

ANALECTA HUSSERLIANA
THE YEARBOOK OF PHENOMENOLOGICAL RESEARCH
VOLUME CV

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*The World Institute for Advanced Phenomenological Research and Learning
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PHENOMENOLOGY AND
EXISTENTIALISM
IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

*Book Three
Heralding the New Enlightenment*

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Published under the auspices of
The World Institute for Advanced Phenomenological Research and Learning
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 Springer

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ISBN 978-90-481-3784-8 e-ISBN 978-90-481-3785-5
DOI 10.1007/978-90-481-3785-5
Springer Dordrecht Heidelberg London New York

Library of Congress Control Number: 2010926222

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Printed on acid-free paper

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THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE LIVING SEED
OF INTENTIONALITY. FROM E. HUSSERL
AND E. FINK TO A.-T. TYMIENIECKA'S
ONTOPOIESIS OF LIFE

ABSTRACT

Husserlian phenomenology maintains a surprising vitality even in its posthumous condition. Habermas observes, in fact, that unlike structuralism and Marxism, phenomenology has not in the least passed into a post-phase, but is still permeated with lively existentiality. In his philosophical testament, Husserl himself epistemologically engages this condition of phenomenology, seeking its foundation through the essential description of the dynamic of philosophizing and its tradition. Even though Husserl and Fink thus manifest the lived experience of iteration of finality with which the "I" of the individual philosopher, in intrinsic and living intersubjective correlation with all the other philosophers, creatively enriches natural life, they failed to devote attention to the newness this offers to the intuition.

Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka, in contrast, grasps and draws forth the phenomenon of the *ontopoiesis of life* that flowers from Husserlian phenomenological intentionality and its developments in Fink, describing it in her phenomenology of life. In the quality of "producer of being" of human creative acts, Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka identifies, as unexplored foundational terrain of phenomenology itself, the "point of contact" with the fountain/source from which the unique and originary poetic flow gushes, which leads being and thinking, nature and consciousness to existence. In this way, pushing the investigation beyond the realm of pure ideas in which Husserl and Fink remained imprisoned, Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka carried out the intuitive re-sowing through which her individual phenomenological initiative was grafted into the very stream of flowing life, bringing to fruit the quality of spontaneous autoproduction of life. A new "Archimedean point" has thus been conquered and upon it each thing can now find its proper place.

THE POSTUMOUS LIFE OF HUSSERL'S PHENOMENOLOGY

History's gaze has also fallen upon the thought of Edmund Husserl, after his death. Father Van Breda's 1939 foundation of the Husserl Archive and the transfer of all the philosopher's manuscripts there marked the beginning of Husserl's *vita postuma*,¹ one to which he had devoted his energies since as early as the 1920s, if one is to judge by the sheer volume of the manuscripts he was accumulating without managing to dedicate the necessary energy to bring them to publication.² It may actually be said that Husserl's *vita postuma* is quite lively: the ever-growing number of manuscripts published in Kluwer/Springer's «Husserliana» series gives rise to natural correlates in the form of discoveries, re-discoveries, reprisals, in-depth analyses, and hermeneutical turning-points of phenomenology, which confer upon the Husserlian *post-mortem* story an authentic vitality.

Notwithstanding the impressive volume of his productive dynamism, though, all this might merely reach us as the effect of an irrevocably terminated history from which we might at best draw inspiration were it not for the fact, – which Heidegger had observed as early as 1929 – that the *Phänomenologisierung* that Husserl inaugurated, created a completely new space for philosophical inquiry, casting upon the “hidden forces” of the great tradition of Western philosophy a “gaze”³ that summoned all to participate in the infinite task, both in method and development, of bringing these forces to their “concrete realization”⁴; a gaze that solicits acceptance of Husserl's legacy itself not just as a completed opus to be historically interpreted, but as a trail blazed in history and still open, leading us ever more deeply into history's living depths. «Wege nicht Werke» (= “Paths, not works!”), therefore, for Husserl as well, according to Heidegger's motto for his *Gesamtausgabe*, one which also describes the vicissitudes of Husserl's thought after his death, “through a kind of retroactive genealogy”⁵

J. Habermas would be wrong, then, if he failed to acknowledge phenomenology's particular character as a living theoretic, giving into his suspicion prompted by «the fact that phenomenologists have not yet arrived at their own “post-ism”», unlike the post-analytics, the post-structuralists, or the post-Marxists.⁶ One could certainly expect that phenomenology, too – which found its own “historians”, its own “standard portrayals”, its own “founding documents” long ago – would be destined for a Hegelian “shape of spirit” (*Gestalt of Geistes*) which, «as soon as [it] is recognized in its uniqueness and is named, [...] is placed at a distance and condemned to decline». One could even hold that «phenomenology [...] seems to be breaking up», «after a final productive impetus» given it in France by Sartre and Merleau-Ponty, “unraveling” into superficial anthropologization and profound ontologization. However, it

is difficult not to note, as Habermas rightly does, that phenomenology has not yet been reduced to the mere “history of its effects” (*Wirkungsgeschichte*) at all; indeed, it is still «permeated with existential topicality».⁷ In fact, as Habermas observes, while «an ontologically oriented phenomenology» discovers that «transcendental consciousness concretizes itself in the practices of the lifeworld and takes on flesh and blood in historical embodiments», «an anthropologically oriented phenomenology locates further media of embodiment in action, language and the body», having by now acquired evidence «for the rootedness of our cognitive accomplishments in pre-scientific practice and in our intercourse with things and persons».⁸

It is truly quite singular that Habermas should be the one to show us “life” as the cipher of phenomenological theoretics and the motive for its post-metaphysical survival! In fact, he comes from the same circles of critical thought that in the 1950s, with György Lukacs, had stigmatized the irrationality of Husserlian phenomenology as an occult philosophy of life.⁹ Later, his philosophical journey led Habermas to adopt the post-modern critique of logocentrism from the positive perspective of identification and enhancement of the “effective” universal suppositions of communication and discourse that permit the attainment of understanding and consensus among subjects capable of speaking and acting. In such a set up of universal pragmatism which, connecting language and socialization, returns the theoretical self-referentiality of the *logos* to a basis in performance, Habermas ran into the “lifeworld” as indispensable “semantic potential” or “horizon of sense” for the constitution of society, culture and personality and the constructive exchange among them.¹⁰ Even more, the «individual life histories and intersubjectively shared forms of life», which «are joined together in the structures of the lifeworld and have a part in its totalization», now represent for Habermas, as happened to Husserl and Fink, «the almost naturelike wellspring for problematizations of this familiar background to the world as a whole», to which the «basic philosophical questions draw the relation they have to the whole, their integrating and conclusive character».¹¹

Thus for Habermas, rooted in the world of individually and socially lived human life is the possibility in the post-metaphysical age that philosophical discourse may maintain ownership of its theoretical function, «to mediate interpretively between expert knowledge and an everyday practice in need of orientation», or in other words, to support «an illuminating furtherance of lifeworld processes of achieving self-understanding, processes that are related to totality». He asserts that «the lifeworld must be defended against extreme alienation at the hands of the objectivating, the moralizing and the aestheticizing interventions of expert cultures».¹²

HUSSERL'S PHENOMENOLOGICAL TESTAMENT

These reflections of Habermas resonate closely with those of Husserl, as stated in his so-called "philosophical testament", *Teleologie in der Philosophiegeschichte* (in three chapters, the first two dated June/July 1937 and the last the end of August, 1936),¹³ in which he outlined the phenomenological meaning of philosophy as an infinite «teleological movement toward reason»,¹⁴ achieved through the cooperative effort of those who practice the craft or the profession (*Beruf*) of philosopher. In this way, Husserl opens a broad passage in the eidetic-egological enclosure of his transcendental phenomenology, leading it into the flow of human life, rooting foundational transcendental reflection in the praxis of human subjects operating in lively collaboration with their peers. To Husserl's retrospective glance, philosophy too, just as other crafts and professions, consists of the unitary idea of a "task" (*Aufgabe*) which is handed down intersubjectively through the course of history.¹⁵ The idea of the task of philosophy has broken into European history through an "originary foundation" (*Urstiftung*) laid by the first philosophers, men who first conceived of the completely new "intention" (*Vorhabe*) of Philosophy and whose realization they made their "primary mission" (*Lebensberuf*). They determined its "reproduction" (*Fortpflanzung*) in the social community through succeeding generations. Of course, for the new profession (*Beruf*) of philosopher to be handed down through history, it had to retain, unaltered in time, its "ideal aim" (*Zweckidee*) which has always defined it beyond the individual philosophical expressions linked to specific ages and personalities.¹⁶ However, for the historical transmission of the craft of philosopher, it has been equally indispensable that real individuals introject the *telos* "philosophy" as their "task" (*Aufgabe*), that is, as both a purpose of their own habitually constant will (*habituell verharrende Willensziele*)¹⁷ and a purpose for its concrete realization (*Vorhabe zu einer Werk*), rooting the *telos* "philosophy" in an "I", in which just this *telos* assumes its place in an effective existence, which is to say that it finds a practical, apodictic driving force that leads it to realization (*Ich, in dem eben dieses Telos eine Stätte wirklichen Daseins, praktischer apodiktischer Richtkraft hat*).¹⁸

Husserl clarified that in the emergence of the task/*telos* "philosophy" with the ancient Greeks, we do not simply see the birth of a new type of craft/profession among many others, which always continuously arise through the ages. In it we find rather, an original and unheard of novelty, «a true turning-point in the general history of humanity» (*eine Wendung in der Gemeintgeschichte der Menschheit*),¹⁹ because from the beginning, philosophy

has asserted that its peculiarity (*Besonderheit*) was its *sui generis* intention to realize a

«science of the universe of being as a science for each 'rational being' who thinks within that pure *epistème* and leads to express a definitive cognition of the world» (*Wissenschaft vom Universum des Seiendem als Wissenschaft für jeden, 'Vernünftigen', jeden in der reinen Episteme Denkenden, zu Gebilden endgültiger Welterkenntnis führenden*).²⁰

If, therefore, even the history of philosophy, as the work of philosophers, who have actually followed one after the other in history, is ruled by a teleology analogous to that which is active in other crafts and if philosophy's perennial task is to reveal the "originary foundation" (*Urstiftung*) of every human experience, the result is an extraordinary possibility: through phenomenological "self-reflection" (*Selbst-Besinnen*) we may reach an awareness of the dynamics of living "reproduction" itself (*Fortpflanzung*) and comprehension of the *logos* by which the special form of the final ideas, present in the assignments of the crafts, may be transmitted intersubjectively, entering into the lives of single individuals so profoundly that they are able to determine, within the history of humanity, a new concrete historical level, produced by the praxis of their "professional humanity" (*Berufsmenschheit*) which generates its own historical concatenation (*einen eigenen geschichtlichen Zusammenhang*).²¹

One might catch here echoes of the post-metaphysical utopia of Max Scheler who, following the Nietzschean anthropology of the superman²² and interpreting man as an *ens amans* constituted by the "gesture itself of transcendence",²³ dreamed of a dynamic conception of ontological unity, open to the possibility of representing being itself as self-increasing, in virtue of how man and his work operate a synergy through the "interpenetration" (*Durchdringung*) of the subjective-ideal being and the objective-vital being.²⁴ Such anthropologically borne interpenetration produces the growth of being: this can happen when through it, radically new beings come into existence, as "artificial" beings. All the products of human endeavor – be they agricultural, craftwork, industrial, cultural or philosophical – are "artificial" beings; they are created or produced by man, but they surprisingly result both enduring in existence and stably "rooted" in the pre-existent being.

Certainly it is not in the course of our everyday "awake life" (*Wachleben*) or "life of the will" (*Willensleben*)²⁵ that we become aware of the surprising fact that our individual action, though fully focused on particular interests and goals, obtains permanent results in the previously existing surrounding world, which we share with our fellow beings.²⁶ Nor, in the course of our everyday life, do we ask ourselves about the «peculiarity of setting and fulfilling tasks»

(*das Eigentümliche von Aufgabestellungen und Erfüllung*) or about the specific task of "philosophy" (*das Spezifische [...] der Aufgabe [...] die den Titel "Philosophie" hat*).²⁷ As long as we are plunged into the everyday "life of the will" (*Willensleben*)²⁸ of our current professions, in fact, we find ourselves in a "unique flowing current" (*Einheitszug*) which leads us to a variously interwoven pursuing (*Fortstreben*) of ever new goals, where we are continuously aiming exclusively at these particular goals and at the most other goals that act as mediators.²⁹

It is only when we undertake the profession of philosopher that we learn to completely change our attitudes (*totale Einstellungsänderung*) and to perform a «total thematic inversion of our focus in order to aim at our effectively operative subjectivity as such» (*totale thematische Umwendung auf die leistende Subjektivität als solche*).³⁰ Living as philosophers, in the condition of freely achieved "self-knowledge" (*Besinnung*) which the phenomenological practice of *epochè* allows us, we can suspend the validity for us of all tested and presumably achieved tasks and of all fulfillments which have been dedicated to these (*betrifft die Epochè das uns Gelten der ganzen Aufgabe und aller ihr gewidmeten, versuchten, vermeintlich erreichten Erfüllungen*)³¹ and grasp what we had never seen before «in the naïveté of everyday life» (*in der alltäglichen Lebensnaivität*)³² that is, that the operative modality of subjectivity (*leistende Subjektivität*) with its acts of «pursuing and achieving goals» (*als abzielendes und erzielendes*) founds *eo ipso* for ourselves as specific Egos, «habituallities directed toward a purpose» (*zielgerichtete Habitualitäten*) and consequently creates within ourselves «a structure of being that is persisting but transforming itself» (*eine verharrende und doch sich verwandelnde Seinsstruktur*). With this operative modality of subjectivity there also arises «an infinite iteration of the possible end-positions» (*eine unendliche Iteration möglicher Zielstellungen*) (in projects, proposals, habitual proposals; in the will as a persevering tension of the persevering "I", in the act of doing, in the effectively achieved goals as permanent result of the "I", etc.), and one arrives «at a certain act of understanding, that is, at a permanent understanding of something that lies in all of life» (*zu [...] einem Verstehen bzw. Bleibendem Verständnis dessen kommt, was in allem Leben liegt*).

It is precisely «in this reflection on oneself which includes iteration as such» (*in der die Iteration als solche übergreifende Reflexion auf sich selbst*)³³ that one turns to oneself as "I", in other words, to his being that perseveres in the changes of his activity; in this reflection, we can glimpse our truly intimate egological being as the real being of that life which, in personal acts individually intentioned, grounds that which is permanent (*das unser eigentliches personales Ichsein als Sein in personal intendierenden, in personalen Akten*

bleibendes Sein stiftendes Leben ausmacht).³⁴ In other words: in reflecting on our human dynamics of infinite iteration of the possible end-positions as such, we address ourselves «as to an "I", that is, we address our being as it endures over time, even in the variations of its acts» (*auf das Ich, auf sein im Wandel seiner Aktivität verharrendes Sein*). Therefore we discover our "I" as «the apodictic condition of the possibility of our permanent being» (*apodiktische Bedingung der Möglichkeit seines verharrenden Seins als identisch Ich ist*), exactly because we can phenomenologically observe that our "I" remains identical while modifying his/her goals and aims.³⁵

Then, Husserl added: «something much more important is implicit for we human beings through the aims of the will» (*in dieser Weise impliziert ist aber für uns Menschen durch die Willensziele noch sehr viel mehr*)! In fact, it is true that «all our natural life refers to our surrounding world, unceasingly pre-given to us» (*all unser natürliches Leben bezieht sich auf unsere uns ständig vorgegebene Umwelt*), as «universal and fundamental terrain of all our aspirations and their effective attainment» (*Sie ist das allgemeine Grundfeld aller unserer Abzielungen und Erzielungen*)³⁶; it is equally true that for any decision we make, its content must be known to us in the form of "apperceptions" (*Apperzeptionen*), which – generated by individual experiencing and living in the for-us-effectively-valid world³⁷ – flow within the concrete current of living experiences and move our will, entering as intentions of meaning. However, it is equally indubitable that, in regard to these apperceptions and to anything which comes to us from tradition or has become habitual, it is up to us both to shape the attitude of a «passive tendency to the assumption» (*passive Tendenz zu Übernahme*) and to place ourselves in active skepses that, by questioning the «original meaning and essence» (*ursprüngliche und eigentliche Sinn*) of every experience or thing,³⁸ leads us to a new awareness. Here, in this intentional iteration, in those who gain self-awareness, the construction of a new, higher goal of distinction and clarity takes place and then imposes itself on the ingenuous setting of objectives and then living to attain them, inasmuch as it is a freely chosen goal that can be reiterated by will (*so baut sich über dem naiv tätigen Leben, dem naiv Sich-Ziele-Stellen und dann den Zielen leben gegenüber als ein neues Ziel, ein Ziel höherer Stufe, das der Deutlichkeit und Klarheit, als ein freies, wiederholbares Willensziele*).³⁹ In such new attainment of awareness that is no longer philosophical or of second level, but phenomenological or of third level, the reflective man acquires awareness of his subjectivity, in experiencing a double freedom, on one hand, «in refusing to automatically appreciate any passivity» and, on the other hand, assuming the responsibility of continuously questioning and clarifying problems (*worin liegt, dass das Subjekt iterative keine Passivität gelten lassen will, die nicht im Vermögen,*

immer wieder in Frage zu können und zu Klarheit bringen zu können, zu verantworten ist. Das Bewusstsein dieses Könnens ist das der Freiheit, sich verantworten zu können).⁴⁰

The dimensions of infinity and responsibility of an I that lives freely with those discovered “infinities” of goals and aims (*ist offenbar [...] dass hier neue Dimension von Problemen – eben die der Unendlichkeit und der Verantwortung des in die entdeckten Unendlichkeiten frei lebenden Ich -und Wir- erwachsen*) is especially evident in the profession of the philosopher, whose cognitive task is not only the opposite of any other special form of knowledge within the pre- and extra-scientific life, being purely theoretical, but also attests, within its plural history, to the judgment of the «impossibility, in early naiveté, of succeeding in achieving the fulfillment of the inherited task» (*Unmöglichkeit, in der alten [...] Naivität der Methode je zu einer Erfüllung der vererbten Aufgaben gelangen zu können*).⁴¹ Husserl himself remembered having experimented with the unsettling role of the philosopher in which, precisely when «expressing oneself completely within one’s own system, one resorts to a personal – and unfortunately only individualistic – conviction of having taken philosophy down the road of a definitive realization» (*Ein jeder, in seiner System sich auslebend, erringt eine personale – leider nur persönliche – Überzeugung, die Philosophie auf die Bahn endgültiger Verwirklichung gebracht zu haben, und unser exemplarisch Philosoph [=Husserl selbst] mochte ebenso schon in dieser Weise personal vollendet*), exactly in that instant one is unfailingly «taken in by the skepsis which derives both from the complex view of history and from the inductive certainty of exactly what the general fate of philosophy is» (*als sich seiner jener Skepsis aus dem Gesamtüberschau über die geschichte und der induktiven Gewissheit eben jenes allgemeine Schicksal der Philosophien bemächtigen will*).⁴² But it is precisely at this point, when no new objective seems possible, that Husserl points out that “self-reflection” (*mich besinnen*) in itself is the much sought-after new beginning (*das ist schon ein neuer Anfang*): it shows itself to me as what “I” can do without abandoning the “philosophical” objective. In fact, «self-reflection, in this situation, is the primary “opportunity” to question philosophy and study according to its conditions» (*sich in dieser Situation besinnen ist die prinzipielle “Möglichkeit”, die Philosophie in Frage zu stellen und nach ihren Bedingungen zu fragen*).⁴³

BEYOND THE VI CARTESIAN MEDITATION

At this point, discouragement might overtake even the most devoted follower of Husserl. It would seem, in fact, that the curse of Wilhelm Wundt had once

again worked its harm, damning phenomenological research to revolve upon itself in a spiral of sterile self-referentiality.⁴⁴ Hadn’t this same attention to *Erlebnis* – revived by Husserl in his philosophical testament as a place of subjective donation of sense earned with the practice of *epochè* – set into motion the phenomenological movement three decades before? Has no progress been made, then, beyond naturalism and idealism “toward the things themselves” (*zu den Sachen Selbst*)? After all, such an awareness of the failure to overcome the self-referentiality (*Selbstbezogenheit*) or circularity of phenomenology was precisely what induced Husserl to concede to that hitherto unknown “productive tension”⁴⁵ that was being developed with Eugen Fink, the only student that the master had deemed a “co-worker”⁴⁶ and upon whom he judged that “the future of phenomenology” depended.⁴⁷ In the *VI Meditation*, consequently, Fink explored more deeply the issue of transcendental awareness.

With the intention of establishing a “phenomenology of phenomenology”, he radicalized the “split” in phenomenology, already evident in the Husserlian II and V *Meditations*, into basic phenomenology (which, by its nature is still affected by apodictic naivete) and secondary phenomenology (as the original critique of phenomenological transcendental awareness),⁴⁸ setting forth a further reduction of the worldly idea of being by introducing a distinction between the ontic sense of the world and an understanding of it in a transcendental or “meontic” sense.⁴⁹ Fink felt it cogent to question «the methodological naiveté found throughout the *Méditations Cartésiennes*», «a naiveté which consists in uncritically transferring the mode of cognition that relates to something *existent* (*Seiendes*) into the phenomenological cognition of the *forming* (constitution) of existent». ⁵⁰ Therefore, he sought not so much to reiterate philosophical reflection on the phenomenology of phenomenology, as to work on the aporetic threshold opened there – which Husserl himself ran into, as we can see from his philosophical testament – to verify, with the same method as Heidegger «whether and how the horizon from which “being” (*Sein*) is finally to be understood is itself “existent” (*seiend*), whether and how the *being* of *temporalization* of what is existent (*das Sein der Zeitigung des Seienden*) is determinable». ⁵¹ For Guy van Kerckhoven as well, Fink’s reflection occupies the gap created between the project produced by the pure subjectivity and the being in general⁵² and should thus be considered a constructive phenomenology⁵³ rather than descriptive or genetic. In fact, the liberation of the transcendental constituting life from its concealing in/conniving with the world should be constructed, provoking through «the performance of the phenomenological reduction» a “dividing” (*Entzweiung*) in the undifferentiated unity of natural and unreflected world-constituting activity, by which «transcendental life, in producing the “onlooker”, steps *outside itself*, splits itself, divides». «This dividing, however, is the *condition of the possibility of*

coming to-itself for transcendental subjectivity»,⁵⁴ because it gives way to a place for the transcendental spectator that thematizes the constituting transcendental life. Here we have the oxymoronic concept of the “onlooker who acts” (*phänomenologisierender Zuschauer*), which, as Natalie Depraz notes in the *Schwarzblatt Manuscript* at the Fink Archive in Freiburg i. Br., cited and annotated by Bruzina,⁵⁵ shows to what degree Fink was philosophically intolerant of the descriptive seriousness used by Husserl who, seeking to keep to the methodological rigor of the sciences, held intuitive evidence as the only criterion for truth.⁵⁶

On the other hand, Husserl himself dealt not only with objects and elementary acts of givenness, but also with formal acts of symbolic givenness and with phenomena, such as the existential events and situations of birth and death, or certain social interactions that set into motion a complex structure located beyond the power an individual can have over them. In §62 of the *V Cartesian Meditation*, Husserl identified these as boundary-problems that neither static nor genetic phenomenology, limited to the individual, can deal with, and which therefore call for a specific descriptive method⁵⁷ that must take into account the latest phenomenological “discoveries” by means of which, on the one hand, being constitutes a practical idea, that of the infiniteness of a work of theoretical determination and on the other hand the transcendental sphere of being is presented as a monadic intersubjectivity. It was precisely this new methodological need, we believe, that led Husserl to entrust to the exercise of lively phenomenological intentionality of another, Eugen Fink, the progress of the «phenomenological system itself as architectonic of transcendental philosophy», given that, as Fink also recognized, it «cannot be drawn up ahead of time, but is only to be obtained from the “matters themselves” by passing through concrete phenomenological work».⁵⁸

Notwithstanding the transcendental excavations and intersubjective stratagems put into play, however, the fact remains that phenomenological research never produced the systematic method, open to the metaphysical and religious-ethical dimension, that Husserl had envisioned in the 1930s.⁵⁹ In the Finkian text as well, in fact, the progress of phenomenology is still judged to be limited to the draft phase: «What we have done first is to sketch out the Idea of constitutive clarification as the Idea of the analytical inquiry that moves back from the “phenomenology of the world” (from the acceptedness-construct [*Geltungsgebilde*] in reductively disclosed transcendental life) into the construction of the acceptedness, into the process of world-actualization». But this “predelineation” does not itself go «beyond a quite preliminary and general characterization».⁶⁰ Husserl and Fink thus seemed to agree that even using the synergy of their joint research, they had made no progress beyond the

stage of “a working philosophy” or, Kantianly, that they had only developed a prolegomena for a science still to be constructed, rather than explanation of an already existent science.⁶¹

However, it is not convincing that this state of affairs in Husserlian phenomenology should exclusively depend, as Fink claims, on the fact that

«there can be no adequate characterization of phenomenological cognitive actions before concrete analyses are carried out; the method and system of phenomenological cognitive actions cannot be anticipated nor can the essentially new kind of thing which in phenomenological cognition transcends the style of knowing found in worldly knowledge, be comprehended on the basis of “philosophical” tradition of world-bound philosophizing and cognising».⁶²

Rather, one has the impression that something fundamental had been overlooked, neglecting the consideration of what in effect was already present in intuitive givenness; it would seem that this error promoted the speculative/idealistic drift that «breaks the anchorage to the immediate phenomenal».⁶³

THE ONTOPOIESIS OF LIFE

In contrast, Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka focuses her attention on the «late breakthrough to the plane of nature-life» that characterizes the final phase of Husserl’s journey of reflection; from here, she has applied her work to reactivating *Phänomenologisieren*, which had apparently run dry, in order to bring to light once again «the seminal virtualities engendered by [Husserlian] thought», which philosophically link the historical body of phenomenological learning and the horizons for future programs.⁶⁴ Moving from the reflective unease, triggered by the dualistic result that had accompanied the attempt of the classic phenomenologists to discover, in the flow of experience, an adequate principle of intentioning grasp that leads all living experiences to consciousness, Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka pursues more deeply the intuition of the *logos*, intrinsic to phenomenological inquiry, and realizes a phenomenology of the onto-poietic *logos* of life.⁶⁵ As early as the 1960s, she had intuited that there is a more originary talent/disposition of consciousness (*Uranlage des Bewusstseins*), beyond the absoluteness of the constituting transcendental dimension. The experience of the “conscious-corporeal” (*das “Leiblich-bewusste”*) shows that consciousness effectively is based in the “natural corporeal” and that an organic nexus unites consciousness with the entire contexture of nature, which remains nonetheless autonomous, as documented by the lived experiences of succession, intertwining, and motivation of the psychic processes in general. The essential “givenness” of the constitutive genesis of objectivity is rooted in an

«intimate operating like the place from which *eidōs* and fact simultaneously arise, which is to say that no longer constitutive intentionality, but the constructive march of life that sustains it can by itself reveal to us the principle of all things».⁶⁶

The result of this intuitive descent to the most primitive level of being, that which precedes the very act of asking any philosophical or scientific questions, and in which, therefore, both philosophy and science find their authentic and common root, has been that Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka attained the pre-ontological position of being, that in which being generates itself and regenerates. From this point of view, she has been able to untangle the *logos*, which presides over the evolution of the life of being, indicating it, with a term of her own coinage, as “ontopoiesis”, that is, “production/creation of being.”

Therefore, while in the past we traced the tracks of being, now we can follow the traces that beings, living and non, leave in their becoming: they pursue a road of progressive and growing individualization in existence, that is, in the environmental context of resources, strengths, and intergenerative energies; life itself, inasmuch as *vis vitale*, pushes them along this road, promoting their unfolding and controlling their course. Also from within the human condition, in fact, there radiates, grafted on the natural self-individualizing flow of life itself, a dynamic of creative vital expansion, upon which every intellectual dimension is based.⁶⁷ For this, the cognitive act, which points to the structures of beings and things in order to give rise to static ontologies, must give way to the creative act, during which man manifests the same *vis vitale* at work in the becoming of beings: establishing ourselves on the level of creativity, it is possible to follow the *poiēin* of those same essential structures that knowledge identifies, isolating them.

A new symbolic complex is delineated in this way: it is the platform of the onto-poiesis of life, which is metaphysical but also ontic, inasmuch as it grasps the being of the moment in which, while “it generates itself” as being, it also manifests the *logos* in its continuous “making itself be”. This *logos* proceeds self-individualizing, and without changing nature traverses the entire inorganic, organic, and human universe. Following the leitmotiv of the onto-poiesis of life, an ontological teleology is thus manifested, by which the unfolding of natural life finds its *telos* in human life.

On the basis of these philosophical discoveries, Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka forges a new link with consolidated phenomenology. She no longer intends «to interpret phenomenology through its method» nor to pursue the vain effort, common to all phenomenologists from the founder on, «to justify its philosophizing procedure from all possible angles». She realizes, in fact, that such an effort would do nothing «to solve the quandary that puzzled Husserl, [that is] the impossible situation of the subject’s constituting the world and being

simultaneously an objective element of it». In her opinion, what is needed, rather, is

«to learn, from the strengths and the weaknesses of the specifically phenomenological rationalities, the nature of the universal rationality that is involved in the emergence and run of our reality that subtends its genesis – the *logos* reaching beyond it and yet essentially engaged in the constitution of ourselves within our lifeworld and its horizons».

The «Husserlian proposal of a self-critique of phenomenology upon its very transcendental/subjective assumptions»⁶⁸ is thus understood in an enlarged and evolving sense, so to speak, following the tendency present in the late Husserl to break with «the early theoretic-methodological restrictions that his focus on intentionality [had] imposed on him».⁶⁹

Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka can now follow «the progress» implicit in the Husserlian method, which emerges by studying the «integral Husserl»,⁷⁰ where «each stage of his thought seems to have been for him a springboard for inquiry in a more profound direction», even while proposing no speculative claim «to unify his various insights». Husserl, in fact, simply «follows an analysis to an obvious end and then takes up deeper questions», tracing an evolving sequence which only in appearance seems to lack nexuses among its phases, given that in it «Husserl adjusted his assumptions as he went without dismissing any set of them». In effect, Tymieniecka continues, Husserl

«might call the regional ontologies ‘naive’ as they stand alone, but he never disclaimed the eidetic insight through which we distinguish objects. He tacitly included it in the ascending noetic steps in the process of originating and forming the ideal structures of beings as they are constituted in the subjective transcendental processes of the intellect. And then he immersed the singular mind with its set of constitutive procedures within the intersubjective lifeworld. The concatenation of the lifeworld opens yet another field of investigation, but the nature of the constitutive process in the singular individual mind remains valid, however much apprehension of the reality of the lifeworld modifies the appreciation of it».⁷¹

Notwithstanding the contradictory appearances and Husserl’s own awareness of them, therefore, the Husserlian phenomenological research seen from the new position set forth by Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka, proves neither rhapsodic nor preliminary. Advancing his project «beyond a fixation on inner subjectivity», one may still trace there a constructive *logos* of iron-clad necessity, the same that presides over «the planes of the human reality», in which each effective carrying out of descriptive study, as phenomenology certainly is, involves that we finally find ourselves at the edge of the area that has just been investigated and from which we can lean out to grasp new dimensions now within reach. The remarkable euristic-poietic validity of such spontaneous human cognitive behavior, indeed, has guided the progress of scientific knowledge in

the twentieth century!⁷² A similar evolving *logos*, human and phenomenological, preserves not only the validity of each phase of phenomenology, but also «the promise each offers».⁷³ The future opportunities for investment, in fact, rest in the living, concrete, natural subjectivity of the philosopher at work: the onto-poietic acts of such an individual can bring new being to existence and construction, increasing being itself, as noted even by Husserl in his philosophical testament. As Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka comments:

«Therefore, the elementary condition of man—the same one through which Husserl and Ingarden attempted in vain to open a breach, extending the expansion of its intentional nexuses and at the same time turning to ante-reduction scientific data—appears to be constituted by the blind element of nature, and yet at the same time this element shows itself to have virtualities for individualization on the vital level and, what is more important, for a specifically human individualization. The latter virtualities we could call ‘subliminal spontaneities’».⁷⁴

From the vitality of this natural subjectivity, so rich as to sustain the entire phenomenological journey of interrogation and reduction, there rises, according to Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka, the Husserlian twofold philosophical approach, «with an intuitive grasp of the givens paralleling a cognitive constitutive scrutiny of the cognitive procedure, one that is meant to validate and legitimate them».⁷⁵ In such a «unique» approach, «the system of consciousness that Husserl, in accord with the nature of subjective acts, calls “intentional” and “transcendental”» is rooted together with «the primordial givenness of the objective correlates of our intuitions».⁷⁶ For this reason, while proceeding «in the exfoliation of the levels of authentic reality» by the successive stages of the reductive procedures, these reductions not only are performed «in the very depths of the progress of interrogative investigation, but concurrently in their consecutive phases they make up the body of phenomenological doctrine».⁷⁷ Here, in fact, we find delineated the successive rational intuitive “platforms” of the very life of conscious being, as Tymieniecka calls them. The intentional platform, the multisphere platform of the lifeworld, the platform of the genetic perspective with the correlated sphere of the creative experience: each constitutes a step on the experiential ladder which effectively leads from one intentional intuitive step to the next, new onto-poietic platform, which in turn leads to a further and still unknown level of phenomenalization. These platforms may now be understood as arising from «two channels of self-generating forces – objective and subjective – [that] roll forward, one proceeding from the concatenation of constitution on the objective side and the other proceeding from the nature of the subjective intentionality at work in that constitution».⁷⁸ Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka emphasizes the *sui generis* nature of these dynamisms, for while they are proper to the life of consciousness, they

also represent, to the extent that they realize something in being, «the specific dynamism of the constructive *logos* of the real as it deploys itself». In this natural onward flow of consciousness, in fact, the constructive acts of consciousness bring forth their very own inner dynamisms and forces in such a way that reason/*logos* is not a mere structuring line of construction, but simultaneously its prompting force.⁷⁹

Husserl and Fink certainly were culpable of a grave oversight in underestimating to such an extent their own work, in which, instead, Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka recognized the *logos* of life in action, as the sole and the original poietic flow that leads being and thinking, nature and consciousness, to existence and that therefore is the source/font or the grounding terrain of phenomenology. With such an evolutive source, still little known but certain in its effects, Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka sought to re-establish conscious contact: she set in motion a new phenomenological “self-knowledge” (*Selbstbesinnung*) that, pushing the investigation beyond the realm of pure ideas, carried out the intuitive re-sowing through which her individual phenomenological initiative was grafted into the very stream of flowing life, bringing to fruit the quality of spontaneous autoproduction of life, which, in the 1970s, neurophysicists Maturana and Varela had discovered and defined as “autopoiesis”.⁸⁰ Armed with only the Husserlian “principle of all principles” that recognizes «every originally offering intuition (*Intuition*)»⁸¹ as legitimate source of knowledge, Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka dove into the sea of phenomenological experience searching for its sense and vital continuity, beyond the safe but asphyxiating limits set by the constituting consciousness and its givenness. Her endeavor was completely successful, not only because she attained the revitalization of consciousness without giving up its constituent function, producing a new line of inquiry in the phenomenology of life, but above all because in proceeding this way, for philosophy itself and for all the human sciences, including economics, she surprisingly opened wide a new horizon of sense and a new symbolic system calibrated on the vitality of being, discovered at the roots of constituting consciousness and contiguous with it.

The nature and meaning of every development, including that of phenomenology, can thus be enclosed in this new philosophical platform of the onto-poiesis of life. Such a theoretical situation of solidarity between spirit and life had never been seen before on the contemporary philosophical scene. It emerged as a new horizon of sense when A-T. Tymieniecka decided to follow her intuition in practicing a «radical overturn of the phenomenological perspective» to gain a new “Archimedean point” on the basis of which «each thing finds its proper place».⁸²

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NOTES

- ¹ R. Cristin, *Invito al pensiero di Husserl*, Mursia, Milano 2002, p. 13.
- ² E. Husserl, Letter to Paul Natorp dated February 1, 1922, in: *Briefwechsel*, ed. by K. Schuhmann and E. Schuhmann, «Husserliana Dokumente», Kluwer, Dordrecht 1994, V, pp. 151–152.
- ³ M. Heidegger, *Edmund Husserl zum siebzigsten Geburtstag*, in: «Akademische Mitteilungen» Albert-Ludwigs-Universität, Freiburg i. Br., IX Sem., 3, 14/5/1929, p. 47.
- ⁴ E. Husserl, «Persönliche Aufzeichnungen», ed. by W. Biemel, in: *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, XVI, 3, 1956, p. 298.
- ⁵ Cristin, *Invito al pensiero di Husserl*, op. cit., p. 47.
- ⁶ J. Habermas, *Nachmetaphysische Denken. Philosophische Aufsätze*, Suhrkamp, Frankfurt am Main 1988. Engl. transl. by W. M. Hohengarten, *Postmetaphysical Thinking. Philosophical Essays*, The MIT Press, Cambridge, MA, and London, 1993, p. 3.
- ⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 4.
- ⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 7.
- ⁹ Cf.: G. Lukács, *Die Zerstörung der Vernunft*, Aufbau Verlag, Berlin 1953; engl. transl. by P. R. Palmer, *Destruction of reason*, Merlin Press, London 1980. Lukács is concerned with Husserl only indirectly because the irrationalistic tendencies, present from the start in Husserlian philosophic method, will become truly explicit only in the works of Scheler and particularly Heidegger.
- ¹⁰ Cf.: M. Calloni, *Introduction to the Italian edition of Habermas, Il pensiero post-metafisico*, Laterza, Bari-Roma 1991, p. vii.
- ¹¹ Habermas, *Postmetaphysical Thinking*, op. cit., pp. 16–17.
- ¹² *Ibid.*, pp. 17–18.
- ¹³ Text from cover K III 29 and from pp. 5 and 9 of cover K III 28; now included in volume XXIX of «Husserliana», *Die Krisis der europäischen Wissenschaften und die transzendente Phänomenologie. Ergänzungsband. Texte aus dem Nachlass 1934–1937*, ed. by R. N. Smid, Kluwer Academic Publishers, Dordrecht/Boston/London 1993, n. 32, pp. 362–420. In the *Anmerkungen des Herausgebers*, it is R. N. Smid who defines the text in question as «Husserl's last philosophical testament» (p. 362). Cfr.: N. Ghigi, *Introduzione a «La teleologia nella storia della filosofia»*, in E. Husserl, *La storia della filosofia e la sua finalità*, it. trans. by N. Ghigi, Città Nuova, Roma 2004, pp. 11–55.
- ¹⁴ P. Volontè, «Husserl e la filosofia come professione. Note sul volume integrativo della Crisi delle scienze europee», in: *Rivista di filosofia neoscolastica*, 89 (1997), p. 143.
- ¹⁵ Husserl, *Teleologie in der Philosophiegeschichte*, op. cit., p. 363. M. Scheler as well, dealing with human labor, refers to the concept of «task» (*Aufgabe*), as «a goal purely and simply represented», which one works to achieve. Cf.: M. Scheler, *Arbeit und Ethik*, in: *Gesammelte Werke*, ed. by M. Scheler and M. Frings, Francke, Bern-Munich, I, «Frühe Schriften», 1971, pp. 167, 170.
- ¹⁶ Husserl, *Teleologie in der Philosophiegeschichte*, op. cit., p. 363.
- ¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 364.
- ¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 411.
- ¹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 363–364.
- ²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 405.
- ²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 363.

- ²² Cf., F. Nietzsche, *Also sprach Zarathustra*, in: *Nietzsche Werke. Kritische Gesamtausgabe*, ed. by G. Colli and M. Montinari, W. de Gruyter, Berlin-New York, VI₁, 1968. English trans. by W. Kaufmann, *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, New York: Penguin, 1978. Concerning the Scheler-Nietzsche relationship: D. Verducci, «Scheler-Nietzsche. Per una misura dell'Übermensch», in: F. Totaro (ed. by), *Nietzsche tra eccesso e misura. La volontà di potenza a confronto*, Carocci, Roma 2002, pp. 219–236.
- ²³ M. Scheler, *Zur Idee des Menschen*, in: *Gesammelte Werke*, op. cit., III, «Vom Umsturz der Werte», 1955. Engl. trans. by C. Nabe, *The Idea of Man*, in: «Journal of the British Society for Phenomenology», 9, October 1978.
- ²⁴ M. Scheler, *Erkenntnis und Arbeit*, in: *Gesammelte Werke*, op. cit., VIII, «Die Wissensformen und die Gesellschaft», 1960, pp. 360–362.
- ²⁵ Husserl, *Teleologie in der Philosophiegeschichte*, op. cit., p. 373.
- ²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 369.
- ²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 370.
- ²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 373.
- ²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 370.
- ³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 371.
- ³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 374.
- ³² *Ibid.*, p. 371.
- ³³ *Ibid.*, p. 369.
- ³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 371.
- ³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 369.
- ³⁶ *Ibidem.*
- ³⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 372–373.
- ³⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 373–374.
- ³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 376.
- ⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 377.
- ⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 379.
- ⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 410.
- ⁴³ *Ibidem.*
- ⁴⁴ Cf.: W. Wundt, *Psychologismus und Logicismus*, in: *Kleine Schriften*, I, Engelmann, Leipzig 1910, pp. 511–634.
- ⁴⁵ Cf.: M. Mezzanzanica, «La discussione tra Husserl e Fink e l'idea di una fenomenologia della fenomenologia», in: *Magazzino di Filosofia*, 5 (2001), «La VI Meditazione cartesiana di E. Fink e E. Husserl», edited by A. Marini, p. 68.
- ⁴⁶ Cf. Letter to Eugen Fink dated July 21, 1934, in: Husserl, *Briefwechsel*, op. cit., IV, p. 93. Engl. trans. in: R. Bruzina, *Translator's Introduction to: E. Fink, Sixth Cartesian Meditation*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington & Indianapolis 1995, p. xxvi.
- ⁴⁷ Cf. Letter to Gustav Albrecht dated October 7, 1934, in: Husserl, *Briefwechsel*, op. cit., IX, p. 105. Engl. trans. in: Bruzina, *Translator's Introduction*, op. cit., p. xxvi.
- ⁴⁸ Cf.: *Husserliana*, vol. I: *Cartesianische Meditationen und Pariser Vorträge*, hrsg. von S. Strasser, M. Nijhoff, Den Haag 1950, p. 68 e pp. 177–178.
- ⁴⁹ E. Fink, *VI. Cartesianische Meditation*, T. 1, *Die Idee einer transzendentalen Methodenlehre*, ed. by H. Ebeling, J. Holl, G. van Kerckhoven, Kluwer Academic Publishers, Dordrecht-Boston-London 1988, p. 183. Translation with introduction ed. by R. Bruzina: E. Fink, *Sixth Cartesian Meditation: The Idea of a Transcendental Theory of Method*, with Textual Notations by Edmund Husserl, Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1995, p. 1. «Though mentioned only in the Foreword and nowhere in the text of the *Sixth Meditation* itself, the “meontic” is one of the notions

- most often and continually recurring in Fink's personal notes during the period of his labors with Husserl», Bruzina, *Translator's Introduction*, op. cit., pp. lv-lvi.
- 50 Fink, *Sixth Cartesian Meditation*, op. cit., p. 2. German text: p. 184.
- 51 Ibidem.
- 52 G. van Kerckhoven, *Mondanisation et individuation*, Msk. 1995, pp. 338-651. Tr. it. di M. Mezzanzanica, *Mondanizzazione e individuazione. La posta in gioco della Sesta meditazione cartesiana di Husserl e Fink*, il Melangolo, Genova 1998, p. 38.
- 53 Cf.: Fink, *Sixth Cartesian Meditation*, op. cit., §7, «Phenomenologizing in "constructive" phenomenology», pp. 54-66. German text: pp. 61-74.
- 54 Ibid., p. 26.
- 55 R. Bruzina, *Edmund Husserl-Eugen Fink: Beginnings and Ends in Phenomenology. 1928-1938*, Yale University Press, 2005.
- 56 Cf.: N. Depraz, «Il metodo pradossale di Fink nella VI Meditazione cartesiana: una pratica speculativa», in: *Magazzino di Filosofia*, 5 (2001), op. cit., p. 97.
- 57 Ibid., p. 101.
- 58 Fink, *Sixth Cartesian Meditation*, op. cit., §1, p. 8. German text: p. 8.
- 59 Cf. on Husserlian intent see the letter to Dorion Cairns dated September 23, 1930 (Husserl, *Briefwechsel*, op. cit., vol. IV, *Die Freiburger Schüler*, 1993, p. 25) and letter to Roman Ingarden dated December 21, 1930 (Husserl, *Briefwechsel*, op. cit., vol. III, *Die Göttinger Schüler*, 1993, pp. 269-270), in: Mezzanzanica, *La discussione tra Husserl e Fink*, op. cit., note 1, p. 64.
- 60 Fink, *Sixth Cartesian Meditation*, op. cit., §1, p. 4. German text: p. 3.
- 61 E. Fink, *Die Spätphilosophie Husserls in der Freiburger Zeit*, in: Id., *Nähe und Distanz*, Alber, Freiburg i. Br.-Munich 1976, p. 209.
- 62 Fink, *Sixth Cartesian Meditation*, op. cit., §1, p. 4. German text: p. 4.
- 63 Depraz, *Il metodo pradossale di Fink*, op. cit., p. 102.
- 64 A.-T. Tymieniecka, «A Note on Edmund Husserl's late Breakthrough», in Tymieniecka (ed. by), *Phenomenology world-wide. Foundations, expanding dynamics, life-engagements. A guide for research and study*, Dordrecht, Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2002, p. 685.
- 65 D. Verducci, «The ontopoiesis of life: a theory of solidarity between logos and life», in: *Phenomenological Inquiry*, 31 (2007), p. 23.
- 66 A.-T. Tymieniecka, *Tractatus Brevis, Analecta Husserliana XXI*, 1986, p. 3.
- 67 A.-T. Tymieniecka, *Logos and Life. Creative Experience and the Critique of Reason*, Book 1, *Analecta Husserliana XXIV*, 1988, p. 392.
- 68 A.-T. Tymieniecka, «The Logos of Phenomenology and the Phenomenology of Logos», in: *Analecta Husserliana*, LXXXVIII (2005), p. xv.
- 69 Tymieniecka, *A Note on Edmund Husserl's late Breakthrough*, op. cit., p. 686.
- 70 A.-T. Tymieniecka, «Phenomenology as the inspirational force of our times», in: Tymieniecka (ed. by), *Phenomenology world-wide*, op. cit., p. 2b.
- 71 Ibid., p. 3a.
- 72 Ibid., p. 2a.
- 73 Ibid., p. 3a.
- 74 Tymieniecka, *Logos and Life: Creative Experience and the Critique of Reason*, op. cit., p. 28.
- 75 Tymieniecka, *The Logos of Phenomenology and the Phenomenology of Logos*, op. cit., p. xvii.
- 76 Tymieniecka, *Phenomenology as the inspirational force of our times*, op. cit., p. 3b.
- 77 Tymieniecka, *The Logos of Phenomenology and the Phenomenology of Logos*, op. cit., p. xviii.
- 78 Tymieniecka, *Phenomenology as the inspirational force of our times*, op. cit., p. 4a.
- 79 Ibid., p. 4a.
- 80 D. Verducci, «La questione dello sviluppo in prospettiva ontopoietica», in: *Etica ed Economia*, I (2007), pp. 46-48.

- 81 E. Husserl, *Ideen zu einer reinen Phänomenologie und phänomenologischen Philosophie*, I, *Allgemeine Einführung in die reine Phänomenologie*, in: *Husserliana III/1 and III/2*, ed. by K. Schuhmann, Martinus Nijhoff, Den Haag 1976.
- 82 Tymieniecka, *Logos and Life: Creative Experience and the Critique of Reason*, op. cit., pp. 3-4.