

## Editorial

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*Phenomenology & Practice* is halfway through its fifth year as a scholarly, open access journal. Our aim has been—and continues to be—to share phenomenological insights published in experientially-oriented and unconventional papers by remaining open to innovative contributions. Clearly, the journal is on its way to earning a niche as one of few international journals focusing on a wide range of practices within a hermeneutical-phenomenological-methodological scope.

With this issue, we introduce a dialogical process in our book reviews. As before, book reviews are written in a personal, essay style; but in this, and future issues when appropriate, the reviewer's essay will be responded to by the author of the book. Furthermore, beginning in 2011, we intend to publish two issues of *Phenomenology & Practice* a year. Upcoming publications include two special issues that focus on the practice of pedagogy and on experiential questions related to the health-oriented disciplines.

Before proceeding to the presentation of the eight diverse articles of *P&P*'s fifth issue, I would like to take a detour to a theme that has stayed with me as I embarked on the extensive and meticulous editorial work with the current papers. These papers are the products of excellent scholars and are unique works that have come into a distinct phenomenological-hermeneutical form during months of reconsideration, adjustment, revision, and change. Through processes of poetic writing and re-writing, each of the papers—following special threads of diverse lived experience—has reached a state of a phenomenological representation of the lived world. Despite or perhaps due to their diversity, I believe the authors would agree with me when I claim that these papers are not 'completed' (in the absolute meaning of the term). The papers continue to pose questions, rather than give answers, and they will continue to radically confront both author and reader with issues that are by no means resolved. The authors, as well as the readers, keep grappling with the questions at hand, and in doing so, new poetic papers may be created in their wake. But what do we mean when we talk about poetic writing in hermeneutic phenomenology?

### Poetic Activity

Hermeneutic phenomenology, as is prototypically practiced by the members Utrecht School, is known for three qualitative features that are recognizable in their writing: the choice of everyday, familiar and situational subjects; the use of experiential material in the texts; and an unconventional writing style (Henriksson & Sævi 2009). This writing style might be described using Heidegger's (2001) term *Dichtung*, which has a wider meaning than its equivalent in English, *poetry*. The term refers more broadly to the concrete and situated activity of inventing or writing, and not only the poetic product, the poem. *Dichtung* can

apply to the tangible practice of all creative, original writing, and seems to value the process of sensing, writing and thinking, prior to the success of the result. But why does Heidegger seem to favour the process to the result? The artistic process of creation is a process where slowness and uniqueness characterize the writer's sense and thought. To Heidegger (2001) there is an affinity between poetic language and thinking, although he notes that "the poetic character of thinking is still veiled over" (p. 12). He even claims that thinking's inability "to say that which must remain unspoken" is what "would bring thinking face to face with its matter" (p.11). Perhaps the reason why the process of *Dichtung* is so important is because it is here, in this grappling activity, that the writer is confronted with a sensing/thinking/writing that is essentially undoable, impossible and unsuccessful compared to the complex and manifold experiential world where we live.

The practical-ethical-aesthetic poetic writing style calls for a responsible writer who dwells poetically in existence as well as in writing. The sensibility required to engage with a language that resonates with experiential meaning comes precisely from the way we dwell with the things of the world. As readers, we may feel addressed by texts that stir up the sensations of lived experience, be it a poem or a phenomenological text, because "it evokes in us recognition or thoughts which are new and at the same time conversant" (Henriksson & Saevi 2009, p. 49). The resonance between the experiential meaning of the phenomenon expressed in the evocative language of a hermeneutic phenomenological text, and the lived sensibility of self and world of the reader, is a point of contact between writer and reader—a point that one may never know was shared or experienced by the other. They share an intersubjective and interdependent dwelling in existence. The inseparable relation between things, world, human being, and language is the reason why the evocative writing style of hermeneutic phenomenology speaks to us in the tension between the pre-reflective and the reflective, and thus could be called a poetic activity.

The unsurpassable relationship between thinking and poetic language, ever present in *Dichtung*, and which makes hermeneutic phenomenological writing a poetic practice (Henriksson & Saevi 2009), naturally also characterizes the art of writing poetry. Reference to the Norwegian poet and orchardist, Olav H. Hauge (1908-1994) might serve as a way of contextualizing the experiential and poetic-writing authors present in the current issue of *Phenomenology & Practice*. Hauge wrote his poems in an unusually lucid and unspecialized poetic language, and his metaphors were refreshingly nourishing in their everyday simplicity. Hauge lived his entire life on his farm in Ulvik, a village at the furthest end of the Hardangerfjord in Western Norway. From this remote location, he read, translated and wrote extensively. The breadth of his work included the translation and recreation of poetry by the likes of Berthold Brecht, Georg Trakl, Alfred Tennyson, Paul Celan, Arthur Rimbaud, and Robert Bly. Likewise, Hauge's own poetry has been translated into German and English. Robert Bly, in his preface to a selection of the latest of Hauge's poems to be translated into English, gives this memorable image of his friend and colleague:

He loved to honor culture, and he honored it more than many classic professors do. People in the neighborhood felt a little fear when they entered his small book-filled house. He was liable to pull down a fat volume, printed in Oxford, and say, "No doubt you've read this?" Very few people in town had read it, but there wasn't a trace of scorn in his question. He loved the books so much he thought it quite possible that you did too. (Hauge 2008, p. xi)

A product of Hauge's comprehensive reading of literature and poetry from abroad and his interest in interpreting other poets' works is apparent in his renowned poem "T'ao Ch'ien":

If T'ao Ch'ien  
comes to visit someday, I will  
show him my cherry and apple trees.  
I hope he'll come in the spring  
when they are in bloom. Then we'll relax in the shade  
over a glass of cider, perhaps I'll show him  
a poem – if I can find one he'd like.  
The dragons that pass across the sky trailing smoke  
and poison  
flew quieter in his day, and more birds sang.  
There's nothing here he wouldn't understand.  
More than anything he'd wanted to get away  
to a small garden like mine.  
But I'm not sure his conscience would let him. (p. 69)  
(translated by Robert Hedin).

The leap from ancient China to Hauge's garden in Ulvik, where the encounter between two poets takes place in a mode of dignified simplicity, opens up a theme that the two poets seem to have in common; farming and the earth. T'ao Ch'ien might feel the resonance to Hauge's poem "Scythe" if he, across the centuries, might have had the opportunity to hear it:

I'm so old  
I keep to the scythe.  
Quietly it sings in the grass,  
and my mind wanders.  
It doesn't hurt at all,  
says the grass,  
to fall under the scythe. (p.55)  
(translated by Robert Hedin)

The shift from the situated and earthbound qualities of Hauge's poetry to the scholarly but poetic writing of hermeneutic phenomenology consolidates interconnected but distinctive linguistic practices, all of which explore the relationships between human beings, things and world. Both work in accordance with Hannah Arendt's suggestion that "there is nothing in the ordinary life of man that cannot become food for thought, that is, be subjected to the twofold transformation that readies a sense-object to become a suitable thought-object" (1981, p. 77–78). Robert Bly emphasizes the question of priority, or perhaps instead, necessity, in his homage to Hauge:

If you have a farm, you need to love poetry more than the farm. If you sell apples, you need to love poetry more than the apples. It's good to settle down somewhere and to love poetry more than either of them. (p. xii)

Bly's point, obviously addressing Hauge's life-situation, is equally appropriate to every writing phenomenologist, as phenomenology cannot be practiced as a kind of sideline that is disconnected to how one sees self and others in the world. Hauge's concrete, imaginative poetry prefers pointed images and unabstracted language to emotional and symbol-laden expressions, and focuses on the thing *as* thing; rather than as a symbol for something more abstract. Both Hauge's poetry and hermeneutic phenomenological writing hold these qualities – which might be called "presentational" – in common. When language creates evocative images, like Hauge's poems, then the proximity to the artistic practice of hermeneutic

phenomenology is striking, which rightfully is called a “fine human science” (Henriksson & Saevi 2009).

Hermeneutic phenomenological writing has a clear affinity with Gadamer’s (2002) notion of “transitional cases that stand between poetically articulated language on the one hand and the purely intentional word on the other” (p. 67). In the writing of hermeneutic phenomenology, language is not primarily a means to an end; linguistic engagement is an end in itself, in which a world is created, challenged and confirmed. In poetic writing and thinking, the world appears to me as a particular givenness, a dative of manifestation, as well as a commonly experienced intersubjectivity. This world, as it is the object of both sensation and thought, evokes questions rather than answers. It follows that phenomenological writing sets its sights on questions and matters that go beyond what is immediately available and apparent. In our attempt to sense, write and think at this border, however, we must admit with Arendt (1981) that “Seeming – the it-seems-to-me, *dokei moi* – is the mode, perhaps the only possible one, in which an appearing world is acknowledged and perceived” (p. 21).

### Eight Poetic Papers

Stephen J. Smith’s paper, *Becoming Horse in the Duration of the Moment: A Trainer’s Challenge*, explores the lived meaning of a moment in horse training. Smith explores the pre-linguistic aspects of the living and moving bodies of horse and human. The paper addresses the corporeally-charged experience of being with horses, whose movements resonate with our own and connect us to them. Smith eloquently and evocatively introduces us to the world of horse training in which the language of movement exceeds human speech and where the assumption of human supremacy over animals is forcefully put into question.

Wenche S. Bjorbækmo and Gunn H. Engelsrud have written a reflective and, in my opinion, poignant paper, that comes from a professional field rarely represented in *P&P*. “*My own way of moving*”: *Movement Improvisation in Children’s Rehabilitation*, explores the lived experience of children with motor disabilities being encouraged to engage in bodily improvisation and dance. Children with a defined disability are typically involved in programmatic and instrumentalized training of specific motor functions. But this paper focuses on their free and willed movements – their own way of moving. This paper accomplishes a rendering of the familiar as foreign and the foreign as familiar. Instead of an experience of the self and the body as inadequate and even alien, the children are encouraged or supported pedagogically to experience themselves in relation to others, within a community of shared movement.

Rehabilitation is also the focus of the third article in this issue, Øyvind F. Standal’s “*I Learned Nothing from Him...*” *Reflections on Problematic Issues with Peer Modeling in Rehabilitation*. This piece thoughtfully investigates how persons confined by spinal cord injuries (and other conditions) to wheelchairs learn from their peers. This learning process occurs in addition to, and sometimes in spite of, the intentions and actions of professional rehabilitation staff. Based on lived experiences recounted by a participant in a rehabilitation programme, the author reflects on distinctions separating different forms of empathy, and the ethical implications of learning from peers.

National identity, as produced and reproduced in American educational identity ‘projects’, is the focus of the fourth paper, *Performing the Nation: Pedagogical Embodiment as Civic Text*. In this text, authors Kyle A. Greenwalt and Kevin J. Holohan explore

experiences related to nationality and its performance through the school students' narratives. They ask: How does the teacher act as curriculum for students' identity formation and what is the significance of the relationship between personal and collective national identity? Interestingly, personal identity, anchored as it is in multiple stories and experiences, speaks with many voices and exists in manifest tension between resistance and acquiescence.

In his paper *Rhetorical Caricature: An Educational Reading of Nabokov's Treatment of Freud* Herner Sæverot shows how author and literary critic Vladimir Nabokov provides his readers with a rich and ambivalent educative experience. Instead of being afflicted with the "anxiety of influence" in his engagement with Freud, Nabokov performs a critique of Freud not so much through the explicit content of his treatment, but through what he does *not* say. Thus, the author concludes, Nabokov is able to engage in a pedagogical practice that exists between what is said directly and what only indirectly is articulated.

In line with the recent practice turn in organization theory, Wendelin Küpers presents a phenomenological and pragmatic discussion of ways of sustaining creative organizational practices. The title, *Embodied Pheno-Pragma-Practice – Phenomenological and Pragmatic Perspectives on Creative "Inter-practice" in Organizations between Habits and Improvisation*, reflects the multifaceted nature of the paper itself. In it, Küpers engages a variety of interrelated questions of embodied and situated practices and habits. In contrast to dualistic and sometimes reductionistic understandings of organization and management, the author suggests a phenomenological pheno-pragmatic approach as a way of grounding managerial practice in lessons won from experience.

In his paper *The Experiential Flesh: Incarnation in Terms of Quantum Measurement and Phenomenological Perception*, Will Johncock undertakes a thought-provoking exploration of possible connections between phenomenology and natural science. His interdisciplinary interpretation of the relation between human and world incorporates both Bohr's quantum physics and Merleau-Ponty's notion of the "flesh of the world." Johncock argues that like phenomenological perception, quantum measurement is an incarnate phenomenon in which knower and known may be distinguished but not separated.

In the concluding contribution to this issue, Eva Simms' 2008 book, *The Child in the World: Embodiment, Time and Language in Early Childhood* is reflectively reviewed in a personal essay by Andrew Foran and Elizabeth Munroe. In this piece, Simms also responds to the questions posed by the reviewers for each chapter in her monograph. The resulting dialogical reflection will be of interest to readers concerned with different perspectives on phenomenology as a way of researching the lived experiences of children.

I hope you will enjoy this "fresh" spring issue of *Phenomenology & Practice*, and find much to inform and sustain both practice and reflection. I would like to express my gratitude to the journal's dedicated peer reviewers, to its proofreader, Merilee Hamelock, and to my capable colleagues in the editorial team. I feel at times overwhelmed by the amount of articles received and requiring review and discussion; but every article and issue reveals to me something new about the methodology and the world of experience that I share with my readers. This confirms my conviction that the investigation of experience and its meanings is simultaneously infinite and invigorating. The sometimes overwhelming amount of research generated through this kind of investigation humbly reminds us of its unbounded nature, and the growing appreciation of its value.

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