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Wonder in Qualitative Research and Practice-based and Existential Phenomenology

November 15-17, 2017

Location:

Aalborg University, Aalborg
HCCI-doctoral research programme, Dept. of Communication

Lecturer(s):

Professor Espen Dahl, Tromsø University
Professor Anders Lindseth, University of Gothenburg
Associate Professor Jakob Wolf, Copenhagen University
Professor Finn Thorbjørn Hansen, Aalborg University

Course description, incl. learning objectives and prerequisites:

"Doing phenomenology is becoming infected with a certain pathos that creates an openness to the world and a wondering attentiveness that is the trigger in phenomenological inquiry."(Van Manen, 2014, p. 36). This insight into the heart of phenomenological research is indeed pivotal not only for phenomenological philosophy in narrow sense but indeed also for practitioners in qualitative research as well as practice-, dialogue-, and action-based research, who ground themselves on the discipline of hermeneutic and phenomenology.

Gadamer (2006) emphasises that phenomenological and hermeneutic experiences have the structure of the question. Only when we as hermeneutic and phenomenological researchers 'are taken' by the question and moved to a certain 'non-knowing openness and receptiveness' will we be able to receive a deeper understanding of the subject matter that engage us. However, when doing empirical research on phenomenological and hermeneutic ground we often see an uneasiness with and lack of wonder in many PhD-student's (as well as human science researchers) systematic reflections on themes and 'meaning units' in their analysis. Wittgenstein wrote: *"Man has to awaken to wonder - and so perhaps do people. Science is a way of sending him to sleep again."*(Wittgenstein, 1980, s.5) Will a too methodological and systematic analyses approach stand in the way for more original thinking in qualitative research as well as in practice-based dialogue- and action research? How then do we learn to orient ourselves towards a more wonder-based research approach?

In human science based on phenomenology and hermeneutics focus is often put on 'the human factor', that is, inter-human relations and other more humanistic, existential, esthetical, ethical and maybe even spiritual dimensions of and experiences in professional life and human life as such. How are we to do research on these fragile, meaning-giving, non-tangible and sometimes wonder-awakening life events and life phenomena?

If to be in wonder (in Greek: *thaumazein*) – as opposed to being for example curious, critical reflecting, in a problem-solving-oriented or explaining-seeking analysis mode – is a main quality or hallmark in phenomenology and hermeneutics as many scholars, philosophers and human scientists would say (Merleau-Ponty, Patocka, Marcel, Heidegger, Gadamer, Arendt, Wittgenstein), then how can we then better understand, train and cultivate our ability to and sensitivity for what is, and how we can practice a wondrous reflection or maybe even a kind of "wonder-in-action" as something different to "reflection-in-action"(Schön, 1983)?

If wonderment in some respect 'wells up' when the researcher is in contact and dialogue with a wonder-in-life (an enigmatic life phenomena or event), how are we to understand these wonders? If wonder means the encounter with what is new, unprecedented and in other ways surprising, then the everyday seems to be its precise antidote: The everyday is the sphere of the familiar, of repetition and the returning of the same. Still, such conception of the everyday is too one-sided, for also ordinary life keeps being interrupted by certain experiences of things turning out different than expected.

One could point to some phenomenological candidates of accounting for such interruptions of the everyday, as something completely Other (Otto, 1950), or as saturated phenomena (Marion, 2002). This perspective presupposes a clear split between the everyday and what interruptively occurs in it. Other phenomenologists (Dahl, 2010) find it to be illuminating and fruitful to describe and understand wonder which overcomes such split. Arguably, wonder is not so much tied to the new and surprising, but a noteworthy experience that is made up by the wavering and



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interpenetration of the familiar and the foreign. Phenomenology means disciplining our attention on what we actually experience. In this attention the phenomena of the world, even the apparently very trivial, reveals an inexhaustible depth.

Modern empirical science is reducing (from Latin: *reducere* = lead back) new knowledge to an established knowledge foundation that may be verified or falsified, nuanced or corrected by such reduction. The aim is to establish a knowledge so well tested as possible – and by doing so, processes of wondering become little attention compared to the undertaking of designing research and analysing data.

Phenomenology and hermeneutics can be seen as reactions to modern reductive research, – reactions aiming at establishing knowledge or insight on the ground of sensation, feeling, lived experience, narration and concrete reflection (Lindseth, 2015). Phenomenological and hermeneutical research is not about stating facts but rather about finding and giving orientation in life. Such research will have a normative dimension and it will naturally include processes of wondering. Being influenced by main stream science we are not always so aware of that.

In order to cultivate the sense of wonder, and to understand the close relation between sensing and wonder, we will also in the course be focusing on the phenomenological analysis of sensation. Sensation and sense perception has been misunderstood generally in the European philosophy since Plato and Democritus (Wolf, 2017). It has been understood in the scheme of the separation of body and soul. The soul receives sense data from the outside. Nobody experiences sensation in this way. The soul, later on called consciousness, mind, the mental etc., is a theoretical construction (Wolf, 2017). In sense perception and bodily sensation there is no separation between soul and body, subject and object. When we sense there is no separation between us and the world. At closer attention sensation turns out to be an amazing phenomenon.

In the course we will be reflecting on the phenomenology of wonder (Rubenstein, 2011) and on different practices of wonder (Vasalou, 2012; Hansen, 2015a) in doing human science. Learning to do phenomenological-hermeneutic research is not primary about learning some specified knowledge and a specific methodology. It is not about 'how' to do it but about developing a *musicality* for the mystery in daily life and a particular 'listening' orientation towards the world. Thus, if wonder is connected to a certain kind of 'being-in-the-world' and maybe also some virtues and attitudes or tactfulness and *Bildung* (Gadamer, 2006), then how can we call upon or immerse ourselves into these wondrous moments in our research processes? Is it for example possible to talk about and practice 'wonder-based and phenomenological action research' (Hansen, 2015a)? How do we in practice-based insider-research (Lindseth, 2015) connect to the primordial world-relation that wonder seems to lead us to? And how would we practice wonder-inspired phenomenological-hermeneutic analyses in empirical research (Lindseth & Norbjerg, 2004)?

These are some of the questions that we invite PhD-students to reflect upon and wonder about in dialogue with the keynote speakers.

Course aims

The main aim of the course is to support course participants' PhD projects by working with wonder-based or wonder-inspired approaches to qualitative research, practice-based dialogue and action research. We will focus on the phenomenology of wonder, and different practices of wonder. Reflection on the ontic and ontological dimension of wonder will be discussed as well as the different phenomenological and hermeneutical attitude and virtues that seems to call upon a sense of wonder. Each participant will get the opportunity to examine in what way they are understanding wonder and to find 'traces of living wonder' in their own writings. The course is intended to provide participants with insights and attitudes that will cultivate their capacity or readiness in what Gadamer (2006) describes as moving into 'the open'. And by doing that hopefully also the participants' ability to 'thinking-through-wonderment' (Heidegger, 1994; Smythe et al. 2008) on their empirical as well as theoretical studies.

The course is designed to help to answer complex questions such as the following:

- How can we practice, analyse, and understand qualitative research as well as practice-, dialogical and action research when putting a special emphasis on wonder?
- How can we become more aware – cognitive, affective and existential – on the different dimensions of wonderments?
- What can we learn from the philosophers and phenomenologists of wonder?
- How may a wonder-based approach in qualitative research or action research look like?
- Is it possible to design wonder-based dialogues or interviews? Or is it more like an improvising art experience, that is, something that speaks to us and comes to us, when it wants to?
- How can we understand the ontological dimension – or primordial



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world-relation – in the phenomenological-hermeneutic research? • Why is wonder connected to special form of sensing and ‘caring-for-the-world’? • What might be the enigmatic connection between love and wonder, as Heidegger indicate when saying: “*Love, as basic motive for phenomenological understanding.*”(Heidegger, 1982, 185)? • How can wonder help the researcher to get in a better dialogue with the life phenomena in the field? • How can we critically and reflexively work with issues and practices of wonder and notions such as hermeneutic and phenomenological experiences and truth?

Teaching methods:

Course format

The course will be organised along lectures, dialogues and interactivity through workshops.

Morning lectures will be thematically organised in order to address the questions listed above. The lectures will be followed by Socratic dialogue workshops, where a community of wonder around chosen questions will be practiced. These are preparations for dialogue between the course participants and speaker of the morning session.

Afternoon will start with a short question of wonder by one of the other speakers of the course and inspired by the morning session. Afterwards the afternoon will consist of course participants’ presentations and feedback based on the 10-page papers (in English, Danish, Norwegian or Swedish) submitted by course participants prior to the course. Afternoon workshops will be divided into groups of 5-6 participants. It is expected that every group member has read all papers in their group prior to the course. In addition, there will be two designated feedback givers (1 PhD student & 1 teacher) who will give detailed feedback. A detailed program for each day will be sent out in November. Morning workshops will be held in English. There will be both English-language and Scandinavian- language afternoon workshops (depending on the language of the 10-page papers submitted).

The aim of this format is to create a dynamic interplay between the philosophical, theoretical, methodological, empirical and practice-oriented perspectives brought into play on the course and in PhD research practices.

Preliminary program:

November 15th:

Morning session:

Speaker 1: Professor Anders Lindseth, University of Gothenburg: *Phenomenological and hermeneutic research: Concrete reflection from lived experience*

Speaker 2: Professor Finn Thorbjørn Hansen, University of Aalborg (DK): *Practical considerations about the Tone and Call of Wonder in Phenomenological Action Research*

Workshops and dialogue

Afternoon session:

Speaker 3 og 4: Wonder question (one short inspiration)

Paper presentation Workshops

November 16th:

Morning session:

Speaker 3: Professor Espen Dahl, University in Tromsø: *The Wonder and the Everyday*

Dialogue workshop

Afternoon session:

Speaker 1, 2 or 4: Wonder question (two short inspirations)

Paper presentation Workshops

November 17th:

Morning session:

Speaker 4: Associate Professor Jakob Wolf, University of Copenhagen: *The comeback of the wonder in the phenomenological approach to the world.*

Dialogue workshops

Afternoon session:

Speaker 1, 2 or 3: Wonder question (two short inspirations)

Paper presentation Workshops

Rounding off and goodbye!



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Anders Lindseth is in Norway Professor Emeritus for practical philosophy at the Centre for Practical Knowledge, Nord University. In Sweden he was 2008–2016 Guest Professor for practical knowledge at the School of Design and Crafts, Faculty of Fine, Applied and Performing Arts, Gothenburg University. 1988-2001 he was professor at the Department for Health Care Research, Faculty of Medicine, University of Tromsø. His main fields of interest are relational and health care ethics, philosophy of practice, philosophy of human sciences and methodology.

Finn Thorbjørn Hansen is Full Professor in dialogical and philosophical practice at the Centre for Dialogue and Organization, Department of Communication, Aalborg University (and host of this PhD-seminar). He has for many years been doing research in the phenomenology of wonder, and how Socratic and wonder-based dialogues can be applied in qualitative research and especially phenomenological-oriented action research. He has written several books on these subjects and also facilitated practice-based and phenomenological action research in different areas of professions such as Design School, Hospice, Innovation in Public Organisation and hospitals, who all wanted to inquiry how the existential and ontological dimensions in these fields can be understood and seen as a resource.

Espen Dahl is Full Professor in systematic theology at UiT – The Arctic University of Norway. His dissertation was an attempt to shed phenomenological light on the interweaving of the holy and various modes of ordinary experience (2007, published 2010). He has been working on different themes within ordinary language philosophy and phenomenology, especially related to religion, aesthetics, memory and embodiment. He has published two books related to the holy, and one, more recently, on the work of Stanley Cavell's philosophy and its religious significance.

Jakob Wolf is since 1995 associated professor at the department of Systematic Theology, University of Copenhagen. His dissertation, "Theory and phenomenon" (1984) was on the phenomenology of Hans Lipps. His habilitation, "A world of colours" (1990) was on Goethes theory of colours, Hans Lipps' language philosophy and K.E. Løgstrup's philosophy of religion. Wolf's main interest has always been phenomenological research. He have published 11 books. The two latest books are on Rudolf Otto's phenomenology of the holy (2014) and an introduction to the phenomenology of Hermann Schmitz (2017). K.E. Løgstrup was his teacher and has been very inspiring for his research career.

Key literature for the course and lectures:

Dahl, E. (2012). *In Between: The Holy Beyond Modern Dichotomies*, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, p. 22-63.

Hansen, F.T. (2015a). The Philosophical Practitioner as a Co-Researcher. In: A. Fatic & L. Amir (eds.), *Practicing Philosophy*. Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, s. 22-41.

Heidegger, M. (1994). *Basic Questions of Philosophy*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, p. 131-164

Lindseth, Anders & Norberg, Astrid (2004) A phenomenological hermeneutical method for researching lived experience. *Scandinavian Journal of Caring Sciences*, 18, 145–153.

Løgstrup, K.E. (1995). *Metaphysics (Vol. II)*, Milwaukee, p.1-74.

Marion, J-L. (2008). *The Visible and the Revealed*, New York: Fordham University Press. ss. 18-49

Otto, R. (1950). *The Idea of The Holy* (Oxford), p. 1-41.

Ricœur, Paul (1974) *The Conflict of Interpretations. Essays in Hermeneutics* (Ed. by D. Ihde), pp. 236–266: "The Question of the Subject: The Challenge of Semiology". Evanston: Northwestern University Press.

Rubenstein, M.-J. (2011). *Strange Wonder. The Closure of Metaphysics and the Opening of awe*. New York: Columbia University Press, p. 1-60.

Miler, J. (1992). *In the Throe of Wonder: Intimations of the Sacred in a Post-Modern World*. New York: State University of New York Press, p. 1-52.

Van Manen, M. (2014). *Phenomenology of Practice. Meaning-Giving Methods in Phenomenological Research and Writing*. Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press, p. 15-71.

Wittgenstein, Ludwig (1965) A Lecture on Ethics. In: *The Philosophical Review*, LXXIV, 3– 12.



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Further literature for recommendation:

- Bean, G. (2007). *Waking to Wonder: Wittgenstein's Existential Investigations*. New York: State University of New York.
- Dahl, E. (2010). *Phenomenology and the Holy. Religious Experience after Husserl*. London: SCM.
- Dreyfus, H. & Kelly, S.D. (2011). *All Things Shining: Reading the Western Classics to Find Meaning in a Secular Age*. New York: Free Press.
- Gadamer, H.-G. (2006). *Truth and Method*. London: Continuum.
- Hansen, F.T. (2010): The Phenomenology of Wonder in Higher Education. In: Brinkmann, M. (Ed.): *Erziehung. Phänomenologische Perspektiven*. Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann.
- Hansen, F.T. (2012): One Step Further: The Dance Between Poetic Dwelling and Socratic Wonder in Phenomenological Research. *Indo-Pacific Journal of Phenomenology* (Special Edition, Ed.: Galvin, K.). July 2012, pp. 1-20.
- Hansen, F.T. (2015b). The Call and Practice of Wonder. How to evoke a Socratic Community of Wonder in professional settings. In: M. N. Weiss (ed.), *The Socratic Handbook*.
- Heidegger, M. (1982). *Basic Problems of Phenomenology*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Husserl, Edmund (1992) *Gesammelte Schriften 3 (Logische Untersuchungen, Zweiter Band, I. Teil, Untersuchungen zur Phänomenologie und Theorie der Erkenntnis, Text nach Husserliana XIX/1), V. Über intentionale Erlebnisse und ihre "Inhalte"*, Seite 352–529. (Ed. by E. Ströker.) (First published 1901.) Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag.
- Husserl, E. (1970). *Crisis of the European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press)
- Kemp, Peter (1999) *Tid og fortælling. Introduktion til Paul Ricœur*. Århus: Aarhus Universitetsforlag.
- Løgstrup, K.E. (2013). *Ophav og omgivelse*, Aarhus.
- Løgstrup, K.E. (1984). *Kunst og erkendelse*. Kbh: Gyldendal.
- Lindseth, Anders (2015) Svarevne og kritisk refleksjon – Hvordan utvikle praktisk kunnskap? I: McGuirk, James & Methi, Jan Selmer (red.), *Praktisk kunnskap som profesjonsforskning. Antologi over yrkeserfaringen som utgangspunkt for forståelse av kunnskapsutvikling i praksis*, side 43–60. Bergen: Fagbokforlaget.
- Lindseth, Anders & Norberg, Astrid (2004) A phenomenological hermeneutical method for researching lived experience. *Scandinavian Journal of Caring Sciences*, 18, 145–153.
- Marion, J.L.(2002). *Being Given* (Stanford: Stanford University Press)
- Patočka, J. (1989). The End of Metaphysics and Negative Platonism. In: Kohak, E. (eds.), *Jan Patočka: Philosophy and Selected Writings*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, pp. 52-60.
- Ricœur, Paul (1974) *The Conflict of Interpretations. Essays in Hermeneutics* (Ed. by D. Ihde), pp. 236–266: "The Question of the Subject: The Challenge of Semiology". Evanston: Northwestern University Press.
- Ricœur, Paul (1984) *Time and Narrative, Volume I* (transl. by K. McLaughlin & D. Pellauer), pp. 3–87: "Part I: The Circle of Narrative and Temporality". Chicago/London: The University of Chicago Press.
- Schmitz, H. (2005). *Das Göttliche und der Raum*. Bonn.
- Smythe, E.A., et al., (2008). Doing Heideggerian hermeneutic research: A discussion paper. *International Journal of Nursing Studies*, Vol. 45, Issue 9, Pages 1389–1397.
- Wittgenstein, L. (1980). *Culture and Value*. Chicago: Chicago University Press.
- Wittgenstein, L. (2009). *Philosophical Investigations* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing)
- Vasalou, S. (ed.). (2012). *Practices of Wonder. Cross-Disciplinary Perspectives*. Eugene, Oregon: Pickwick Publications.
- Venhoeven, C. (1972). *The Philosophy of Wonder*. New York: Macmillian.
- Wolf, J. (2013). *Mennesket i universet*, Aarhus.
- Wolf, J (2015). *Det guddommelige – Fænomenologisk set*, Kbh. .
- Wolf, J. (2017). *Krop og atmosfærer*, Kbh..

Max number of students:

25

Number of ECTS:

3 ECTS-point

Registration:

hannepc@hum.aau.dk no later than November 1, 2017