But now at this point, where life has attained a new functional platform, the constitutive apparatus of the organic brain is informed by *Imaginatio Creatrix* and myriad transformative devices are crystallized into the functional system of the mind so that this particular living being acquires *the power of invention and the power to project lines of conduct*.

This amounts to saying that the vitally operative logos of life is progressively preparing in its diversification for just this radical step, the entrance into the game of life of *imaginatio creatrix*. *Imaginatio Creatrix* proceeds from the womb of life and depends on it. Still it lifts the logos, thus far subservient to meeting the needs of survival, to the level of autonomy, in which the living subject becomes endowed with a far-reaching range of conscious intellectual performance. We have the self-directing sphere of consciousness in a full conscious human individual.

Quite obviously, the operations of the mind carried by the logos of life and diversifying into innumerable streaks of sense are all related to sentience. In its various modalities and degrees the mind modulates all the communicative virtualities of this sentience up to a point at which the data attain the “abstraction” of “subjective” acts such that sentience now appears to be “detached” from the conscious agency, that is, to break loose from its essential sentient core. And yet even this sense correlates with the sentient receptivity of the living human subject.

This is not the place to enter into a discussion of the creative powers of the logos instrumental in the constitution of the human mind with all its faculties. What is at stake here is the differentiation of the logos of life in its specifically human constructive expressions and devices, that which characterizes human beings within their circumambient world and the commonly shared universe of life.

2. THE HUMAN WORLD OF LIFE: DEVELOPMENT IN A CONFLICTIVE SITUATION BETWEEN HUMAN INVENTIVE PROJECTIONS AND VITAL NECESSITIES

With the human creative mind we have entered the specifically human plane of existence developing the human significance of life. Having laid down the onto-poietic cornerstones for our investigation, in which we have seen how the

vital-natural functions of animal life have unfolded further and further to the point of their essential encounter with the rays of creative imagination (with the living agent being transformed through its metamorphosis into the human creative mind), it remains now only to ponder this metamorphosis at its core in order to bring out the specificity of the human constructive/destructive development in its multisided, conflictive, and somewhat enigmatic features.

Let us ponder first of all that the new directional lines in the development of the human being as well as the influx of new resources and forces. There is no need to emphasize the emergence of the individual personal will that conducts the specifically human progress/regress itself in contrast to the ontopoietic design that subtends the progress/regress of the living agent within the natural sphere of existence. Let us repeat that while at the natural level the law of fitness reigns over the selection of food, shelter, range, and degree of communal sharing-in-life and a pretraced line in beingness is followed, with the emergence of the will there is brought in an entire apparatus of intellectual interrogation, deliberation, selection, and planning. While the existential progress/regress of natural/vital development consists in instances of coalescing moves toward constructive projects foretraced in their essential virtualities by the intrinsic ontopoietic sequence, instances that, however complex they may be, advance in a quasi-"linear" fashion reflecting time experienced as Chronos, the human advance in contrast proceeds in its moving and unfolding from the new prompting force of the will and the mental mesh of deliberation, selection, and decision, powers that take on a special form—with the planning of the mind in which all the faculties take part assuming the form of "achievement." No matter how simple a human act be, in stemming from an imaginative propulsion of the mind it carries an aim to be "achieved." This essential feature endows human self-awareness with an inner conviction of being "free." We are free to project, free to choose, but does that mean we are free to achieve?

Here we come back to our initial ontopoietic vision, which confirms itself. As I emphasized above, the individual existence of each living being in its existential unfolding partakes of and is part of its existential context—it maintains a crucial interplay with the circumambient life network within which it is ingrown. Even so the specifically human creative sphere of life—the human world of life—not only remains existentially/vitally founded in the natural sphere of life, being dependent on its fluctuating conditions, but personal/individual unfolding and undertaking within the creative sphere of life is also essentially ingrown, in a more intimate and extended intersubjective context, that is, not only in the network of natural/vital existence but also in the world of other human creative individuals planning their moves for the

achievement of aims according to their own inventive powers. Here are joined strictly subjective appetites, tastes, and deep elemental inclinations coming from natural strivings and drives.

Thus we cannot limit ourselves to positing “rationally” calculable motives when looking at human action. We have also to take into account the workings of the *tertium quid* that is the matrix of human becoming—the in-between sphere in which the elementary functions of natural-animal development encounter the specifically human imaginatively lifted powers. Here we come to a culminating point of our considerations. On the one hand, the creative/inventive swing and deliberative mind give the human being an imaginatively expanded self-awareness of his or her powers. This makes human beings feel they are the agents of their life courses, the masters of “blind” forces to be directed to personal advantage. On the other hand, each human being is grounded in those forces and is subject to innumerable influences in his or her unfolding and so really acts as informed by coexistential circuits.

At present, given the capacities each of us has for calculating and cognitively encompassing life, the life-world, the cosmos, etc., human life appears to be expanding within the frame of the individual. As a matter of fact, we speak of how the evolution of types is now concentrated on the evolution of human individuals, who currently stand endowed with consciousness that has greatly expanded in just the course of a century and appears to have found the secret of further, seemingly infinite, expansion of human potential. This expansion manifests itself not only within the individual but also in the transformative progress of the entire life and world network. This is not only true with the technological advance of individual and societal existence, but is also true with the growth of human consciousness and of the spiritual dimensions of experience. From day to day, we are facing both new inventions and new turns of mind. We presume an infinite progress ahead. This progress creates new demands upon the individual and society as well as new problems that society has to solve. Ever new sources of force reveal themselves to us and we believe we are able—as masters—to foresee and control their courses and their effects. Yet like the sorcerer’s apprentice of the tale, having found the key to releasing the current of power, the human being possesses neither the key to stopping the current nor the means to entirely control the achievements it makes possible. Outcomes remain always subject to the whims of nature, cosmic and human.

This course involves not only individual natural endowment and inclinations but also the potentialities of the entire network of sharing-in-life within circumambient and remoter circles. The course now depends on ontopoietic

self-individualizing directions and on the onto-poietic rules of the circumambient contexts, on the one hand, and on individual creative genius, on the other.

The question of how to master the routes of human development within the individual as well as within its interactive world, society, culture while navigating the stormy sea between and among conflicting forces without a compass is beyond the scope of this presentation, which intends merely to describe that development's onto-poietic groundwork. We may, however, draw from that ground an essential indication. Human mastery being out of reach, there seems to be an indispensable measure of human conduct if one wants to safeguard human existence on earth. In order to control in some way the flux of human development to our existential advantage we have to adopt a special frame of mind. Keeping in sight the onto-poietic groundwork sketched above, human calculation should embrace measure, proportion, and temperance in its contention with life's conditions.

NOTES

¹ See the first part of this study in the "Thematic Study" of Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka (ed.), *Phenomenology of Life – From the Animal Soul to the Human Mind*, Book I: *In Search of Experience*, *Analecta Husserliana* XCIII (Dordrecht: Springer, 2007), pp. xix–xxiv.

² See Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka, "The Great Metamorphosis," in *Logos of Phenomenology and Phenomenology of Logos*, Book 5: *The Creative Logos: Aesthetic Ciphering in Fine Arts, Literature and Aesthetics*, Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka (ed.), *Analecta Husserliana* XCIII (Dordrecht: Springer, 2007), pp. xi–xv.

SECTION I
SPHERES OF THE HUMAN SOUL

PHENOMENOLOGICAL HYLETICS: THE ANIMAL,
THE HUMAN, THE DIVINE

The dimension defined as the hyletic one is discovered by Edmund Husserl while analysing the human being; but, the problem consists in asking whether it is possible to understand the animal with the tools given by hyletics. Though Husserl did not perform the application of hyletics to the animal world, in his analyses we can find, however, a general description of the animal. Further one can note that in the phenomenological school there was a great interest regarding the phenomena of animal and vegetal life, because the comprehension of the human being passes also through the comparison with these dimensions. This happens in particular in the case of Hedwig Conrad Martius and Edith Stein¹, but before them it was Husserl himself who began that kind of research.

The scheme of my contribution is, therefore, the following:

- (1) What Husserl wrote about animals.
- (2) What is the phenomenological hyletics in relationship to the human being and the possibility to extend it to animals.
- (3) Hyletics as a tool of interpretation of all the reality, as far as the Divine.

1. THE ANIMAL AND ITS INSTINCTIVE LIFE

As regards the question of the human world and the animal world and the theme of instinct that they have in common, particular significance seems to me to attach to some manuscripts that belong to different groups, A, C and E, and therefore concern also different core problematics – according to the subdivision utilized at the archives in Louvain – that yet converge on the topic with which we are here concerned.

That the theme was not exceptional in Husserl's reflections is brought out by the manuscripts that were to constitute the second volume of the *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and a Phenomenological Philosophy*², in which there appears an explicit reference to the psychic constitution of animals (Section II, IV, 45) as compared with the human world. The fact

that he subsequently returned to the topic shows that the attention Husserl paid to the animal world was not by any means occasional and, as we shall subsequently see, its treatment in particular contexts is a further motive of interest.

For the moment, however, I shall concentrate on the analysis to be found in ms. E III 10 in which the study of the pre-given world from the point of view of impulsive and instinctive life is used as the starting point for tackling the theme of knowledge of the human world and the animal world. The text opens with one of the very few passages where Husserl refers to S. Freud's analyses and seems to share their results. Husserl accepts the possibility of the existence of 'repressed' affects, of unsatisfied desires that are relegated to the level of the unconscious and generate an 'illness' of the soul; indeed: "Everything that is removed, everything that is of value, but remains hidden, continues to function in an associative and apperceptive manner, something that the Freudian method deems possible and presupposes"³. Starting from this consideration, Husserl examines the dynamics of the special intentionality that characterizes the instincts; the desire for food, for example, can be described by using the approach valid for the cognitive modality, for in this case, too, there is a tending towards a fulfillment that finds its realization in an object, particularly in the act of eating. In actual fact, hunger helps Husserl to understand the instinctive dimension, because the I is always hungry, hunger is its habitual condition that is only temporarily interrupted by the taking of food.

The analysis of instinctive life in human beings leads Husserl to establish two firm points: it is precisely thanks to habits that the unity of the I already constitutes itself at this level, so that the unity of subjectivity, though recognized by consciousness, is of anterior origin; secondly, the habits themselves influence and in some cases even determine the direction of the will and therefore passivity plays an important part in the sphere of the human will; as a supporting example one may note that the need for walking becomes transformed into a decision: "I want to go out". Rather, one can trace a typicality of the fundamental structure of needs that become articulated at different levels and constitute the structural form of all life, making it possible for the I to possess a systematic structure of the orientations of its will; in a wider sense, we can consider the modes of the will and of originary instinctive life to be the *Vorgestalt*, that is to say, the form that precedes the other forms.

All this leads Husserl to examine the 'vital' instinct of animals in general and not from the point of view of the naturalist scientist, who studies only its physical aspects, and not even – as we might add – from that of the ethologist or the scholars of animal psychology who, even though they seek

to penetrate ‘inside’ the psychic life, do not – according to Husserl – possess adequate instruments for doing so: this goal can be achieved only by an analysis that Husserl calls transcendental in the phenomenological sense: “. . . in this way we have the animal subject as subject of its pregiven world, of its acquired orientations and correlates, in which one always finds the identical objects”⁴.

Husserl begins his analysis by highlighting two particular instincts, that of survival, bound up with food, and that of generation, which is connected with the community dimension. These two instincts, of course, do not exhaust the description of instinctive life; the instinct of fear, in fact, is also of considerable importance for survival. Moreover, there come into play both pleasure and non-pleasure and also whatever attracts or repels, through the sense of smell or sight for example, and these are connected with both the instinct of survival and the communitarian instinct.

In an approach of such an ‘internal’ type – in the phenomenologico-transcendental sense – how can one justify self-conservation and conservation of the species? An animal comes into the world through birth and leaves it on account of natural death due to old age or illness or as a result of chance events that yet have a typicality of their own. Is it therefore possible to understand what happens in the psyche and consciousness of an animal, a ‘superior’ animal of course, in relation to its death? It knows death through the deaths of its companions, but does it make sense to speak of companions, family relations, education? Is there some correlation between the I and the Thou and therefore the Us in the animal world? Husserl’s answer is affirmative, even though the intersubjective world of animals is characterized by an as yet primitive form of relations between male and female, between father, mother and ‘offspring’, between friends and enemies, or by the struggle for life or death, by death as an event of this surrounding world. But what is the level of awareness of all this with respect to animal individuality?

The answer to this question is found in the central part of the manuscript, which bears the subtitle of *The animal and awareness of death. The superior animal and the I and the Us as regards animals in relation to the surrounding world*⁵. Life is self-conservation in a continuous development of realization (implementations) that commences for the individual with birth and terminates with death, but birth implies also generation, and thus survival of the species, and yet even species come to an end. The examination of the animal world therefore proposes again a necessary confrontation with the human world that brings out both the affinities and the differences. One may ask oneself whether the individual animal has consciousness of its death, but it would certainly be devoid of sense wondering whether it is conscious of the end of

the species; and yet, all this is present, albeit with graduality and different levels of awareness, in the human world.

Human life is explicitly connected with its own death, but also connected with its own human history and, more precisely, with the future of humanity and thus also with the life and death of humanity as such and with the surrounding human world as cultural world. This at least as regards the highest development levels so far achieved by humanity – in this case, once again, there are different real and possible degrees⁶.

In this way we started from, but also arrive at the human.

2. HYLETICS AND THE DESCRIPTION OF THE HUMAN BEING

Husserl's analysis of the *Erlebnisse* highlights the duplicity of the intentional noetic moment and the hyletic or material moment. As one can notice the term hyletics is not intended to indicate matter in the traditional sense, but a new type of materiality that he proposes in §85 of the first volume of *Ideas*, for which he was then looking for a new term and thought to have found in the Greek word *hyle*. It is a question of identifying what had never before been clearly delineated and for this reason there also lack the words to express it. The description of this sphere is, then, to be found in the first volume of *Ideas*⁷ and is further developed in the second volume⁸ in connection with the analysis of the living body (*Leib*), which has localizations regarding not only the sensorial sensations that exercise a constitutive function for the objects that appear in space, but also regarding completely different group sensations and the exemplification is efficacious, because Husserl is referring to sensorial sensations, the sensations of pleasure and pain, of bodily well-being or discomfort deriving from a bodily indisposition⁹, and this represents a particularly important point.

That this argument continues to be present in his researches is confirmed by a copious number of manuscripts of groups C and D dating to the thirties, in which he considers the two moments mentioned I have just mentioned. The function of hyletics in the field of the sensations is particularly studied in Ms. Trans. D 18 dedicated to the formation of the kinaesthetic system, which is concerned with the relationship between one's own body and the changes of the surrounding world with reference to the oculomotorial field. In Ms. Trans. D 10 I Husserl specifies that the kinaesthetic system becomes constituted in relation with the constitution of the hyletic objects¹⁰, but it is in Ms. C 10 that one grasps the connection between the hyletic units and the affections, because even though the hyletic universe is a non-egological universe that becomes constituted without the intervention of the I, nevertheless "*das Ich*

ist immer 'dabei'”, the I is always present as place of the affections is always active in some way¹¹.

It will not be out of place to come back to some passages of Husserl's text I have just cited. I have in mind the reference to the two groups of localized sensations, which perform a role – of materials, in fact – similar to that of the primary sensations for the intentional *Erlebnisse*, such as hardness, whiteness, etc. Inasmuch as they are localized sensation, these groups of sensations – according to Husserl – have an immediate somatic localization, such that for every human being they concern in an immediate intuitive manner his body (*Leib*) inasmuch as it is his own body, as a subjective objectivity that distinguishes itself from the purely material thing “own body” by means of the stratum of localized sensations¹². “difficult to analyze and illustrate”, – as Husserl continues – the latter form the basis of the life of desire, of will, the sensations of tension and relaxation of energy, the sensations of internal inhibition, of paralysis, of liberation¹³. But connected with this stratum are the intentional functions, the materials assume a spiritual function, just as happens in the case of the primary sensations that come to form part of perceptions on which constitutive judgments, etc., became subsequently constituted¹⁴. There is thus indicated a stratification that has a twofold aspect: a cognitive one, formed by the primary sensations, perceptions, perceptive judgments and a psychico-reactive one, formed by sensorial sentiments and valuations. The perceptive, judicative and valutive level is on the side of noetics.

The relationship between hyletics and noetics is thus clearly delineated, but the hyletic moment seems to drag the noetic one, and hence Husserl's preemptory affirmation: “... a man's entire consciousness is in a certain way with his body through its hyletic base”¹⁵; but the duplicity is not eliminated, indeed, the intentional *Erlebnisse* are not localized and do not constitute a stratum of one's body. The autonomy of the spiritual moment with respect to the material one, which yet makes possible its manifestation, is in this way confirmed and corroborated; indeed, inasmuch as it is tactile grasping of form, perception is not in the finger that touches and in which the tactile sensations are localized; thought is not really localized intuitively in the head as the localized sensations of tension¹⁶. Husserl notes that often we express ourselves in this way, and one may wonder why this should be so; one can reply that the attractive force of the hyletic localization makes us concentrate attention on our body.

Concerning what happens in animals, though it is impossible for us to live what animals live, it is possible to perform a kind of empathy which consists in grasping their life and the acts lived by them as far as these acts are similar to those ones lived by us. After all what Husserl said about the

animal world and the instincts, that characterise it, was said referring to the human capacities to grasp that world.

The level of likeness concerns the bodily sensations and the reactions through the psychic acts that we can grasp in animals, particularly when we are in contact with the more developed ones. The difference and the disparity emerges – as we have already said – when we mind that animals cannot perform some acts that we define “spiritual”, as intellectual comprehension and elaboration, willing actions and motivated decisions, all things that are at the bottom at least of the artificial world constructed by human beings. We are aware that we cannot establish empathy at that level, and that is why we cannot consider them really “like us”. If all this is true, we are able to affirm that, even if we cannot grasp at the bottom the mechanism through which animals know the world at a perceptive level and even if there is a great variety of cognitive modalities in this sphere, researched in particular by the ethologist, perception with its passive process draw near the human dimension to the animal one. And also the psychic reactions which follow such a process, seem to be akin, linked up with the localised sensations and expressing satisfaction or disgust, attraction or repulsion.

3. HYLETICS AND THE “ULTIMATE REASONS”

Not only the human world and the animal world can be studied by the phenomenological hyletics – a tool of research which comes up by the side of the phenomenological noetics – but it can be a useful instrument to analyse the deepest strata of reality.

Though the manifestation of hyletics is primarily in the gnoseological ambit, numerous remarks made by Husserl suggest a more ample function. As we have seen hyletics concern first and foremost the affective and impulsive sphere that underlies – and in this sense one can speak of hyle, i.e. of matter – noetic valuation. The hyletic sphere seems to Husserl to have a peculiar autonomy too. In fact analyzing human acts in their stratification, Husserl affirms that in them there is present a “blind” and “organic” entelechy that acts at the impulsive level, it becomes explicit at the level of the will, passing from an impulsive intentionality to a conscious one. Following the road of practico-ethical behaviour and not its purely gnoseological counterpart, it is possible to gain greater insight into the theme of entelechy and its teleological sense.

Undoubtedly better known is Husserl’s insistence on the teleology of history, which is to be understood as discovery of an immanent end in history and as an ethical appeal for the realization of that end. But the ultimate reasons of the existence of this dimension are traced in what he calls necessary

“reference to the originary facts of the hyle”¹⁷, which would seem incomprehensible if the intentionality present at the impulsive level had not been highlighted. In this case, once again, there manifest itself the cross-reference that Husserl always makes from the sphere of cognitive and ethical awareness, which he calls the categorical sphere, to the pre-categorical sphere. And the road he indicates on the logic level runs from formal logic to transcendental logic (*Formal and transcendental logic*) and, on the gnoseological level from consciousness to the passive syntheses (*Analysis of the passive syntheses*), which are at the basis of the formation of all knowledge in the web of subject and object before these two moments become effectively distinct.

More generally, the “archaeological” excavation that I am here trying to reconstruct by moving from Husserl’s scant analyses serves to uncover the “ultimate reasons” that are associated with the prime or more obvious reasons. This excavation, which commences in interiority, serves, as we have seen, to leave it by the road of hyletics, because the “ultimate reasons” are to be found in the fact that nothing is “by chance”, quite the contrary, one has to trace, and right from the most profound dimensions, a “teleology”, a finality and therefore the reference to an “originary facticity” can be fully comprehended if one grasps that it has its foundation in God¹⁸.

The way to arrive as far as God, here proposed by Husserl, shows itself as particularly original, because, founding itself on the ground of finality, comprehend it as the profound and ultimate structure of all the reality. Husserl not only affirms in a general manner that all the things have a goal, but he analyses each stratum of reality through the stratification present in the human being to conclude that not only the cultural and spiritual works, the voluntary processes characterising the human beings, not only the examination of the organisms and of their levels of development and perfection – how one can read in *Ideen* – but also that obscure world of originary instincts, of feelings, of the unconscious bodily and psychic movements have a sense. That is why Husserl speaks of a *Triebintentionalität* (impulsive intentionality). Sense and goal, formal cause and final cause – using Aristotle’s language – are correlated. Only then will one understand the definition that Husserl gave of teleology as “form of all the forms”, because through it we can grasp the ultimate significance of reality¹⁹.

If in all the levels, not only in the rational level, in the spiritual works, but also in the dimensions considered chaotic and magmatic we can discover a sense, then it is necessary to attribute the origin of the sense to God, as ultimate reality. All the aspects of reality are connected; there is a chain leading from the animal to the Divine, not in an evolutionary process, because each degree has its original specificity and what comes later does not just derive from

what is before. The stratification of reality is made by qualitatively different levels linked up regarding some aspects, but also unique in themselves, and all together included in an Absolute Principle who is the Cause and the Goal of everything which is alive.

Italian Center of Phenomenology, Rome
Lateran University, Italy

NOTES

¹ Regarding these phenomenologists I examined their position in *Phenomenology World Wide*, Analecta Husserliana, vol. 80, edited by A. T. Tymieniecka (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 2002): *Edith Stein's Contribution to Phenomenology*, pp. 232–240; *Edith Stein. Phenomenology, the State and Religious Commitment*, pp. 648–656; *Hedwig Conrad-Martius and the Phenomenology of Nature*, pp. 210–232.

² *Ideen zur einer reinen Phänomenologie und einer phänomenologischen Philosophie*, transcribed by Edith Stein between 1916 and 1918, revised by Ludwig Landgrebe in 1924–25 and by Husserl himself until 1928 and eventually published by Marly Biemel in 1952 as Vol. IV of *Husserliana*.

³ Ms. Trans. E III 10, *Vorgegebene Welt, Historizität, Trieb, Instinkt*, January 1930, p. 3.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 10.

⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 12–17.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 17.

⁷ *Husserliana*, Vol. III.

⁸ *Husserliana*, Vol. IV.

⁹ *Ibid.*, §39.

¹⁰ Ms. Trans. D 10, *Zur Konstitution der physischen Natur. Zuerst Leib – Aussending; dann rückführend auf Hyle und Kinästhesie*, p. 23.

¹¹ Ms. Trans., C 10, *Das gehört zum Komplex der urtümlichen Gegenwart!*, p. 25.

¹² *Ideen II*, op. cit., §39.

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ *Ideen II*, op. cit., §39.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ *Zur Phänomenologie der Intersubjektivität, III*, *Husserliana* XV, p. 386.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 94.

PASSIVITY AND FUNDAMENTAL LIFE'S
EXPERIENCE IN MICHEL HENRY'S THOUGHT

Reflecting at length¹ on the disastrous consequences of Galilean science for the understanding of life, Michel Henry departs from the *Krisis* to characterize the Galilean legacy as a “archi-founding act”² of modern science and knowledge which excluded phenomenological life by reducing it to the geometrical mathematization of the material universe.³ The rupture between the knowledge (*sagesse*) inherited from the Greeks and Christianity, which survived until the eighteenth century, and the aestheticism of modern culture reflected on the opposition between two matrices: that of moral, religious and political unity of the simultaneously sentient and rational being, conceived in the image of God yet irreducible to all purely conceptual and demonstrable knowledge;⁴ and the scientific-technical matrix of the vision of the world, nature and man. In the latter, the modern concept of *cogito* reflected two major structural epistemological streams of Modernity: the valuing of the ego, the transcendental and timeless subject, with decisive consequences both for the devaluing of the concrete man (man builds his identity by transcending himself through reflection) and for the condition of ‘incommunicability’ of the subject; and the discovery of the body-machine that functions autonomously without the contribution of thought. Marked by the rule of appearance and sensuality, the body of Modernity is governed by duality and separation, adopting some ambiguous attitudes towards the body: valuing it on the one hand yet devaluing it on the other. Modernity has thus radicalized the idea that man is fundamentally a dualistic being, a radicalization that was accompanied by the antagonism between subject and object, nature and society, individual freedom and social/communal laws or norms. The rupture or transformation of the unity of discourse, such as Modernity conceived it, culminated in the workings of the linguistic rules that embodied, in the Kantian system, the transcendental structures of understanding. The whole of post-Cartesian philosophy reflects, therefore, the parallelism between rationality and the systematic foundation of knowledge, resulting from an ontology of transcendental subjectivity and a notion of an all-enveloping human essence of a

practical-ethical order. The methodological-scientific concerns that became predominant since the seventeenth century overlooked the fact that formed consciousness (*Bildung*) overcomes all natural sense, since, while the latter is always limited by a certain sphere, consciousness “operates in all directions and, as such, is a general sense.”⁵ The classic *visual-objective* model of the *thing* restricts reflective consciousness to the *factum* and its exact observation; science is the measure of all knowledge where space and time are exclusively a system of coordinates for accessing exact and accurate clues about all things. At an anthropological level, this model turned the concepts of *logos* and *space* into the commonplaces between the ‘world’ of nature (the external, the physical) and the “world” of culture (the internal, the reflective consciousness). Man is since seen as an (objectifiable) corporal or biological thing, as a *sum*, a “pure object of the physical or external world, something that can be touched and objectified, i.e., a body comparable to that of an animal yet specifically different from it because it is endowed with something that animals do not have, the *logos* or the *nous*”.⁶ The Western model of man, for which Christianity is strongly responsible as the heir of the platonic concept of the body as a “passing condition of the soul,”⁷ introduces a deeper and more radical distinction⁸: “Flesh and spirit are not anthropologically constitutive elements of the human entity but rather ways of being of man in his referral to divinity. Man ... is not an amalgamation of two completely different substances but a single incarnate subject.”⁹

The crisis in the sciences after the seventeenth century is the crisis of culture (*paideia*), a crisis of existence brought about by the hyper-development that the Galilean legacy generated, with the subsequent multiplication of increasingly specialist knowledge, of new methodologies which opened up new horizons, but whose premises or conditions he did not theorize: the geometrical-mathematical legibility of the universe requires a transcendental performance of consciousness, an act of the spirit creating something that did not exist before.¹⁰ The ideality of Galilean science, which translates into forms and essences, is based upon a “seeing,” as the sum total of the senses, which operates in a phenomenological horizon: it reflects on an exterior world, a pure exteriority, since matter is *res extensa* and only knows idealities if they are presented before its very eyes:

The geometric determinations to which Galilean science tries to reduce the being of things are idealities. These, far from being able to account for the sensory, subjective and relative world in which our daily activity takes place, necessarily refer to this world of life; it is only in relation to this world that they have a meaning; it is on the insurmountable ground of this world that they are built.¹¹

Experience cannot be conceived as an effect; a reality cannot happen other than to the extent that it provides a sense and a consciousness. Scientific idealities always refer, therefore, to a sense-giving consciousness. In other words, as idealities, the geometric and mathematical determinations imply subjective operation, a transcendental consciousness, a principle which, as it continually engenders the world of science, is a permanent condition for its own possibility: "The transcendental condition of the possibility of the experience in general is the condition of science itself."¹² Continuing on the basis of a technological hyper-development, scientific knowledge invaded the entire field of the *logos*, of *praxis*¹³ and *culture* with an exclusive claim on truth, and its effects on the notions of *the world*, *subjectivity* and *life* often went unnoticed or were not thought through. Modern culture has not only reduced *knowledge* by scientifying it, but also extended the self-denial of life and the pathos (this *originary suffering*) that sustains it¹⁴ to the world and to societies:

To the extent to which culture is the culture of life and pertains to it exclusively, the science that keeps this life and its specific development out of its subject matter, which is culture itself, remains well and truly alien to it. The relationship between science and culture is a relationship of mutual exclusion. (...) By eliminating ... the world-of-life and life itself, science places itself paradoxically outside the latter and its development, and consequently outside all possible culture.¹⁵

The seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, according to Georg Simmel's analysis, reflected an arduous search for the lost unity of the "transcendence of life", the recovery "on a higher basis of the lost unity between nature and spirit, between mechanism and inner meaning, between scientific objectivity and the meaning of value that we sense in life and things."¹⁶ Johann Goethe's life and works strongly expressed an evolution in the concept of the individual in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, since they contained various approaches to individuality (articulated in the idea that man should live *from within himself, act from within*), to freedom, to equality, in the constant flow of life. With *Werther*¹⁷ and *Faust*,¹⁸ Goethe marked the transition from a sentimentalist concept of life to a theoretical-practical concept. It is the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, however, that take it up again in the epistemic crisis of Physics, shifting the transcendental issue of the *cogito* theme to issues in which the being is in question, i.e. to the thought that is directed at the *unthought* and articulates with it. The refusal of the modern concept of autonomous subject in the name of the originary passivity and sensitive affectivity asserts the originary One as a self-given oneself and not a self-proclaimed ego, root of all thought, knowledge or power. From the concepts of W. Dilthey, H. Bergson and E. Husserl there is

an evolution towards the legitimization of philosophical thought in areas that science had originally conquered, whose consequences translate today into the incompatibility of upholding a subject that asserts universal and absolute truth, through its *suitability* to the object produced in itself, through the act of understanding.¹⁹ From the notion of distance between the subject and the object, between man and the world, we go on to a notion of familiarity: the world is not the object of knowledge but the place where I live, where I am allowed to have hope and plans. Experience being a vital, historical process, its intelligibility does not depend on the mere observation of facts but on the blending of memory and expectation, as Dilthey had already argued. The ideality of meaning cannot, therefore, be assigned to a transcendental subject because it comes from the *lived*. The experience that offers itself to the subject is founded on meaningfulness and experiential nexus. Therefore, epistemic consciousness simply continues the thought initiated in the experience of life, since it is previously situated in its vital nexus and finds in it the reference of its own being. Science cannot, therefore, replace the ground on which it is itself rooted, i.e., the *sensus communis* (Vico), the ground for all ability and legitimacy to think and act (*ability to judge*). The *sensus communis*, or “common understanding” (*der gemeine Verstand*), is decisively characterized by the ability to judge, so *judgement* is not a concept created by reflective consciousness but indeed a sense of judgement similar to the sensitive judgements that, despite being formed with some certainty, are not however logically demonstrable. But if objective sciences have understood nothing about life,²⁰ philosophy does not escape this either, as in the form of a classic transcendental phenomenology it does not know any manifestation other than that produced within the world²¹:

When subjectivity is nothing more than externality and its unfolding, when it is no longer something alive, and that by which it is life is lost sight of, denied or concealed, and this by philosophy and science alike, then the former has no lesson to remind the latter, they both live in the same oblivion, in the same stupor in the face of what is in front, which only qualifies as being in their eyes. (...) It is also necessary to understand this subjectivity as life, in such a way that the transcendental contributions which make up, or rather are, science let themselves be recognised as modes of absolute life, for the same reasons as the creations of art, for instance, and in the same way as cultural phenomena for the same reasons as artistic phenomena.²²

Life itself is the origin and fundament both of the objectivity of scientific knowledge and the philosophical reflection to arrive at the truth: the link between Life and knowledge is, therefore, an originary given, since consciousness is always incorporated in history, in society, in economy, in technique and in culture. Subject/consciousness and object/nature cease to be regions of the *Metaphysica Specialis*; instead they designate concrete circles