

Islamic Philosophy and Occidental Phenomenology
in Dialogue 8



Detlev Quintern
Daniela Verducci *Editors*

Eco-Imagination towards a Sustainable Future

Perspectives from Philosophies in Islam


 Springer

Islamic Philosophy and Occidental Phenomenology in Dialogue

Volume 8

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Among inter-cultural dialogues of phenomenology, the Islamic philosophy remains barely touched upon. It is the intention of the World Phenomenology Institute to unfold a dialogue between Islamic philosophy and phenomenology - phenomenology of life in particular - at the deepest philosophical level toward the uncovering common springs of philosophical meditation. It is hoped that this interchange between the Islamic and occidental philosophies will foster the 'New Humanism so urgently needed in our world'.

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Editors

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Preface

The saying “reculer pour mieux sauter” [backtrack to jump better], quoted by Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka (2011, 10), may help readers understand why *Eco-Imagination towards a Sustainable Future: Perspectives from Philosophies in Islam* was chosen as the title for this volume 8 of the Islamic Philosophy and Occidental Phenomenology in Dialogue (IPOP) editorial series. Indeed, to explain how we came to address eco- imagination and sustainable futures in dialogue with Islamic philosophy, we must “backtrack” to the platform of ideas that Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka had developed when she initiated the IPOP series. This platform and the contribution of dialogue with philosophical Islam served as a springboard from which phenomenology could “jump” towards eco-phenomenological and eco-imaginative investigation, a further level of phenomenological inquiry which contemporaneity urges us to reach.

Over the course of her forty years of research activity (1983, 1986, 1988a, b, 1990, 2000), Tymieniecka strove beyond the boundaries of consolidated phenomenological results, focusing on the “breaking point of intentionality”, the border between “the significant role of the intellect” and the area of the pre-predicative terrain, whose meaning escapes “the tentacles of the mind” (Tymieniecka, 1983, xv). Here she saw that the concrete living human individual comes into manifestation with a special endowment of creative virtualities, which express themselves in the course of his/her “self-individualization in existence” (Tymieniecka, 1983, xvii).

Thus, Tymieniecka realized that in human creative acts, rather than in the cognitive processes of the human mind, the “inner givenness of vital progress common to all living beings as such” is manifested (Tymieniecka, 2000, 4–5). She also perceived the emergence of a living and sentient logos, which supported this progress through its network. Before her phenomenological eyes there emerged the expansive and evolutionary logic of self-individualization of life, which reproduced itself auto-poietically in pre-human natural constructivism, while producing being through *Imaginatio Creatrix* in the ontopoiesis of the human level of life.

At the World Congress of Philosophy in Boston in 1997, Tymieniecka announced her discovery of the onto-poietic logos of life, based on the creative human condition in the context of everything-that-is-alive. This breakthrough allowed us finally to go beyond the limits of the modern rationalistic logos that had ensnared classical and

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post-classical phenomenology. In fact, with the new phenomenology of the onto-poiesis of life, by virtue of the phenomenological manifestation of an unprecedented logoic continuity between cosmic constructivism and human creativity, we see “the perspective of becoming, in which the inner ontic operations establishing beingness *in linea entis* occur as well as *cognitio*”. With this, “the level, at which the foundation of the phenomenal lies, a level that Husserl did not reach” (Tymieniecka, 2003, xv), was phenomenologically recovered and phenomenology was also restored in its vocation as “a universal philosophy in which the entire universe of human experience is to be given due consideration” (Tymieniecka, 2003, xiii).

With the phenomenological discovery of the onto-poiesis of life, Tymieniecka established herself at a more original level of the genesis of objectivity, the one from which *eidōs* and fact simultaneously spring, with the insight that “not constitutive intentionality but the constructive advance of life, which carries it, may alone reveal to us the first principles of all things” (Tymieniecka 1986, p. 3). By focusing on the virtualities of the Human Condition as the uncontaminated point of reference for the investigation of the origin, destiny, role and place that the human being occupies in the scheme of life, all cultural prejudices are eliminated. “We reach together to the fountain of life and of the community of human minds”, Tymieniecka exclaimed (1986, pp. viii–ix).

The “advent of [such] a further development of the Husserlian inspiration in the form of the Phenomenology of Life in its onto-poiesis”—Tymieniecka observed (2003, xv–xvi)—was particularly congenial for the initiation of dialogue with Islamic philosophies because this phenomenological advancement overcame the situation of “estrangement” between the two cultural worlds of the West and the Islamic East. The Medieval climate of exchange, dialogue and mutual influence between Western and Islamic thinkers was supplanted by “estrangement” when Western philosophers gave in to excessive rationalization/intellectualization, exclusively pursuing the Cartesian ideal of “clear and distinct ideas” modeled on those of geometry. “This ideal – Tymieniecka commented – was also seen as responsible for the disjunction between mind and body that occurred in Western philosophy and resulted in a disruption of the metaphysical vision of the Unity of Being heretofore shared by both sides” (2003, xiv).

Furthermore, in the specific dialogue between phenomenology and Islamic philosophy, the new phenomenological platform of the onto-poiesis of life allowed the possibility to apply her expansion of Husserlian method (Tymieniecka 2003,

xii), thanks to contact with Henri Corbin's comparative studies on Islamic literature (1981), and his assertion that all types of experiences presenting themselves in evidential intuitions are legitimate objects of inquiry. Thus, Tymieniecka noted, though Corbin did not cite it, he in fact asserted Husserl's "principle of all principles" in an extended mode, which avoided identification with any particular type of intuition (e.g., "eidetic" intuition in which intellectual "essences" are accessible to experiencing subjects) and therefore encompassed more than the experiential yielding of intellectual essential insight (Tymieniecka 2003, xii).

By making use of intuitions of all kinds to deal with experiences in which they manifest themselves and which otherwise fall outside the intellectual-natural sphere,
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Henry Corbin was able not only to bring to light the esoteric world contained in spiritual, visionary and mystical experiences of Islamic sages but also, even more, to constitute the common intuitive basis for a constructive comparison between the rationalistic-scientific contents of post-medieval Western thought and the esoteric content of spiritual thought and visionary and mystical experiences of Islamic wisdom (Tymieniecka 2003, xiii).

Hence, Tymieniecka proceeded "towards philosophically vindicating the realm of the spiritual, the esoteric, the sacred", fields as important in the Islamic world as they are little investigated by classical phenomenology, albeit with significant exceptions.

She was motivated neither by the intention to contribute to comparative studies nor that of finding a cultural bridge. Rather, she was animated by genuine "philosophical eros", only aimed at searching for the "truth of things", without prejudices.

Since both parties, phenomenological and Islamic, shared faith in intuition, Tymieniecka identified "the dialogue process in terms of a coming together in the intuitive differentiation of the real" (Tymieniecka 2003, xv) as a valid tool for talking about "intuitions that renew both philosophical traditions" (Tymieniecka 2003, xiii). All the more so, since Tymieniecka's emerging onto-poietic vision of the phenomenology of life as a post-Husserlian phase of phenomenology had established "the essential extension of the parameters of phenomenology to a level where the 'unveiling of the phenomena' at least reaches its proper platform" (Tymieniecka 2003, xvi).

Thus, the effective dialogue with Islamic philosophy that has developed in the framework of the phenomenology of the onto-poiesis of life has enriched the intuitive basis of classical phenomenology and expanded the inclusiveness of its method by introducing an approach to the microcosm that must welcome and valorize the Islamic approach to the macrocosm and transcendence (the divine), while also helping to keep the formulation of the microcosm clearly intuited sufficiently flexible, by placing emphasis not "upon concepts, but rather upon the intuitive insights that they convey", to allow one to take into account all types of experience (Tymieniecka 2003, xiv).

Thus equipped intuitively and methodologically, the phenomenology of the onto-poiesis of life affords a much more general value than that expressed in the

dialogue between the West and the Islamic East. In fact, Tymieniecka's Phenomenology of the onto-poietic logos of life allows phenomenology to enter into a relationship with all those phenomena, including extra-cogitative ones, that have escaped and still escape the reach of the cogitative intentionality of classical phenomenology. In addition, it equips phenomenology with the tools to positively face the new and bring about that creative dynamization of the established mental-cultural schemes that the new calls for. For this reason, it is only with the intuitively and methodologically expanded and shared version of the phenomenology of the onto-poiesis of life that phenomenology has been able to accept the challenge posed by the increasingly pressing need for an eco-phenomenology and the related eco-imagination to face the present ecological crisis which urges the consolidated philosophical parameters to even broader and more shared openings.

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Tymieniecka revealed that the phenomenology of life had matured into an eco-phenomenological Enlightenment, in a 2008 interview with Norwegian journalists Lars Petter Torjussen, Johannes Servan and Simen Andersen Øyen in Bergen, where she was receiving an Honorary Doctorate in Philosophy from the Norwegian University.

Indeed, in virtue of the unifying and integrating power of the onto-poietic logos of life, discovered as the driving and ordering force that is the basis of all evolution, the usual ecological outlook centered on relationships among organisms or groups of organisms and their natural environment can expand beyond the confines of so-called nature. Even the human condition originated from it, since the human being is an ecological fruit formed by the earth and nourished by its juices. Thus, there are even cosmic dependencies of the human mind and human development, but the self-individualization of life, which is the basic instrument of onto-poiesis, draws upon the laws of the cosmos and the earth and can broaden into the supernatural, through the advent, in the midst of the just conquered unity-of-everything-there-is-alive, of the free human creativity/*Imaginatio creatrix*.

In the Preface to the first volume of the IPOP series in 2003, Tymieniecka claimed the merit of having reached the primordial plane of phenomenology through her phenomenology of life: it coincides with the foundational and uncontaminated level established by the onto-poietic logos of life, in which the unprecedented metaphysical platform is configured for a renewed indispensable and constructive intercultural and interdisciplinary dialogue on the issues that history brings forth and makes inevitable, such as the ecological crisis which presses us today, as integral as it is cosmic and human.

This evolutive platform is the source of the energetic momentum that led us to give shape to this 8th volume of the IPOP series.

Macerata, Italy

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