

Veiled in darkness

— The Ordinarity of Being Aged —

Wright-St Clair
'Showcase' – NZ Nursing Research 2007
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- In completion of Doctor of Philosophy
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Aging exists
in its everywhere-ness
Always moving towards
its natural being
Yet it is unseen
below the horizon
of the gaze



In the everyday
aging just is

Overview of Presentation

- Purpose of the study
- Theoretical framework
- Methods
- Findings
- The meanings





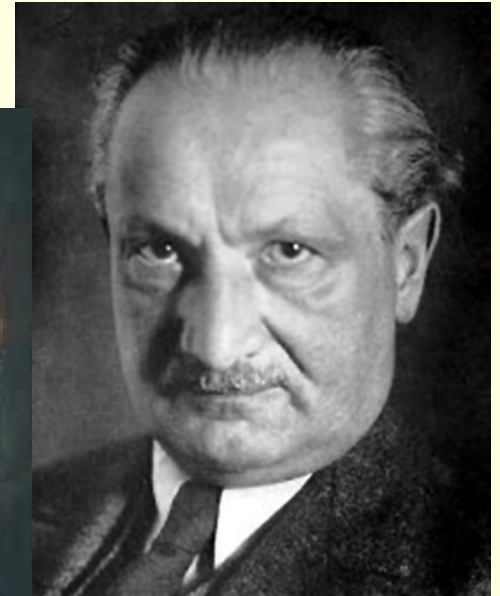
The phenomenon of being aged



How do elders experience aging
in their everyday lives?

Theoretical Framework

- Hermeneutic phenomenology
- Guided by the philosophies of Hans-Georg Gadamer and Martin Heidegger



Research Methods

Potential participants identified from the North Shore electorate, New Zealand electoral roll

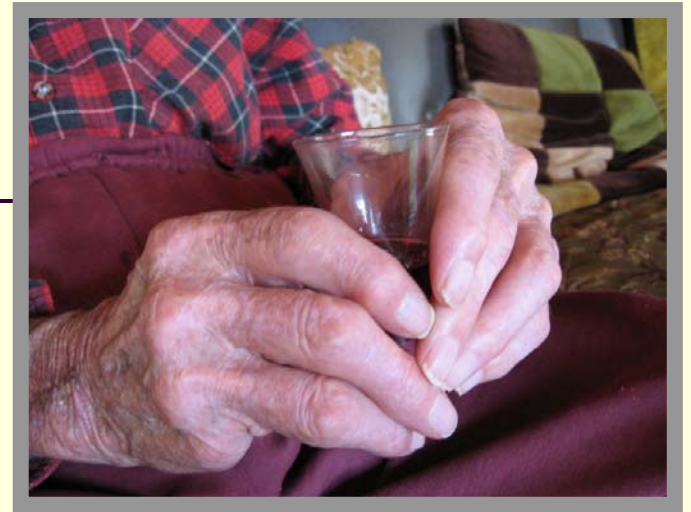
Maori aged 70+ & non-Maori aged 80+

Living in private residences

Purposive recruitment of 15 participants

Te Puna Hauora as a research partner





- 4 elder Maori
 - Two women: 77 & 93 years
 - Two men: 71 & 74 years
- 11 non-Maori
 - Six women: 80, 89, 90, 91, 93 & 95 years
 - Five men: 89, 91, 97, 97 & 97 years

Gathering the Text

Individual research conversations were conducted with participants to open up:

- Stories about everyday experiences, describing events; the here-and-now stories
- Understandings of being aged

Photographs of only the hands doing a precious occupation

Gathering & interpreting the text were integral



Working with the text

- Conversations were taped & transcribed
- Each transcript was recrafted into a set of anecdotes then affirmed by the participant
- Hermeneutic interpretation of anecdotes through dialectical conversation
- Poeticised the essence
- Phenomenological reflection to uncover the being of being aged



Engaging in Phenomenological Interpretation

- Being in the everyday
- Experiencing the uncomfortableness of the unaccustomed
- Being with others
- Aging just is





Being in the everyday
(Matelot, 74)



Being with others
(Tom, 91)

A close-up photograph of an elderly woman's hands, showing wrinkles and age, as she sews a piece of colorful, patterned fabric. She is using a needle and thread, with her fingers carefully guiding the needle. The fabric has a mix of green, blue, and yellow patterns. The background is slightly blurred, showing more of the fabric and the woman's arm in a light-colored sleeve.

**Experiencing the uncomfortableness
of the unaccustomed
(Ella, 93)**

Langs Beach,

I see a group of houses
Nestled in a hillside
Looking at the
And the d

**Aging Just Is
(Merrill, 89)**



He is
the boy riding horse
the young man driving
the father providing a home
the craftsman laying bricks
the grandfather gardening





He is
the aged man sitting
working hard to dress
looking out the window
waiting for time to pass
feeling himself fade away

He is
all of these

His past, present and future come
together in his everyday

Meanings in Practice

- Find ways to open up understandings of aging rather than simply bring assumptions to the fore
- Being aged is qualitatively different than being old, so avoid the language of 'oldness'
- Aging just is, it is just there, but some of the 'is' will always be veiled in darkness





Questions and Discussion

