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

ANALECTA HUSSERLIANA
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*The World Institute for Advanced Phenomenological Research and Learning
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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

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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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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 intellective 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 circum-ambient 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.