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Abstract

This paper traces the development of phenomenology as a philosophy originating

from the writings of Husserl to its use in phenomenological research. The key issues

of phenomenological reduction and bracketing are also discussed as they play a

pivotal role in the how phenomenological research studies are approached. What has

become to be known as "new" phenomenology is also explored and the key

differences between it and "traditional" phenomenology are discussed. van Manen's

phenomenology is also considered in light of its contemporary popularity among

nurse researchers.

Keywords: Phenomenology, Husserl, van Manen, phenomenological reduction,
bracketing.

1. Introduction

An examination of the philosophical basis of knowledge development is an essential component of nursing scholarship (Packard & Polifroni 2002). Phenomenology has become a dominant means in the pursuit of knowledge development in nursing. However, the term "Phenomenology", although used frequently in nursing scholarship, is accompanied by confusion surrounding its nature. Firstly, it is not only a research method as that employed frequently by qualitative researchers; it is also a philosophy. Secondly, there are as many styles of phenomenology as there are phenomenologists (Spiegelberg 1982). There are a number of schools of phenomenology, and even though they all have some commonalities, they also have distinct features. Furthermore, the many perspectives of phenomenology locates its various forms in the positivist (Husserl), post positivist (Merleau-Ponty), interpretivist (Heidegger) and constructivist (Gadamer) paradigms (Racher and Robinson 2003). Finally, a type of phenomenology as a research method, which has evolved in the US, known as new phenomenology (Crotty 1996) is evident of a transformation that has occurred in phenomenology as a research method utilised by nurses. This paper adds clarification to the blurred boundaries of phenomenology as a philosophy and as a research method. This paper aims to unravel the origins of phenomenology as a philosophy to its adoption as a methodological approach and its subsequent transformation into what is known as new phenomenology. It is hoped that by taking the reader on this dual philosophical and methodological journey, a deeper understanding of an often perplexing issue will ensue.

2. Philosophy of phenomenology

2.1 The phenomenology of Husserl

Phenomenology arose as a philosophy in Germany before World War 1 and has since occupied a prominent position in modern philosophy. It challenged the dominant views on the origin and nature of truth of the time. The word phenomenon comes from the Greek *phaenesthai,* to flare up, to show itself, to appear (Moustakas 1994). Thus the motto of phenomenology: "*Zu den Sachen"* which means both "to the things themselves" and "let's get down to what matters!" (van Manen 1990, p 184).

The term phenomenology was used by philosophy texts in the eighteenth century, especially by Kant and later by Hegal, who made the most prominent use of the term when it featured in the title of his 1807 work "*Phenomenology of Spirit"* (Moran 2000). However, the inspiration for Husserl's use of the term was neither Kant nor Hegal, but Franz Brentano (Moran 2000).

Brentano (1838-1917) employed the phrase "descriptive psychology or descriptive phenomenology" and this provided the most important intellectual motivation for Husserl's development of phenomenology (Moran 2000). Husserl adopted Brentano's account of *intentionality* as the fundamental concept for understanding and classifying conscious acts and experiential mental practices (Moustakas 1994). Intentionality is the principle that every mental act is related to some object (Moran 2000), and implies that all perceptions have meaning (Owen 1994). All thinking i.e. "imagining, perceiving, remembering etc" is always thinking about something (van Manen 1990,

p.182). Intentionality therefore refers to the internal experience of being conscious of something (Moustakas 1994).

Husserl's goals are strongly epistemological and he regarded experience the fundamental source of knowledge (Racher and Robinson 2003). For Husserl, the aim of phenomenology is the rigorous and unbiased study of things *as they appear* in order to arrive at an essential understanding of human consciousness and experience (Valle et al 1989). In order to hold subjective perspectives and theoretical constructs in abeyance and facilitate the essence of the phenomena to emerge, Husserl devised phenomenological reduction (Racher and Robinson 2003).

2.2 Phenomenological reduction

A key epistemological strategy of phenomenology is the concept of phenomenological reduction. Phenomenological reduction was proposed by Husserl, revised by Heidegger, reinvented by Merleau-Ponty and endorsed by Levinas with an ethical emphasis (Moran 2000). However, Jean-Paul Sarte (1905-1980) rejects much of Husserl's reduction, arguing that it is impossible to carry out a complete reduction.

Husserl (1970) argues that the "lifeworld" *(Lebenswelt)* is understood as what individuals experience pre-reflectively, without resorting to interpretations. Lived experience involves the immediate, pre-reflective consciousness of life (Dilthey 1985). Therefore, an attempt is made to understand the essential features of a phenomenon as free as possible from cultural context. Moran (2000) explains this as: "Explanations are not to be imposed before the phenomena have been understood from within" (p. 4). This point is key to understanding the phenomenology of Husserl.

The focus in on the primeval form, what is immediate to our consciousness, "…before we have applied ways of understanding or explaining it. It is experience as it is before we have thought about it" (Crotty 1996, p. 95). Therefore, Husserl's phenomenological view requires that descriptions of experience be gleaned before it has been reflected on (Caelli 2000).

Phenomenological reduction involves transcending what is termed the "*natural attitude*" to the *"transcendental attitude"* by the process of *bracketing* (Heidegger 1962). The use of the term "reduction" quite literally means that the person " reduces the world as it is considered in the natural attitude to a world of pure phenomena or, more poetically, to a purely phenomenal realm" (Valle et al 1989 p. 11).

Husserl uses the term "natural" to indicate what is original, naïve, prior to critical or theoretical reflection (van Manen 1990). In the natural attitude individuals hold knowledge judgementally but epoche requires a fresh way of looking at things (Moustakas 1994). Epoche is a Greek word meaning to refrain from judgement or stay away from the everyday, commonplace way of perceiving things (Moustakas 1994). However, in order to bracket one's preconceptions and presuppositions, one must firstly make them overt, and render them as clear as possible (Valle et al 1989).

Spiegelberg (1982) identifies *phenomenological intuiting* as the heart of phenomenological reduction. This is an eidetic understanding of what is meant in the description of the phenomenon under investigation (Scheubert and Carpenter 2003). This is described by Parse (2001) as "the process of coming to know the phenomenon as it shows itself as described by the participants (p. 79). This involves the

phenomenologist attempting to meet the phenomenon as free and as unprejudiced as possible in order that the phenomenon present itself as free and as unprejudiced way as possible so that it can be precisely described and understood.

3. Phenomenological reduction and phenomenological research

Polkinghorne (1983) suggests a two –step process for phenomenological reduction based on the work of Husserl. This is achieved by firstly free (imaginative) variation which leads the researcher to a description of the essential structures (essence) of the phenomena, without which it would not exist. Essence is what makes a thing what is (and without which it would not be what it is) (van Manen 1990). Following this, the researcher then focuses on the concrete experience itself and describes how the particular experience is constructed (intentional analysis) (Polkinghorne 1983).

Imaginative variation is described by Spiegelberg (1982) as a sort of mental experimentation in which the researcher intentionally alters via their imagination, different aspects of the experience, by either taking from or adding to the proposed transformation. The point of this exercise is to "imaginatively stretch the proposed transformation to the edges until it no longer describes the experience underlying the subject's naive description" (Polkinghorne 1989, p.55). van Manen (1990) describes the process succinctly as a concern to "…discover aspects of or qualities that make a phenomenon what it is and without which the phenomenon could not be what it is" (p.107); this process therefore verifies whether the theme belongs to a phenomenon essentially (rather then incidentally) (van Manen 1990). This process is not unlike determining the defining attributes and constructing a model case in the approach to concept analysis outlined by Walker and Avant (1995), as free imaginative variation

asks the question: "is this phenomenon still the same if we imaginatively change or delete this theme from the phenomenon?" (van Manen 1990, p.107). For example, Endacott (1997) utilises this strategy through imaginary conversations or scenarios in attempts to construct additional cases for her concept analysis of "need".

An adequate transformation should be publicly verifiable so that other researchers will agree that the transformed expression does describe a process that is contained in the original expression (Polkinghorne 1989). This is similar to what van Manen (1990) refers to as the "phenomenological nod" (p. 27) as a way of demonstrating that good phenomenological description is something that we can nod to, recognising it as an experience that we had or could have had.

The issue of phenomenological reduction is crucial to any discussion on what Crotty (1996) terms "new" phenomenology", labelled "scientific" by Giorgi (2000a) and "American" by Silverman (1987) (Table 1). Crotty (1996) argued that American phenomenology cannot be phenomenology as it does not adopt the epistemological situation regarded by Husserl as essential to Phenomenology. Paley (2002) also takes issue with nurse researchers use of phenomenology which he argues has resulted in the abandonment of scientific rigour. However, Rapport (2002) responds with a reminder that phenomenology is not an empirical analytic science but a human science in which the "object" can be defined and defined through the medium of "subject" and its relationships. This argument will be further discussed later.

4. The Phenomenology of Heidegger

Martin Heidegger (1889-1976) was also born in Germany. His hermeneutic phenomenology like Husserl's phenomenology is concerned with human experience as it is lived**.**

Heidegger agrees with Husserl's declaration "to the things themselves", but does not agree with Husserl's view of the importance of description rather than understanding (Racher 2003). He differs from Husserl in his views of how the lived experience is explored, and he advocates the utilisation of hermeneutics as a research method founded on the ontological view that lived experience is an interpretive process (Racher and Robinson 2003).

Heidegger's work *Being in Time,* published in 1927, proposes that consciousness is not separate from the world of human existence, and he argues for an existential adjustment to Husserl's writings that interprets essential structures such as basic categories of human experience rather than as pure, cerebral consciousness (Polkinghorne 1983). He is one of the first thinkers to combine existential matters with phenomenological methodology, being influenced by the Danish thinker Soren Kierkegaard (1813-1855) who is generally regarded as the founder of existential philosophy (Valle et al 1989).

Heidegger's focus is ontological and he believes that the primary phenomenon that concerned phenomenology was the meaning of Being (presence in the world) (Cohen and Omery 1994). To ask for the Being of something is to ask for the nature or meaning of that phenomenon (van Manen 1990). Heidegger also uses the phrase "Being-in-the-world" to refer to the way human beings exist, act, or are involved in the world (van Manen 1990). He argues that understanding is a reciprocal activity and proposed the concept of "hermeneutic circle" to illustrate this reciprocity (Koch 1996). The hermeneutic circle is viewed as one between preunderstanding and understanding which Alvesson and Skoldberg (2000) label "the circle of alethic hermeneutics" (page no), to differentiate it from the original so-called hermeneutic circle of the part related to the whole of objectivist hermeneutics. Historicality and the hermeneutic circle may be perceived as a "revisioning" (p 473) of phenomenological reduction, rather than a rejection of it as suggested by some (Racher and Robinson 2003). Interestingly, strict followers of Husserl's transcendental method would maintain that phenomenological research is pure description and that interpretive (hermeneutic) fits outside the limits of

phenomenological research (van Manen 1990). However, it is argued that "phenomenology without hermeneutics can become shallow" (Todres and Wheeler 2001, p.6).

Walsh (1999) utilises three existentials of Heidegger ("Being-with" as understanding; "Being-with" as possibility and "Being-with" as care-full concern) in his study of nurse-patient encounter in psychiatric care. He argues that "being-with" allows the nurse to share more fully in the human experience of the patient as it becomes part of their "shared humanity" (p.7).

It is not surprising that researchers from the caring movement such as Benner and Wrubel (1998) adopted Heideggerian philosophy in their study of caring in nursing. However, Bradshaw (1995) argues that Heideggarian philosophy does not provide a basis for the relationship on which care for others depends. Moreover, Paley (2002) describes such adoption as "ironic" in view of Heidegger's membership of the Nazi party for 11 years.

5. Merleu Ponty

Merleau -Ponty built on the writings of Husserl and Heidegger and argues that the objective of phenomenology is to describe the barest elements of human experience: "the things themselves" (Racher and Robinson 2003). In Merleau-Ponty's *Phenomenology of Perception,* the goal of phenomenology proposed is to rediscover first experience, which he terms as the "primacy of perception" (Racher and Robinson 2003). Like Husserl, Merleau Ponty advocates phenomenological reduction in order to reach an original awareness (Racher and Robinson 2003). The goal of Merleau-

Ponty's "phenomenology of origins" is to help us view our experience in a new light, not relying on the categories of our reflective experience; a pre-reflective experience (Moran 2000). However, he reinterprets reduction to avoid the idealist leanings of Husserl's, into his "special type of reduction- a return to the perceptual pre-conceptual experience of the child" (Moran 2000 p. 402). The usefulness of Merleau-Ponty's writings for nurse researchers is evident in the utilisation of van Manen's (1990) four existentials (*lived space* (spatiality), *lived body* (corporeality), *lived time* (temporality), and *lived human relation* (relationality or communality), are productive for the process of phenomenological questioning, reflecting and writing (van Manen 1990).These four categories have been considered as belonging to the fundamental structure of the lifeworld proposed by Merleau-Ponty in *Phenomenology of Perception.* Check for Philips work on ESSCO I think he used this framework.

6. Gadamer

Gadamer, with his work *Truth and Method,* followed on the work of Heidegger. The two central positions advanced by Gadamer are – (a) prejudgement (one's preconceptions or prejudices or horizon of meaning that is part of our linguistic experience and that make understanding possible) and (b) universality (the persons who express themselves and the persons who understand are connected by a common human consciousness, which makes understanding possible) (Ray 1994).

Gadamer (1989) argues that to understand does not mean an individual understands better (e.g. because of clearer thoughts on the subject being understood); rather, an individual understands in a different way. He also argues that the detachment of our

fruitful prejudices that facilitate understanding from our prejudices that obstruct our understanding occurs in the process of understanding itself (Gadamer 1989). Therefore, in his version of phenomenology, understanding is derived from personal involvement by the researcher in a reciprocal processes on interpretation that are inextricably related with one's being-in-the-world (Spence 2001). The inquiry using Gadamerian hermeneutics becomes dialogue rather than individual phenomenology and interpretation permeates every activity, with the researcher considering social, cultural and gender implications (Koch 1999).

Gadamer describes the hermeneutic circle as the fusing of horizons, which is circular in process. However, he takes the concept of the hermeneutic circle a step further, and researchers following the work of Gadamer should ensure that feedback and further discussion takes place with study participants (Fleming 2003). Therefore, the hermeneutic process becomes a dialogical method whereby the horizon of the interpreter and the phenomenon being studied are combined together.

7. Phenomenology as a methodological approach

As a philosophy, phenomenology is associated with the writings of Husserl, Heidegger, Gadamer, Arendt, Levinas, Sarte, Merleau-Ponty and Derrida (Moran 2000). It has been called a pre-science by Carl Stumpf because of its position before making any claims of knowledge (Spiegelberg 1982). Although none of the phenomenological philosophers developed research methods, their philosophies are often used to fortify contemporary qualitative research (Fleming et al 2003). Moreover, Husserl is credited with founding an empirical philosophy, which is both a descriptive method and an a priori philosophical science derived from the method

(Owen 1994). In order for what Giorgi (2000a) calls "scientific practices" (p. 4) to be performed, the insights of the philosophy of phenomenology must be mediated. Indeed, if nurse researchers were to pursue the philosophy of Husserl as it was originally conceived, they would be practicing philosophy, rather than research (Giorgi 2000a).

Many nurses utilise the work of Husserl and Heiddegger as, using the words of Giorgi (2000a) "inspiration" (p. 10) for their research. However, others are increasingly utilising the philosophy of Gadamer (Mak and Elwyn 2003, Bergman and Bertero 2001) and Merleau-Ponty (Sadala and Adorno 2002).

Psychologists (for instance, Giorgi, Colaizzi and van Kaam) associated with the Duquesne school of phenomenological psychology (Pittsburgh University) have been credited with the quest to establish reliable methods for conducting existential-phenomenological research. Scientific phenomenology was developed in the pursuit of a "scientific practice based upon phenomenological philosophy" (Giorgi 2000a p. 4). They were dissatisfied with the limitations of empiricism, and proposed a method involving description, reduction and the search for essential structures (Giorgi 2000a).

All three psychologists (van Kaam, Giorgi and Colaizzi) employ a similar series of steps: a) the original descriptions are divided into units, b) the units are transformed by the researcher into meanings that are expressed in psychological and phenomenological concepts and c) these transformations are combined to create a general description of the experience (Polkinghorne 1989).

The inclusion of a discussion on the work of the scientific phenomenology community from the field of psychology, in particular those from the Dusquesne school is necessary as their work greatly influences many nurse researchers. Colaizzi's (1978) method is commonly adopted by nurse researchers who employ a phenomenological method (e.g. Scannell-Desch 2005). However, his method is also regarded as one suitable for Heideggarian phenomenological research (Hodges et al 2001, Fleming et al 2003, Perreault et al 2004). Colaizzi's final step in his method involves the researcher returning to participants and asking: "How does my descriptive results compare with your experiences?" which suggests that some interpretation is acknowledged rather than just description.

Colaizzi developed his steps while a psychology student doing his 1973 doctoral dissertation (Thomas 2005), and his work is frequently cited as a method of data analysis (eg Priest 2003). However, his phenomenological method as detailed by Polkinghorne (1989) is also a procedure for phenomenological research, and utilised by, for instance, Beitz and Goldberg (2004).

Thomas (2005) finds nurse researchers' "prolonged allegiance" with Colaizzi's work, "puzzling" (p. 66) as she could find no evidence that Colaizzi remained active in phenomenological scholarship. Colaizzi's (1978) work is related to what is termed "Bibliotherapy"; which arose from the concept that reading could affect an individual's attitude and behaviour and thus influence the shaping and changing of values (Marlowe & Maycock 2000). This process is similar to *Bildung* as referred to by van Manen (1990) where reflective awareness experienced in the natural attitude transforms an individual.

van Kaam (1966) also operationalized empirical phenomenological research in the field of psychology (Moustakas 1994). van Kaam's (1969) steps in the phenomenological generation and analysis of data is only occasionally utilised by nurse researchers, but less so recently (e.g. Lee 1997). van Kaam too, did not continue with the development of phenomenological research methods (Polkinghorne 1989).

Of all the phenomenological psychologists, Amedeo Giorgi continues to write regularly about phenomenology as a method for the human sciences (e.g. Giorgi 1989, 2000a, 2000b, 2005). His work is representative of the further outgrowth of his work with the Duquesne group during the 1960's and of his own re-examination of the phenomenological literature undertaken during his 1969 stay in Europe (Polkinghorne 1989). His human science approach to phenomenology follows a rigorous program of Husserl's writings and maintains that the object of phenomenological description is achieved "solely" through a direct grasping (intuiting) of the essential structure of phenomena as they show in consciousness (van Manen 1990). Giorgi's influence on nursing theory is also evident in Watson's (1985) theory of caring, where she elaborates on the notion of a "human science" proposed by the followers of the Duquesne school of phenomenology (Pittsburgh) (Holmes 1990). Parse's (1981) theoretical work took the notion of a "human science" a step further with her work clearly based on philosophical views proposed in the existential phenomenology work of Heidegger and Merleu-Ponty. Her theory is considered to belong to the Simultaneity paradigm (Parse 1987- get ref), which… (see McKenna). Benner's middle-range theory of novice to expert (Benner 1984) is another example of phenomenology being used as a research approach to develop

nursing theory. Such theory developments through the utilisation of phenomenology are very appropriate for a practice discipline such as nursing. Nursing theory developed through a phenomenological approach reflects the reality of nursing practice, which is complex and situational. Such knowledge generated from practice has therefore more relevance for nurses. Nevertheless, it must be acknowledged that adapting the fundamentally philosophical process of phenomenology as a practical and robust attempt to understand nursing practice is problematic (Lawler 1998).

Giorgi's work is utilised frequently by nurse researchers in the analysis of interview data. For instance by Moore and Miller (2003) in their phenomenological study of older men's experiences of living with severe visual impairment, and Schulmeister et al (2005) in their method triangulation study exploring and measuring perceptions of Quality of Life among patients undergoing autologuous out-patient stem cell transplantation. An interesting example of the utilisation of Giorgi's (1985) process of descriptive phenomenological analysis is by Silen-Lipponen et al (2004) in their study using critical incident analysis to detail how thirty nursing students (British, American and Finnish) experienced learning about teamwork during their Operating Room placement. The use of critical incident analysis suggests a stripping away of the layers shaping the incident in order arrive at the essence of the phenomenon of learning about teamwork. This is not unlike what van Manen describes as "protocol writing" (p.63) where the phenomenological researcher asks selected individuals to write down their experiences.

7.1 The role of bracketing in phenomenological research

The issue of bracketing is key to this discussion as it is fundamental strategy in phenomenology. Crotty (1996) argues that nurse researchers view bracketing, instead of the philosophical underpinnings of phenomenology, as the feature of the phenomenological tradition. Bracketing also differentiates the chiasm between phenomenology as a philosophy and as a research endeavour. Study respondents are not typically asked to bracket in nursing phenomenological research (Yegdich 2000). If they were this would render it a philosophical endeavour. When bracketing is referred to in phenomenological studies, it usually relates to the researcher examining their prejudices in order to allow them include the views of the respondents.

However, at what stage of a study bracketing should occur generates some discussion. Drew (2004) refers to a talk by Giorgi at the University of Minnesota's 1998 Conference on Phenomenological Nursing Research, where he argues that bracketing is properly done in the analysis phase of the research and is not appropriate while interviewing, when closeness with the other takes priority. Indeed, sometimes the utilisation of bracketing during data analysis is the only evidence that a study has some phenomenological influence. However, nurse researchers are not alone in this use of bracketing. For instance, in a study by Canadian physical education academics examining stress among Aboriginal men and women with diabetes in Canada, a phenomenological approach for data analysis in which 'bracketing' was employed (Iwasaki et al 2004). No other aspect of this study suggests any other phenomenological influence.

Sometimes bracketing is also employed at other stages of a phenomenological study. Lythe and Hutchinson (2004), also physical education academics utilise a qualitative

approach based on a "phenomenological theory" (p.3) and employ what they call a "phenomenological approach", where they describe the experiences and roles adapted by physical educators engaged in consultation interactions. They cite the work of Denzin and Lincoln, Strauss and Corbin and Patten to support their stance. However, they indicate that epoche was "conducted" (p. 41) prior to, during and after data collection (Lythe and Hutchinson 2004).

Moreover, the strategy termed "bracketing interviews" is employed to meet the needs of reflexivity. Reflexivity refers to the engagement by the qualitative researcher in continuous self-critique and self-appraisal and the provision of an explanation of how his/her own experiences did or did not influence the stages of the research process (Koch and Harrington 1998). Graber and Micham (2004) utilise bracketing interviews by engaging their reflexivity team (academics from the disciplines of anthropology, ethics and divinity, who were familiar with the interview design) prior to and after their study. Similarly, Rolls and Relf (2004) report that they utilised their project advisory group to engage in a series of taped interviews through which they identified the assumptions and past experiences of the principal researcher in order to 'bracket' or put them to one side. Such a process assisted in understanding how these assumptions may have impacted on the data collection and analysis process (Rolls & Relf 2004). What Northway (2000) calls "critical friends", and Drew (2004) refers to as a "bracketing supervisor" can also help in this process.

However, the use of the term "bracketing" is not without its critics. Dahlberg and Dahlberg (2004) prefer to use the term 'bridling' instead of bracketing. They argue that this term is preferred to bracketing as bracketing carries with it an "exactness and

finitude of mathematics" (p.272) and 'bridling' also 'invokes the thought of being respectful, or humble, to that which it bridled in order not to dominate, violate it, or 'swallow' it as 'bracketing' seems to do" (p. 272). This view is interesting as it suggests a change to the view of bracketing as originally espoused by Husserl.

However, confusion regarding bracketing still abounds. For instance, Donalek (2004) advises that: "Research is not truly phenomenological unless the researcher's beliefs are incorporated into the data analysis" (p. 516). Donalek seems to be referring to Interpretive phenomenology here but does not make a difference between descriptive and interpretive phenomenology. The focus in her article is very much on method and little on the philosophical underpinnings. Donalek's (2004) puzzling description of phenomenological research illustrates the importance of paying attention to the philosophical underpinnings of phenomenology by nurse researchers as stressed by Thomas (2005). This sentiment is echoed by Giorgi (2000a) adding that it "is simply good scholarly practice" (p. 10).

8. Debates over new phenomenology

The real debates on the use of phenomenology in nursing however centre on the views of Crotty (1996) and Paley (1997, 1998). Their arguments have placed a spotlight on phenomenology which has helped expose its complexities.

Crotty (1996) argues that nurse researchers have not developed their own phenomenology but "they have avidly embraced a form of phenomenology which developed around them and which appears to serve their purposes well" (p.24). Crotty is of course referring to the hybrid phenomenology embraced by nurse researchers in what he calls "new" phenomenology, which he argues is descriptive, subjective and lacks critique. "Scientific" phenomenology, as labelled by Giorgi (2000a) also comes under this heading.

Crotty (1996) reached his conclusions following his review of 30 nursing research papers adopting phenomenology. Subsequently, he proposed that because nurse researchers focused on experience, they were not following the original intentions of phenomenology (i.e. to seek the essence of the phenomenon under investigation). In Crotty's opinion, the process of phenomenological reduction is essential for the bringing forth of such essences. Caelli (2000) suggests that it was not nurses who changed the way phenomenology was conducted in America, Australia and at times in the UK, but American philosophy that changed and adapted the traditional phenomenologies developed in Europe. In North America especially, phenomenology came to be applied to the study of other people's experience, which is reported in the third person, and as Crotty (1996) argues, to be linked with and informed by the

intellectutal tradition, in which pragmatist philosophy, symbolic interactionism and humanistic psychology make important contributions. Indeed, Benner (1984) acknowledges the influences on her interpretive phenomenology as the hermeneutical tradition and the existential phenomenology of Kierkagaard, Heidegger, Merleu-Ponty, Wittgenstein, Druyfus and Taylor. American phenomenology therefore fits with a human science perspective and seeks to understand the reality of the individual's experience as they engage with the phenomenon rather than the more objective reality of the nature of the phenomenon itself (Caelli 2000). An example of this is evident in Parse's phenomenological research method which she describes as "generically phenomenological in that the entities for study are experiences as described by people who have lived them"(Parse 1995, p. 153).

However, it is again important to stress that the changes evident in American phenomenology have resulted because the approach is being used for research and not for the solitary philosophical reflections as espoused by Husserl and Heidegger (Caeilli 2000). Moreover, Giorgi (2000a) stresses that critics should distinguish between "inspiration" and "imitation" as he argues that "Often, to be inspired means that one is attracted by someone's thought, even though one is aware that he or she has to modify what was said in order to make it meaningful in the context where the one inspired wants to use it" (p. 10).

There are two distinct differences between what has been come to be known as new phenomenology or American phenomenology (Caelli 2000), referred to as "Continental" Phenomenology by the philosopher Silverman (1987) (Table 1). Firstly, American phenomenology questions do not usually seek the prereflective experience

but include thoughts and interpretations of the experience in the data collection and analysis (Caelli 2000). This lack of emphasis on phenomenological reduction is important as Crotty (1996) argues that through the process of phenomenological reduction, the essences of the phenomenon under investigation may be brought to the fore. Crotty (1996) therefore concludes that the research conducted by nurses is not phenomenology according to the European tradition, but a North American hybrid. However, in a clinical discipline such as nursing, phenomenological reduction is often accompanied by practical and even ethical issues in attempts at divorcing nurse and researcher identities. The adoption of a hermeneutic approach which emphasises reflexivity is perhaps key to addressing this dilemma. Divorcing the "nurse" and "researcher" identities is raised by Allan (2004) and Whitehead (2004) among others. Reflexivity therefore assumes a key role in current discussions of interpretive phenomenological methods. This would seem an appropriate development as it embraces a human science perspective of intersubjectivity methodologically as well as philosophically.

However, Caelli (2000) takes a broader view of what phenomenological research is and argues "thoughtful, reflective, and previously interpreted descriptions of experience given by research participants provide a broader canvas on which to paint a description of a phenomenon than is provided by traditional phenomenology alone" (p.373). New phenomenology is therefore strongly influenced by the work of Heidegger phenomenology which emphasises the acknowledgement of methodologically historical constraints on the researcher themselves and others' interpretations (Racher and Robinson 2003). This point is key, as Husserl (1970) was concerned with the world of everyday experience as expressed in everyday language,

and the life-world prior to reflection (Valle et al 1989), and it distinguishes European phenomenology from new phenomenology as the latter seeks descriptions from a personal perspective of the individual.

Another key distinguishing feature is the issue of how culture is considered in new phenomenology. Benner (2000) argues that the goal of interpretive phenomenology is "…to look for commonalities….in culturally grounded meaning" (p. 104). However, Husserl and Heidegger both were rigorously critical of the effect that culture and tradition might have on the true examination of phenomena (Caelli 2000).

This development reflects what Caelli (2000) refers to as recent philosophical thinking which recognises that is impossible for individuals to think "aculturally" (p.371). Benner (2000) suggests a phenomenological approach to studying illness holds that cultural and social contexts create the conditions of possibility for the illness experience. In light of this, with American phenomenology, analysis focuses on describing participants' lived experience within the context of culture as opposed for a universal meaning of it (Caelli 2000). This issue of overlooking culture in traditional phenomenology is also related to the issue of phenomenological reduction. With American phenomenology, the need for phenomenological reduction is less evident as there is not the same impetus to eliminate traditional and cultural understandings as in European phenomenology (Caelli 2000)

Crotty (1996) argues that nurses should not claim Husserlian or Heideggerian influences on research that utilises new phenomenological methods. If the researcher wants a subjective understanding of the experience of the phenomenon from the participant's, new phenomenology is appropriate, particularly if the subjective

experience is objectively scrutinised as suggested by Giorgi (2000b). On the other hand, if a researcher chooses to explore and understand the phenomenon itself, or the object of the participants' experience, European or 'philosophical' phenomenology should be employed (Giorgi 2000b).

Giorgi (2000b) admits that there are many weak examples of the application of phenomenology in the nursing literature and these efforts usually are found in the phenomenology of the scientific type and not the philosophical form. To give an example: Moyle (2003) presents a study that sought to understand the importance of the therapeutic relationship in patients with depression through what she terms "a phenomenological approach". Data was analysed following Giorgi's steps to phenomenological analysis. However, Moyle makes no reference to phenomenological terms such as reduction, bracketing and so on, and the focus is on the patients' descriptions rather than the phenomenon of the concept of the therapeutic relationship.

Of all the responses to Crotty's observations, the view of Giorgi (2000b) is the most helpful. Giorgi (2000b) argues that Crotty's assertion that scientific phenomenology seeks to establish the subjective experiences of people is misplaced as when nurses are asking for so-called "subjective experiences"; "they are asking for descriptions of *situations in the world as experienced by human subjects!"* (p. 13) (Giorgi's emphasis). He further argues that because " the nature of the experience depends on the *manner* in which it was experienced, how can one avoid obtaining descriptions from subjects?" (p. 14). Moreover, it is argued that the "thrust of phenomenological

research, remains oriented to asking the question of what is the nature of this phenomenon as an essentially human experience" (van Manen 1990, p. 62).

9. Current impact of van Manen's phenomenology

The influence of the Canadian phenomenologist Max van Manen also requires attention. As outlined earlier, his four existential provide guidance for researchers on phenomenological writing. These existentials also illustrate a fusion of the objectivist hermeneutic circle (part-whole) and the alethic hermeneutic circle (pre-understanding-understanding) as they acknowledge the experience of a phenomenon in a whole experience and also the researcher's role in the research process.

His work has contemporary popularity among not only nurses but also medical practitioners (Mak and Elwyn 2003) and physical educationalists (Goodwin et al 2004). His contribution to phenomenology is curious for although it would appear to come under the heading of new phenomenology, it would also appear that it does not, as his writings combine the descriptive phenomenology of Husserl, with an emphasis on the study of the world before reflection and also argues that it is scientific and simultaneously asserts that it involves interpretation. Also, van Manen (1990) appears to use the term phenomenon and experience as the same thing (p. 106). His type of phenomenology is located in what is termed the Dutch school as it is a combination of descriptive and interpretive phenomenology (Cohen and Omery 1994). He uses the terms "description" to include both interpretive (hermeneutic) as well as the descriptive phenomenological element and presents his work as influenced by the "spirit of the European movements as well as by certain North American developments" (van Manen 1990, iv). Like Heidegger, van Manen does not embrace

Husserl's view of bracketing and asks: "If we simply try to forget or ignore what we already "know", we might find that the presupposition persistently creep back into our reflections" (van Manen 1990, p.47).

van Manen's phenomenology is described as "…a human science research approach, showing a semiotic employment of the methods of phenomenology and hermeneutic" (van Manen 1990, p. 1), and is commonly used in conjunction with other contemporary influences in nursing phenomenological research studies. For instance, Fielden (2003) utilises Heidegger's hermeneutic phenomenology informed by van Manen's (1997) and Benner's (1985) (among other Benner work) to explore and interpret the lived experience of family members after losing a close family member to a suicidal death. Moreover, Hassouneh-Phillips (2003) explored lived spirituality among abused American Muslim women by utilising the work of van Manen and Benner's "paradigm cases" (Benner 2000). In addition, Brett (2004) utilises the writings of Heidegger and also utilises the work of van Manen which she indicates brought "structure" (p.14) to the study and "informed analysis through phenomenological reflection" (p.14) in her study exploring how parents of profoundly handicapped children experience support in their lives. Finally, Jongudomkarn and West (2004) utilise Colaizzi's and van Manen's work for data analysis in their case study strategy for data collection and a phenomenological approach for data analysis.

Others merely refer to the work of van Manen in passing, especially when they indicate that their qualitative research is guided by a phenomenological approach. For instance, Brajtman (2005) refers to the work of van Manen in her qualitative study which utilises a phenomenological approach. No other aspects of phenomenological research are evident in this study, which involved focus group and individual

interviews with family members of patients experiencing terminal restlessness, and utilised content thematic analysis. This would appear to be an example of what Giorgi (2000a) terms "inspiration" as mentioned earlier. Moreover, the use of focus groups is curious in this study as it does not fit with the tenets of phenomenological research which explores the individual's experience (Webb & Kevern 2000). Hassouneh-Phillips (2003) also utilises group interviews in their phenomenological study. However, Spiegelberg (1982) does outline the procedure of co-operative or group phenomenology, where groups ranging from 6 to 16 people are brought together for 2 days to 2 weeks. Benner (1984) utilised group interviewing for her phenomenological study. Moreover, conjoint interviews can also be employed in phenomenological research where it is deemed appropriate (Racher 2003).

A curious example that suggests a strongly philosophical phenomenological orientation, is presented in a study by Hilton and Henderson (2003). They utilise the writings of van Manen (1997) to "disclose and understand the contextual meaning of living with bladder cancer" (p. 351). Only one patient was interviewed in the study and the researchers do not indicate if more than one interview was conducted. They also indicate that "constant comparative analysis of responses" was utilised for data analysis, which is a curious utilisation as it suggests many interviews with different participants as employed in grounded theory.

A good example of van Manen's work being utilised throughout a phenomenological study is that by Thome et al (2004). They utilised what they describe as the hermeneutic phenomenological method described by van Manen and also utilise van Manen's (1997) writings in the data analysis where they attempt to follow his work

and "transform personal meanings and experiences from interview texts into disciplinary understanding" (Thome et al 2004 p 401).

van Manen's writings on a human science approach to phenomenology offers some solutions to nurse researchers facing the difficulties of phenomenological reduction and reflects the ongoing transformation of phenomenology as a methodological approach.

10. Conclusion

Caelli (2000) argues that although the traditional European approach to phenomenology has value to the "critical, objective analyses of phenomena as they present in nursing" (p. 374), American approaches also have merit as they are in keeping with the philosophical movement toward a position located firmly in the postmodern world where people live and where research is conducted. Moreover, nursing has a concern to understand the human condition rather than the phenomena as such. The view of Spiegelberg (1982) is noteworthy in this discussion on the changes in phenomenology as he asserts that it is a moving philosophy with many parallel currents. Owen (1994) highlights that phenomenology "is a reminder that all knowledge is human made, and not timeless and unchanging." (p. 273). He also maintains that research method has a history that can be traced back to a certain point when an innovation became established in a community (Owen 1994). Such a view certainly suggests the appropriateness of phenemonogoly as a method of propelling knowledge development in nursing becauses....Phenomenology certainly has become established as a research "method" for nursing and its incarnation can clearly be traced to its utilisation by nurse researchers in North America. What is also clear is its

evolvement in nature over the past three decades. This evolvement reflects a move into the phase of "crisis of representation" where issues of culture cannot be ignored by researchers (Denzin and Lincoln 2000). However, it also reflects a deepening blurring of boundaries between phenomenology as a philosophy and phenomenology as a "method". Perhaps too much a shift towards phenomenology as a "method" loses sight of its philosophical origins, which may result in nurses utilising a hybrid approach that no longer is true to its core pursuit of the essence of a phenomena. However, a hybrid approach is also propsed by Alvesson and Skoldberg (2000) in a merging of both objectivist and alethic hermeneutic circles, which they view as "different rather than contradictory" (p. 66) Such an approach addresses such issues as the phenomenon under study in the context of the whole experience for the individual being researched as well as the interpretation of the researcher. The words of Packard and Polifroni (1992, 163) are apt therefore in ending this discussion: "Good science emanates from a solid philosophical base wherein the ends determine the means, rather then the other way around".

Table 1: Clarification of terms

	American phenomenology	Traditional phenomenology
Other descriptions	➢ New phenomenology (Crotty 1996) ➢ Continental phenomenology (Silverman 1987)	➢ European phenomenology (Silverman 1987) ➢ Philosophical phenomenology (Giorgi 2000b)

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