

LOGOS OF PHENOMENOLOGY AND PHENOMENOLOGY
OF THE LOGOS. BOOK THREE

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For sequel volumes see the end of this volume.

LOGOS OF PHENOMENOLOGY
AND PHENOMENOLOGY
OF THE LOGOS. BOOK THREE

*Logos of History - Logos of Life.
Historicity, Time, Nature, Communication,
Consciousness, Alterity, Culture*

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Wadham College.

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The present collection is the third volume gathering papers from the Third World Congress of Phenomenology, “Phenomenology World-Wide: Logos of Phenomenology and Phenomenology of the Logos,” held in Oxford, August 15–21, 2004.

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I wish to express special thanks to Jeff Hurlburt, our secretary, for his assiduous and dedicated work in preparing this gathering. The enthusiasm and expertise of the authors who joined us from the entire world – forty countries – made this Congress an epoch-making phenomenology event.

A-T.T.



Floor Oosting and Louis Houthakker in front of our exhibit at the SPEP 2004.

THEMATIC INTRODUCTION

LOGOS' TIMING OF LIFE – FABULATING HISTORY

Life times itself! In our having grasped that the onto-poietic unfolding of life is the ultimate generation of beingness-in-becoming, we have gained this insight into the secret of its progress: *ontopoietic becoming times its advance at each and every one of its steps*. We may follow the innumerable passes, circuits, ins and outs of life's timing, going through its stages with the logos of life: organic, vital, sharing-in-life, gregarious, creative, societal, etc.¹ The universalizing and objectifying of movement, change, becoming that humanity has for millennia assumed in various ways as a means by which to regulate the flow of human existence amid confluence and interaction, yields a universally valid order of life's course, one accepted by all and one that assumes 'time' as "real", whereas I emphasise, it is just a hypostasis.²

Communication among living beings is one of the essential onto-poietic modalities of the logos of life; as such it undergoes differentiations in sense in life's advancing stages of timing. When that sense reaches the level of communication about the human condition, we have the essence of history.

We have previously followed the timing of life through the analysis of the onto-poesis of life punctuated by the logos' constructive rhythm of *impetus and equipoise*.³ In the present brief study I will attempt to bring to light some essential insights toward the onto-poietic matrix subtending the timing of life itself. Simultaneously, I will lay bare some logoc knots founding history at its onto-poietic level in terms of its logos.

I.

In timing life the logos flows constructively onward, prompting and carrying, engendering, binding, dissolving, extinguishing, meandering along in its mission of manifesting human reality. As we delineated in *Impetus and Equipoise in the Life-Strategies of Reason*, there are as many modalities of life's timing as there are modalities of the logos' continuous harnessing of the rush of universal forces into a congruent line of becoming. This constructive building/demolishing course differentiates the conscious recording of change into significant complexities, beginning with the lowest level of animal consciousness, for which seasons of singular

life concerns (feeding, resting, roaming, playing, mating, birthing, caring, aging, dying) mark the flux of life's timing. In human beings fully endowed with the apparatus of consciousness, with memory of the past and anticipation of the future, the timing of life essentially reaches its apex. This is the interrogative mode of the specifically human logos, which proceeds through the human faculties of the mind that lift human consciousness above the immediacy of the sentience and affect tied to meeting a living being's survival needs and toward deliberative appreciation and selection. At the level of animality – although animal consciousness is differentiated by degrees – this identification never reaches beyond the threshold of somewhat vague or somewhat more clear phantasms that amount to recognition by the animal of objectives that meet survival needs and their satisfaction. This selection is restricted in range and does not entail further questioning about “how,” “what for,” and “why.” Not so with the human creative mind, which has at its service the versatility of the plurisignificant logos running freely through all the spheres of consciousness.

How does the human creative mind lift itself from the animal sphere of phantasmic recognition of just that which correlates with a living being's requirements? We here have to recognize first the role of creative imagination in the shift from strictly survival-oriented registration of the instants of onto-poietic striving in individualizing life to actual “cognizing,” for which, first, reference has to be made to numerous logocic perspectives, and, second, universal validity has to be realized. Imagination offers, indeed, a variety of explanatory hints for the interrogatory quest.

Interrogation itself cannot move along with life's timing. It cannot simply be absorbed into life's flux. It has to maintain a balance amid the moves. Hence humanity needs a universal reference, one valid for all timing of human affairs, this for immediately pragmatic reasons and for the general orientation of our advance. In the fleetingness of life, we have sought and established a universal reference system, one abstracted from all the singular steps of life's timing – the system of time and space coordinates, a stable grid for all the change that may be drafted on it. Hence emerged the hypostasis of time (and space). Human kind postulates its practical life upon that hypostasis.

However, being able to draft life upon this grid does not definitively resolve the problem of cognition and comprehension. There is no answer here for the key questions “how,” “what for,” “when” (to act), “why.” These are not matters to be plotted on the space/time coordinates. And even the answers to the simple questions of “what” and “who” can evade us. We know from jurisprudence how often an innocent man has been

found guilty. In drastic situations reference for the verification of a state of affairs has to be found on the physiological level. In establishing a “real” fact or state of affairs in the relentlessly advancing current of life, no matter how careful our scrutiny, the reality will remain somewhat elusive.

II.

But it is to be noted that the above set of questions seems to form a logic standard, a knot of queries basic to the investigation of the order of the data coming to our attention, with the aim of establishing any datum as “real,” one that we may situate in the context of the reality of life. Reflecting on it then, we see how we oversimplify this situation in the pragmatic attitude toward life, cutting through the arteries of its logic concatenations and skimming its surface. To pursue this reality adequately would require employing the entire logic setup of the full-fledged human mind – to date – as such was required in its evolving course; only then may the human logos conduct its interrogation into this key schema that it took man centuries to discover. This specifically human mode of questioning musters into service all our functioning in all our virtualities and refers as well to the entire inventory of previously acquired knowledge and our conscious involvement in all life perspectives. We see the logos of life by its timing steps overflowing already the vital and so see the human sphere in full.

The basic determination of any “what” encompasses the entire context outlined for it by the onto-poiesis of the logos, that is, the ways in which the individual is embedded within the circumambient web of life. In other words, it involves the existential ways in which the object in question participates in the schema of meaningfulness and that order in which they were timed by the steps that life took to weave them in. It comprises also the object’s pertinence to the practices founded in the skills that the given group has developed, in the trades that its members pursue, as well as in individual habits.

III.

With the questions “how,” “what for,” and “why,” we enter deeper and deeper into the perspective from which the timing of events, experiences, etc. proceeds. For to ‘understand’ means not only to disentangle the

innumerable knots of sense that find their interconnection and pertinence in the questions at stake, but also to call on our profound yearnings, tendencies, and wishes in our appreciation of the possibilities of satisfying them. Ultimately, understanding is suspended on an intellectual search for verifiable answers to our queries. But these are not available. Each answer points the interrogative thrust of the logos further. To attempt to “understand” means our having to pursue the matter further and further. Can the urge to understand ever be quenched? Our cognitive intellectual apparatus will never arrive at understanding. But let us attempt to sketch understanding’s itinerary toward fulfillment. In this very itinerary an essential part of understanding will be found.

By recruiting the subliminal realm in launching our interrogative quest, by sounding the possibilities granted us by the Human Condition in its creative sphere, we obtain the lift needed to attain self-understanding.

Let us first consider the crucial modality of the creative timing of the conscious life reached by the human mind – *memory*. In the relentless flow of conscious acts in life’s stream – the very engine of ontopoietic life – the instants of the logos that come to the forefront of awareness with their sense do not endure or even linger. Their life significance weakens beyond the instant of the present. They weaken and recede, going to the side, passing into the background, yielding the limelight to new promptings of the logos. Conscious logos times the operative/cognizing processes of life, steps of becoming that are irreversible. The course of psychic steps taken is equally irreversible, and in faint, gradually fainter form, they go into in an inventory of the “past,” a depository of the lived present now passed away. These psychic passages are irremediably past, but, *mirabile dictu*, they can be called up by the mind for inspiration, even if their hazy contours need to be filled out with fresh, actual feelings of the moment in a reconstruction. The substitutes or facsimiles that are memories serve us well in the disentangling of the knots of life. The *kairic* knots of attainment or accomplishment especially are moments that in memory aid the advance toward understanding.

IV.

There now enters on the scene the interrogative logos’ primogenital function of fabulation,⁴ which is infused into it by *imaginatio creatrix*. With this retaining of traces of its former moves, the logos of interrogation reaches a new platform for plotting reality. A sense of history emerges. Our querying is inestimably enriched by this ability to refer the immediate

data of experiential wonderment to imaginative conjecturing. This venturing points us to the very horizon of the Human Condition.

The logic constitutive system expands to take in the steps of the living present now preserved in their sense. As survival-oriented, pragmatically bound queries after the “what,” “how,” “why” of life’s intricacies go forward, numerous perspectives – psychological, cultural, rational – now lead these quests into the subliminal depths of the person’s fears, longings, dreams as well as into pondering of the common Human Condition.

Going beyond their immediate individual or personal perspectives, human beings not only reach out to the human community, but also seek communication with all of life, particularly with life’s story, its evolution. Within the evolution of living types, the human mind is embedded in an inheritance of ways of experiencing, of conceiving the reality of life, of human relations, and of visions of human destiny, as all this has been passed down in collective experience, formed and filtered by the human mind from generation to generation, providing models for experience. This forming and filtering of experience expresses the deepest concerns of the human being reflecting on our condition.

An innermost urge to understand puts to work all the means available to the interrogative logos. To understand now means not only to situate an event within the network of life in its *natural* unfolding, but also to relate it to *traditions* that have been passed down from generation to generation. This quest spirals up to find or establish a sphere of sense higher than that of vital significance. How are events significant for the plights, struggles, and ideals that are the unique acquisition of the human cohort as it crystallizes in the consciousness of its members?

V

Fabulation is the response of imagination that is triggered by the urge to understand, a response that goes further than the factual timing of reality. It leads the questioning logos toward its furthest horizon, the human condition. Fabulation lies at the very heart of specifically human communication. It relates the beginning to the end, our incomprehensible origins to our insurmountable condition. Beginning with “narrating” the real events in our line of sight and advancing to “story telling” (myths and sagas), fabulation reaches to the depths of our personal being with its joys, tribulations, despairing and hopes, all that we want to share with others of the human cohort, culminating in the transmission of ancestral wisdom.

In its recall of the hazy contours of its past steps, the interrogative logos of life pours into them the felt pulp of the actually lived present and along with that connects the sense of the past with the living present's net of meanings. Thereby the past is endowed with interpretative sense that presents it from various unprecedented angles. A vast virtual arena is opened up that prepares the ground for life's further steps. When from the deepest recesses of our personal quests to understand there springs up the questions "Why do we suffer?", "Why is this situation what it is?" and "Why cannot we change it?," our imagination launches deeper queries by deploying its essential function, that of *fabulation*, and so puts in question the very stability of our contingent existence.

The communicative networks of sharing-in-life emerge as we move from life's vital and psychic spheres toward the sharing-in-life of the Human Condition. Storytelling exhibits this innermost need to participate in the common fate, which quenches the thirst for understanding human destiny. It is the elevation of the interrogating spirit in fabulation that sustains the human predicament's character of discrete continuity. The interrogative logos of life leads us away from strictly singular confines and in the direction of communion with the All. Thus, it appears to be the quest for wisdom that underlies the originary recordings of events that have distinguished human communities.

VI

Finding in the instantaneous timing of life's stream no reliable answers to the questions "how," "what for," "why," the human mind seeks them in the Human Condition itself. We cipher life's incidents, evaluating them in light of our universally shared hopes, emotions, strivings, response, dreams. War and peace, cataclysms, serene periods, triumphs, defeats, natural disasters, floods, earthquakes, illness, recovery, gardens, all these acquire special significance for the human being in so far as these partake in the meaning of the universal human predicament, of which they are elemental ciphers. The human condition bends toward the rays of fabulation, love of fabulation being a life force.

Wisdom is to be sought in events of particular significance for human affairs, in their kairic knots of attainment or failure, which fall into specific phases of the discrete linkage of sense. Events are recorded to be interpreted throughout the timing of generations. As distilled by the mind's intellectual logos, events appear as offering the sense of what we call 'history.'

Attitudes toward life as such, ideals and strivings, are handed down and developed from generation to generation forming a cultural tradition. Not all of the strings that could be played in individual and communal involvements are in fact plucked as each “what” is re-cognized/identified, but only some deemed pertinent to the present situation. Still each of the items to be “defined,” “identified” in its “self-sameness” is grounded in the entire fabric of reality. Indeed as the logos of life rushes relentlessly onward, its upward spirals trespass on each other, so that we may speak of a discrete continuity, all aimed at the apex of understanding.

To conclude, the logos of life carrying the self-individualization of the living being times its progress by intricate trial and error, exploring the byways. Yet we may trace in its tortuous course a threefold generative “ordinance.” First there is the onto-poietic sequence of the singular individualizing process in question; second there is the system of life; and third there are the particular circumambient conditions – organic, vital, gregarious, creative – within which the onto-poietic process occurs.

The timing of life is thus suspended on this threefold ordinance (matrix). Dynamic and ever fluctuating, this ordinance lies, as does the pivot of life, within the conscious agency of living beingness and expands with that agency’s growth in complexity, reaching its culmination in the creative timing of the human mind.

The communicative logos upon attaining the power to interrogate life’s entire temporal web creatively throws down the tracks for human history’s fabulation.

Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka

NOTES

¹ Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka, *Logos and Life, Book 4: Impetus and Equipoise in the Life-Strategies of Reason, Analecta Husserliana LXX* (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2000).

² See *ibid.*, Epilogue.

³ *Ibid.*, *passim*.

⁴ I have introduced the conception of “fabulation” in my *Logos and Life, Book Three: The Passions of the Soul and the Elements in the Ontopoiesis of Culture*, p. 36, *Analecta Husserliana*, Vol. XXVIII, 1990, Kluwer Academic Publishers. I defined then fabulation as a function of the imaginatively inspired mind which “intentionally transfigures life’s ‘nude’ facts in accordance with the propensities, visualities, and factors of the human condition. The result is prototypical models of human character, conduct, societal organization, visions of humanity; the stage is set for the ideals which will fashion a culture’s style” (*ibid.*, p. 39).