

Islamic Philosophy and Occidental Phenomenology in Dialogue

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# Islamic Philosophy and Occidental Phenomenology in Dialogue

The Logos of Life and Cultural Interlacing

# The Seal of Philosophy: Tymieniecka's Phenomenology of Life Versus Islamic Metaphysics

Olga Louchakova-Schwartz

**Abstract** Tymieniecka's philosophy developed amidst the same twentieth-century cultural changes that have precipitated broad interest of non-Muslim philosophers in Islam. This paper argues that Islamic metaphysical vision finds its Western philosophical counterpart in the Phenomenology of Life. Tymieniecka revivifies the notion of the sacred in Western philosophy by introducing the concept of sentience, intelligence (logos) and unity of life. However, comparative analysis of the main categories and methods of knowledge in both systems demonstrates that despite the obvious similarities, there are significant distinctions between these two systems. Tymieniecka's philosophy begins with epoché on the preceding philosophical knowledge, while Islamic philosophy begins with revelation; Tymieniecka uses presuppositionless phenomenological direct intuition combined with reflective analysis, while Sufi metaphysics combines logic, intuition and reliance on the experience attained in the states of mystical perception. Unification of Reality and realization of truth in the Phenomenology of Life is attained via the intuition of life at large, and in Islam—via certainty attained in religious experiences of mystical unveiling. Due to refocusing from the static and objectification-based ontological categories of traditional metaphysics on the process of life's development (ontopoiesis), Tymieniecka's ontology serves as a possible solution to the problems of static metaphysical vision of Reality in Sufism.

The metaphysical vision of Islam is rooted in the notion of the unity of existence and knowledge, available through knowledge by presence; Syed Muhammad al Naquib al-Attas calls this the "Intuition of Existence."<sup>1</sup> Crystallized over centuries

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<sup>1</sup> Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas, *The Intuition of Existence* (Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia: International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization, 1990).

O. Louchakova-Schwartz (✉)  
Graduate Theological Union, Berkeley, CA, USA  
e-mail: olouchakova@gmail.com

of Islamic practice, this vision connects the common human quest for truth with the dimensions of the sacred in inner religious experience. This paper argues that vision finds a Western philosophical counterpart in the still-evolving ontological phenomenology of Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka. Though enriched by the attainments of modern science and Western philosophical tradition, her ontology does not divide reality into spiritual, physical or other compartments, and is inspired by the same primary data of life that animated the philosophy of the ancient Greeks, which is at the roots of Islamic metaphysics.<sup>2</sup>

Tymieniecka's philosophy developed amidst the same twentieth-century cultural changes that have precipitated broad interest of non-Muslim philosophers in Islam.<sup>3</sup> Undermined by postmodern deconstruction, metaphysics faced a need to reaffirm its traditional essentialist, universalist, and monotheistic agendas against the "crimson dawn" of the many gods of relativism.<sup>4</sup> At the same time, perennial tensions within metaphysics itself were also being exacerbated. The juxtaposition of the 'non-dual' Indian religious philosophies with Western individualism led to the growth of simplified philosophical approaches to existence, and compromised the subtle insights of apophatic theologies. Traditionalist Islamic philosophers such as Reza Davari Ardakani (Iran) and al-Attas (Malaysia) responded to this crisis by reprimanding the West for what they describe as the loss of metaphysics to the positivistic and scientific worldview.<sup>5</sup> On the other hand, liberal Islamic philosophers such as Abdolkarim Soroush in Iran have welcomed the new epistemologies as a positive development that enriches humanity's knowledge of itself.<sup>6</sup> As a result

<sup>2</sup> For a general introduction to the history of Islamic metaphysics, including the influence of Greek philosophers, see Seyyed Hossein Nasr and Oliver Leaman (eds.), *History of Islamic Philosophy*, 2 vols. (London: Routledge, 1996).

<sup>3</sup> For more on the history of the dialogue between Islamic and Western philosophy, see John Inglis, "Towards a Balanced Historiography of Medieval Philosophy", Introduction to *Medieval Philosophy and the Classical Tradition in Islam, Judaism and Christianity*, ed. John Inglis (New York: Routledge, 2002), pp. 1–17.

<sup>4</sup> For more on postmodern relativism, including a discussion of its many gods, see Richard Shweder, *Thinking through Cultures: Expeditions in Cultural Psychology*. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991).

For more specifically on the relativity of religious knowledge, see Abdolkarim Sorosh, "Text in Context", Lecture delivered at McGill University, Institute of Islamic Studies, April 13, 1995, published in *Liberal Islam: a Sourcebook*, Charles Kurzman (ed.), (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), pp. 244–251.

The metaphor of "crimson dawn" was first used with regard to polytheism by Henry Corbin in "Le paradoxe du monothéisme," *Eranos Jahrbuch* 45, 1976, pp. 69–133.

<sup>5</sup> For more on Davari's perspective, see Mehrzad Boroujerdi, "Three Philosophical Debates in Post-Revolutionary Iran", in *Iranian Intellectuals and the West: The Tormented Triumph of Nativism* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1996).

For more on al-Attas's perspective, see Syed Muhammad al Naquib al-Attas, *Islam and Secularism* (Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia: International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization, 1993).

<sup>6</sup> For more on Soroush's perspective, see Boroujerdi, op. cit., 1996. For a review of Soroush's life and work, see <http://www.dr.soroush.com/>

of these changes, there has emerged a need for an innovative gnoseology that will be able not only to reposition metaphysics within these new and challenging cultural contexts, but also to resolve millennia-old internal contradictions of ontology.

To develop her original process-oriented metaphysics, Tymieniecka had to analytically penetrate the centuries of congealed philosophical tradition. Her monumental epoché on the assumptions of Western ontology, phenomenology, and philosophies of reason opened up a clearing (*Lichtung*, German) where the Logos of Life can be seen and articulated. The focus on the Logos, which is life's innermost sentience, measure, creativity and self-ordering, revives the sacredness in the practice of living. The specific timing of Tymieniecka's analytical summation of the philosophical heritage, the resulting synthesis and epoché, and this new metaphysics led me to view Tymieniecka as a 'Seal' of Western/Occidental philosophy.

The concept of the 'Seal' has its origins in Islamic thought.<sup>7</sup> Just as a design of a real seal sums up the contents of the treasure chest, a thinker who is "the Seal" completes and expresses the essences of preceding knowledge. New knowledge emerges out of this creative synthesis. For example, Ibn 'Arabi, the great "Revivifier of Religion", not only summarized and reinterpreted the monotheistic message of Islam, but developed the new doctrine of monotheistic unification which received a name *wahdad al-wujud* (unicity of being, Arabic). By discovering the sentient, ordering Logos of Life, Tymieniecka not only re-sacralizes Western philosophical discourse, but enriches it with the understanding of the ontological status of the Divine imagination. In the analysis of Tymieniecka's gnoseology, it becomes clear that her novel metaphysics depends on the original strategy of knowledge, such as engagement of the direct intuition with the developing horizon of life, and attention to the inherent logistics of the process of knowledge as the logic self-articulation of life.<sup>8</sup>

By comparison, in Islamic metaphysics, the two main sources of knowledge are scriptural revelation and the personal intuition of the sacred.<sup>9</sup> These sources of

<sup>7</sup> The oral tradition of Sufism, such as Beshara Foundation, interprets the prophetic stations in Ibn 'Arabi's *Fusus al-Hikam* as a succession of stations in the emergent self-disclosure of the Real through the different Divine Names. A Divine Name is represented by a prophet who is the 'setting' (bezel) for the jewel, that is, the specific revelation. The setting is the place of reception which is formed according to the imprint of the jewel. Each prophet/Name appears in historical time and brings a wisdom/mode of being/mode of witnessing that expresses a new possibility for the era and is a response to the new possibility coming from the interiority of the people of that era which also represents that new possibility (Nick Yiangou, Beshara Foundation/Ibn-Arabi Society, personal communication, 2/4/11).

<sup>8</sup> For an in-depth analysis of the epistemological strategy in Tymieniecka's work, see Olga Louchakova-Schwartz, Direct intuition: Strategies of knowledge in the Phenomenology of Life, with reference to the Philosophy of Illumination. In A.-T. Tymieniecka (ed.), *Phenomenology and the Human Positioning in the Cosmos*, Book 1. Analecta Husserliana, CXIII, 291–315 (Dordrecht: Springer, 2013).

For the term "horizon" with regard to phenomenology, see Enrique Lima, "Of Horizons and Epistemology: Problems in the Visuality of Knowledge", *Diacritics*, 33, 3/4 (2003), pp. 19–35.

<sup>9</sup> Seyyed Hossein Nasr, "Mystical Philosophy in Islam", in *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Edward Craig, Vol. 6 (London: Routledge, 1998).

knowledge are related; the tradition maintains that intuition, or “knowledge by presence”, had been a medium of original revelation recorded in the Qur’an. However, as I will discuss in depth, psychological and phenomenological analysis uncovers a tension between these two sources of knowledge: in spite of the inspiring nature of Qur’anic revelation, the personal intuition of the sacred will be circumscribed by one’s commitment to a set of recorded ideas, as frequently happens in Islamic religious and philosophical practice.<sup>10</sup>

Close parallels can be established between Islamic knowledge by presence and direct intuition of phenomenological tradition, including the work of Tymieniecka.<sup>11</sup> Thus, in addition to the apparent similarity of their basic categories and their shared Greek heritage, Islamic metaphysics and the Phenomenology of Life also share an emphasis on direct intuition in the practice of knowledge. However, the presence of scriptural revelation in Islam creates considerable differences between the two systems, which are especially noticeable with regard to the process of enquiry itself.

Islamic metaphysics first posits a self-subsistent unified source of all particular conditioned existences, and then proceeds to examination of the structures of existence, while the Phenomenology of Life first acknowledges the actual presence of life and then follows its designs until they reveal their own intrinsic unity, intelligence, and implicit self-subsistence. Next, while there is some shared commonality in the systematic mental operations underlying the search for the real in both systems, Islamic metaphysics does not have a distinct process orientation. In fact, the process-orientation has never even been discussed with regard to metaphysics in Islam. As I show later, the process orientation, especially in Sufism, is a matter of internal practice, not a matter of metaphysics. In the latter, the traces of process orientation are to be found only in the Neoplatonic influences on Islamic philosophy, for instance in Proclus.<sup>12</sup> In contrast, Tymieniecka’s philosophy takes process orientation to its conceivable limit.<sup>13</sup> This difference has consequences; in

<sup>10</sup> For more on the inspiring influence of revelation, see Muhammad Asad (trans.), *The Message of the Qur’an* (Pakistan, Lahore: Maktaba Jawahar ul uloom, beginning of the fifteenth century of the Hijrah/beginning of the twenty first century).

<sup>11</sup> For knowledge by presence in Islam, see Mehdi Ha’iri Yazdi, *The Principles of Epistemology in Islamic Philosophy* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992); Seyyed Hossein Nasr, “Mystical Philosophy in Islam”, (Routledge, 1998). Available from <http://www.muslimphilosophy.com/ip/rep/H004>; For direct intuition in Tymieniecka’s work, see Olga Louchakova-Schwartz, op. cit., 2013.

<sup>12</sup> For more on Neoplatonic influences in Islamic mystical philosophy, see:

Ian Richard Netton, “Neoplatonism in Islamic Philosophy”, in *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Edward Craig, Vol. 6 (London: Routledge, 1998).

Corbin, op. cit., 1976.

<sup>13</sup> For process orientation in Tymieniecka’s approach, see Olga Louchakova-Schwartz, op. cit., 2013.

Islam, the concept of the Unity of Existence is conditioned on positing a transcendental entity; in Tymieniecka, a process orientation obviates this logical necessity (see the discussion in the next section). Another substantive difference in orientation is that religious experiences, as the instances of God’s self-disclosure, play a major role in the formation of Islamic metaphysics, while in Tymieniecka’s approach, religious experience is only one instantiation of the logico self-articulation, while the main field of it is life at large.

Tymieniecka’s critical analysis of the philosophical approaches to reason, enhanced by her novel use of direct intuition, leads to understanding of Logos as a unified reason inclusive of all modalities of intelligence. This essential understanding distinguishes Tymieniecka’s thought from contemporary western philosophies; at the same time, it connects her with Islamic thought. Shared by the great thinkers of Ismaili, Ishraqi, and Andalusian schools, and Tymieniecka, this understanding of reason is important not only as a metaphysical insight in and of itself, but as a foundation for the applied aspects of metaphysics. There, it has the potential to rejuvenate both Western philosophy and postmodern Islamic philosophy, as well as the potential to influence scientific enquiry and cultural healing systems.<sup>14</sup> Interestingly, this understanding of cosmic, unified intelligence in Tymieniecka grows out of a different route of enquiry than the one found in Islam. One of the goals of this paper is to show how, in Phenomenology of Life, the direct, supposition-free apperception of the intelligence embedded in life’s logico networks liberates one’s reflection to build a new, internally congruent and scientifically informed metaphysics.

## A Problem of a Static Metaphysical Unity

It is hard to imagine a philosopher raising metaphysical questions without having some personal relationship with the question of the Real. A question may be asked, then, whether it will be better to begin philosophical analysis with the notion of the Real, or with the engagement with the Real per se, as opposed to the reflection of the Real in the notion of the Real. Tymieniecka’s Logos of Life is not rooted in a mere rational motive; she appercepts the Logos directly, and re-affirms her discovery through the application of her phenomenological method. The sentience and the logistics of the unfolding of life are the main horizons of Tymieniecka’s intuition. These horizons are much broader than the horizon of spiritual and religious experiences, as the Logos encompasses immensely more than a particular instance

<sup>14</sup> Olga Louchakova-Schwartz, “A Paradox of the New Enlightenment: The ‘Endangered’ Self in the Path(s) of Individualizing Life”, *Selected Papers from the IV International Conference of Phenomenology, “Phenomenological Paths in Post-Modernity: A Comparison with the Phenomenology of Life of A.-T. Tymieniecka”*, Pontifical University, Rome, January 13–14, 2011, (to appear in *ARACNE Sentieri Fenomenologici Bozze*, pp. 205–220).

of spiritual understanding.<sup>15</sup> Direct intuition has access to the overall field of Logos; with regard to religious experience, direct intuition grasps only one aspect of this field.

In Islamic metaphysics, by contrast, the enquiry begins with the notion that “everything is God”, and that God is the Real. Islam maintains that its textual tradition, i.e. Qur’an and hadith, spring forth from the above insight being the content of religious experience(s) of the founder of the tradition, the Prophet Muhammad.<sup>16</sup>

In post facto interpretations of a religious experience, immediacy loses itself to memory, turning into a notion. Such memories are mental replicas of experience; they can inspire faith, but paradoxically, they can also block access to individual pre-reflective experience of God.<sup>17</sup> Because preconceived mental formations inhibit the direct intuition of the Real, the practice-oriented Sufi tradition neutralizes this effect by a mental training that brackets out higher-order reflective thought, logical reasoning or imagination in the process of refining one’s perception of the Divine.<sup>18</sup> However, even with this kind of training, experiential mystical perception remains conditioned by the original revelation as its ideas are passed down through the generations. A conceptual replica of the original revelation can inhibit direct intuition and intimate knowledge of God.<sup>19</sup> In other words, a record of revelation can become abstracted from its living roots and turned into a set of beliefs, thus defeating a part of its own purpose, which would be to inspire religious experiences in the followers.<sup>20</sup> Further, the ideas of scriptural revelation themselves may become an object of worship. To me, this contributes to the problem stated by Corbin:

<sup>15</sup> Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka, *The Case of God in the New Enlightenment*, *The Fullness of the Logos in the Key of Life 1*, *Analecta Husserliana* 100:70 (2009).

<sup>16</sup> For an example of Qu’rānic statement that God is the reality of everything, see Sura Fussilat, Muhammad Asad (trans.), op. cit., XLf: 53.

*Al-Haqq* (‘the truth’, ‘the Reality’, ‘the truly existing’, Arabic) is one of the names of God. For more on the name *al-Haqq*, see Ibn Ata’ Allah al-Iskandari, *The Key to Salvation: A Sufi Manual of Invocation*, trans. M. Koury-Danner, (United Kingdom: The Islamic Texts Society, 1996);

For Ibn ‘Arabi’s use of *al-Haqq*, see Muhyi-d-Din Ibn ‘Arabi, *The Wisdom of the Prophets*, trans. Angela Culme-Seymour (Roxburgh, Scotland: Beshara Publications, 1975), translated from *La Sagesse des Prophètes*, trans. Titus Burckhardt from *Fusus al-Hikam*, p. 8.

<sup>17</sup> For more on roots of revelation in the direct experience, see William Alston, *Perceiving God* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1991).

Christopher J. Eberle, “The Autonomy and Explanation of Mystical Perception,” *Religious Studies*, 34 (1998), pp. 299–316.

<sup>18</sup> Sheikh Yasin Toussulis of the Malamatia Sufi Order and Sheikh Mehmet Selim Ozich, personal communication (1997).

<sup>19</sup> For more on the relationship between conceptual and intuitive knowledge of God, see the argument between Pharaoh and Moses in Muhyi-d-Din Ibn ‘Arabi, op. cit., 1975, pp. 109–115.

<sup>20</sup> For more on the relationship between conceptual and intuitive knowledge of God, see the argument between Pharaoh and Moses in Muhyi-d-Din Ibn ‘Arabi, op. cit. *The Wisdom of the Prophets (Fusus al-Hikam)* translated from Arabic to French by Titus Burckhardt, from French to English by Angela Culme-Seymour (Gloucestershire: Beshara Publications, 1975), pp. 109–115.

In its exoteric form, namely the profession of faith that declares *La Ilaha illah [Lā ilāha ilā’ Llāh]* monotheism perishes in its triumphant moment, unknowingly obliterating itself by becoming *volens nolens* metaphysical idolatry.<sup>21</sup>

Corbin refers to the conflict between the idea of the multiplicity of divine manifestations (existences) and the idea of unity of the self-subsistent Essence (being) in exoteric forms of religion. Unless there is a direct perception of unification in being, as opposed to a logically derived possibility of unification in being, there is idolatry, that is, the worship of a thought-form. In Corbin’s view, Ibn ‘Arabi effectively resolved this contradiction by positing the experiential availability of indivisible transcendent being:

Monotheism attains salvation and obtains its truth only by attaining its esoteric form whose symbol of faith is expressed thus: *Laysa fi’l-wojud siwa Allah*—‘in being, there is only God’.

In other words, God is in being, where “being” transcends qualified existence(s). However, the question remains as to how this completely unqualified God can be known by presence. If this is possible, this knowledge must be devoid of subject-object dichotomies. The religious thinking in the psychologically early developmental stages of faith creates many such dichotomies, including multiplicity versus unity, or the human subject of faith versus the divine object of her worship.<sup>22</sup> Regardless of whether the mental conception of God is singular or plural, dichotomizing will always lead to a form of idolatry where, instead of the living God, an *Imago Dei* is worshiped. The advanced direct intuition necessary to get beyond this frame of mind is distinct from the intuition that sustains faith in its psychologically early form.

By comparison, in the *Phenomenology of Life*, the refinement of intuition takes religious insight outside of its dichotomizing forms, liberating it from the preconceived, theory-laden notions of the Divine. The unifying intuition involved in the *Phenomenology of Life* is distinct not only in the degree of its advancement, (as opposed to the psychologically early forms of intuition), and not just in the unification of subject and object, but in its re-focusing on developmental moments and developmental horizon of life as opposed to the static snapshots of existences and the objectified being.

In the following sections, I will further elaborate the comparisons between these different conceptions of ontological singularity, by way of discussing the epistemological pathways leading to these differences. As I mentioned briefly earlier, the natures of this singularity are also different, in spite of the intuited unicity of *what is* in both systems. In Islam, Reality pertains to the one and only self-subsistent being who is beyond appearances of existence, i.e. distinct in its transcendentality. In contrast, Tymieniecka posits *Logos Omnia*, as sentience, measure, proportion, and unfolding which is inseparable from all life.<sup>23</sup> As life is a singular unity, *Logos*

<sup>21</sup> Corbin, op. cit., 1976.

<sup>22</sup> For a description of the different stages of faith, see James W. Fowler, *Stages of Faith* (New York: Harper Collins, 1981).

<sup>23</sup> Tymieniecka, op. cit., 2009.

*Omnia* too is one, not many, in the same and the only order of beingness that life is in; and the instances of life are the instances of logoc self-particularization, immanent and transcendent at the same time.

### Presuppositionlessness Versus the “Islamization of the Intellect”

As I noted in the introductory section, some contemporary Islamic metaphysicians are skeptical of Western metaphysics across the board. To al-Attas, . . . any attempt to resurrect a science of metaphysics in the West leads only towards metaphysics’ final dissolution.<sup>24</sup> William C. Chittick indicates that, to anybody who is sensitive to Islamic revelation, Tymieniecka’s philosophy may appear “deafening”.<sup>25</sup> I believe that such criticism overlooks the contribution of Tymieniecka’s direct intuition to phenomenological ontology. In its orientation towards life per se, presuppositionless direct intuition serves as a powerful antidote to what al-Attas calls a corroding influence of secularization.<sup>26</sup>

In phenomenology in general, the suspension of suppositions and the analysis of the natural attitude convert ontology into a methodologically rigorous and epistemologically certain enterprise. This early agenda of Husserl’s phenomenology remains valid in Tymieniecka’s metaphysics. Orientation of Tymieniecka’s direct intuition towards the Logos of Life enables both the certainty of ontological conclusions and fidelity to the Real. Her focus is on onto-poietic, developmental moments. This enables her to articulate the unity-of-everything-there-is-alive, the unity of essence and manifestation, the harmony of measure and order, ontological-epistemological unity, onto-poiesis, the *Imaginatio Creatrix*, and other aspects of the fully fleshed-out ontological insight of her metaphysics.

Despite some individual variations, the basic thesis of presuppositionless necessary for successful explication of the structures of consciousness pervades all modalities of Western phenomenology. The presuppositionlessness is achieved via *epoché* and *phenomenological reduction* whereby one suspends ontological judgment in order to access the pre-reflective givenness of the phenomena.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>24</sup> Al-Attas, op. cit., 1993, p. 37.

<sup>25</sup> William C. Chittick, “The Circle of Life in Islamic Thought,” in *Islamic Philosophy and Occidental Phenomenology on the Perennial Issue of Microcosm and Macrocosm*, ed. Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka, Islamic Philosophy and Occidental Phenomenology in Dialogue 2 (Dordrecht: Springer, 2006), pp. 205–213.

<sup>26</sup> Al-Attas, op. cit., 1995.

<sup>27</sup> Amedeo Giorgi, *The Descriptive Phenomenological Method in Psychology: A Modified Husserlian Approach*, (Pittsburgh, PA: Duquesne University Press, 2009), p. 91.

Experience happens for the experiencing subject in an immediate way and as part of this immediacy, it is implicitly marked as *my* experience. For the phenomenologists, this immediate and first-personal givenness of experiential phenomena must be accounted for in terms of a pre-reflective self-consciousness.<sup>28</sup>

Bracketing, which is a systematic peeling-away of interpretive and symbolic layers of reflection provides for the “unpacking” of phenomena themselves.<sup>29</sup> Although the Husserlian *epoché* has been interpreted and used in various different ways, and although the procedure of bracketing per se structures pre-reflective experience, *epoché* has nonetheless been continuously useful in phenomenological work.<sup>30</sup> The need to free the mind from suppositions in order to obtain direct knowledge of what is has always been well-known in the practice of esotericism. In spiritual systems, examination of one’s beliefs, control over the random production of thoughts and subconscious projections, and developing a conscious awareness of thought are major aspects of inner practice. Meditation styles that are concerned with the contents of the deep layers of the mind, such as Dhyana in Yoga or Nididhyasana in Advaita Vedanta, identify and discard the layers of meaning connected with individual identity it attaining the consciousness beyond the ego. Discarding the precepts and perceptions in search of unqualified essence of God is also central to the practice of negative theology.<sup>31</sup> In that regard, phenomenological approach is faithful to a tradition of esoteric knowledge verified by centuries of practice.

Early on in her writings Tymieniecka fully embraced the phenomenological premise of bracketing out suppositions to access the pre-reflectively given patterns and designs implicit in the experience of life.<sup>32</sup> In contrast, with the exception of

<sup>28</sup> Shaun Gallagher and Dan Zahavi, “Phenomenological Approaches to Self-Consciousness”, *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Winter 2010 Edition), ed. Edward N. Zalta available at <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2010/entries/self-consciousness-phenomenological/>

<sup>29</sup> Presuppositionlessness and a return to prereflective experience cannot ever be fully achieved, as one cannot completely strip phenomena of their constitutive influences. However, it is possible to attain a degree of bracketing out of value judgments and symbolic and interpretive meanings pertaining to the phenomena in question. For more on the relationship between prereflective and reflective meaning, see Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka, “The Creative Self and the Other in Man’s Self-Interpretation”, Tymieniecka (ed.), *Analecta Husserliana* 6, pp. 151–186.

<sup>30</sup> For example, Maurice Merleau-Ponty used *epoché* to explicate the true structures of perception from underneath the philosophical assumptions of intellectualism and empiricism; for his description of the process, see Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, trans. Colin Smith (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1962).

<sup>31</sup> For more on negative theology, see Henry Corbin, “Apophatic Theology as Antidote to Nihilism”, in *Le Paradoxe du Monothéisme*, Ed. de l’Herne, 1981. Paper presented in Tehran, 20 October 1977 during a conference organized by the Iranian Centre for the Study of Civilizations, *Does the Impact of Western Thought Allow for the Possibility of Real Dialogue between Civilizations?*

<sup>32</sup> Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka, “The Creative Self and the Other in Man’s Self-Interpretation”, *Analecta Husserliana* 4 (1977), pp. 151–186.

some forms of Sufism,<sup>33</sup> this kind of philosophical attitude is alien to Islamic metaphysics of knowledge by presence. Behind Islamic metaphysical philosophy, there are many centuries of what Seyyed Hossein Nasr calls the "islamization of the intellect". Such Islamicised intellect contains mental networks of categories constituted by principles of Islam.<sup>34</sup> Categorization is necessary for information processing, and cultural influences have been shown to structure this processing.<sup>35</sup> Due to these inherent properties of information processing, any analysis or experience in Islamic cultural milieu is embedded in Islam's categorical framework. Within the Islamic cultural milieu, Qur'anic revelation and prophetic authority are not optional; they are constitutive.<sup>36</sup> It follows that the direct intuition, or knowledge by presence, at the core of Islamic philosophy must have been Islamized with regard to its horizons.

Reliance on the direct intuition in the matters of God-knowledge is a staple of Islam.<sup>37</sup> Unaffected by the Cartesian influences that led to empiricism and intellectualism, thinkers such as Suhrawardi, Ibn 'Arabi, and Mulla Sadra avoided

<sup>33</sup> The Neoplatonic treatise on negative theology, *Theologia Mystica*, attributed to Dionysius the Areopagite, influenced both the mystical theology of Hesychasm in Christianity and the doctrines of Sufism. For more, see *The Mystical Theology*, in *Pseudo-Dionysius: The Complete Works*, trans. Colm Lubheid (New York: Paulist Press, 1987), pp. 133–142.

For more on Hesychastic mystical theology, see Vladimir Lossky, *The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1992).

For more on the influence of Dionysius the Areopagite on Dhu 'l-Nun, the teacher of Bestami, who is the leading proponent of negative theology in Sufism, see Reynold Alleyne Nicholson, *The Mystics of Islam* (London, G. Bell and Sons, 1914), p. 9.

<sup>34</sup> Seyyed Hossein Nasr, "The Qur'an and Hadith as Source and Inspiration of Islamic Philosophy", in Nasr Leaman, op. cit., 1996, Vol. 1, pp. 27–39.

<sup>35</sup> For more on cultural structuring of cognitive schemas, see:

Richard Shweder, *Thinking through Cultures. Expeditions in Cultural Psychology* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991).

Michael Cole, *Cultural Psychology: A Once and Future Discipline* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 1996).

For more on cultural formations of the self, see Cushman, op. cit., 1995.

For more on categorization with regard to the study of religion, see Abdolkarim Souroush, Lecture Delivered at McGill University, Institute of Islamic Studies, 13 April 1995 and published in *Liberal Islam, a sourcebook*, ed. Charles Kurzman, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), pp. 244–251 (1). Souroush says: "The science of nature is a human endeavor to understand the nature, and the science of religion is a human endeavor to understand religion. All understanding assumes suppositions and entails 'categorization,' that is subsuming the particular under universal categories and concepts. Understanding religion is no exception. It is preceded by certain assumptions and principles which are necessary conditions for its intelligibility and interpretation."

<sup>36</sup> For more on Islamic elements as part of Muslim philosophers' psychological constitution, see Marc H. Applebaum, "A Phenomenological Psychological Study of the Muslim Leaders' Attitudes Toward Connection with the Prophet Muhammad" (PhD dissertation, Saybrook Graduate School, 2009).

<sup>37</sup> Al-Attas, op. cit., 1990.

For more on direct intuition in Islamic epistemology, see Yazdi, op. cit., 1992.

the false dichotomy between reason and intuition, as well as what amounts to a divide between ontology and epistemology in Western thinking.<sup>38</sup> The validity of intuition as a means to knowledge was established by Qur'anic revelation long before Western phenomenology acknowledged its cognitive value. Reliance on knowledge by presence in the formation of ontological insight, therefore, is both typical for Islam, and is informed by concepts of Islamic revelation.

However, the Qur'an is believed to be a sealed book, in that the deepest understanding of the recorded revelation remains hidden. The levels of understanding that are available are premised on the idea of a primordial covenant between God and the human soul. The soul's existence is conditioned on her acknowledgment of relationship of lordship and servanthood, wherein the self-subsistent God commands the soul to be. Faith in this revelation rests on inner vision (*imān* in Arabic), and resolves into a direct, unmediated knowledge of God.<sup>39</sup> However, from the phenomenological perspective, consciousness maintaining such a notion of covenant is limited in its possibility to intuit a totally unqualified Real (cf. the Kantian thesis of transcendence). This intuitive knowledge is contingent on a presupposition that can never be discarded as long as that consciousness continues to be. Therefore, the functioning of the direct intuition is constrained with regard to any possibility of broader ontological insight.

By contrast, the constitutive influences of Western culture open the possibility of transcendental in many ways, and either theistic or non-theistic philosophizing. There is a spectrum of possibilities between the two, and the starting platforms do not define the theistic or non-theistic nature of conclusions. Especially in phenomenology, because of its pre-predicative focus and fidelity to human experience, the initial rational motives of a philosopher's individual faith have to be bracketed out. In the search for truth, "... a knowing that does not know any revelation or that does not recognize it as an already given fact (even to transform it later in a cognitive manner) is a-theistic... [I]f such knowledge should lead to God, this way would be an atheistic way [of coming to God]".<sup>40</sup> The process remains inspired by an open-ended faith, as opposed to a creed. This inspiration opens horizons of pre-reflective experience, whereby the non-theistic philosophizing discovers the implicit, constitutive religious presence:

Consciousness is immediately aware of the fact that there is a transcendent, absolute being; this is inscribed in consciousness itself. Consciousness knows this and this particular

<sup>38</sup> Ingles, op. cit., 2002.

<sup>39</sup> For more on faith in Islam, see James Hastings and John Selbie, *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, vol.10 (Whitefish, MT: Kessinger Publishing, 2003) 700. Original work published in 1908.

For more on knowledge of God in Islam, see:

Reza Shah-Kazemi, "The Notion and Significance of Ma'rifa in Sufism," *Journal of Islamic Studies*; 13:2 (May 2002), p. 155.

William C. Chittick, *The Sufi Path of Knowledge: Ibn al-'Arabi's Metaphysics of Imagination* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1989).

<sup>40</sup> Angela Ales Bello, *The Divine in Husserl and Other Explorations*, *Analecta Husserliana* 98 (2009), p. 14.

consciousness is religious insofar as the awareness is an awareness of the presence of God, which is simultaneously not reducible to consciousness itself.<sup>41</sup>

These “intuitional manifestations” make a foundation for the subsequent theoretical thought. Tymieniecka refers to this level of insight as one’s own logico manifestation from which one draws certainty regarding the sentience of Logos in all manifestations of life, which in turn nourishes a consecutive formulation of the process-oriented phenomenological ontology.<sup>42</sup> Without this gestalt, being and existences would remain as two separate ontological principles, and there would be a need to posit an ideal metaphysical ground that must be more real than the allegedly semi-real manifestation. Therefore, the difference in gnoseological method, specifically, the presence or absence of epoché, is a cornerstone of the distinctions between the two systems.

Tymieniecka accomplishes with regard to being what Merleau-Ponty accomplishes with regard to knowing: a complete epoché of the preceding theory-laden approaches.<sup>43</sup> Even though the analytic styles of the two philosophers are very different, examination and suspension of theory-laden reflective thought, especially the targeted examination of one’s ontological assumptions, create a clearing where the philosophers can carry on their investigations. In the *Phenomenology of Life*, both the creative activity of life and the deep structures of its Logos are available for direct apperception as a result of this epoché. In other words, presuppositionlessness creates a space for the self-disclosure of the Real.

In comparing Tymieniecka’s ontology with Islamic metaphysics, this section has described two situations, one in which the flow of consciousness induces pre-reflective intuitions that become the foundation for metaphysical thought, and another in which ontological consciousness is guided by a previously fixed agenda.<sup>44</sup> The following sections will examine in more detail the phenomenological

structure of metaphysical insight in Sufi metaphysics and in the *Phenomenology of Life*.

## Ontological Intuition and Sentience

It has been said that Tymieniecka begins her analysis with the world. William Chittick has contrasted this with the primary moment of Islamic philosophy, revelation.<sup>45</sup> However, structural analysis of the two systems shows that place of the world in Tymieniecka’s philosophy, and the place of revelation in Islamic metaphysics are not the same, therefore, they can not be compared with regard to their function in the overall system. Tymieniecka does not, in fact, begin with the world; she only uses the world as a phenomenological field of life in which she situates her intuition at the beginning of the cycles of interrogation.<sup>46</sup> The interrogation itself, as is the case with Tymieniecka’s great counterparts in phenomenological ontology, Husserl and Merleau-Ponty, begins with the epoché. The understanding of limitations in preceding philosophy leads her to reformulate the whole philosophical apparatus with the central move of putting life in the center of interrogation. The world is a display of life, whence, Tymieniecka analyses the world. Therefore, in Tymieniecka’s philosophy, it is the position of the philosophical-phenomenological epoché, and not the analysis of the world, that corresponds structurally to the role of revelation in Islam.

In order to attain her focus on the world, Tymieniecka uses the clearing created by epoché to establish a link between her intuition and the Logos of Life.<sup>47</sup> The philosopher’s soul functions as a lens through which the logico structures of the world are seen according to the principle “as within, so without.”<sup>48</sup> As the sentience of the Logos is also discovered to be a part of this inner logico manifestation, interrogation connects to the sentience of the Logos as its guiding thread. In the clearing created by phenomenological epoché, the mind of the philosopher and the Logos of Life are dialogically connected, and the sequences of interrogation both are *initiated* by the self-articulating impulse of the Logos, and *are* the Logos. Thus, the impetus of interrogation is not so different from the intention of the original covenant between the soul and God in Islam; each is a logico imperative. However, since this imperative is not ontologically presupposed in the *Phenomenology of*

<sup>41</sup> Ales Bello, op. cit., 2009, p. 66.

<sup>42</sup> For a further discussion of one’s own logico manifestation, see Olga Louchakova-Schwartz, op. cit., 2013.

<sup>43</sup> For Merleau-Ponty’s critique of empiricism and intellectualist assumptions regarding perception, see Merleau-Ponty, op. cit., 1962;.

For more on the suspension of presuppositions in Merleau-Ponty’s ontology, see Martin C. Dillon, *Merleau-Ponty’s Ontology*, (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1988).

For one criticism of preceding philosophical ontologies, see Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka, “Inaugural lecture: Ontopoietic ciphering and existential vision of reality”, *Does the world exist? Plurisignificant ciphering of reality*, ed. Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka, *Analecta Husserliana* 100:79 (2004), pp. xiii-xxx. However, discussions of preceding ontologies occur throughout Tymieniecka’s writings. For summary, see Nancy Madras, “Creative Imagination—The Primogenital Force of Human Life: Following Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka’s Thread from the Elemental Stirrings to Human Fulfillment”, in *Imaginatio Creatrix: The Pivotal Force of the Genesis/Ontopoesis of Human Life and Reality*, Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka (ed.), *Analecta Husserliana* 100:83 (2004), pp. xxi-xli.

<sup>44</sup> For a discussion of Husserl’s analysis of these two types of situations, see Ales Bello, op. cit., 2004, pp. 65–79.

<sup>45</sup> Chittick, op. cit., 2006.

<sup>46</sup> For the comparison of the self and the world as the primary ground of phenomenological interrogation, see Olga Louchakova-Schwartz, “Self and World: Vedanta, Sufism, and Presocratics in Phenomenological View” to appear in *Analecta Husserliana* (a).

<sup>47</sup> For more detailed analysis, see Olga Louchakova-Schwartz, op. cit., 2013.

<sup>48</sup> For more on the structures of the world inside the self, see Olga Louchakova-Schwartz, op. cit., to appear (a).



Life, but is expressed in the *de facto* relationship in interrogation, it places no limitations on the enquiry.

Freeing the mind from the preceding philosophical perspectives in order to regain access to pre-reflective facts of life in Tymieniecka's philosophizing is comparable to the process of internal purification of the spiritual heart in Islamic gnosis. As Ibn 'Arabi describes in *Fusus al-Hikam*, God created the world in order to see his own essence reflected in it. However, initially, the world was like an unpolished mirror. Adam, the *anthropos*, became the "light itself of the mirror and the spirit of this form [of the world]."<sup>49</sup> The spiritual heart (the phenomenological core of one's consciousness) is the junction between the human and divine self-awareness, where the light of knowledge illumines the form of the world. The heart also contains its own reflection of the world as *alam al khayal* (the 'Imaginal World', Arabic). Polishing of the mirror of the heart through the process of internal practice and correct ethical choices is necessary in order for God to see His own essence (or essences). These essences are grasped by the awareness which al-Attas calls the Intuition of Existence.<sup>50</sup>

The corresponding aspect of direct intuition in Tymieniecka's approach can be referred to as "ontological intuition."<sup>51</sup> As an aspect of overall phenomenological direct intuition, this kind of intuition is directed at the "*immediate, direct evidence* which lies at the roots of all human experience: direct evidence accompanying states of affairs, objective formation by the mind, emotional complexes, intentional acts..."<sup>52</sup> The ontological intuition is specific with regard to the spectrum of the direct evidence that it selects out of all possibilities of consciousness. It chooses the horizon in which it operates, beingness, because the goal of this intuition is to support the "reflection that underlies . . . all the major phenomenological attempts at grasping the great conundrum of beingness."<sup>53</sup> The direct evidence corresponding to ontological intuition involves both modes that correspond to physical realities and "modes in which transcendencies are made known other than the constituting of physical realities as unities of harmonious appearances..."<sup>54</sup> In other words,

<sup>49</sup> For more on the metaphysics of the mirror of the heart, see Muhyiddin Ibn 'Arabi, "Of the Divine Wisdom in the Word of Adam" in *Fusus al-Hikam*, chapter 1, Ibn 'Arabi, op. cit., 1975, pp. 1-7.

<sup>50</sup> Al-Attas, op. cit., 1990.

<sup>51</sup> The term was introduced, and the spontaneously rising ontological intuition was first reported with regard to the experience of people with spiritual emergence. For more, see Olga Louchakova, "Ontopoiesis and Spiritual Emergence: Bridging Tymieniecka's Phenomenology of Life and Transpersonal Psychology", in *Phenomenology of Life—From the Animal Soul to the Human Mind*, Book II of *The Human Soul in the Creative Transformation of the Mind*, Analecta Husserliana 100:94 (2007), pp. 43-68.

<sup>52</sup> Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka, "The Theme," in *Phenomenology of Life and the Human Creative Condition*, Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka (ed.), Analecta Husserliana C100:52 (1998): 52, p. xii.

<sup>53</sup> Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka, op. cit., 2004, p. xiv.

<sup>54</sup> Edmund Husserl, *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and Phenomenological Philosophy*, Book 1, trans. Fred Kersten, (Dordrecht: Kluwer 1976), p. 117.

ontological intuition takes into its horizon both the realities of the world, and intra-subjective clusters of phenomena united by a particular mode of transcendence in self-awareness.

Sentience is grasped by intuition in this pre-reflective evidence. Tymieniecka's account of sentience is very laconic, possibly, due to lack of terms for the description of the modes of transcendence which defy the usual subject-object dichotomizing.<sup>55</sup> I will attempt to replenish her evidence of sentience by the data of my own psychological phenomenological study. Sentience can be described as an essence of the perceived-perceiving field. Along with qualities of awareness and/or aliveness, it also has a quality of sacredness.<sup>56</sup> One experiences sentience as pre-reflective and pre-suppositionless, as it has a paradoxical nature of appearing simultaneously as the subjective, as belonging to the phenomenal field, and as uniting the two fields. Sentience is not divisible per se; it only appears divided into aspects such as pure awareness, knowing, the known, existence, or fullness/sacredness by the superimposition of language and discursive thinking.<sup>57</sup> There are two features in the direct apperception of sentience which make it difficult to explicate it: firstly, sentience is both the substance and the source of all apperception; secondly, the gestalt of sentience is nearly instantly veiled by reflective higher-order thoughts. However, some people, especially Buddhist practitioners, can experience the gestalt of pure sentience for prolonged periods of time, in spirituality-related experiences. In the oral tradition of Buddhism, sentience is referred to as the "intrinsic radiance of all phenomena".<sup>58</sup> Tymieniecka describes the horizon of sentience as an "All-Surpassing sphere of fullness . . . where we seek a divine instance as our own measure, as it is circumscribed by the logos of life."<sup>59</sup> This sphere of fullness is, at the same time, a pre-reflective ground which is not optional, but constitutive for a religious/spiritual experience.<sup>60</sup>

Sentience is also a dynamic principle, and a birthing ground for all kinds of transcendencies. As a pre-reflective ground, it is invisible in the natural attitude untouched by epoché. However, its direct self-apperception is available in the

<sup>55</sup> For more on the use of language in description of the realities of the sacred, see Michael Sells, *Mystical Languages of Unsayings*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994).

<sup>56</sup> Louchakova, op. cit., 2007.

<sup>57</sup> There is a detailed analysis of how sentience-awareness appears divided in the Indian philosophy of Advaita Vedanta; see the *Mandukya Upanishad*, Swami Gambhirananda (trans.), Vedanta Press; Advaita Makaranda, Ann Berliner (translation and commentary) (Bombay, India: Asia Publishing House, 1990).

In Western philosophy, Merleau-Ponty performed a similar analysis of the fragmentation of a unified percept into aspects due to the superimposition of theory-laden thinking; see Merleau-Ponty, op. cit., 1962.

<sup>58</sup> Sylvia Gretchen, Dean of Tibetan Nyingma Institute, Berkeley, personal communication at the Buddhist Nyingma retreat (November, 2010).

<sup>59</sup> Tymieniecka, op. cit., 2009, p. 253.

<sup>60</sup> Ales Bello, op. cit., 2004.

human condition, and appears as a part of the ontopoietic design of the Logos highlighted in cognitive activities of the soul. The moments of sentience emerge out of anonymity due to inwardly directed-awareness.<sup>61</sup> Besides touching on the sacred, the intuition of those moments touches also on reality, truth, the origin of things, the emergence and development of life's manifestations, as well as contributing to the formation of one's understanding of principle of autonomy and self-subsistency, and to one's conceptualization of God.<sup>62</sup> This complex field of sentience is at the core of Tymieniecka's philosophizing; the fullness of spirit associated with religious experiences in the human condition is, in fact, the same phenomenological reality. By highlighting the notion of sentience as a defining feature of the Logos of Life, and as a guiding principle for her phenomenological system, Tymieniecka reintegrates sacredness into Western philosophy.<sup>63</sup>

Ontological intuition, emerging through reading Tymieniecka's philosophy, leads one to understand how pervasive sentience is in life; one can follow sentience as a guiding thread throughout Tymieniecka's discovery of the Logos of Life. However, Tymieniecka does not always invite the reader to witness the process of her realizations, but offers mainly a concluding gestalt.<sup>64</sup> This is the case with the category of sentience, which Tymieniecka does not completely spell out in her writings; this has led to much discussion. To clarify the notion further, I will make a connection that is not immediately evident, between the gestalt of sentience in Tymieniecka's thought and the category of sentience in experience-based metaphysical religious philosophies. Tymieniecka maintains that sentience is the main feature of life and the essence of the Logos of Life. In this, her view resonates with the metaphysical perspectives of many spiritual philosophies. For example, in Vedanta, the nature of Ultimate Reality is defined as *sat-cit-ānanda*, 'truth/being-awareness/sentience-fullness' (Sanskrit).<sup>65</sup> In Buddhism, the absolute *Bodhicitta* is both enlightened compassion and enlightened pure awareness, i.e., aspects of sentience. The name of God *al-Haqq* in Sufism is 'Truth', 'Reality' (Arabic), but at the same time it points out to a principle related to knowing, that is an aspect of

sentience.<sup>66</sup> All of these terms point out to a certain perceptual field. As of both the above analysis of people's reports, and of the analysis of texts, sentience is not divisible *per se*; it is only divided into aspects such as pure awareness, knowing, the known, existence, or fullness/sacredness by the superimposition of language and discursive thinking.<sup>67</sup>

In Tymienieckian contexts the notion of sentience appears to be similar to the one in the present analysis. Again, she only points to it.<sup>68</sup> In the *Phenomenology of Life*, a detailed egological analysis isolated from the larger field of life would be of a limited cognitive value; it is only in the context of observations of the whole field of life that the egological gestalt acquires its true meaning. Sentience is to life what wetness is to water: the former can not be separated from the latter. Sentience always *is*, and thus, Tymieniecka can maintain that life is its own metaphysical ground; there is no ideal essence, or substance of any kind that can be posited as separate from life. As the essence of perception, sentience is the phenomenological core of reason, intelligence and all knowing. Therefore, it is also the essence of the Logos of Life. As a logoic principle, it is not a thing, but a process: its existence is in relationship, and in the unfolding of the ontopoietic schema of the Logos. In short, sentience, which always contains a possibility to know or posit something, *IS* the dynamic of the Logos.

Tymieniecka's *Logos* is grammatically a noun, but its phenomenology is that of a process. The Logos signifies the logistics of unfolding of life, and aspects such as measure and proportion, sequencing and direction of becoming. As a signifier for a process, *logos* is semiotically a verb. Refocusing from things to processes is an important feature of Tymieniecka's approach, in which she breaks through the habitual tendencies of the mind which lead to a cul-de-sac of objectification in metaphysics. Tymieniecka observes that the mind tends not only to focus on what is static, but also to create an impression that things actually are static:

Given the spontaneous tendency of the speculative mind to seek a point of vantage from which the all-embracing intuition could be obtained, the cognitive mode of the mind is led to focus on the static, stationary circuits of the artifacts of the lifeworld that the human mind itself establishes.<sup>69</sup>

<sup>61</sup> Olga Louchakova, "Ontopoiesis and Union in the Prayer of the Heart: Contributions to Psychotherapy and Learning", *Logos of Phenomenology and Phenomenology of the Logos*, Book 4 of *The Logos of Scientific Interrogation. Participating in Nature—Life- Sharing in Life*, Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka (ed.), *Analecta Husserliana* 100:91 (2006), pp. 289–311.

<sup>62</sup> For more on the potentialities of ontological intuition in spiritual emergence, see Louchakova, *op. cit.*, 2007.

<sup>63</sup> Corbin refers to the loss of the sacred as one of the main problems of Western philosophy; see Corbin, *op. cit.*, 1981.

<sup>64</sup> For more on Tymieniecka's presentation of her methodology, see Louchakova-Schwartz, *op. cit.*, 2013.

<sup>65</sup> The exact translation of Sanskrit *ananda* is 'bliss'. However, oral tradition always refers to *ananta ananda*, which is limitless bliss or fullness., I use it this term the translation of definition as it is closer to a phenomenological referent implied in this definition than bliss.

<sup>66</sup> For instance, it is described so by Ibn 'Arabi: "God [*al-Haqq*] wanted to see the essence [*al-a'yan*] of His most perfect Names [*al-asmā al-husnā*]. . .", Ibn 'Arabi, *op. cit.*, 1975, p. 8.

<sup>67</sup> There is a detailed analysis of how sentience-awareness appears divided in the Indian philosophy of Advaita Vedanta; see the *Mandukya Upanishad*, Swami Gambhirananda (trans.), Vedanta Press; Advaita Makaranda, Ann Berliner (translation and commentary) (Bombay, India: Asia Publishing House, 1990).

In Western philosophy, Merleau-Ponty performed a similar analysis of the fragmentation of a unified percept into aspects due to the superimposition of theory-laden thinking; see Merleau-Ponty, *op. cit.*, 1962.

<sup>68</sup> This is a part of her method. For more on Tymieniecka's method, see Louchakova-Schwartz, *op. cit.*, 2013.

<sup>69</sup> Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka, Book 4 of the *Impetus and Equipose in the Life-Strategies of Reason. Logos and Life*, *Analecta Husserliana* C:70 (2000), p. 22.

When this cognitive mode is bracketed out, Life and Logos appear not as static principles, but as processes. Therefore, Tymieniecka avoids objectification in her language; for example, she does not say being, but introduces the term beingness. Epoché and the resulting presuppositionlessness enable her to bracket out the static interpretive framework of philosophical terminology and to focus on the dynamisms of life. Thus, the sentience of the Logos of Life refers to a moment that is in itself dynamic, paradoxically combining the qualities of being an object of perception. It is a process, like the flow of a river, or a combination of a process and an object, like an electron being both a particle and a wave.

Tymieniecka's insight into the dynamic singularity of the Logos of Life, and her focus on transformation, development and emergence, are rooted in the specific positioning of her direct intuition towards the phenomenological referents of transformation, development, emergence, and the like. She sees the Real not through a series of snapshots but through the awareness of continuous transformations (like bread being baked). This repositioning of the direct intuition leads Tymieniecka to many phenomenological discoveries, including her view of onto-poietic time as a self-articulation of the Logos.<sup>70</sup> Tymieniecka's analysis shows that the sequences of insights and the focus of attention in interrogation is governed by the internal, implicit logistics of the process. This is not a logic of the reason, but a logistics of measure, proportion, and flow of logico-onto-poietic manifestations. In other words, interrogation means following this flow, in dialogue with the Logos itself. Along the lines of this understanding, the notions of consciousness and beingness are the ciphers of one unified phenomenon of life. Life's sentience radiates as a number of rationalities such as intelligence, apperception, or awareness, which function in relation to other virtualities and rationalities and to one another. The sentience is embedded both in the subject and in the object, and is on both ends and at the core of any intentional consciousness, including the apperception of the real. Tymieniecka says:

... [S]entience is the conductor of the unfolding of the sacred thread of the logos in its progressive revelation. Sentience leads the constructive forces of life ... culminating in human experience—in beauty, love of the other, sacrality. It reacts to the experience in the ex-stasis of life in the Divine Fullness.<sup>71</sup>

Let us again reengage this analysis with the Islamic discourse. It is obvious that the same pre-reflective substratum of sentience can be tracked in the Sufi intuition of existence, which happens through the mediacy of *shuhūd* ('spiritual witnessing', Arabic), or *dhawq* ('tasting through the heart' Arabic), or both.<sup>72</sup> As a pre-reflective intuitional manifestation, this intuition feeds theoretical thought. Thought objectifies

<sup>70</sup> Kathleen Haney, "The Ontopoietic Timing of Life versus the Kairic Unfolding of the Trans-Natural Destiny (A.-T. Tymieniecka)", in *Timing and Temporality in Islamic Philosophy and Phenomenology of Life*, Islamic Philosophy and Occidental Phenomenology in Dialogue, V. 3, Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka (ed.) (Dordrecht: Springer, 2007), pp. 285–294.

<sup>71</sup> Tymieniecka, op. cit., 2009, p. 99.

<sup>72</sup> Al-Attas, op. cit., 1990, p. 29.

its pre-reflective referent, and can be abstracted from the actuality of the intuitional, embodied meaning of the spiritual moment. When thought acquires a life of its own, it draws attention away from the actual experience. Then the subtle individuations of sentience again sink into anonymity and become invisible in experience. New intuitions do not occur because attention does not deepen, and the introspection—the inward turn of awareness—does not take place. If thinking has been crystallized as a religious dogma, it becomes detrimental to the moments of transcendence; rigid presuppositions, superimposed on the direct intuition and sentience, silence their gentle whisper.

Intuition-based phenomenological tracking of the unfolding manifestations of sentience is an opposite of the mental position of objectification. Sentience, tracked as a dynamic reality, unfolds into different aspects, such as beingness and/or intelligence. When the reflexive thought captures the virtualities growing out of sentience in its aspect of beingness, and the rationalities emerging out of its aspect of intelligence, it formulates the notion of dynamic evolving unity, the onto-poietic logos. This tracking of sentience in life leads Tymieniecka's philosophical reflection to formulate an original understanding of truth. The overall certainty of truth is formed not through any single experience of God but through systematically and persistently following the life of the logico-onto-poietic sentience, that is, through the totality of the perceptual possibilities and ontological intuitions available in the human condition. As opposed to *faith-based* certainty in Islamic metaphysics, intuiting the dynamic sentient multiplicity of phenomena feeds the ongoing *direct perception* of the certainty of truth.<sup>73</sup> This canvas of life in Tymieniecka's thought unfolds against the background of the intuited unity of life. The numerous virtualities of life and rationalities of Logos bask in this indivisible dynamic unity, where every step is conceived within the preceding steps, and is connected by myriad potentialities with the sentient whole.

The ontological intuition grasps the ongoing onto-poietic emergence of sentience, both at the core of one's religious perception, and in the larger field of life. The dynamic nature of the sentience, uncovered in its preconceptual givenness, serves as a foundation for Tymieniecka's integral process ontology.<sup>74</sup> If one focuses on the process of emergence, rather than on static sequential moments, the arguments about the nature of the Ultimate Reality do not arise; life's sacredness is the perennial metaphysical reality. On the contrary, an incorrectly positioned perception, or objectifying thinking, construct the static categories of metaphysics which never fully work. The beingness does not have any isolated phenomenological

<sup>73</sup> For more on the notion of certainty in Islam, see Abu Bakr Siraj ad-Din, *The Book of Certainty: The Sufi Doctrine of Faith, Vision and Gnosis*, trans. Martin Lings, (Cambridge, UK: Islamic Texts Society, 1996);

For a description of this particular type of intuition coming from extinction in God, see Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas, *Prolegomena to the Metaphysics of Islām* (Kuala Lumpur: International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization, 1995), pp. 177–216.

<sup>74</sup> I suggest the term *integral process ontology* to differentiate Tymieniecka's process-oriented ontology from Whitehead's process theism.

referent that can be captured by a static focus, as opposed to the pure being which appears to be simply constructed by the above-mentioned objectification. When Ultimate Reality is derived from erroneously intuited, artificially static pre-reflective data, and is then treated by objectifying thinking, it turns into an epiphenomenal construction, and the whole process of theological or ontological enquiry devolves into a thought chasing its own tail. From the process-oriented perspective, the metaphysical oppositions between materialism and idealism, between essence and existence, arise from such erroneous perceptions; they are perpetuated by analysis that focuses on static categories and objectifies the fleeting moments of life.

In contrast, Tymieniecka's intuition captures the process of the constant unfolding of the field of life, its poiesis and its flow. In process-oriented phenomenology, she has developed a proper philosophical procedure capable of resolving gnoseological conflicts. In this procedure, one focuses on the dynamisms and interrelatedness of virtual moments of beingness that shape the whole of life.<sup>75</sup> In order to capture the inherent unity of life, one must stay in the horizon of developing sentience; that unfolding sentience is life's growth cone and onto-poietic front. This is the clearing in which newly born virtualities and rationalities are visible.<sup>76</sup> Because Tymieniecka's ontology is oriented towards processes; it is an integral ontology that manages to capture the whole field of *what is*, liberating ontology from internal contradictions.

## Static Versus Ontopoietic Oneness

Through the focus on poiesis and flow, Tymieniecka's metaphysics posits a complete unity of life, its identity with what is real, and the full availability of this unity to the process-oriented ontological intuition. This situation, where apperception of unity is fully available as soon as the process-orientation of intuition is understood, is different from the understanding of unity in the Sufi doctrine. In the latter, the Aristotelian and Neoplatonic influences, which became amalgamated with the original Qur'anic message, create a logical gap between the creation and the transcendent God:

The Qur'anic God was linked to his creation by the sheer power of creativity, the Aristotelian God was linked—much less feelingly—with that which moved, while the Neoplatonic God bridged, or attempted to bridge, the huge gulf between transcendence and corporeal reality by the device of emanation.<sup>77</sup>

<sup>75</sup> For more on the interrelatedness of instances of individualizing life with all life, see Tymieniecka, op. cit., 2009.

<sup>76</sup> For an experience-based description of the process of this deployment as seen by people in the process of spiritual emergence, see Olga Louchakova, op. cit., 2007.

<sup>77</sup> Netton, op. cit., 1998.

In Sufism, metaphysical vision must be supported by the direct intuition in actual practice. As al-Attas puts it:

Metaphysics as we understand it is a science of Being involving not only contemplation and intellectual reflection, but it is based on knowledge gained through practical devotion to that Being Whom we contemplate and sincerely serve in true submission according to a clearly defined system of Revealed Law.<sup>78</sup>

Through states of expanded awareness (states, *hal*, Arabic) and stable changes in Sufi personality (stations, *makam*, Arabic), practice brings a Sufi to the gestalt of the Ultimate Reality. The concept of the stations can be traced back to the Neoplatonic concept of emanations. This integration of the experience of the Ultimate, transcendent Reality with the actual experience of living has been of major importance in the development of Sufi thought. In the doctrine of *wahdat al-wujud* ('Unicity of Being', Arabic) of Ibn 'Arabi, the concept of God is radically monotheistic, however, it is not the linear logic, but the paradoxes and hermeneutics of understanding and perception that link the idea of transcendent unity with the impressions gained through internal practice.<sup>79</sup> Affirming this doctrine, practice unity has become especially important in the relativity-infused cultural climate of postmodernism, where Ibn 'Arabi's teachings enjoy growing popularity among modern Sufis. As described by Corbin, Ibn 'Arabi reconciles the multiplicity of existences with the oneness of being through paradoxes:

One ... needs to consider the relationship between *being* and *existent being*. We shall advance two hypotheses: does the One absolutely One transcend being itself? Or is it concomitant with Being, of the "Act-to be" that transcends existent beings? ... The word One does not name what it is but is the symbol of the absolutely Ineffable. The one is not One. It does not possess the attribute One. It is essentially unificient [*unifique*], unifying, constitutive of all the Ones, of all the beings that can only be existents by being each time an existent, i.e. unified [made one], constituted in unities precisely by the unifying One. ... In Ibn Arabi's school of thought, harmony is achieved by the confrontation between monotheism of the naïve or dogmatic consciousness and theomonism of the esoteric consciousness; in short the acceptance of the exoteric or theological *tawhid* (*tawhid wujudi*). This is precisely the form that the paradox of the One and the Many takes in Islamic theosophy.<sup>80</sup>

Interestingly, in this description there is a hint towards the process-orientated unification, (as in "Act to be" which transcends the existent beings), however, this never receives its full doctrinal development. In fact, the doctrine always contains the paradox of one and many, there is no final unification outside of this paradox. The personal understanding of unity along these lines is necessarily connected with the state of non-ordinary perception known as the final unveiling.<sup>81</sup> As al-Attas describes it:

<sup>78</sup> Al-Attas, op. cit., 1990, p. 26.

<sup>79</sup> For an example of such a hermeneutics, see Ibn 'Arabi, *The Tarjuman al-Ashwāq*, trans. Reynold Nicholson (London: Theosophical Publishing House, reprint of 1911 edition, 1978).

<sup>80</sup> Corbin, op. cit., 1976.

<sup>81</sup> Al-Attas, op. cit., 1990.

In the final 'unveiling', he 'witnesses' the single, unified Reality again taking the myriad forms of the phenomenal world without Itself becoming multiple. He sees with a spiritual vision the Unity individuating Itself into Multiplicity without impairing Its original Unity, and yet 'connecting' or 'relating' the Multiplicity with Itself in such wise that, although the Unity takes on the forms of Multiplicity, It still distinguishes itself from the latter and remains always in Its original nature. In other words, he sees the inner articulations of the Unity, in which Unity is neither joined to nor separate from the Multiplicity, and which goes on in continuous operation. This continuous operation of Unity articulating itself into Multiplicity and back again into Unity as witnessed by the spiritual adept is called the 'gathering of gathering' (*jam' al-jam'*)...<sup>82</sup>

Taken in themselves, in isolation from ordinary perception, these experiences are in contrast with the rest of human life. Therefore, the concept of God, who is the only self-subsistent Reality and the principle of principles which logically can not change, creates an opposition to the experience of God which is fluctuating. To maintain fidelity to the uncompromising monotheism of Qur'anic revelation, the states of unveiling have to be conceptually unified with the states where God is veiled. The doctrine must bridge gaps in experience until experience catches up with doctrine. Therefore, the notion of a static metaphysical unity has to have as its correlate a notion of the nonreality, or degrees of reality of the empirical world. Although the Neoplatonic concept of emanations is absent from the Qur'an,<sup>83</sup> Islamic mysticism has some semblance of it in the idea of the scale of perceptions, or stations (as above), that bring a Sufi gnostic closer and closer to God.<sup>84</sup> Therefore, the states of unveiling are glimpses of more real levels of reality that shine through ruptures in the less real levels of reality. However, the individual perception can never be fully trusted in terms of being an instrument of knowledge, because the current station of the gnostic may not be that of the full unveiling of the Reality of God.

Ibn 'Arabi resolves the tension between the transcendent oneness of being and experiential multiplicity of existences through the dialectics of opposites on the spectrum of consciousness. In this spectrum, one polarity is human identity, and the other is God's identity, and a man must be 'removed from himself' by Divine will to know the Real.<sup>85</sup> In this extinction of illusory separateness, and the extinction of the illusory act of extinction, the self-subsistent Absolute/God is the only one remaining. This relationship or self-subsistency of God, and conditioned nature of manifestation are contained by the ethics of lordship/servanthood between the Absolute and its derivative, the human soul with no being of its own. The absolute unity of God is established in the dynamic dialogical cycles between the two. These

<sup>82</sup> Al-Attas, op. cit., 1995.

<sup>83</sup> Corbin, op. cit., 1976.

<sup>84</sup> James Morris, "The Sage and the Young Disciple. Revisiting religious Shi'ism and Early Sufism: the fourth/Tenth Century Dialogue of 'the Sage and the Young Disciple'. Reason and Inspiration in Islam," ed. Todd Lawson, (London: Tauris and Co, 2005), p. 110.

<sup>85</sup> For an example of hermeneutics emerging out of the fluctuating states of perception, see Ibn 'Arabi, *The Tarjumán al-Ashwáq*, trans. Reynold Nicholson, (London: Theosophical Publishing House, reprint of 1911 edition, 1978).

cycles of gnosis engage the two polarities, the soul that is gradually acquiring direct knowledge of God that confirms and transcends its original conceptual knowledge, and God (Reality), who manifests knowledge of Itself through Its activities of self-disclosure within the human soul. Eventually, the gnostic:

... knows what he has 'witnessed' was a 'fragment', so to speak, of the continuous series of self-determinations and particularizations of the absolute Unity. His remembrance, reflection and contemplation of that vision at this stage constitute that Knowledge in him whose reality and truth is established by the certainty of direct experience (*haqq al-yaqīn*)... "[W]itnessing' of it is temporary, but the subsequent knowledge of it is permanent... for he now *knows* that the myriad forms that constitute the Multiplicity are in reality so many different aspects of 'the Truth' (*al-haqq*) Who 'clothes' Himself in their guises..."<sup>86</sup>

In this process of maturing intuition, the prescribed exoteric forms of faith, *islam* and *iman*, progress towards an inner, esoteric form, *ihsan*, which is faith in God as if one sees Him.<sup>87</sup> Faith eventually advances to *ma'rifa* ('gnosis', Arabic), which transcends egoic ownership of knowledge and eventually becomes the condition of God's self-knowledge.

The final end and ultimate return of the gnostics... is that the Real is identical with them, while they do not exist...<sup>88</sup>

In other words, the states of experience are ontologically integrated only in the context of an overall developmental progression that includes various modes of cognition. When this is accomplished, "Man... sees God everywhere in his spiritual vision, so that for him is realized the full meaning of the text: 'wheresoever you turn *there is an aspect of God*.'"<sup>89</sup>

Throughout the history of Islam, great minds and outstanding mystics have tried to reconcile the tensions between the experientially recognized dynamic Unity within multiplicity and the static conceptual framework in a recorded monotheistic revelation. On the one hand, original revelation declares the ontological Unity, on the other hand, there is a framework based on static categories and objectifications, which has to be reconciled with experience. Even though Ibn 'Arabi's work diminished the prominence of this conceptual problem, Sufi God remains to be an Absolute Being, a sort of a global subject/substance. From my perspective, there remains a contradiction between the static concept of God and the dialectic of the perceptual process by which God is known. The ultimate unification of existences in being can not be attained in a theory of relative levels of reality, or experimentally, unless the metaphysics refocuses, as in the Phenomenology of Life, on the process.

<sup>86</sup> Al-Attas, op. cit., 1995, pp. 192-193.

<sup>87</sup> Hassan El-Najjar, "Three Levels of Faith: Islam, Iman, and Ihsan", Al-Jazeera, 2007. Available at <http://www.aljazeera.info/Islamic%20Editorials/2007/May/Three%20Levels%20of%20Faith%20Islam,%20Iman,%20and%20Ihsan%20By%20Hassan%20El-Najjar.htm>

<sup>88</sup> Reza Shah-Kazemi, op. cit., 2002, p. 63.

<sup>89</sup> Al-Attas, op. cit., 1995, p. 200. Quoted text is from Qur'an, al-Baqarah (2):115.

I believe that the static metaphysical categories can not convincingly support a monotheistic vision of reality. This discrepancy between life as given, and the metaphysical vision, and not the nearly proverbial conflict of civilizations, is what appears to propel young Muslim intellectuals to seek solutions in Western philosophies of reason.<sup>90</sup> But the solutions of traditional Western philosophy are yet another cul-de-sac; reason-based approaches cannot solve problems of a metaphysical nature, nor can empiricist perspectives. Western philosophy itself has long recognized this; the crises of reason precipitated the search for solutions in phenomenology. Tymieniecka's phenomenological orientation towards life, and the focus of her intuition on the dynamic and temporal moments, naturally solve the problems that emerged in the preceding enquiry.

### *Unified Intelligence, Reality and God*

Albeit with controversies, Islam provided a vision of unified existence, which was a healthy alternative to postmodern trauma and fragmentation of the self. Perhaps, Tymieniecka's philosophy was inspired by the same sensibilities, and its solution for the problem of fragmented existence is a more consistent one.<sup>91</sup> Before the *Phenomenology of Life*, Western philosophy not only separated one aspect of knowledge from the other, but viewed them as having different statuses in the hierarchy of approaches to truth. Rooted in Aristotelian categorizing, Western philosophy distinguished between the different mental categories, such as reason, emotional intelligence, intuition, logic etc. Human reason was differentiated from the divine reason, and the nature was devoid of intelligence altogether. As viewed by the seventeenth-century European Enlightenment, intelligence and reason are the discriminating faculties. In this intellectual climate, an idea of a unifying intelligence would be an oxymoron. Reflecting on the emergence of the new quality of knowledge in the current period that she calls the New Enlightenment, Tymieniecka developed a concept of unifying reason-Logos.

Logos in the New Enlightenment manifests in the increase of knowledge, especially scientific knowledge. Scientific knowledge changes humanity's knowledge of life and of itself. Scientific knowledge is not only reason-based; it incorporates many forms of intelligence. In the framework of the *Phenomenology of Life*, scientific knowledge is a manifestation of universal, unified intelligence,<sup>92</sup>

<sup>90</sup> For more on the popularity of philosophies of reason among Muslim intellectuals, see Ali Paya and Mohammed Amin Ghaneirad, (2006). *The Philosopher and the Revolutionary State: How Karl Popper's Ideas Shaped the Views of Iranian Intellectuals. International Studies in the Philosophy of Science*, 20:2, pp. 185–213.

<sup>91</sup> For more on Tymieniecka's thought in post-modernism, see Louchakova-Schwartz, op. cit., to appear in *ARACNE Sentieri Phenomenologici Bozze*, pp. 205–220.

<sup>92</sup> For an example of the scientific study of multiple intelligences, see Swami V., Furnham A., Zilkha S. Estimates of self, parental, and partner multiple intelligence and their relationship with

which is the Logos of Life. Through science, Logos provides the new data regarding the structures and processes of life. With regard to being a source of a new kind of knowledge, one can compare the practice of science with the internal mystical practice in Sufism: both provide the new knowledge relevant to what is true and real. If a philosopher accepts this new testimony as a ground for her philosophizing, this causes re-visioning the concepts of the real and God.

While Islamic philosophy also incorporated the Peripatetic heritage, it developed its own alternative to Western analysis of mind in a notion of a unified faculty of heart-intellect.<sup>93</sup> The teachings of Suhrawardi, Mulla Sadra, Ibn 'Arabi, and their successors establish the inherent identity between the trans-egoic intelligence available to advanced gnostics, and God's, or Reality's, knowledge of Itself.<sup>94</sup> As I described in the preceding section, this intelligence is attained through the dialectic cycles of inner spiritual practice and understanding. Basing her conclusions on her own phenomenological analysis, Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka goes beyond the limits of these dialectics. First, she uncovers the unifying intelligence that is available experientially in a non-mystical state of mind. Second, she discovers that this intelligence is not of a human origin, but has a universal character; it is inherent not only to human consciousness, but to life at large. When, in the course of ontopoiesis of life, the human condition of life emerges, it brings this intelligence into focus, and serves as a locus of its self-articulation. The gestalt of this unifying intelligence is within the natural possibilities of human knowledge, and the awareness of such intelligence depends on the direct intuition, not on mystical perception. Finally, because this intelligence is expressing itself poetically, as life's measure, proportion, and ordering, it inherent at all life.

In the concept of unicity of being and the corresponding concept of the unicity of awareness, Islamic metaphysics point out to the cosmic unifying intelligence identical with Absolute Existence/Being. As opposed to logically conceived realities, this intelligence is discovered via a combined action of reason and intuition, which is the heart-intellect. However, the differences between the exoteric and esoteric understanding, and the problems in esotericism per se that I described in the previous section, lead to possibility of misinterpretations of such a unity. As Corbin indicates:

[J]ust as the exoteric level is constantly subject to the menace of metaphysical idolatry, so too the esoteric level is threatened by the danger that arises from a mistaken interpretation of the word being.<sup>95</sup>

personality, values, and demographic variables: a study in Britain and France. *Spanish Journal of Psychology* 2009 Nov; 12(2):528–39.

<sup>93</sup> In Ismailism or in Ibn 'Arabi's hermeneutics, however, this unified reason is only available in potentiality, and is activated only in the upper stages of the gnostic's ascent, where the seeker's own identity is erased, and the Real, i.e., God-Intellect, is self-manifesting through the heart of the gnostic.

<sup>94</sup> Shah-Kazemi, op. cit., 2002.

<sup>95</sup> Corbin, op. cit., 1976.

Tymieniecka does not have to introduce an esoteric dimension to her philosophy because the contradictions between the reason and the intuition and the tensions between the stating being and dynamic beingness are resolved in her concept of onto-poietic Logos. Since the earlier thought could not possibly incorporate the data of modern sciences, and Tymieniecka can, this helps her to develop a full picture of this intelligence. The 'unveiling' of the Real takes place in the analysis of onto-poiesis with the inclusion of the data of sciences.

This fullness of understanding will also be connected with the Tymienieckian view of transcendence as a process which takes place in the course of life's onto-poiesis, and remains within the logoic unity of life. The logical necessity of there being a transcendent source of everything finite is a cornerstone of most metaphysics.<sup>96</sup> However, this logical move is conditioned by its dependence on the presence of things to be transcended, that is, by the inherent dichotomy between the infinite and the finite. Like other religious philosophies, Islam tried to deal with this problem by introducing the notion of the degrees of reality. Tymieniecka avoids this fatal for metaphysics situation because her world does not consist of finite objectified existences; it consists of the onto-poietic virtualities of life and the rationalities of the unfolding Logos. Therefore, the logical necessity for a metaphysical principle beyond manifestation is obviated by Tymieniecka's process orientation. It is only in the eternal unfolding of life that the notion of the real finds its real positioning in *beingness* and its consequent freedom from the logic-based fallacy. Life-intelligence is, *de facto*, a principle that extends beyond all particular instances of individuation, such as particular concepts of God. Tymieniecka differentiates this principle from the sacred in religious experience, and calls it *Logos*.

What is the givenness of the *Logos* for us, in the human condition of life? On one hand, Tymieniecka's interrogation is both non-theistic, and phenomenologically the direct intuition-based; on the other hand, as Ales Bello demonstrates, any phenomenological direct intuition of an absolute being is inspired by faith.<sup>97</sup> The question arises, then, as to whether faith, and as to what kind of faith, is at the core of this apperception of the *Logos*. Psychologically, faith develops in conjunction with an idea of God, from formalized and objectified symbolic representations towards progressively more formless and immediate intuitions.<sup>98</sup> In the advanced forms of faith, the pre-reflective substratum of religious thinking is fully brought out of anonymity; acts of faith are open-ended, and are based not on a mere idea of God, but rather on a lived experience of God with connotations of certainty, reality and truth. This can be called either faith, or knowledge, or both in one.<sup>99</sup>

It appears that it is due to this kind of mental environment created by the advanced open-ended faith, that Tymieniecka's intuition acquires the qualities

<sup>96</sup> Netton, *op. cit.*, 1998.

<sup>97</sup> Alles Bello, *op. cit.*, 2009.

<sup>98</sup> Fowler, *op. cit.*, 1981.

<sup>99</sup> Shah-Kazemi, *op. cit.*, 2002.

essential for the act of discovery of the unifying Logos. It is because of this intuition that Tymieniecka's Logos-God does not have to be posited as an a priori principle; it is discovered early on in Tymieniecka's philosophizing, but as an a posteriori. In Tymieniecka's philosophy, this act is not postponed until perception catches up with metaphysically expressed recorded revelation, but begins from the very beginning with the intuition of Logos in Life, and remains pervasive throughout her whole discourse.

As distinct from the term "Logos", Tymieniecka uses the term "God" predominantly to address experiences which have the dimension of the sacred. Tymieniecka leaves unspecified whether these experiences support a polytheistic or a monotheistic understanding. This specification would be unnecessary because the intuition of the unifying intelligence in Tymieniecka's philosophy is not rooted in the experiences of polytheistic or monotheistic nature. The recognition of the unifying *Logos* happens, as I mentioned above, at the very beginning of Tymieniecka's interrogation, and the main body of her philosophy is dedicated to description and analysis of the process-structures of the already discovered principle of the Logos of Life. In separately standing experience, what is can appear fixed in its static givenness by the objectification of the noetic-noematic constitution of one's perception. In Tymieniecka's metaphysics the true knowledge of life is found outside of these perceptual boundaries. In order to obtain a full picture of reality:

[W]e have then to recognize not only the horizons of our cognitive performances ... but also the horizons of the whole experience of living beingness and of all its vital functions.<sup>100</sup>

God of religious experiences is only a part of life. What is embedded in and discovered through the intuition of the myriad of connections and interrelatednesses that shape life. Both Islamic metaphysics and Tymieniecka's metaphysics incorporate the data of religious experience, and the data of life larger than one single experience. However, for the Islamic metaphysics, life outside of religious experience is a life of veiled Reality, or the life of separation from reality. Unification of reality happens in the transcendence of life. For Tymieniecka, on the contrary, the intuited unification of life is what presupposes the possibility of metaphysical analysis. In Islam, the unity of awareness and being is given via religious experience, coming in increments.<sup>101</sup> In Tymieniecka, the unity of knowledge and life are given both via religious experience, and life as a whole, in all cognitive modalities which pertain to life. This is especially evident when one considers life in its self-creative aspect. As Tymieniecka states, "In the onto-poietic perspective, life and consciousness are interchangeable."<sup>102</sup>

Onto-poiesis is Tymieniecka's term for what she observes as a self-creative activity of life. This activity, by which life sustains itself, is logoic (sentient and

<sup>100</sup> Tymieniecka, *op. cit.*, 2009, p. 134.

<sup>101</sup> Incremental revelation is reflected in Qur'an.

<sup>102</sup> Tymieniecka, *op. cit.*, 2009, p. 131.

orderly). It is also mediated by the work of *Imaginatio Creatrix*, a logicoic force which 'invents' the new forms and contents of life. In ontopoiesis, life deploys the tandem of entelechial energies and the operative generational force.<sup>103</sup> The entelechial energies formulate future purposes and organize the field of life; the operative generational force fills in the actual contents.<sup>104</sup> Thus, the unification takes place at every moment of life, it is both a *modus vivendi* and a *modus operandi*. The human condition of life emerges in the sequence of ontopoietic stages as a novum, which is a radical shift in qualities of life, and in logicoic imagination. The human soul is the center of unification, a cognitive condenser that distills ontological insights out of the matrix of life. The soul:

... works on and with all virtualities as a lens of life, offering the ground for their encounter and opening the space where it can intervene in those virtualities and transform them in particular ways.<sup>105</sup>

The soul has an inward dimension, the center where, as Tymieniecka puts it, there is "the specific cognitive face of the process in which the objective content of the logos is formed."<sup>106</sup> The religious experiences and/or experiences of self-knowledge in this center serve as a clearing in which one sees overt expressions of the tendencies of life, a sort of ontological blueprint of the universe.

In the human condition, the logicoic aspect of *Imaginatio Creatrix* reveals its agency and expresses consciously its creative potentialities. This initiates the soul's transcendence of the vital order of life and the development of spiritual and philosophical reflections. In the Logos-human dialectics of Tymieniecka's philosophy, the human condition is both necessary in and subordinated to the logicoic scheme of things. It is the apex of logicoic individuation and the state where Logos accomplishes its reflective self-articulation.

In Tymieniecka, Logos is never veiled. In its complete identity with life, the Logos is totally available to the philosophical direct intuition. However, one needs to know how to position one's phenomenological intuition in order to discern the logicoic networks. In Tymieniecka's analysis, none of her predecessors in the Phenomenology of Life dissociated eidetic intuition from the intuition of life.<sup>107</sup> The intuition of life, as opposed to intuition of abstracted essences, enables one to focus on the self-subsistence and logicoic development of life, i.e., ontopoiesis. In Tymieniecka's view,

<sup>103</sup> Tymieniecka, op. cit., 2009, pp. 36-37, 44.

<sup>104</sup> In Islamic perspective, there is a corresponding principle: God preparing the place to receive the spirit, and then informing it with spirit. One of the aspects of God which emerges out of this view is God as a builder of measures and proportions. Therefore, Islam articulates its *adab* ('etiquette', Arabic) as consideration and respect for the order of things in Divine economy.

<sup>105</sup> Tymieniecka, op. cit., 2009, p. 224.

<sup>106</sup> Tymieniecka, op. cit., 2009, p. 131.

<sup>107</sup> Tymieniecka, op. cit., 2009, p. 73.

**Table 1** Comparisons between the concepts and categories of Tymieniecka's phenomenology of life and Islamic metaphysics

Concept or category	The Phenomenology of life	Islamic metaphysics
Instantly recognized similarities		
Central concept	Life	Existence/being
Central feature of the method	Direct intuition	Knowledge by presence
Reality	Life with its logos	God
Cosmic intellect	Logos of life	God
Unification	Life is a unity, and one with its Logos, which is intelligence in all its forms; sentience, measure and proportion of all things	Unification in being
Status of the human being	Established in the context of ontopoiesis, as a locus where life's logos reflectively articulates itself	Similar concepts of anthropos as a light of awareness in the world, with the latter serving as God's mirror in God's self-knowledge
Nuances and distinctions		
Structural foundation of philosophy	Life per se, as observed and given in experience	Scriptural revelation regarding the nature of one's existence
Conceptual foundation of philosophy	Critical analysis of the preceding philosophical systems, phenomenology, early Greek philosophy; personal insight	Scriptural understanding of Reality combined with Aristotelian and Neoplatonic influences
Method	Phenomenological interrogation, which is the direct intuition of life and its structures combined with reflective analysis. Main features of the method: (a) phenomenological presuppositionlessness at the level of grasping of the structures of life, pre-reflective with regard to self-experience; (b) orientation of intuition towards the process, as opposed to objectification of noematic contents of experience	Logic subordinated to the creed, and faith-inspired hermeneutical cycles of the direct intuition in spiritual states. Focus on static categorizing, not presuppositionlessness, no concept of pre-reflective horizon, but reliance on the intuitive apprehension of mental realities as a valid epistemology
Central category	Life, as unitive, sentient, intelligent (logicoic), self-creating and self-ordering principle	God, as unity of existence (being) and witnessing
Being and knowledge	Identical as life and its logos	Identical both in the nature of the real, and its cognitive hierarchies
Reality	Discovered phenomenologically, and formulated a posteriori. Identical with sentient and logicoic life	Posited a priori, and then affirmed experientially. Transcendent to the ordinary life experience
Unification of reality	Attained via phenomenological method	Posited a priori

(continued)



Table 1 (continued)

Concept or category	The Phenomenology of life	Islamic metaphysics
Concepts qualifying the central category	The logos of life; sentience; onto-poiesis of life; Imaginatio Creatrix	Truth, reality, and other names of God
Unity of being and awareness	Established in the context of onto-poiesis	Established via the direct intuition of mental realities in introspective experience <sup>a</sup>
Metaphysical unification of the real	Attained in the context of onto-poiesis, as unity of particularization and unification of life	Posited a priori
The concept of intelligence	Intelligence as logoic sentience, measure, proportion, ordering and purposefulness inherent to life; intelligence is a cosmic feature of all life. A concept of unifying intelligence, incorporating all modalities of reason, awareness, intuition and thinking	Unifying reason is connected with the notion of Supreme Being, or God, which is the transcendental reality. It is available in direct experience of human heart-intellect
Process orientation	Taken to its maximum, pervasive and foundational to the whole system	Present in the cycles of hermeneutics in Sufi practice, but does not occupy a central place in metaphysics

<sup>a</sup>For unity of being and awareness, see Suhrawardi (1183–1191) *Oeuvres philosophiques et mystiques*, vols I and II, ed. H. Corbin, Tehran and Paris: Adrien-Maisonneuve, 1976; vol. III, ed. S.H. Nasr, Tehran and Paris: Adrien-Maisonneuve, 1977

[A] statement of fact or state of affairs never remains completely enclosed within itself, [but it] refers always with necessity to some factor or factors needed for further completion ... and ... to its 'possible' but not definitely indicated continuation...<sup>108</sup>

The place Tymieniecka assigns to the human soul in the cosmic schemata of Logos reminds one of Ibn 'Arabi's description of the meaning of the prophetic station of Adam<sup>109</sup>; the idea of logoic self-articulation will resonate with the idea of the self-disclosure of God in Sufi hermeneutics.<sup>110</sup> These and other evident similarities between the Phenomenology of Life and Sufi metaphysics are accompanied by many significant differences. In many instances, the deeper contextual comparative analysis reverses the initial impression of similarity. In conclusion, I attempt to systematize this complex situation in a schematic summary of comparisons between the categories in these two completed systems of knowledge (Table 1).

<sup>108</sup> Tymieniecka, op. cit., 2009, p. 12.

<sup>109</sup> Ibn 'Arabi, op. cit., 1975, pp. 1–7.

<sup>110</sup> W. C. Chittick, op. cit., 1998.

## Concluding Remarks

Replacing the traditional ontological analysis of static essences and structures with interrogation focused on the life's process, Tymieniecka avoids the infinite regress of logic and the consequent necessity to posit a separate from empirical existence metaphysical substratum as the causal principle of reality. Since her ontological premise is life, which is a process, and is *sui generis* and sentient, her unity-of-everything-there-is alive is in *Logos Omnia*; i.e., it is a process-based category. "The *sui generis* life is understood ... to be at the center and also to be the ultimate point of reference."<sup>111</sup> Therefore, her discourse does not suffer from the internal contradictions that are inevitable in Islamic monotheism due to its objectification of the metaphysical ground as a static, eternal principle. Taking her enquiry beyond the contradictions between being and existence(s) into beingness, and beyond the inconsistencies of monotheistic theory and praxis into the onto-poietic and sentient unity-of-everything-there-is-alive, Tymieniecka achieves a new kind of unity-based metaphysics. Whether or not Tymieniecka's thought was influenced by Islamic metaphysics, remains an open question. In her extensive analysis of the preceding philosophies, she does not mention Islamic metaphysics. However, the commonalities between the basic categories of Ishraqi, Ismaili or Akbarian philosophies, and the Phenomenology of life are hard to deny. The distinctions are also evident: Tymieniecka offers new solutions to the problems at the core of ontological cul-de-sacs of Sufism, thus extending her function as The Seal of philosophy towards Islamic metaphysics itself.

<sup>111</sup> Tymieniecka, op. cit., 2009, p. 74.