

## FROM SPONTANEOUS EXPERIENCE TO THE COSMOS: ARNE NÆSS'S PHENOMENOLOGY

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**Abstract.** *The aim of this paper is to focus on Arne Næss's phenomenological method and some of its anthropological and cosmological implications. Næss's Ecology, Community and Lifestyle, in fact, can be fruitfully read as an example of phenomenological inquiry, in which the notion of "spontaneous experience" plays a fundamental role. This method leads Næss to develop a "relational ontology," in which the "ecological self" is seen as a "relational junction within the total field." In addition, I show how Tymieniecka's philosophical thought can offer us the proper eco-phenomenological perspective to better understand Næss's Ecosophy T.*

**Keywords:** *Arne Næss, ecophenomenology, ecological self, spontaneous experience, Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka*

The importance of the work of Arne Næss (1912–2009) is yet to be fully appreciated, even within academic philosophical circles. As a matter of fact, while Næss is easily associated with his studies and activism in ecology today, he was a philosopher. His work covers problems in epistemology (at first, as a follower of the Vienna Circle), metaphysics, psychology, and ethics, among other things. Similarly, it is not known whether he saw in phenomenology the correct method to address the most urgent environmental issues of our days. The aim of the present paper is to analyze the phenomenological method that Næss uses in environmental philosophy and

some interesting conclusions of his inquiry, particularly focusing on his book, *Ecology, Community and Lifestyle: Outline of an Ecosophy* (Næss 1989).

### Phenomenology as a Reply to the Abstractness of Scientific Theories

The need that Næss sees for a phenomenological approach to environmental problems results from the perception of an inadequacy of the so-called contemporary scientific method. This deficiency lies in the tendency to reduce nature to symbols and mathematical formulas. As Næss (1989: 48) writes at the outset of *Ecology, Community and Lifestyle*, "within the informed public, the dominating answer would in all likelihood

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be that it is precisely the mathematical natural sciences which supply the approximately correct description of the environment as this is in itself [...]. Are we getting any closer with the long scientific strides built upon the work of Galileo and Newton?" In Næss's thought, modern science is inadequate for providing a comprehensive account of the natural world to which we belong. Although the task of science is to grasp the objectivity of reality, modern science has failed not because it aspired to objectivity, but because its idea of objective reality was too narrow: "'Objective descriptions of nature' offered us by physics ought to be regarded not as descriptions of nature, but as descriptions of certain conditions of interdependence and thereby can be universal, common for all cultures" (Næss 1989: 50). What science describes is ultimately something different from the concrete nature, of which we are a substantial part. In other words, modern science, and modern physics in particular, unveils only abstract and universal structures.

Næss's point is of particular interest because, instead of rejecting the claim that science is an objective form of knowledge, it brings into question its capacity to provide "realistic" descriptions, i.e., adequate interpretations of reality. In other words, the target of Næss's criticism is the informative content of scientific theories, not the quality of such content. As a consequence, it represents an original outlook on the problem of the validity of scientific theories, insofar as Næss's claim is that, on the one hand, scientific theories can be true or false and are genuinely observer-independent, and, on the other hand, they are also incapable of grasping the concrete content of subjective experience. In fact, the scientific goal is to

find the "pure" structures of nature, since "physics provides some common points of bearing, for example time and space coordinates, degrees of longitude and latitude. But characteristically enough, these are nowhere to be found [...]. The structure belongs to reality, but it is not reality" (Næss 1989: 50).

Once the informative weakness of scientific theories is acknowledged, the need for a different methodology, capable of grasping our concrete experience within nature, becomes clear. At the same time, the different methodology we are looking for should also be able, on the one hand, to overcome the domain of the merely subjective impressions and, on the other, to avoid the risk of taking personal experiences as mere opinions, irremediably linked to the idiosyncrasy of the individual's perceptual performances. Næss (1989: 32) puts this point in the following way:

Is not the value-laden, spontaneous and emotional realm of experience as genuine a source of knowledge of reality as mathematical physics? If we answer 'yes!' what are the consequences for our description of nature? The deep ecology movement might profit from greater emphasis on spontaneous experience, on what is called the 'phenomenological' outlook in philosophical jargon.

The need for an adequate phenomenology of our natural experience, or of the experience of us as natural beings, emerges as an attempt "to defend our spontaneous, rich, seemingly contradictory experience of nature as more than subjective impressions. They make up the concrete contents of our world" (Næss 1989: 35). This kind of approach is more suitable to the idea of a value-laden nature, always implying human subjectivity, as Hans Jonas (1984: 236) pointed out. At the same time, it should be a viable alternative

to “the contemporary near monopoly of the so-called scientific world-view” (Næss 1989: 35), which reduces the world of fact (Næss 2005a) to mere abstractions.

In short, Næss’s goal is to account for the richness and complexity of concrete phenomena and to deepen the analysis of our being-in-nature, without falling into reductionist abstractions or generalized points of view. In this sense, Næss’s philosophy has deep similarities with the phenomenological approach, since they are both concerned with the defense of the totality and depth of “lived experience” (Brown 2003: 5-6), without imposing “abstract concepts” on the same experience (Diehm 2004: 22; Næss 1989: 51)<sup>1</sup>.

A second point of connection between Næss’s philosophy and (eco-)phenomenology (Wood 2003) is the criticism of the partial account of experience typical of naturalist metaphysics (Brown 2003). Just like that of Edmund Husserl, Næss’s thought moves from a feeling of dissatisfaction with all those naturalist metaphysics that transform the world of experience into the world of experiment (Agamben 1993: 17–24), and therefore reduces it to the extensional properties of matter (Brown 2003: 7). The world of experience, says Næss, is much more complex and wide than what the scientific method has been able to show so far. In this sense, “Whitehead aptly says that the paradoxical assumption that nature is without colors, tones, or smells exists because we have confused our abstractions with concrete realities” (Næss 1989: 54).

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<sup>1</sup> In an interesting paper, Chistian Diehm (2004: 22–25) tried to identify the possible phenomenological sources of Deep Ecology, concluding that Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Gabriel Marcel, and Martin Heidegger have developed the most suitable philosophical groundings for Næss’s view.

These two elements – the rejection “of positive sciences” and of “methodological naturalism” (Konopka 2008: 37–38) – constitute the essential condition to talk about a possible Næss’s phenomenological philosophy or view, together with the emphasis on “spontaneous experience” as a source of environmental philosophy, as we will see through the paper.

## **Spontaneous Experience Comes First**

What I have tried to do so far is to show Næss’s need for a method in philosophy that allows accounting for natural phenomena, including our experiences, in the most faithful way. Næss sees in phenomenology the best tool for this task. Once we have abandoned the idea of an unknowable “thing in itself,” Næss calls our attention to look at experience as it manifests itself, to return again to the things themselves (Diehm 2004: 26). He calls it “immediate” (Diehm and Næss 2004: 9) or “spontaneous experience.” In Næss’s thought, it is not possible to give a definition of this experience; to the fair observer, spontaneous experience is so rich and deep that it cannot be described with precision by appealing to any language, either written or spoken, scientific, philosophical, or even artistic, since “the manner in which we express our feelings in words is guided by conventions and does not easily make us intensely aware of how feelings are felt” (Næss and Haukeland 2002: 8). In this regard, the meaningfulness and the complexity of this immediate experience resists any conceptualization or simplification, and “we don’t have words for all that’s happening” (Diehm and Næss 2004: 12).

Spontaneous experience always precedes our reflection and re-includes our linguistic practices, so that it is only “describable as bodily” (Diehm and Næss 2004: 12). This is why we cannot constrict it within a language, however refined and precise it might be. Brown’s notion of “pre-theoretical experience” can help us understand the meaning of Næss’s “spontaneous experience”:

Our pre-theoretical experience [...] is not the experience of an ‘objective world’ (i.e., of a devalued world consisting of causal relations and extensional properties), but rather ‘the actual experienced world, value-laden and meaningfully ordered by the presence of life [...]. This meaningful order does not have the status of fact. It is not a ‘given’ of experience, but rather, to use a Husserlian locution, it is ‘pre-given,’ or to use another phrase popularized by subsequent phenomenologists, it is ‘always already’ there (Brown 2003: 13).

Taking seriously the spontaneous experience in its rich integrity is the only available way to avoid any mystifying or reductive account of the experience of our being in the world. It is the same concern that led Næss to grow a deep dissatisfaction with the logical positivism of the Vienna Circle<sup>2</sup>. Although it is not possible to provide a clear and definite description of an immediate or spontaneous experience, it is, however, possible to interpret it and keep it as the truth-horizon that generates our thoughts. In this sense, “spontaneous experience is not sense experience. It is experience of more or less stable things and processes of ‘the world we live in’ (*Lebenswelt* in the terminology of philosophical phenomenology).

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<sup>2</sup> Næss’s relationship to the Vienna Circle constitutes a rich subject and would require more systematic treatment, which is not possible here. For further considerations, please see Drengson’s (Drengson and Valera 2015: 210) and Fox’s (1992: 68–73) writings.

[...] The essential aspect of the ontology of contents is not a negation of enduring beings, but of the omnipresence of the ‘we’ or ‘I’ and the duplication in external and internal worlds” (Næss 2009: 201).

It should be clear why Næss’s philosophical system, *Ecosophy T*, (Næss 1985: 221–228) starts from a reevaluation of “what there is” and of how we perceive what is around us. This is the kernel of what I would call Næss’s “phenomenological analysis”. If we want to find the methodological starting point of Næss’s philosophy, we could say that it is the spontaneous experience of the human being as such. Such a fundamental knowledge of reality is made possible by the fact that we are capable of a basic intuition of our being-in-the-world, i.e., of the relationship with our surroundings.

From the fact that the form of our immediate relation to the world is pre-theoretical knowledge relying on spontaneous experience as its regulative criterion, it follows that one of the most immediate contents of such knowledge in the modern age is, in Næss’s thought, a very significant fact: we perceive the crisis of our world and at the same time we have a feeling of emptiness in our life. The perception of a global environmental crisis (Næss 1989: 23) stems from a perception of the crisis of our particular life-world. The two perceptions are distinguishable even though not distinct. In fact, they belong to the same and identical subject, who is at once an individual entity and part of the system of nature. We can understand this perspective only in light of Næss’s interactional conception of the relation between human beings and nature, which is one of the most influential paradigms in contemporary eco-phenomenology:

The study of ecology indicates an approach, a methodology which can be suggested by the simple maxim that ‘all things hang together.’ This has application to and overlaps with the problems in philosophy: the placement of humanity in nature, and the search for new kinds of explanation of this through the use of systems and relational perspectives (Næss 1989: 36).

The unity of perceptions is therefore guaranteed by the unity of the human being with nature (Knopka 2008: 50), an “*existing* unity” and a “unity in *existing*” (Diehm and Næss 2004: 9). If this were not the case, it would be almost impossible to justify what we have just observed. In fact, “we do not receive bits of unrelated sense data. Experience does not give us a “pure sensation”, an “atom of feeling”. We are aware of matters in context, what Merleau-Ponty called “the upsurge of a true and accurate world”. Our perception of whole contexts in concrete reflection enables us to move from the particular to the general, and it provides a context for seeing the connection between description and explanation” (Marietta 2003: 122).

### **From Phenomenology to Relational Ontology: The Ecological Self**

All philosophies that take the human being to be separate and independent from its existence<sup>3</sup> are inadequate, because they are incapable of grasping the factual co-essentiality of human being and nature. On the contrary, the only reasonable picture of the world for Næss is a relational one:

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<sup>3</sup> Anthropocentric philosophies are usually criticized for separating the human being from its natural context and transforming it into an “unnatural” being, transcending its own environment (Valera 2013: 78–84).

the individual acquires consistency only within a relational context that continuously generates and nourishes it. For this reason, adequate environmental ethics necessarily require a prior “ontological commitment”, a suitable philosophical anthropology holding that “humans are a part of the system of nature” (Marietta 2003: 121). In this regard, it is possible to fully understand Næss’s statement about the supremacy of ontology on ethics (Næss 2005: 527; Zimmermann 1993: 198; Valera 2018; Thomson 2004).

For Næss (2005: 516), therefore, the relational dimension of the human being – and of the cosmos – is grounds for any inquiry in ecology as well as for Ecosophy:

Relationalism has ecosophical value because it makes it easy to undermine the belief in organisms or persons as something which can be isolated from their *milieux*. Speaking of interaction between organisms and the *milieux* gives rise to the wrong associations, as an *organism is interaction*. Organisms and *milieux* are not two things [...]. Organisms presuppose *milieux*. Similarly, a person is a part of nature to the extent that he or she is also a relational junction within the total field (Næss 1989: 56).

This idea is able to account for the necessary and constitutive relational dimension of the human being and shows the inadequacy of any modern solipsism to understand the practical dimension of human life. However, it might at the same time constitute a logical stretch: in fact, to state that relation is prior to substance, as some interpretations of the *Deep Ecology* try to do, seems to imply a logical contradiction. How is it possible to have “the concept of *ens in alio* without already having the concept of that *aliud* which is in itself?” (Vanni Rovighi 1996: 38). How is it possible to have “the being in something else if there is not the

‘other’ thing which is the being in itself?” (Vanni Rovighi 1996: 38). The relational being is in fact an accident: the Aristotelian *pros ti* (“in relation to...”), presupposes the existence of beings which are the bearers of the relation; it also conveys the idea that the substance is something existent in reality or in some ideal world. The category of relation can never precede the category of substance: relation is not possible unless its terms are already given (Valera 2013: 221-227).

What is important to stress here, however, is not Næss’s ontological conclusions, which to some extent mirror Spinoza’s metaphysics (Næss 1977), but his epistemology. According to his epistemology, it is only possible to know the relations among things and not the things in themselves: “We arrive, not at the things themselves, but at networks or fields of relations in which things participate and from which they cannot be isolated” (Næss 1989: 49). To state that the thing in itself is unknowable is neither advocating for a relativistic or subjectivist conception of truth, nor for a diluted Kantianism. On the contrary, for Næss, such an insight amounts to a conception of knowledge based on the totality of our experience. It is for this reason that a relational theory of knowledge is radically opposed to a subjectivist epistemology, since “there is a difference between something relational and something which is no more than an expression of one person’s personal judgment. [...] The relational is not subjective” (Næss 1989: 49-50).

Every factual judgment on the things that surround us – but also on those that originate in ourselves – is a relational judgment, that is, a judgment that affects “the totality of our interrelated experience”,

and, on a broader scale, that concerns the totality of the actual world of experience: “The basic character of the whole influences *decisively* our experience” (Næss 1989: 57). Næss aims to overcome the traditional distinction between objective and subjective, where the former would refer to the elements of the object in itself independently from the subject that observes it, while the latter would refer to what remains essentially linked to the perceiving subject (Næss 1989: 47). If, on the one hand, the subjective description of reality is lacking in communicative and informative power, the objective description, on the other, seems to provide an excessively abstract model of nature, for it overlooks the experience of the subject. In this regard, what remains in the scientific description of the world is only “abstract structures,” or “several common *reference points* suitable for mathematical description,” not the world of nature itself (Næss 1989: 48).

In order to give a comprehensive and non-reductionist account of natural phenomena, then, it is necessary to “reflect on the primal oneness of experience in the kind of phenomenological reflection [called] ‘concrete reflection,’ in contrast to intellectualized abstract reflection” (Marietta 2003: 123). In this kind of reflection “we find that our bodies are not just objects in the world, but that they are, as Merleau-Ponty described it, ‘the vehicle of being in the world.’ The body is not detached, as an object, from the self, the subject. The experience of one’s body does not support the separation of subject and object” (Marietta 2003: 123).

If the subjectivist and the objectivist perspectives are both wanting because they forget what the human place in the cosmos

is, even in this case the problem is first and foremost anthropological and ontological rather than epistemological, and for this reason the centrality of the body (“flesh”) should be recovered (Booth 2016; Russo 2016). It is therefore necessary to find a third way that prevents any reductionist account of experience. In Næss’s perspective, it is necessary to recognize that if the human being is a relational entity – what he calls the “ecological self” (Næss 1989: 175; Næss 2005: 516)<sup>4</sup> – then its descriptive knowledge of the world follows a relational dynamic: through this knowledge we arrive “not at the things themselves, but at networks or fields of relations in which things participate and from which they cannot be isolated” (Næss 1989: 49).

In this sense, a philosophy of “deep” ecology and an eco-phenomenology should begin with the acknowledgement that the human being not only *has* an environment, but it *is* also an essential part of its environment; it is “internally related” to nature (Diehm and Næss 2004: 14). The human being is originally and constitutively in relation with everything else, and with the Whole, as the Norwegian father of Deep Ecology himself would have said. Therefore, we should abandon the idea that the environment is something that begins where our skin ends, as Næss (1968: 196) highlights referring to Heidegger: “The Heideggerian analysis cuts across the distinction between me and the world,” bringing us back to “something that cognitively precedes the subject-object distinction”<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>4</sup> A good interpretation of Næss’s ecological self could be found in Diehm’s paper (2002).

<sup>5</sup> This is precisely the Heideggerian contribution to eco-phenomenology, as highlighted by Harvey (2009: 65–68)

We should say more properly that we experience *an* environment, not that we live *within* an environment. In this sense, a proper phenomenology is a prerequisite, or an essential condition, for formulating a new ontology (which is the basis for a new environmental ethics): “His [Næss’s] conviction that phenomenology could assist in formulating new ontologies, combined with the belief that new ontologies [...] were precisely what environmentalism really needed” (Diehm 2004: 22).

In order to grasp this new relational ontology – which, at the anthropological level, is traduced by the idea of an “ecological or relational self” – it is necessary to change our epistemological view by means of a process of identification (Valera 2018), i.e., of “a process in which the relations which define the junction expand to comprise more and more. The ‘self’ grows towards the ‘Self’” (Næss 1989: 56)<sup>6</sup>. Once we experiment on the identification with the other beings, it is possible to expand our consideration of our self towards an ecological or relational self. In this sense, “identification is the path to Self-realization, the process by which one develops one’s ‘ecological Self’” (Diehm 2007: 2). It is possible to understand the reason why the idea of “identification-as-belonging” (which is the translation at the epistemological level of the anthropological idea of dwelling) is a tipping point in Næss’s view (Diehm 2007: 9): it is the very source of any epistemological, ontological, anthropological and ethical discourse.

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<sup>6</sup> For more information about the process of identification, please see (Næss 1985) and (Valera 2018).

## **Phenomenology and Cosmos: Næss and Tymieniecka**

The fundamental implication of Næss's phenomenology of spontaneous experience is that the human being, as a part of nature, is constituted of relations that can bring about either its flourishing or its destruction. Similarly, human knowledge is relational and has spontaneous experience as its pivotal point, in the sense that the human being perceives in it its dependency on the Whole.

Næss's phenomenological reflection presents deep similarities with the idea of eco-phenomenology put forth by Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka. Although I am aware of the different theoretical frameworks with which the two authors work, in the remainder of this paper I intend to show some similarities that the two authors share in terms of environmental philosophy.

First, the two authors believe that it is necessary to understand human experience as essentially linked to the environmental context if we do not want to lose the "terrestrial" carnality of human life. Tymieniecka explains this point in a rather suggestive way when she describes the condition of our life on Earth, i.e., our dwelling (Heidegger 2001; Valera 2018): "Our seemingly most direct 'contact' and experience of the earth comes from our experience of living 'upon' the earth. We walk, we build, we establish our dwelling" (Tymieniecka 2001: 6). In other words, both authors acknowledge that our experience is originally rooted in the fact that we are beings dwelling (on) this Earth and that the awareness of this fact tends to shape our understanding of the cosmos.

Such a connection to the environment is integral to the human condition and

should not be overlooked. As it is frequent in contemporary eco-feminism (Valera 2017), Tymieniecka also equates the connection between the human being and the environment to the relation that a child has to its mother, meaning to the experience of communion and dependency that relates a living being to its parent. The Earth, described by her as "a mother's womb," is the condition of possibility of our development, "our very milieu, realm of existence as we participate in its changes, transformations, palpitating with its convulsions, worrying about its fate" (Tymieniecka 2001: 5). In this regard, with the Earth as our "groundwork," it should even be "the destiny" of our lives: it determines our position in the cosmos, which "is not absolutely dependent upon the constitutive subject" (Tymieniecka 2014: 11). Between the subject and the cosmos, thus, there is such a connection for which the subject is not only dependent on the Earth itself, but "derives its essential architectonics and sustaining forces from cosmic spheres" (Tymieniecka 2014: 11).

For Næss and Tymieniecka, then, the pre-theoretical starting point of any attempt to understand the world is this original and generative dependency of the human being on Nature: "The most intimate and essential bond of the living human being with 'mother earth' lies at the very heart of our beingness" (Tymieniecka 2001: 2).

Second, both thinkers maintain a unitary conception of the given and the value, as I have already argued with reference to Næss's Ecosophy, and as I will show with reference to Tymieniecka. In other words, there is no radical gap between our emotionally rich perception of the world and the world itself, since we are not "abandoned

to ourselves in a neutral medium,” nor are we “suspended in a void, within undifferentiated matter” (Tymieniecka 2001: 4). As already suggested, such a unitary view, properly phenomenological, is deeply opposed to a “scientific” and “objectivist” understanding of the world, which may see the given as absolutely independent from the interpretative process and reduces the world itself to a bunch of quantifiable particles. Eco-phenomenology and Ecosophy T start from a unitary conception of human being and cosmos, well expressed by Næss’s idea of an “ecological or relational self” and maintain the legitimacy of an emotional knowledge of the cosmos as a consequence. If, moreover, for Næss, human passions do not constitute the domain of a “subjectivist” evaluation of the world, for Tymieniecka, they also represent the existential background of the personal self: “This sphere of our *actio/patio* experiential background is the sphere of our vital passions of the earth” (Tymieniecka 2001: 7).

The ecological or relational approach by Næss and Tymieniecka, thus, highlights the mainstream contemporary view’s mistake: the contemporary literature interprets the relation between the human being and the environment as a univocal one, in the sense that the human being is considered capable of transforming its environment but not susceptible to being changed by it. The two authors stress that “human being” and “nature” are essentially connected polarities, and that they need to be taken together if we want to understand how experience and individuality come to birth. If it is true that the human being dwells on the planet by cultivating and caring for it (Garlaschelli and Petrosino 2012: 39), it is also true that

this dynamic has a “feedback effect”, in a way that the planet also produces changes in the human being. In other words, we could affirm that the existential “scene” of the human life is represented by the environment in which the human being dwells: “Earth in its otherwise mute interplay with our faculties and their employment brings our entire existence to the scene of life” (Tymieniecka 2001: 4).

### **Eco-Phenomenology: Helping Ecosophy T in Understanding Nature**

The similarities that underlie Næss’s and Tymieniecka’s philosophies, as occurs with many other eco-phenomenologists, seem to point in the direction of a possible integration of them in order to obtain a more complete understanding of nature and of us as “natural beings.” Of course, I have only mentioned a few points thus far of the connection between the two authors in the present paper; I haven’t provided an exhaustive account of their positions. Næss’s Ecosophy T and Tymieniecka’s Eco-phenomenology have simply represented the theoretical frameworks to which my reflections have been addressed, concretely in the direction of enriching Næss’s phenomenological insights through Tymieniecka’s view.

Once the affinity of thought between the two authors has been established, and a certain use of the phenomenological method by Næss justified, however, it seems important to go back to an even more radical point: “Is phenomenology a help or a hindrance to a philosophical ecology or a philosophy of the environment?” (Llewelin 2003: 51).

Furthermore: if the phenomenological approach represented a genuine improvement of philosophy of ecology, what would its effective contribution be?

Næss's thought includes, on the one hand, tenets that are persuasively argued and, on the other hand, more programmatic points, which would require further clarification. It seems to me that Næss's view of the role of phenomenology in Ecosophy T is one of those points that are still in need of a proper explication<sup>7</sup>. Although Næss has intuited, probably for the first time in systematic environmental philosophy, that the phenomenological approach could represent the appropriate methodological starting point of a philosophy of ecology, it seems to me that he has not capitalized all the potentialities implicit in it. Næss (1989: 51) has a narrow and meager understanding of phenomenology (Diehm 2004; Diehm and Næss 2004), which is not comparable to the genuine phenomenological tradition represented here by Tymieniecka. Næss's ecological philosophy would have certainly benefited from a deeper knowledge of Heidegger's meditation on the nature of dwelling, as well as from Tymieniecka's thought.

As I have tried to show so far, Næss agrees with the insight of phenomenology that the scientific picture of the world is not able to provide a sufficiently deep account of our experience of the natural world. In agreement with phenomenol-

ogy, Næss would acknowledge the need for a new method: "The description of the experience is an attempt to return to the 'things-themselves' rather than simply taking for granted higher-level, culturally sedimented idealizations and abstractions that often pass for ahistorical metaphysical discoveries" (Brown 2003: 5-6). Only this method makes it possible to see ecology (and philosophy of ecology) in a new light, as both Næss and Tymieniecka do, that is, as a "science of the home" (*oikos-logos*). Brown admirably sums up what has been said so far:

With it emerges the possibility of a new vision of a *logos* of the home – that is, an eco-logos. Such an eco-logos begins with the rejection of a value-free conception of nature (typical of modernistic thinking), as well as fanciful mystifications of a divine nature (typical of pre-modern thinking), by returning to nature as experienced – that is, to nature perceived as worthy of our moral respect and admiration. [...] It is the destiny of eco-phenomenology to complete this critique [of naturalism] with a phenomenology of nature (Brown 2003: 16).

Næss's message is quite explicit: human beings should start to reflect again on their dwelling in the *oikos* (Diehm and Næss 2004: 11). In order to do this and to avoid the risk of abstractness, we should start from our spontaneous experience in its thickness and deepness. In other words, Næss's philosophy rescues experience in its entire complexity and constantly reminds us that a fundamental relation to the Whole constitutes us even before we decide what we want to be. In this regard, he is implicitly rescuing eco-phenomenology as a method.

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<sup>7</sup> In this regard, Diehm's (2004: 21) statement is very interesting: "It is clear [...] that phenomenology – particularly existential phenomenology – is a vital component of Næss's ecological thinking, and has been for some time."

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## NUO SPONTANIŠKO PATYRIMO IKI KOSMO: ARNE'S NÆSSO FENOMENOLOGIJA

### Luca Valera

**Santrauka.** Straipsnyje analizuojamas Arne's Næsso fenomenologinis metodas ir jo reikšmė sprendžiant antropologinius ir kosmologinius klausimus. Næsso *Ekologija, bendruomenė ir gyvenimo būdas* analizuojamas kaip fenomenologinio tyrimo pavyzdys, kuriame „spontaniško patyrimo“ sąvoka atlieka fundamentalų vaidmenį. Fenomenologinio metodo taikymas interpretuojant aplinkosaugos problemas padėjo norvegų filosofui išplėtoti „reliacinę ontologiją“, kuri į „ekologinę savastį“ (*ecological self*) žvelgia kaip į „reliacinę sąmazgą aplinkos visovėje“ (*relational junction within the total field*). Be to, parodyau, kaip A.-T. Tymienieckos knygoje *Žemės aistros* atveriamą ekofenomenologinę perspektyvą padeda mums geriau suprasti Næsso *Tekosofiją*.

**Pagrindiniai žodžiai:** Arne Næssas, ekofenomenologija, ekologinė savastis, spontaniškas patyrimas, Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka

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