



One Step Further: The Dance between Poetic Dwelling and Socratic Wonder in Phenomenological Research

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Abstract

The phenomenological attitude is essential for practising phenomenology. Many refer to wonder and wonderment as basic attitudes and ways of being present with and listening to phenomena. In this article a critical view is placed on the typically psychologically-loaded language and tonality that is used by phenomenological researchers in the human sciences in order to describe the wonder and openness they try to be a part of when doing phenomenology. With reference to the difference between Heidegger's and Gadamer's views on Socratic dialectics the author points to an ontological dimension in the phenomenology of wonder that cannot be reached by taking only an emotional-bodily-oriented approach (the psychological approach) or an aesthetical-intuitive-oriented approach (the late Heidegger poeticised philosophizing). Instead this dimension must be reached through a Socratic questioning and Community of Wonder.

Feelings accompany the metaphysical and meta-psychic factum of love, but they do not constitute it (...) Feelings one 'has'; love happens. Feelings dwell in man; but man dwells in his love.

Martin Buber, *Ich und Du*, 1923 (my translation¹)

¹ In the English translation of Martin Buber *Ich und Du* (1923), entitled *I and Thou* (2004; Continuum International Publishing Group), this sentence is translated as: "Feelings are 'entertained'; love comes to pass. Feelings dwell in man; but man dwells in his love" (p. 19). However, in the original German text by Buber he writes: "Gefühle werden »gehabt«; die Liebe geschieht. Gefühle wohnen im Menschen, aber der Mensch wohnt in seiner Liebe". Thus, similar to Gadamer, but many years earlier, Buber emphasizes love as a 'Geschehen', as an ontological event that happens to us.

Prelude

Nativity is one of these fine, beautiful and thought-expanding words that flow from the language of philosophy and into the thinking and language of qualitative and educational research. Nativity, in the understanding of the German-American philosopher Hannah Arendt, is described as a kind of philosophical presence, a way of being reborn into the world again through a philosophical wonder, and through a 'putting yourself at play and at risk', when thought and act melt together into a deedful action (Arendt, 1958, 1978).

Other words and phrases of the same evocative and wondrous character include terms such as *Gelassenheit* (Heidegger), the inner word (Augustine/Gadamer) and the ontological cipher (Merleau-Ponty). These are all words that plainly have made, and continue to make, a deep impact on qualitative

and phenomenological research in human science, especially research that draws on the philosophy of existential and hermeneutic phenomenology.

All these words, although in different ways, seem to point to a special kind of philosophical openness or the philosophical presence of 'something' that cannot be grasped directly through common scientific language or qualitative research methods or, I may add, through the particular presence and awareness created by a scientific-empirical approach or a qualitative-methodological approach. Nevertheless, these living philosophical experiences and presences are, as I will elaborate later, what seem to make us able to sense what 'marks' our perceptions and outspoken meanings from inside. In other words, as Merleau-Ponty (1964) writes, "It [phenomenology] must stick close to experience, and yet not limit itself to the empirical but restore to each experience the ontological cipher which marks it internally" (p. 157).

To be in both an epistemological and an ontological relation and authentic dialogue with the life phenomena the researcher wants to understand, calls for a special form of phenomenological attitude and a hermeneutical awareness of the fundamental finitude of humans' perceptions and understandings. In this article I want to dwell upon how we – as qualitative and phenomenological researchers – can understand and practice this phenomenological attitude and hermeneutic awareness through what I have tentatively called a 'living philosophical experience and presence'.

In this article I intend to raise many questions: What does it mean to think and live within and from this philosophical presence and experience? What does it mean to philosophize in this way as a phenomenological researcher? Should psychologists, educators, nurses and qualitative researchers as such become able to philosophize in order to do proper phenomenological descriptions and analysis? And can they philosophize at all? Is it only professional philosophers who are able to do so and who have 'a license to philosophize'? Should the psychologist, nurse or educator instead just stick to his or her scientific discipline and profession and let the professional philosophers do what they are best at?

These questions raise other thoughts. I would argue that professional philosophers slip away from and lose sight of the subject matter (*die Sache*) in their eagerness to pursue logical argumentations, concept analysis and all kinds of philosophical methods in order to look for clarifications, definitions, general statements and philosophical systems. In my view the academic philosophers – even the professional philosophers of phenomenology – have a tendency to get too abstract in their theoretical writings so that

they do not get into an authentic meeting and dialogue with the phenomena.

Hannah Arendt (1978) seems to warn against this kind of professional philosophizing when she notes:

The question, when asked by the professional [philosopher], does not arise of his own experiences while engaging in thinking. It is asked from outside – whether that outside is constituted by his professional interests as a thinker or by common sense in himself that makes him question an activity that is out of order in ordinary living. (p. 166)

In Arendt's (1978) point of view real philosophizing which can help us to hear the reverberation of the phenomena, requires of the researcher a listening and questioning from within his or her own lived experiences.

This statement raises even more questions: What is meant by listening and questioning? Are we to get psychological and conduct introspections? Should the philosopher learn to listen more to his or her own feelings and bodily emotions in a more psychological sense in order to become a good phenomenologist? Alternatively, as many phenomenological oriented philosophers would claim, is it possible that a psychological approach is not required but that a truly philosophical approach is needed in order to do phenomenological proper? However, as Robert Bernasconi (2009) indicates in the journal *Research in Phenomenology*, doing philosophy proper might also lead us away from doing phenomenology proper. He indicates, that "phenomenology is almost always more than philosophy proper, because it exceeds philosophy" (p. 2)

This leads to questions regarding how to practice phenomenology in a way that exceeds both academic philosophy and psychology. In this article I want to use the work of Gadamer and Heidegger as well as the tradition of philosophy understood as an art and way of living (Hadot, Foucault, Achenbach, Lindseth, Hansen²) to point to a third position. This position is a way of philosophizing in the sense that Arendt (1958, 1978) calls for, and it is strongly connected to the Greek concept of *philo-sophia*, that is, a longing and love for wisdom. I will be led by the interpretations of Arendt, Gadamer and other Plato-interpreters (Barthold, 2010; Hadot, 1995; Rhodes, 2003; Sayre, 1995) who argue that the Socratic dialogue and

² For further information and elaboration of this kind of modern philosophical counselling and Socratic dialogue groups, the reader is referred to Achenbach (1987, 2010), Hansen (2007a, 2007b, 2010), Lahav (1996a, 1996b), Lindseth (2005), and Tilmann and Lahav (1995).

dialectics and Midwifery are subtle ways of deconstructing our common concepts and assumptions and daily understanding of our lives in order to arrive at an ontological silence and presence of who and where we are right now. As Arendt (1978) writes:

It is in this [the thinking] invisible element's nature to undo, unfreeze, as it were, what language, the medium of thinking, has frozen into thought - words (concepts, sentences, definitions, doctrines) whose 'weakness' and inflexibility Plato denounces so splendidly in the *Seventh Letter*. (p. 174)

This existential awakening and coming-to-the-world-as-if-for-the-first-time is, from the start to the very end of the Socratic dialogue and thinking, led and nurtured by a fundamental lived experience of wonder (*Thaumazein*), which is not to be confused with a conceptual and epistemological puzzlement and deadlock (*Aporia*). Merleau-Ponty (1945/2007) refers to this fundamental wonder in the preface to *Phenomenology of Perception*, when he says that "... the best formulation of the [phenomenological] reduction is probably that given by Eugen Fink, Husserl's assistant, when he spoke of 'wonder' in the face of the world"(p. xv).

My aim in this article is therefore to examine whether we can qualify the discourse among contemporary human scientists who talk about the importance of a phenomenological openness and attitude in their work by focusing on the phenomenon of philosophical wonder in phenomenological research. In order to achieve this aim I will first focus on the way in which the place of philosophizing and wonderment is described in contemporary phenomenology in human science. In this regard, I discuss two fundamentally different ways of approaching phenomenology: (1) A scientific and epistemological approach based on the work of Giorgi (1985, 1997, 2006) and Dahlberg (2006; Dahlberg, Dahlberg, & Nyström, 2008; Dahlberg, Todres, & Galvin, 2009); and (2) an aesthetical and ontological approach based on the work of Todres and Galvin (2008, 2010), Halling (2008, 2010, Halling, Kunz, & Rowe, 1994; Halling, Leifer, & Rowe, 2006), and Van Manen (1990, 2002, 2007).

Secondly, I will try to circle in on the possible differences between psychological and philosophical understandings of what it means to be present and open in phenomenological research. I will do this by focusing on how we can understand feelings and emotions from an ontological approach, especially with reference to the work of Heidegger (1919/1999,

1923/1995, 1927/2010, 1954/2004, 1961, 1971, 1994, 1995), Martin Buber (1923/2004) and two poets³.

This second point leads me to the important difference between 'emotional homecoming' and 'existential homecoming' highlighted in a discussion with Les Todres and Kathleen Galvin. Todres and Galvin (2008) develop an ontological approach to phenomenology through their use of Heidegger's notion of Poetic Dwelling. This leads to questions regarding the difference between Poetic Dwelling and Socratic Wonderment. Through describing some essential critiques levelled by Karl Jaspers, Gadamer and Arendt regarding Heidegger's notion of *Gelassenheit* and solitary intuition as a way of direct and pure seeing of the phenomena, I will make room for an understanding of 'existential homecoming' and the phenomenological attitude as a part of a *Bildung* process. I will argue that this is a process that is not only directed by a Poetic Dwelling but also by a Socratic Wonderment, based on what Socrates called Ethical Self-Care, which I term articulating 'a Living Poetics' of the phenomenologist.

My main conclusion will be that in order to bring oneself 'into-the-openness' and into a dialogue with the phenomenon itself the researcher should not only be able to hear the Thou in the voices of Life through a Poetic Dwelling, but also hear the I, or voice of the Living Poetics of the researcher, through a Socratic Wonder. I maintain that it is in the dance, or middle voice, between the Poetic Dwelling and Socratic Wonder that a space, or *Lichtung*, is opened and a wonder-based dialogue and the event of understanding can happen to the researcher.

A scientific and epistemological view of phenomenology

It is common to draw a distinction between descriptive scientific phenomenology, as described by Giorgi (1985) or Schutz (1967), where we are both allowed and expected to follow some well-defined method and procedure, and hermeneutic or existential

³ Psychology can be broadly described as based on empirical science and the data that can be captured by these methodologies. Through listening to and allowing myself to be inspired by artists and poets as a source for subtle experiences in understanding wonderment and feelings, I follow Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics (1989, 2007). On the first page of *Truth and Method* (Gadamer, 1960/1989) he acknowledges the paramount importance of the experience of practicing philosophy, art and story-telling of human life in order to gain a deeper phenomenological and hermeneutic understanding of human experiences. These philosophical and aesthetic 'truth-experiences' transcend the data that empirical science can collect through its methods and observations and descriptions.

phenomenology, as described by Van Manen (1990, 2002, 2007) and the Utrecht School (Kockelmans, 1987), where we are encouraged to enforce a non-procedural approach and instead point to an approach that is oriented by a special phenomenological attitude. Many practicing phenomenologists in the fields of education, nursing and qualitative research would probably say that they follow both approaches. On the one hand they do follow some well-defined phenomenological methods such as transcendental reduction, imaginative variation, and phenomenological data analysis. In addition, as professionals in the field of nursing, education or other human-relation professions, they are also aided by other human science procedures and techniques such as experiential interviewing, observations that are experience-sensitive, and thematic and narrative analysis. However, on the other hand, they are also very aware of the limitations of a too rigid methodology when doing phenomenology. If the use of methods and techniques is not governed by a higher musicality for the 'subject matter' (the living phenomenon) then the phenomenological researcher will become just an 'epistemological bookkeeper'; one who may be an expert in systemizing and analysing data but who does not have the necessary phenomenological 'ear' to hear the phenomenon itself (*die Sache selbst*). In order to get this 'ear' or musicality for the phenomena it is necessary to learn how to do phenomenology with a phenomenological attitude and therefore a closer description of what this attitude consists of seems paramount for the quality of the phenomenological research.

One of the leading figures in descriptive phenomenology, and especially in phenomenological psychology, is the psychologist Amedeo Giorgi. He writes about the importance of a modified phenomenological approach that is freed from philosophizing in order for the psychologists and other qualitative researchers to do good phenomenological research in their own specific discipline. Giorgi (1997, 2006) suggests that instead of trying to philosophize in order to do good phenomenological research, the psychologist or nurse should rather adopt his or her disciplinary attitude within the context of the phenomenological attitude. Giorgi thus suggests, for example, that only if the phenomenological psychologist is able to psychologize the phenomenological data, will he or she have the proper sensitivity to the phenomenological analysis and be able to provide a perspective that enables the data to be manageable in a way that is scientifically interesting for the discipline of psychology.

Giorgi (1997, 2006), who is primarily inspired by Husserl's descriptive phenomenology, refers to this as a necessary turn to a 'scientific phenomenological

method', moving away from the more philosophical phenomenological approach. Instead of talking about wonder as a leading ethos for the phenomenological inquiry and about a fundamental sense of mystery or an enigmatic impression to dwell in when trying to understand the world, Giorgi would rather encourage the researcher to look in a systematic way for 'essences' by identifying general themes in the phenomenological description and analysis.

Other theorists, particularly the Swedish Healthcare Researcher Karin Dahlberg, follow Husserl and Giorgi to some extent. However, Dahlberg also tries to supply Husserl's abstract and theoretical approach and Giorgi's methodological approach with a more embodied and relational approach through using the work of Merleau-Ponty as inspiration. According to Dahlberg, in order to gain a personal authentic contact and dialogue with the phenomenon, the phenomenological researcher must practice open-mindedness and be very attentive and bodily present. This involves adopting a listening mood led by curiosity, stillness, slowness and a kind of 'actively waiting' or 'bridling' (Dahlberg et al., 2008). These ways of being assist the researcher in becoming bodily attuned with the phenomenon and the way the researcher is 'in-the-world'.

Dahlberg et al. (2008) write of the importance of a particular openness derived from the capacity of being curious and surprised, which is an attitude the phenomenological researcher must train him- or herself to have. Dahlberg and her colleagues in the book *Reflective Lifeworld Research* (2008) give a rich description of different forms of openness that the phenomenological researcher must learn to cultivate and adapt. They describe this special kind of openness with references to Heidegger, Gadamer and other hermeneutists and phenomenologists as well as cognitive and social psychologists. However, what springs to mind when reading their interpretation of Heidegger's view on openness is their confusion of his ontological understanding of openness with the phenomenon of surprise and curiosity. "For researchers, openness means having the capacity to be surprised and sensitive to the unpredicted and unexpected. Heidegger (1998 – [*Sein und Zeit*, 1927]) describes an open position as 'curiosity' (p. 214) and talks of a 'desire' to see, to understand (p. 215)" (Dahlberg et al., 2008, p. 98).

In contrast, my reading of Heidegger's (1927/2010) thoughts on curiosity in *Sein und Zeit* highlights that the whole point of his description of the phenomenology of curiosity is to show how curiosity closes our ontological openness towards the world and ourselves. In fact, in Heidegger's eyes curiosity (which St. Augustine already noted in the early Middle Age) is an expression of a forgetfulness of

Being, and a lack of ability or readiness to stand still in the near of the phenomenon. In *Being and Time* he writes, “In not-staying, curiosity makes sure of the constant possibility of distraction. Curiosity has nothing to do with the contemplation that wonders at being, *thaumazein*, it has no interest in wondering to the point of not understanding” (Heidegger, 1927/2010, p. 166).

To be curious and to be in wonderment is thus fundamentally not the same, if we are to follow Heidegger. Intellectual curiosity and the openness and interested attitude that flow from that source are of course paramount for good scientific work, and in that sense positive phenomenon. However, to ‘think’ in a deeper, more phenomenological and hermeneutical sense is, as we know from Heidegger and Gadamer (and also Wittgenstein), not the same as doing systematic and scientific reflection. In this regard, Wittgenstein (1980) writes, “Man has to awaken to wonder – and so perhaps do peoples. Science is a way of sending him to sleep again” (p. 5; see also Bearn, 1997; Cahill, 2011). In the same vein, Heidegger states, “And since science does not think, thinking must in its present situation give to the science that searching attention which they are incapable of giving to themselves”(Heidegger, 1954/2004, p. 135) .

Scientific reflection led only by intellectual curiosity and surprise and interest is, in the eyes of Heidegger, Gadamer and Wittgenstein, keeping us away from obtaining a thinking and deeper wonder and connectedness with our ‘being-in-the-world’ or our experience of seeing the world as a fundamental mystery. In Heidegger’s terms, curiosity and surprise will only create a fixation of our worldview (metaphysics and onto-theology) on an epistemological and technological level (the ‘ontic level’). Stated briefly, curiosity is a notion that Heidegger considers from the point of view of everydayness (inauthenticity).

Reading further in Dahlberg et al. (2008) in order to better understand their view of phenomenological openness, the reader will find at the end of the chapter on openness a reference to a particular critical and distancing self-reflection associated with the work of Paul Ricoeur. “To think critically about one’s approach and methods means that one’s thought processes, understanding, and knowledge are systematically and impartially scrutinized for influence on the research process and the outcome of the study”(Dahlberg et al., 2008, p. 144). Everyone agrees that healthcare scientists and phenomenological and hermeneutic researchers must also have a trained eye and skills for this form of impartial critical self-reflection. However, what distinguishes an existential phenomenologist and a philosophical hermeneutics from an empirical scientist and a

descriptive phenomenologist (and maybe also from critical hermeneutics and the hermeneutics of suspicion⁴, with which Ricoeur associates himself) is his or her sensitivity and attentiveness to that which the critical self-reflection and the scientific systematic and analytical and methodological approach cannot grasp. This is the ontological level – the Being-dimension.

In order to attune oneself to this dimension, the researcher has to think from an ontological (‘living understanding’, Risser, 2012) and existential approach. In this approach, the researcher ‘sees’ or ‘hears’ the phenomenon through being grasped by the phenomenon. Unlike Ricoeur’s approach, Gadamer’s and Heidegger’s approaches are not epistemological. In contrast to Ricoeur, Gadamer talks about *Theoria* in the Greek sense in opposition to the modern scientific sense of the concept of theory. For Gadamer, *Theoria* is a kind of contemplation or meditation, during which the thinking person becomes, so to speak, a part of the phenomenon while thinking. He thinks the phenomenon while being in the phenomenon.

This raises more questions regarding the type of openness referred to by Dahlberg et al. (2008). Perhaps it is an openness determined and limited by an epistemological approach and critical reflection, or by an ontological approach and existential reflection. There seems to be, at least in my view, some incoherence in their view of phenomenological openness and their use of different philosophers. This incoherence hides some very important differences between the phenomenology of curiosity and wonder, and the attitude of critical self-reflection on the one hand and existential self-reflection and ontological contemplation on the other hand. In my opinion what Dahlberg et al. lack in their ‘reflective lifeworld research’ is a richer and more nuanced language for this ontological dimension and especially a sense of why wonder is connected to a fundamental sense of the mystery and enigmatic nature of our existence. This lack seems to be exposed when, for example,

⁴ This is not the place to discuss the subtle and fine differences between Gadamer’s and Ricoeur’s approaches and thinking in order to tune in to the essence of the subject matter and Being-dimension. It is also not the place to debate whether there is an important difference between Ricoeur’s impartial and systematic critical reflection (what is called epistemological hermeneutics) and the contemplative and involving thinking as an ontological event that happens to us (which is called ontological hermeneutics, or ‘living ontology’, Risser, 1997) that Gadamer talks about through Socratic dialogue and dialectics. The point I want to make here is that these important differences in reflection (and views on openness) are covered up and not mentioned in Dahlberg et al. (2008).

Dahlberg (2006) writes, “Following Husserl, it must be stressed that grasping essences is by no means something mysterious or enigmatic” (p. 11)⁵ However, when following Heidegger and Gadamer as they also do, trying to grasp the essence of a phenomena is indeed an enigmatic and mysterious endeavour that is expressed by our being taken by wonder.

An aesthetic and ontological view of phenomenology

Two British phenomenological researchers from the Centre for Qualitative Research at Bournemouth University, Les Todres and Kathleen Galvin, have, in what I would describe as a much stronger and clearer announcement, expressed their main interest in placing phenomenological research on a firm existential and ontological ground. Although Todres and Galvin write about embodied and relational-centred interpretation in a language that is very much turned towards the psychological viewpoint of the health-care professional and although in some of their texts (Todres, 2008, Todres & Galvin, 2008) they seem to follow an American philosopher and psychotherapist, Eugene Gendlin, and his ‘psychologized philosophy’, they nevertheless seem in some ways to overcome and transcend this psychological language and therapeutic attitude in their later thinking.

Guided by Mugerauer (2008), a Heidegger scholar and philosopher, and inspired by Heidegger’s own thinking on ‘existential homecoming’ and the notion of *Gelassenheit*, Todres and Galvin follow the path Heidegger took in his later thinking, turning towards poetry and a special form of ‘poeticised philosophizing’ (Heidegger, 1971). In so doing, they seem to point towards some very interesting applications and concepts for such a poetized philosophizing in qualitative research. Terms such as ‘poetic enquiry’, ‘aesthetic phenomenology’ and an ‘existential theory of well-being’ (Todres & Galvin, 2010) can be seen as words to a new vocabulary that might be helpful in the development of phenomenology in the future. By taking this path, phenomenology is tuned to a less epistemological and scientific and psychologically-oriented vocabulary

⁵ To be fair, it is important to note that Dahlberg in her later thinking (see for example Dahlberg et al., 2009), circles around another way of describing ‘bridling’ and the ‘phenomenological attitude’ with the help of the thinking of the later Heidegger. However, this does not yet seem to have moved her from her basically Husserlian and more epistemological approach to phenomenology.

when doing phenomenology and describing the practice⁶ of phenomenology.

However, I also think that there are still some further steps that must be taken if we really want to go all the way into an ‘ontologization’ (Gonzalez, 2009), or a ‘living understanding’ (Risser, 2012) of phenomenology as a ‘homecoming’. These steps, I argue, have to do with the nature of Poetic Dwelling and Socratic wonder. What is missing from Todres and Galvin’s approach is the Socratic approach as well as an even more ontologically-oriented approach to what Poetic Dwelling might be.⁷

In their 2008 article, Todres and Galvin were very influenced by Gendlin and his description of ‘felt meaning’ and embodied interpretation, which Todres and Galvin (2008) describe as “emotional homecoming” (p. 569). When talking about Poetic Dwelling they emphasise the need for the phenomenologist to experience ‘the feel of language’, the evocative dimension, in order to tune in to and ‘be with that’ (Todres, 2008). This is the lived experience, which speaks to us and which makes an

⁶ I am aware that Todres and Galvin (2008) do not propose that poetic dwelling or ‘poetic presence’ is what they start out with when doing phenomenological research. In their 2008 article they only bring ‘embodied interpretation’ (and its poetic sensibility) into play at the findings stage as a way of re-presenting findings in communicative, robust and evocative ways. However, I think that one could and should go a step further (like is done in Art-Based Research and in the tradition of Research by Design) and say that phenomenology should also start (and be led and end) by an aesthetical attunement towards what is essential and calling to us in our meeting with the phenomenon. This embodied and aesthetical ‘musicality’ should not only be seen as a communicative means or vehicle for the scientific finding of the phenomenological researcher, but also as a way of being and listening which directs and leads the researcher to her or his findings.

⁷ I am also aware that the two articles I discuss (Todres & Galvin, 2008, 2010) were approaching two different projects: The former pursued a psychological research methodology project that wished to communicate findings in evocative ways, while the second article was pursuing a more ontological project about the art of living. Thus, the articles relate to different kinds and levels of phenomenologically-oriented projects and the fact that phenomenology includes different kinds and levels of projects needs to be made explicit (e.g. The art of living, articulating human phenomena through research, psycho-therapeutic change, etc.). However, I think that leaving out the ontological attunement to the phenomenon (through Poetic Dwelling and Socratic Wonder) and the ontological-based critique (cf. Gadamer’s critique of scientific methodology) of psychological research methodology (as Todres and Galvin do in their 2008 article) may too easily cover up important ‘ontological ciphers’ in the lived experience so that we only see ‘the empirical’ (cf. Merleau-Ponty, 1964).

impression on us and which has also shown us that we will always be lacking in words to express this lived experience. Todres and Galvin (2008) have an essential but, in my eyes, also a peculiar formulation when they write:

We would like to emphasize that words, which connect the personal to the interpersonal world, are humanizing in that they can find the ‘I’ in the ‘Thou’ in Buber’s sense (Buber, 1970). This is assisted by the kind of language that is evocative and poetic and seeks to make things come alive. We seek to find a way of using language so that readers of phenomenological descriptions can find personal meaning in the descriptions, and thus find themselves in the language in some way. (p. 570)

The first question that must be answered concerns whether it would be more precise – in the spirit of Martin Buber – to say that the readers should not find their ‘I’ in the ‘Thou’, but rather that they should try to find their ‘I’ in relation to the ‘Thou’ or, even better, find themselves in the relation between the ‘I’ and the ‘Thou’. In Buber’s I-Thou-philosophy, the ‘I’ is seen to be as mysterious and metaphysical⁸ as the ‘Thou’, and I and Thou should not be confused and seen as identical. The ‘I’ should also not be confused with the person’s ego or idiosyncratic feelings and thoughts. In contrast, the ‘I’ in Buber’s understanding is described as ‘the person’, and is as enigmatic and mysterious as the ‘Thou’. Buber also underlines that “the word ‘I’ is the true Shibboleth of humanity. Listen to it!” (Buber, 1923/2004, p. 115). He further emphasizes that Socrates was the one who called this ‘I’ to vividly emerge in dialogues with and in the presence of other human beings. It is in the tension that exists in-between ‘I’ and ‘Thou’, that the human being may find and try to understand himself.

In other words, the voice of Thou (or the voice of Life/Being or *Sein* as Heidegger would say in his later thinking⁹) is not the same as the voice of the self (or

⁸ Note that when using the word ‘meta-physical’ Buber does not connect to the ‘metaphysics of presence’ and the ‘myth of the given’ that dominated Western philosophy and were gradually used by Hume and Kant but especially by Nietzsche, Heidegger, Gadamer, and Derrida. It is still possible to speak of ‘metaphysical experiences’ in a post-metaphysical and post-modern age. The later works of Heidegger as well as the work of Gadamer, Arendt and Buber can be said to think, although in different ways, from this kind of ‘negative ontology’.

⁹ In *Beiträge zur Philosophie (Vom Ereignis)* (Heidegger, 1994) we find a special interest in focusing on *das Zwischen* or ‘the between’ that both binds together and distance *Sein* and *Dasein*, the two poles in the movement that Heidegger calls *Ereignis* or ‘the event’. See also Kirkland (2007) for the description of how one could understand thinking in this

Dasein, in Heidegger’s words). Both agencies are bonded to the ontological (or, as Buber would say, ‘meta-physical and meta-psychic’) dimension. In contrast, the ‘little Ego’ (also known as our daily idiosyncratic identity and voice) is bonded to the psychological and socio-cultural sediments of time and culture. This is what Heidegger would call the ‘ontic’ level and Buber the level of ‘It’.

In their work, Todres and Galvin set up a dichotomy between, on the one hand, ‘just logical understanding’ and, on the other hand, an emotional and poetic understanding that can connect people in a heartfelt way. They maintain that through focusing on bodily sensed understanding we will be led to a region that cannot be reached through the language of logical rigorous, precise and rational words. However, I want to question whether, by only focusing on this kind of bodily sensed understanding and emotional homecoming, we are only going half the way or, maybe even worse, we risk getting lost in psycho-logical and psycho-centric worldviews. Perhaps we are not going far enough when we say, as Todres and Galvin do, that we should try to find ourselves in the language. Perhaps it would be more precise to say that we should try to find ourselves in what language can only indirectly point at. Perhaps we should find ourselves in that which is not to be found in language but rather in the relation or triad between ‘I’, language and ‘Thou’ and unfold through action, wonder, presence and love¹⁰.

Poets as guides to the Mountains of the Heart

It is possible that feelings, emotions and bodily sensed perceptions and understandings are only side effects or powerless ontic labels and vehicles of deeper ontological dynamics and meta-physical moods and phenomena, which at the end of the day we only can experience honestly and most directly as a mystery and through the experience of being in a fundamental wonderment. If we follow the quotation of Buber (1923/2004) at the very beginning of this article, it appears possible that love, as a meta-physical and metaphysical event, can only be experienced through a wondrous mind. I believe that Todres and Galvin would agree with this, and would say that Poetic Inquiry and Dwelling is about finding words and metaphors and aesthetic expressions that can help

between, and why Socratic maieutic and dialectical and elenctic methods exhibit something like the same dynamic.

¹⁰ I am not here following the example of Arendt, Jaspers and Gadamer in relation to being influenced by St. Augustine’s notion of love. However, later in this article I will discuss the connection between wonder and love which Augustine points to, and which I also see in Buber’s description of love as not a feeling but as a meta-psychic and meta-physical event.

us in seeing and experiencing the wonder and mystery of everyday life and thereby placing us in an ontological relation with the world. The question then becomes one of how we can listen to and stay in the world in an ontological way if emotions, feelings and bodily sensed understandings can in some situations and ways stand in our way of stepping further on into a more meta-physical and meta-psychic listening and being-in-the-world; what Heidegger would call *Befindlichkeit* and *Gelassenheit*.

Let us, for a moment, become quiet and just listen to the voices of two poets who have been in the experiential landscape of creation and wonder. One of these poets is internationally known (Rainer Marie Rilke), and the second is a distinguished Danish poet (Paul la Cour).

Exposed on the mountains of the heart

Cast out, exposed on the mountains of the heart. Look,
how small there,
look: the last village of words, and higher,
yet how small it is too, one final
farmstead of feeling. Do you see it?
Cast out, exposed on the mountains of the heart. Hard rock
Under my hands. Here, true, something
Comes into flower; from the mute rock-face
An unknowing weed puts out its flowers,
singing.
But the man, knowing? Ah, who began to know,
Cast out, silent now, on the mountains of the heart.
True, safe in unclouded awareness,
Many a mountain creature travels about,
Changes and lingers. And the great sheltered bird
Circles the pure rejection of peaks. –But
Unsheltered here on the mountains of the heart...

(Rilke, 1914/2011, p. 19)

For they are the moments when something new has entered us, something unknown; our feelings grow mute in shy embarrassment, everything in us withdraws, a silence arises, and the new experience, which no one knows, stands in the midst of it all and says nothing.

(Rilke, 2000, p. 74).

One says about the Poet that he is a Word Artist, equipped with a special Word Imagination, and sees in that the original Testimony about his Destiny. But this is a Result of his Destiny. It was the Tool he formed in order to be able to transform his

Wonder in visible Signs. The Language was later. Prior to that was the heaven-fallen Wonder, first the Force of Expression, which created the Language.

(La Cour, 1948, p. 73, my translation)

There exist sybilian lines of verses of such a shining Beauty,
that they move you by their Radiance and Music. No one would
consider asking, what they mean in tangible sense; the miraculous in
them is Meaning enough. They melt you into deep Life Experience
only by being there. Don't forget that the enigmatic has its Clarity. The
Mystery lights up.

(La Cour, 1948, p. 104, my translation)

When a great Movement from outside catches you, and the Poem awakens and becomes alive in you, do not think then that your Role only is to transmit it further on. It must meet a Movement from you at the Bottom of your Being, older than itself. You must penetrate it with your own primordial movement of the mind [or soul] and fight with it in order to force it to become Signs. Without you meeting it with something, that was as unbent as itself, it decays through you to Sentimentality.

(La Cour, 1948, p. 75, my translation)

In climbing the mountains of the heart in Rilke's (1914) poem, notice how we first pass "the last hamlet of words", which from the position where we look down now looks so small and inadequate. However, we should also notice that the spiritual climber has also passed another place, which, from where he is now located, looks equally small. This second place is called "a last homestead of feeling". The climber has moved to a higher level, a level that feelings seem too small and deaf to grasp, although we are getting nearer to the summit of the mountains of the heart. This raises the question: If feelings can lead us astray from the insights of the heart what then does the spiritual climber see and how does he see? According to the poem, he sees an unknowing flowering herb which sings its way to life and a great protected bird that circles around the peaks. The wanderer, who now understands, then becomes silent, exposed and unprotected as he is on the mountains of the heart. It is possible to understand this unprotected and silent wandering as a kind of fundamental wonderment. This may be why St. Augustine once wrote¹¹: "*Percutit cor meum sine laesione*" – It

¹¹ The quotation and translation of this sentence from St. Augustine's *Confessions* is borrowed from Verhoeven (1972, p. 40). This quotation is open to discussion, as the

[Wonder] strikes the Heart without hurting it" (Verhoeven, 1972, p. 40).

In Rilke's (2000) next reflection, which consists of Poetics on how to become a poet, he advises the young poet to move at a very slow and attentive pace, not listening only to his feelings but also to that which seems to transcend what can be captured both in words and feelings. He states that when meeting "that" "our feelings grow mute in shy embarrassment" (Rilke, 2000, p. 74). In this silence, which arises both on the cognitive and emotional levels, the new and unknown appears. The question then becomes: How do we move into this heartfelt silence and be a living part of it? In another famous letter from the same book, Letter #4 dated 16 July 1903, Rilke (2000, p. 35) writes:

Be patient toward all that is unsolved in your heart and try to love the questions themselves, like locked rooms and like books that are now written in a very foreign tongue. Do not now seek the answers, which cannot be given you because you would not be able to live them. And the point is, to live everything. Live the questions now. Perhaps you will then gradually, without noticing it, live along some distant day into the answer.

Thus, living the question and not hastening toward an answer appears to be a way to stay with "the moments when something new has entered us, something unknown" (Rilke, 2000, p. 74). Once again, this leads to yet more questions: How do we live the question? What kind of relation to the world and ourselves do we find ourselves in within those moments? How can we 'be with that' if we are not to follow our logical and emotional understanding, but to instead follow (to use Buber's words) a meta-physical and meta-psychic understanding where we live our questions?

In his poetics, the Danish poet Paul la Cour (1948) states that a poet is not just a man who has a special talent and competence for creating and mastering

full sentence is: "*Quid est illud, quod interlucet mihi et percussit cor meum sine laesione?*", which Nolan (1990, p. 77) translates as "What is it that shines into me and pierces my heart without wounding?" This raises questions regarding what it is that strikes the heart. Is it wonder, wisdom or an experience of looking at God through glass darkly, as St. Paul writes in 1. Corinthians, 13.12: "*Videmus nunc per speculum in aenigmate*"?, which can be translated as "Now we see through reflections from the enigmatic". I tend to share Verhoeven's (1972) view that it is in the enigmatic light from life, when we are in a deep wonder, that our hearts are struck but not wounded. I also believe that there is wisdom to be gained in these reflections from the enigmatic.

words in imaginary ways. Instead, a poet is forced by his destiny to do so, because he is driven by a deeper longing or calling or force (a vocation in life) that is expressed through a fundamental wonder. Only if he is bonded to and writes (or sings) from this fundamental wonder will his talent and tools for creating words find meaning. La Cour (1948) writes, "Prior to that [language] was the heaven-fallen Wonder, first the Force of Expression, which created the Language" (p. 73). Thus wonder, it seems, comes before language.

In his second reflection, or rather observation from his practice of creating, La Cour (1948) points to the fact and experience, that poetic lines and poetic dwelling can be of such beautiful and breathtaking nature, that they are able to "...melt you into deep Life Experience only by being there" (p. 104). Thus, like Rilke (1914/2011, 2000), La Cour (1948) advises us to stay there, doing nothing but living in this poem or line and in the fundamental sense of wonder that this poem or line may evoke in us.

On the other hand, if we hasten to find a logical or emotional understanding of this poem we will not be open to the silent wisdom of the enigmatic and mysterious. "Don't forget that the enigmatic has its Clarity. The Mystery lights up" (La Cour, 1948, p. 104). Thus being in wonder makes us see what cannot be seen directly through cognitions and emotion. Yet the road to this insight might have been through cognitions and emotions.

In his last observation La Cour (1948) brings in an important distinction between the Voices of Life and the Voice of the poet's own Being. Based on Plato's description of the poets (*Ion, Menon, Phaedrus, Symposium, The Laws*) we imagine persons who are in a way 'out of themselves', taken by a divine madness in order to be a medium for the voices of the gods. However, like Martin Buber, the Danish poet wants us to reflect not just on the voices of the 'Thou', but also on the voices of the 'I', which is an equally mysterious and metaphysical agency (who and where am I in relation to the Voices of the Other?) and "the true Shibboleth of humanity" (Buber, 1923/2004, p. 115).

According to La Cour (1948), we end up getting stuck in sentimental feelings if the poem is not created in the space between the Voice of the Subject Matter or the call of the phenomenon on the one hand, and the voice of the Person on the other hand, who responds to this calling in what he or she experiences as the most honest and authentic way of responding. La Cour (1948) writes, "You must penetrate it with your own primordial movement of the mind [or soul] and fight with it in order to force it to become Signs" (p.75).

The use of poems and literature as valid signposts or guideposts and as a kind of ‘metaphysical and meta-psychic factum’ and ‘ontological evidence’ for investigating a life phenomenon is well-known among philosophical hermeneutists and phenomenologists. According to Van den Berg (1955), “poets and artists are born phenomenologists” (p. 61, cited in Bachelard, 1994, p. 1994, p. xxviii.). In other words, phenomenologists express themselves with a poetic precision that is more accurate and in tune with what Merleau-Ponty (1964, 1968, 1945/2007) called ‘the ontological cipher’ in the lived experience than what could be obtained through any empirical investigation and logical and proportional precision.

However, a change in tone and way of speaking can be noted when Rilke (1914/2011, 2000) and La Cour (1948) reflect upon their own creative and poetic process and what constitutes a poem. In this moment, they move from being poets to becoming thinkers. In their poetics, which should not be confused with ‘the theory of poetry’ that can only be written by academics with a mere scholarly interest in poetry, we experience a ‘living poetics’, which is a reflection and wonderment from within the lived experience of being a poet. This living poetics is remarkable because it can only be experienced by poets. They dwell in the lived experience of doing poesy (the phenomenological momentum) and from there they reflect, wonder and think about the essence and fundamental meaning and value of doing poesy. They become philosophers who seek the universal in the concrete with a sharp ear for that which cannot be expressed in clear thoughts directly (the hermeneutic momentum).

This leads me to question why these poets do not simply stick to their poetical language. Why do they need to philosophize at all? I imagine that it is because they experience a kind of embarrassment or inadequacy when they, to use non-poetic words, want to understand themselves and communicate what is really going on and what matters in good poetry. It seems that they want, so to speak, to find themselves and give a personal response to the call of poetry, which seems to have become their passion and destiny. They might struggle with questions such as: What is really the meaning of poetry? What is poetry - not just for me but as such? Will poetry make people and life better in an ethical sense? What is beauty and truth? Where does the mattering arise from? What is calling on me? What is my Call as a poet and as the person I am? What is the relation between me, the language and ‘that’, which wants to be expressed?

Those are all fundamentally philosophical questions, which lead the poet to philosophize ‘from within’ when he or she writes his or her poetics. It seems that this deep longing to understand through thinking from

and over the practice of doing poesy is something that only the practice of philosophizing can offer. However, this can only be done in co-operation or with inspiration from poesy. Thus, as the Danish Philosopher K. E. Løgstrup (1957) writes, “Philosophy can – at best – make an understanding clear. Poetry can make it present” (p. 226, my translation).

Existential well-being? To find an idea I can live and die for

In an article from 2010 Todres and Galvin write of an existential homecoming, which is apparently different to the ‘emotional homecoming’ they write about in their 2008 article. Their ‘lead singer’ is now no longer Eugene Gendlin but Heidegger. In the 2012 article they investigate the concept and experience of Heidegger’s *Gelassenheit*, and describe it as a kind of ‘peaceful attunement to existence’ and a ‘letting-be-ness’. In this way of being an openness emerges; “an openness to allow whatever is there to simply be present in the manner that it is present” (Todres & Galvin, 2010, p. 4). They write that it is possible to come to this kind of ‘letting-be’ and ‘letting-come’ in many ways. “One can come to dwelling in many ways such as sadness, suffering, concern, attentiveness, acceptance, relaxation or patience ... to dwell is to ‘come home’ to what is there with oneself and the world, whatever the qualities of that may be” (Todres & Galvin, 2010, p. 4).

Although they do not mention poesy and the aesthetic approach in this article, we know from their other writings that Poetic Dwelling and Inquiry is also a way, in their understanding, to experience *Gelassenheit*, or what Gadamer describe as a “hold upon nearness” (Gadamer, 1986a, p. 113). However, their statement that *Gelassenheit* has something to do with finding ‘peace’ might not be quite accurate. According to Heidegger *Gelassenheit* refers to openness to the mystery, which has little to do with peace. Poetic dwelling is a way to *Gelassenheit*, but it may also be an expression of *Gelassenheit*. For Heidegger, Poetic Dwelling has something to do with the unfamiliar in the familiar, which might or might not lead to a feeling of peace.

Todres and Galvin (2010) also write that the essence of dwelling lies in all the ways that we existentially ‘come home’ to that which we have been given in time (*temporality*), space (*spatiality*), other (*intersubjectivity*), mood (*Befindlichkeit*) and bodies (*embodiment*). In other words, if you can navigate and take orientation from these *existentiale* and ways of being, then you will be able to help people live a life that points towards what Todres and Galvin (2010) call ‘existential well-being’.

However, when I read this formulation by Todres and Galvin (2010) I miss two important things, which I am sure would also be remarked on by Heidegger as well as other existence-oriented philosophers such as Arendt, Gadamer, Buber, Karl Jaspers and Gabriel Marcel. These two questions are: (1) Where is the experience of fundamental wonder in the description of existential dwelling and homecoming? (2) Where is the *existentiale*, which Heidegger (1927/2010) named ‘understanding’ or potentiality-for-Being (section 31-34), which is not to be confused with *Befindlichkeit*?

Being in wonder is of course not the same as experiences of sadness, suffering, concern, attentiveness, acceptance, relaxation or patience. The experience of fundamental wonder is also not then the same as emphatic attentiveness or intellectual curiosity, surprise or the experience of deep interest. Even when we are curious, surprised or interested we remain in the control of our intentionality and on firm epistemological ground. We know what we know, and expect to know, and want to know, although we might be surprised and lose our footing for a moment. However, in wonder we do not know and have no expectation or specific want to know something. In wonder, we find, so to speak, a footing and joy and beauty (Arendt, 1978) right in the midst of not-knowing. It is neither our knowing nor our intentionality that direct our awareness, but rather Being itself. We have left the epistemological ground for a deeper ontological ground, which we trust without knowing why. If we must talk about a kind of knowing or certainty when we are in wonder, we could say that, using Scharmer’s (2007) concepts of ‘not-yet-embodied knowledge’ and ‘self-transcending knowledge’, we have become part of and are participating in when being taken by wonder.

On an ontological level, the wonder-experience can therefore also be a ‘homecoming’. To further press the point, I would argue that it can even be described as a deeper level than the experience and feeling of sadness, suffering, concern, attentiveness, acceptance, relaxation, patience, curiosity, surprise and deep interest.¹² When Fink (1981) talks about ‘wonder in the face of the world’ he tells us that we are placed in a ‘not-expecting-to-know’ attitude. This is a kind of break-down of our certainties (cognitive as well as emotional). Yet, at the same time we may – and this is indeed enigmatic and marvellous – experience ourselves as being at home in and with the world. “In turning towards the existent with wonderment, man is as it were primevally open to the world once again, he

finds himself in the dawn of a new day of the world in which he himself and everything that is begins to appear in a new light. The whole of the existent dawns upon him anew” (Fink, 1981, p. 24). According to Fink (1981) in wonder we ‘visit the ground of things’ and are positioned in an original relation to the world.

Poetic Dwelling and Socratic Wonder are two different ways of becoming in tune and in dialogue with the ontological mood (*Grundstimmung*) that silently exist as the tacit backdrop of our existence. Poetic Dwelling can help us to be near and present and poetize from this ontological mood (being-there), while Socratic Wonder can help us to get into a thinking and an understanding ‘I-Thou’ relation to this ontological mood. Socratic Wonder achieves this especially by emphasizing the attunement towards the ‘I’, that is, the personal response to the call of the ‘Thou’. (Thus, once again asking the question: Who and where am ‘I’ in relation to the ‘Thou’?)

I therefore suggest that Todres and Galvin’s (2010) description of existential well-being may need an important addition if the existential understanding is to be accounted for in their thinking. In my view, existential well-being has to do with what Socrates called ‘ethical self-care’. It is concerned with what it is to live a life with a high level of meaning (a coherent life) and with a worldview that is also connected to the life experience of what matters in life. I thus claim that Socratic reflections about what a good, beautiful and wise life consists of are (not just for me or my group, but for everyone) very important when describing what constitutes the quality of existential well-being. We could even perhaps go so far as to say that philosophical ideas and understandings and longings can be constitutive of the person’s fundamental mood (*Grundstimmung*). For instance, when Kierkegaard (1835/2000) writes, “The crucial thing is to find a truth which is truth for me, to find the idea for which I am willing to live and die” (p. 24), he is expressing a fundamental existential longing and search that drives every human being. Although Kierkegaard (1835/2000) does not speak here of self-knowledge but of an idea for which to live, he nevertheless further on clarifies that finding the idea is to “find myself” (p. 35). He is not seeking an abstraction or having only an intellectual and cognitive reflection detached from his concrete life and embodied experience of life. He is seeking a meaningful mode of existence within which he will find or become himself (Sagi, 1994). To find an idea that one is willing to live and die for is therefore closely related to self-understanding. Heidegger and Gadamer later follow Kierkegaard’s line of thought when they talk about understanding as existential self-understanding. However, they also emphasize that this understanding is rather to be understood as a

¹² For a further development of this thought I can refer to Heidegger’s distinctions between three fundamental levels of feeling, emotions and *Grundstimmung* (Heidegger, 1923/1995; Ratcliffe, 2010)

horizon or world-openness, or experience of wholeness, which the person can feel more or less a part of, and be called towards.

This leads to the following question: Why not also talk about the importance of homecoming in an idea of the good life? This idea should not be understood as an intellectual, abstract and cognitive idea but rather as an inner vision that we try to follow, as a painter tries to follow and express an impression. The existential idea is to be understood as an attempt to connect to the mystery, that there can be meaningful mattering at all, that things matters, and behold this 'meta-psychic and meta-physical' factum in silent awe and wonder. Maybe it would be better to call it an Existential Call, a Will to Meaning that drives us (Frankl, 1946/2006) or a fundamental longing; although this longing will be manifested through different sketches for a 'ideational landscape' in which to feel at home. This should not be understood as sketches that consist of cognitive decisions and rationally conceived 'life philosophies'. Instead, it should be understood as our 'lived understanding' and 'lived philosophy' of our daily lives, or even better as a 'living poetics' by which we give a personal response to a call.

Merleau-Ponty (1968) provides us with an idea of how we should think and move around if we want to gain a greater sense of the living understanding and philosophy in our lives. He writes:

... the words most charged with philosophy are not necessarily those which contain what they say, but rather those that most energetically open upon Being, because they more closely convey the life of the whole and make our habitual evidences vibrate until they disjoin. Hence it is a question whether philosophy as reconquest of brute or wild being can be accomplished by the resources of the eloquent language, or whether it would not be necessary for philosophy to use language in a way that takes from it its power of immediate or direct signification in order to equal it with what it wishes all the same to say. (p. 102-103)

Thus, according to Merleau-Ponty (1968) the words most laden with philosophy are the ones that point beyond language and towards something (Being or 'the living ontology') that wants to be expressed. 'Lived understanding' and 'lived philosophy' will be understood and articulated if we are able to philosophize with these kinds of 'loaded words'.

Poetic words are indeed also 'loaded words'. However, we have already noted that to philosophize is not the same as to poetize. However, I believe that philosophical ideas are inherently poetic just as good

poetry is inherently philosophical. Karen Blixen, the Danish author of *Out of Africa*, *Babette's Feast* and *Seven Gothic Tales*, underlines this when she writes, "No one becomes a great poet today without a coherent philosophy of life" (cited in Wivel, 1987, p. 90). Again there seems to be an intimate relationship between poetry and philosophy or, more broadly speaking, between art and philosophy.

"Where language is, there Being itself is not yet or no more" (Karl Jaspers)

In order to qualify what Socratic Wonder and Midwifery are, and why this Socratic approach has to balance the Poetic Dwelling approach in phenomenological research, I now turn to a more fundamental philosophical disagreement between Heidegger's view of 'poetized philosophizing' though *Gelassenheit*, and Karl Jaspers', Gadamer's and Arendt's view on Socratic wonderment through 'dialogical and dialectical philosophizing'.

As the Canadian philosopher Francisco Gonzalez (2009) has so thoroughly shown us, Heidegger saw phenomenology and dialectic as fire and water, that is, as two approaches that one could not and should not mix. His basic objection was that dialectic "steps into an already constructed context" (Heidegger, 1923/1995, p. 43) and "always lives from the table of others" (p. 45). When philosophizing in this way we too easily find ourselves in a kind of repetition of what has already coagulated in thoughts and worldviews as well as in empty abstractions and generalized concepts and words that are only vein representations of the phenomena. Heidegger (1923/1995) posits that words that are delivered from Socratic dialectics are not words that are, so to speak, loaded with the authentic and original experience and meeting with the phenomena. Dialectics is therefore, he announces in *Being and Time*, "a genuine philosophical embarrassment" (Heidegger, 1923/1995 p. 25), which becomes superfluous with Aristotle. Although dialectics might help us to transcend idle talk through critical destruction of concepts and words that have objectified the phenomena, for Heidegger it always remains subordinated to pure seeing ('*reines Vernehmen*'). Dialectics only move forward by taking standpoints and by playing one received standpoint against another. The fundamental demand of phenomenology, on the other hand, is to look away from all standpoints (Heidegger, 1919/1999). According to Heidegger, Aristotle was "... in the clear about the phenomena, he saw them directly and without distortion, while Plato, on account of his dialectic, remained mired in the ambiguities and deceptions of Logos" (Gonzalez, 2009, p. 10).

Thus, in short, according to Heidegger, Socratic dialectics becomes too rational and too rigid and 'non-philosophical'. This occurs because dialectics prevents us from being in touch with the subject matter itself and from seeing the phenomena in a direct pure and intuitive seeing (*nous*). Heidegger posits that we will only be able to reach this philosophical insight or summit through a poetizing philosophy and dwelling. This direct saying and seeing can, if we follow Heidegger, only be done in solitude, in lonely dwelling; in the same way, he would probably say, as a good poem cannot be created in communion with other people as a common project. Before the poem can be expressed it must be felt and experienced as an inner and silent dialogue with oneself and one's relation to the world. In this way solitary Poetic Dwelling seems to be superior to Socratic Wonder and shared dialogue.

This discussion of Heidegger's ideas leads to questions regarding the work of Gadamer. Why is it that Gadamer (1985) tells us that his philosophical hermeneutics must be located between existential phenomenology and Socratic dialectic? Why does Gadamer (2002) criticise Heidegger for performing a monological and too closed form of philosophizing? Gadamer (1989) claims that it is in the tension or balance between the phenomenological and dialectical movements, what I here will call the lyrical impulse and the Socratic impulse, that the hermeneutical 'event of understanding' and 'truth experience' take place. According to Gadamer (1989), the phenomenological momentum can help us to obtain the near; in other words, to be sensuously and honestly where we are at a particular time and place. However, the hermeneutic momentum can help us to think critically and to be modest about our certainty and knowledge of where we are. Thus, Gadamer (1989) also wants us to question our 'intuitions' and evocations and our so-called 'pure seeing' through a genuine and critical as well as existential dialogue between two or more interlocutors. This critical and existential thinking is what Socratic dialogue and dialectics can foster in the interlocutors. According to Gadamer (1989), our feelings, moods and intuitions are always coloured by the fundamental ideas, philosophical assumptions, lived worldviews and pre-understandings in which we are embedded when we listen to our feelings, moods and intuitions. As a result the only thing we can do to get as close as we can to the phenomenon itself, is to put our fundamental assumptions, our understandings, our feelings, moods and intuitions in play in a shared questioning. He argues that only the gods can see a phenomenon directly without looking through a 'dark glass' and therefore even 'the inner word' is to be taken up and questioned in a Socratic dialogue (Gadamer, 1989).

However, Logos and rationally developed arguments are not going to decide whether this or that is more true than something else. Instead, according to Gadamer (1989), Socratic Midwifery (*maieutics*) and dialectics (in contrast to Hegelian rational dialectics and maybe even Ricoeur's 'critical dialectics') show us the limits of language and the fundamental finitude of the rational and critical thought. Gonzalez (2009) has the following to say about the 'third dialectical way' between pure intuition (Heidegger) and conceptual mediation (Hegel):

Plato's dialectic absolutizes neither conceptual mediation nor intuition; on the contrary, by continually opposing the one to the other, it exposes the finitude of each. By revealing our inability to say all that we see as well as our inability to see with perfect clarity all that we say, dialectic exposes the limitations of both our seeing and our saying. Heidegger is the one who, in dismissing dialectic, is continually in danger of presuming too much for language and intuition. (p. 290)

Thus, though his dialectical and always negating movements, which at first glance seem to lead us nowhere, Socrates nevertheless indirectly points beyond language and logos to a way of being that has a musicality for 'that' which cannot be spoken or thought but only lived. On this point Karl Jaspers, Hannah Arendt and Gabriel Marcel are in agreement. They all agree that it is not what the interlocutors in a Socratic dialogue explicitly express in clear words, strong arguments and consistent concepts and definitions that should catch our attention but rather the silence, hesitation, reluctance, prudence, slowness, openness and listening attitude as well as the truth-seeking passion, love, playfulness, humour and, of course, the wonder that follows the words or pauses between the words. In this regard, the French philosopher Pierre Hadot (1995, p. 155) writes:

To be sure, Socrates was a passionate lover of words and dialogue. With just as much passion, however, he sought to demonstrate to us the limits of language. What he wanted to show us is that we can never understand justice if we do not live it. Justice, like every authentic reality, is indefinable, and this is what Socrates sought to make his interlocutor understand, in order to urge him to 'live' justice.

This point was also argued by the Danish philosopher Søren Kierkegaard, who stated that it is through a 'Socratic Eros' (in the tension between the temporal and eternity, between contingency and metaphysics, between the ontic and ontological) in the in-between

that you must find the spirit of the Socratic dialogue and dialectics (see also Kirkland, 2007).

Gadamer (1986b) and Gonzalez (2009) have argued that Heidegger's critique of the Socratic dialectics builds on false ground because Heidegger seems to read the Socratic dialectics in the way that Hegel understood dialectic. However, the existential dialectic that Socrates practiced was actually in contrast to the Hegelian dialectics, as Kierkegaard (1841/1997, 1846/2007) was probably the first to see. The Socratic dialectics points to what Plato in the *Seventh Letter* (Plato, 1961; Rhodes, 2003) described as the unsayable dimension in philosophizing. It is exactly this silent region of Being, which Socratic dialogue and dialectic in an indirect way point to, which the Community of Wonder helps us to sense.

In a letter to Heidegger dated 6 August 1949, Karl Jaspers objects to Heidegger's characterization of language as the "house of Being" he states that "... but in communication [Mitteilen] language is to be brought to its self-overcoming in reality itself, through action, presence, love. I could almost say the inverse: where language is, there Being itself is not yet or no more" (Jaspers & Heidegger, 1990, p. 179; see also Gonzalez, 2008, p. 389). Thus, according to Gadamer and Jaspers direct saying and pure seeing through language are not possible regardless of the strength of our phenomenological attitude or state of wonder. However, in wonder we transcend our language and get in touch with the world in a way that brings new life to the words we use to express the impression that life makes on us. Or, as St. Augustine said, "Wonder strikes our heart without hurting it."¹³ Through wonder we silently experience an ontological homecoming before language – the word and the question – arise. Therefore it is also said that the phenomenology of wonder is connected to a deep experience of gratitude, awe and trust in life. In those moments we experience what Arendt (1978) calls 'admiring wonder'.

However, although Gadamer rightly writes that "Being that is understood is language" (Gadamer, 1989, p. 470), we could also add that being that is not understood might be wonder and action in the sense suggested by Jaspers (Jaspers & Heidegger, 1990). In a Community of Wonder and Socratic dialectical dialogue where we deliberately seek to place our thoughts and awareness at their 'wits end' by unfreezing our concepts, words and ideas, language is brought to its self-overcoming in reality itself. We do this in order to find a new beginning (natality; Arendt, 1958, 1978), which can resonate better than the "old words, ideas and worldview" (Jaspers & Heidegger, 1990, p. 179), better than the old former used words,

¹³ See footnote 11.

ideas and worldview with our present lived experience of 'action, presence and love'.

To reiterate my point: Poetic Dwelling can help us to obtain a resonance with Being or the Voice of Life, but Socratic Wonder can help us to find our personal response to this calling. It is through this 'I-Thou'-relation, in this dance between Poetic Dwelling and Socratic Wonder, or the lyrical and Socratic impulse in the phenomenological research practice, that we must find our way. However, if we think from the start that we are and should be in control of this dance we will not reach a true community of wonder.

To philosophize and to wonder is not something we can do. It is not possible to do anything with philosophy. Instead, to cite Heidegger (1961, p. 10), might not philosophy, if we concern ourselves with it, do something with us? To get into a thinking and into a wonderment is an event, where something is happening to us. In wonder, human beings are taken by life or Being; in wonder, we transcend our ordinary conception and understanding of 'the world of appearance' (Arendt, 1978), and arrive at the world as if for the first time. In wonder, we witness a 'world-ing'; that is, a world that is coming to be here-and-now. This makes the I (in Buber's sense) wonder. In wonder, the 'I' comes to him- or herself and to the world in which he or she is already embedded. In wonder, our heart, to speak with St. Augustine, is out in the world wandering around. The heart is struck by wonder but not at all hurt by it, rather wonder awakes and enlivens the heart. In wonder, through a Socratic Eros for wisdom, we strive to understand in the ontological and existential sense that Heidegger and Gadamer refer to when writing of a 'hermeneutic understanding'.

Conclusion – or sortie:

I hope I have made a worthwhile case for considering whether we, as phenomenological researchers in the human sciences, should also take a Socratic approach when doing phenomenology. I hope I have also convincingly argued for why wonder and wonderment cannot simply be described through the psychological vocabulary and approach. Finally, I also hope that I have created some 'clearings' and inspired the reader to start wondering about the differences and similarities between Poetic Dwelling and Socratic Wonder, and helped the reader understand why being in wonder cannot be identified with being curious, surprised or having a deep interest.

As an example, when Halling (2008, 2010), Halling, Kunz and Rowe (1994) and Halling, Leifer and Rowe (2006) write about 'dialogal phenomenology' they are inspired by Gadamer and Jaspers but only focus on

'dialogue' and not on Socratic dialectics, although this is paramount for both Gadamer and Jaspers. Halling et al. (1994, 2006) do not focus explicitly on wonder but talk about it as synonymous with surprise and deep interest. Thus, although they do break through to new and interesting ways of doing modern phenomenological research by bringing in the need for phenomenological researchers to meet in a dialogue and shared questioning around the phenomena in order to call the phenomena alive, they remain in a hybrid of 'descriptive scientific phenomenology' (in the sense of Giorgi) and continue to listen to the evocative and intuitive 'hearings' (of meaning, lived experience, essence) like Dahlberg and Todres and Galvin. These authors do not seem to question, in a Socratic and dialectical way, the intuitions and evocations they receive from investigating the lived experiences in their research.

What is needed here, in my opinion, is a 'wonder-based dialogal phenomenology'; a phenomenology where Socratic critical and dialectical thinking and questioning is allowed and where a Community of Wonder and not 'just' a Community of Inquiry is displayed and practiced. Max van Manen's hermeneutic 'practice phenomenology' is a way of doing phenomenology that contains both the 'lyrical impulse' and the 'Socratic impulse'. He is very explicit concerning the importance of having a truly wonder-based approach when doing phenomenology. The only critical remark I have regarding his 'practice phenomenology' is that I feel that he places too much emphasis on phenomenological research as a writing and reading enterprise. Through this emphasis he seems to support the Heideggerian 'lonely-cowboy-thinking' and poetic philosophizing. In this position, I miss the importance of 'the living word' and dialectical Socratic dialogue and shared questioning

between living and physically present phenomenological researchers.

In this article I hope I have pointed out why a wonder-based and Socratic phenomenology is also needed. In addition, I hope I have shown why there is a need for a vocabulary in phenomenological research that is not too loaded with the tonality of psychological language, which dominates current phenomenological research practices, particularly in the human sciences. What remains to be seen and elaborated is a more developed phenomenology of Wonder, as well as a phenomenological description of the practice of a Community of Wonder.

In addition, questions remain concerning how we can prepare or create an 'inviting space' for the event of wonder and a Community of Wonder. Here it would be natural, at least for me, to not just describe lived experiences phenomenologically through doing Socratic Dialogue Groups and Philosophical Counselling sessions and other philosophical practices with nurses, counsellors and teachers, which I personally have been facilitating over the years, but also to describe and critically discuss some of the theories and understandings underlying the different approaches in philosophical counselling and practices.

However, at the end of the day it is in the practice, in the concrete lived experience of doing Socratic dialogue and dialectics (and led by the Socratic virtues that these forms of dialogues demand), that we will hear and understand that Poetic Dwelling and Socratic Wonder are not the same. It is in practice that we will see that it is in the dance, or balance, between these two movements that a true wonderment and Community of Wonder may happen.

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