

Chapter 3

Methodology

*When I heard the learn'd astronomer,
When the proofs, the figures, were ranged in columns before me,
When I was shown the charts and diagrams, to add, divide and
measure them,
When I sitting heard the astronomer where he lectured with much
applause in the lecture room,
How soon unaccountable I became tired and sick,
Till rising and gliding out I wander'd off by myself,
In the mystical moist night-air, and from time to time,
Look'd up in perfect silence at the stars*

(Walt Whitman)

Introduction

The term 'methodology' is derived from the Greek *methodos*, meaning pursuit of knowledge or orderly mode of investigation. It is a combination of *meta*, meaning 'nature of a higher order' and *hodos*, meaning 'way'. In modern usage 'method' denotes a systematic way of obtaining an object. *Ology* derives from the Greek noun *logos* for 'word', meaning 'discourse or speech surrounding a particular subject'. In modern usage methodology denotes the study of method (*Concise Oxford Dictionary of English Etymology*, 1986).

The methodology forms the theoretical framework/s upon which the method chosen for a particular piece of work rests and can be explained. The ontological and epistemological ruminations of the researcher lead her or him to choose the most suitable means of inquiry for the particular purpose at hand, and therefore to proceed with some confidence.

The method of a study relates to the precise process of finding knowledges or understandings. René Descartes was the modern philosopher who emphasised the importance of method when pursuing or discovering truth (Stumpf 1994, p.242). His principles and rules have become so entrenched in the ways of 'scientists' that most researchers using a traditional design concentrate on applying the rules of 'scientific' method rather than studying the underlying episteme of the conventional approaches. In other words, the method is so dominant it is seldom examined and methodological issues are 'relegated' to the domain of the philosophy of science. The data collected

in these studies, and re-presented, are systematically judged on the criteria of reliability and validity of outcomes and the rigorous application of method. Ethical considerations frequently revolve around the rights of the individual participants and evade questions regarding the ethics of the mission of the work and its relationship to the benefit of society.

Alternatively, researchers, using interpretive and critical methodologies sometimes referred to collectively as 'new paradigm research' (Reason & Rowan 1981) and 'naturalistic inquiry' (Lincoln & Guba 1985), generally justify their approach and therefore undertake protracted methodological inquiries. These researchers trace the epistemological ground leading to their different methods of investigation, the means of evaluation of the information gathered during the process of inquiry, and the moral content and intent of the inquiry. It is necessary that the researcher finds the underlying philosophies consistent with his/her views and values regarding the nature of human beings and knowledge acquisition. Koch (1994), drawing on Guba and Lincoln (1989), demonstrates the uses of a documented 'decision trail' in an interpretive phenomenological study which looked at the concerns of elderly people admitted to general hospitals.

This type of scholarship ensures that judges of the works are able to follow researchers' intellectual pathways and, when used as a guide, may help them to make judgements regarding the integrity of researchers' theses. The recording of an intellectual pathway is an accomplishment considered by Lincoln and Guba (1985, p.281) to be the hallmark of a good qualitative study, and a means by which qualitative studies may be appreciated as 'trustworthy' by readers. A methodological inquiry may also serve to uncover and disturb the assumptions about knowledge, and knowledge acquisition, that have become ingrained in our culture; assumptions which, if left unexamined, could lead the researcher to choose an inappropriate method for the study.

The methodology in this thesis lays the path to a method of investigation which enables me to make an expressive connection between existence and meaning; demonstrate how meanings are revealed through everyday actions in the world; and create evocative portraits of what it means to live with chronic illness. These understandings will be extrapolated from the conversations between myself and the texts which were provided by the people with chronic illness who helped me with this work. These textual narratives portray people's existence by illustrating their comportment in the everyday world and highlight actions, thoughts and feelings to reveal personal meanings and shared meanings within the context of the world. It is my intention to write a methodology which leads me to a means whereby I can form

and express an understanding of chronic illness. (Understanding is used here in the old meaning, portrayed in ancient Greek philosophy, as practical wisdom *phronesis*.) This practical wisdom is signified by understandings which are situated, developed and expressed in moral ways and learnt through the experience of living with other people in the world (Thompson 1990, p.247).

As a preamble to my methodology this chapter will begin with a critique of the traditional scientific approach, which has dominated Western science since the Enlightenment. This critique confirms my belief that the traditional scientific view should be displaced as the prime means of discovering truth and thereby make room for other views of science. The critique helps me to know why I have chosen to deviate from the dominant path and to justify this decision.

It is quite common for nursing theorists/researchers and human scientists generally to prepare the ground for their work with a critique of traditional views of science. The influence of traditional science on the generation of nursing knowledge and the conduct of practice has been tremendous and this influence should be subject to careful critique. Benner and Wrubel (1989, p.29) in the second chapter of *The Primacy of Caring* demonstrate to the reader how much the assumptions underpinning conventional views of science have 'influenced how we think of ourselves and others in our everyday lives'. As one example she shows how our view of the mind/body dichotomy has served to disembodify the subject and has resulted in disproportionate knowledge development in nursing. The reification of abstract universal concepts has rendered embodied knowledge and skills (which are so crucial to nursing) unexplored and underdeveloped in the shadows of mainstream research. Both Heidegger (1962) and Gadamer (1994) gave detailed critiques of traditional philosophical science before writing their revolutionary philosophical works, both of which represent radically new ways of viewing the world, knowledge and knowledge acquisition.

Hekman (1990) warns that some critiques of the dominant traditional scientific approach perpetuate this conservative position. They do this by engaging in arguments which challenge certain, but not all, of the tenets of positivism. This is particularly so when they attack the hierarchical polemics (rational/irrational, etc) constructed by Western philosophers and so dear to Western philosophic traditions since Descartes. They do this by engaging in the either/or arguments which tend to result in the perpetuation of the dominant pole of the argument, for example in the infamous objective/subjective knowledge debate. Munhall (1993a, p.39) adds that the arguments for each pole are usually expressed in extreme terms. Whatever the outcome of debate, by substituting one dominant thesis for another an oppressive

generalisation is recreated and other views are relegated and silenced. The way forward, Hekman (1990, p.5) suggests, is to sidestep the either/or dichotomy that renders subjective knowledge inferior to objective and approach the problem from a new, both/and, perspective; a perspective that Walker (1994b, p.164) comments, ‘... dismantle[s] the dichotomous couplings that have been installed in the language of the 20th century’.

Referring to the philosophical works of Heidegger and Gadamer I will begin my methodology in a different position, replacing the traditional scientific view, and the dichotomies which are associated with it, by recourse to ‘fundamental ontology’ (an idea that should become clearer later in the chapter). Fundamental ontology is the examination of existence (‘Being’) which Heidegger (1962, p.2) contends is the *a priori* of knowing and therefore the most appropriate place to start when trying to understand the world.

Both Heidegger (1962) and Gadamer (1994) are philosophers who explicitly deny any pretence to developing a methodology for the human sciences. Their philosophical ideas inform the methodology of this thesis rather than form it. I do not pretend that this is either a Heideggerian or Gadamerian study but I am impressed and influenced by these philosophers’ approaches to interpretations and understandings of the ‘lived-world’. In order to introduce Heidegger’s ideas there will be a brief examination of the development of phenomenology as a modern philosophical movement and a similar introduction to locate Gadamer’s hermeneutics. Two brief sections named ‘phenomenology’ and ‘hermeneutics’ are a necessary introduction to the philosophers’ ideas.

After a review of the philosophical impressions gained from Heidegger and Gadamer, the works of nurses who have studied interpretive phenomenology and used it as a research approach will be included. Increasingly phenomenology is embraced by nurses. They see it as an approach that will enable them to uncover rich understandings of people’s experience regarding health and specifically nursing situations. In particular, the works of Benner (1994a) and her associated school of researchers, are illuminating—their work is an important guide and inspiration to the progress of this study. Nearer to home are the interpretive phenomenological works emanating from the Pearson school in Australia, particularly Taylor (1992a, 1992b, 1994c) and Walters (1992, 1994a, 1994b) and Thaniwattananon (1995).

Although this is a nursing study it is appropriate to begin the work with the philosophers and to appreciate their regard for the nature of understandings of human experience. Cohen and Omery (1994) and Ray (1994) emphasise the

importance of philosophical preparation for phenomenological studies and good examples of this are given by Benner (1984a, 1994a) and Benner and Wrubel (1989). Benner has worked closely with and impressed the eminent contemporary philosophers Dreyfus (1994) and Taylor (1991, p.6). It is pertinent in this study to relate the general philosophy of knowledge acquisition to the work of nursing scholars who have considered the importance of increased understanding of the 'lived-world' for nurses' work. Although I believe there is now ample discourse provided by nurses regarding interpretive phenomenological methodologies (Benner 1984a, 1994a; Benner & Wrubel 1989; Leonard 1989; Taylor 1992b, 1994c; Walters 1992, 1994b; Morse 1994; Morse & Johnson 1991; Koch 1994, 1995), I am also influenced and impressed by the work of some educationalists, particularly van Manen (1990) and the political scientist and feminist Hekman (1983, 1984, 1986, 1990).

It is perhaps ironic that just as nurses are gathering a distinctive 'body of knowledge' the postmodern philosophers reasonably challenge the notion of essentialism, propose the blurring of interdisciplinary boundaries and there appears the potential for a large 'melting pot' of knowledge and understanding from diverse perspectives. I applaud this heterogeneity in terms of collaborative opportunities for working towards a fair (and fairer) understanding of the human world. I do, however, believe nursing's discourses retain some distinctive features which relate to specific interests and the focus of the discipline and which distinguish us from other scholars who work with us towards a better understanding of the world. I admit that this belief may be politically prudent at a time when nursing is consolidating its position amongst the health care disciplines. I intend that a nursing focus will be obvious in this thesis.

Newman, Sime and Perry (1991, p.1) define the focus of the discipline of nursing as 'the study of caring in the human health experience'. In a complimentary fashion Fjelland and Gjengedal (1994, p.4) emphasise the purpose of nursing science as a practical concern, '... the aim of a science of nursing is to contribute to better practical nursing'; an aim which they propose is inextricably linked with a moral process. The statements of the focus of the discipline and the purpose of nursing science act as homing beacons which allow the nurse researcher to see and explore the entire field and indeed to be influenced by, and work with, other disciplines without losing the feel of a general commission, albeit broad, for nursing.

A critique of traditional science

Criticism is not merely a negative moment in the evolution of our understanding but is a process through which we can identify, analyse and theorize those concerns which most constrain and disable our lives as nurses (Walker 1994a, p.47).

Following Walker it is my intention to problematise rather than negate traditional science, hopefully demonstrating the effects this pervading view has had, and still does, on nursing inquiry. Walker (1994a) proposes that the influence of the dominant and powerful discourse of science reaches beyond research and constitutes nurses' concepts of themselves as nurses and social beings. In view of the modern, almost messianic, imperative for nurses to research, to predict, to prove, to produce, to know, to control, to contribute and to compete, in order to establish nursing as a compatible discipline among contemporaries in academe and the health care industry, I am persuaded Walker has a cogent case.

There are a variety of versions of the definition of science and I agree with Holmes (1991, p.438) who wishes to encourage a broader understanding of science. He suggests that 'science' is a term which should include both positivistic and other perspectives of understanding, as legitimate means to knowing in the human world. However I do acknowledge that in common parlance the term 'science' is still usually understood to refer to the blatantly positivistic representation of science as, for example, presented in the *Macquarie Dictionary*:

The systematic study of man [sic] and his environment based on the deductions and inferences which can be made, and the general laws which can be formulated, from reproducible observations and measurements of events and parameters within the universe (1991).

For convenience, 'traditional science' will be the term used to refer to the different thoughts (in both more and less adulterated forms) stemming from the historical period referred to as the Enlightenment. These approaches share some or all of the following assumptions: the supremacy of the subject (human) who is capable of detached observation of the world (of objects) and who can come to know and control it through methodical, rigorous, and rational inquiry. Truth is seen to be located in the human subject, universal, absolute, atemporal and abstract.

Since the time of René Descartes (1596–1650), and the period known as the Enlightenment, traditional scientific views have dominated the Western world. This period marks the time when knowledge was separated from religion, and it was deemed possible for 'man'¹ to examine human dimensions of life and the natural

¹I refer to 'man' in this section because traditional science is a thoroughly patriarchal discourse (Hekman 1990; Walker 1994b).

world without directly deferring to religious authority. It was proposed that knowledge could be discovered through a rigorous method of rational detached observation (Stumpf 1994).

Descartes, the most famous and influential of the Renaissance philosophers, described radical doubt. He pronounced that he was uncertain of everything because his senses could not be trusted. Inspirationally he found what he purported to be the only certain truth: he thought ('I think, hence I am') (Descartes 1962, p.35). In consequence he identified his 'self' with his conscious; his mind was not a doubtful phenomenon as was his body and therefore this *a priori* truth formed the foundation or 'starting point' for the development of all knowledge (Palmer 1994).

Descartes was a sceptic so he assumed nothing to be true before it could be proved. Truth was obtained through either inductive (observation of the natural world and progressive abstraction and generalisation of facts) or deductive (hypothetical abstract theories formulated in isolation and tested in practice) processes. As subjective emotions were not considered a suitable means for discovering truth (for these were deemed to be irrational ideas rather than the exalted rational thought) it was proposed that the human mind should be schooled to discover knowledge by following rules of scientific method and thereby avoid contamination from the human imagination. Stumpf quotes the four precepts for inquiry from Descartes' *Discourse on Method* (1962):

The *first* was never to accept anything for true which I did not clearly know to be such; ... to comprise nothing more in my judgement than what was presented to my mind so clearly and distinctly as to exclude all ground of doubt. The *second*, to divide each of the difficulties under examination into as many parts as possible, and as might be necessary for its adequate solution. The *third*, to conduct my thoughts in such order that by commencing with objects the simplest and easiest to know, I might ascend by little and little, and as it were, step by step, to the knowledge of the more complex ... And the last, in every case to make enumerations so complete, and reviews so general, that I might be assured that nothing was omitted (1994, p.241).

In the interests of 'truth' scientific 'man' was exhorted to avoid the contamination of studies by the consideration of dynamic social, cultural or historical variables. Rather 'he' was to view truth as independent of its changeable and, therefore unreliable, context. For truth to be monolithic, generalisable, and enduring, it must be independent of the era in which it was construed. By necessity, theories became abstract, above reality and increasingly distanced from practice or concerns of everyday life.

The human subject became the centre of knowledge construction. 'Man' discovered knowledge by considering the natural world, and all things in it, as objects. These objects, it was proposed, were reducible to parts and could, in turn, be analytically examined in a rational and detached way. The natural world was considered to be orderly and once patterns and regularities were discovered these were deemed to be constant (until disproved).

The aims of scientists were to explain, predict and control the world, and in this pursuit they have been fortified by meteoric technological advances. The hopes and aspirations of the Enlightenment 'man' were to conquer the harsh natural world and emancipate 'man'. However concentration on method rather than methodology has resulted in achievements which are mechanistic and which seldom refer to moral intent, aesthetics, processes or alternative perspectives of knowledge acquisition. Despite science's achievements and the increasing methodical mechanisation of the Western world we are still plagued with war, atrocities, abuses of the eco-system and the individual is becoming increasingly self centred and greedy (Taylor 1991). Jones describes the modern predicament succinctly:

We became so clever at tinkering with everything we decided that in fact we don't need God and can control our own machinery. The results are ugly: fragmented, lonely, uncertain people being manipulated like cogs in a machine; the natural world ravaged by selfish exploitation; public life dominated by a brash patriarchy (1990, p.ix).

The foundation point of traditional science is the 'knowing subject' and from this 'truth' springs all the other assumptions and hegemonious dichotomies (eg subject/object, mind/body, theory/practice, rational/irrational, abstract/concrete) so illustrative of traditional science. The acceptance of these assumptions and adherence to scientific method has resulted in the almost unhalted 'progress' of the Western world and yet at the same time has detracted from and subverted other ways of knowing which, although different, might have been just as, or in other ways more, illuminatory. Kuhn (1970, pp.23–24) notes that research paradigms become powerful because they are seen to be more successful than other views and in this vein Walker wryly remarks that '... science is perhaps the exemplar *par excellence*' of success and status (1994a, p.49). Benner and Wrubel (1989) and Walker (1994a, 1994b) are convinced that traditional science's limited (note they do not say misconceived) but dominant view of the world has constrained nursing's knowledge development, maintaining its 'all round' inferior status, compared to other health care professionals' and academic colleagues' knowledge. Heidegger (1962) takes great pains to demonstrate that any view of the world that bases its perspective on the observation and identification of objects will inevitably miss many aspects of the

world which cannot be defined as objects—surely a significant problem which nurses cannot afford to miss.

As a nurse attempting to understand the world in which I practise nursing I find the dominant poles of traditional scientific arguments ‘unworldly’. I do not have an interest in controlling, explaining or even predicting events in the ‘out-there’ of the world. Rather I am a part of what is happening and want to make sense of matters in order to be more ‘in tune’ with my fellow human beings. I do not wish to view the people I interact with each day as objects of study. Even though this involved world view may seem impossibly complex and irrational it is more realistic than the detachment and reduction imposed by traditional science which is an anathema to my practice.

It is possible to compare the notion of the distanced observer in traditional science to the voyeur. Romanyshyn (1992, pp.160–163) proposes that the development of the linear perspective in art, with its attendant rules of method, demonstrates the harm this predominant detached observer perspective has had on Western development. He describes the artist as one viewing (for artist, think researcher) the world through the canvas, (likening the canvas to a window on the world—window is a metaphor often used by researchers), which functionally distances the artist and serves as a grid to measure proportions for reproduction. He suggests that the artist has come to rely on the sense of vision predominantly and has become increasingly disembodied (no longer using the senses of touch, taste, or sound which require involvement) and distanced from the world ‘he’ represents. By viewing the world through a window then:

... as an object of vision the world is on its way to becoming a matter of light, a “light matter” both in the sense of becoming a matter of information, a bit of data, and in the sense that as a space to be explored, explained and exploited it becomes a place which we no longer take so seriously as home, as our place of dwelling (Romanyshyn 1992, p.162).

The primary position given to abstract, distanced, rational and disembodied knowing has disadvantaged nursing development, because it has relegated some of our most powerful ways of knowing and doing to an ‘unscientific’ (read: inferior, unimportant and unworthy) place. For example, Dunlop (1994, p.32) notes a tendency to ‘dematerialise’ caring, by analysing and characterising it as an abstract psycho/social concept rather than the central way of our nursing which is inseparable from the physical ‘being with’ people. One outcome of these analyses is a poor portrayal of caring, the effect of which is to distance the nurse from the patient, in terms of physical care, by relegating ‘basic care’ into the hands of people who are not

educated as nurses. This is a point Pearson (1983, 1992) has been making in practice, academic and political circles, for years.

Benner and Wrubel (1989, pp.42–50) discuss embodied intelligence, shared background meanings and situational meaning experienced by nurses as other dimensions of coming to understand. These are ways of knowing which are integral to nursing practice but which have been obscured by Cartesian dualisms; dualisms in which ‘the other’ (anything which is the opposite to the traditional scientific binary position, in this case detached, atemporal, abstract, rational, etc) is demeaned.

Traditional science has been challenged and various approaches have emerged, especially in the human sciences, to offer a different perspective (humanistic, feminist, critical theory, etc). Indeed considerable dissent has emerged from within the natural sciences, especially since the advent of the theory of relativity and quantum physics (Capra 1983; Schumacher & Gortner 1992). Madison (1990, p.157) cites Morowitz’s (1981, p.39) explanation of the turn in traditional science to once again include the human mind:

First, the human mind, including consciousness and reflective thought, can be explained by activities of the central nervous system, which, in turn, can be reduced to the biological structure and function of that physiological system. Second, biological phenomena at all levels can be totally understood in terms of atomic physics, that is, through the action and interaction of the component atoms of carbon, nitrogen, oxygen, and so forth. Third and last, atomic physics, which is now understood most fully by means of quantum mechanics, must be formulated with the mind as a primitive component of the system.

Freeman Dyson (1995), a professor of physics at the School of Natural Sciences, Princeton University, recently argued for scientists to be more rebellious and to consider the limitations of a reductionist approach to problems. Referring to Kurt Godel’s mathematics he writes: ‘His work showed that except in trivial cases, you can decide the truth of a statement only by studying its meaning and its context in the larger world of mathematical ideas’ (p.27). Dyson considers science to be close to art and explains that a work of art is not a reduction but a construction. He is more excited by the prospect of ‘mathematics as an endlessly growing realm of ideas’ (p.28) rather than as some all encompassing abstract theory. Furthermore he writes that science is not defined by a single philosophy:

Science flourishes best when it uses freely all the tools at hand, unconstrained by preconceived notions of what science ought to be. Every time we introduce a new tool, it always leads to new and unexpected discoveries, because nature’s imagination is richer than ours (Dyson 1995, p.28).

Indeed, one could suggest that scientists (and I include a proportion of human scientists) who persist in clinging to some tenets of traditional science have failed to notice that the natural sciences have been forced to rethink the canons of objectivity and truth.

Schumacher and Gortner (1992) describe the accommodation made for these new ideas in the contemporary or post-positivistic philosophy of science and they suggest that arguments against traditional science fail to recognise the changes that have occurred. They accuse some nursing theorists of using a critique of traditional science as ‘... a foil against which to describe the philosophical position of the author(s)’ (Schumacher & Gortner 1992, p.1) and interestingly, for he usually commends their arguments, Kuhn (1991, p.18) also notes this ploy amongst human scientists.

Despite their protestations that science has become more accommodating towards other views, I would contend that this is no more than rhetoric. Throughout Schumacher and Gortner’s (1992) thesis there is an underlying implication that unless nurses conform to the basic tenets of traditional science they run the ‘risk’ of losing professional or disciplinary status. While these views persist it is necessary to defend one’s position. Walker (1994a, p.49) notes this propensity to offer threats to nursing’s disciplinary status by quoting Moccia (1988, p.7): ‘If [nurse scientists] abandon their attempts to predict and control, [they] threaten nursing’s status as a legitimate science and autonomous profession’ and, as a last example, Dreher (1994, p.44) in dialogue with colleagues insists that any work that is not subject to refutation ‘*is just not science*’ [my emphasis].

Some of the human scientists (by no means all) make the case for a science, apart from natural science, which during investigation can accommodate the unstable, subjective and culturally dependent nature of truth in the human world. This is a science which accepts other methods of investigation besides the traditional. There are a number of nurse theorists who take this view, notably Paterson and Zderad (1988), Watson (1988) and Parse (1987, 1992).

By far the most radical of challenges to traditional science have come from the postmodern critiques developing from the time of Nietzsche and nurtured by Heidegger, Gadamer, Derrida and Foucault. These are critiques which re-view science and note the power/knowledge nexus and vested interests in the status quo; critiques which will not be drawn into the ‘this is better than that’ arguments which almost always emerge when debating alternatives to traditional science, for example qualitative versus quantitative methods. Rather they branch out and revel in

serendipitous exploration which often means the recovery of shadowy and silenced wisdom, found secreted in the slipstreams away from the mighty manufacture of mainstream knowledge.

Indeed, Heidegger (1962) and Gadamer (1994) propose a first science, one of interpretation. They believe that one of the distinguishing features of humans is their ability to be self-interpreting. In other words they make sense of their everyday surroundings, not with the use of theories, but by understanding the meanings in their situations. This understanding is a natural way of getting by which is to exist alongside and be involved with people and things. Understanding is a basic way of being in the world; it is generated through dialogue. It is neither subjective nor objective but simply the way we are gathering understanding from every possible source. It is a basic way of being that even traditional scientists engage in before they embark upon their method bound investigation of objects, and indeed as do those social scientists who inquire into the purely subjective intentions of human subjects.

One example of the failure of new epistemes (in the human sciences and nursing) to radically challenge traditional science is the tendency for proponents to maintain 'the primacy of the knowing transcendental subject', that is, Descartes' idea of the 'self-conscious guarantor of all knowledge' (Hekman 1990, p.62). While detached, objective, rational thought is challenged by, for example humanists, in reality this is just another form of the 'all knowing subject'. For them, by the use of some qualitative research methods, concentrate on the subjective perspective thereby creating another dominant idea which serves to silence other perspectives. Hekman makes the point thus:

The essence of the humanist argument was to assert the subjectivity of the social sciences as opposed to the objectivity of the natural sciences. In doing so, however, they were in effect reifying the enlightenment epistemology they claimed to oppose. While acknowledging the subject/object, subjectivity/objectivity split central to Enlightenment thought, they attempted only to revalorize the "disprivileged" side of these dichotomies. Thus instead of escaping the epistemology that defined the social sciences as inferior they were effectively embracing it (1990, p.64).

Furthermore, because these traditions are basically foundationalist (ie the belief there is a truth from which knowledge can be generated) they substitute the 'grand narrative' of science with a grand narrative of their own. Thus they perpetuate the tyranny of powerful knowledge which suppresses other forms of knowledge, albeit with the worthy desire to emancipate and improve the world.

It was not until the time of the radical philosophies of Nietzsche, Heidegger and Gadamer that the privileged status of the knowing subject was objected to. Instead,

these preferred to find truth/understanding in human experience, that is, as plural meanings and understandings which are constituted in the socially, historically and culturally constructed world. It is a world that changes constantly and where the experience of time and space and the acquisition of language impinge upon human viewpoints. This view puts truth, as it is conventionally perceived, in a tenuous position. Indeed, truth or understanding as a product of interpretation is always susceptible to new and better interpretations.

Lather (1991, p.2) writes of the convincing critique of traditional science that has been massed in the past two decades. The displacement of the assumptions of traditional science makes space for some interesting and exciting developments in the human sciences. However this theoretical rearrangement is not matched in practical spheres. While Lather (1991, p.2) is referring to educational research I would include nursing when she writes, '... positivism retains its hegemony over practice'. There is ample evidence of the effects of this domination in nursing. Besides the effects upon knowledge acquisition and appreciation mentioned above, it is my experience that nurses work closely with (read: are dominated by) the medical profession, which is still predominantly influenced by 'scientific' research, and health administrators who are in organisations which are bureaucratic and preoccupied with the rationality of structural-functionalism. Medics control research ethics committees and funding bodies, which have relatively few nursing representatives and continue to judge proposals for qualitative projects by applying standard 'scientific' criteria. The administrators control budgetary matters and impose standards in the organisations.

Kuhn (1991, p.22) is immensely impressed by human scientists who re-view the philosophical foundation of scientific inquiry. He agrees that essentially all human contact with the world is interpretive. However he suggests that natural scientists differ from human scientists because they conduct their inquiries in different ways. He proposes that the scientific method is suitable for addressing 'puzzles' found in the natural world (how to make things larger and more efficient) but are not suitable as a means of human and social inquiry. Like the nurse theorist, Jean Watson (1985, 1988), I believe that nurses may wish to use the methods of traditional science to solve some 'puzzles' they commonly encounter in practice. However when I consider my concern regarding *chronic illness* I need a far larger horizon than traditional scientific method would give. I am looking for an existential account of the reality that both I and the people helping with the study experience. Traditional scientific method has little to offer in terms of a means of inquiry or evaluation of the inquiry in this instance.

While this is not a 'postmodern' thesis, some of the debates regarding the crisis in modernity are referred to because most postmodernists have been heavily influenced, indeed led, by both Heidegger's (1962) and Gadamer's (1994) critiques of the modern enterprise (which includes traditional science). Both these philosophers are regarded by some (Hekman 1986, 1990; Smith 1991; Parker 1991) as the philosophers who laid the foundations for much of the contemporary postmodernist philosophical thought. They both, as will be seen in this chapter, decentred the subject, displaced the authoritarian polarities which flourish in traditional science, (and indeed all the modernist approaches) and appreciated the social construction of meaning, knowledge or understanding (Hekman 1990). Meanings they proposed were accessible through the description of human actions (or comportment in the world) and subsequent textual interpretation. Heidegger began his work by rejecting the supremacy of the traditional scientific view. His radical approach was quite unlike other philosophical perspectives in the modern tradition that have critiqued traditional science. Smith explains this well:

The modern world comes complete with its own distinctive view of reality, history, politics and morals. Technology, liberation, individualism, progress, subjectivism, democracy, etc, represent an ensemble of ideas that are indicative of the modern understanding. Those ideas are linked; to begin to question any of the parts is to call into question the whole. Heidegger undertakes that questioning in a powerful way. What he has said—and hence unleashed—can never again be unsaid (1991, p.385).

Phenomenology

Kant (1794–1804) was the philosopher who, according to Hinchman and Hinchman (1984, p.186) '... helped to set the stage for phenomenology'. He distinguished between *noumenal* reality, 'things in themselves' which are nonsensual and which we can never know, and *phenomenal* reality, the 'appearance of things' as perceived, conceived, imagined and interpreted (Stumpf 1994, p.309; Palmer 1994, p.196). It is the 'phenomenal world', the world of appearances, which phenomenologists study, for the noumenal world is inaccessible. This is because the moment anything is observed by a human being it becomes a phenomenon. Kant did not say that the mind constitutes objects, rather that the '... mind brings something to the objects it experiences' (Stumpf 1994, p.309). The proposal that things 'as they appeared' or phenomena were the only means by which humans could experience any objects opened up the opportunity to know about and examine, in a scientific way, phenomena of everyday life besides just the objects considered suitable for natural scientific study.

Spiegelberg (1982, p.1) describes phenomenology as a 'movement' rather than a distinct school or class. The metaphor 'movement' conjures up the dynamic nature of phenomenology well. Using another metaphor, Spiegelberg (1982, p.2) likens the different views within phenomenology to parallel currents in a river which are going in the same direction: 'related but by no means homogenous'. While he does not go so far as to suggest that there are as 'many phenomenologies as there are phenomenologists' he recognises quite diverse views within the movement. Philosophers have contributed to phenomenology and its diversity by adding and then changing their particular nuances, throughout long careers in which they all seemed to write voluminously. Spiegelberg (1982, p.4) suspects all phenomenologists do have some common starting ground but their particular views lead proponents to different destinations. He particularly contrasts the transcendental phenomenology of Husserl (detached description) and, what he terms, the existential phenomenology of Heidegger and Sartre (involved interpretation), noting Husserl's phenomenology to be 'its [phenomenology's] most rigorous form' (Spiegelberg 1960, p.63). However I presume when he refers to 'rigour' he means the traditional scientific criteria of rigour, as Husserl's work is more method orientated than that of the later interpretive phenomenologists (Cohen 1987).

Madjar (1991, p.47) writes that '... the distinguishing mark of phenomenology is its primary concern with the nature and meaning of human experience as it is lived.' While this definition is useful, because it gives a common starting point for phenomenology, it does not distinguish phenomenology from most of the other methodologies situated within the interpretive paradigm. This is a problem for some researchers, which is noted by Ray:

Although this misuse may be true, in part, because phenomenology does disclose the meaning of human experience and qualitative research addresses both human experience and meaning, not all qualitative research or approaches are phenomenological (1994, p.123).

Cohen (1987, p.31) writes that the starting point for all phenomenologists is to refer to the 'things themselves' in reality rather than beginning with theories. This is certainly an area where Husserl and Heidegger agreed.

I believe that, rather than looking for commonalities, it is some of the contrasts between Husserl's and Heidegger's work which help to make the picture of phenomenology clearer. Ray (1994, pp.123, 126) emphasises the need for nurse researchers to consider the philosophy underpinning phenomenology in order to be clear on the method to be chosen to address questions. She writes: 'In determining excellent phenomenology, the researcher needs to communicate some knowledge of

the phenomenological traditions as advanced by the key philosophers or other scholars who have interrelated key phenomenologic ideas' (Ray 1994, p.123). Indeed, Cohen and Omery (1994, p.151) cite research reports where an appreciation of the differences in phenomenology is decidedly lacking and results in works which appear to be incongruent with the claimed phenomenological approach.

Hermeneutics

Hermeneutics is the old and established discipline dealing originally with the interpretation of texts. The etymology of hermeneutics is Greek—*hermeneuein*, 'to interpret', is derived from the Greek God Hermes who was a messenger (Thompson 1990, p.230). While phenomenology is a descriptive enterprise which aims to allow the phenomena to show up as near to natural as possible, hermeneutics is about the interpretation of things and includes the search for the meaning assigned to matters. Gadamer assigns this generic meaning to hermeneutics: '... a rediscovery of something that was not absolutely unknown, but whose meaning had become alien and inaccessible' (1994, p.174).

Orminston and Schrift (1990, pp.11–12) use the work of Ast written in 1808 to give an explanation of the way in which hermeneutics was employed in order for scholars to understand the spirit or *geist* of history as portrayed in texts. The framework for hermeneutics was described by Ast as, '(1) historical understanding of the content ... (2) grammatical understanding of their language and style; and (3) spiritual understanding of the total *geist* of the individual and their age' (cited in Orminston & Schrift 1990, p.12). Ast described the basic principle of the hermeneutical circle: that is, the idea that the whole can be understood through the study of the particular and the particular can be understood by study of the whole.

While early hermeneutics is associated with the interpretation of Biblical and ancient texts, later traditions have a practical turn relating to the interpretation of immediate cultures. Interpretation now benefits such diverse endeavours as literary criticism, cultural anthropology, jurisprudence, historiography, feminist theory, and nursing (Benner 1984a, 1994a; Benner & Wrubel 1989; Reeder 1988; Thompson 1990). Interpretation has come, in some quarters, to be broadly defined and understood as the first point of all human inquiry (Heidegger 1962; Taylor 1982, 1989; Dreyfus 1991); others go further and contend that all phenomena, whether they are for human or natural scientific investigation, are primarily subject to interpretation (Gadamer 1994; Hekman 1986; Rorty 1991). This is an interesting debate, further discussion of which is inhibited by the limitations of this thesis.

Right up to the time of Dilthey² the goal of interpretation was to represent the original author's meaning. However Gadamer (1994) complicates matters by arguing that interpretation of any text is influenced by facets of the interpreter's situation and therefore perspective. Interpretation results from, what he terms, the 'fusion' of the author's and the interpreter's horizons (Gadamer 1994, p.397, p.576).

The science of hermeneutics is the hub of contemporary philosophical debate. Besides issues such as the interpretive enterprise in natural science there is the notion of adequate and truthful interpretations. When all interpretations are viewed as dependent upon dynamic circumstances it is difficult to see how interpretation can ever be deemed adequate or truthful in any enduring way. Indeed, as one proceeds with the hermeneutic circle of interpretation, it is doubtful whether an interpretation can ever be said to be complete and therefore remains tentative and open to re-vision. These are issues which Gadamer (1994) considers in some detail and it is precisely the point that some researchers (Parse 1992) celebrate and others (Dreher 1994, p.44) find incompatible with science.

Husserl (1859–1938)

Edmund Husserl is generally acknowledged as the inaugurator of the phenomenological movement (Spiegelberg 1982, p.73; Stumpf 1994, p.490; Thompson 1990, p.232). He began his academic career as a mathematician; a significant fact when understanding the path he took regarding the phenomenological reduction and the consuming interest he had for the 'rigour of science'. As a pupil of Brentano³, Husserl turned from mathematics to philosophy.

Jennings (1986, p.1232) writes that Husserl had a mission to reinstate the discipline of philosophy to its former importance as leader of the disciplines. Apparently he believed that the emergence of a variety of disciplines, each with its own 'world-view' and pathway to the truth, had undermined philosophy, which was no longer deferred to as the source for guidance in the way of truth, particularly in the natural sciences. He was impatient with the philosophical idea, which was rising in influence, that proffered the notion of relativity (ie there is no universal truth, everything depending on a particular time, context and personal perspective). Husserl believed that the relativist's renouncement of the quest for ultimate truth, or for pure knowledge that could endure extraneous influences, had robbed philosophy of its most challenging

²Dilthey (1833–1912) was a German historicist.

³Brentano (1838–1917) was an influential philosopher/psychologist, whose stated purpose was to make a scientific reformation of philosophy.

goal. His philosophical endeavour was an epistemological one (Cohen & Omery 1994, p.137).

While Husserl (1981) admired traditional scientific method and indeed tried to emulate its rigour in his method, he objected to the omission of phenomena which could not be directly observed or measured (the metaphysical). Traditional scientists he noted did not appreciate or include the richest, essential and profoundly interesting things in the world, such as remembering, imagining, depicting or expecting (Zaner 1970, p.38). Husserl writes that the essences of phenomena are revealed through description of the human experiencing subject or as Thompson (1990, p.233) writes ‘... an analysis of the subject and object-as-the-object-appears-through-consciousness ...’. Husserl concentrated on the phenomenal world and ignored the noumenal world, because it was only the ‘data of consciousness’ that was available and which constituted the world for human investigation (Hinchman & Hinchman 1984, p.187). Faithful representation of phenomena as perceived through consciousness, he believed, was possible.

Husserl suggests that the world is not actually constituted by the subject’s conscious but presents itself to the conscious and in return is given meaning by the conscious (Hunnex 1961, p.43). Husserl, cited in Stumpf (1994, p.498), contends that we should not make statements about anything we do not see for ourselves. Husserl proposes that the essences of phenomena are only accessible and real when the human consciousness is directed at them and they are perceived by it. An essence which is to be discovered does not exist awaiting to be attended to, but is imminent and is understood by the intention of the conscious directed towards the ‘Life-World’ or *Lebenswelt* (p.498). Intentionality is an important idea, and Cohen explains it this way: ‘Everything we consider to be psychical refers to an object. For example, we do not hear without hearing something; we do not believe without believing something’ (1987, p.32). It therefore stands to reason that the reality of the human world cannot be presumed before it has been regarded and detailed by the conscious.

Husserl expected the truth he exposed to be universally applicable and not specific to an individual, a particular time or place. In order to grasp essences in a manner that could render them universally useful (over cultures and time) Husserl believed it was essential to suspend the ‘natural attitude’. By the ‘natural attitude’ he meant all the taken-for-granted meanings we accept daily without deliberation. Indeed, these may be notions that can lead us up wrong paths, such as the idea of the flat world. What Husserl described was ‘transcendental phenomenology’, so termed because the phenomenologist temporarily suspends all claims about reality other than that of consciousness directed at the particular phenomena (Stumpf 1994). These automatic,

taken-for-granted, commonsense views of the world which we all have mean that our minds are full of expectations and presuppositions that act as a mist over phenomena and hide their essences. The natural attitude is culturally constituted and therefore affects the perception of phenomena; a distorting force Husserl wished to avoid in his search for the essential nature of the thing under study. Examples of some of these presuppositions regarding phenomena might be, for instance: 'chronic illness is a negative experience', or that 'mad people are sick'. In order to achieve a neutral view (shake off these preconceptions) Husserl decided that the researcher or philosopher should suspend the natural attitude and address and uncover the phenomena under scrutiny with a clear mind; that is, a mind uncluttered with presuppositions that may obstruct the view of the essential essence of the thing as experienced (Stumpf 1994).

This type of imposition of limits on the mind through the suspension of the natural attitude is called either the 'phenomenological reduction' or 'bracketing'. Both are mathematical terms; means by which a problem is simplified. In mathematics brackets are dealt with and reduced before the rest of the problem can be dealt with. In phenomenology the reduction is used to simplify or 'purify' the problem or the phenomenon (imagine the phenomena in brackets) making it clearer to see it in general or essential ways.

Merleau-Ponty (1956, p.64) writes that Egen Fink, Husserl's assistant, had a grasp of the phenomenological reduction. Fink speaks of 'an astonishment before the world' and van Manen, another experienced researcher in this field, talks of the rekindling or recapturing of the sense of mystery in the world (1990, p.50). In order to see the world in essence we need to lose some of our familiarity with it. Merleau-Ponty (1956, p.64) also reminds us that the reduction is not a renunciation of commonsense and the taken-for-granted, but a retrieval of those things that have gone unnoticed for so long. Nothing can ruin a good story for a person so much as to have a listener who keeps saying 'I know, I know'. Husserl knew that the reduction was an ideal that would always be difficult, if not impossible, to achieve. As Merleau-Ponty writes:

The greatest lesson of the reduction is the impossibility of a complete reduction. That is why Husserl questioned himself again and again on the possibility of the reduction (1956, p.64).

It is possibly worth remembering that the term 'reduction' means lessening, not total loss, for as Oiler Boyd (1989, p.17) points out, '... to eliminate perspectives would be to lose contact with the world, an idea that is not conceivable except perhaps through death.' Husserl could not have expected researchers to have approached informants with blank minds, but rather to focus their full attention on the informants for a period of time.

Examples of nurses whose work is informed by Husserlian phenomenology are Davis (1973), Oiler (1982, 1986), Omery (1983) and Knaack (1984). As Koch (1995) demonstrates it is quite difficult to classify some of the phenomenological research projects for they can appear to be a mixture; that is, they have some of the philosophical underpinnings of interpretive phenomenology and use Husserlian methods.

To summarise the central tenets of Husserl's work: *Firstly* he sought to know the essential nature of the things 'as themselves'. He approached this through the recounted experience of subjects who gave form to things by consciously directing attention towards them. *Secondly* he sought an absolute and universal truth and expected the essence of a phenomenon to be exhibited or uncovered through the rigorous application of the phenomenological reduction. *Lastly* he wanted to see each phenomenon uncluttered in a simple and true form. It should however be noted that in Husserl's work, the problem of the disembodied detached viewer as described by Romanyshyn (1992) is not overcome, as it is in Heidegger's work and described later in the chapter.

Husserl's work has been appreciated by human scientists. Three of these were psychologists who devised phenomenological methods from Husserl's work. They are van Kaam (1959), Giorgi (1985) and Colaizzi (1978). Their methods are specifically related to Husserl's work and, as Walters (1994b, p.135) comments, they are not compatible with Heideggerian interpretive phenomenology.

Hinchman and Hinchman (1984, p.188) identify two major implications of Husserl's philosophy. Firstly his views diverted attention from a 'purely subjective view'. By suspending the natural attitude (using phenomenological reduction) what actually appeared was described with less 'distortion'. Secondly Husserl 'held the promise of elevating the phenomena of everyday life (what he later called *Lebenswelt*) to the same dignity, as matters for rigorous study ...' (Hinchman & Hinchman 1984, p.188) in the natural sciences. This last point is an important one for nurses and is at least a partial explanation of the attraction which Husserl's work has for many nurses. For it is an understanding of people's everyday health experiences which provides much valuable information for nurses.

Heidegger (1889–1976)

Heidegger was a German philosopher who was, for a time, Husserl's student and colleague. Although Hinchman and Hinchman (1984, p.189) describe Heidegger's early work *Being and Time* (1962) as an extension of Husserl's ideas, it was

fundamentally different and Husserl was hurt by Heidegger's turn from transcendental phenomenology (Spiegelberg 1960, p.66). Spiegelberg (1960, p.66) writes:

... expressions, such as lectures, letters, and especially marginal comments to his readings in Heidegger, leave no doubt about the fact that Husserl saw especially in the latter's analytics of existence a corruption of the phenomenological enterprise.

Despite this basic disagreement Heidegger acknowledged Husserl's early influence and dedicated the first four editions of *Being and Time* to him. In the later years they lost social contact and Heidegger explained the end of the relationship in an interview with Augstein and Folff. He claimed, with regret, that it was Husserl who cut off ties between the two men, not himself. The interview was printed in *Der Spiegel* after his death and reprinted in 1993 by Wolin (1993, pp.98–100). The delay in the first publication of the interview was at Heidegger's insistence.

Heidegger succeeded to Husserl's post as Rector at Freiburg University in 1933. It was a brief appointment, which only lasted nine months during the troubled times leading up to the Second World War in Germany. Heidegger resigned because of pressure from the Nazi Party to make academically unsuitable appointments (Wolin 1993, p.100). Heidegger's association with Hitler's National Socialism is a black, albeit brief spot in his career which I find impossible to explain. He failed to apologise for the association and maintained a supercilious attitude to the affair throughout his life (Heidegger 1993, p.163).

Heidegger undertook an ontological study of the world because, he reasoned, ontological questions are prior to epistemological ones. 'Epistemology', put simply, means 'to ask questions concerning how something can be known and what can be known', whereas 'ontology' concerns questions about the existence of things. Gelven (1989, p.6) states that prior to Heidegger ontologists habitually asked the question '... what things exist?' However Heidegger (1962, p.2) pointed out that they missed the vital and first (*a priori*) question, which is: *What is existence?* He does not view existence as an entity or thing but as a process and described it as 'Being' or, in essence, as the infinitive (verb as noun) 'to be'. The fundamental ontology (which this "'Being' investigation' represented) had, Heidegger suggested, been disregarded since the time of Plato and Socrates. He believed that, of all the philosophers in the Western tradition, Plato was the one who addressed the question of 'Being'.

A great deal of Heidegger's scholarly work was devoted to critique, a re-examination of the work of the philosophers. Heidegger wrote that in order to see in new ways, old constructions need to be 'delimited' (Heidegger 1962, p.29); that is, they need to

lose the constraints imposed on the understanding of all types of phenomena by the modern vernacular in order to uncover original (new and primordial) ideas. In this vein Heidegger studied the etymology of words, so that he could express new views vividly. He was also prone to making up words in order to express ontological meanings (eg everydayness, fallenness).

He objected to the notion of the Cartesian subject who was distanced from the world and a viewer of objects. He saw the world as an indivisible part of being a person. People are born into a world which is already formed and meaningful through history and cultures. As people develop they are impressed and moulded by this background of given history and context. In time the person also contributes to culture and history. In this way, as Koch (1995, p.831) explains, people are both constituted by and constituters of the world.

In the first section of *Being and Time* Heidegger considers the reasons why the question of 'Being' have been ignored. *Firstly* he proposes that 'Being' was considered so universal that to investigate the existence of *anything* is to consider its being. It was assumed therefore that there was no need, or way, to categorise it. Heidegger, disagreeing with the assumption, writes:

So if it is said that 'Being' is the most universal concept, this cannot mean that it is the one which is clearest or that it needs no further discussion. It is rather the darkest of all (1962, p.23).

Secondly he proposes that philosophers have argued, quite rightly, that as 'Being' refers universally to things, it is not an entity (which can be assigned characteristics) and therefore cannot be defined in traditional 'logical species/genus' terms. Heidegger responds to this argument by saying that 'Being' is far too important to be left at this impasse. As he puts it, 'The indefinability of "Being" does not eliminate the question of its meaning; it demands that we look that question in the face' (Heidegger 1962, p.23). Thus he notes that while it is not possible to ask, *what is a 'to be'?* because 'to be' is not a thing, it is possible to ask the question of existence, *what does it mean to be?* and thereby discover 'Being'. *Thirdly* Heidegger (1962, p.24) writes that it has been presumed that 'Being' is 'self evident' and therefore requires no further examination. Heidegger, however, suspicious of something which is supposedly 'self evident' and which is not articulated in any meaningful way, asserts that '... the very fact that we already live in an understanding of 'Being' and that the meaning of 'Being' is still veiled in darkness proves that it is necessary in principle to raise this question again' (Heidegger 1962, p.23).

In his exposure of these 'prejudices' Heidegger (1962, p.24) proposed that it is not only 'Being' that lacks an *answer*, but that the question itself is obscure and without

direction. There were no traditional methods that would help the inquirer to approach the question of 'Being'. He proposed that in order to make this approach a new structure was required. Heidegger turned the idea of 'Being' from a highly abstract and remote notion into a matter of concern which was accessible through the examination of human ways of *Being-in-the-world*.

Stumpf (1994, p.504) explains that for Heidegger human interests, such as 'Being', could not be pursued through the traditional lines of objectifying them, for a 'Being' is not a static thing which can be categorised and described like an object. Rather a person is aware of his/her own possibilities and is a 'self interpreting' 'Being' who moves, is moved and changes over time in the world. Heidegger thought an understanding of humanity would be found through the pursuit of a clearer conception of the significance or meaning of our own 'Being'. Such clarity would come, not by viewing the world (as a subject apart from the objects contained in the world), but by Being-in-the-world (how 'Being' is to be looked at) and by analysing those ways of 'Being'. Heidegger introduced the means by which such clarity will be found; that is, through Dasein:

Looking at something, understanding and conceiving it, choosing, access to it—all these ways of behaving are constitutive for our inquiry, and therefore are modes of Being for those particular entities which we, the inquirers, are ourselves. Thus to work out the question of Being adequately, we must make an entity—the inquirer—transparent in his [sic] own Being. The very asking of this question is an entity's mode of Being; and as such it gets its essential character from what is inquired about—namely, Being. This entity which each of us is himself and which includes inquiring as one of the possibilities of its Being, we shall denote by the term "*Dasein*" (Heidegger 1962, p.27).

Heidegger's thesis in *Being and Time* (1962) asserts the need for an analytic reconstruction of 'Being' as signified by Dasein. He examines ways, or modes, of 'Being' and names these 'ways' 'existentials'. He writes about, for example, 'Being-in-the-world', 'understanding', 'fallenness', 'care', 'nearing death' and 'dread' as exposés of human existence. The background structures or 'horizon' of these existentials were reconstructions of the notions of time and space from an existential point of view; his intent was to ascribe 'meaning, time and place' to the human world (Wolin 1993, p.155).

It is neither possible nor necessary to recount all the Heideggerian analytic of 'Being'. I will however present in this chapter a precis of the existentials 'Being-in-the-world' and 'care'. I will also consider 'time' and 'space' as they were the basic structures of Heidegger's analysis and relate all to 'Being'. Lastly I will show how a re-analysis of 'care' in the light of time renders the analytic 'more ontological' and

how it is part of the on-going process of the hermeneutical circle of interpretation. These exposés of Heidegger's interpretation will demonstrate how I will investigate the question of *what it is to be chronically ill* later in the thesis.

Hermeneutical phenomenology

Heidegger's (1962) study of 'Being' is phenomenological and interpretive. Gelven (1989, p.42) explains that, '... Heidegger carries out his analysis of "Being", and remains true to his two principles: (1) let the facts speak for themselves, [phenomenology] and (2) there are no such things as bare, uninterpreted facts [hermeneutics].' These statements may appear contradictory, as in conventional terms it seems logical that if it were possible for facts to speak for themselves then no interpretation would be required; or alternatively, if it is considered that facts do not have meaning in themselves they must then be interpreted. It was Heidegger's contention that this was not an insurmountable dilemma, for he proposed that facts regarding human experience were not, in principle, separate from the meanings of facts. Gelven gives the following example:

When I am afraid, the full and explicit meaning of my fear may not ever be realised; but it is nevertheless the case that my being afraid is *meaningful*. If it were not meaningful to me, I would not be afraid at all. Thus, ontologically speaking, the factual occurrences within my existence are never without meaning; whereas in a scientific account we can make a distinction between a fact and the theory that explains the fact. But it is impossible to think of being afraid without realising that "to be afraid" has a meaning for the one who is afraid. Thus fear has meaning in a way different from the way fire has meaning. Hermeneutic inquiry is that inquiry in which the implicit meaning of an existential fact is made explicit (1989, p.40).

Gelven goes on to demonstrate graphically how the hermeneutic circle works. He demonstrates how one makes explicit a particular existential fact (fear, anger, dread). That is, by considering:

... how it relates to the whole of my existence. In other words, I show what it means to be afraid by working out how fear relates to what it means to be at all. And how do I come to realise what it means to be at all? By analysing the particular ways of existing, such as fearing, as a totality (Gelven 1989, p.40).

As Gelven asserts, this is not mere 'ontological autobiography' (1989, p.43). An '*existentiell*' is a self-understanding; Dreyfus (1991, p.20) defines it: 'Existentiell understanding is an individual's understanding of his or her own way to be, that is, of what he or she is.' What Heidegger sought through fundamental ontological investigation were the structures of what it is 'to be'; those shared culturally, linguistically, historically and socially constructed understandings of 'Being' which humans in a certain time and locale share. The subject was not the traditional modern

example of the free, autonomous, detached maker of his or her own world, but a person immersed and developing in a world that provides her or his understandings. Heidegger's concern, quite emphatically, was not, like Husserl, exclusively for the conscious (disembodied) subject capable of transcending prejudice and making meaning (Dreyfus 1991, p.13). Rather it was for the meaning of what it is to be as revealed through everyday actions in the world; and the most important revelations are of shared meanings. Leonard explains this common ground:

Although we may each constitute our world in the sense of taking up in a personal way the common meanings given in our language and culture, we nevertheless have some aspects of the world in common with all other members who share our language and culture. For instance, the American notion of upward mobility, though taken up in many ways within our society, makes sense only within our cultural context, in which class lines are supposedly fluid and opportunities supposedly exist for self-improvement (1994, p.48).

If this common ground was not sought, Heidegger's work could be viewed as a psychoanalysis of the individual and understandings considered relative to each individual in the world; hardly the life work for a philosopher (Gelven 1989, p.45). This is not an example of a Cartesian subjective (individual/idealism) versus objective (general/realism) competition; binary oppositions which are so obvious in traditional science do not arise in Heidegger's work because meanings stem from all ways of ordinarily and pre-theoretically 'Being-in-the-world'.

Heidegger (1962, p.24) structured his 'question of Being' in order that it was made 'transparent' and could be understood as a fundamental and special question '... with its own distinctive character'. Stumpf writes of Heidegger's new turn in philosophy:

Heidegger produced a new conception and understanding of humanity ... Between humanity and things there is this fundamental difference: Only people can raise the question about their being or about 'Being' itself. The error in traditional philosophy which Heidegger sought to correct was the tendency to think about humanity in the same way as we think about things. We think about things by defining them, that is, by listing their attributes or characteristics. But the essence of humanity cannot be accounted for by listing its attributes. Unlike the being of things, the being of humanity includes an awareness of being. Unlike a hammer, which is simply a kind of 'Being', a person, says Heidegger, "always has to be (ie, realize) his [sic] being as his own"—by which he means that one is aware of the possibility of being or not being one's own self (1994, p.504).

As some understanding of 'Being' is always taken for granted, in an unarticulated and pre-reflective way, there is always a nebulous ordinary understanding of 'Being' which is a fact. This primordial understanding Heidegger suggests gives us

embryonic ideas of what it is we are seeking when trying to answer the question of 'Being'. This understanding is concealed in our everyday comportment. 'Comportment' is Heidegger's word for 'the way human beings relate to things' (Dreyfus 1991, p.51) in the world (ie in 'everydayness') and it is found through asking about what it is to be in certain ways (eg *What does it mean 'to be' frightened? What does it mean 'to be' nearing death? What does it mean 'to be' happy?*) Heidegger writes:

In so far as Being constitutes what is asked about, and "Being" means the Being of entities, then entities themselves turn out to be *what is interrogated*. These are, so to speak, questioned as regards their Being (1962, p.26).

In order to find meaning, Gelven (1989, p.179) suggests, the questioner must inquire '... for that which makes something possible'. Heidegger (1962, p.26) admitted that there are so many things that we designate as being that it becomes difficult to understand what entities we should interrogate. He differentiated between 'Being' and 'being'—'Being' is associated with human being and refers to the 'Being' that is aware of 'Being', or Dasein ('Being-there'). The other 'being' refers to the being of things rather than people.

By analysing ways of 'Being' or existentials (eg 'to be concerned', 'to be nearing death', 'to be fearful') Heidegger moves nearer to the ideas of what constitutes what it means 'to be'. The background structure to all his inquiries regarding what it is to be are new ways of regarding space and time. It may be useful here to consider Heidegger's preliminary analysis of just two existentials, 'Being-in-the-world' and 'care', which he undertakes in Division One of *Being and Time*. Later in the chapter, after 'time' has been considered, I will show how Heidegger re-analyses 'care' in relation to 'time'.

Being-in-the-world

In Heidegger's analytic of Being-in-the-world he emphasises ontological rather than ontic conceptions. Ontological concerns *ways* of 'Being' while ontic concerns beings. Heidegger clarifies this fact by examining the 'in' of 'Being-in-the-world'. The ontological view of 'in' is existential *involvement*, characterised by concern, that is, to be *in* love, to be *in* nursing. In contrast, an ontic view relates to physical space and is characterised by indifference, such as tea *in* a cup. Being-in-the-world is to dwell there, to be involved, to move, to feel, to communicate, to contact and to spend time in the world.

Through the consideration of human modes of engagement the being of things is explained by Heidegger (1962) in the following two ways: '*ready-to-hand*' and

'*present-to-hand*'. 'Ready-to-hand' are objects which we use and understand through use. This is the person's primordial relationship to things. 'Present-to-hand' are the things viewed independently of their function. 'Present-to-hand' is the mode of explaining objects in the natural scientific or Cartesian way. It is a derived conception of things and is an attitude which is developed. Heidegger concedes 'present-to-hand' as a way of understanding for Dasein but he does not give it priority over practical 'ready-to-hand' understandings.

It is important also to note that relating to things as either equipment or objects are both ways of seeing the world, but they are by no means the only ways. For example, Heidegger describes three ways of looking: '... when I look at the world as environment, I employ "circumspection" [looking around]; when I look at the world of other Daseins, I employ "considerateness" [a looking back]; and when I "look at" myself, I employ "transparency" [looking through] (cited in Gelven 1989, p.63).

Care

Care is a way of Being-in-the-world in which things and other Daseins *matter*. It is the human mode of connection with the world. It is not possible for Dasein to exist without caring. While Being-in-the-world is the broadest of existentials, caring is the most essential to *Dasein* and is the one that Heidegger uses to unify the existentials. It is, explains Gelven (1989, p.111), the base for all the other existentials because it is the existential '... that describes Dasein as Dasein'.

Gelven (1989) starts his commentary on Heidegger's analysis of care by remarking that there are three existentials that reveal the self, that is:

... state of mind, which manifests the ways in which one is (the mode of the actual) [Being-in-the-world] ... understanding, which manifests the ways in which one can be (the mode of the possible) [Being-ahead-of-itself] ... [and] fallenness, which manifests the ways in which one hides behind the chatter, the curiosity, and the ambiguity of inauthentic existence (the mode of fallenness) [Being-alongside] (p.120).

Dasein is a synthesis of these three modes of 'Being', and couched in this clumsy yet illuminating statement '... the Being of Dasein means ahead-of-itself-Being-already-in-(the world) as Being-alongside (entities encountered within-the-world)' (Heidegger 1962, p.237). This construction of Dasein signifies care or in Gelven's (1989, p.121) plainer words, 'To care, then, means: to be ahead of oneself already involved with entities within the world.'

Heidegger (1962, p.237) describes care in two ways, that is *concern*, translated by Gelven as 'caring about', and as *solicitude*: 'caring for' (1989, p.121). 'Caring

about' is related to things, possessions, tools, and so on, while 'caring for' is related to other people. In addition, care always relates to caring about the self. Care is always the substrate of existentials that describe Dasein's self. Heidegger uses the following fable (from a text by Bücheler) to illustrate Dasein's union with care:

Once when 'Care' was crossing a river, she saw some clay; she thoughtfully took up a piece and began to shape it. While she was meditating on what she had made, Jupiter came by. 'Care' asked him to give it spirit, and this he gladly granted. But when she wanted her name to be bestowed upon it, he forbade this, and demanded that it be given his name instead. While 'Care' and Jupiter were disputing, Earth arose and desired that her own name be bestowed on the creature, since she had furnished it with part of her body. They asked Saturn to be their arbiter, and he made the following decision, which seemed a just one: 'Since you, Jupiter, have given it spirit, you shall receive that spirit at its death; and since you Earth, have given its body, you shall receive its body. But since 'Care' first shaped this creature, she shall possess it as long as it lives. And because there is now a dispute among you as to its name, let it be called '*homo*', for it is made out of *humus* (earth)' (cited in Heidegger 1962, p.242).

The significance of the fable, Heidegger explains, is that:

... 'care' is here seen as that to which human Dasein belongs 'for its lifetime', but also because this priority of 'care' emerges in connection with the familiar way of taking man [sic] as compounded of body (earth) and spirit; the entity is not released from this source but is held fast, dominated by it through and through as long as this entity 'is in the world' (Heidegger 1962, p.234).

Part of Dasein's self understanding and therefore identity is constituted by the things that are cared about, or, as Leonard (1989, p.45) terms it, those things which have 'significance and value'. Later in this study it will be shown that people's values of fitness and health have a profound effect upon their ability to accommodate views of themselves, or indeed others, as sick persons. Leonard (1989, p.45) shows how many things that matter are related to the future or, in Heidegger's (1962, p.119) words, 'for-the-sake-of-which'. Concentration on the product in the future can diminish the process of living or work. Leonard (1989, pp.45–46) gives good examples of the technological 'advances' in the preparation of food and parenting which minimise practical processes for the sake of a product (a nutritious meal or a '... physically well-formed, well-educated, well-mannered, employable, attractive young adult'). Skimming these practical activities significantly affects the quality of living.

Time

Time was conventionally conceived as a linear construct; an accrual or succession of events. From the traditional viewpoint time was a space to be filled and entities, and indeed truth, were independent of time. Even the historicists, who consider time to be

significant to human understanding, regard it in a linear way. This view of time means that truth must be atemporal, for otherwise truth would either be in the past or not yet (Faulconer & Williams 1985).

On the other hand, Heidegger gives another analysis of time. He describes time which is dynamic, relative to all things in the world and constructive of understanding. Heidegger does not ask the question: What is time? Instead he asks the ontological question: *What does it mean to be in time?* The importance of time is reflected in the title of his first book *Being and Time*. Indeed he promises to show that:

... whenever Dasein tacitly understands and interprets something like Being, it does so with *time* as its standpoint. Time must be brought to light—and genuinely conceived—as the horizon for all understanding of Being and for any way of interpreting it (Heidegger 1962, p.39).

In chapter four of Division Two in *Being and Time* Heidegger (1962) re-analyses the existentials (ways of Being), which had first been examined in Division One. He does this in terms of ‘temporality’ in order to deepen the ontological understanding of the existentials and therefore of ‘Being’. An example of this deeper ontological study regarding ‘care’ will be given in the next section of this chapter.

When focusing upon the ontological meaning of time Heidegger refers to the past, the present and the future as *ecstases*, which is a word derived from Greek meaning ‘displacement’ or ‘to stand out’ from. He uses the term *ecstasis* because to focus on a particular time is to stand out from the general flow of time (Heidegger 1962, p.377; Gelven 1989, p.182). His ontological analysis of *ecstases* demonstrates the break with the traditional linear view of time, which he explains was a construction of a particular historical era. Of his (Heidegger 1962, p.377) three *ecstases* (the past, the present and the future) the future is deemed the most important to Dasein, for it is the *ecstasis* (the future) where our ‘possibles’ lie.

The future is not ahead of us; according to Heidegger (1962, p.377) the future is present in terms of how it affects Dasein. Gelven (1989, p.178) rather cleverly demonstrates this immediacy by showing how we use the term ‘there is a future’ rather than ‘there will be a future’. The future makes Dasein meaningful and provides a way forward: for example, I look forward to going home, I anticipate the happiness involved in seeing my family again—now. *The past* is of secondary importance to the future but is consequential to Dasein: the past is with us and is meaningful in the present. This is exemplified in the Macquarrie and Robinson translation of Heidegger’s German words for the past as ‘I am as having been’ (Heidegger 1962, p.376). For example, the contract I signed last week is still binding,

and affects me now, even though the time has passed. Again Gelven (1989, p.180) makes the point succinctly: 'We do not say, the past *was* meaningful'. Neither the past nor the future should be trivialised by conceptions of the future as the 'not yet' or the past as the 'no longer'. *The present*, although it has been the focus of attention in the traditional views, has always presented problems for philosophers:

If the present is the locus of reality, how broadly must the present be conceived? Does the split second after a moment of consciousness fade into the no longer of the traditional past, or does the forthcoming split second not-yet avoid any ontological status because it has not as yet been realized? Or is the present merely to be seen as that nexus between the arriving future and the departing past? (Gelven 1989, p.181).

Again Heidegger addresses the problem in an ontological way, by asking *what makes the present meaningful?* The answer for him is that doing things makes the present moment of note, a practical answer (I am talking therefore I am creating this situation) which makes far more sense than the abstract notion of the present as a fleeting intangible moment which does not have any existential significance.

Heidegger (1962, p.427) explains the importance of the lifespan in Dasein and relates it to the *ecstases* of past, present and future outlined above:

Factual Dasein exists as born; and, as born, it is already dying, in the sense of Being-towards-death. As long as Dasein factually exists, both the 'ends' and their 'between' *are*, and they *are* in the only way which is possible on the basis of Dasein's Being as *care* (Heidegger 1962, p 426).

In the same passage Heidegger describes Dasein's movement in time as 'the way Dasein stretches along'; this way of 'Being' in/across/through time he calls 'historizing' (p.426). Time for Dasein is finite. The fact of our approaching death being ever present is an understanding Dasein needs to accept in order to live authentically. However Heidegger acknowledges that Dasein can appreciate time after death in the world and time before birth.

This analysis of time is of great importance to philosophy and indeed the human sciences. It means that it is now conceivable that truths or rather understandings of the human world are changeable, dependent on time and open to the possibilities of the future. This creates the possibility of investigating in the human world and making intelligible understandings amid the dynamism of the world (Faulconer & Williams 1985, pp.1186–1187).

Temporality and care

The first 'preparatory' analysis of care, in Division One of *Being and Time* is understandable as a fairly superficial interpretation of Dasein in its 'everydayness'.

However as Gelven (1989, p.178) points out it is not clear why 'time' should be conceived as a 'ground' for all existence and he calls for a 'more ontological' view of 'care' and 'temporality'.

Gelven explains that the question to be asked in order to extrapolate meanings is, *How is such-and-such a thing possible?* For example:

We all know that there is going to be a future. Before one begins to spin elaborate theories of time, however, suppose one simply reflects upon *how it is possible for the future to exist as a meaningful concept* or awareness in our lives [my emphasis]. I look forward to the completion of this chapter. I anticipate a certain amount of satisfaction from the work having been accomplished. The future is not meaningful to me in any abstract way of not-yet nows. The future is meaningful to me because it is one of the ways in which I exist. In fact, the future, as *a way of existing*, turns out to be the ultimate presupposition of authentic existence. The varied and multifarious forms of awareness and consciousness, of thought and calculation, all presuppose, to some extent or another, the basic attitudes of 'Being' *toward* a future and *from* a past (Gelven 1989, p.179).

The question asked in the re-analysis then is: *What does it mean for all 'care' to be temporal?* or *How is it possible that temporality is the basis of 'care'?* Remembering the definition of what it means 'to care'—'ahead-of-itself-Being-already-in-(the-world) as Being-alongside (entities encountered within-the-world)' (Heidegger 1962, p.237)—it is possible to isolate the existentials involved in the characterisation of care, namely 'state of mind', 'understanding' and 'fallenness' and see their essential temporality (temporal character) as a basic structure. 'State-of-mind' is only possible existentially because of the past; that is, '... as that ground from which one's significance as already thrown into a world is revealed' (Gelven 1989, p.183). 'Understanding' is only possible existentially because of the future; that is, '... as that ground by which guilt, responsibility, and the awareness of possibilities all spring' (p.183). 'Fallenness' is only possible existentially in the present; that is, '... as that ground in which actions and situations are made possible' (p.183).

Existence or what it means 'to be', can only be appreciated in existential terms, that is the way in which it is experienced by Dasein. While Heidegger's analysis of 'care' and 'temporality' is complex it is more realistic than one that could originate from the linear concept of 'time'. I mean here a view where 'time', considered as an entity, is just a succession of moments and 'care' as an entity could only be embellished and described as a static atemporal thing.

Space

Typically Heidegger (1962) views space existentially. 'Spaciality' is the term used to refer to a fundamental characteristic of Dasein ('to be' one has 'to be' in space). The

notion of space is produced by the way in which things in the surrounds are experienced as being either near or far away.

Heidegger (1962, p.138) explains that for a Dasein to be regarded as an entity at a certain place (either as ready-to-hand or present-to-hand) is not an example of 'spaciality'. As a characteristic of Dasein 'spaciality' has to be experienced by the Dasein *in-the-world* (how it feels to be in space); that is, Dasein is concerned with, and for, the things in the surrounds. Being-in-the-world is what makes 'spaciality' possible for Dasein. Space can be experienced in both objective and subjective terms, as both are modes of space (Gelven 1989, p.67). The important point is that felt space can be quite different to objective space. For instance, I am closer to the key board of this computer which I am touching (but not particularly aware of or concerned about) but I *feel* closer to my family in England, represented in a photograph which is on the noticeboard above the computer. Gelven makes this important point: '... space involved in our world of concern is primordial to the abstract space of "objects"' (1989, p.67).

In a way by now familiar, the ontological inquiry into space begins with these questions: *What does it mean to be in space?* and *What makes it possible to be in space?* The answer is: we generate a notion of space by sensing things as either remote from or near to ourselves, that is the body becomes the centre of space (Spiegelberg 1960, pp.53–54). Fjelland and Gjengedal (1994, p.15) explain how Heidegger conceives 'remoteness'—not by measuring the miles or geometrical distance but by considering what makes the distance possible or how to overcome the distance. Overcoming remoteness is termed de-severance (an example of de-severance is the photograph which brings my family closer). Heidegger (1962, p.139) defines de-severance this way: '... [it] amounts to making the farness vanish—that is, making the remoteness of something disappear, bringing it close.'

In the previous chapter, it was shown how researchers have viewed space in an objective manner, by using topographical data to establish the criteria for classifying the regions of Australia. However it is how space is experienced (lived-space) which reveals what it *means* to people and therefore places some kind of value upon it.

Spiegelberg writes:

Geometric space has no natural center. Any point is like any other, and it is entirely arbitrary which one in particular is chosen as the center of a coordinate system. In lived space, my body is the natural center with reference to which I establish all external places and directions. Objective distance, which is measured in terms of yards and meters and eliminated by mere motion, is not the same as the lived distance which is measured by care, and eliminated by approach (1960, pp.53–54).

As the lived-body is the centre of spaciality so it becomes possible to understand the concept of personal horizons; that is, the perspective experienced by the person from their centre, or body place, in-the-world.

Heidegger (1962, p.169) explains that 'Being-in' means 'being in a situation or a particular set of circumstances'; for example, a place from which the Dasein experiences an 'I here' in relation to 'things yonder'. Combined, these two represent the situation and are denoted by Heidegger with the word 'there'.⁴ (In German *da* is the word for both 'here' and 'there'.) He names this situation which the Dasein is currently in: *lichtung* ('clearing' in the Macquarrie & Robinson translation) (1960, p.171). Translated literally it means 'a clearing in the woods'; *licht* is the German word for light. Dreyfus (1991, p.163) translates the idea thus: 'Things show up *in the light of our* understanding of being.'

Summary

This is not a treatise on Heidegger's early work in *Being and Time*. Instead, I have tried to show how it is that Heidegger approaches the knotty problem of understanding the human world; how he transcends or sidesteps the objective/subjective dichotomy by referring, with an ontological question, to the existential world of everydayness. His insight is that 'we live our lives by experiencing the world and not primarily by "knowing" it' (Thompson 1990, p.234). He sees the mundane world as a place where the human comports her/himself in a skilled and unselfconscious way—a world where the value of those things that matter are exposed through the meanings they have for people.

Heidegger views the world from the inside, using all the senses. If it is my intention to understand the world of the chronically ill, then I need to gain some kind of access to their world. I do this by being *alongside* them for a while, by paying meticulous *attention* to their everyday stories and, thereby, attempting to uncover or reveal the meanings chronic illness has for them. All these aspects of the study will be explained and described in the next chapter.

Gadamer (1900–)

The task of hermeneutics is to clarify this miracle of understanding, which is not a mysterious communion of souls, but sharing in a common meaning (Gadamer 1994, p.292).

⁴Heidegger sometimes writes 'Being there' in brackets after Dasein to denote Dasein situatedness.

Gadamer was born at the turn of the century. His major work, *Truth and Method* (1994), was not published until he was sixty. Intellectually he was at his most influential during the post war years into the 1960s. The second edition of *Truth and Method* was translated into English in 1975. The work that I refer to in this thesis is a revised translation by Joel Weinsheimer and Donald Marshall. This translation draws from the fifth revised and expanded German edition of *Truth and Method* (Gadamer 1994; Silverman 1991).

Gadamer's humour and humility are palpable in his writing. Often he uses footnotes to his writing to critique his own views and to commend other people's work. In an interview with Boyne in 1985 Gadamer compares himself to Heidegger and explains how he avoided provoking the same type of criticism that Heidegger did, even though their work was similar in many ways:

On the whole, I would say that my work is less provocative than Heidegger's. This may explain, to some extent, how I was able to continue working with Heidegger's texts at a time when, in Germany, there was an effective proscription on this material. ... I was more of a scholar than Heidegger was. There is a kind of subordination in scholarship; it is less threatening than the kind of forcing creative genius which Heidegger represented (1988, p.27).

Gadamer's work is of central importance to this study because it demonstrates a means of understanding or interpreting the texts generated by the participants who gave me accounts of their everyday experiences. While Heidegger demonstrates how meaning can be revealed in accounts of everyday comportment, Gadamer shows how an interpretation may be produced from the text which lies before the interpreter. In this case the texts are the transcriptions of the participants' accounts. At length he discusses the role of the interpreter and clarifies and justifies the interpreter's involvement, alongside the actors, in the production of new meanings or understandings (Gadamer 1994).

Hekman (1983, p.206) explains that Gadamer was frustrated by the restrictions placed upon interpretation by Dilthey and Schleiermacher. These two historicists proposed both epistemological and methodological accounts of interpretation with the intention of ascertaining, as near as possible, the original author's ideas. Gadamer writes:

When we try to understand a text, we do not try to transpose ourselves into the author's mind but, if one wants to use this terminology, we try to transpose ourselves into the perspective within which he [sic] has formed his views. But this simply means that we try to understand how what he is saying could be right. If we want to understand, we will try to make his arguments even stronger (1994, p.292).

Gadamer, impressed by Heidegger's accounts of ontological priority, took an ontological turn regarding interpretation and asked the question: *What does it mean to understand?* Thompson (1990, p.247) writes that Gadamer saw interpretation as a '... mode of being and not a way of knowing'. He regarded interpretation as a natural and basic way of being; as a primarily practical activity rather than a purely theoretical one. He wrote of interpretation as, '... the practical capacity of understanding, in the sense of the intelligent and empathetic entry into another's standpoint' (Gadamer 1987, p.325). Indeed he went so far as to suggest that interpretation is a skill one has a natural penchant for, not something which is produced by applying theories rigorously to practice. Rather than a method for the social sciences he saw interpretation as a 'basic human capacity' which therefore relates to a universal means of understanding by humans (Gadamer 1987, pp.325–326). This understanding is not restricted to the human sciences but is relevant to all forms of inquiry. Furthermore he identified it as a practice which could not be divorced from the interpreter's particular world stance or view, which is constituted historically and mediated linguistically. He proposed that when hermeneutical interpretation is considered ontologically, or experientially, it is apparent that it is generated through conversations and Gadamer describes it in this way:

To conduct a conversation means to allow oneself to be conducted by the subject matter to which the partners in dialogue are oriented. It requires that one does not try to argue the other person down but that one really considers the weight of the other's opinion. Hence it is an art of testing. But the art of testing is the art of questioning (1994, p.367).

And the art of questioning is at the heart of the art of dialectic. The ability to lay open a subject by more questions is the means by which it is possible to reveal the subject. Dialectics are not about winning arguments for, as Gadamer points out, it is possible to argue and win by the skill of argumentation rather than the worth of the case. The aim in philosophical hermeneutics is to understand by searching every possible aspect of the subject. The (re)search is ethically bound by the interpreter's desire to come by a good or fair understanding rather than a particular product (Gadamer 1994, p.367).

Gadamer's account of the universality of hermeneutics allows him to neatly transcend the dichotomy between positivist and humanist approaches in the human sciences. The former paradigm champions the researcher's objective views of social action and the latter paradigm champions the subjective view of the actors in any social situation. Both perspectives presume the need for a foundation, 'an element of social reality' (Hekman 1984, p.337) from which to generate the 'truth'. Gadamer reaches below/before these epistemological and polar arguments of subjective and objective

'truth' and defines interpretation and hence understanding (rather than truth) as the experience of the fusion of the perspectives of the actor and the interpreter. It is a combination of information which is neither purely subjective nor purely objective, but available in everydayness. Furthermore this fused perspective of meaning is not static, for both views are constituted in historical traditions and will be understood differently by interpreters in different times with different histories, asking different questions.

Gadamer views hermeneutical interpretation as a conversation between the interpreter and the text. He explains that it is a conversation which is never complete as there is always the possibility of new and better interpretations emerging from more dialogue (1994, p.367). This position opens Gadamer to the criticism of being a relativist. Hekman (1986, pp.115–117) responds to this criticism of Gadamer by proposing that although he does not suggest that it is possible to find the 'right' interpretation, nor that there is some fixed basis for truth from which to begin interpretation, some interpretations are 'better' than others. Indeed some interpretations are false. A better understanding is found through the examination and re-examination of the interpreter's prejudices:

What Gadamer's position requires, is that the interpreter is situated in history and time and that this situatedness is what protects against arbitrariness. Hermeneutic investigations are neither arbitrary nor 'objective' but are constituted by the self-reflexive analysis of prejudice from within a human linguistic community (Hekman 1986, p.115).

The pursuit of a 'better' understanding saves the interpreter from the abyss of futility generated by those philosophers who believe there is no possibility of truth.

To understand Gadamer's work in an elementary way it is useful to consider some of his main considerations. The ideas of effective history and prejudice, language, the hermeneutic circle, and the fusion of horizons will be explored briefly now.

Effective history and prejudice

Effective history and prejudice are linked with Heidegger's notion of foremeanings (Gadamer 1994, p.269). They represent the ideas and notions one has before confronting a phenomenon and which *affect* one's understanding of it. These foremeanings are the beginnings of interpretation and liable to change as the interpreter's initial perceptions interact through dialogue with the text. They are: 'conditioned by the person's historical era and social interests' (Hekman 1986, p.241) and as such they are value laden and ideological.

Gadamer reclaims the word 'prejudice' and uses it as simply 'pre-judgement' without the modern negative connotations with which it is usually associated. Prejudgement is a necessary part of interpretation and is full of possibilities in terms of enriching a view. Our prejudices are constituted socially and embedded in our historical and cultural traditions (traditions are those things which are passed on to us through time). It is our place in history (with regard to time and place, culture, language, etc) which constitutes our prejudgement of a phenomenon. History affects the view we take and therefore the meanings we generate. So while our prejudgements affect the way we understand, our history *affects* our prejudgements. Hekman (1986, p.117) explains that rather than being an obstacle to truth, prejudice, as constituted in our historical and temporal positions, is a prerequisite to truth/understanding.

Gadamer (1994, p.270) writes that the modern rejection and neglect of prejudice has been detrimental to the progress of human understanding. It is the *unexamined* prejudices, the ones that some scientists claim they extinguish (or maintain have no part in the generation of knowledge) which may be at the roots of misunderstandings: 'It is the tyranny of hidden prejudices that makes us deaf to what speaks to us in tradition' (Gadamer 1994, p.270). Ironically, and I think with some pleasure, Gadamer points out that the traditional scientists, and some of the social and human scientists, rather than refuting prejudice display it openly. He writes, 'And there is one prejudice of the Enlightenment that defines its essence: the fundamental prejudice of the Enlightenment is the prejudice against prejudice itself, which denies tradition its power' (Gadamer 1994, p.270).

Earlier hermeneuticists attempted to reconstruct the original meaning of the text by reconstructing the historical context and concentrating upon that view. However, Gadamer argued that the attempt to control bias by suspending interpreter prejudice results in the interpreter being distanced from the text. Gadamer believed this type of artificial use of technique impedes the natural and productive encounter between the interpreter and the text (Outhwaite 1985, p.24). Indeed he thought that the reconstruction of the original context was futile:

Reconstructing the original circumstances, like all restoration, is a futile undertaking in view of the historicity of our being. What is reconstructed, a life brought back from the lost past, is not the original. ... Even a painting taken from the museum and replaced in a church or building restored to its original condition are not what they once were—they become simply tourist attractions. Similarly, a hermeneutics that regarded understanding as reconstructing the original would be no more than handing on a dead meaning (Gadamer 1994, p.167).

The examination of personal prejudices on the part of the interpreter involves self-reflection. It follows then that as the text is interpreted the interpreter develops a heightened or broader self-awareness.

Language

Gadamer extends Heidegger's thesis regarding language and, like him, places a great emphasis upon its importance as the *medium* of interpretation. The interpretation of human actions is considered to have a semantic organisation (Packer 1985, p.1081). Even though the interpreter does not completely share the actor's situation it is accepted that the interpreter has at least a vague idea of the situation. This preliminary understanding is possible because of, and indeed fostered through, the use of a common language.

Thompson (1990, p.240) writes that Gadamer, along with other contemporary philosophers, rejects the instrumental view of language; that is, the view of language used by people as a tool to create symbols and signs for their use. Instead it is proposed that language dictates meaning. Human beings cannot attribute meaning to words arbitrarily for they already have meaning. Hekman (1986, p.110) cites Gadamer's admonition to his students to illustrate this point:

... you must realise that when you take a word in your mouth, you have not taken up some arbitrary tool which can be thrown in a corner if it does not do the job, but you are committed to a line of thought that comes from afar and reaches on beyond you (1994, p.548).

Language belongs to situations (rather than to individuals for their peculiar use) and is learned through our being in situations, cultures and epochs. It follows then that 'language and being are inextricably linked' (Thompson 1990, p.240).

... the world comes to being in language and language has its being in the fact that the world is represented in it. Language "discloses" the world to us (Hekman 1983, p.212).

Language is the ground on which we can share meanings with others in our culture. Hekman states that in order to understand Gadamer's ontology it is most '... fruitful to ask how language reveals Being' (1986, p.95). In this study it is the language used by the individuals which reveals their situations. Munhall (1993b, p.10) demonstrates this point by showing how things may exist, but until they are named they are not shared socially and culturally. Chronic fatigue syndrome is an example of this. When the syndrome was named people could recognise their symptoms and claim affinity with others. Until there was a name there was no syndrome and no means of sharing meaning.

Hermeneutic circle

Thompson (1990, p.243) describes the hermeneutic circle as a metaphor for the dialectical task (involving conversations and questions) which involves movement backwards and forwards between the background of shared meanings and the experience of the individual living-in-the-world. The background of shared meanings is constituted within a community with common language, history and traditions.

Gadamer (1994, p.293) states that the hermeneutical circle is 'not a "methodological" circle, but describes an element of the ontological structure of understanding'. It is how the everyday person comes to understand in his/her world—a mode of being which is not a process of applying theories of analysis and synthesis to the world. The ordinary person constantly approaches phenomenon with prejudices constituted in the shared world and relates them to specifics, backwards and forwards from the whole (shared world, with history and tradition) to part (the specific subject). The analogy is usually given of learning a language: in order to understand a conversation in a foreign language it is necessary to learn the individual words. However to understand the meaning of the words they need to be related to the gist of the whole conversation.

The whole in the instance of Gadamer's philosophy of interpretation is forever developing. Tradition is added to as time passes and therefore there are always more nuances in the perspective. The hermeneutic circle is not something which has a starting place or a finishing place; it is the means by which we continue to search for new and better meanings.

Fusion of horizons

Gadamer (1994, p.302) defines 'horizon' as: 'the range of vision that includes everything that can be seen from a particular vantage point'. As far as he is concerned understanding comes neither from the subjective view of the actor/author/artist nor from the view of the interpreter but through the overlapping of the two positions. By the overlapping or fusion of the horizons of the interpreter and the object of understanding (text) a picture can be conjured up of a means by which the interpreter may change his/her perspective to incorporate the other standpoint, while at the same time not leaving it behind (Thompson 1990, p.246). What results is a larger frame which can accommodate differences.

The fusion of the horizons is achieved through dialogue or conversation for it is not a competition/argument between two views. Gadamer insists that it is the interpreter's responsibility to endeavour to appreciate the other perspective and he is delighted to be persuaded from his first view. He says:

Jurgen Habermas once said that I am the man who urbanized Heidegger; and it is true that a much more dialogic mood suffuses my writing. I like to listen to others, and I am always tempted to find and acknowledge the strong point of their argument against me (interview with Gadamer, Boyne 1988, p.27).

Thompson (1990, p.246) describes the interpreter's necessary attitude toward the text as one of 'openness' in which the interpreter 'relaxes' his/her own view and truly desires to hear the text and to understand what the actor's behaviour meant in the social situation. However the fusion of horizons does require that both perspectives are represented. It is important for the interpreter to reveal and demonstrate his/her own conceptual scheme and demonstrate how the fusion occurred (Thompson 1990, p.255).

Social action as text

Gadamer states in the Introduction to *Truth and Method* that: 'The phenomenon of understanding and of the correct interpretation of what has been understood is not a problem specific to the methodology of the human sciences alone' (1994, p.xxi). In an attempt to keep the subject of hermeneutics broad Gadamer maintains repeatedly that he is not offering a methodology for the human sciences, rather his work represents a hermeneutical philosophy which situates interpretation as a mode of being.

While they accept that hermeneutic philosophy is not a methodology both Hekman (1984, 1986) and Thompson (1990) see the potential for the practical application of Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics in human research. Hekman uses Ricoeur's (1977) ideas for relating the similarities between social action and written discourse. In effect he suggests that social action can be construed as a text for analysis. It is proposed in the following two ways: firstly, action and text are seen to be separated from the mental intentions of the actor/author and can therefore be understood as they stand, and, secondly, both actions and text are constitutive of meaning. Hekman explains that Ricoeur is not suggesting that action and text are analogous but simply that these two common elements render them both suitable for textual analysis.

This is an important point for this study. The participants who helped me have given detailed narratives of their everyday lives and the effect chronic illness has on them. The narratives have been tape recorded and transcribed. It is these transcriptions which are the texts with which I will work. They are the texts which represent the social actions or in Heidegger's terms the participants' comportment in the world (1962). I will question and converse with these texts in order to extrapolate and form, as closely as possible, a picture of chronic illness which is of the contemporary situation of people who are chronically ill.

Summary

Gadamer moved the art of interpretation from particular disciplines (ie religion, law) to a universal ontological interpretation of being. His underlying assumption is that interpretation is an *a priori* way of being (in agreement with Heidegger he sees humans as essentially self interpreting), a fundamental which is not only relevant to the science of human beings but to every facet of life, including the natural sciences.

Understanding is brought about by the merging of two perspectives. The perspective represented in the text and the perspective constituted for the interpreter by his or her prejudices and dialogue with the texts. Any interpretation is dependent upon its locale in terms of time and place and is therefore subject to change and development.

While Gadamer relates his work to the interpretation of arts and literature, Hekman and Thompson relate it to the interpretation of social actions. It is through the work of Benner and other nurses who have used interpretive phenomenology that we will now consider the reality of the application of hermeneutics to the nursing world.

Interpretive phenomenology and nursing

It should by now be clear that phenomenology is a broad philosophy and a title which gives the reader little information about the specific course of any study. Phenomenology is a methodology used by an increasing number of nurse researchers and I think there is little to be gained, in this instance, in reviewing those which take a Husserlian or epistemological approach.

The work of Paterson and Zderad (1988), *Humanistic Nursing*, was first published in 1976. They introduced nurses to the possibilities of exploring existential reality through interpretive phenomenology. The other work of note here, not least because some of it was done in Australia, is Watson's (1988) book *Nursing: Human Science and Human Care: A Theory of Nursing*. In this book Watson explores existential phenomenology as a methodology for her theory. These authors celebrate humanity and encourage nurses to be passionate about nursing. This temper endures in later phenomenological works and is one of the reasons that the methodology is creating such interest within the profession.

Researchers who are about to research the 'lived-world' by means of a phenomenological investigation need to have a protracted methodological introduction to their work. This is so that they can clarify the philosophical underpinnings which will give their work a sense of direction and should help them to justify the decisions they make regarding the process or method of the study. Ray

(1994, p.126) notes how ‘... [it is] philosophical knowledge or lack of it that is carried into the work and that implies a certain way the study will be accomplished.’

Generally there is a notable lack of methodological preamble to phenomenological nursing studies which have been published in the professional journals. This may be because there is a word limit imposed on most publications and the journals have a traditional scientific format which does not accommodate methodologies of any substance. However, it is, in some circumstances, because the underlying philosophies have not been clarified. This is particularly so regarding the understanding of the differences between Husserl’s and Heidegger’s work (Koch 1995, p.827). Studies which do not give details of methodological/philosophical grounding are difficult to critique in terms of scholarship.

Koch (1995) finds precious few nursing studies which demonstrate the true dialogue required in the hermeneutic circle. She even criticises Benner’s work for this lack of thorough interpretation. To an extent Koch (1995) is right; however, I believe that critics of phenomenological studies in nursing should consider the circumstances. The philosophy underpinning interpretive phenomenology is difficult to study and understand. The early nurse researchers did sterling work coming to terms with the philosophers’ writing and in pioneering the ideas in practical research. They made the work of Husserl, Heidegger, Gadamer, and Merleau-Ponty’s philosophy more accessible for those of us who were lucky enough to come later and benefit from their interpretations. It is perhaps the task of current nurse researchers using interpretive phenomenology to take up the challenge of pushing on with ‘better’ interpretation through the hermeneutic circle and dialogical conversations with the texts.

Despite some of the criticisms of phenomenological studies⁵ which do not reach the levels/cycles of interpretation which are expected by some academics, I agree with van Manen (1990, p.5) that an important source of understanding of phenomenological research is found ‘... from the inside ...’; that is, by doing this type of research and coming to understand the particular research process. Surely this dawning understanding is an important element of Masters and Honours level work. I have read dissertations and theses which have described the life-world so nearly that I have been moved deeply by their texts and learned new and closer ways of understanding the phenomena of their studies. I would not wish to detract from these understandings by being too critical of their depth of interpretation, for these theses do serve to

⁵This criticism is particularly directed at students undertaking phenomenological studies at Masters and Honours level. For a discussion see Morse & Johnson, *The Illness Experience*.

increase my repertoire of nursing and improve my practice. I am indebted to all these researchers.

In the theses of interpretive phenomenological studies at PhD level there are detailed methodologies. Because of this there is a strong case for encouraging researchers to publish monographs with full methodology sections. I have been particularly helped to understand phenomenology by reading Taylor's (1992b) study of the phenomenon of ordinariness in nursing; Walters (1992) who examined the phenomenon of caring in an intensive care unit, and Thaniwattananon (1995) who researched the experiences of nurses while providing care for patients with AIDS in Thailand. My progress was also aided by hours of discussion at the postgraduate research schools.

The distinction between descriptive/epistemological (Husserlian) and interpretive/ontological (Heideggerian, Gadamerian) phenomenology had not been thoroughly addressed in nursing circles until the landmark papers by Leonard (1989) and Thompson (1990), both of which are referred to extensively in this thesis. The debate is now being aired in detail (Walters 1994b; Cohen & Omery 1994; Ray 1994; Koch 1995) and will hopefully inform future researchers. Lack of philosophical discourse in this area has resulted in some confusion and ill founded work.

Diekelmann and Allen (1989) have used philosophical hermeneutics in order to discuss curriculum reform for the National League for Nursing in New York. In this study they perceive the curriculum as a text which can be included in a process of dialogue. Koch (1995, p.833) notes this is one of the few studies which demonstrates a serious application of the hermeneutic circle. Diekelmann (1990) writes of the influence Heideggerian philosophy has had on her experience as a teacher and demonstrates the use of interpretation of texts at staff seminars. However in a larger research project (1992) she uses a complex method of inter-researcher analysis and consequential levels of analysis in order to control bias. This demonstrates a turn towards the objective hermeneutics described by Thompson (1990, p.251) as a position which '... defends the validity or objectivity of interpretation against the passion, self-interest, or prejudice of the scholar.' Diekelmann reiterates this position when describing the process of interpretive research using the computer program MARTIN (Diekelmann, Schuster & Lam 1994).

I intend, in this last part of the methodology chapter, to concentrate on Benner's work. She has studied the philosophy surrounding interpretive phenomenology and used it as a research guide for many years now. Her works are always most

encouraging for practising nurses and researchers because of her respect for practical knowledges which she suggests can be neglected.

Benner

Benner (1984a) and Benner and Wrubel (1989) pioneered the approach of interpretive phenomenological research in nursing. As mentioned earlier, there were other nursing theorists who contributed to the development of this methodology for nursing (Paterson & Zderad 1988; Parse 1981; Watson 1985, 1988). However it was Benner who laid her methodological foundations so clearly for the reader and firmly established the connections with Heidegger and Gadamer's ontological pursuit of understanding. She (Benner 1994a, p.xiv) draws extensively on the work of her mentor and friend, Dreyfus, and the political philosopher, Taylor, both of whom are prestigious scholars in their fields and who have acknowledged Benner's work publicly (Dreyfus 1994; Taylor 1991). It is not appropriate to give a full account of Benner's philosophical standpoint for a great deal of it will repeat what has been written so far in this work. Instead, I will deal with three issues, which I have not covered in my accounts of either Heidegger's or Gadamer's work but which are important elements in each philosopher's work: practice, ethics and embodiment.

Practice

Significantly, Benner turned to the experiential world in order to formulate understandings. Unlike other nurse theorists who have sought to *know* nursing and generate theories that are applicable to practice, she asked questions about the existence of experiences: *What does it mean to be a nurse?* (Benner 1984a); *What does it mean for a nurse to be caring?* (Benner & Wrubel 1989); *What does it mean to be working?* (Benner 1984b). Her book *From Novice to Expert* was an inspiration and source of immense encouragement to many nurses. In it she explored and interpreted the lived-world of nurses and was able to convey some of the skill, acumen and artistry of expert practitioners. What she wrote was to inform others, not necessarily to create theories for practice.

Appreciating both Gadamer's and Heidegger's distrust of method, rules and principles for practice, Benner has resisted writing about methods or ways of 'doing' interpretive phenomenology. Like Gadamer she writes of people's natural ability to generate understandings through the experience and exploration of their lived-world (Benner 1994b, p.103). She likens the process of research (observing, conversing, making sense of, asking pertinent questions, presenting, etc) to the process of nursing:

The dialogical process of learning to create, understand, and interpret texts begins with preexisting abilities to understand the world, read texts for meanings, and extend those everyday

capacities with rigor and attentiveness to interpretive research (Benner 1994b, pp.102–103)

It is not accidental that the study of practical knowledge, like the study of all knowledge development, requires taken-for-granted practical knowledge about understanding and reading human situations. Knowledge from a practice such as nursing, teaching, medicine, or law can create enhanced perceptual recognition skills ... (Benner 1994b, p.103).

Instead of prescribing a method for interpretive phenomenology Benner writes of the experience both she and her colleagues (co-researchers and students) have had while conducting interpretive research (1994b). It is for the reader to pick up the relevance of the philosophical underpinnings and to recognise ideas that appear to be right for their work.

Holmes (1991, p.436) has a problem with Benner's notion of expert practice. He proposes that if it is the case that we can recognise expert practice then such practice must be already known. This is really a matter of where one steps into the hermeneutic circle. Gadamer always assumed that the interpreter had some common understanding with whatever was to be understood. Interpretive phenomenology facilitates the production of more and, hopefully, better understandings; it is a process which does not have some end or end product. Even if good practice is recognised it is through hermeneutic interpretation that it is understood more or better. However I have sat through many complex discussions with people who have wanted to investigate 'expert practice', trying to determine who were 'expert practitioners'. The point is that whatever the participant's level of expertise is thought to be it will be revealed through the interpretation of her or his comportment.

Thompson (1990, p.272) criticises Benner's work by proposing that despite a commitment to the context of experience she gives only a little attention to the social and political situation of nursing practice. This deficiency affects the practical consequences of Benner's work. In a spirited reply, Benner (1990, p.282) denies this and reminds Thompson that '... theory (critical or otherwise) is not the *only source of liberation*', referring here to Thompson's stance as a critical theorist. Indeed, she proposes that the narratives of expert nurses resound with a 'substantive set of goods that one wants to conserve and preserve' (p.282). Within these narratives are critiques by the nurses which are used by Benner (1984a) and Benner and Wrubel (1989) to critique the dominant discourses which abound and constrain nursing practice.

Ethics

Benner's (1994a) work has a strong ethical theme. She uncovers the prudent behaviour of expert nurses and demonstrates their wise and ethical comportment. She

does not aim to engineer the social world; however, she hopes to have a beneficial effect by unearthing or revealing 'notions of the good that fuel health care practices, help seeking, and receiving' (Benner 1994a, p.xx). She writes that:

The ethical stance of the interpretive researcher is one of respect for the voice and experience described in the text. The guiding ethos is to be true to the text. Throughout the interpretive project the researcher asks, "What do I now know or see that I did not expect or understand before I began reading the text?" If the interpreter's own views have not been challenged, extended, or turned around, the quality of the account is questioned and the danger of just reading in preconceptions must be considered (Benner & Wrubel 1989, p.101).

This harmonises well with Gadamer's notions of the 'better' interpretation being the one that refers to, and is rooted in, the careful examination and re-examination of prejudice.

Thomasma (1994), in a contribution to Benner's book *Interpretive Phenomenology: Embodiment, Caring and Ethics in Health and Illness*, notes a process of ethics which emanates from the human ability to understand and interpret situations and a process of ethics where the rules and principles for good decision making are generated from the context or situation at hand. This ability to make ethical decisions in nursing, he suggests, is dependent upon the nurse being 'in touch' with the client/s in all senses of the word (Thomasma 1994, p.92). This same notion is applicable to the researcher attempting to work with participants in a study.

Gordon (1994, p.313) explains Benner's position thus: ethical decisions must be 'caring practice' and that the process of ethics is embedded in situations so that they can reflect '... not just the "right thing to do" but the "good way to be"'. This is a particularly Heideggerian way of viewing the world or, rather, Being-in-the-world. Furthermore, Gordon (1994, p.313) demonstrates in her study of ambiguity and concealment around cancer that the challenge nowadays is to accommodate changing situations and understandings of the 'good life'. The application of 'the right thing' without due recourse to the 'good life' renders practice an 'empty technique'.

Embodiment

Benner really rejoices in a philosophy which once again unites the body and the spirit: rather than 'having a body' we 'are embodied' (Leonard 1994, p.52). She conceives of the body as being irrevocably connected to the world and the source of our personal understanding and understanding of others (Benner 1994a, p.xvi). Knowledge of the world experienced through the body is demonstrated by the person's pre-reflective comportment in the world. Benner (1994a, p.xvi) describes

'embodied knowing' as such things as the way we hold our bodies to convey messages (swagger, bowing, distance) and how others understand these messages.

A great deal of what is understood is embedded in our practices and largely unarticulated. It is these understandings that Benner deeply respects and endeavours to uncover in order to inform nursing and promote the wellbeing of clients. In her work (Benner 1984a; Benner & Wrubel 1989) the skilful knowledge which is embodied and displayed is exemplified in nurses' actions which demonstrate an understanding of the situation. For example, Benner (1994b, p.105) writes:

Phenomenology explores embodied understandings of the situation in highly skilled, taken-for-granted bodily responses such as an early recognition of impending patient crisis as the result of perceptual acuity and pattern recognition, or anticipatory nausea experienced by a patient approaching a chemotherapy situation.

Leonard (1994, p.53) uses the analogy of ill-health to demonstrate the concept of pre-reflective embodied knowing:

Our everyday lived experience in which the embodied self is taken for granted breaks down in illness. Our ready-to-hand understanding of ourselves as embodied doesn't work for us anymore. Thus it is in this state of "breakdown" that we develop insight into the taken-for-granted understanding of health: the unity of self and healthy body.

Summary

Benner expounds the philosophy of Heidegger and Gadamer in order to reveal understandings that are embedded in ordinary everyday practices. The methods she and other interpretive phenomenologists use may be different but they all have similarities which emanate from:

a shared understanding of what it means to be an embodied human-being that is self-interpreting and that takes a stand on being a particular finite human being in particular communities at a particular time in history (Dreyfus 1994, p.vii).

Benner's works bring alive the philosophy of Heidegger, Gadamer, Dreyfus and Taylor, as she relates their work to the world of nursing.

Indeed, I would suggest that Benner's research, along with other interpretive phenomenologists, is the antithesis to Romanyshyn's (1992) view (referred to earlier in this chapter) because they are all researchers who are *embodied, engaged* and *concerned* about the world they explore.

Conclusion

I have chosen to inquire into the meaning of chronic illness by using interpretive phenomenology, a methodology underpinned by the philosophers, Gadamer and Heidegger, and the nursing scholar, Benner. The main attraction of this approach for me is the return to ontological meanings as expressed existentially. By this I mean a return to first knowledges or understandings, which are demonstrated in everyday comportment, before the application of theories.

When nursing, I have experienced a measure of frustration applying abstract theories to practice, for they do not seem to suit the changeable and complex world of everyday nursing. I have always appreciated the established skill and artistry involved in nursing but it is only since reading Benner's work, some ten years ago now, and in studying philosophy in more depth that I see how this can be achieved. In similar vein I do not wish to impose theoretical ideas about what it is to experience chronic illness upon the chronically ill. I wish to examine their life-worlds and find what they experience and share.

Heidegger's work points me in the direction of the participants' experiences in their world and the meanings they make of their experiences. I will now seek *modes* of being chronically ill. In other words, I will seek answers to questions like the following: *How is it possible to be chronically ill?* and *What does it mean to be chronically ill?* I will not ask these questions directly of the participants but of the texts created from accounts (mine in field notes and theirs in transcriptions of their stories) of their everyday actions. These actions are set existentially and are conditioned by the person's position in time and space. These actions will demonstrate what matters through the basic mode of being: care. Gadamer shows how to converse with the texts, to be open to them, and to be aware of one's own viewpoint while trying to understand another's, and how to be honest and to truly attempt to produce a *good* understanding of the situation. Benner shows me how to relate and share this work in the world of nursing '... to make the concerns, voice, habits, and practices of people visible ...' (Benner 1994b, p.123).

Chapter 4

Method

Introduction

The methodology underpinning this research is a philosophical one. Over and over again both Heidegger (1962) and Gadamer (1994) insist that they are writing philosophically rather than methodologically. It is therefore left to the researcher to find a means of relating their two philosophies to the process of generating an ontological understanding through hermeneutical interpretation.

The absence of systematic methodical instructions for interpretive phenomenology has been both frustrating and liberating. These twin feelings have waxed and waned throughout the three years of the study. As I became increasingly familiar with the philosophy I grew in confidence and celebrated the opportunity to choose the pathways to understanding, but when it was difficult to know how to deal with the texts the security of rules and principles seemed attractive. There were times I agreed with May (1994, p.10) when she wrote: 'We talk about [insights] "emerging from the data"—which is garbage. We DRAG it out of the data!' However, from my experience, it is tempting to draw a comparison between the developing phenomenologist and the nurse. The novice looks for direction, rules and principles while the expert revels in the challenges of knowledgeable decision making (Benner 1984a).

There are methods for phenomenological research but they tend to be rigid and associated with Husserlian phenomenology. Bearing in mind the differences between Husserl's work and Heidegger's, it is quite possible to learn from the established methods and use them in an individually adapted way. Both Walters (1992) and Koch (1995) have chosen to do this in their respective interpretive phenomenological studies. However, they are both intellectually aware of the incompatibilities there are between these methods and the underlying assumptions in Heidegger's and Gadamer's work (Walters 1994b; Koch 1995).

The established methods for phenomenology have been developed by psychologists such as van Kaam (1959), Giorgi, Fischer and Murray (1975), Colaizzi (1978), and the sociologist, Schutz (1972). All these researchers give interesting accounts which may be helpful when deciding how to go about researching a phenomenon. However, it is

necessary to be mindful of the methodological foundations of each author's work. It is possible to find the method described to be at odds with the stated philosophical position of one's own work. For example, bracketing is not a technique that someone would use if they were informed by Heidegger's (1962) analysis of 'forestructure' or Gadamer's (1994) notion of 'prejudice'.

Possibly the most established and used method for phenomenology in nursing is that of Parse (1981). She was heavily influenced by van Kaam and Giorgi who were fellow academics at the Duquesne University in Pittsburgh. Parse's (1981) method is structured and organised in order, sequentially, to move knowledge from the existential world of the participants to the extrapolation of abstract and generalisable principles and theories. It was not my intention to theorise in this way. I wanted to keep the understanding and expression of chronic illness as near to the lived world as possible.

Madison (1990, p.25) appreciates Gadamer's (1994) reluctance to impose objective rules on the art of interpretation. He does not believe that good interpretation is the result of 'mastering' a set of rules but rather that it is an artistic skill (p.29). However, Madison (1990) can see the need for a middle ground between fixed rules and judgements and interpretations which are '... gratuitous or the result of subjective whim' (p.28).and therefore calls for 'method in a normative sense' (p.28). He would like to see judgement guided by principles which have to be applied artistically according to the situation. He would see method as a '... system whose purpose it is to orient action'. In similar vein Packer and Addison (1989, p.277) write '... we have argued that there are indeed no procedures for interpreting. But this hardly implies that interpretations are "divinatory".' They (Packer & Addison 1989, p.277) recommend a process of preparation for entering the hermeneutic circle whereby the researcher has considered the 'forestructure' in terms of their own prejudices and is prepared to negotiate and converse with the texts.

In harmony with Madison (1990), van Manen (1990) writes artistically and convincingly in order to guide interpretation. He manages to balance both the freedom to research in the way the researcher feels is right and to incorporate a more structured form of design which guides the researcher's path. He describes six stages to the method as:

1. turning to a phenomenon which seriously interests us and commits us to the world;
2. investigating experience as we live it rather than as we conceptualize it;
3. reflecting on the essential themes which characterize the phenomenon;
4. describing the phenomenon through the art of writing and rewriting;
5. maintaining a strong and oriented pedagogical [nursing] relation to the phenomenon; and
6. balancing the research context by considering parts and whole (van Manen 1990, pp.30–31).

van Manen's method has been used by Thaniwattananon (1995). His work is impressive and easy to follow and he, too, encourages the researcher to follow her/his intuition. In the early stages of this study I used van Manen's method; that is, in terms of turning to the phenomenon in the field and being prepared to be involved and committed to the project and the participants who were to help me.

Benner (1994b) and Place (1992), in useful work, demonstrate how the philosophical underpinnings of interpretive phenomenology guide choices of method. They both encourage the researcher to be flexible and creative in her/his ways of interpretation. Taylor (1994b, pp.54–63) undertakes a useful analysis of the various methods and assumptions underpinning phenomenology and proceeds to create and describe the method she adopted for uncovering ordinariness in nursing. Her method was clearly informed by other people's work but it is distinctively her own way of revealing ordinariness in nursing.

Following Taylor (1994b) I start the process of the research with a summary of the practical implications for the conduct of the research. These implications arise from the methodology which was explored in depth in the last chapter. The other stages of the process of the research which follow from, and are faithful to, these assumptions are described and explained in the rest of the chapter.

Summary of the philosophical base for the characteristics of interpretive phenomenology

This summary is adapted from Packer and Addison (1989, p.16) who use the ideas to compare hermeneutics with the perspectives of rationalism and empiricism. They contend that each kind of perspective develops the field in question, and hence the design of the study, in different ways. This exercise displays how a common reality (ie the social everyday world) is viewed from different angles. For the interpretive phenomenologist these are the underlying assumptions which mould the characteristics of the study.

The field of inquiry

The understandings to be revealed are hidden in the everyday actions of people in their world. The actions are laid out in the texts or text analogues.

Foundation of knowledge

The origin of knowledge is embedded in actions. Pre-reflective practical understandings are the manifestation of *a priori* knowing.

Explanation—mode of expression

Storytelling of everyday accounts which are converted to text.

Explanation—means of analysis and interpretation

Understandings are revealed through a process of dialogical conversations and questioning of the texts.

Method—relationship to the natural world

The researcher is fully involved with, and committed to, coming to understand the phenomenon within the context in which it is experienced. The understandings are developed as the perspectives of the interpreter/researcher and the participants in the study are fused.

Method—trustworthiness of the explanations

The degree to which it is judged that light has been thrown on the research question and better understanding of the phenomenon is achieved through the fusion of horizons or perspectives on the phenomenon.

Turning to the field of study

By the field of study I mean the part of Australia in which the work was done and the people involved. It also includes the means by which these people came to work with me and were introduced to the research project.

Entering the field

The context of the study has been described in chapter two. In line with interpretive phenomenology, this study focused on the discovery and understanding of the phenomenon of chronic illness by thoroughly examining people's everyday experiences in their context (action in context).

The twelve months preparation for the fieldwork was a useful time. No opportunity was lost in terms of getting to know local people and learning about the area. Some modifications to the original design of the study were made in light of dawning understandings about, and increasing familiarity with, the area and the people who lived there. For example, it felt right to confine the study to rural New South Wales. Originally there was an intention to collect some information from people living in the cities too. When it became apparent that there were specific rural issues affecting the experience of chronic illness which warranted examination, I changed my mind.

The participants

The people who helped with this study volunteered. There was only a minimum of selection criteria and it was necessary that:

1. they were over eighteen
2. they were able to speak English
3. they had direct experience of the phenomenon
4. they indicated a willingness to participate in the study by giving their written consent following an explanation of the study and the nature of their required participation.

There were three ways that attention to the study was sought:

1. advertisements in local newspapers in Armidale and Tamworth
2. a short newspaper report (see Appendix 2)
3. a local radio interview.

The participants in the study are introduced in a variety of ways in the thesis. As explained in the ethics section I did not wish to have one part in the thesis where all the participants were presented. I was worried that this might draw attention to them and make it easier for them to be recognised by anyone reading it who lived locally. Instead I have spread the introductions throughout the thesis, meaning that it is more likely that people will have to read the entire document before coming across all the participants. Thumbnail sketches of the participants would have also meant presenting such functional particulars as names, ages and diagnoses. It was my intention to introduce them more sympathetically and personally than that. In chapter five, six people are introduced with full case histories and in chapter seven there are footnotes to introduce each new participant. In chapters eight and nine there are three stories which reveal more about three of the participants.

The number of participants in the study was influenced by a few things. In the initial planning the intention was to work with approximately thirty people. However, as the fieldwork progressed it became apparent that this number would be difficult to cope with practically. Many of the interviews lasted well over an hour so the volume of texts expanded quickly and it was evident that enough information had been collected in order to begin the hermeneutic interpretation of the narratives. Benner (1994b, p.107) concedes that some practical concerns do govern the number of participants in a study. Her studies involve large numbers of participants and, compared to this study, she has a team of researchers to help manage the information. The manageable number of participants and resulting texts ensured that there was time to become involved with the participants and to engage in interpretive conversations with the texts.

Eighteen people responded to the calls for participants and it was decided that it was unnecessary to attract more with alternative schemes. It would have been possible to find more participants if I had requested the help of healthcare professionals. However, there

was a reluctance to ask professionals for introductions to likely participants because it would have meant that the professionals could define who was chronically ill and legitimate their chronically ill status. There was every intention in the study to avoid relating chronic illness to a medical diagnosis because it was the experience of being ill which was sought.

Being with the participants

The initial contact with people was by telephone. During the conversation an appointment was set for me to go to their house and meet with them informally. The aim of the first visit was mainly social. It was an opportunity for the person to meet me and decide whether they wanted to share their experiences.

I would tell them about my circumstances, that I was a British nurse who had come to Australia specifically to do this research. I used to emphasise that my work to date, although it had included teaching appointments, was practical and that my interest in the topic of chronic illness arose from the work I had been doing lately on an acute medical ward. It was explained to them how it had struck me that ill people were dealing with and coping in situations which I knew too little about. While I believe I provided a good service in hospital and attempted to plan for discharge well, it had become apparent to me that I was not aware enough of the experiences of people living day to day with their illnesses. I explained that the purpose of the study was to uncover or reveal the experiences people had of chronic illness and to provide a graphically detailed account of what it meant to live with chronic illness. It was important for them to know that I intended to use the information with nurses with the intention of increasing nurses' understanding of the everyday lives of the chronically ill.

We talked about the tape recordings. Some people needed reassurance about talking into a recorder. They were told that the recordings would probably be done on two occasions but that this arrangement was flexible. More or less time recording their stories of chronic illness would be acceptable. The people were also reassured that they could change the materials if they wanted to after the recordings. Zoe, one of the participants, requested that I wipe the first recording we made and this was done immediately.

The process of the Ethics Committee was explained. Each participant was asked to consider that my main role was that of researcher rather than therapist. I told them that while it was possible they might find the experience of relating their illness experiences therapeutic, this was not the main purpose of my visit. As it turned out this was a rather naive attempt on my part to differentiate between my role as nurse and that of researcher. I had intended by doing this to try and avoid disappointment when the research relationships were finished. This matter is discussed in the ethical section of this chapter.

A plain language statement (Appendix 3) and the consent form (Appendix 4) were left behind for people to read at their leisure. An arrangement was made to telephone them at another time to see if they wanted to help with the work. Each person who was visited agreed to help with the study. The first visit was extremely useful in terms of getting to know each other and ensuring that both parties felt comfortable together.

Turning to experience as lived

Phenomenological research aims at establishing a renewed contact with original experience. Merleau-Ponty (1962, p.viii) showed that turning to the phenomena of lived experience means re-learning to look at the world by re-awakening the basic experience of the world. This turning to some abiding concern of lived experience has been called a turning “to the things themselves” (van Manen 1990, p.31).

To find this original experience I became involved with the participants in the study. I visited their homes, met their families and pets and encouraged them to tell me about their everyday lives. I tape recorded their stories and made fieldnotes.

From stories to text

Getting the participants to talk about their lives was not difficult. I had no interview protocol but just encouraged them to keep talking about the things they wanted to. The way I did this was similar to the way I encourage patients to talk with me in the hospital. For years I had talked with patients and listened to them attentively. I knew that if I could understand their circumstances I was more likely to be able to offer them appropriate therapy. Indeed Frank (1991, p.47) contends that, ‘The caregiver’s art is finding a way to allow the ill person to express his [sic] needs.’ Taylor (1994b, p.50) and Benner (1994a) make the connection between the art of research as phenomenologists and the art of nursing. Hutchinson and Wilson (1994) investigate the difference between the therapeutic interview and the research interview. They find marked similarities and propose that it is possible that the participant could benefit through research. However, they maintain that the main focus of the researcher is upon science.

Hutchinson and Wilson (1994, p.304) review the role of the interviewer in phenomenological research and note that the interviewer rarely speaks but encourages the participant to carry on talking. Review of the tape recordings in this study show that I, too, rarely speak.

The length of each recording did not vary a great deal. Usually the participants talked for about forty-five minutes. There were some notable exceptions, however. The tapes were transcribed as soon as possible afterwards. I attempted to have the transcript ready for the participant to read by the time I saw them for the second interview. I quite quickly found

that this was a difficult and unnecessary exercise. The participants were not particularly interested in reading their whole transcript. Indeed, they disliked reading their 'umms' and 'errs'. Sarah even wanted to correct hers until I reassured her that it was not necessary. In the second half of the study I prepared a summary of the first transcripts for each person and shared this report with her/him before embarking on the second session.

During the fieldwork, which lasted officially from March 1993 to November 1993, there were seventy-nine visits and thirty-six tape recordings made. I transcribed the tape recordings myself. This was useful in order to ensure anonymity for the participants as I was able to remove all identifying names. It also enabled me to begin the process of becoming thoroughly immersed in the stories.

Fieldnotes as text

I began to record fieldnotes in order to describe and elaborate on the participants' contexts. I would describe their houses and the way they appeared at home. After each visit I would record the details of the visit including my subjective impressions. I would critically reflect upon the way I had helped and encouraged the participant to talk.

The participants told me stories off the tape, too, so I used the fieldnotes to record these accounts. A great deal of valuable information was saved using this method of recording the extra things participants told me about their life worlds. The fieldnotes were recorded in two books and then later, straight onto Macintosh computer discs (eg fldnte:2.3 refers to page three, book two).

Ethical considerations

Before starting any fieldwork it was necessary to obtain ethical approval from the Deputy Vice-Chancellor's Advisory Committee on Ethics in Experimentation on Human Participants and the School of Health's Research and Higher Degree Committee. These Committees are entrusted to ensure that research studies involving people are conducted: a) without harming the people in any way; b) with informed consent of the participants; and c) with an academically sound methodology and design. Approval was given (see Appendix 5) for fieldwork to be undertaken between March 1993 and November 1993.

In terms of protecting the participants from harm, the application to both ethics committees addressed issues of confidentiality, information giving, obtaining consent and dealing with any distress the conversations with the researcher may bring to the surface. I prepared a plain language statement for potential participants and a consent form (see Appendices 3 and 4 respectively).

Before embarking on the project I thought carefully about the power relationships in the research process. I did not wish to exploit the people who helped me by adopting what Oakley (1993, p.234) terms 'an attitude towards interviewees as sources of data'. I did believe that the relationship between myself and the participants could be a reciprocal one. I did not collect the information purely for myself. It was a process that had the potential to help all of the participants reassess and express themselves through recounting their experiences with chronic illness.

Moral dilemmas occurred during the course of the study which had not been anticipated. For example, changing people's names did not guarantee anonymity. The fieldwork was undertaken in the vicinity of two small rural cities and it was possible that the people with the rarer conditions and distinctive histories could be recognised. As this problem cropped up I discussed it with the participants and in order to conceal their true identity we changed certain personal details. The decision to omit a list of thumbnail sketches of the participants from the thesis also helped to secure their anonymity. Another precaution was to do the transcribing of the texts myself.

A larger dilemma occurred in terms of breaking off relationships with people after the information had been gathered. Despite clarifying and discussing my role with the participants, some of them were disappointed when I finished working with them for the research. With hindsight this disappointment was quite predictable. On the whole, the participants found the telling of their stories to an attentive listener a worthwhile and enjoyable experience. They looked forward to my visits and missed me when I stopped coming.

I thought I was being honest when I explained I was not offering therapy but that I thought they may find talking about their experiences beneficial. I knew there were time constraints, and I felt it was unfair to offer support or therapy which I would not see through to a satisfactory conclusion. In reality, I summed up each situation as it occurred. No matter what I said in terms of my purpose and what I had to offer, those participants who felt in need asked me for help or information because everything else, besides those words of caution, intimated that I was capable and willing to help if I could (my history as a nurse, the attention I paid to them, the caring concern for them which I felt). Some people did not need any nursing help but some did and when it was appropriate I gave the help, and when not I urged them or helped them to contact the right people. This was not always confined to the fieldwork period. Indeed, I continued to visit some of the participants up until the time I left Armidale. However, it was not possible to do this with everyone and I did feel a sense of having let some people down. Intuitively, I felt that the level of involvement I reached with some participants was right and my resolve was

supported by Oakley (1993, p.236), who was prepared to answer women's questions and to become involved with participants in her studies.

I was faced with a problem which concerned me greatly with one of the participants who is introduced in the next chapter. Linda has had untreated epilepsy since her teens. The number of grand mal fits she has is beginning to increase. She still drives a car and refuses treatment because she does not want to lose her licence. To protect Linda I will not reveal in the study precisely how we continued to work together. I still saw her when the research was, to all intents and purposes, finished in order to help her. At this time I stopped taking fieldnotes and have not used any of the further experiences we shared in the study. She has now left the area and is not contactable.

It is likely that problems like the ones I encountered and did not anticipate may occur during the course of studies similar to this one. It has been useful to regard the ethical process of the research as one that needs to be reviewed as the work progresses. It was my responsibility to be wary and address problems as they arose. I was aware that the 'one off' approval by the university ethics committee did not exonerate me from further responsibility. Discussions with my supervisor have been important in order to work through the dilemmas as they occurred.

The hermeneutic circle

Packer and Addison (1989, p.278) describe preparation for entering the circle. This involves a review of the researcher's personal perspective and a commitment to finding reciprocity and negotiation of meanings among the horizons of understanding.

Assumptions and expectations

The most dominant of my prejudices on entering this study was a passion for nursing. My practice over twenty years has taught me the power of therapeutic nursing and the benefits which can be achieved with clients and nurses working as partners (FitzGerald 1990; 1991a; 1991b; 1994; Vaughan & FitzGerald 1992). Tertiary education has given me the chance to study nursing and the nursing theorists have substantiated my views on the ideals worth striving for; that is, a client centred service delivered by sensitive, skilful and knowledgeable nurses who are prepared to work in partnership with clients and their families. I am committed to finding ways of generating new knowledge as well as appreciating extant knowledge for nursing. These are knowledges which hopefully can accommodate the complexity and reality of the world (FitzGerald, in press).

I have had little experience working in the community; however, I suspect from stories like Ms Thorne's, that people do struggle on with their health related problems until they

require the physical assistance of a community or district nurse. I suspect that they might be helped sooner if they were referred routinely to a community nurse who could provide them with a longitudinal individualised service.

The groundwork that I did in preparation for chapter two taught me a great deal about rural Australia and the healthcare service in this country. I cannot help but draw contrasts with the National Health Service in the United Kingdom, although I concede that it has been considerably undermined recently. I am opposed to a fee at the point of delivery service system and believe that it is contrary to the needs of chronically ill people who might well benefit from more attention from their doctors. In the present system both doctors and clients are aware of time clocking up money and this is a pressure which is not conducive to the expression of worries or complex symptoms associated with chronic illness.

The background to the study

As Benner (1994b, p.104) explains, some notion of the cultural and social background to a study is necessary because:

The goal of interpretive phenomenology is to uncover commonalities and differences, not private idiosyncratic events or understandings. In rational empirical studies, the strategy for achieving patterns, trends, and commonalities is to decontextualize, that is, to objectify by removing all the historical, timing, and world aspects that will create accurate predictions when circumstances or self-understandings do not change or when learning or transformation does not occur.

In looking for ‘commonalities and differences’ it was pertinent to look to the circumstances in which shared cultural meanings arise and thereby constitute people’s circumstances and reactions.

Whole stories

When first confronted with the texts I asked the question—*Who is this person? What are they doing? What does this portray? How does it relate to their life with chronic illness?* I was attempting to draw a picture of the person with chronic illness. For each of the participants I wrote a case study, six of which are presented in chapter five. These are descriptive case studies with only a superficial amount of interpretation.

At the end of the case studies I wrote down impressive words. These words were the start of the analysis and the hermeneutical interpretation. It was an attempt to find some similarities and differences among the participants.

Sorting particular parts

All the transcripts were typed and then read while listening to the tapes. This served three purposes: it made me more familiar with the texts and was an opportunity to check for

accuracy and any distinguishing marks which may have identified the particular participant.

The transcripts were then introduced to the computer program NUD*IST 3. NUD*IST is a software system for managing and organising qualitative research data (Richards, Richards, McGalliard & Sharrock 1992). Once in the program the texts were divided into text units which were numbered. This numbering has ensured that all the parts of text used in the thesis have been coded and are easily relocated in the original transcription. This simple and practical application of coding facilitated the hermeneutical task of moving consistently from the whole to the part and back again. The initial sorting of the texts described below resulted in two groups of texts—parts and wholes. The parts were extracts from the participants' transcripts pertaining to one idea, for example, 'aleness', 'anger', 'fighting spirit'. The wholes were the entire transcripts from all the participants.

All quotes from the transcriptions are in italics and followed by a code number. The participants' individual texts are lettered Z to G (Zoe—Sallyanne), the text units are one line each. Therefore (Nc:99–103) is a four line piece (99–103) from Peggy's story (N) early in the third (c) recording.

Guided by the 'impressive words' generated from the case studies, I sorted the texts into conceptual groups; that is, when 'loneliness' was mentioned in the text I would index the text at a node¹ entitled 'loneliness'. As the texts were re-read on the computer screen some new ideas emerged and these were added to the list of nodes being built. It was important that the texts were still throwing up ideas, otherwise the preliminary list of 'impressive words' could have imposed a rigidity upon the analysis. I might then have only searched the texts for those ideas and ignored new ones that had not struck me when writing the initial case studies. Predominantly this was an analytical combing and sorting exercise—it was not hermeneutical interpretation. At this stage there were only superficial conversations with the texts as the principal task was to sort the texts into 'parts'.

The arrangement of the interpretation within the horizons of time

The interpretation of the texts is presented in chapters six, seven and eight. The past is generally referred to in chapter six, 'Histories', the present in chapter seven, 'Lives' and the not yet in chapter eight, 'Futures'. This arrangement was chosen as a backdrop to

¹A node is the term used in the NUD*IST program for the collection of data relating to specific topics, for example 'loneliness'.

meanings which began to emerge from the texts. Gelven (1989, pp.196–197) explains the arrangement of horizons of time well:

The term “horizon” as used by Heidegger seems to mean: the total range of possible modes of significance for a particular ekstasis [sic]. The present’s horizon is the in-order-to. This means that whenever I involve myself with the world as ready-at-hand (equipment) and perform actions and declare situations (which is what the present means existentially), I do so in terms of a kind of purpose (why was this action done? In-order-to accomplish such-and-such). The horizon of the present, then, is the in-order-to. The horizon of the past is the in-face-of-which, which declares and establishes moods and states of mind.

Significance is related to meaning. The way the world is lived by people corresponds to the significance of the past, the present and the future; that is, the temporality of Being. Adapting Gelven’s (1989, p.186) interpretation of Heidegger the modes of understanding which emanate from the *ecstases* are: the past—remembering and forgetting, the present—actions and situations, and the future—anticipation and waiting. In an attempt to maintain the understandings emerging in this study as realistically as possible, I chose to arrange them along the horizons of time rather than in themes. Themes tend to develop into all encompassing statements or definitions of reality. This is a legitimate and useful way of presenting human experience but it was not how I wanted to do it in this ontological existential study. My intention was to present the people’s experience in the most realistic and therefore necessarily complex way. I had no intention of simplifying experience but I did wish to organise it in an intelligible way.

Interpretation and presentation

Writing is an integral part of hermeneutical interpretation (van Manen 1990, p.32). The first superficial part of the interpretation in this study was the writing of the case studies presented in chapter five. Each time I came up with a possible idea which needed uncovering I returned to the individuals in the study and sought elucidation of the idea by writing about an individual’s experience. Some of these writings are used in the thesis. In chapter six I use the excerpts from Pam’s and Dr Craig’s histories; in chapter seven Pam’s and Paul’s stories are presented as examples of situations of struggle and difficulties directly related to their chronic illness states. In chapter eight I recount one of my own experiences with Sarah, one of the participants. Besides being important in terms of developing understanding through textual presentation, the stories relating to individuals are an example of the return to the whole from the parts of the study.

Once the material from the texts had been organised it was possible to start the process of questioning and conversing with it, thereby to pursue particular lines of inquiry and to uncover the meanings embedded in the ‘ways of Being’ or existentials of the participants.

This was done by a process of moving from what was already known in a fairly superficial way to a deeper understanding. As the nodes in NUD*IST began to fill, it was possible to investigate the snippets of material in each one and then refer back to whole stories presented by each participant.

Packer and Addison (1989, p.275) describe a process in hermeneutical interpretation. In their description of the hermeneutic circle they write about two arcs of the circle; that is, a forward arc of projection and a backward arc of uncovering. By 'projection' they mean 'projection of the researcher's notion of the possible meanings' and by 'uncovering' they mean 'revealing', or in their words "uncovering" how these ideas came to be'. The backward arc is the means by which it is possible to evaluate to some extent the trustworthiness of the study. The large chunks of the participants' texts and reference to fieldnotes represent this backward reflective part of the circle.

Chronic illness literature

In phenomenological studies, to a greater or lesser extent, researchers may use extant literature to illustrate the understandings being generated in the study. I chose to use the literature written by people who were experiencing chronic illness. This was rather than the theoretical literature which emanates from the plethora of research around the subject of chronic illness.

I found that the literature written by people with chronic illness could be used to potentiate the feelings and emotions I wanted to convey to readers of this study. These authors' ability to write the most moving stories and poems added to the wealth of material supplied by the participants in the study. Predominantly I used the following texts: Register (1987), Olson (1993), Keith (1994a), Frankl (1985) and Frank (1991).

While some of the more formal literature is referred to in the interpretation, I maintained a reluctance to simplify or generalise (which is what commonly happens in conventional research studies) the information contained in the study. An example would be Thorne's (1993, p.107) theory of patient/doctor relationships. Thorne categorises these and I may have related Elizabeth's relationship between her specialist and herself as one of 'hero worship,' for it did bear some of those hallmarks. However, what led Elizabeth to describe him this way—'*There is not a patient there doesn't love him. There isn't a patient there that he hasn't got the time of day for. No problem is too great to ask him.*' (Ib:776–779)—should not be simplified to the rather demeaning label of 'hero worship' for it is far more interesting, complex, important and real for that.

Throughout chapters five, six, seven and eight there are large pieces of the participants' texts included in order to illustrate the understanding which emerged from the texts. This

thesis is truly co-written by a nurse and eighteen people with chronic illness. My emerging understanding and their contributions are the evidence of the fusion of our horizons.

Trustworthiness of the study

A great deal has been written about the quality of qualitative research. It is now fairly widely accepted that traditional scientific criteria for evaluation, such as reliability, validity and so on, are not applicable to new paradigm works (Reason & Rowan 1981; Benner 1994a; Denzin & Lincoln 1994).

Leonard (1994, p.61) makes this sensible remark regarding the quality of phenomenological studies:

Certainly, interpretive researchers agree that there are better and worse interpretive studies. A study can be judged by how carefully the question is framed and the initial interpretive stance laid out, how carefully the data collection is accomplished and documented, and how rigorously the interpretive effort goes beyond publicly available understandings of a problem to reveal new and deeper possibilities for understanding.

Ray (1994, p.130) refers to the 'credibility' of phenomenological research and considers that the reactions which studies elicit are important criteria for success. van Manen (1990) refers to the 'phenomenological nod' that is the moment when the audience concurs with what is being written or said about the reality of the phenomenon.

More formally, Koch (1994) considers the notion of trustworthiness in qualitative research and especially the hermeneutical work that she undertook. She (1994, p.976), like Ray (1994), maintains that the judgement of trustworthiness is in the hands of the research reader. It is the researcher's responsibility to demonstrate or provide an audit of the decisions made in the process of the study; that is, 'the events, influences and actions of the researcher' (p.976).

Madison (1990, pp.28–29) offers a list of principles to be considered when evaluating interpretive work. His ideas are a good compromise between the two positions of intuitive feelings for the credibility of the work and the more systematic audit of the processes. In the last part of the thesis his principles are considered in the light of the completed thesis. Once again, the principles are:

- a. coherence
- b. comprehensiveness
- c. penetration
- d. thoroughness
- e. appropriateness

- f. contextuality
- g. agreement (1)
- h. agreement (2)
- i. suggestiveness
- j. potential (Madison 1990, pp.29–30).

Conclusion

The method for this study is informed by the methodology examined and presented in chapter three of this work. It is the underlying philosophical assumptions of interpretive phenomenology which guide the process of the study. This type of foundation to the process of the work allows the researcher considerable freedom to choose the means by which the understandings of everyday life with chronic illness are to be uncovered, that is, revealed from amidst their usual hiding place in ordinary everyday comportment.