

Interpretative *Phronesis* (Practical Wisdom) Analysis: A Hermeneutic Narrative of Research Participant Caring

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*Aristotle's distinction between phronesis (practical wisdom) and episteme (theory) has been centrally influential in the development of hermeneutics. Heidegger, initiating hermeneutic phenomenology, foregrounded practical understanding as foundational (or 'ready-to-hand'): scientific theory was but secondary ('presented-at-hand'). Gadamer subsequently emphasised understanding as primarily practical, as an applicative achievement, within broad assumptions, 'horizons of understanding', a metaphor signalling explicitly/implicitly represented surroundings. How should Aristotle's idea of practical wisdom in human affairs articulated in phenomenology's hermeneutic thought - principally Gadamer's scholarship - inform researcher analyses? Here an account of hermeneutic philosophy, with its core conceptual formations, is presented as concerning situated understanding in practice, phronesis. Multiple instances of this behavioural research focus from psychology's Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis then receive reflection. Interviewing proceeds from 'horizons of expectation' (Jauss 1982). Themes are viewed as 'horizons of understanding' (Gadamer 1975), interviewees' perspectives on practices. A researcher may engage in resolving 'indeterminacy' (Iser 1978). Participants' reflectively recounted meaning-making phronesis practices can be structured in their analyses by locating their a priori, universally discernible aspects. Thus phronesis is constituted by generic, care (Heidegger's *Sorge*) embodying activity, 'emplaced' or understood from tacit representational affective 'horizons of understanding': participant bodies can become denoted 'equipment' (Heidegger's *Zeug*).*

Keywords: *caring, hermeneutic phronesis, interpretative horizons of understanding, phenomenology*

A person who 'is truly good and wise bears all the accidents of life with proper dignity and always makes the best of present circumstances' (Warrington 1963, p. 19).

Introduction: Research Participant *Phronesis* as Interpretative Practical Wisdom

How a subject matter is conceptually conceived, explicitly or implicitly, shapes its further study. Disciplinary philosophies, the philosophy of natural or social science, reflexively consider such connection. This paper reflects on practice underwritten by philosophy in qualitative psychology, and particularly discusses *phronesis* as a perspective in hermeneutic psychology research.

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The 'philosophical stance one assumes in relation to the nature of reality and the nature of knowledge largely determines how the researcher conducts research, what he or she considers as legitimate research evidence' (Seamon and Gill 2016, p. 117).

Svenaesus (2003) argues that the 'development of Aristotle's practical philosophy plays a key role' in 'the philosophical hermeneutics of Hans-Georg Gadamer' (Svenaesus 2003, p. 407). Gadamer's perception of understanding is practical, 'hermeneutics in its purest form is found in the living dialogues carried out between people of real flesh and blood' (Svenaesus 2003, p. 415). 'Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics is deeply influenced by the concept of practical wisdom (*phronesis*)' (Duvenage 2015, p. 77). *Phronesis* concerns ethics in practice, a central instance of requiring interpretative judgement with respect to which a hermeneutics study is appropriate rather than the application of laws as in science.

'if we relate Aristotle's description of the ethical phenomenon and especially the virtue of moral knowledge to our own investigation, we find that his analysis in fact offers a kind of *model of the problems of hermeneutics*' (Gadamer 1975, pp. 320, 321, emphasis in original).

Acknowledging such influence one may ask can such a Gadamerian hermeneutics informed by Aristotle's *phronesis* supply concepts applicable to analysing research participant account? This article argues for a positive response, that there is a locational framework of characteristic features, aspects or (using phenomenology's term) 'moments' which can then be perceived in these research narratives. Methodologically, an investigative conclusion can be structurally accommodated, albeit psychologically and culturally diverse, within globally applicable concepts.

Norlyk and Harder (2010) argue in their review of nursing research that 'there is a need for clarifying how the principles of the phenomenological philosophy are implemented in a particular study'. Integrating Aristotelian and Gadamerian perspectives, 'research could be strengthened by greater attention to its philosophical underpinnings' (Norlyk and Harder 2010, pp. 420, 427). Their viewpoint is shared within this paper reviewing Interpretative Phenomenological Analyses that are 'strongly connected to the interpretive or hermeneutic tradition' (Smith 2004, p. 40) through furthering these analyses as being the hermeneutic narrative of *phronesis* or practical wisdom instantiated.

Embodied, enlacing tacit material and metaphorical 'horizons of practical understanding', representational frameworks of participant perception, *phronesis* as considered hermeneutically, is posited here as focus of Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis. Many of the empirical studies illustrating *phronesis* cited in sections below are chosen to explicate and further IPA research.

Moreover, reflecting on research participant thematic account considered as practice of self-understanding, IPA analyses can be conceptually furthered by employing hermeneutic philosophy's spatio-temporal metaphors, models of understanding. Through knowing this 'primary hermeneutic technique, the metaphor' (Papaloukas et al. 2017, p. 427), one can follow structurally informed routes in closely reflecting upon research participant account. Notably, 'the term

horizon has a long history as a metaphor in philosophy': being the 'framework of our experience, it is both limit and condition of possibility' (Evink 2013, pp. 297, 298 emphasis in original) in representing understanding's context.

Interpretative Hermeneutic Reflecting on *Phronesis* Practices: Caring's Perspectival Representing Horizons of Understanding

Hermeneutics engages with our embodied understanding as fundamentally informing being in the world, our location on the cultural perimeters or horizon from which we interpret experience. With analysis of positioned *phronesis* we further establish our identity. Being-in-the-world *matters*.

We care about the goals embedded with our activities, re-presenting them perspectively to ourselves, understanding our purposes in our practices as important, trivial... 'Being-in-the-world is essentially care (*Sorge*)' (Heidegger 1962, p. 237). People are concerned about things (*Besorgen*), themselves (*Selbstsorge*) and feel solicitude for other persons (*Fursorge*) (Heidegger 1962).

Caring affectively interprets a situation. Spatio-temporal images or metaphors are available through hermeneutic philosophy to 'picture' the process of human sense-making, the 'event-structure of all understanding' (Gadamer 1975, p. 481). Caring represents from a person's valuing perspective.

Hermeneutic *phronesis* offers integrating concepts resourcing an experiential analysis. This philosophically generated theory is applied in discussion below, presenting a research 'horizon of understanding' (Gadamer 1989) of studies such as psychology's Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis. Interviewees are considered re-presenting their pre-reflective meaning-making 'practical consciousness' (Giddens 1979, p. 2) as a recurring hermeneutic *phronesis*. How, for instance, did they interpret engaging, continuously or intermittently in behaviour shaped by chronic pain? What was the nature of their 'knowing how' to deal through practical wisdom with this chronic issue?

Hermeneutically, discussion of research interviewee topics are viewed in appropriate terms as exploring through talking, how they represent, their affective horizon of understanding recurrent *phronesis*. 'Horizons' may take material as well as a metaphorical shape encompassing a person's lifeworld, 'our lifeworld-our horizon of meaning' (Svenaesus 2003, p. 415). Thus Ahmad and Talaei's (2012) article on 'understanding chronic pain' refers to a research participant's regular practice in response to chronic pain where a space (a room) becomes an enclosing protective place, a domestic as well as discursively referenced horizon of surviving physical issues.

Positioning her practical wisdom, *phronesis*, she narrates 'I'll avoid light ... noise, too many people around get me upset ... I keeping myself alone, control myself in the room'. Enabled by this sanctuary, materially understanding its use in her embodied perspective on her habitual practice as a horizontal refuge, she establishes in self-caring an equilibrium beyond the 'light', 'noise', 'too many people' in 'liking to be alone'. Her account reflects on, representing her 'attuned' (Heidegger 1962) anticipated practice, a realisation of interpretative practical

wisdom. 'What *phronesis* does is that it enables one to hit the adequate thing to do in a certain situation' (Bobb 2020, p. 33).

Horizons of understanding in representational narratives of the world have shaped practices.

Essential to the concept of situation is the concept of 'horizon.' The horizon is the range of vision that includes everything that can be seen from a particular vantage point. Applying this to the thinking mind, we speak of narrowness of horizon, of the possible expansion of horizon, of the opening up of new horizons, and so forth (Gadamer 1975, p. 301).

Using Hermeneutic Spatio-temporal Metaphors in Analysis: Locating Perspectival Horizons Positioning Practical Understanding of *Phronesis*

'For Gadamer' participation in language acknowledges that an individual is located within a substantive horizon of meanings which transcends subjective consciousness', 'horizons of meaning which implicitly sustain reflection and which can, when made explicit, bring us to think quite differently of ourselves (Davey N. 2016).

Exemplifying an 'IPA in practice' Smith (1996) considers hospital haemodialysis where machines replace functioning of damaged kidneys (Smith 1996, pp. 267-270). A participant reflects on being 'really fed up with the repetition' of such recurring 'passive' participating in the ongoing hospital practice. During this repeated practice in 'becoming part of this machine' her embodiment and equipment unhappily merge. Haemodialysis emplaces her affective horizon of awareness: - 'dialysing at home would be - I'm still being myself', refiguring a separate human identity. Her routine, equipped engaging with this practice - her 'passive' engaging 'tethered to one place' - establishes tacit thinking, a horizon of understanding 'place' discerned in emerging discussion. If she was dialysing at home, 'I've still got my identity' with equipment 'under my control and I use it', materialising *Selbstsorge* (self-caring) attaining, instituting, realising practical wisdom, *phronesis*, a facility perhaps economically challenged.

Hermeneutic practices can be continuously challenging. In Eatough and Shaw's presentation (2019) of a research participant with Parkinson's Disease, personal *phronesis* and challenge emerge. Embodiment becomes 'conspicuous' (54). Barbara's affective 'coping style' (ibid) is care -directed in 'battling all the time' to 'deal with' her issues as generated by the 'evil twin'. Habituated practice, notably her morning routine, is 'like a tortoise' (55) seen from friends' horizons of understanding as 'a drag on them' (54). Subject (the human agent) and structure (the social) are hereby 'constituted in and through recurrent practices' (Giddens 1982, p. 8) emplacing a caring (*Selbstsorge*) perspective.

Practices, as earlier considered, establish identities, likewise open to challenging. Behaviour can constitute the 'boundary object' (Star 2010) of contestation. In 'Stigma and the Delegitimation Experience' (Dickson et al. 2007), distance between social horizons of understanding a practice is heard as being 'contested diagnosis between CFS (chronic fatigue syndrome) and depression' (856).

Confronted with his doctor's diagnosis of depressive behaviour (such as not sleeping) their research participant recalls, 'I said "It's not depression, I know my own body and I know how I'm feeling and I know this is not depression."' Source and subject of reflecting know the same self, advancing *phronesis*. Embodied self tells a story, exercised with practical understanding, phenomenologically, enactive, motor or 'operant' meaning making, represented in affective articulation of his narrative.

Coping with chronic pain pursues corporeal *phronesis*. Manifested in recurring concern, its demanding focus can displace a fuller engaging with living to far distant horizons of understanding. Research participants, Osborn and Smith (1998) record, 'remained preoccupied with a sense of confusion, loss and threat' (Osborn and Smith 1998, p. 76). Hermeneutically regarded, *phronesis* here implicitly assumes a (dis)enabling environment of equipment rather than entities (*simpliciter*). In reflective interviewing, pain may be explicitly interpreted as being signal of dysfunctional 'equipment'. 'I always thought you had pain to tell you when there was something wrong' (female) (Osborn and Smith 1998, p. 69), a bodily malfunction.

For Ricoeur, hermeneutically, spatio-temporal separation from a practice can support critical 'distanciated' (Ricoeur 1981b) interpreting. Discussing a research participant's affective distanced horizon in critically understanding experience of embodied pain, Smith and Osborn (2007) consider 'pain as an assault upon the self'. An interviewee reflectively dissects her account, so separating the source and sufferer of pain (albeit 'me'), positioning herself on a horizon of affective interpretation from where she critically distances herself from source of both pain and a 'mean me', 'all sour and horrible', distinct from herself as a person suffering, a 'nice person'. 'It's the pain, it's me, but it is me, me doing it but not me do you understand what I'm saying?' A different contribution installs a similar spatio-temporal distance between 'selves' in its narrative, enabling a 'refiguring' (Ricoeur 1988) of identity: 'it's like living with this guy who follows you around all the time.' In narratives of ethical positioning, *phronesis* is a 'space of moral possibilities' (Yanchar and Slife 2017, p. 146).

Societal horizon of understanding embedded in daily practices can be physically as well as meaningfully established, denoted as bearing the multiple status in research participant 'discursive consciousness' (Giddens 1979, p. 5). Moving to his desert island, the chronic pain sufferer in Smith and Osborn's (2008) research would 'still be a miserable old git but it wouldn't matter' (73), since nobody would 'come around'. He would be alone in the island enabling 'refigured' (Ricoeur 1988) existence, goal-oriented in 'practical coping' (Heidegger 1962), 'all day'. He reflects affectively on achieving this 'easier' material as well as metaphorical horizon of living: 'just be yourself it doesn't matter what you do'. 'Self/identity and relationships define pain experience' (Smith and Osborne 2008, p. 74). This interviewee presents *phronesis* in caring for self (*Selbstsorge*) (Heidegger 1962).

In the article discussing 'the personal experience of chronic benign lower back pain: an interpretative phenomenological analysis', Osborn and Smith (1998) reflect on their research participant Linda's concerned understanding of her

diminished practices, her *Selbstsorge* as a grounding aspect of her being-in-the-world, her reduced embodied knowing-how, practical understanding ‘cut down’:

Linda’s hermeneutic *phronesis* is ‘goal-directed’, ‘caring’. ‘I can’t do half of what I used to do’. Her bodily ‘equipment’ (or *Zeug*, Heidegger 1962) is not ‘ready-to-hand’ (ibid), has been ‘cut down’. Her caring is informed by perspectival re-presentational ‘cultural horizon’ (Gadamer 1975):

‘they say life begins at 40’, people ‘flying their kite’, ‘I used to work like a horse’.

Linda dissects her *phronesis* as generic ‘text’ establishing ‘sense-content’ (Ricoeur 1981a):

‘I’m only 50 and I should be doing this and that and the other’. Her practices ‘configured’ (Ricoeur 1988) her desired relational identity, ‘I just think I’m the fittest’. She affectively distances herself or ‘distanciates’ (Ricoeur 1981b) from her ‘refigured’ (Ricoeur 1988) embodied self :- ‘I can’t do half of what I used to do’. Her corporeal being-in-the-world *matters*.

Understanding-in-practice projects and maintains meaning, constituting ‘object’ as enabling equipment, functioning items seen from an affective horizon of understanding embodied in generic, goal-oriented behaviour. Investigating compulsive hoarding, Garza and Landrum (2015) also show how psychological horizon of understanding, ‘meaning horizons’ (138), can be spatially evident or ‘constitutive of a “world” of hoarding’ (144). Thus for a person who hoards, ‘horizons of meaning’ are (in)forming a ‘relational space’, materialising the ‘basis of an experienced gulf between herself and the others in her life’ (146). For the interviewer, horizons of *phronesis* form focus for insight.

Smith and Osborn (2008) discuss a ‘patient’s experience of renal dialysis’, generic narrative instantiating their embodied and equipped experience. Exploring *phronesis*, they seek their patient’s affective temporal horizon of understanding around ‘coping’: ‘What does the term “illness” mean to you? How do you define it?’; ‘Do you think about the future much?’ Considering the experience as identity-constructing, as a text ‘refigured’ by the patient in constructing ‘self’ they ask: ‘Has having kidney disease and starting dialysis made a difference to how you see yourself?’ Embodied horizon of understanding can be non-verbally evident as when one participant in Willig’s (2007) research on ‘extreme sport’ repeatedly releases ‘audible intakes of breath in order to reinforce her descriptions of the tense and exciting nature of her experiences’ (220), re-presenting a powerful immersion.

As we have noted articulated in our analysis throughout this article hermeneutic philosophy provides spatiotemporal concepts (e.g., ‘horizons of (practical) understanding’, ‘fusion of horizons’, participant ‘projection’ of possibility and ‘refiguring’ narrative), shown as situating the analysis of social dimensions of meaning and materiality in participant *phronesis*. Participant contributions to Shaw et al. (2016) writing on ‘extra care’ housing for older adults equally respond to hermeneutic concept. Horizons can be materially or ontologically as well as epistemically evident in practices.

Care home participant *phronesis* incorporating ‘refigured’ (Ricoeur 1988) identities shaped by ‘coming to terms with having what feels a little bit invasive’,

maps out their agentic embodied horizons of understanding affordances as being enclosing ‘equipment’ (Heidegger): ‘four walls to see, four walls closing in on me’ or ‘sit(ing) on the chairs outside, my hat on, and people com(ing) past’. They form materially (dis)enabling affective conditions of living in community housing.

This research narrative is evidently a ‘prefigured’ (Ricoeur 1988) or anticipatory account of a formed ‘fore-understanding’ (Heidegger 1962). ‘And this is like your cabin and you come out you see and you’ve got everything there for you’. ‘I do like to do a little walk about each day ... around the perimeter’, marking out material horizons of a socially extended understanding in *phronesis*.

The author’s Malaysian hermeneutic research contains the comparable invoking of material/metaphorical positioning societal horizon of practical understanding, on this occasion the *phronesis* of studying in a university campus. Watching a brief video blogging narrative, a student comments:

The scenery is so beautiful, no matter it’s morning, noon, evening or night. I feel (it would be) very relaxing if I could study in this university. From the video, I could feel the air is so fresh, it could reduce my stress on study (male, Chinese).

This discourse establishes a metaphorically spatiotemporal social horizon of understanding place as ‘beautiful’, ‘fresh’, a site of potent narrative where ‘I could study’, activity ‘refigured’ as nourishing identity (‘very relaxing’ to ‘reduce my stress on study’). Anticipating potent *phronesis*, recurring routines, projecting meaning he celebrates an ‘embodied experience’ (Willig 2007, p. 209). Denoting Malaysian Borneo ‘relaxing’ material horizons, ‘scenery’ surrounding public university, the ‘embeddedness’ of reflective responding in a ‘local world’ (Todorova 2011, p. 36) is evident, as a ‘frame of reference’ (Martin and Sugarman 2001b, p. 196) from where he contemplates such study. Dwelling encompassed by such a ‘beautiful’ life-world, therein enjoying a ‘relaxing’ familiarity of embodied goal-oriented *phronesis*, would embody/emplace affective tacit horizon of understanding ‘study in this university’ as being enjoyably ‘settled/still within the physical environment’ (Shaw et al. 2018, p. 29). Elsewhere, ‘stress on study’ lacks a ‘horizon that can give respite’ (Shaw et al. 2018, p. 32).

Listening to this interviewee account from a ‘horizon of expectation’ (Jauss 1982) that it would reference a university campus, the researcher accessed student ‘configured’ (Ricoeur 1988) narrative. ‘Blanks’ or ‘indeterminacies’ (Iser 1978) were absent with such an affective anticipating of study. Embodied horizons of understanding encircle the life-world (in)forming therein participant narrative, ‘beautiful’ circumstances lived pre-reflectively, evident in his anticipatory participating.

The hermeneutic discussion locates (‘foregrounds’) the interviewee position on a horizon of affective understanding embedded within practices as ‘framing assumption’ (Yanchar 2015, p. 107), a reference point, stance from which participant experience is being tacitly expected and evaluated. Such horizons of embodied understanding can be followed, discerned as encircling a life-world, to be informing *phronesis*, as the ‘centrality of temporal-narrative themes’ (Yanchar

2015, p. 107): ‘the air is so fresh, it could reduce my stress on study’ and ‘scenery is so beautiful (...) I feel (it would be) very relaxing’.

This celebratory instantiating, albeit as counterfactual, of a generic goal directed narrative presents personal identity, a less stressed ‘self’. We hear ‘implicit and embodied understanding of the good life that (could be) manifested in social practice’ (Christopher and Campbell 2008, p. 677), there displayed affectively, viewed from ‘horizon of narrative inquiry’ (Rosiek 2007). Embodied and encircling horizons of understanding, perspectives in *phronesis*, (in)form life-worlds.

Dwyer et al. (2019) in their article endorsed by Nizza et al. (2021) as being a ‘very good IPA paper’ (2), discuss ‘young adults’ experiences of residing in nursing homes following acquired brain injury’ (ABI). This article identifies some ‘young adult’ narrative themes exemplified by quotation. Furthering a hermeneutic analysis of Dwyer et al.’s (2019) theme, ‘existential prison of the nursing home: stagnated lives’, one can see that ABI adult ‘horizons of understanding’ care homes are structurally material, their being both physically emplaced, surrounded by ‘imprisoning’, as well as by sharing affective perspectives re-presenting a nursing home as experiential ‘stagnation’. Adults are existing on the mortal edge, horizon of death: “‘Like, so many people have died there, I’m in their company and helping people here and there and next thing you know they are after dying.” (Liam, 178–189)’ Materially and intersubjectively, ‘we (can) speak of narrowness of horizon’ (Gadamer 1975, p. 301) within which a caring practical wisdom, a limited *phronesis* is being exercised.

Horizons of understanding articulating this identity are built or established through personal vocal affective narrative. “‘You see that empty chair where they used to sit and slowly, one by one, they are disappearing ... you say, ‘is it coming around to me?’” (Sarah, 1450–1460)’ Here, Sarah’s dis-equilibrating narrative ‘fore-conception’ ‘refigures’ (Ricoeur 1988) her identity as ‘threatened’. There then continues Sean’s uneasy narrative re-equilibrium: “‘I felt like I’d come out of the crypt. That I was Lazarus, awoken from the dead. ... It was like I was brought back to life.” (2904–2910)’, a phronetic insight realising self-caring.

‘Horizons of understanding’ are established, marked out or traced linguistically, conveying close or differentiated affective perspectives: ‘David’s repeated use of “I had to” illustrates his lack of control over a fundamental aspect of his daily life (meal times)’ (Dwyer et al. 2019), constructing an alternative point-of-view from Sean who ‘stated that he found the meal structure consoling’ (Dwyer et al. 2019).

In another ‘very good IPA paper’ (Nizza et al. 2021), Conroy and de Visser (2015) discuss the ‘importance of authenticity for student non-drinkers’. Here, ‘horizons of understanding’ emerge hierarchically, signifying ethically, personally, or socially elevated greater vision with wider insight, as empowering authenticity. Michelle’s horizontal ascension augments her awareness: ‘The less and less I drank the more I realised that I didn’t like who I was when I was drunk, so the less I drank still.’ Likewise, Katie attains an ethically self-elevated horizon of understanding alcohol consuming: ‘you’re tainting yourself’. Both experience here ‘an expansion of horizon, of the opening up of new horizons’ (Gadamer 1975, p.

301). Fear articulates, emplaces a phronetic ‘horizon of expectation’ in Paul: ‘The reason I don’t drink might be because I am afraid of what I might say or do, if I drink.’

In short, I suggest ‘horizons of understanding’ are implicit in research participant narrative. The care home example also illustrates well how a material horizon of understanding is established by economic decision-making, thereby relating IPA to addressing political analysis. In these papers, engaging with the spatio-temporal metaphor ‘horizons of understanding’ ‘illustrates a close meshing of theoretical and empirical instantiation of the search for experiential meaning’ (Smith 2018, p. 15). Martin and Sugarman (2001a) write: horizons of “self” understanding connect particular being to the life-world in ways that respond to the cares and concerns of embodied agents’ (110), their self-caring realising of *phronesis*, horizontal practical wisdom in securing personal salvation:

Implicit ‘horizons are the conditions that provide the meaning for (experience), conditions which need to be made conscious for a proper understanding of the (experience). As providing the key to understanding our perceptions they draw us forward, inspiring investigation’ (Vessey 2009, p. 536).

Hermeneutic *Phronesis* Perspectives: Analysis of Research Participant Practical Wisdom

Doing IPA inevitably involves being hermeneutic in the general sense; doing it well involves more particular hermeneutics (Smith 2011a, p. 58).

Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis, firmly asserts its initiating author, is ‘strongly connected to the interpretive or hermeneutic tradition’ (Smith 2004, p. 40). Can insight exercised in hermeneutic *phronesis* analysis, in perceiving embodied understanding as ‘practical consciousness’, function as schema enabling the application of core concepts analysing research participants’ narratives? Can participants’ emerging interpretative ‘horizons’ of (in)sight be regarded as their reflecting on a care-directed *phronesis*? Presenting the earlier case studies, the author has sought affirmative response.

Analysed within a philosophical (in)forming, participant meaning making *phronesis* can be considered as placed within perspective, horizon of understanding, diversely implicit in embodied action. What is their anticipated ‘horizon of possibilities’ (Papadimitriou et al. 2018, p. 13) heard in research participants’ self-regarding understanding? How is this behaviour being seen? From what conceptual horizons of understanding participant behaviour is this research ‘co-constituted’ (Gupta 2020, p. 12)? Thinking philosophically, it becomes clear that the Gadamerian ‘fusion of horizons’ with participant perspective mediating researcher reflecting (in)forms the ‘interactional “business” of the interviews’ (Coyle 2010, p. 79). During the process, horizons of understanding can be augmented, or as if in a tunnel of constrained comprehension, narrow and shrink. What is being heard? *Phronesis* is ‘about a dialogue or conversation about those

perspectives that offer the best theoretical answers to practical questions' (Duvenage 2015, p. 85).

Constituting meaning may be viewed 'horizontally', from close analysis to far away, from defining human behaviour to the hermeneutic background of making sense. Experientially, 'we are only able to make sense of and interpret the world within these horizons' (Burton et al. 2017, p. 376), the ubiquitous 'horizons of experience' (Burton et al. 2017, p. 378). Within research participants' 'meaning-making resources' (Coyle 2010, p. 81), the tacit 'horizon of meaning' becomes the sense making 'background that is usually taken for granted' (Githaiga 2014, p. 403) by interviewees, but their understanding can be discursively 'fore-grounded' in discussing. A participant's retreat to a back room from the public space can be closely considered by the researcher as taking 'refuge', reducing bodily pain.

Constituting meaning can be considered temporally, as being in process. People understand via different routes, agreeing or disagreeing. Ideational location as a social horizon of understanding in a group, may be shared or individually occupied, so seen in shifting ground, a 'chronological and cumulative process of sense-making' (Tomkins and Eatough 2010, p. 255) in discussions.

Smaller groups enable potentially lengthy 'visits' to perhaps darkened horizons of concerned understanding, enabling each participant to 'discuss their own experiences in more detail' (Phillips et al. 2016, p. 299). Self-caring (*Selbstsorge*) hermeneutic embodied *phronesis*, enabling coping with debilitating chronic pain can emerge during reflecting, there viewed as emplacing moral horizon of understanding, establishing interviewee 'refigured' (Ricoeur 1988) identity, individually or group.

Davidson (2013) asserts the importance of sighting and reflecting on a broader or wider ideational participant 'horizon of meanings' (Davidson 2013, p. 324), with the distant (perhaps the 'refuge' as in reducing pain) being equally significant as the immediately evident meaning of the experience ('pain'). The account may involve a 'hermeneutic circle of understanding' by integrating horizontal context with *phronesis*. Establishing distant meaning, discussion can proceed from a horizon of uncertain vision.

Hermeneutically, *phronesis* is generic, recurring (akin to texts (Ricoeur 1981a)) as types of behaviour. Considering participant narratives as reflecting on earlier generic goal directed practices enables the latter's acknowledging as behavioural type embodying roles, actions more or less successfully accomplished - again, for instance, in pain reducing behaviour. Narratives may be characterised by disturbances or disequilibria before returning to equilibria or calm.

Smith (2007) writes: 'I think there is considerable scope for developing, and extending hermeneutic theory to help its application to the activities of researchers in the human sciences' (Smith 2007, p. 4). Such development could be initiated by noting that narrative derived research participant content may be interpreted as 'configuring' (Ricoeur 1988), establishing experientially their position on 'horizon of understanding' (Gadamer 1975), with the latter thereby appropriately explored during interview. How, to revert to the earlier example, do adult brain injured persons perceive resident care homes? Interviewers can suitably and sympathetically search within 'horizons of implicit meaning' (Finlay 2014, p. 138)

- for there are equally 'embedded meanings to consider' (Finlay 2012, p. 185). How does someone adversely affected by arthritis re-present their diminished experiences more widely? How is their disabling generic experience diffracted across a diversity of identity establishing behaviour? Exploring embodied horizons of understanding around recurring *phronesis* shows 'concepts, habits, routines, expectations, and norms may be disrupted or even destroyed by illness' (Carel 2016, p. 17).

Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) is informed by hermeneutic philosophy. So, for instance, the researcher's interpreting participant narrative of self-understanding is characterised as being a 'double hermeneutic' (Smith 2011b, p. 10) augmenting the former's perspective through 'fusion of horizons' (Gadamer 1975). therein aligning a question and response. Content established from listening to participant *phronesis* should be 'grounded' in 'enough particularity' yet equally contain 'enough abstraction' to allow a 'conceptual' organising of interview narratives (Smith et al. 2009, p. 92). This article has sought to suggest 'concepts'.

Using hermeneutic spatio-temporal metaphor, this research protocol may be re-interpreted as recommending locating, positioning particular participant accounts within conceptually appropriate horizons of understanding, points of viewing 'grounded' *phronesis* heard during an interview. IPA's presenting research through the increasingly abstract relationship between 'superordinate concept' and 'themes' can be re-presented as being an epistemological hierarchy of 'horizons'. Here, seeing gathered qualitative data 'top-down' from far off to focussed views of participants' accounts shapes 'fine-grained analyses of individual lived experiences' (Eatough and Smith 2008, p. 186) from such a reflective wider perspective. 'Themes', in short, can be more or less precise, construed as denoting perceptive framing 'horizons of understanding' *phronesis*, a portal on research participants' - actual, present or preferred alternative - life-worlds. Hermeneutic philosophy is thereby further enacted.

Insights as a themed seeing could be termed 'horizontalisation' (Trondalen 2005 in Lee and McFerran 2015, p. 368), 'horizoning', or the 'horizontal' perception of research interviewee *phronesis*. Doing so signals IPA's hermeneutic underwriting as reflective process in its attending to 'fusion' of interviewer/interviewee 'horizons' (Gadamer, 1975) as interpreting individual participant or focus group 'multiperspective' (Palmer et al. 2010, p. 117) constructing of shared practices. Shaw (2010) points to Gadamer's epistemic of our culturally and historically situating ubiquitous horizontal perspectives as hermeneutics being appropriate 'support for adopting a reflexive attitude in experiential qualitative research' (Shaw 2010, p. 235), or researcher reflecting on preconceptions. Realising participant perspectives, their 'fore-understanding' (Heidegger 1962), establishing interviewee instantiated horizons, should find a critical focus in reflection. 'Objectivity begins by being aware of one's own subjectivity' (De Castro 2005, p. 159) - a distancing oneself from presuming participant assumptions enables a 'critical hermeneutic gaze' (Langdrige 2006, p. 644).

Citing Schleiermacher's hermeneutics, who 'suddenly sounds contemporary', Smith (2007) reminds us that participants as 'author' of their *phronesis* may be considered sources establishing a meaning for their experience (5). An interviewee

account can be analysed as attempting or essaying integration of their episodic experience in a 'hermeneutic circle of understanding' (Gadamer 1975): he or she strives to assemble the fragmented experience into holistic narrative of an issue. Listening, the researcher gains insight avoiding distorting horizontal 'fore-conception' (Heidegger 1962).

Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis is (in)formed philosophically by the hermeneutic narrative of knowing as use (cf. Wittgenstein 1991), as primarily practice. Here, 'understanding' is considered 'practical engagement with the world', involving 'self-reflection and sociality, affective concern, and a temporal, existential location' (Smith et al. 2009, p. 17). Participating in research, the interviewee's affective shared 'self-reflection', their 'discursive consciousness' (Giddens 1979, p. 5) of concerns is heard enunciating their pre-reflective recurring 'practical consciousness' (Giddens 1979, p. 5). IPA shares in listening to contributors the hermeneutic *phronesis* perspective goal, bringing to the fore tacit knowledge-in-use. The latter - and likewise, I suggest, the former - is concerned with socially located recurrent practices. Both exemplify research reflecting upon agential 'embodied concerned involvement in practices' (Yanchar and Slife 2017, p. 147), as in reverting to a room/sanctuary from noise.

Being reflective entails relating finding back to 'practical engagement' as the understanding of experience prior epistemologically - as a form of knowing - to the capacity to issue propositional accounts for researchers. In the latter, as we noted at the outset, evaluative horizon of understanding can be glimpsed or become more fully visible. A sustained trial and error in surmounting issues may be shown to be returning interviewee to habituated 'ready-to-hand' (Heidegger 1962) familiarity.

Analytical results map the 'constitutive structure' (Willig 2007, p. 221) of understanding. Here discursive recollecting of *phronesis* consciousness (as in caring) references embodied constraint and enablement. Shareable generic rules for enacting affectively interpreted purpose, marking a cultural standard of engagement may exist, from participating in 'extra care housing' (as exemplified above) to pain alleviation. Reflecting on health practices, participant enabled social genres emerge.

Hermeneutic IPA contributes to sustaining such qualitative research across 'embodied active situated cognition' (Larkin et al. 2011, p. 319) - finding multiple modes of understanding-in-practice. The preceding section applied diverse 'moments' or aspects of a hermeneutic *phronesis* perspective (HPP) on behaviour to re-viewing, thinking through empirical exemplification of IPA research. Being universal characteristics of 'practical consciousness', they are seen emerging as such in ubiquitous report as well as incorporated, immanent or heard in particular participants' discourse, 'presented as *both a priori* and essential and concrete and variable' (Tomkins and Eatough 2013, p. 4, emphasis in original). Focus group or interviewing display these epistemological moments through responses so furthering the 'consideration of emergent core constructs in IPA' (Brocki and Wearden 2006, p. 100). From hermeneutic horizons, understanding is 'primordially embodied, enabled *phronesis*, tacitly emplacing social perspectives, universally discernible 'moments' in research participant reflection.

Research participant epistemological ‘horizons’ can be glimpsed, then gained more widely. ‘Analysis results in an explicitation of horizons, which enables an access to the life-world’ (Sages and Szybek 2000, p. 155). *Phronesis* is discerned in discussion as discourse shaped philosophically.

To make the case that hermeneutic Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis is enhanced drawing more widely upon spatio-temporal metaphor such as ‘horizon of understanding’, is acknowledging that ‘when we are trying to understand another person or a text, we need to have some idea of the horizon in which the subject matter is intelligible to the author or speaker’ (Vessey 2009, p. 539).

In this way, speaking and writing from implicit, social horizon of understanding, positioned within a perspective, can be seen as conceptually informing the interviewee’s grasp on - or point of view of - a subject matter. If considered temporally, the subject’s ‘entering’ *phronesis* from horizon of understanding, our thus seeing content as being generically constituted, generates an expectation, potentially fulfilled by subsequent sequence. A ‘relaxing’ campus facilitates reduced ‘stress’.

Horizons of understanding are not only the embodied affective perspectives from which we make sense of the world, conceptualise its occurrence, but the material and metaphorical perimeters or limits of vision. ‘Refigured’ (Ricoeur 1988) narrative securing identity for research participant - an experiencing ‘self’ - can substantiate horizon of understanding a room as refuge from pain. So engaging in such a practice, one can maintain embodied ‘home understanding’ (Taylor 1995a, p. 150), refiguring identity ‘equipped’ by enabling familiar habitual supportive concrete circumstance. Thus ‘belonging’ facilitates ‘becoming’ in this narrative of subjectivity in recurring *phronesis*.

Conclusion: Interviewing from an Interpretative Hermeneutic *Phronesis* Perspective (HPP): Using Analytical Metaphors Situating Understanding

Philosophy is tacitly embedded shaping research practice, present within hypothetico-deductive philosophy of science or in the hermeneutic structuring of scientific paradigms. Reflecting upon philosophy-in-practice enhances empirical analysis. Hermeneutic philosophy has informed and shaped social science research activity, not least as practices theory. The consciously culturally located investigator seeks pre-reflective participant self-understanding in *phronesis*: while latent in recurring behaviour, an identity establishing narrative becomes manifest in discussion.

An embodied ‘horizon (of understanding)’ is not a rigid boundary but something that moves with one and invites one to advance further’ (Gadamer 1975, p. 238).

Presenting research participants as being always already engaged in their familiar habituated life-worlds, achieved as a ‘home’ or as alterable focus of would-be distancing, is philosophically far from empiricism’s narrative of knowing an external world as the passive ‘imprinting’ (Taylor 1971, p. 32) of ‘sense-data’, received impressions constituting the base substratum for assembling

'ideas' or knowledge. Positivism's data are derived and delivered free from any theoretical encumbrance:

the basic building block of knowledge on this view is the impression, or sense-datum, a unit of information which is not the deliverance of a judgment, which has by definition no element in it of reading or interpretation, which is a brute datum (Taylor 1971, p. 7).

Instead, the world in which one is placed is interpretatively regarded, seen from materially located cultural position, an individually nuanced location. While a socially designated horizon of its understanding may be limiting, thus rendering a person 'incapable of framing certain questions, and entertaining certain possibilities' (Taylor 2002, p. 130), points-of-view can discursively broaden.

'Unformulated' (Taylor 1995b, p. 179) during recurring practice, embodied understanding-in-use is habitual resourcefulness available to be 'voiced out' during research interviews. Horizons are ubiquitous: 'doing without frameworks is utterly impossible for us' (Taylor 1989, p. 27).

Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis is reflectively grounded in a qualitative study of participant 'particularity' (Smith et al. 2009, p. 92), rather than physical science (alleged) 'raw data', accounts contextualised by conceptualising theme, rather than contained in law-like nomological generalisation. Interviewees, this paper suggests, reflect on absorbing in hermeneutic *phronesis* of understanding experiences - often as issue-laden encounters - tacit repeated understanding-in-use wherein entities are interpreted as disabling/enabling. IPA's phenomenology is then distant from positivism's subject-object dualism in denying understanding disconnects from its embodiment. 'Being angry is an experience which is lived through the body' (Eatough and Smith 2008, p. 494). 'Once drunk he seemed like God's gift to women!' (participant in Roleston and Shaw 2017, p. 7).

Viewing Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) as exemplifying the philosophical hermeneutic perspective in undertaking empirical research, these pages have sought to extend IPA's 'distinctive epistemological framework' (Shinebourne 2011, p. 17) towards achieving 'uncovering of meanings' (Shinebourne 2011, p. 19) implicit in research participant *phronesis*. Reflective philosophy's research can reveal 'involvement' (Heidegger 1962), an interviewee's embodied (Larkin et al. 2011) and implicit articulation of entities as 'equipment' in her or his understanding-in-use. A tacit affective 'horizon of (practical) understanding' (Gadamer 1975) can be traced during the analysis as being a more or less 'shared commonality' (Shinebourne 2011, p. 23) of the interpretative experience.

Reflection situates 'seeing' enabled/ elided by culture (in)forming understanding, this 'shared background of life into which we are initiated' (Martin and Sugarman 2001b, p. 197). Yet participant *phronesis* can limit as well as allow understanding (Langdridge 2006) and may be challenged by a difficulty where 'people reflect and deliberate on how to proceed' (Polkinghorne 2000, p. 457) thereby revising their recurrent activity and identity in self-interpretation (Brinkmann 2008).

The paper has reflected on the foundational conceptual framing of hermeneutically informed Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis. It considered the proposition that revisiting hermeneutic philosophy's multiple spatio-temporal metaphors for the process of understanding would generate a resource further enhancing analysis of research participant *phronesis*. Thus reference to a historical underpinning could shape a current insight. Such a concluding comparison may be made with other communication disciplines. Refiguring this qualitative psychology through the philosophical lens of understanding as an interpretative hermeneutic *phronesis* perspective (HPP), its research participant reflecting on their previously tacit recurring activity can be viewed as narrating an (i) emergent; (ii) embodied; (iii) equipped *phronesis*; (iv) emplacing implicit 'horizons of understanding' (Gadamer) in their (v) generic, care-directed activity (vi) 'refiguring' (Ricoeur) their identity as (vii) a subject of celebratory or 'distanced' (Ricoeur) viewing, (viii) contextually an institutionally consensual or contested 'boundary object' (Star 2010). So 'practical consciousness' (Giddens 1979) emerges in reflection as being tacit, teleological awareness of identity in lifeworld socially positioned subjectivity.

Considering conceptual foundations shaping a hermeneutic Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis I have reviewed this approach to qualitative interview psychology engaging with research participant *phronesis*. Drawing on an epistemological framework advanced by Aristotle, Heidegger, Gadamer and Ricoeur would enable analytical narratives enhancing psychology's empirical insight as a contribution to a 'narrative psychology' (Sools et al. 2015). Hermeneutic philosophy advances practice further articulating theory and psychology, whether research is conducted by individual or a 'team' of investigators (Montague et al. 2020, p. 26). Research participant articulated 'horizons of understanding' as representational, render explicit a tacit pre-reflective awareness of powerful life-world embedded in a participant's meaning-making 'practical consciousness' (Giddens 1979). *Phronesis* as pursuing personally propitious practices 'refigures' (Ricoeur 1988) participant identity.

Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis reflects in partnership with participants upon their tacit understanding in/of recurring behaviour, the hermeneutic dimension of *phronesis*. 'The person becomes the universe of exploration at the outset' (Smith 2021). Acknowledging IPA concern with practices, as an interpretative hermeneutic *phronesis* perspective (HPP), allows participant accounts to be seen as instantiating *a priori* perspectives, a structurally ubiquitous behavioural (in)forming.

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