

**A WALK AMONG THE BRUSHES.
A PERSONAL REFLECTION OF
ANNA-TERESA TYMIENIECKA: THE POET**

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Abstract: The ‘I’ of the feminine is often reflections/expressions of the most intricate of all consciousness; yet it is the blatant of all that is human. The feminine phenomenology of our existence is intricately woven into the reality of our limited understanding and knowledge. Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka wrote of it in her publication, “The Song of the ‘Promised one’” (2011), where she discerns the maiden and the Mother, from the Father and the son. To understand feminine experiences within the limits of human/non-human reality is to explore humanness in the objective reality, and the subjective reality of feminine humanism. Phenomenology has little research in the past in exploring feminine phenomenology. Is it different in terms of understanding or in the feminine expression? Yes, the women who have braved and surged in their academic writings, particularly the phenomenologist of Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka. There is a gender consciousness and gender reality in humanness, which is often overlooked or not often explored in phenomenology. This paper will explore the *poetic creatrix* of the feminine of Tymieniecka’s poetic expressions of the “logos of life”, and the ‘I’ of her feminine; what my poem, *She and the Sea*, explicitly, artistically expresses the feminine existence of the universe; the soul, the logos and the ‘she’.

Keywords: Tymieniecka, poetry, phenomenology, feminism of poetics

*Her soul needed refreshing
she returned to the sea
when the waves came, her troubles leave*

*her hair played with the wind
her smile swept across her face
she felt the universe give back her grace*

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*early morning from darkness to light
rose into colors of orange, pink and red
she nodded and watched, no words said.*

*Her soul needed refreshing,
She returns always to the sea
the waves come, her troubles leave*

The ‘I’ in the feminine becomes unknown in the nothingness of the greater; the divine. In reference to my poem, *She and the Sea*, the feminine of her grace was obscured by her innermost acceptance through her faith in the moment; which was grace.

My paper is written in poetic reference on the phenomenology of life, from a feminine perspective and the reflections of Art and Literature as often reference in the Artistic spiritualism of those women who have gone before us, and reflection of the beauty of their phenomenological insights.

The work of Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka (1923-2014) challenges us with her own poetic gifts of life and the universe, the human and the non-human, and the question of consciousness and the place of the “logos of life”.

She became the feminine voice often in publications with Karol Wojtyła (*The Acting Person*) as they became lifetime friends in study of Phenomenology and Poetry. They were the actors on a universal stage of inquiry, the poet who listens; to quote, a *Haiku* of mine:

*Poets listen, hearing
Sounds break like tuning forks of
The soul; passing time.¹*

According to Tymieniecka², “our imagination is informed by the gloomy vapors, the glimmers of fleeting light, and the glory of the skies. Reconnoitering from the soil of human life and striving towards the infinite, the elan of imagination gets caught up in the clouds of the skies”. She goes on to write, “There in that dimness, sensory

¹ See Christine McNeill-Matteson (2011). “Tuning Forks of the Soul”. In Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka (ed.), *Sharing Poetic Expressions. Islamic Philosophy and Occidental Phenomenology in Dialogue*, Volume 6. Dordrecht: Springer, p.218.

² Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka (2012). “The Passions of the Skies”. In Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka (ed.) *Analecta Husserliana*, Volume CXII: *Art, Literature, and Passions of the Skies*. Dordrecht/Heidelberg/London/New York: Springer, p.ix.

receptivity, dispositions, emotions, passionate strivings, yearnings, elevations gather and propagate.”³

Thomas Merton, in his book, *New Seeds of Contemplation*, notes “...yet, I can find her, if I too can become hidden in God, where she is hidden. To share her humility and hiddenness and poverty, her concealment and solitude is the best way to know her: but, to know her there is to find wisdom.”⁴ He was speaking of Mary, known as the Mother of God, the feminine of our Christianity, the beingness of our beginnings. It is the feminine of humanity, the ‘I’ that continues on through time. In poetic form I share a piece of the hiddenness of the feminine which continues; the promise of humanity:

I enter my garden of Gethsemane,
With the shroud of my womb
Choking closely on my shoulders.

Weeping across my soul the red stain
Flows into the vine now twisting into my
Human flesh of pain and sorrow.

Mother of Mothers, whose loneliness
And desperation sheds the crust of my body
Calling out for the new bread.

New bread, for the generation left
From a Mother’s tears,
At Mary’s feet; the world weeps.

Garden

Tymieniecka speaks with passion in her poetic fragments⁵: “The ardor of all in me brought to one point: to be with you - you who are always and never there.”

We often hear feminist views in a commercial tense and immediately attach them to the world views of politics. All the while, the feminine of intellectual philosophers, inquirers, poets, artists pick up their pen and brushes and classically throughout the ages bring

³ *Ibidem*.

⁴ Thomas Merton (1949 / 1972). *New Seeds of Contemplation*. New Directions Publishing, p.168.

⁵ Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka (2011). “The Song of the ‘Promised One’: A Christian ‘Song of Songs’”. In Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka (ed.), *Sharing Poetic Expressions. Islamic Philosophy and Occidental Phenomenology in Dialogue*, op.cit. p.230.

strength to the truth of the philosophy of women, leaving ‘tuning forks of the soul’ in the ubiquity of time.

Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka calls from the voice of the maiden. She questions all of “The Father-Not Enough. The Son/The Mother,” her existence, her reality, her beingness of her own mortality and spirituality; she writes “The great mystery of the creativity of nature.” Notwithstanding, the author later expounds in her publications of “The Song of the ‘Promised One’, A Christian ‘Song of Songs’”:

...till the outline of a life’s destiny is spun. Neither the tempestuous passing and absence of the “beloved” of the soul, nor the presence of the accomplished fact, expectation and projection of the mysterious play already started in full run to which our whole being is committed. It grows its roots in every realm; the mystery of this anticipated creation from the felling and the flesh that only Motherhood knows; of passing from within what is most precious to her and yet what by its very nature and preciousness remains unknown.⁶

In my writing of the poem, *Motherhood*, I express the internal, the spiritual, the physical and the universal plea of the feminine of Motherhood. The very ‘I’, the unknown of the once, the most precious of ‘Motherhood’:

If you have leaped as high as the moon,
Sailed on the winds of the spirit,
Bruised with the stone of others
From the anguish they want you to inherit.

If you kissed the faces of innocence,
Prayed till your knees have grown numb,
Walked the miles of a lifetime,
Felt the urgency of an open run.

Drown in the past of yesterdays,
Swam in all hopes of tomorrows,
Carried the weight of generations,
Felt their joys and dealt with their sorrows.

You turn and see what you did not understand,
And understood the wisdom of ages.
You have been in the shadow of your children,
And contributed within these pages.

⁶ *Ibidem*, p.233.

Nietzsche would stand incensed with the thought of a woman with a voice, “If a woman possesses many virtues one should run away from her. If she does not possess them, she runs away from herself.” Such is the history of the reflection often of the female station in life. Whereas, Søren Kierkegaard’s famous quote, “What is a poet? An unhappy *man* who hides deep anguish in *his* heart, but whose lips are so formed that when the sigh and cry pass through them, it sounds like lovely music”⁷. In Raymond Wilson’s words, “*he writes we build from the past*”⁸. And, according to Lawrence Kimmel

In the beginning is the end - The wisdom of the poetic voice is in knowing the place for the first time. ...but, so long as there is a residual sense of the archaic, a deep desire for continuing communication with the past, and the commitment of the poetic moorings of cultural and spiritual life, then even within the *abstract cultures that dominate the contemporary world*, the open horizon of the human soul will remain a possibility of great literature.⁹

‘I’, - linger long enough in the brushes of life, to listen to the “logos of life”, in the archives of the voice of Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka. She sings her “Song of Songs”, in her fragment poetical feminine voice as it resonates. The ‘I’, in her feminine voice, as she comments

In this sentience, which develops from this first germinal coming forth of life, appearance of life, to the fashioning of the individual, which in the human case of being, with its highest sentience spiritual unfolding, this sentience is really carrying the divine.¹⁰

The poetic reference she refers to her being a gardener is like unto the very mystery of life. I envision her poetic stance, her meditative

⁷ See Søren Kierkegaard (1843/1992). *Either/Or: A Fragment of Life*. Penguin Classics.

⁸ See Raymond J. Wilson (2012). “All My Sons: Arthur Miller’s Sky Play in Light of Søren Kierkegaard’s *Either/Or*”. In Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka (ed.), *Analecta Husserliana*, Volume CXII, *op.cit.*, pp.223-232.

⁹ See Lawrence Kimmel (2012). “The Recovery of Archaic Truth in Literature: Light and Darkness in the Perception of Space in the Human Imagination”. In Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka (ed.), *Analecta Husserliana*, Volume CXII, *op.cit.*, pp.63-76.

¹⁰ Lars Petter Torjussen, Johannes Servan and Simen Andersen Øyen (2008). “An Interview with Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka”. August 27, 2008, Bergen, Norway. www.phenomenology.org/images/Interview-A-T-Tymieniecka-27-August-2008.pdf

inquiry as she listens to the out-of-doors and somehow finds place even for the weeds, as she so expressed in her 2008 interview¹¹.

A poem I wrote and was published by Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka¹²:

As a student of psychology,
Frequently I read the suasions
Others have, and why
They think as they do
Piled in-the-midst of minds
Temporal confusion
Seeking clarity to
Enigma with propagational clues
I listen to the
Outcry of misunderstandings...
I distinguish myself
Writing of my own queries.
While people seek to share their
Confusion from the lockers
Of their minds,
The poet inserts a key and she writes.

Dichotomy

The feminine, the 'I' of Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka speaks, without notice walks among the brushes, smelling the flowers and not minding the weeds, as she spoke of her missing the garden when she would be absent for a while. The garden of the poets; now miss her:

Wet morning sand stick to my feet
while brown seaweed break into my path.
I travel to my beginnings toward the sea.
Watchful without pretention or notice
sounds of waves crashing and wind blushing
past me, as I step into the path.
On the shores morning and evening meet always.
Reflection of all time before me, and after me,
will continue long after my footprints are no longer
wet to my feet; deep into my path.

¹¹ *Ibidem*.

¹² See Christine McNeill-Matteson (2011). "Tuning Forks of the Soul". In Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka (ed.), *Sharing Poetic Expressions. Islamic Philosophy and Occidental Phenomenology in Dialogue, op.cit.*, pp.219-220.

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