

LOGOS AND LIFE:
THE THREE MOVEMENTS OF THE SOUL

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ANNA-TERESA TYMIENIECKA

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INTRODUCTION TO THE
PHENOMENOLOGY OF LIFE
AND OF THE HUMAN CONDITION

Book 1

VOLUME XXIV

Logos and Life:
Creative Experience and the Critique of Reason

Book 2

VOLUME XXV

Logos and Life:
The Three Movements of the Soul

ANNA-TERESA TYMIENIECKA

The World Phenomenology Institute

LOGOS AND LIFE:
THE THREE MOVEMENTS
OF THE SOUL

or

*The Spontaneous and the Creative
in Man's Self-Interpretation-in-the-Sacred*

THE THIRD PANEL OF THE TRIPTYCH

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For Thomas King with a rose
on August 15, 1971, Georgetown

and

For Réginal R. de Rocquois with a smile

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A-T. T.



ANNA-TERESA TYMIENIECKA

INTRODUCTION

PART I

THE CRITIQUE OF REASON CONTINUED: FROM LOGOS TO ANTI-LOGOS

1. THE NEW CRITIQUE OF REASON

A new critique of reason is the crucial task imposed on the philosophy of our times as we emerge more and more from so-called "modernism" into a historical phase which will have to take its own paths and find its own determination. It may be considered that the main developmental line of modern times in its philosophy as well as in its culture at large was traced by the Cartesian *cogito*. The unfolding of Occidental philosophy has culminated in reason or intellect's being awarded the central place. This is its specific trait. We can see a direct line of progression from the *cogito* to Kant's *Critique*. It is no wonder that this work is the landmark of modern philosophy.

Kant's *Critique* was concerned with the foundation of the sciences. Edmund Husserl launched a second major, renewed, critique of reason, one which addresses not only the critical situation of the sciences but extends the critique even to the situation of Occidental culture as its malaise is diagnosed by this great thinker.

Edmund Husserl voiced, in fact, the conviction that Occidental humanity has reached in our age the peak of its unfolding. His identifying this peak with the formulation of phenomenological philosophy strikes at the point in which the significant and novel developments of Occidental culture and philosophy (phenomenology, that is) coincide. Both coincide, indeed, in the surging of what I have earlier called the "rational enlightenment" that seems to characterize our present times in an unprecedented way.

It is this radical enlightenment which emboldens contemporary man to question everything. His attention is particularly focused upon his survival on the planet earth as the so-called "crisis of culture" debated in the previous decades now cedes place to what may be called the "crisis of man's self-awareness."

With it the attention of the philosopher is moving away from so-

called "human nature" — the subject matter of philosophical anthropology — to which the investigations of mind of the first two critiques in truth pertain, into the vaster areas of the cosmic situation of human life at one extreme and of human destiny at the other. Thinkers no longer shrink from seeking their own solutions to the issues concerning both. The Cartesian ideal of rational understanding is thus extended everywhere now. Indeed, refusing in the name of his own powers and responsibility to uncritically accept handed-down explanations, norms, and precepts, present-day man wants to determine himself to the full. Taking his destiny into his own hands, he wants to find out by himself not only all the strings upon which his existence in nature as well as in society is suspended but also to find out by himself all the reasons for his thoughts, feelings, and bends down to the reasons for his very existence — the ultimate meaning of his life — and to devise his life-progress and course of action in full awareness.

But the classic and hitherto applied vector of the intellect is inadequate for the directing of such a many-sided inquiry; the human being lacks a compass for such an expanded search and so goes about it in a haphazard way. As he interrogates all the dimensions of his existence at once, he has no common field available to him on which they can all be interrelated in some common patterning, a field on which the multifarious forces, tendencies, promptings, conditions, etc., which enter into the shaping of the individual life-course as well as of the personal destiny of man, and are seemingly at cross-purposes, or without any visible connectedness, can plausibly be weighed against each other and traced to some ever so elusive operational patterns. Left, as he is, in a seemingly inscrutable void, man in his estimation of his existential situation oscillates between two extremes in the evaluation of his destiny: between pessimism and optimism about his very existence. And he lacks the ground for estimating the validity of either.

A new critique of reason, of the constructive ordering and articulating of human existence in its unfolding is thus called for, a critique that (1) will not single out and use just one of the endowments of human nature for the mapping of life's progress, but one which will consider the entire spectrum of our constructive capacities by reaching down to the *human condition*.

This new critique must further (2) uncover the field where the complete set of the issues that pertain to man's existence within the system of life as well as within societal development may be revealed. To this effect we cannot, as in the three critiques of Kant or in the

four-stage unfurling of Husserl's transcendental consciousness engage in progressive and piecemeal surges of meaning-bestowing by the constitutive powers of the mind and then seek later to fit all the streams and streamlets into their proper place. In radical contrast, we have (3) to strike all at once at the Archimedean point from which all of the lines along which the ordering of human existence proceeds in its seemingly haphazard, disjointed-conjoined, disharmonious-harmonious fashion.

It is the thus-conceived task of the new and definitive critique of reason that we have attempted in this present treatise, *Logos and Life*. In line with what has been said we have not taken for our compass man's cognitive-constitutive powers — neither his empirical functioning or action — as has been customary in modern philosophy. In radical contrast, the *creative act of man has revealed itself in our earlier investigations to be the Archimedean point* from which we may assay all the constructive ordering of the human being and of life as such. Through the investigation of the creative act of man we also uncover the entire field where all the lines of that constructive progress come together: the field encompassed by the Logos of Life as it surges through the self-individualization of beingness and expands in the multifarious rationalities through which man-the-creator establishes his very sphere of existence and his specific beingness in the *specifically human significance of life*.

By the same stroke we leave behind the antiquated philosophical anthropology's self-enclosing notion of "human nature" (and that notion's correlative anthropocentrism) and turn to the "human condition" as it reveals itself within the evolutive spread of the *unity-of-everything there-is-alive*. The "Copernican revolution" which our inquiry effects with respect to modern and contemporary philosophy is thereby completed.

2. THE COMPLETE "STORY" OF THE LOGOS OF LIFE

In the first book of this treatise we have contemplated the course of the Logos of Life as it ascends to and reaches the zenith of the course which it traces in the constructive unfolding of the human person — the apex which is cultural communion with others. Does, however, the human being on having reached this peak of his creative exuberance remain on the course traced by the creative compass in the impetus of its constructive progress? Does the Logos of Life advance on one

creative line infinitely? Does the expansion of his life-world offer the answers to man's quest after the ultimate destiny and significance of life? These are the questions which the reader must have asked himself at the end of the first and second panels of the triptych into which this treatise is organized. It is now time to treat these questions in a comprehensive fashion in the third panel of our continuing critique of reason.

In fact, the short span of the human life course and of the lives of the various cultures which emerge as well, achieve a level of identity and then decay. This fact seems to preclude any such hasty assumption. We are all too well aware of the finiteness of our earthly existence. Hence, the already mentioned urgent call for the definitive clarification of the meaning of this existence.

Thus, for the critique of reason to be complete it has to not only consider the customary great outline which it follows in delineating the multidimensional edifice of the human significance of life by taking up in turn the moral, the aesthetic, and the intellectual, but it has also to reach further into the life of the Logos itself as it assumes human significance; that is, it has to follow the "history of the Logos of Life" not only while it advances on the vigorous ascending route toward its flourishing but also to see what its further course is just when the Logos is seemingly at its peak in the constructivism of life as the human being who is the bearer of its unique creative phase strikes at the crucial issue of his entire quest: *the yearning to give ultimate significance* to his enterprise, to reach the last phase of self-enlightenment. That is to say, and let me emphasize it, we cannot exfoliate the nature of reason — rationality — unless we realize that when the force which the Logos of Life unfolds reaches its zenith at the peak of life's expansion, it then recedes before the inward demands of a self-interrogative quest that works in a less demonstrative and discrete way. In fact, only after we have discovered and followed the meanders of the descending route which the Logos of Life then takes in man's so-called spiritual-religious development, may we talk about a complete critique of reason worthy of the name.

There is no need to stress the fact that this new critique of reason lays bare the ultimate foundations of philosophy as such: *the phenomenology of life and of the human condition*.

In taking on this formidable task we have, first, had also to respond to the demands of our historical situation, those of philosophy in decay,

by taking into consideration the reasons underlying the evolution of concepts along with the evidence lying at their formulation handed down to us by modern philosophy. We have, second, had also to respond to present-day radicalism in the evaluation of this very evidence, and of these approaches, methods, and criteria; we have had to be aware of the impasses, hesitations, disclaimers of validity, and postulates of present-day thinkers as well as of the pursuits in which they are engaged and to answer their claims.

The strategies which we have devised to deal, first, with the vastly ramified task of a total philosophical reconstruction, and, second, with the response to be given to the demands of history as well as of the contemporary historical situation of Occidental humanity will be best explained by reproducing here some of the sections by which we introduced the first volume of our critique of reason, *Logos and Life: Creative Experience and the Critique of Reason*.

PART II

THE STRUCTURE OF THE PRESENT WORK

1. PLURIVOCAL CORRESPONDENCES OF COHERENCE: JUXTAPOSITION OF DESIGN PATTERNS

What in the actual workings of Nature and life unfolds is either in simultaneous (yet distinctive), or successive (yet intertwining) events (which partly cooperate and partly advance over each other's phases) or in fusions, which enact each other's propensities. The discovery process of the human mind, in contrast, first follows the whims of the spontaneous, intrinsic processes of Nature, yet diverges in the ways of their plotting organization into expository presentation, and second, has, in the traditional discourse in which philosophical visions of Nature, life and man are presented, followed the strictly delineated pattern of the temporal succession in which our reading-cognizing process works.

Why, instead of following this usual way of composing a learned work, did I choose to make this presentation in such a form that no forcible direct continuity of the rational argument is projected, but the three parts into which the first two books of this treatise are divided appear in the guise of three different "tableaux?" Their unity is, in fact, not that of a continuing argument, but that of numerous significant threads which, being subjacent to the direct themes of presentation, maintain interconnections among various issues, various analytic complexes, and various dimensions which are projected by the great themes in question. In this inter-connectedness resides that which we aim to reveal: *the workings of the creative condition of man*.

This is why these three parts are called a "triptych," a term borrowed from plastic visual reconstruction of a segment of life's fullness, which, limited to a one-dimensional presentation of its topic may, within one of the panels, bring to life merely one phase of the development of the objective sense of the work, as well as only one "sphere" of its inner workings, the revelation of the complete significance of which necessitates and indicates its innermost links to an ulterior as well as a preceding phase (either in temporal genesis or in spatial extension, or, lastly, in thematic expansion).

Thus a medieval “retable” of the nativity which has, in its center, the nativity scene situated at the cross-section of several spheres — a real babe in a manger, a historical situation, and a transnatural message — functions in its fullness only by having at the right the scene of the shepherds heading for Bethlehem to make their discovery and, on the left — bringing both to the culminating point of significance — the homage of the wise men of the Orient in its full dimensions as the recognition of the mysterious message at the center. This artistic answer to the question of the unity of various spheres of life brings us back to the problem of philosophical exposition. When dealing with a subject matter which involves the phenomenological recognition of, on the one hand, *all* types of experience as well as of *all* the ways of making “objectivities,” operations, forces, dynamisms, virtualities, etc. present which these types of experience may entail or postulate, and, on the other, recognition of the modalities in which the making “present” may take place (evidence, presumption, conjecture, etc.), we do not want to introduce either a forced connectedness, or dubious speculative nets of unity. But we must also avoid unwarranted conclusions as to the non-existence of merely evoked facts on account of their ungraspability in one perspective when they delineate themselves in their own unique fashion within each other. Lastly, aware as we are that discreteness and discontinuity on one level do not mean chaos — that tracks that vanish in one modality might be traceable in another —, instead of following the traditionally established patterns of exposition of ideas that are assumed to be attuned to a strictly rational, cogent, intelligibly graspable unity of the universe, we realize that we have to proceed according to a different pattern; a pattern that the originating reality, in acquiring its sense, projects.

We know that the path of discovery which our mind follows so that we may come to grips with some elements of *reality-in-becoming* and “understand” it is so tortuous, disrupted, and takes in complete obscurity so many by-ways of our entire human functioning, that there are contemporary thinkers who are led to identify its tortuous progress with the nature of reality itself.

Yet that which we call the “reality of life,” however tortuous progress in approaching and “understanding” it might be (for it is certainly fluid, infinitely expansive, and, as such, ungraspable in its fullness), it progresses in a harmonious—disharmonious unfolding which is just the opposite of the chaotic ways of our discovering process; reality in

becoming indicates a harmony, the networks of which are woven on so many looms, with such infinitely varied types of warps and woofs, in so infinitely changeable a variety of patterns, that no direct passage from one segment of its weaving to another — with each segment extending into both infinitely simpler and more complex designs — can be established by analyzing it through a certain selected number of modalities.

Neither may we begin our “reconstruction” of the vision of reality, that is, of natural life, the passional abyss of the soul and the human universe which unfolds on the wings of the creative consciousness, by beginning, with Pascal, in fixating on the “infinitely small,” for it leads us precisely into infinitesimal dimensions that are beyond our discernment. Nor may we begin this “reconstructing” endeavor, which of necessity has to keep to the main lines, the “essential” complexities, and the primordial arteries of forces, within the horizon of the infinitely expanding, because that lies beyond our embrace, and, diving into its flux, we will of necessity go astray. This means that neither descent into the origin of consciousness, which leads us into the vital realm but leaves us at a loss in finding a “beginning,” nor reaching toward the life-world genesis, which escapes our grasp, is the way to find the harmony of the “reality of life.”

To strike the right chord, which echoes and resounds from all the roads of the human universe-in-the-making, we have to begin at the center of all differentiation. We have to begin by evincing the human creative experience, in which all the forces which carry the meaningfulness of natural life play upon the strings of the passional soul and are gathered and transmuted, filtered, and untied and tied again into new networks, bringing new, unprecedented, and unique *specifically human significance to life*. Indeed, the emergence of creative experience, creative consciousness, and the human creative act means the establishment of a unique condition for life. *With their orchestration the natural life is lifted to a level of novel significance*. Instead of the field of the life-world assumed as the ultimate ground, even by Merleau-Ponty, yet seen as the expansion of the constitutive, objectifying consciousness which is being restricted to the intellectual surface of life, we gain, within the “creative context,” a full-fledged field of philosophical inquiry into Nature, life, its specifically human meaningfulness and the sense of the human orbit, in which human functioning is not cut off at source points but stretches in all directions and into all dimensions — is not dwarfed as some or other modality, rational or sensuous, but comprises them all.