



PHD

**Language and Entrepreneurial Experience: A Hermeneutic Phenomenological Inquiry into Japanese Entrepreneurship**

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*Award date:*  
2022

*Awarding institution:*  
University of Bath

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**“Language and Entrepreneurial Experience:**

**A Hermeneutic Phenomenological Inquiry into Japanese Entrepreneurship”**

Robert Pearce

A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy University of Bath

School of Management, July 2022.

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**Abstract:**

In recent years, a number of Entrepreneurship Studies scholars have called attention to the prospects of a phenomenological approach to researching Entrepreneurship in context. While many current studies have focused on the lived experience of the Entrepreneur, these scholars have not yet considered the fundamental, interpretive role of language in the Entrepreneur's experience of reality. By utilizing the hermeneutic phenomenological methodology of Hans Georg Gadamer, this research considers the impact of language on experiential meaning and understanding.

As to explore the merits of this Gadamerian methodological approach, this research investigates the phenomena of "Entrepreneurship" as experienced through the Japanese language. Through a hermeneutic phenomenological inquiry, this qualitative study focuses on the lived experience of the so-called "KIGYOUKA" (起業家) - the Japanese "Emerging Business Specialist". This inquiry focuses on the meaning and purpose of these experiences as interpreted by the individual. However, Gadamer's approach not only takes into consideration these experiential interpretations, but also the historic presuppositions, biases and fore-structures embedded into language and how they inform these interpretations, understanding and experience. It is this "Meaning" that the Gadamerian hermeneutic phenomenologist is interested in, "Meaning" as regarded as the structure of our experiences.

To investigate this meaning, this research considers the accounts of 22 Japanese "Entrepreneurs" (the aforementioned KIGYOUKA) regarding their lived experiences as meaningful and intentionality directed. This Gadamerian approach gains understanding of phenomena through the "hermeneutic phenomenological interview" - a collaborative, dialogical approach to qualitative research where the researcher and participant work together to explore meaning and to develop a rich understanding of the phenomena investigated.

This study seeks to inform and develop our current understandings and representations of the human Being central to Entrepreneurship studies, as experienced within specific, interpretive contexts.

**Keywords:** Entrepreneurship Studies, Hermeneutic Phenomenology, Hans-Georg Gadamer, Hermeneutic Ontology, Hermeneutic Being, Phenomenological Interview, Japanese-language Entrepreneurship, KIGYOUKA (起業家).

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Language and Entrepreneurial Experience:

A Hermeneutic Phenomenological Inquiry into Japanese Entrepreneurship.

Chapter I. Introduction

## **Chapter I: Introduction:**

As situated within the Functionalist research paradigm, our mainstream Entrepreneurship studies discussions currently struggle to represent human Being. This is arguably due to the foundations of the paradigm being grounded in a positivistic Scientism originally adopted from the natural sciences, which facilitates a complementary Subjectivism the field inherited from its market economic heritage, fostering both positions' respective penchant for reduction, abstraction and theoretical parsimony (Seymour 2006, 2012; Cope 2005; Grant and Perrin, 2002). As the field's focus has begun transitioning into more anthropomorphic, "social" representations of the so-called "Entrepreneur", an inevitable incommensurability between phenomena, concept and theory has arisen, calling for a reevaluation of the paradigmic approach best suited to consider this phenomenon (Packard, 2017; Cope 2005; Grant and Perrin, 2002; Bouwen and Steyaert, 1992).

In response, a number of Entrepreneurship scholars have called attention to the prospects of a phenomenological approach to researching Entrepreneurship in context. These scholars have recognised phenomenology as a means to gain fuller appreciation of the lived experiences of the Entrepreneur, and also to substantiate and develop our understanding of the concepts central to Entrepreneurship studies (Steyaert, 2007; Berglund, 2007; Cope, 2005). These studies investigate experiential meaning through the transcendental phenomenology of Husserl (Berglund, 2007; Fast, 2018;) as well as the ontological phenomenology of Heidegger, focusing on the lived experience of Entrepreneurship (åsvoll 2012/2018; Cope, 2005/2011; Popp and Holt, 2013; Seymour 2006; Shaw et al. 2011). However, while many of these studies examine the lived experience of the Entrepreneur, most neglect to consider how such experiences are interpreted by the Entrepreneur, and what interpretive factors contribute to this experience of reality and of human Being.

The hermeneutic phenomenological approach of philosopher Hans-Georg Gadamer meanwhile, focuses on the interpretive role of language in these experiences, investigating the hermeneutic ontology of “Meaning” and the human experience of understanding; how we interpret our world, and how we experience those interpretations (Gadamer, 1960). Gadamer’s approach not only takes into consideration these experiential interpretations, but also the historic presuppositions, biases and fore-structures embedded into language and how they inform our interpretations, understanding and experience. This is especially significant when considering Entrepreneurship in different contexts globally. This research argues that by utilizing a Gadamerian Hermeneutic approach to phenomenological inquiry, we are able to consider the experience of meaning and understanding as accessed through language, as to better understand the meaning and purpose of Entrepreneurship as interpreted by the individual Entrepreneur. This research therefore aims to address the present gap in the Entrepreneurship Studies literature already taking a phenomenological approach to the understanding of Entrepreneurship not yet exploring the interpretive qualities of language-use in context.

By taking into account the so-called “Entrepreneur” as a hermeneutical existence, we focus on subjectively-interpreted “Meaning” rather than objective “profit-opportunity” and also move away from subject/object dichotomisation that has distracted current discussions within the field from the phenomena at hand. This research therefore employs a Gadamerian approach as to conduct a hermeneutic phenomenological inquiry into Entrepreneurship.

To explore the merits of this methodological approach, this research investigates the phenomena of Entrepreneurship as experienced through the Japanese language. A qualitative study designed to access and to better understand the lived experience of the so-called “KIGYOUKA” (起業家) - the Japanese “Emerging Business Specialist”, focusing on the meaning and purpose of Entrepreneurship as interpreted and experienced through the Japanese language. Japan has been one of the largest and most developed economies of the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> Century so far. However, the country has seen relatively low-levels of entrepreneurial activity and new venture creation especially when compared to other high-income economies (Suzuki et al. 2002, Suzuki 2012, Bosma et al., 2007 Debroux, 2003; Sagie and Elizur, 2003;), with the country’s rate of early-stage entrepreneurial activity being the second lowest of all economies surveyed by the GEM (GEM,2020). Japanese Entrepreneurship has been described as “low-risk low-return” on the perceived basis that “Japanese entrepreneurs value stability and security over growth” (Feigenbaum & Brunner, 2002; 47), demonstrating comparatively low-levels of “entrepreneurial attitude” (Honjo, 2015). This broad environment therefore makes a thought-provoking case-study to consider interpretations of “Entrepreneurship” as experienced. By employing this Gadamerian approach, this Hermeneutical phenomenological inquiry aims to gain access to the meaning of an experience as interpreted, as to understand the purpose and meaning of these experiences as understood by these so-called KIGYOUKA.

This research considers the accounts of 22 Japanese “Entrepreneurs” (the aforementioned KIGYOUKA) regarding their lived experience of KIGYOUKA-SEISHIN - “The spirit of the emerging business specialist” - a phenomenon akin to “Entrepreneurship” - as experienced through the Japanese language. To access this experience as is interpreted by the individual, this research

employs the qualitative research methodology established by Max van Manen (1990, 2014) as channelling Gadamer's hermeneutic phenomenology. This methodology gains understanding of phenomena through the process of the "hermeneutic phenomenological interview" - A semi-structured, dialectical approach to qualitative research where the researcher and participant work together to explore meaning and to develop a rich understanding of the phenomena investigated (e.g., here, the experiences of KIGYOUKA-SEISHIN as interpreted and experienced by KIGYOUKA through the Japanese language). Through this process of collaboration, phenomenological texts emerge (van Manen 1984/2011; Lavery, 2003). These texts are then subject to the phenomenological reflections and thematic analysis of the researcher, where emerging themes from across the interviews are documented and further discussed (van Manen 1984/1990).

This research presents these themes across three main findings chapters: The first focuses on "Purpose", the second on "Meaningful experience and meaningful action" and the third on "Trust-relationships', language and common/shared-understanding". This research then discusses the prominent themes which emerged, themes such as: "Contextually-oriented concern", the reading the "YONONAKA" and the "Flow of the times", "Trust, relationships and opportunity (KIKAI, KOUKI, CHANSU)", "Commonly-understanding, sense of possibility and learning from experience", "Value in the YONONAKA" as well as considering the "Venture as Meaning, KIGYOUKA as interlocuter".

Beyond being a suitable vehicle to consider accounts of the phenomena as lived and as understood, at a meta-theoretical and methodological level, the main thesis Gadamer presented throughout his magnum opus "Truth and Method" (1960) focused on the shortcomings of Scientism and Subjectivism

as adopted into the human sciences, considering how best to represent authentic accounts of our Being in our human-science academic endeavours. This is the very issue this research acknowledges has been a problematic in the field of “Entrepreneurship Studies”, the issue this research seeks to address. This research aims to explore how best for us as a field to represent our human Being at the heart of these studies.

This research therefore becomes an exploration of this notion - adapting the main tenets of Gadamer’s thesis into a methodological approach integrally conscious of the perceived limitations of Scientism - to explore a paradigmic alternative to the fields current Functionalist orthodoxy in a bid to remedy phenomenal/conceptual incommensurability rife in our current “Entrepreneurship studies” discussions. The background to this issue as relevant to “Entrepreneurship Studies and the social sciences more broadly, as well as phenomenology’s suggested place within this discussion, will now be outlined further throughout this introductory chapter.



### **Paradigmatic and philosophical positioning of this research:**

Situated within the Interpretivist research paradigm, this Hermeneutic Phenomenological research prioritises the intentionality-driven, subjectively-interpreted perspective of the individual (Here, the so-called “KIGYOUKA”) rather than the teleologically-supposed, opportunity-driven conception of the Entrepreneur as is prominent in at the centre of mainstream Functionalist research (Kirzner, 1979; Shane and Venkataraman, 2000; Shane, 2003). This research position argues a plurality of the phenomena of Entrepreneurship more broadly, with this study taking into consideration a variant relative to the language it is experienced through. Therefore, this research is not an ontological inquiry into objective “*profit opportunity*” (as has been typical of studies situated within the dominant Functionalist paradigm), but one into the ontology of *interpretation* and *meaning*; The experience of understanding, and the production of idiosyncratic, noematic meaning which directs one toward meaningful action and experience. It is this meaning that this Gadamerian hermeneutic inquiry is concerned with. This research thus argues the benefits of an Interpretivist approach to Entrepreneurship Studies research. This position is at odds with much of the field’s established orthodoxy, challenging many of the ontological and teleological assumptions typical of mainstream Functionalist Entrepreneurship studies.

This initial chapter therefore aims to justify the legitimacy of minority heterodox approaches, such as those that fall within the Interpretivist paradigm (e.g., Hermeneutic Phenomenology). It will outline where this research is situated paradigmatically, as to frame the contents of this research within the fields greater metatheoretical discussion going forward. The chapter will therefore review the broader scholarly context of entrepreneurship studies, discussing the recent and historic paradigmic and metatheoretic framing of work focusing on the phenomena of Entrepreneurship. The first section will outline and discuss the four principally-recognised paradigms of sociological research (Burrell and Morgan;1979), drawing attention to the current paradigmic orthodoxy of the Functionalist paradigm, as well as outlining the paradigmic and philosophical positioning of this current research project (Interpretivism – Hermeneutic Phenomenology). The second offers a brief, initial outline of Phenomenology as a philosophical position as it sits within the Interpretivist paradigm.

Through outlining outright the key traditions and paradigms of sociological inquiry, this first chapter intends to deliberately draw explicit attention to both the language associated with, as well as the concerns of each research paradigm (specifically focusing on comparing the dominant Functionalist orthodox-approach to the promoted Interpretivist/Phenomenological alternative). This may seem a rudimentary place to begin, but its inclusion helps to make clear the normative qualities and limiting aspects the current orthodoxy perpetuates, as well as methodological and systematic characteristics of that paradigm that appears to lead researchers toward issues of conceptual and theoretical incommensurability (Packard, 2017;

Grant and Perrin, 2002; Chell and Pittaway, 1998). These issues will become prominent themes throughout both this current chapter, as well as the following literature review that outlines the dominant conceptions of Entrepreneurship in the Functionalist orthodoxy, eventually guiding the reader through the alternate Gadamerian Hermeneutic Phenomenological conception of human existence considered appropriate for the study of entrepreneurial experience as suggested by this research project.

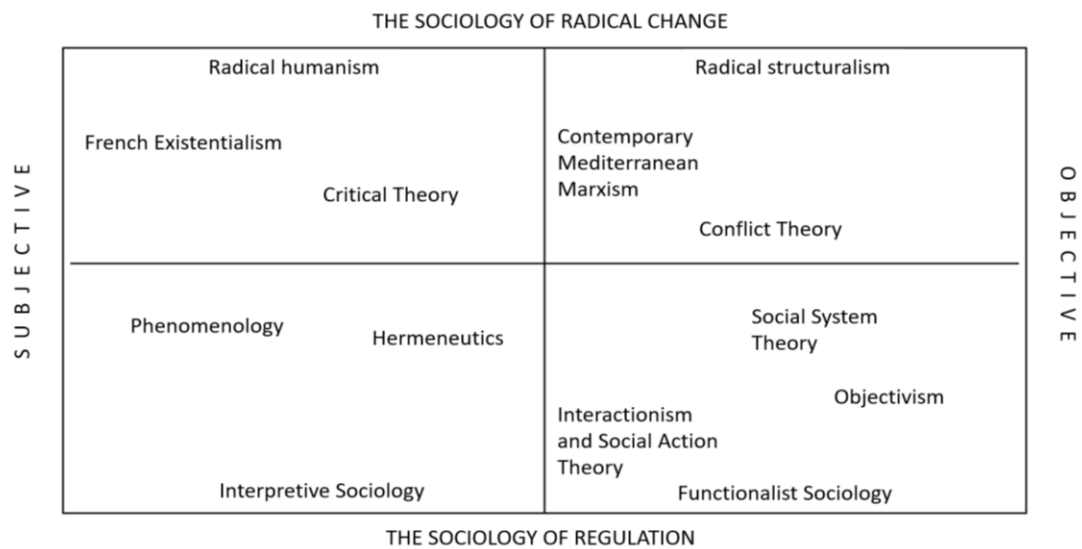
The following chapters serve as to review current conceptions of the phenomena and discuss the ontological status of the phenomena (as experienced) vis-à-vis the ontologically-reductive abstractions prevalent in current Functionalist-research. It is therefore necessary to briefly review the key intellectual traditions which inform the field of “Entrepreneurship Studies” as to establish the language of discussion going forward.

### **The Key Traditions of the Social Sciences: “Sociological Positivism” and “German Idealism”:**

To begin, this section draws attention to the two key intellectual traditions informing the great socio-political debate of the sociological realm (including the disciplines of Management and Entrepreneurship studies) – “Sociological Positivism” and “German Idealism”. These two traditions divide broadly into “Objectivist” (*Sociological Positivism*) and “Subjectivist” (*German Idealism*) approaches to research, and are considered the philosophical foundations for the four key paradigmatic-extremes of sociological thought that have dominated social-science research for the last two-hundred years (Burrell and

Morgan;1979). “Sociological positivism” takes a *positivistic* approach to sociological inquiry, in line with those of the natural sciences. It takes a generally “Objectivist” stance to research. The Objectivist position believes reality is concrete and measurable, examining objective constancies “out there” in the world - a world directly accessible to humans. Through scientific rigor, objectivists strive to produce prescriptive concepts and universal laws to explain such objective reality. Sociological positivism typically holds a *deterministic* view of human nature. “German Idealism” meanwhile is focused the free-will of human consciousness, citing this fundamentally subjective phenomena as the source of the social reality we experience. “Subjectivist” approaches are concerned with the subjective experience of a reality as is relative to individual consciousness. This philosophical approach also requires scholars to reflect on their own role in the social scientific endeavour. That beyond the notion of infallible scientific-rigor, the perceived immanence of our human subjectivity ultimately lies obstacle to human access to objective reality. This perceives subjectivity as a fallibility in the pursuit of the objective and so strives to understand the *phenomena* rather than *noumena* (Kant, 1781). Sociological positivism typically seeks to *explain* the phenomena it observes, while idealism strives to *understand* it (Droysen,1858/1897; von Wright; 1971, Apel,1984). Beyond these distinct philosophical cleavages, Burrell and Morgan (1979) conceive of sociological research in terms of four key paradigms, each distinct in relation to their particular underlying metatheoretical assumptions. Each paradigm is essentially founded upon mutually exclusive approaches to

the social scientific-endeavour (with the foundational sociological positivism and German idealism cleavages providing the subjectivist objectivist extremes of their model). Let's briefly examine each.



(fig 1): Burrell and Morgan's Sociological paradigms (1979)

**The Functionalist paradigm:** (Objectivist/regulatory) - The dominant paradigm in organisational and entrepreneurship studies. This perspective is rooted in sociological positivism. Social relations are considered concrete, identifiable and measurable via pragmatic scientific approaches. Believes every part of society serves a functional purpose toward the maintenance of that society in the best way possible (Spencer, 1860). The underlying aim is to provide rational explanations for social phenomena (Burrell and Morgan 1979; 26) with a positivistic predictability bound to deterministic teleology.

**The Interpretivist paradigm:** (Subjectivist/regulatory) The Interpretivist paradigm is rooted in German idealism. The *participants* frame of reference is prioritised, rather than that of the *observer*. Focuses on how humans interpret the social realm through their subjectivity (and in some hermeneutic endeavours, how the researcher also interprets these interpretations). That reality is not strictly “out there” but exists relative to the subjectivity of the individual.

Interpretivism holds a voluntaristic view of human free will (Burrell and Morgan 1979). It values the individual as “complex” and so accepts different individuals will understand (and thus *experience*) reality in different ways, as well as viewing the realm of individual consciousness as an on-going process (Burrell and Morgan 1979; 28).

**The Radical Structuralists paradigm:** (Objectivist/ radical change) Radical Structuralists focus on structural relationships and structural conflicts within a realist depiction of the social world. This paradigm observes the notion of radical societal change - here from an objectivist perspective - that change is generated inherently by societal structures and the crisis’s these structures develop i.e., political or economic. Shares similarities with Functionalist approaches.

**The Radical humanist paradigm:** (Subjectivist/ radical change) Is concerned with a “sociology of radical change” from a Subjectivist point of view. Shares similarities with the other subjectivity-based paradigm (“Interpretivism”) yet the key difference is the Radical humanist position focuses on a radical disruption of the status quo. The core tenet of this paradigm is human consciousness is ultimately dominated by the social realms ideological

superstructures that we have developed and interact with, placing a “cognitive wedge” between ourselves and “reality” (Burrell and Morgan, 1979, 32). Aims to transcend the artificial limitations created within the social realm.

Accordingly, each of the outlined approaches subscribe to diametrically-differing assumptions, not just about the nature of the social-scientific enterprise, but also the underlying assumptions of how we as academics qualify the human experience of the social world and of human existence itself. Burrell and Morgan’s subsequent attempt to explore such assumptions were confronted by issues pertaining to “Epistemology” and “Ontology”, issues they believed underpinned the great socio-philosophical and meta-theoretical debates both captivating and frustrating researchers of all rival intellectual traditions (Burrell and Morgan, 1979; 1). These *epistemological* issues are concerned with knowledge, specifically the acquisition of an accessible truth and how to distinguish such from falsehood.

Epistemology is typically oriented towards objective knowledge, considering such as accessible, ascertainable and acquirable and so orients its attention towards the justification of such. The *ontological* issues underpinning sociological research concern the constitution of reality. They contemplate issues such as whether reality is separate and external from the individual or conversely, whether reality is a product of one’s individual consciousness.

Whether “reality” is an objective *existence* or a subjective *experience*.

These two factors are extremely significant in shaping the sociological-research landscape as their ideological incommensurability ultimately creates a philosophical and methodological

fracture right at the centre of our academic foundation. Through distinguishing these underlying philosophical positions, we are able to recognise the significance of how they inform the four main socio-philosophical debates prominent in modern sociological scholarship, as outlined below. Each opposing position in each respective debate ultimately aligns with opposing Sociological Positivist (Objectivist) and German Idealist (Subjectivist) assumptions.

### **The Ontological Debate – Realism (Objectivist) and Nominalism (Subjectivist) /**

#### **Relativism (Subjectivist)**

The “Realist” ontological position considers reality as existing independent of the human mind, not something created by the individual - it exists 'out there'; Our social realm is deemed to exist as concretely as the natural world, made up of tangible, immutable structures that exists irrespective of our (in)ability to observe them or our individual perceptions of them. The “Nominalist” position meanwhile assumes the social realm consists of names, labels and concepts from which we structure reality. Our social reality is relative to an internalisation of the artificial social constructs, the product of human subjectivity, communication and our proclivity for abstraction. Another subjectivist position is “Relativism”. Relativism believes that reality is a finite experience, dependent on the subjectivity of the individual. The social realm does not exist outside of the human mind. Our social reality is thus relative to our subjective interpretation of said reality. This notion lends



itself to a perspective that multiple interpretations of reality exist, a plurality dependent on particular factors that influence our subjectivity (i.e., language).

### **The Epistemological Debate: - Positivism (Objectivist) and Anti-Positivism - (Subjectivist)**

Positivism views “knowledge” as scientific *truth*; The factual product of scientific testing, the rigorous measurement of the objective world. Therefore, Positivism seeks to explain and predict aspects of our social world through the development and testing of scientific hypotheses, as to produce laws and principles explaining such. As a result, positivism believes it achieves knowledge of infallible, predictive rigor due to the objective facts its methodology is seen to uncover. Conversely, Anti-positivism rejects such empiricism and scientific method. It dismisses the positivistic notion that social-science research can create objective knowledge or scientific “truth”, suggesting the subjectivity of both the *researched* and *researcher* stand as obstacle to such objectivity. Anti-positivists seek to understand the subjective interpretation of social action and social existence from the perspective of the *individuals studied*, typically through qualitative research methods such as ethnographic research, discourse analysis or conversation-based interviews.

These underlying ontological/epistemological assumptions also have significant methodological implications, creating debate with regard to the means and method of sociological research.

## **The Methodological Debate – Nomothetic (Objectivist) and Ideographic (Subjectivist):**

Complementary to the positivistic line of inquiry, Nomothetic investigation partakes in an effort to derive general, predictive laws as to explain objective phenomena. It relies on scientific method akin to that of the natural sciences, using quantitative methods to achieve such, typically deductive hypothesis testing, based on existing theory. It achieves this through highly-structured experiments (searching for indications of “causality”) as well as statistical surveys involving numerical estimation and statistical inference-type analysis. Their research questions tend to be pre-specified and outcome-oriented.

Ideographic inquiry meanwhile employs research methods to acquire subjective accounts of phenomena *as experienced*. They strive to understand the meaning of subjective phenomena that currently cannot be understood nor explained by existing theories or paradigmatic approaches. This involves “getting inside” an individual subject who has experienced the phenomena under investigation first hand, exploring their background and life experiences.

As outlined above, this approach typically utilizes qualitative research methods, such as interviews, observation, document reviews and “exit interviews” valuing accounts of subjective experience. Sample size is usually small, seeking subjective “accounts” as opposed to a “dependent variable” (sought in nomothetic research) as a product of the inquiry. Their research question tends to be open-ended and process-oriented.

## **The Human Nature Debate: Determinism (Objectivist) and Voluntarism (Subjectivist)**

Scientific determinism conceives of humans as adherent to a characteristic and predetermined functional purpose, as determined by natural law and/or the social structures they exist within. Determinism believes our choices, actions, behaviour and are causally determined *and on this basis, everything in the social realm can be explained*. This supports positivists' focus on predictivity and incentivises theory-building. "Voluntarism" meanwhile is predicated on the assumption that humans have an irreducible freedom and a structural autonomy. This grants humans the freedom to choose (or further, the innate *capability to distinguish and ascertain*) the purposeful aspects of life by themselves, to decide and interpret their meaning and their significance, and to pursue such as is deemed significant by the individual their self.

These debates prove significant both as to illustrate and emphasise the philosophical divisions in the field of sociology (thus drawing attention to the broad possibilities of research), as well as to illustrate the dichotomisation of concepts, theories and schools of thought that stem from their above outlined epistemological and ontological underpinnings.

Nevertheless, Burrell and Morgan realised that the orthodoxy within organisational studies was based in just one dominant tradition - the Functionalist paradigm. Due to the prevalence of this approach, its orthodoxy (and its above-outlined methodologies and research positions) has become taken for granted as "right and self-evident" (Burrell and Morgan, 1979; IX),

implicitly limiting the parameters of contemplation of the phenomena at hand, thus restricting the breadth and depth of discussion and research.

Satellite perspectives appear to have been unnecessarily neglected (effectively *marginalised*), having developed from fundamentally differing philosophical assumptions, diametrically-opposed to those of the dominant Functionalist orthodoxy. Burrell and Morgan therefore suggest that the majority of social scientific enterprise is generally developed upon “an extremely narrow set of metatheoretical assumptions” (1979; IX). This observation translates into the realm of entrepreneurship studies, where “it is fairly uncontroversial to say that the majority of entrepreneurship research is still functionalist in nature” (Essers et al, 2017;1 / Jennings et al, 2005).

### **Interpretivist reaction to Functionalist hegemony:**

Yet the limitations and restrictions of this status quo is currently under scrutiny, with a “paradigm shift” deemed necessary as for the field of Entrepreneurship Studies to truly prosper (Packard, 2017; 536). As outlined above, entrepreneurial research has traditionally been dominated by objectivist, Functionalist approaches (Grant and Perrin 2002; Jennings et al 2005; Hjorth et al 2008), producing theory-heavy research, aiming to *explain* Entrepreneurship. Yet recently, a number of scholars have taken to alternative approaches as to understand the phenomena first, prior to attempting to explain it (Anderson and Starnawska, 2008; Chalmers, 2015; Chalmers and Shaw 2017; Chell, 2000; Downing, 2005;

Fletcher, 2006). These approaches challenge the normative philosophical assumptions of the Functionalist paradigm that have potentially limited how scholars observe the entrepreneurship previously (Lindgren and Packendorff, 2009). They aim to engage in “greater paradigmatic experimentation” (Cope, 2005; 169) as to move beyond the existing ‘paradigmatic cage’ (Grant and Perrin, 2002) of which Entrepreneurship scholarship has thus far sat within, regulating the scope and dimension of entrepreneurial research (See Bouchikhi, 1993; Chell and Pittaway, 1998; Costello, 1996; Hines and Thorpe, 1995; Johannisson, 1995; Rae, 2000; Rae and Carswell, 2000; Steyaert, 1998; Bouwen and Steyaert, 1997). This has resulted in the call for a more inclusive and open approach to Entrepreneurship scholarship, to include and further develop qualitative and pluralist approaches to research (Cope, 2005; Down, 2010; Gartner, 2004, Gartner, et al 2010, Grant and Perren, 2002; Leich et al 2010, Ogbor, 2000; Steyaert, 2005; Steyaert and Katz, 2004). However, due to these approaches still occupying the fields minority heterodox position, recognition and uptake of such has been limited (Chandler and Lyon, 2001; Coviello and Jones, 2004; Drakopoulou-Dodd, 2014; Jones and Spicer, 2005; Steyaert and Hjorth, 2003).

Even though the Functionalist tradition is dominant, Entrepreneurship studies is still a nascent field, with no actual consensus on a definite, over-arching metatheoretical framework for research to exist within (Packard, 2017; Grant and Perren, 2002). Most attempts to develop one occur under Functionalist /objectivist terms, to build upon pre-existing market-economic theories, and supporting constructs and conceptualisations many based on the

dynamic process of Entrepreneurship, as considered in a market economic context, yet this approach has been plagued with phenomena /construct incompatibility and greater paradigmic incommensurability. (Packard, 2017; Grant and Perren, 2002; Dimov, 2011; Foss and Klein, 2012; Klein, 2008)

As mentioned above, the current Functionalist framing of the Entrepreneurship discussion regulates - and thus reduces - the scope of our contemplation by preferencing a paradigmic penchant for deterministic behaviour (i.e., *the Entrepreneur seeks the entrepreneurial opportunity*) without yet having studied the phenomena of Entrepreneurship sufficiently enough to validate this teleological assumption (i.e., that of *the Entrepreneur being motivated by the opportunity*). Functionalism serves many beneficial qualities with regard to theory building, but before we can develop *theory*, we need to establish *what the phenomenon of Entrepreneurship is* and then further still *how best to conceptualise it*. Even this current suggestion makes the assumption that there is one homogenous, generalisable “*phenomenon of Entrepreneurship*”.

Interpretivism (specifically in the case of this research, Hermeneutic phenomenology) begins with an underlying paradigmic inclination to accept plurality of phenomena, stepping away from the generic universalism of the functionalist paradigm and instead valuing relativistic experiences of a phenomena, as interpreted and experienced subjectively (Bjerke, 2011; Hill and McGowan 1999). Entrepreneurship is “simply too broad to be constricted in a single, universal classification” (Anderson and Starnawska, 2008; 2). This research does not seek to

define “Entrepreneurship” in one finite definition. Instead, it hopes to understand a variant (here, as manifest through and specific to a particular language) of the phenomena, and promotes a methodology of how to do so, with the hope for future research focusing on other variants and categorisations to be inspired to follow suit. (E.g., Interpretivism – Phenomenology – Hermeneutic Phenomenology)

There is already much debate regarding the validity of the “opportunity” construct that much of the current Functionalist orthodoxy is based around (Dimov, 2011; Davidsson, 2015, 2016; Foss and Klein, 2012; Klein, 2008, Popp and Holt, 2012). By beginning our investigation of a still-contested phenomena in this broad and open fashion, we invite scholars to step backwards as to step forwards; to observe and evaluate a pre-theoretical, pre-conceptualized phenomenon of Entrepreneurship, to accept and include characteristics that have perhaps been trivialised as unimportant or simply unnoticed previously through observing the individuals experience of entrepreneurship (Berglund, 2007).

This research therefore suggests an Interpretivist approach - specifically a Gadamerian Hermeneutic Phenomenological approach - as a means to observe and understand the lived experience of phenomena of Entrepreneurship (in the broad varieties it may take). The Interpretivist metatheoretical underpinnings provide a suitable forum to contemplate such, supporting inquiry with the above noted qualitative research methodologies, perceived to be benefit from paradigmic assumptions characteristic of the Interpretivist paradigm such as Nominalism, Relativism and Voluntarism.

This paradigmatic position has already received much enthusiasm, but due to its effective marginalisation has not been developed nor considered enough as to reach its potentials (Packard, 2017; Grant and Perren, 2002). This research therefore aims to show the benefit of the development of such an Interpretivist approach, employing Hermeneutic Phenomenology as to survey and document accounts of the phenomena of entrepreneurship, here with a Gadamerian approach with the emphasis on language being a significant factor in producing a relativistic experience of the phenomena. To observe the influence of language on the experience of Entrepreneurship as well as how it manifests ontologically.

This research project seeks to acquire experiential accounts the phenomena of Entrepreneurship. This project nominates an Interpretivist approach as a suitable means to document and analyse such accounts, as to consider the meaning and purpose of the phenomena of Entrepreneurship as experienced, as to begin to provide the foundations for a field of study focused on a phenomenon currently-known as “Entrepreneurship”. Foundations based on accounts of individuals who have experienced this phenomenon. An unabashed and nascent field of inquiry, not yet regulated and limited by *theory*, specifically those of the dominant Functionalist paradigm.

Through a Hermeneutic Phenomenological methodology this research hopes to highlight how qualitative accounts of the experience of Entrepreneurship would benefit this nascent field of study moving forward, as to inform our conceptualisations of such phenomena, moving away from the inherited terminology from the field of Market-economics that stifle our concerns as



a relatively new and exciting field of research. With this in mind, the next section of this chapter will begin to outline the Phenomenological philosophical positionings (as it sits within the Interpretivist paradigm) detailing phenomenology as a general philosophical position before specifying the premise of the Gadamerian approach as well as the Gadamerian premise of hermeneutic ontology.

### **Introduction to Phenomenology:**

There are currently few studies taking a phenomenological perspective of the Entrepreneur and entrepreneurship. (e.g., Fast, 2018; Berglund 2007/2015; åsvoll 2012/2018; Cope 2005/2011; Seymour, 2006; Lavoie, 1991; Popp and Holt, 2012; Shaw et al. 2011;). This research seeks to highlight and promote the benefits of a hermeneutic phenomenological research project as solution to core issues of phenomena/construct incommensurability currently plaguing entrepreneurship studies.

Phenomenology is considered a significant school of thought within the Interpretivist paradigm, however its paradigmatic categorisation is far from straightforward here. Where Burrell and Morgan's matrix diagram rest on a continuum of subjectivity / objectivity, Phenomenology has a complex relationship with these dimensions of the research endeavour. Hermeneutic Phenomenology (the iteration of Phenomenology this research is developed upon) was from its inception, a reaction to the subjectivism and scientism of the philosophic tradition of its time (as characterised by the outlined Functionalist approach to researching

human phenomena), yet this reduction of Being is to some degree also present within approaches also categorised under the Interpretivist banner (E.g., social constructivist approaches which promote a subjective, first-person approach yet still retain an implicit deterministic teleology at the heart of theory-building). This issue of reduction was also significant problem with regard to the fields founder (Edmund Husserl's) descriptive phenomenological approach (outlined below).

Therefore, this research considers its sensibilities to stem from hermeneutic phenomenology (as will be outlined throughout this thesis), but is categorised paradigmically by management scholarship as falling within the outlined "Interpretivist" paradigm.

### **Phenomenology and Hermeneutic Phenomenology:**

First developed by Edmund Husserl, the philosophy of Phenomenology is the study of phenomena as experienced in consciousness. Phenomenological enquiry originally aimed to observe and describe the subjective, individual experience of "lived experience".

However, while Husserl took an epistemologically-inclined approach toward considering our lived experiences of phenomena - focusing on the mental representations and analytic perceptions of a pure and transcendental consciousness in isolation (ultimately reducing his thesis to a neo-subjectivism), his protégé Martin Heidegger would fulfil the promise of phenomenology by taking the discipline in a arguably fuller direction by rejecting the epistemology-inclined Cartesian subject-object dichotomy of the tradition so far through the

development of an ontological phenomenology, focusing on describing our human Being as a “Being in the world” (Heidegger, 1962).

What Heidegger began to meditate on in his ontological phenomenology (and what Gadamer further developed through his hermeneutics) is what it means for something to “Be” and how we consider this in our academic endeavours. Both scholars felt the scientific/academic tradition had up until this point “misdescribed and misinterpreted human being” (Dreyfus, 1991;1) and that it was crucial to the human sciences for them to address the encroaching methodological scientism and its integrated subjectivism which was being adopted from the natural sciences. To present a focus for our studies that is representative of our human existence.

Heidegger delivered a primordial representation of human existence, of human being-in-the-world, through the notion of DA-SEIN (“Being -There”), that rather than focusing on the mental acts of the human “knower”, DASEIN is Being as a *practical* existence, as embedded in a world of tools and involvements. Human Being as concerned, as coping individuals, thrown into an already interpreted world. That this understanding is not how we “know” the world we exist in, but is our basic mode of being and of interaction with our world. This is a comprehensive view of our day-to-day existence that was Heidegger’s beginnings of an ontological Hermeneutic phenomenology. Therefore, Hermeneutic Phenomenology rejects Cartesian subject/object dualism, rejecting any perceived ontological separation between consciousness and the material world we inhabit. To reduce the human to “object” by

applying the same ontological deliberations typically used in the natural/physical sciences discounts the breadth of human existence, and also the holistic, contextual nature of human understanding (Stewart and Mickunas, 1974).

This introduction focuses on introducing Hans-George Gadamer's (Heidegger's protégé and colleague) hermeneutic phenomenology, as well as clarifying distinctions between key notions appropriated from Husserl's descriptive phenomenology (specifically here the notion of "intentionality" as adapted into Gadamer's "hermeneutic ontology").

The underlying premise of hermeneutic phenomenological inquiry is that human beings cannot be considered in isolation from the world they exist in. Humans interact, learn and so evolve, and are therefore not "reducible to (their) present situation" (Seymour, 2006; 146); Humans are developing amidst an interpretive, temporal process of interaction and understanding, consistently becoming aware of new possibilities as they become interpretable. It is this understanding that gives us our voluntaristic agency, and informs an individual's hermeneutic "Intentionality" of being. (Husserl, 2012; Gadamer 1960). Yet this intentionality is contentious issue within the tiers of phenomenology's progression from an epistemologically-inclined discipline to an ontological one.

A discussion of iterations spanning from Husserl's Cartesian, epistemological intentionality, Heidegger's "absorbed" *ontological* intentionality and Gadamer's hermeneutical intentionality (based on his "hermeneutic ontology"). Therefore, before outlining Gadamer's

hermeneutical philosophy, it is briefly necessary to outline Husserl's pure transcendental consciousness' (as assumed and as investigated in isolation) relationship with our intentionality, some basic phenomenological notions as well as its associated terminology.

Under the Husserlian phenomenology, our experiences' central structure is its "Intentionality". Our intentionality is our *directedness* toward something. Experience is always "*of*" or "*about*" something. Intentionality is the "aboutness" (Moran, 2000) or directedness of mind toward intelligible objects (phenomena, concepts, events, goals, etc.). This intentional act of directedness consists of what Husserl referred to as "Noetic" content; "*Noesis*" - the directed/intentional act itself (i.e., to perceive, to anticipate etc.) and its "*Noema*" - the object that holds one's directedness, holds our intentionality (Husserl, 2012; Moran, 2005). Yet this "*Noema*" is not the object itself, but our perception of it – the perceived *subjective phenomenon* of it. Therefore, this directedness is not directed by the object itself, but is directed by our *experience* of the object – the subjective meaning it has to us. Of the "external" (the so-called "objective"), an object may be objectively existent within space and time yet our noematic experience of the object exists subjectively "*in consciousness*" (Fast, 2018; Husserl, 2012). This premise accepts that an external, materially objective world does exist, but is only accessible through subjective means, as a subjective phenomenon (our experience of it). This noematic premise is applicable to that of the internal also, i.e., the subjectively imagined entity. As Føllesdal (1969) observes "When we think of a

centaur, thinking has a noema, but it has no object; there exists of which we think. Because of its noema, however, act is directed.” (Føllesdal, 1969; 681). However, this dichotomising notion of external “objectivity” and internal “knowledge” relegated Husserl’s conception of consciousness and its intentionality to an isolated Cartesian knower, detached from the world. Heidegger’s notion of DASEIN (“being-there”), (Heidegger 1927), “*Being-In-The-World*” describes our contextually-bound primordial existence, where *Being* dwells within its “*totality of involvements*” (Heidegger, 1927), an embedded existential relationship dependent on Beings involvement with the world it is “thrown” into. Aspects of Heidegger’s thesis will be discussed further in chapter II, yet it is the foundations of Gadamer’s hermeneutic phenomenological thesis that will now receive our attention here.

### **Gadamerian Hermeneutic phenomenology:**

Hermeneutic Phenomenological inquiry firstly aims to access and then describe, meaning and the human experience of understanding; how we interpret our world, and how we experience those interpretations. The hermeneutic phenomenological scholar attempts to further interpret these subjective, experiential accounts of understanding as to provide greater insight into such phenomena, *as experienced (i.e., as interpreted)*. Phenomenology becomes hermeneutic when its motive is interpretive and not purely descriptive, taking into account the interpretive quality of understanding, as well as contextual presuppositions, assumptions, prejudices and biases.

Hans-George Gadamer pursued the interpretive potential of hermeneutic phenomenology throughout his volume "Truth and Method" (1960). He focused on the existential human process of understanding, whereby "Meaning" emerges and thus "Being" transpires (1960/1966). "Being" to Gadamer, here, is our possibility to "Be", our capacity to understand and interpret possibility; the possibilities we have as "Being", our potentials, our future orientation, our directedness as "understanding" Beings. The production of meaning as interpreted, that which contributes to this sense of possibility, this sense of being. Thus, through *understanding* we are "Being".

He explored the role of language, dialogue and "historicity" on this experience of "Being" through a phenomenology of human conversation and understanding. For Gadamer, human thought, interpretation and understanding occurs only *because* of language, and *in/through* language. Gadamer argues that language is where our understanding is *realised* (i.e., is *practically applied into our essence of being*); That language is effectively our primary mode of understanding (and thus of *experiencing*) "Being" and "Reality". It is through understanding we "Be".

Understanding is considered by Gadamer as an interpretive act; understanding is not simply *reproductive*, in its essence it is ultimately *productive*, producing an interpretation of meaning - an understanding. Gadamer saw the understanding that is achieved through dialogue as a significant "Event" (1960). That dialogue is a formative process in sense-making and understanding that occurs between interlocutors. This understanding is what Gadamer saw as

the “event” that brings something (*a possibility of being*) into “Being”. The “event” of understanding that occurs only in and through language. Thus, to Gadamer (as it was to Heidegger before him) understanding is not simply an " 'act' of subjectivity. It is an ontological mode of human being; it is not a “subject” becoming conscious of an “object” - it is a dynamic event that fundamentally changes “Being” (Lammi,1991;490). This will be further discussed in detail throughout chapter II.

Yet beyond the immediacy of this “Event”, Gadamer had an active interest in the “deep structures presupposed by the act of conversing” (Moran, 2000; 271), the “deep structures” that are derived from our historical, cultural and educational traditions. Gadamer saw language never to be completely neutral or unbiased; Rather, language is already laden with the traditions and values of the culture from where it is developed, and that it in turn vivifies. That every effort to communicate, interpret and comprehend is already shrouded in some form of tradition. This is something he terms the “Historicity of Understanding”, a concept that embraces the notion that we are limited by the legacies of language (Gadamer, 1960). Gadamer views understanding as always occurring within the background of our prior involvements, our common-understandings, our historic situatedness. Thus, our consciousness is a ‘historically-effected consciousness’ (“*wirkungsgeschichtliches Bewußtsein*”), and it is through language that we access a historically-effected experience of “Being”.



From the same viewpoint, Heidegger's later works further argued that it is language that speaks, not Man (Heidegger, 1959; 59), supporting Gadamer's premise that "language speaks us, rather than we speak it" (Gadamer, 1960; 479). That our language is shrouded in historicity and interpretive legacies. Therefore, so is our Being (our potentials and future orientations).

From the Heideggerian and Gadamerian perspective, language is considered as the "progenitor of thoughtful perception" (Tedbot, 2008) (or more precisely, progenitor of thoughtful *interpretation* and *understanding*), the first interpretive lens through which our Being and the phenomena we experience begin to gain their reality. That language precedes the human experience of *interpretation*, and language encompasses the existence of our interpretations, as rendered into our experience of reality. This premise states the foundations for the Gadamerian thesis of a "Hermeneutic ontology" - That our realities as interpreted and experienced are shaped through the ontological legacies prominent in our language.

### **The potential of Gadamerian Entrepreneurship studies:**

What is significant in the Gadamerian thesis is the social/historical nature of our Being (as accessed through language), integral to our Being as situated, modern human Beings, is in complete contrast to the Tabula Rasa-like existence of transcendent consciousness as represented in isolation, or the contextless and teleologically objectified "Subject" currently rife in Functionalist scholarship, reduced within the vacuum of Subjectivism.

Gadamerian “Hermeneutical Ontology” and Gadamer’s *historically-effected* “Hermeneutic Being” have not yet been considered to a satisfactory extent in previous Entrepreneurship Studies explorations of either Phenomenology or the hermeneutic role of language in our interpretation of experience, and are seen as a potential remedy to these issues. This is where a Gadamerian hermeneutic phenomenological approach is deemed significantly enlightening and well suited for this research. This approach shows promise where other phenomenological methods fall short of their potential significance as a unique and enlightening research methodology. Having outlined the research premise, methodology and the gap in the literature this research addresses, this chapter will conclude with a brief layout of this research thesis.

## **Chapter II: Literature review**

**Literature Review Part One: How the current Functionalist orthodoxy considers the phenomenon of Entrepreneurship – the “Entrepreneur” and the “Opportunity”:**

Ontological inquiry is an investigation into the constitution of reality and Being. Specifically, in Entrepreneurship studies, current discussions centre on the ontological status of both the “Entrepreneur” and the “Opportunity”. As outlined in the introductory chapter, the foundational ontological assumptions of the field stretch a heavily debated philosophical continuum, considering the objective to the subjective (Burrell and Morgan 1979; Johnson and Duberley, 2000; Seymour, 2012). The more objective an ontological position a research project takes, the more objectively “real” the world is assumed to be (Stewart and Mickunas, 1974; Seymour, 2012). “Reality” here is deemed to exist beyond human perception and experience. That it is possible to achieve an understanding of the “real-world” and “how things really work”, as such “things” exist objectively, in an objectively real world (Stewart and Mickunas, 1974). The inherent traits of an object are deemed ascertainable and are thus prioritised as the focus of the research. Such objects exist independently, detached from context, distinguishable solely by its own distinct characteristics. Therefore, this position’s ontological claim is that reality is a collection of “context free, independent substances that privilege a detached attitude of contemplation” (Seymour, 2012;32). In Entrepreneurship Studies, the objectivist position therefore views “Entrepreneurial Opportunity” as a distinct entity, existing separate from the “Entrepreneur” (Shane and Venkataraman, 2000).

Objectivist ontological assumptions provide the foundations for the positivist and post-

Positivist research perspectives (based within the Functionalist research paradigm) that have up until recently been dominant in the field of Entrepreneurship Studies (Leibenstein, 1979; Kirzner, 1973; Shane and Venkataraman, 2000). The critical question of concern within this paradigmic/ theoretic enclave therefore becomes: “How do can entrepreneurs discover opportunity?” (Seymour, 2012). This section will first review how these two entities are considered in their distinct objectified condition, as well as their perceived relationship as is currently conceived of within the Functionalist research position, to then engage in and outline an Interpretivist critique of the dominant ontological representations and teleological assumptions of the phenomena of Entrepreneurship as considered within the dominant Functionalist orthodoxy.

### **The Functionalist paradigm’s “Objectivist” position:**

The Objectivist position borrows its foundations from market-economics and considers ‘Entrepreneurial opportunity’ to exist objectively, independent to the Entrepreneur (Kirzner, 1979; Casson, 1982, Shane and Venkataraman, 2000; Shane, 2003). Specifically, these entrepreneurial opportunities are understood as ‘gaps’ in an established market or as price discrepancies across markets to be exploited through instances of arbitrage (Kirzner, 1973/1974; Shane and Venkataraman, 2000). The Entrepreneur relies on the research and analysis of objective information to recognise such gaps/discrepancies in the market place (so-called ‘opportunities’). Such opportunities are considered to exist ‘out there’ in the world independently, as ‘objective phenomena, not known to all parties at all times’ (Shane and

Venkataraman, 2000; 220/Kirzner, 1997). Accordingly, the Entrepreneur is thus conceived of as someone who takes ‘advantage of concrete profit opportunities neglected by others’ (Lavoie, 1991; 50). Their ability to exploit opportunity in this way is thus said to be determined by an Entrepreneur’s access to objective information regarding said opportunities. That profit opportunities are conceived of as ‘quantitative facts’ (Lavoie, 1991:50) and given access to such data, any Entrepreneur is able to recognise the same objective opportunities (Shane and Venkataraman, 2000; Shane, 2003). The approach of the Entrepreneur originally conceived of in Objectivist approach to entrepreneurial activity was assumed to utilize analytical tools, models and frameworks to ascertain such opportunities (Casson, 1982; Seymour, 2012; Poolton and Barclay, 1998), with this goal being deemed the predominant characteristic of the Entrepreneur and of entrepreneurial activity. Therefore, given the limited nature of these objective opportunities, it was considered the concern of the Entrepreneur to recognise such opportunities before any other would-be Entrepreneur. The availability of such objective information is also considered “scarce” (Simon, 1983; Casson, 2003).

This also plays into the notion of the Entrepreneur being conceived of as a “co-ordinator of scarce resources” (Casson, 1982). However, changes in political rule, changes in regulations, in technology or certain natural/societal disasters etc. were believed to produce new information with regard to certain resources and how they might become more in demand or utilised differently than before (Venkataraman, 1997). Such information is deemed to change the price of resources, therefore those that have early access to such information are able to

act to create products or services in advance at a low price as to profit. (Shane & Venkataraman, 2000). “Entrepreneurship” was therefore deemed to exist by the Objectivist due to an informational asymmetry of such limited information between actors within the market.

### **The Functionalist paradigm’s “Subjectivist” position:**

As touched upon in chapter I (and will be discussed throughout this thesis), it is recognised as there being two main “Subjectivist” positions: The first focusing the ‘Discovery’ of profit opportunities (the so-called ‘Discovery’ position - in that objective opportunities exist and are discoverable), the second focusing on the “Creation” of profit opportunities (in that opportunities are developed by the Entrepreneur) (Alvarez and Barney, 2007).

### **The ‘Discovery’ approach:**

To the discovery-oriented Subjectivist, the entrepreneurial-opportunity is conceived of as objectively existent and although hidden to most, it is perceivable (Seymour, 2012; Sudderby et al, 2015). This position assumes that “like mountains” – opportunities exist as objective phenomena, out there waiting to be discovered (Alvarez and Barney, 2007;11). This shares much in common with the above outlined Objectivist view in its value of the objective opportunity, and that the Entrepreneurs teleological incentive is to discover and exploit these objective ‘discoverable’ opportunities. The critical question for the discovery-position has become “how is the Entrepreneur uniquely ‘alert’ to objective opportunity”? (Seymour, 2012;

Shane, 2000; DeTienne, Chandler, & Lyon, 2003;). This “Alert Entrepreneur” premise was originally introduced by Austrian Market economist Israel Kirzner (1973;1979) and developed into one of the main tenets of the Subjectivist “discovery” position, a popular premise in Functionalist Entrepreneurship studies. (Alvarez and Barney, 2007; Endres and Woods, 2006; Harper, 2003; Minniti, 2003; Shane, 2003;).

The default state of the Entrepreneur in this conception is considered to be ‘alert’ to such discoverable opportunities, perpetually ‘scanning the horizon... ready to make discoveries’ (Kirzner, 1997;70). Similarly to the Objectivist position, occasions of arbitrage as well as competitive imperfections that arise from exogenous shocks to the market are perceived as potentially discoverable opportunities by the alert Entrepreneur (Kirzner, 1973, 10; Alvarez et al 2013; Shane, 2003). The main premise here is that the discovery of such profit opportunities depends on the Entrepreneur’s access to *ex-ante* information/knowledge regarding such change (Shane, 2000). Yet the ‘alert’ Entrepreneur has not necessarily had to seek out such information actively, but is seen to have acquired such by simply 'opening their eyes and discovering economic facts that had previously been overlooked by all other market participants” (Harper, 2003; 24 / Kirzner, 1979). This alertness is perceived to have been cultivated through the retention of ‘scraps’ of definite prior knowledge of objective opportunities, knowledge derived through a process of information gathering from various sources such as prior business experience, networking/events and personal influence (Kirzner, 1979; 143). Therefore, such alert Entrepreneurs are said to notice (be more sensitive



to) data related to other information and knowledge they already know (Von Hippel, 1994). Prior knowledge of a market or industry for instance, informs this sensitivity and thus triggers the recognition of value in any new information found regarding a potential market opportunity (Shane, 2000/2003). Thus, any recognition of entrepreneurial opportunity by the alert Entrepreneur is also “preceded by a state of heightened alertness to information” (Ardichvili et al. 2003;107). Ray and Cardozo (1996) refer to this alertness (or ‘awareness’) as ‘a propensity to notice and be sensitive to information about objects, incidents, and patterns of behaviour in the environment, with special sensitivity to maker and user problems, unmet needs and interests, and novel combinations of resources.’ (Ray and Cardozo, 1996;10). That Entrepreneurs are able to tap into their stock of prior knowledge/ as to recognise information valuable in the pursuit of opportunities others are oblivious to (Klein, 2010). The “winner takes the spoils” consequences of Entrepreneurs operating within an environment regulated by their access to such finite information (as well as their alertness to such finite opportunity) has begged the questions ‘how is this superior state of alertness (to both information and opportunity) achieved?’ (Kirzner, 1979; Gaglio and Katz, 2001) and ‘Why are some individuals more capable of creating new means-ends frameworks from ex-ante information about change than others?’ (Shane & Venkataraman, 2000; Eckhardt & Shane, 2003).

This premise ultimately diverged into a ‘traits approach’ to the investigation of the ‘Entrepreneur’, where the Entrepreneur here is also identifiable and investigated quite

explicitly as a discoverable object (Deivansenapathy, 1986; Stewart and Mickunas, 1974). In that, similarly to the entrepreneurial opportunity, the Entrepreneur itself is considered as 'discoverable' and also 'describable' (Seymour 2012; Barron 1955). This approach explores what identifiable traits (of the identifiable 'Entrepreneur') encourage such alertness. Traits-based approach focus on personal and cognitive characteristics of the Entrepreneur that are considered to make them more 'alert' to entrepreneurial opportunity than other individuals ('Non-entrepreneurs'), producing a sub-set of research producing cognitive models explaining the Entrepreneur (Baron, 2004; Shane and Venkataraman 2000; Galio and Katz, 2001; Sigrist, 1999). For example, Galio and Katz (2001) take such a cognitive approach, conceiving of 'alertness' as schematic cross-linkages between such scraps of information retained by the entrepreneur, giving them a cognitive advantage in their ability to critically and creatively re-evaluate causal relationships within social and economic processes as to ascertain the valuable aspects of their acquired ex-ante knowledge unnoticed by others. Other identifiable traits include cognitive and behavioural processes e.g., 'Pattern recognition' (Matlin, 2004, Baron 2007) and 'Social skills' (Wayne et al., 1997), personality-types e.g., 'Independence' (Digman,1990; Costa & McCrae, 1992), attitudes e.g., 'Risk-taking propensity' (in that the perceptual qualities associated with this entrepreneurial cognition identify 'opportunities' rather than 'risks' (Sarasvathy et al. 1998), as well as other abilities considered in a limited and focused manner. The capacity of the 'subjectivity' of the alert Entrepreneur envisioned in this conception, is mainly limited to that of 'opportunity

recognition'. Therefore, "Entrepreneurship" here is defined as the discovery and exploitation of profitable opportunities (Shane & Venkataraman, 2000).

### **The "Creation" approach:**

Alvarez and Barney (2007) question whether entrepreneurial opportunities do simply just exist waiting to be discovered, or if entrepreneurial opportunities are best considered as 'created' by the actions of the Entrepreneur. To the creation-oriented Subjectivist, entrepreneurial opportunities don't necessarily develop out of 'missed' or unexploited price discrepancies between pre-existing markets, but instead are considered as being 'created' endogenously by the actions of the Entrepreneur (Baker and Nelson, 2005; Bhide, 1999; Dosi, 1984, 1988; Etzioni, 1963;). The 'creation'- oriented Subjectivist position is based on the action (reaction, and enactment) of the Entrepreneur (Sarasvathy, 2001; Gartner, 1985; Weick, 1979). This view is concerned with 'opportunity formation' rather than recognition or discovery. Unlike in the discovery scenario, these 'creative' Entrepreneurs do not 'seek' but rather, they 'act' (Alvarez and Barney, 2007). Such opportunities do not already exist 'out there' ready for discovery, they only exist when the Entrepreneur acts to create them. (e.g., Baker and Nelson, 2005; Sarasvathy 2001; Felin and Zenger, 2009; Luksha, 2008). The assumption of this perspective is rather than A. the Entrepreneur acquiring explicit data and making this the basis for entrepreneurial action or B. the Entrepreneur being cultivated into a permanent state of entrepreneurial 'alertness' through the search for such data/opportunities, the "Creation" Entrepreneur starts only with 'what they have' (Alvarez and Barney, 2011).

The Entrepreneur's subjective perception of their environment and their available resources are used to create a unique profit opportunity that differs to other Entrepreneurs (Penrose, 1959). In this approach, the Entrepreneur decides what 'opportunity' to create, and also decides how best to utilise and manipulate the resources at hand as to accomplish this, thinking-up solutions and novel ways to employ said resources (Alvarez and Barney, 2011; Penrose, 1959). Therefore, this position takes the view that profit opportunities are formed by Entrepreneurs as they explore new ways to produce products or services (Baker and Nelson, 2005; Gartner, 1985; Sarasvathy, 2001; Weick, 1979). Through their action, the Entrepreneurs not only develop and form 'opportunities', but also create supply, demand and a market in itself (Miller 2007). After their initial action, they then observe how these markets 'respond to their actions' (Alvarez and Barney, 2007;15). They must then react to the response of the market, readjusting the actions they initially took and then act once again (Weick, 1979). Therefore, the formation of the opportunity follows a 'path dependent' - approach to satisfying market demand (Arther, 1989), resulting in an "emergent" approach to strategizing and achieving market acceptance (Mintzberg & Waters, 1985). In contrast to the 'Discovery'-oriented Entrepreneur (dependent on producing stable strategies in advance), 'Creation'-focused Entrepreneurs follow incremental decision-making that supports more emergent and flexible strategizing (Klein, 2010). Through this unique action of the Entrepreneur, opportunities are formed that wouldn't be known about otherwise (Alvarez and Barney, 2007). Therefore, such opportunities do not exist objectively initially, but are considered to

be rendered into objectivity through the actions of the Entrepreneur. ‘Opportunities’ (to profit) therefore ultimately rely on the acceptance of a market as to exist. Such creation opportunities are understood as social constructions (Aldrich and Kenworthy, 1999; Berger and Luckmann, 1967), in that they are fundamentally dependent on both the perception and judgement of the Entrepreneur and also, the mutual acceptance of the market (here recognised as a social construct in itself). (Shackle, 1979; Weick, 1979; Giddens, 1984; Sarasvathy, 2001; Dimov, 2007; Felin and Zenger, 2009). That the market tests the veracity of the Entrepreneur’s perception and judgement of what they perceive to be an opportunity (Alvarez and Barney, 2007). In this sense the creation opportunity is dependent of acceptance to the market as to exist. Once such profit opportunities are conceived of and further developed by the Entrepreneur, they are rendered into objective existence (Klein, 2010). It is argued such ‘created’ opportunities come into objective being ‘like a work of art’ (Klein, 2010;105). As the underlying premise of this position implies, ‘something is created’ and of that something ‘there is no uncertainty about its existence or characteristics’ (Klein, 2010;105). The scholar evaluates the existence of opportunity *ex post*, after the opportunity is rendered into reality by the action of the Entrepreneur. Yet the Entrepreneurs are here conceived of as not being “able to see ‘the end from the beginning’” (Alvarez and Barney, 2007; 15). This position deems there is no ‘end’ until the Entrepreneur has enacted the above outlined process of action and reaction toward the market, attaining the markets acceptance. That in both respective ‘Subjectivist’ positions, the opportunity objectively exists either *ex*

*ante*, as a pre-existing profit opportunity separate from the Entrepreneur and is discoverable, or *ex post*, as in it is rendered into what is considered objective existence by the actions of the Entrepreneur.

### **Critical and Evolutionary Realist contributions:**

Two other significant perspectives contributing to the two main Functionalist discussions (i.e., discussions based around ‘Discovery’ and ‘Creation’ theory) are ‘Critical Realism’ and ‘Evolutionary Realism’. ‘Critical Realism’ borrows its epistemological underpinnings from the ‘Radical structuralist’ paradigm, sharing objectivist foundations with Functionalism. Researchers adopting the ‘Critical Realist’ research position share similarities with the both the ‘Discovery’ and ‘Creation’ perspectives yet contrary to Alvarez and Barney’s view (2007, 2010) objective opportunities are neither discovered nor created at all, but are instead considered to be ‘objectively existing propensities to be creatively actualized’ (Ramoglou and Tsang, 2017;2). Such ‘opportunities’ are here re-conceived of as ‘propensities’ of market demand that are as-yet unactualized, existing available to be ‘actualized into profits through the introduction of novel products or services’ (Ramoglou and Tsang, 2017;2), that such opportune propensities exist as “non-actualised market conditions” ready to accommodate the creative agency of the Entrepreneur. They argue that these opportunities are not created by the Entrepreneur, but that the Entrepreneur’s creative agency is simply part of this actualisation process. They clarify the creativity of the Entrepreneur is not constitutive to the existence of Entrepreneurial opportunity itself (i.e., the propensity), but only its actualisation.

Therefore, dependent on the creative action of the Entrepreneur, ‘Propensities’ sit objectively waiting to be found and exploited.

The constructivist notion of the “Opportunity” as outlined in our discussion of “Creation Theory” is founded in being able to achieve (a socially-derived) acceptance from the “Market” (here, a social construct). Striving for such suggests that the Creation-approach is grounded in a perspective known as “Evolutionary Realism” (Alvarez and Barney, 2007; Azevedo, 2002; McKelvey, 1999; Campbell, 1960). That through the above outlined process of blind-variation and experimentation (Campbell, 1960), knowledge regarding a ventures ability to satisfy the market is deemed to grow ‘empirically through a Darwinian natural selection process’ (Packard, 2017;539) with the relationship between the market and the Entrepreneur ultimately culling ideas and initiatives that don’t achieve this satisfaction benchmark, in a “survival of the fittest”-esque process of evolution (Aldrich and Ruef, 2006). The Evolutionary Realist scholar deems survival as being achieved when an opportunity is uncovered through the enactment of such experimental processes by the Entrepreneur. That the market co-creates an opportunity by questioning a venture’s meaning and value, finally accepting the re-configured, re-negotiated idea as ‘meaningful and valuable’. This leads to the successful exploitation of a created opportunity, or in Critical Realist terms, the Entrepreneur has been able to ascertain and further actualise an objective propensity through these creative means (Aldrich and Kenworthy, 1999; Ramoglou and Tsang, 2017).

As has been outlined in this section, Functionalist research generally accepts and promotes the notion that “Opportunity” is a vital component integral to our evaluation of the phenomena of Entrepreneurship, either explicitly as sought by the conceived Entrepreneur or implicitly as observed by the scholar – ‘To have Entrepreneurship, you must first have entrepreneurial opportunities’ (Shane and Venkataraman, 2000; 220). All above outlined conceptions of the Entrepreneur are ultimately observed as being directed - in some fashion - by objective profit opportunities (The objectivity of the opportunity qualified ex post, through the acceptance of a venture/product/services by the market and recognised as achieving such through the/an empirical manifestation of profit). This teleological assumption is perpetuated by the Functionalist preoccupation with the ‘Opportunity’ construct. Assumptions that seem to have originated from the Entrepreneur as conceived of within an abstract, market-economic context (Kirzner, 1973).

The legacy of the ‘Opportunity’ construct further encourages a teleological bias to be hardwired into Functionalist theory, even theory that suggests an open-ended view of the entrepreneurial process (e.g., Sarasvathy et al. 2003,). In that, even when the Entrepreneur is conceived of to engage in ‘subjective’ activities, the breadth of this ‘subjectivity’ is limited by a projected telos of the scholar (i.e., the Entrepreneurs eventual attainment/creation of opportunity or an acceptance of a market). The Functionalist scholar might accept this aim is possibly not the conscious focus of the depicted entrepreneur, but such deterministic assumptions implicitly regulate conceptions of the Entrepreneur within theory that aims to



mirror an idealised process of opportunity-exploitation, dependent on market-acceptance, recognised as being achieved through an empirical manifestation of profit. These conceptualisations and teleological assumptions have ultimately been constructed out of the terminological remnants of the fields market-economic heritage, its legacy now the centre of much (meta) theoretical debate in the field. This has become even more problematic regarding the issue that this terminological heritage now sewn into the fabric of most functionalist discussion. The next section will outline and challenge the paradigms teleological assumptions, and then further scrutinised the reductive market-economic abstractions the field has developed from. To re-examine genesis of such terminology, and to question the merit of the use of this construct as well as the teleological baggage it retains in its use.

### **Teleological assumptions of the Functionalist Scholarship:**

Teleological explanation is a Rationalist approach to Social Science research focusing on the functional goal or ends deemed to drive human behaviour, and subsequent human action (Scott, 2001; DiMaggio and Powell, 1983; Herzberg, 1976; Parsons and Shils, 1962; Nagal, 1961; Bergmann, 1957; Parsons, 1951; Maslow, 1943; Lesser, 1935). All of the key Functionalist conceptions of the Entrepreneur outlined in this chapter – The ‘Informed Recogniser’, the ‘Alert Discoverer’ and the ‘Incremental Creator’ – are all conceived of as sharing a common teleological existence as to exploit or form opportunities (Alvarez and Barney, 2007; 12 / Shane, 2003; 4 / Shane and Venkataraman, 2000; 211). Functionalist

theory demands a teleological goal exist for it to then to be resolved through the functionality of the observed agent, the so-called “Entrepreneur”. Therefore, it is necessary to ask: what has encouraged Functionalist scholars to arrive at these assumptions? The key theoretical constructs used within Functionalist theory appear to originate from market economics (Plummer, 2007; Kirzner 1963/1979/1997; Leibenstein, 1968).

Cantillon is credited with the initial development of Economic Theory and is considered to be the first to recognise the Entrepreneur as a pivotal aspect the economy (Brown and Thornton, 2013). Although neo-classical economics has been averse to the idea of the Entrepreneur, the Austrian school of recognised this and adopted the premise of the Entrepreneur as a dynamic process within a theorised Market-economy. ‘The Market’ is a macro-level construct, with its components also further abstractions. An abstraction is by its very nature metaphorical - a reduction of a complex premise or notion. Yet the field of Entrepreneurship Studies has endeavoured to ascertain the ontological nature of the abstract and metaphorical ‘Opportunity’, fundamentally mistaking such epistemically-objective abstraction as ontologically existent entity. To the extent Kirzner had to clarify he was not making claims about the ontological nature of the outlined ‘Opportunity’: ‘My 1973 exposition, however, was not concerned with such almost-metaphysical questions. It was aiming at a down-to-earth understanding of the dynamic market process — one that clearly consists of movements responding to (existing or future) profit opportunities and somehow, but quite surely, succeeding in tending to eliminate imbalances in market activities’ (Kirzner,

1999;150). He was using the term as a metaphor, an abstraction describing a dynamic market process in a market economic context (See Dimov, 2011; Klein, 2008). Thus, the ‘Opportunity’ Kirzner first alluded to was a term used to describe an epistemic ‘Opportunity’ – an abstract representation of (hypothetical) discrepancies between prices, developed in a context of economic data, with the agency and teleology of the market-economic “Entrepreneur” indirectly prescribed (and ultimately regulated) by the market-economics scholar, as to achieve theoretic satisfaction/consistency of abstraction. This is a macro-representation of the dynamic process of ‘the Entrepreneur’. This is not even necessarily a reductive representation of the human Entrepreneur, but simply a view of the ‘Entrepreneur’ as an instrument within an economic abstraction, bringing the market equilibrium back from disequilibrium. Therefore, the ‘Entrepreneur’ of this ilk and iteration is thus ontologically questionable. Kirzner-like Austrian Market Economics scholars evaluated the Entrepreneur in a market-economic context as an arbitrageur amidst a theorised market-economy, servicing the ends of a market-economy or profit-focused, market-economic theory. The Entrepreneur is here regarded as a conceptualisation within an abstraction; an invented, conceptual agent used as to ‘isolate each productive function of the economy’ (Görling & Rehn, 2008;95). Designed as to explain/utilize the Entrepreneur as a ‘conduit’ in the theorised economy, channelling supply to demands, as to satisfy the greater abstraction of the Austrian-style market. This Entrepreneur was conceptualised as a mediator of resources-for-profit. Functioning as to seek concrete profit opportunities that have been neglected by other such

arbitraders within this market abstraction bringing equilibrium back to the market. The human at the root of the Entrepreneurship was disregarded in favour of the abstraction conceptualised within the context of the market (Jennings et al; 2005). The confusion between the micro and the macro has created a meta-theoretical 'wild goose-chase' to ascertain whether the epistemologically objective abstraction is ontologically existent. This takes away the attention and focus of the field from ascertaining the ontology of entrepreneurship as a phenomenon, as experienced and as ontologically existent. This could also be said to be due to a misguided over-concern with the 'Opportunity' as teleological focus/goal, that persuades us to further view entrepreneurship through Cartesian lens of the distinct 'Entrepreneur' and the distinct 'Opportunity'. Such abstractions and teleological assumptions objectify the Entrepreneur as a character of simplistic rationale, diminishing the range, scope and depth of human contemplation. The Austrian-school Entrepreneur is an instrument within a deterministic market economic abstraction - a conceptualisation of a conceptual-market allocating deterministic assumptions to each component as to service the premise of the greater conceptual abstraction. An ahistorical framework that (neatly) determines the nature of the rationality of its components (Bernstein, 1983; XI). Such abstraction could be considered epistemically objective, but not necessarily ontologically existent (as reduced and represented). The deterministic teleological characteristics of the Functionalist conception (i.e., motivated by abstract opportunity, its teleological ends

defined/ derived from a market-economic context) objectifies the entrepreneur, yet it doesn't accurately represent the entrepreneurs ontological state as is existent

By removing the teleological limitations imposed through reduction and abstraction we are able to contemplate the broader purposes of the human entrepreneur. And by subsequently becoming less reliant on the Cartesian ends the Functionalist model typically subscribes to, we broaden our discussion of the ontological status of the phenomena. However, the question still remains; how do we go about establishing the ontological nature of the phenomena?

### **Entrepreneurs “read”:**

The default position of the current orthodoxy is grounded in the point of view of the economics scholar rather than that of the 'Entrepreneur'. Summarising the sentiment of sociological phenomenologist Alfred Shultz, Berglund (2007) posits the notion that “‘What does opportunity mean for me the observer?’ requires as a prerequisite the answering of the quite other question 'what does opportunity mean for the observed actor?’” (2007;244). The positivistic, epistemologically-driven 'Market-Economist' typically measure entrepreneurship, as their position has developed out of a background of (Market) economics. Projecting their positivistic-rigor and epistemology-centric approach onto their conception of the Entrepreneur. Yet as Lavoie (1991) observes, contrary to economist's approach outlined above, entrepreneurs themselves don't necessarily *measure*, they “*read*”. (Lavoie, 1991; 51, my italics). They're not strictly an observer of objective quantities as in the market economists trade-based market scenario, but are 'discerning of the intersubjective meaning of

a qualitative situation' (Lavoie, 1991; 51), a qualitative situation understood amidst a social context of reading, listening, learning, understanding and becoming. That the 'seeing of profit opportunities is a matter of... interpretation' (Lavoie, 1991; 36). Rather than being simply alert to opportunity, the Entrepreneur interprets their entire context – that the reading of profit, of opportunity, of success, of failure, of meaning, of purpose 'takes place within a larger background context, a context of meaning' (Lavoie, 1991; 36). Within the Kirznerian conceptualisation outlined above, both the 'Entrepreneur' and the 'Opportunity' exist within a context absent of meaning other than 'Profit'. The Entrepreneur is conceptualised as nothing but a programmed 'Pac-man' like automaton, eating profit for points (i.e., conceptual/theoretical validation). The need to abstract from reality is argued necessary due to the enormity of the Marco-phenomena observed, i.e., the 'economy', the 'market' (Baumol and Blinder, 1994;11), yet enormous phenomena is perceived to be made up of smaller components. Its components – like Matryoshka 'egg' dolls – are represented as smaller abstractions within the main abstraction (e.g., the so-called 'profit opportunity' is an abstraction, situated within the greater abstraction of 'the market'). These reduced components are then further analysed separately, in abstraction as a main phenomenon, with their components further reduced until we arrive at a point, at 'micro' phenomena which we are able to manage the investigation of, yet we still choose to consider it in the abstract. The market-process Entrepreneur considered in abstract as to fulfil a teleology assigned to it from this abstract market context. This is the trap of reduction (the reduction of 'micro')

phenomena that we are able to manage the investigation of) and of conceiving of Entrepreneurship in an abstract context that from the outset dictates a deterministic teleological goal. 'Abstraction' occurs in two forms – 'partial representation' (i.e., descriptions) the other is 'idealisation' (Rappaport 1996; 217). By accepting - in deterministic terms - that opportunity is the teleological goal for the Entrepreneur (from the point of view of the observing scholar), we idealise our conceptualisation as to service positivistic, Rationalist theory. We ultimately idealise and thus distort our representation of the phenomena to represent it at its most profitable. It's ideal state. By idealising our conception, we limit our contemplations of the phenomena and of the motivations and meaning behind the individual's Entrepreneurship. The sentiment of the 'abstraction from unimportant details' (Baumol and Blinder, 1994; Kirzner 1963) begs the question - Unimportant to who? To those in the experience or to those observing it? What is deemed unimportant to the scholar (seeking theoretical parsimony) may be different to what is deemed important to the entrepreneur, in the day-to-day experience of the phenomena. This is why it is vital to begin developing our field from the point of view of those we observe as to develop theory from this point upward. The unmeasurable, unfixed, qualitative aspects of the 'Market' might very well be of concern when considering the phenomena of entrepreneurship as experienced. As Lavoie observes above, 'Entrepreneurship' is the discernment of intersubjective meaning, a discernment that occurs within a broader qualitative context (Lavoie, 1991;51), stressing the social aspect of market activity – Reminding us in a Gadamerian vernacular that

‘Conversational processes ... existed in human societies before the evolution of market processes’ interactions that provide ‘the foundation on which primordial elements of markets began’ (Lavoie, 1991:63). From a phenomenological position, rather than reduce the market, Lavoie asks use to excavate the social process it was based upon, ‘what existed historically before the emergence of markets ...(were)... process of cultured evolution in which interacting human being participated’ (Lavoie, 1991: 50). The teleologically-unburdened Interpretivist takes this notion further, outside of agorian premise of ‘the Market’ itself. Prior to the experience of Entrepreneurship, the human individual (here, the would-be ‘Entrepreneur’) is social. The lived experiences that occur in and outside of the market (and in and outside direct social interaction) contribute to the individual’s intentionality and thus direct them toward an experience of Entrepreneurship (to what degree is outlined in section 2 of this literature review). The social qualities of the Entrepreneur have been recognised throughout plenty of ground-breaking creation and process theory research (see Baker and Nelson, 2005; Felin and Zenger, 2009; Luksha, 2008; Dimov, 2007; Steyaert & Hjorth, 2003; Swedberg, 2000, Sarasvathy 2001). Processual Entrepreneurship attempts to move beyond reductive explanations of Entrepreneurship, focusing on the process of Entrepreneurship, realising the importance of the social-aspects of learning and understanding within the qualitative situation. Of being and becoming (Steyaert 1997/2007). Yet factions of process-driven research often also focus on the premise of ‘Opportunity-Development’ (‘Opportunity’ as a social construction), once again dependent on terminology and constructs adopted from



markets-economics (Moroz and Hindle, 2012; Selden and Fletcher, 2015). The teleological focus of process here still focuses on ‘all the functions, activities, and actions associated with perceiving opportunities and creating organizations to pursue them’ (Bygrave, 2004; 7). Such positivistically-inclined process research typically engages with ‘process’ as a linear sequence of distinct, observable states (Moroz and Hindle, 2012; Selden and Fletcher, 2015) subsequently becoming limited to a teleology dependent on ‘market-acceptance’ as the ultimate, definitive final-stage of the outlined process. This positivistic-approach not only succumbs to focusing on the entitive stages of the ‘opportunity-development’ process but in doing so is also implicitly regulated by conceptual relics abstractions and terminology leftover from the fields Market-economic heritage. This is problematic as through their use, their teleological assumptions are perpetuated and accepted as the mainstay teleologic focus of the field, normalized as ‘right and self-evident’ (Burrell and Morgan, 1979; IX) through their use. Even in more radical positions that focus on ‘opportunity-emergence’ and remove the focal stress of ‘opportunity-attainment’ as an explicit goal of Entrepreneur as depicted, there still remains an implicit focal concern of the scholars who are utilising these conceptions/ employing these constructs within their theorising (i.e. whether the Entrepreneur is perceived as conscious of this or not, scholars observe and qualify the Entrepreneur by their eventual ability to exploit or achieve an opportunity to profit). The recent push for Evolutionary Realism as a suitable metatheoretical framework for process-theory has been met with contempt by the Interpretivist position, with Packard (2017) noting such a

positivistically-inclined teleological position ‘constrains its study to tracing the stages of opportunity emergence’ (Packard, 2017; 543), instead promoting ‘Interpretivism’ and the sensibilities of the so-called Interpretivist paradigm as the forum to support the perceived potentials of open-ended process and creation theories. From an Interpretivist position, the implicit preoccupation of the Functionalist scholar with ‘Opportunity’ – (a preoccupation not necessarily shared with the Entrepreneur of whom they theorise) - burden our depictions of the Entrepreneur with teleology making assumptions about their Entrepreneurships purpose. By utilizing an interpretivist position, we are able to reject a generalisable goal as to open up our contemplations of the phenomena of Entrepreneurship as ontologically existent, to move Entrepreneurship studies beyond the scholarly focus on opportunity and market acceptance the field has become due to its heritage. To pull back and look at the phenomena of entrepreneurship warts and all. How individuals are driven or directed to experience Entrepreneurship. This is inclusive of non-successful endeavours (gauging ‘success’ by the individuals own subjectively interpreted goals, purpose, meaning of their Entrepreneurship) – highly important as the learning experiences, and not dismissible or omittable for the sake of theoretical parsimony. The inherited value of the ‘epistemically-objective opportunity’ construct (and subsequent epistemically objective conception of the entrepreneur) does not translate to the lived experience of Entrepreneurship, hence the ontological incommensurability between that that is epistemically objective and the ontological status of Entrepreneurship as phenomena. This appears to be why the construct of the epistemic

opportunity appears to be so elusive (Dimov, 2011), due to a basic ontological and phenomenological incommensurability of the phenomena as lived vis-à-vis the reduced epistemically objective opportunity abstraction. This ‘slip’ (Dimov, 2011; 60) between the epistemically objective and the ontological (i.e., the macro as abstract and the micro as lived-experience) has resulted in dispute amongst scholars as to what the focus of our studies should be, and subsequently with this division of focus also comes a lack of definitional clarity, as well as a questionable theoretical precision as a result (Wood 2017, Davidsson, 2015/2017; Hansen et al., 2011; Suddaby, 2010). This has seen calls for the Opportunity construct to be either replaced (Davidsson, 2015 /2017) or abandoned altogether (Foss and Klein, 2012; Klein, 2008). The legacy of this terminology being adopted from Market economics has resulted in a sub-field of metatheoretical discussion aiming to remedy ontological, conceptual and theoretical incommensurability. The field is currently bound by adopted macroeconomic constructs and teleological assumption that snare our ability to approach the phenomena of Entrepreneurship as ontologically existent and tether us to incommensurable constructs when taking into account the lived experience of the Entrepreneur.

This research looks toward a hermeneutic phenomenological approach (specifically a Gadamerian approach) to re-consider the foundational conception of Being which underpins these discussions in a bid to address the potential of incommensurability between such borrowed constructs and the phenomena they represent. To consider in such phenomena as

experienced by so-called 'Entrepreneurs' first, through both phenomenological and qualitative means, in order to make the source of our discussions the human Being experiencer (the so-called "Entrepreneur") and not the economics scholar.

The Gadamerian approach also restructures our contemplation of our human understanding away from the notion of *subjective perceiver in insolation* to *hermeneutic interpreter in context*, this also a foundational tenet which contributes to Gadamer's *hermeneutic ontology*.

The next section of this literature review outlines the suggested Gadamerian hermeneutic phenomenological approach to understanding the phenomena of currently referred to as "Entrepreneurship".

**Literature review part 2:**

**How Hermeneutic Phenomenology conceives of human existence and the experience of phenomena (Here, “Entrepreneurship”).**

**How Hermeneutic Phenomenology conceives of human existence and the experience of phenomena (Here, “Entrepreneurship”):**

In recent years a subgroup of Entrepreneurship scholars have made persuasive arguments regarding the adoption of a phenomenological research methodology (Fast, 2018; Berglund, 2007/2015; åsvoll 2012; Cope 2005/2011; Seymour, 2006; Shaw et al. 2011;). These scholars promote the use of phenomenological conceptions of human existence as a means to observe and understand the phenomena of Entrepreneurship as experienced, as to broaden our understandings of the entrepreneurial phenomenon.

Due to the relative neglect of this approach, a thorough outline of the Hermeneutic phenomenological premise is deemed necessary. Therefore, rather than compare the dominant theories (like in the previous “Functionalist” section), this chapter serves to outline a Hermeneutic Phenomenological (specifically ‘Gadamerian’) conception of the human as existent, meditating on themes of potential relevance to Entrepreneurship scholars.

This section intends to illustrate the comprehensive, interpretive, social, historically-situated, ontological existence of Being as described by Hans G. Gadamer, and also reviews precursory phenomenological ideas initially developed by his mentor, Martin Heidegger.

### **Gadamerian Hermeneutic “Being”: What we reduce when we reduce.**

In this section, we will begin to consider the comprehensive nature of Being from the point of view of Hans Georg Gadamer, and how he believes rational Modern representations of Being diminish the essence of our broader hermeneutic existence. He considers such representations of Being to be detrimental to our academic studies and inquiries.

For Gadamer, this begins with the blind, haphazard application of scientific method to social phenomena which he felt results in a distortion or obscuration of the very phenomena we aim to gain an understanding of. In that “the experience of the sociohistorical world cannot be raised to a science by the inductive procedure of the natural science” (Gadamer, 1989;4). This statement sets the tone for his thesis more broadly, while also drawing attention to tensions between the intellectual factions of the mid-20th Century. A climate where the so-called ‘Human Sciences’ perceived the ‘Natural Sciences’ to be “imposing an inappropriate methodology” on the former (Nixon, 2017;5).

While Gadamer and his mentor Martin Heidegger were neither anti-theory, nor anti-methodology, both had realised the *limitations* in this manner of inquiry (with regard to the study of human Being) and the necessity to discuss these issues further (Dreyfus, 1991; Nixon 2017).

Both scholars therefore attempted to present contributions to academia that would enable a sufficient representation and investigation of this primordial, ontological essence of Being,

often reduced under the positivist rubric of post-Enlightenment approaches to so-called 'Social Science' investigations.

Whereas Heidegger presented the beginnings of an ontological notion of our Being ("DASEIN") in *Being and Time* (1927), Gadamer confronted the meta-theoretical/methodological issue of how Positivist sensibilities were detrimental to the representation of Being in the so-called human/social sciences. In disclosing this premise, he then set the stage to advance Heidegger's ontological conception of our human being further, by stressing the hermeneutical qualities of our Being's understanding, and the subsequent social and historic qualities of our 'Hermeneutical Being'. In suggesting this situated conception of our hermeneutical existence, Heidegger and Gadamer ask us to dismiss the reduction of our Being as prioritised by parsimonious, scientific-theory, and in doing so, they expose a primordial vantage point to view our social and historical human Being from.

The broad argument of these Hermeneutic Phenomenalists rests upon the underlying thesis that the broadness of human Being cannot be reduced to 'object' in isolation (through the same methods employed in the natural sciences), nor to 'subject' in isolation (as was the tradition of the Enlightenment post-Descartes, a reduction characteristic of the human/social sciences of the early/mid-20<sup>th</sup> Century), rejecting the Cartesian separateness of subject and object. (e.g., 'entrepreneur' and 'market opportunity'). That there is an interconnectedness of Being essential to our human Being, beyond this compartmental abstraction (an abstraction deemed not well-suited to consider nor representative of such human Being).



This discrepancy is central to the ‘distortion’ Gadamer points toward, a distortion incurred by the ‘inappropriate’ application of positivistically, epistemologically inclined approaches to the study of our primordial human Being. As qualitative phenomenologist Max van Manen states, the problem with epistemological forms of reductive thematization and objectification is that they tend to “confuse the nonprimordial (conceptual objectifications) for the primordial (nonconceptual meanings) dimensions of experience” (2014;105). Thus, as is currently a dilemma in the Functionalist field of inquiry, conceptual objectification is arguably preventing any real progression within the paradigm.

As argued so far, the ‘anthropomorphisation’ of the conceptual Market “Entrepreneur” (i.e., the dynamic process of ‘Entrepreneurship’ surveyed within a market economy) which rational Functionalist discussion of Entrepreneurship is broadening toward, are beginning to run into problems when juxtaposing more human ‘traits’ and circumstances in tandem with such objectified, conceptual relics which linger from the fields Market-Economics era (i.e., abstractions such as ‘the Market’, ‘Opportunity’ etc.). The intention being to represent the ontological (to some degree, the *primordial*), while still retaining and including these conceptual objectifications; the heart of conceptual, theoretical, phenomenological and paradigmic incommensurability which currently burden the field. This distortion creates the obscuration Gadamer highlights and seeks to avoid.

Therefore, in this context, the field is beginning to realise the benefits of looking at ‘Entrepreneurship’ from the vantage point of so-called ‘Interpretivist’ positions may allow

for (Anderson and Starnawska, 2008; Berglund 2007 Chalmers, 2015; Chalmers and Shaw 2017; Chell, 2000; Downing, 2005; Packard, 2017). The nonprimordial epistemic abstractions the field puts great pressure upon, are seemingly not compatible with the human Being at the heart of the phenomenon as experienced. Thus, to persist on viewing aspects of lived experienced as fragmented, isolated, A-historical “concepts” - through the Cartesian subject/object divide and the teleology it provides - we will inevitably continue to encounter paradigmic, conceptual, theoretical incommensurability.

Much like Heidegger’s reaction to Representationism’s reductive iteration of intentionality and its transcendental representation of pure consciousness, Gadamer’s critique of Subjectivism and Scientism was aimed toward those approaching the so-called social sciences in such a reductive and detrimental manner, and thus deliberately set out to remedy this limitation by providing a body of work discussing this issue – His famous volume ‘Truth and Method’ - amidst such suppling a philosophical hermeneutic illustration of Being which will be outlined through this chapter .

Therefore, given the current state of Entrepreneurship studies, this research suggests the hermeneutic Being of Gadamer’s thesis as a manner of considering our hermeneutic, historically-effected, social existence as it experiences what we assume to be a phenomenon called “Entrepreneurship”.

The remainder of this second chapter will outline the comprehensive nature of Gadamer’s Being and why this is a (useful) basis/premise to situate our discussions around.

This is a big task and no small undertaking – however, this section will conclude with an abridged outline of each significant component, which will be further addressed throughout the following three chapters.

These chapters aim to consider both how this Gadamerian illustration of our Being is both a suitable foundational premise to conduct Entrepreneurship studies research, both as to consider the primordial activity of Entrepreneurship, while also exploring how this broader dialectical existence seamlessly accommodates a qualitative research portion as to gain understanding of experiences of such as experienced by individuals.

**This chapter will begin to outline the comprehensive nature of Gadamer’s hermeneutical Being by focusing on:**

- Hermeneutic phenomenology’s iterations of ‘intentionality’ (Heidegger’s ‘absorbed’ intentionality, setting the stage for Gadamer’s ‘hermeneutic intentionality’).
- The concern of Gadamerian hermeneutic intentionality (which seeks ‘hermeneutical understanding’ via ‘interpretation’ i.e., our understanding necessarily involves *interpretation*)
- Our ‘*wirkungsgeschichtliches Bewußtsein*’ (‘consciousness where history is operative’) and the historically-effected nature of our understanding.
- The notion that ‘Meaning’ is not self-evident; ‘Meaning’ as interpreted is both ‘historically-effected’ and is ‘contextually-dependent’.

- Phronesis: The *particular* nature of our hermeneutic understanding through *deliberation*.
- The *finite* and *iterative* nature of hermeneutic understanding.
- The *productive* and *transformative* nature of our understanding (with regards to both our individual Being and in the context of our broader human existence).
- Horizons – the open range of ‘vision’ (comprehension/understanding) our prior experiences and interpreted understandings afford us, the remits of our understandings, the horizons of our understandings; this contains the preunderstandings we arrive at questions/understanding with (including out presuppositional prejudices, fore-judgements, assumptions etc.)
- The dialectical synthesis of understanding through the ‘*fusion of our horizons*’ (e.g., through ‘I and thou’ interactions, through similar deliberative reflection with other texts).
- The *historicity* and *linguisticity* of our understanding i.e., The history operative in understanding (through history, language, interaction, discourse and interpretation).
- The interconnected nature of our hermeneutical Being as ‘historically-effected’ and as ‘co-determined’ (through history, language, interaction, discourse and interpretation).
- The part Hegelian ‘sublation’ (*aufheben*) plays in our individual understanding and Being, as well as how it contributes to our human Being more broadly, as temporal and productive.

As well as further discussion of aspects of Gadamer's thesis as scrutinised by peers and critics, especially focusing on review of the notions of 'Critique and 'Tradition' as present in Gadamer's thesis.

## **Hermeneutic phenomenological intentionality and its impact on our Being:**

Being primarily a Gadamerian inquiry, this research jumps into the progression of the phenomenological conception of human Being later into the discipline's lineage, beyond the bracketed, transcendent consciousness in isolation, beyond mentally-oriented, Representationalist phenomenology of the discipline's Husserlian foundations. An era of phenomenology opened up by Heidegger. An era acquainted with "DASEIN" ("Being-there"), with "Being-in-the-world". Here we consider that to be human is to be embedded, immersed in a tangible day-to-day world amongst other things - as interpreted. Not a transcendental consciousness in isolation, but a world we are "thrown" into thus we are a part of. A condition integral to our existence as observed. Thus, it is this existence, this primordial phenomenon, that is the centre, the foundation, of our (ontological) contemplations of human existence, post-Husserl.

Further ( as outlined in chapter I), under Gadamer it is language, dialogue, interpretation, (interpreted) meaning, the *linguisticity* of our understanding (understanding as accessed through language), the *historicity* of our understanding (understanding where history is operative), and subsequently our historically-effected consciousness (*wirkungsgeschichtliches Bewußtsein*) that immerse us in this "thrownness"; this embedded, absorbed, meaning-filled existence we exist within from the time we are first socialised. A temporal and interpretive existence, where our understandings are produced and updated through deliberative, reflective interpretation.

Here, under Gadamer, the notion of intentionality is appropriated from Husserl as *ontological*, not analytic as previously conceived of. Gadamer's is a *hermeneutic* intentionality of hermeneutic experience. This Gadamerian approach focuses on the ontological dimension of this hermeneutic intentionality – Gadamer fills out the stark epistemological intentionality of Husserl with *interpretation* rather than *perception* – interpretation as situated, as historically-effected, as *ontological*. As interpreted into the lived context of one's historically-effected existence. This sidesteps the Cartesian, epistemologically-inclined approaches to intentionality that ultimately reduced Husserl's, transcendental, bracketed conception of consciousness.

It's important to point out that under Gadamer 'intentionality' is not simply a directedness toward something, but is a reflective, critical, deliberative, intentional act of *interpretation* of something into ones already historically-effected consciousness; Gadamer's hermeneutic intentionality is directed toward achieving understanding. We are concerned and oriented to seek understanding (Gadamer 1989; Grondin, 2002). "Understanding" is here achieved through interpretation, interpretation which occurs amidst the layers of meaning previously interpreted by ourselves during our lived experiences, as understood within our historically-effect consciousness.

"Interpretation" by its very nature is integral to the intentional act of understanding; Our intentional "Interpretation" necessarily anticipates "Understanding" (as directed).

“Understanding” itself also involves some anticipation of “Meaning”. This anticipation is related to the anticipatory fore structures and pre-understandings accumulated within historically-effected consciousness which Gadamer refers to as our “*horizon*” - our situated pre-understandings, understandings, presumptions which develop throughout our hermeneutical existence. These are not ridged, fixed “horizons” nor parameters or limitations to our understandings, but are our current, ever developing “horizons”, becoming broader and more informed through our new understandings. Therefore, under Gadamer, our preconceptions, our prejudgements, our preunderstandings, - our situatedness – are the ever-evolving conditions of both our understandings and the meanings they produce. Thus, our interpretations of our experiences are impacted by this situatedness initially.

Further, Gadamer’s ‘*Fusion of Horizons*’ is the dialectal experience of hermeneutical understanding where as we seek understanding, our horizons are impacted by our encounters with other, our understandings transformed by our encounters. (This notion will be touched upon throughout this chapter’s reflections on Gadamer’s hermeneutic Being, and will be outlined the following methodology chapter – chapter III.) Dallmayr (2000) suggests this as our ‘bridge’ into understanding the otherness of Other.

Thus, from Gadamer’s perspective this is not Being as isolated; The Gadamerian historically-effected consciousness exists as informed through a social fabric of language and the



historicity of our situated understanding that occurs within and through this language, this interaction, this dialogue, this socialisation, this immersed, historic, social existence.

This then suggests our Being is more than the compartmental individual, but is also dependent on and part of a greater interconnectedness of Being deemed essential to this hermeneutical existence.

That as individuals, our historically-effected consciousness is part of an interpretive, learning and understanding individual “Being”, who is situated historically through social means (e.g., language, dialogue and interactions). However, this social quality of our understandings is tempered away from a relativistic determinism through the uniquely *productive* nature of our hermeneutic intentionality and of our understanding (A significant quality to Gadamer’s Hermeneutical Being, outlined below in the section). On this basis, Gadamer feels we are ‘co-determined’ (Gadamer et al, 2001;45) by both the particular nature of our hermeneutic intentionality and the historically-effected nature of our consciousness.

What Gadamer means here is that we are co-determined by history (our Being is both historically-effected), as well as driven by our own particular experience and interpretations (see Gadamer, 2001;45) Thus, it is not in transcendental isolation that we process ‘meaning’, but our interpretation of ‘meaning’ itself is historically-effected and socialised, as is our experience of it.

Through language, through interaction, through our historic situatedness we encounter the *particular*, and our interpretation of such is dependent on these factors; Meaning is thus not self-evident. It is dependent on our interpretation, in context.

As historically-effected, we experience objects and situations in contextually meaningful ways, and also by “dint of the way they relate to the totality of our experiences” (Fast, 2018; 511). We accrue meaning through situated, meaningful experiences of understanding.

Meanings that become the structures of our experiences, as well as experiences that (in their selves) become meaningful to us retrospectively. Experiences that become meaningful by means of existing through social space and time, of being *while becoming* (Heidegger 1927; Whitehead, 1929).

Through interaction, interpretation and critical reflection an understanding situated within a context of prior meaningful experiences (as situated in a historic context of language and understanding, presupposition and tradition) is produced by the individual. As will be explored further below, it is important to make clear under Gadamer our understanding is produced through the reflective, imaginative synthesis of these factors through the lens of our past experiences, which occurs during the critical deliberative aspect of our interpretation (particular, co-determined, historically effected). This enables us not to be entrenched by history and tradition (The clarity of Gadamer’s illustration of themes related to this was famously scrutinised by critical sociologist Habermas, and will be discussed later in this chapter).

The following sections of this chapter will primarily outline a *Gadamerian* hermeneutic phenomenological conception of human existence, the aspects of Gadamer's thesis deemed relevant to the study of 'Entrepreneurship' as experienced. However, it will begin with the initial starting point of Heidegger's notions of "availability" and "occurrentness", to show how our orientation becomes concerned. It will then return to the Gadamerian "Hermeneutic intentionality" in more detail, focusing on its complimentary notions of understanding and application, imaginative reflection of possibility, our synthesis of a tentative "understanding" of solution for the concerns which direct us (i.e., an "event of understanding" this research will refer to as "an idea").

## **Hermeneutic Phenomenological Intentionality Part one:**

### **Heidegger's absorbed intentionality & notions of "availableness" and "occurrentness".**

We briefly turn our attention to iterations of "intentionality" as successively progressed by both Heidegger (1962) and also by Gadamer (1960/1966) as to outline how meaningful purpose is ascertained by individual. While Heidegger fully dismissed his mentors epistemological focus on intentionality, Gadamer –while very much committed to developing an ontology-focused philosophy of hermeneutics, hermeneutical phenomenology – appropriated the Husserlian intentional object of consciousness to fit his interpretive phenomenology and its hermeneutical ontology.

Heidegger developed what is considered an "absorbed intentionality" through his depiction of human being as DASEIN, as Being-there, immersed in the above outlined "primordial", situated existence. To unpack this, we must discuss Heidegger's related notions of "availableness" and "occurrentness" (1962), outlining the purposeful modes of existence inhabited by the individual (Morez and Hindle, 2012; 786).

In *Being and Time* (1962), Heidegger relocated the focus of philosophical intentionality away from the analytic, the mental and relocating it in the practical, the lived (Dreyfus, 1991; Chia & Holt, 2006). Heidegger felt that we exist in an already interpreted world, one we are "thrown" into (Heidegger 1962; Seymour 2006), that the day-to-day acts we engage in are so fluid and usual to us that we don't register what these things are, we simply register what they *mean* to us.

To the degree that our everyday “tools-in-use” inconspicuously become phenomenologically transparent (Wheeler; 2011). To illustrate this, Heidegger famously offers the example of the use of a door knob when entering a room (Heidegger 1962: 163). You’re here in this room yet the use of the door, the analysis of the door knob, the acknowledgement of its existence, the acknowledgement of its use, the turning of the knob, all went unrecognised. This is what Heidegger refers to as “Availableness” or "Readiness-to-hand" (“*Zuhandenheit*”). A mode of unreflective awareness where the sentient, active individual is seamlessly immersed within their lifeworld environment, seemingly at one with the “tools” encountered there, due to their unobtrusiveness. It’s this unobtrusive availability that characterises “availableness”; the everyday, smooth, practical coping accommodated by pre-established Meaning. Only if our smoothness of practical coping breaks down and is disturbed in some way, when we encounter an entity “unready-to-hand” (the obtrusive), we are forced to reflect on the object of our directedness and register its meaningful *significance*, and to what degree its current condition does not satisfy that meaningful purpose (e.g., when a hammer stops being a “Hammer”, and resorts to being “broken”, a functionless amalgam of wood and metal, disturbing its given “Meaning”). When an object becomes/ is *un*-available, when meaning-in-context is absent, lost or additional reflective analysis/understanding is required. Under Heidegger, it is when there is a *problem* that we become directed by our intentionality (Chia and Holt, 2006; 642/ Morez and Hindle; 2012). When we diverge from our practical,

unreflective engagement with the world and engage in a reflective mode of existence, of ‘*Occurrentness*’ (Heidegger, 1962; Chia and Holt, 2006; Guette and Vandembemt, 2020).

As Chia and Holt (2006) maintain, for Heidegger, it is only at this point that we “begin to consciously rely on symbols and representations to help us retrospectively understand what is happening. Only then do intentionality, deliberation and purposefulness kick in. Only then does the myriad of conscious activities that we commonly call strategic analysis and planning take place” (2006; 642). Therefore, it is when there is a disruption to our everyday coping, that prompts our reflection and further conscious action (Chia and holt, 2006). When meaning or understanding is absent, we are triggered into this reflective mode, this “alerts our consciousness and attention and causes us to stand back and survey our circumstance” (Chia and Holt, 2006; 642). This occurrent-state is where the reflecting subject critically distances themselves from circumstances as to gain reflective distance from a situation for deliberative purposes. A distance required as to assign “identities, meanings, functions and causes” both to their self and also to the phenomena they’re deliberating (Chia and Holt,2006; 642). When there is a “breakdown” or “disturbance”, our *purposeful* intentionality takes over from our everyday practical coping and the “immersed” actor is forced to become a “reflective observer” (Chia and Holt,2006; 642), a state of occurrent deliberation that preludes meaningful, deliberate, intentional action.

Heidegger’s notions of “availableness” and “occurrentness” touch upon how our orientation becomes concerned. This notion of seeking understanding to address our concerns is where

Gadamer begins to build his own hermeneutic intentionality, which the next section will begin to cover.

## **Hermeneutic phenomenological Intentionality Part Two:**

### **Gadamer's hermeneutical understanding.**

Gadamer has several interconnected iterations of 'understanding', all are intrinsic and essential of our hermeneutical Being. This section will focus on understanding as intrinsic to our hermeneutic intentionality (for Gadamer's "understanding as agreement", please see chapter III).

Following on from the above mentioned *absorbed* and *available* aspects of Heidegger's unreflective mode of Being, under Gadamer, we become reflective when *concerned*, and when concerned we seek understanding/endeavour to 'understand'. It is through gaining understanding we exist i.e., we grow, we become. We address concerns, the unavailable, the absent.

Through Gadamer, our hermeneutic Being intentionally seeks understanding; Understanding to overcome unavailability, understanding to comprehend. To comprehend an issue in a particular, situated context. Thus, our intentionality under Gadamer is our hermeneutic *understanding*, our concerned orientation to understand, and this understanding as applied addressing concerns in practical, lived fashions.

To Gadamer, we achieve such understanding through *interpretation*; this 'hermeneutic understanding' is practical, particular and context-dependent. This understanding is tentative, finite, never comprehensive (given the temporal and situated nature of our Being); it is *emerging* and it is *iterative* (see chapter III, The 'hermeneutic circle').



Gadamer here appropriates the Aristotelian notion of practical wisdom derived from (and based on) deliberation – “*Phronēsis*”. *Phronesis* is particular understanding not of “*episteme*” (context independent, universal, scientific knowledge), nor is it practical knowledge in the vein of “*techne*” (i.e., technical knowledge, method); *Phronesis* is the lived experience of practical deliberation based on one’s own wisdom. A discerning judgement concerned with particular situations – The hermeneutic experience. This notion is significant not only as it offers a continuation of Heidegger’s practical being-in-the-world (Heidegger, 1962), but also due to its mediation of the so-called “universal” with the “particular” (Duvenage 82;2015). Gadamer’s understanding is thus *practical* and situated, not theoretical and A-historic. It is an intentionality-driven *hermeneutic* understanding (historically-effected interpretation), applied practically in a meaningful and intentional manner.

### **The productivity of hermeneutic understanding (as integral to our Being at every level):**

Thus Gadamer’s ‘understanding’ is never simply *subjective*; it is always *interpretive*. In that understanding is not simply *reproductive* (i.e., the attainment of a straight duplication of *objective knowledge by the subject*), in essence it is ultimately *productive*, producing a situated interpretation of a situation (Gadamer, 1960; Roy & Bayo, 2011). It is contextualised in the lived and socialised context of our historically-effected Being. This distinction alludes to what Gadamer perceived to be the fundamental flaw of the era’s Subjectivist representations of human understanding – that subjective understanding isn’t passive; its

active – it’s *interpretive* (and thus *productive*) (Gadamer, 1960; Roy & Bayo, 2011). That through interpreting an understanding in context (in one’s particular lived context) something is *produced*; it comes into Being through an event of understanding, a unique interpretation of meaning as understood within our own situated historically-effected consciousness (for example, a ‘possibility’, a ‘solution’, an understanding to be applied as intentionality directed).

Therefore, for something to be understood it necessarily requires *interpretation*; for it to be brought into one’s own situatedness – an understanding unique to, and dependent on, the greater, lived-context of the individual (their experiences, interpretations and understandings as operative in historically-effected consciousness). A *wisdom*. Thus, through interpretation, a *new version* of meaning is created, as situated within Self. For Gadamer, “to understand” (i.e., to understand through this necessary interpretation) is “to understand in a *different way*” (Gadamer, 1960; 297).

This not only important with regard to adapting things to the specific circumstances before one’s self, but also vital to the core premise of Gadamer’s hermeneutic intentionality, which directs us through presuppositions of possibility, to revelation, understanding and fundamental change (‘transformation’).

Gadamer turns to ‘Art’ as to illustrate the productivity of understanding through ones “fusion of horizons” (This is one of Gadamer’s most significant tenets; see the below section ‘Dialectic and interconnectedness, as well as the Methodology chapter, chapter III). Gadamer

views “Understanding” to be the simultaneous reflective recognition of both “*something and oneself*” (1960, 114; my italics). This occurs through what Gadamer sees as an interpreted synthesis, a sublated bond of something and oneself which occurs in-between both “*presentation*” and “*recognition*”, as understanding of what is presented is interpreted into one’s own Being, the greater context of one’s lived experiences, interpretations and understandings.

Where prior appreciations of art had focused on recognising the original basis presented in and by art, Gadamer looked beyond this, emphasizing that the fundamental experience of how “the truth of art” experiences the *future*, rather than the past (Barthold, 2020). In that the recognition experienced through the art is not of the *original*, but of a *possibility*. Rather than “imitation”, Gadamer’s presentation is “*revelation*”; That art is not to mimic an original but to present something more, to reveal something, something situated in the experiences and interpretations of the artist, something *truer* than the original. Not for us to look backwards toward the original, but to open “one’s eyes to a new way of seeing and future possibilities” (Barthold, 2020). The “Recognition” of possibility unconcealed by others (through dialogue, and further, through the historicity and linguisticity of our understanding) is to recognise a new possibility of one’s own comprehension, one’s own being.

Yet this revelation necessarily requires an element of self-implication, self-reflection, the openness of allowing what is to be understood to be reflectively interpreted into one’s own lived context, for “Self” and that which presents itself to us to blend within Self, they are

blended in the synthesis of our interpretation (The '*fusion* of our horizons' as Gadamer famously posits, 'Horizons' themselves are discussed further below). The blend of (interpreted) possibility, as presented, as recognised in context, and as recontextualised into one's own situatedness, through the (historically-situated) act of interpretation.

Gadamer suggests "the true locus on hermeneutics is this in-between" (Gadamer, 1960, 295), a highly important issue with regard to both our hermeneutic conception of Being, but also with regard to the research methodology this research employs (This will be discussed further in the context of the "Fusion of Horizon's" in Chapters III, and as also relevant to Watsuji's notion of "AIDAGARA" in chapter VI).

Thus, the intentional act of understanding aims to understand as to apply, to changes one's life through interpreted possibility.

The act of interpretation necessarily anticipates understanding, and thus reflects on our prior presuppositions of possibility during this act of interpretation. These reflections survey our prior presuppositions of possibility (i.e., past meaning/understanding which provide the conditions for one's historically-effected understanding), as to recognise the possibility understood in this revelation. However, this results in a *new* possibility being understood by the individual, considered within the context of their own lived being. Intuitively recognised as possible (as explored later in this chapter).

This produces an “*event of understanding*”. To recognise possibility/impossibility and to understand how it applies to the problem (the absence) at hand (or that we are conscious of) as to tentatively understand how to resolve it, the synthesis of some revelation, one’s own presuppositions and the situation at hand having interpreted it.

As outlined in chapter I, to Gadamer these understandings and presuppositions are historically-effected not only due to the prior particular experiences of the individual, but are also derived from the linguisticity of our understanding, and the historicity of our understanding as well as the interconnectedness of our Being through dialogue and interaction.

**Gadamerian hermeneutic Being: Dialectic, *fusion* and interconnectedness (through the *linguisticality* and *historicity* of understanding).**

Gadamer felt Heidegger's notion of Dasein was too isolated and sought to demonstrate the interconnectedness of our Being as hermeneutical also. Here we discuss how Gadamer's dialectic is significant to our individual understandings, as well as begin to outline the underpinnings of themes such as generations, tradition, critique, critical reflection and the co-determination of such, as this will begin to play heavily into our discussions of 'Entrepreneurship' and KIGYOUKASEISHIN throughout this thesis.

**'Fusion of horizons' and the co-determination of our understanding:**

Gadamer situates dialogue and the notion of the 'dialectic' as a central aspect to our understanding, and our hermeneutical Being. Gadamer puts our focus here on the interpretive 'understanding' which occurs between individuals, as well as between individuals and texts (an example given above with our productive and transformative interactions with art, however this 'text' might be any other, e.g., a book, a fashion, a discussion, a person, a problem, a symbol, a system etc.) – the productivity of understanding and of hermeneutical Being achieved through the tension which comes from reflective dialogical engagement and furthermore the 'fusion of horizons' (See below) achieved through this. Gadamer viewed the hermeneutical understanding (interpretation) that occurs during dialogue as a "fusion of horizons" – A 'horizon' being a "range of vision that includes everything that can be seen from a particular vantage point" (Gadamer, 1960;302) based on our individual prior

experiences and our historic situatedness. These “horizons” comprise of the so-called “preunderstandings” (*Vorverstandnisse*) of the individual – the prejudices, biases and presuppositions accumulated through an individual’s prior lived experiences, as understood and interpreted within their historic situatedness (of language, of culture, of tradition, of historicity, of personal experience as interpreted) as well as the particular learning and understanding achieved throughout these experiences. (Gadamer 1976).

In the Gadamerian premise, these preunderstandings are considered the anticipatory fore structures which allow for that which is being interpreted to be understood in the preliminary.

However, through dialogue, interaction, and through the productivity of our understanding, our horizons are never *closed*; They are always open and broadening through new understandings, new possibilities, new positions. Their ‘fusion’ is the productive synthesis of such horizons interacting.

Due to the finite nature of our understanding, we are seen to be open to encounters with new ideas and the strangeness and unfamiliarity, as we seek to gain supplementary insight and understanding

As Dallmayr (2000) described, the fusion of horizons is seen as our bridge to ‘Other’.

Through our difference in backgrounds and experiences, we are able to achieve some sort of insight from each other – an important dynamic to this comprehensive conception of hermeneutic Being as individual human Beings as interconnected and dependent.

Both parties must in some way be open to what the other is saying as our interactions are innately always seeking some kind of understanding, therefore in Gadamer's dialect, each party deliberately jeopardises their beliefs as they enter into discussion. These interactions broaden our horizons, through the productive re-interpretation and synthesis of that we have gained from the interaction (e.g., explicit information as recontextualised, we might understand the point of view of other is similar/differs to our own etc.)

'Horizons' are thus the situated-but-evolving context of our individual understandings as far as we can 'see' at present (based on our prior lived experiences); Our understandings which act as the basis for our presuppositions based on that which we have encountered, interpreted, critically engaged with. The linguisticity and historicity of our understanding are also significant factors, also laced with presuppositions and biases historically-present in our language, which may require us to reflect on them.

Gadamer's intention here is to highlight the historical-effectedness of our Being which occurs through our interactions and how significant these interactions are to our essence of Hermeneutic Being; the historical interconnectedness which integrates and connects us, situates us through language, discourse and interaction. To show how our *wirkungsgeschichtliches Bewußtsein* is affected by our interactions; that through both through the historicity and linguisticity of our understanding (i.e history is operative in our understanding) as well as our dialogical inquiries (our fusion of horizons) Gadamer highlights



the 'co-determination' of consciousness, of understanding and thus of our Being as hermeneutical.

This is his iteration of a dialectical interaction which he uses to illustrate the impact of such on our essence and to use this as the foundation of our broader existence as Being, as hermeneutic, as interconnected, as temporal.

Gadamer's thesis appropriates the understanding of the dialectic as had been presented by the ancient Greeks (i.e., Pre-Socratic dialectic, Plato's accounts of Socratic dialectic, Aristotle's dialectic), and also builds on the modern dialectic which emerged within German Idealism, significantly in Hegel's phenomenology of the *Geist*. Hegel's dialectic and his notion of *Geist* (Sometimes referred to in English as 'Spirit') provide a vague outline format/blueprint of which Gadamer re-works while building his comprehensive outline of 'hermeneutical Being', except does so by making radical alterations to the notion in a manner which could be considered similar to Heidegger's shift of phenomenology from Husserl's *analytic* focus to an *ontological*; here, the dialectic is shifted from the '*teleological*' to the '*intentional*'.

The traditional dialectic centres on discourse between two or more individuals attempting to establish knowledge/univocal truth through reasoned argument. Beyond this methodological discourse in isolation, Modern iterations further considered it as an integral component of a rational system, a formal system of reason occurring through an exchange of logical arguments arriving at some teleologically-driven univocal truth, sometimes characterised as culminating in some grand conclusion. For example, (as mentioned above and outlined

further throughout this section) Hegel's cumulative notion of 'Absolute Geist'. Hegel presents Geist as a purposeful, teleological lifeforce which propels humankind toward its future as an engine for change, or conversely, what might be seen as reaching its own volition through the momentum of human history. Hegel's iteration presents dialectical reasoning as a purposeful unfolding of human history as a systemic and systematic conception of Being which is teleologically driven and eventually has humanity arrive at absolute consciousness, absolute *Geist*. (Etymologically, 'Geist' shares common essence with notions such as 'Ghost/Ghoul', 'Geyser', and 'Gist', all of which contribute to this idea of such spirit running through our era-spanning Being, as generational uprisings of certain ideas).

In Hegel's phenomenology of Geist, he is attempting to depict our human Being as always in flux, as always in a state of change, as always in a state of becoming, ultimately manifesting in this eventual 'absolute Geist', a state without contradiction (touched upon more below).

While many of these idea's make their way into Gadamer's appropriation, the culminative, teleological aspect is foregone in Gadamer's appropriation of the notion; this is 'a dialectic without system, and therefore one without end' (Nicholson, 2002, 184). Gadamer's outcome here is not of reason or univocal knowledge, but of the particular, productive understanding of *phronesis*, of deliberation, of wisdom. Therefore, there is no expectation of arriving at an eternal or universal truth, nor even at any one, singular, definite, formal interpretation produced in culmination of this dialectic (Nicholson, 2002, 184), the focus here is on the productive quality of our Being and our hermeneutic understanding. That we necessarily seek

particular understanding as relevant to our particular concerns. This is what might be considered a ‘soft’ rather than ‘iron’ dialectic (Nicholson, 2002, 184).

Gadamer appropriates the dialectic not as a method for achieving truth or knowledge, but as simply an integral part of our (hermeneutical) Being and its historically-effected consciousness – dialogue, language and understanding.

However, while at times not made explicitly clear by Gadamer, these interactions provide the foundations for his more comprehensive illustration of our interconnectedness (something mostly absent in Heidegger), as foundational to the interconnectedness of our Being in similar breadth to that of Hegelian *Geist*, through interaction, the linguisticity and historicity of our understanding, the historically-effected nature of consciousness, the understanding it produces and the transformative nature of such.

This returns us (in part) to Hegel’s grand systematic dialectic and his notion of Geist. For Geist to arrive at absolute consciousness via human history, Hegel’s dialectic is centred around the notion of what he refers to as *aufheben* often translated into English as ‘*Sublation*’. This is a significant premise to Hegel’s dialect which Hegel chooses to use due to the duality of its meaning in German; To both negate or cancel, *as well as to preserve*. This is in reference to a rhythm of Hegel’s dialectic often communicated through the heuristic of ‘Thesis’, ‘Antithesis’ = ‘Synthesis’. In that as we engage in dialogue, we present a *thesis*, our

counterpart presents an *antithesis*, and the result is a *synthesis* of ideas which carries with it this essence of sublation; a retention of what is deemed good or necessary for humanity, the dismissal of the trivial, retaining the useful part of a notion while advancing beyond the notions original limitations. It is this dismissal of the bad, retention of the good which supposedly results in the accomplishment of *Geist*'s teleological potential and ultimate entelechy - Absolute Geist/Spirit; Humanity's supposed goal to be without contradiction.

While Gadamer's thesis fundamentally objects to Hegel's depicted teleology, he implicitly yet deliberately builds upon this rhythm of sublation in his 'fusion of horizons', an idea which contributes to the new and the old of the times, of generations, in its generation (in its productivity). However, for Gadamer this is without telos, it is perpetual and unpredictable (O'Neil, 2007; 68). Gadamer does away with the sentiency and teleology of Hegel's Geist and instead lifts from this notion of the interrelatedness of all parts through dialectical interaction - which plays into Gadamer's broader social ontology (Scheibler, XI;2000) – in a bid to describe our essence as hermeneutical Beings en masse as temporal through time, without bringing over this idea that through this discourse all opposition is resolved and contradiction is erased.

As is mentioned elsewhere in this section, Gadamer's understanding is considered tentative, finite. This shares similarities with Hegel in that this is experience of *negation*; Of recognising one does not know or understand something/everything. That this lack of

knowledge or understanding leads us to questions through this necessary concern, toward this rhythm of dialogue and sublation as a fundamental mode of our Being.

Gadamer, by removing this teleological element and suggesting we can't know everything, concludes we are finite, and thus unable to know everything, we seek understanding and supplementation from one another (as historically situated). The understanding produced during such dialectical reflection is integral to our broader Being, producing/contributing to this sense of sublation, as apparent the waves of change grounded in the consistency of 'Tradition' as retained understandings, as communicated and reinterpreted (See following section discussing key themes related to such from the debate between Habermas and Gadamer regarding 'Tradition' and 'Critique')

## **'Critique' and 'Tradition': Gadamer's hermeneutic intentionality under scrutiny**

Amidst Gadamer's broad outlining of Hermeneutic Being it was suggested by peers and critics some themes raised were not addressed clearly enough. While there were a variety of famous debates centred around Gadamer's Philosophical Hermeneutics (Which saw Gadamer's ideas come under scrutiny from fellow Phenomenologists such as Paul Ricoer, from Existentialist thinkers such as Jacque Derrida, Educational Philosopher E.D Hirsch Jr to name a few such famed examples), most significant (and useful as to clarify Gadamer's ideas) is that of Critical Sociologist Jurgen Habermas. Habermas draws out attention to the notion of 'Critique' vis-à-vis 'Tradition' and this is of enormous importance in our discussion of Entrepreneurship (touched upon further in Chapter IX: Discussion part 1). This is something Gadamer quietly addresses throughout his tome, however, Habermas's argument is a useful moment to re-visit this and make it clear.

What is important to point out is Habermas enters this discussion arguably at a different level of analysis to Gadamer's broad philosophical hermeneutics. Habermas' position stemmed from the neo-Marxian Frankfurt school of thought and is characterized by its critique of power, authority, and ideology and is built upon the foundational interest of an emancipation from such. Habermas' is a critical philosophical position, concerned with developing a critical social science approach (Gall, 1981;6) and holds the view that through critical reflection, we can elevate ourselves above Tradition and the entrenchment of history and preunderstandings. Habermas's interprets Gadamer's thesis as being problematic in this

respect - suggesting that if our understanding is preconditioned by the history and tradition we seek to understand, we are not able to elevate ourselves into such critically-distanced reflective position and thus are not able to challenge said tradition (Leiviska, 2015;586). This in turn – in Habermas’ evaluation – forbids Gadamer’s hermeneutics from functioning as a critique of tradition and further of ideology (Habermas, 2015).

Habermas argues Gadamer’s ‘Critique’ is not clearly outlined enough vis-à-vis antithetical counterparts such as ‘Tradition’ or ‘Authority’. Gadamer’s use of these ideas were often misunderstood as approached from a Modern/Rationalist perspective; Terms here considered by Habermas to be in the same vernacular as the greater schema of the Enlightenment’s ideology. Gadamer does not draw us to these idea’s as established, but instead appropriates these terms (‘Tradition’, ‘Authority’) from their Enlightened, Modern use in a bid to rehabilitate our understanding of them as broader, more neutral, *post* Modern terms when unpacked as situated within Gadamer’s broader thesis, as for us to appreciate their significance (Gadamer, 1960). Therefore, it is necessary to clarify Gadamer’s deliberate rehabilitation of these terms in his philosophical hermeneutic project

### **Gadamer's rehabilitation of Tradition:**

Contrary to Habermas' view, Gadamer suggests experience is always present in our human understanding and our presuppositions are the fore ground necessary for us to achieve the understanding we interpret. Gadamer posits that within our understandings lie many other implicit beliefs and understandings. Gadamer's 'Horizon' consists of our pre-understanding (*Vorverständnis*) which provide the basis for our pre-judgments (*Vorurteile*) and presuppositional prejudices (*Vorurteil*) which we meet any moment with. What is significant here is Gadamer's "prejudice" (*Vorurteil*) is neutral (i.e., unpassionate, unaligned), receptive and unfixed, always changing/altering as we understand and develop; they are what change through revelation and understanding, and are what we initially arrive at questions/understanding with.

Gadamer therefore suggests this horizontal pre-supposition is a necessary component of both our questions and our understanding; That we arrive at questions through our engagement with history as historically-effected. Gadamer suggests presupposition provides the foreground for understanding and is an integral part of our experience of 'revelation' – the understanding achieved which contradicts our presuppositions in some way, which reveals something unknown - an unknown which is made comprehensible (even as revelatory) due to how it is in *some way* related/relatable to our preunderstandings; its *revelatory* but in some manner interpretable/ comprehensible - These pre-judgments are necessary to situate our experience of revelatory understanding which in turn, alters these preunderstandings also to



some degree. These are the necessary fore judgments which frame our experience of interpretation and understanding (see above).

Within the pre-scientific experience of hermeneutical understanding (interpretation) not only do we achieve some kind of revelation regarding that which maintains our concern in this particular instance (either during dialogue, or interactions with other texts as concerned), but this also has a knock-on effect to these prior beliefs and understandings as relevant and/or interconnected. Quite importantly, we reflectively 'expose and subsequently affirm or negate' (Barthold, 2022) these beliefs, fore-judgements and pre-understandings also. While Gadamer believes they are not completely erased, they are contradicted and altered, as hermeneutic understanding is 'transformative' (and thus, at the same time 'productive'). Both partially retentive and partially revelatory at once.

'Hermeneutical understanding' intrinsically operates in a mode open to strangeness or unfamiliarity, allowing (and necessarily requiring) these preunderstandings to be addressed and called into question (Gadamer 1960; Gall, 1981; Dallmayr, 2000), which involves the questioning of 'initial, perhaps misleading "fore-meanings" and their replacement by more productive judgments- which in turn become resources for continued questioning or inquiry' (Dallmayr, 2000). That through the dialectical 'fusion of horizons' understanding is co-created between two (or more) individuals; these enabling fore judgements (which allow for understanding to occur) are partially retained in synthesis yet are transformed via revelation.

Thus to begin to outline Gadamer's rehabilitation of Tradition and Authority, this is where the notions of 'synthesis' and 'sublation' are again relevant to our discussion, as integral to the dynamic of our productive understanding and of our hermeneutic Being as interconnected, temporal, insightful and transformational; In reference both to our growth as individuals as informed by our hermeneutic encounters with others, and further, the productivity and transformative quality of such which contributes to the productive temporal notion of *generations* – 'generation' a synonym of productivity here rooted to the dynamic change which occurs through interaction and hermeneutic understanding.

This synthesis of the retained and the particular - the passing on of an idea (as reinterpreted) - is what Gadamer refers to as 'Tradition'; Not necessarily institutionalised, authoritarian nor dogmatic as Habermas recognises this notion in more Enlightened terms, but Gadamer's traditions are in reference to idea's as interpreted and imparted/communicated, either actively or passively, however not necessarily revered, and never absolutely preserved. (See below section on critical reflection).

However, when Gadamer states we are historically-effected and cannot escape tradition, it does not mean we *endorse* all tradition, nor does he mean are 'without recourse to critique it.' (Barthold, 2022) It does not mean we cannot or do not reflect on tradition (Such is an integral part of our hermeneutical understanding - see above outline of Gadamer's notions of

‘presentation’ and ‘recognition’ above), nor does it claim that we cannot or do not engage with, question or attempt to change alter advance or dismiss a tradition. Rather, Gadamer is simply asserting that we never start from a ‘tradition-free’ position (Barthold, 2022)

Gadamer’s rehabilitations here undoubtedly begin to challenge and modify the established idea of ‘tradition’ (and by extension ‘critique’) courted by Modern philosophy since the Enlightenment, and Rational perspectives of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century in line with Habermas who follow this Modern tradition. According to Gadamer, the traditions and presuppositional fore-judgements within which we are situated are enabling in that they provide the basis to make sense of what we encounter. They are enabling in that they allow us to get a contextual foothold to interpret in context - it is this foot hold which grounds us in something and allows us to reflect at all. They enable their own transformation by being the basis of reflection, recognition and revelation to occur.

This is not satisfactory for Habermas, who argues that even in the social sciences, controlled methodological distanciation (*‘Verfremdung’*) is necessary to elevate ‘pre-scientific’ hermeneutic experience to a reflective procedure - a method - as for us to ensure objectivity. However, conversely Gadamer would argue as our historically-effected consciousness provides the structure of our experience, this makes it a ‘necessary condition of science (experience of the world precedes scientific analysis of it) , not a science itself (we do not control experiences)’ (Gall, 6;1981).

To be clear, Gadamer's 'hermeneutical understanding' is not in reference to an approach to a method of social scientific endeavour – i.e., the protocols of the 'distanced' conditions Habermas describes in line with the tradition of positivistic science - but as constitutive of our human Being (and our understanding), and thus a legitimate, underlying aspect of our approach to the scientific endeavour Habermas is attempting to describe. What we arrive at questions/understanding with, and in doing so is attempting to reconcile the perceived place of experience in our scientific endeavours.

This is where Gadamer appreciates the natural science premise and its achievements, however suggests that we arrive at our questions/answers through our history. Gadamer is attempting to describe the foreground upon which scientific inquiry would take place.

Fellow phenomenologist Paul Ricoeur, sought to occupy a middle ground between the two philosopher's viewpoints – he saw the significance both of the continuity of tradition as well as critically over coming tradition - which it might be argued that in some way so does Gadamer, however he is accused of not being clear enough in his articulation of such.

Although critical of Gadamer's handling of the idea's he puts forward, Ricoeur appears to support Gadamer's position that critique can't be 'detached from hermeneutic presuppositions' (Ricoeur, 2008; 270), and the 'the ideal of preconditionless understanding' (Leiviskä, 2015;582) that Habermas stands by is argued to be an unachievable ideal as "an exhaustive critique of prejudice - and hence of ideology - is impossible, because there is no zero-point

from which it could proceed" (Ricouer, 2008;270). Our scrutiny itself is situated within a history.

Gadamer is also keen to note 'reflection' cannot question everything all at once (Gadamer, 1960; Gall, 10;1981). That, importantly, 'Reflection on a given preunderstanding brings before me something that otherwise happens behind my back. Something—but not everything—for what I have called effective historical consciousness is inescapably more being than consciousness' (Gadamer, 2008; 38)

### **'Critique', 'Tradition', 'Hermeneutic understanding':**

Habermas claims that the continuity and lineage presented by Tradition, combined with the circular, iterative nature of Gadamer's understanding (The hermeneutic circle – See Chapter III) reduces such to a 'vicious circle' (Leiviskä, 2015;589) entrenched in heritage. However as is outlined above, Gadamer's understanding is *productive*, not *reproductive*. Tradition is never fully the same – it is always re-interpreted, interpreted anew and contextualise for the times it exists within, due to the particular experiences the interpretations of the individual are dependent on.

Hermeneutical understanding includes a critical aspect as triggered by concern, in sync with our implicit recognition of our own finitude; we seek a particular understanding and our interpretation includes reflection and scrutiny to arrive at a recognition

Gadamer sees it that we always amidst tradition, but never fully entrenched (given our capability to imaginatively synthesis and produce understanding – see section later in this chapter).

Consequently, it is this ‘co-determinedness’ (Gadamer et al, 2001;45) which at once makes us part of the times we exist within while also productively reflecting on such and effectively moving them forward. This *aufheben*-like sublation consists of critical reflection, interpretation, synthesis of that we interact with and a subsequent production of understanding - a hermeneutical reflection interpreting things anew reflectively.

‘Tradition’ here is the passing on or retention of certain idea’s, interests, solutions, questions, and problems during this synthesis of understanding. However, what is key here is such ‘Tradition’ is necessarily altered when engaged with, as while it is being understood it too is ‘transformed’ as re-interpreted within the context of the individual, and as existent as experienced within the current times. Some aspects rejected, others adopted, partially preserved as relevant or diverged from in the new context. This is the sublative rhythm of generations passing/re-generating as mapped by Hegel. However as outlined above, this isn’t with a teleological outcome, this isn’t with purpose beyond our individual understanding (addressing concerns).

Further it is most generally not concerned with the preservation and conservation of dogmatic ideology. Gadamer’s tradition is not of blind affirmation nor unscrutinised imitation, but shows how ‘making tradition our own means a critical and creative application of it’ (Barthold, 2022).

While we are influenced by tradition, we also appropriate tradition in critical reflection. Therefore, although bound by ‘Tradition’, this tradition is ‘inexhaustibly open to new interpretations and additional dimensions of meaning’ (Leiviskä, 2015;589) , which is the production of completely new ideas or renovations of old ideas within a different context. It is necessary to alter tradition as to make it our own (Barthold, 2022). For example, ‘revolution’ is a response to ‘Tradition’ which ‘nonetheless makes use of that very same tradition’ (Barthold, 2022).

It is this critical reflection and appropriation which Gadamer sees as constitutive of his rehabilitated ‘Tradition’. The synthesis found in Gadamer’s interpretative fusion relies on this capacity to imaginatively appropriate and synthesise that which came before to be applicable in the newness of now. As is discussed further below, Gadamer involves an “imaginative reflection” in our hermeneutical understanding where we imaginatively synthesise new ideas from the aspects we break our history down into (the possibility we have encountered), both the explicit as well as implicit themes e.g., such as ‘possibility’, ‘irony’, ‘value’, ‘sensitivity’, ‘nuance’ and so on (See below section ‘Deliberation and imaginative reflection’).

Thus, Habermas’s position that all ‘Tradition’ is doctrinal, all-consuming, authoritative and not subject to ‘critique’ by Gadamer’s hermeneutic project is arguably missing the point of Gadamer’s bid to rehabilitate the terms. On the contrary, the attention Gadamer draws to ‘Tradition’ highlights the *active* quality of understanding which is *productive* and

*transformational* (Leiviskä, 2015; Barthold, 2022). Transforming these preunderstandings and fore judgements which are the necessary foothold which makes reflection possible, what we consciously reflect against when directed by concern and what are altered through recognition and revelation, the sublative growth of self, our understanding and expansion of our unfixed, expansive horizons.

### **‘Authority’ as ‘insight’:**

Habermas appears not to value the term ‘Authority’ as Gadamer does during his rehabilitation, instead recognising the term in mostly Cartesian terms. This is possibly due to the difference of approaches the two scholars or the levels of which they enter into this discussion. Whereas Habermas’ ‘depth hermeneutics’ is focused on preparing a method for the social sciences, Gadamer’s philosophical hermeneutics is discussing the essence of our human existence outside of scientific inquiry and further outlying why we might require such scientific methods.

It is vital to recognise these terms (‘Authority’ and ‘Tradition’) as rehabilitated in order to value the meaning of them in Gadamer’s thesis as well as to recognise their relationship with one another in this context. Gadamer recognises ‘Authority exists in countless forms’ (Gadamer, 1986:285) however the authority he is drawing our attention to is not that built around blind alliance or obedience, but to an authority of knowledge where the authority stems from ‘the *reflective* acceptance of another person’s superior judgement’ (Scheibler,



2000;19 italics in original). Although not always clear in Gadamer's argument, Gadamer is distinguishing between the 'authority of a person' and the 'authority of a *claim* one attributes to a person' (Scheibler, 2000;19 my italics); Gadamer draws us to a notion of 'Authority' as *insight* (and further, how 'insight' permeates into our collective consciousness as this re-conceived 'Tradition') where one recognises the legitimacy, validity, relevancy of the teachings at hand.

This is similar to what we would recognise as the authority of an 'Expert'. 'Authority' here is again, not as dogmatic and/or blindly accepted, but teachings as *critically reflected upon by the recipient* and discerningly examined as *relevant* through deliberative hermeneutic understanding as we might do during our day-to-day existence.

This notion of expertise and the scrutiny of such is important to our discussion of Entrepreneurship with regard to the notion of universal solutions vis-à-vis particular problems (Discussed further in Chapter IX). The faith in such insight and claims of knowledge depend on either a 'hermeneutics of faith' or 'hermeneutics of suspicion'; This is what Gadamer refers to in the title of his thesis – 'Truth and Method': Claims of 'truth' and processes of 'method', discussing the application of particular iterations of such in domain appropriate manners (See Chapter III). Gadamer felt when engaging with a text or claim one must engage in a 'hermeneutics of faith' (the acceptance of this disclosure) or a 'hermeneutics of suspicion' (where one subjects the claim to scrutiny and critique) (Gadamer, 1984).

Both Habermas and Ricoer were underwhelmed with Gadamer's treatment of the later. In support of Gadamer's position but feeling he did not take this notion as far as was required, Ricoer distinguishing between the two further in his own elaboration on both; Ricoer conceived that the hermeneutics of faith's focus was to restore meaning to a claim/text, while the hermeneutics of suspicion for him was an attempt to decode further meaning disguised within the claim/text (Josselson, 2004:1). However, Ricoer - similar to Habermas - again leans toward a critical hermeneutical position, where Gadamer's was an illustrative, philosophical hermeneutical intention.

Gadamer was drawing attention to the role of experience in our pre-scientific day-to-day existence, which implicitly involves scrutiny as part of its deliberations. Gadamer's idea of 'Authority' thus innately requires the *judgement* of other, and gains value through either being accepted or rejected. Where 'method' scrutinises a claim of truth, 'disclosive truth' is the interpretation of an experience or an understanding (which when conveyed to another becomes an 'insight') and is not subject to methodological scrutiny (the scrutiny of scientific method) – it is what we might consider non-universal, non-eternal, simply particular 'insight'.

Gadamer's rehabilitation of Authority (vis-à-vis his rehabilitation of Tradition) necessarily requires *judgement*; This authority requires the acceptance achieved through the critical reflection of the learner (e.g., recognition of *applicability*) in order for its authority to be established – however this too can be later contradicted by other learnings, rejecting the

authority of the knowledge communicated. This ‘Authority’ earns its validity through the second party recognising the validity in this claim of hermeneutical truth (outlined in Chapter III).

‘Authority’ here (under Gadamer’s rehabilitation) may simply be teachings accepted as valid as they are useful to us and our concerns. This ‘Authority’ might stem from kin, partners, parents, offspring, grandparents, relatives, friends, community members, community seniors, experts, teachers, academics, authorities of knowledge, established authorities and so on.

However, this does not mean the individual themselves is an imposing authority.

This original insight (in which history is operative) stems from an individual’s deliberation (which produces an original synthesis of particular understandings) and is passed on. In this way, ideas are passed on, accepted or rejected as deemed relevant. This may further inform or resonate with common beliefs, however, as *beliefs* these aren’t necessarily permanent, eternal truths, but may reveal insight adaptable to particular circumstances as interpreted (and reflectively accepted through the deliberative judgement of *phronesis*.)

In line with Cartesian position, the scientific validity of such is provable or deniable, however it is interpreted initially to only be of use in the particular, and is being recommended not necessarily as a universal truth, but as insight based on experience, which further requires and expects the deliberation of the recipient, a tailoring to a situation, an adapting. This insight (with these caveats) can be passed on to members of a generation, or further, to the next generation again with this implicit clause that adaptation would be required.

This relationship between Gadamer's 'Authority' (i.e., recognised validity of 'insight') and those who consider and further subscribe to these understandings as applicable, is the pulse behind rehabilitated (i.e., non-dogmatic) Tradition's contributing factor to hermeneutic Being's generational 'sublation'. This occurs amidst the other productive understandings of the individual which are experienced afresh.

This 'Authority' is constitutive to the turn of sublation in tradition, a 'mediator' of that which is retained. The influence of tradition (i.e., the teachings of authority as imparted, in contrast to particular experiences of understanding achieved through one's own deliberation), is implicit however 'Authority' is (as recognition of the superiority of a claim) rejectable when subject to the critical, particular deliberation of phronesis.

The breadth of common-understanding which finds its genesis in teachings accepted as insight, and then the intrinsic belief (an idea discussed later in this chapter) which develops from this as adopted and taken for granted, lays between and amidst our individual critical reflections and deliberative experiences, that which is available to us as established.

When scrutiny is required (to test the universal and/or eternal validity of these claims), the hermeneutics of suspicion engage and to test the validity of these claims (through so-called 'method', which in our day to day experiences may not necessarily be *scientific*, however this would be appropriate also.)

This said, through the wisdom acquired (the possibilities and understandings we're aware of) we might question, challenge, critique commonly held understandings if they lie contrary to one's own experiences or to the intuition (imaginative reflection, imaginative interpretation and synthesis of the possibilities we understand) we foster based on our experiences more broadly. Thus, Gadamer speaks not of 'Authority' the oppressive force, but of understandings consensually accepted as insight through the scrutiny of reflection.

The Tradition and effective-history Gadamer refers to are not one singular tradition nor are they necessarily one homogenous, broad stroke, wholesale experience of such for all – the history and tradition we experience happen in step with our own personal lived experiences – we exist within the new as well as the old due to both the co-determinedness of our understanding/Being and the productivity of our understanding – this is what Gadamer means that we are co-determined by history and our Being is both historically-effected, as well as driven by our own particular experience and interpretations (Gadamer et al, 2001;45). The particular and the translation of insight into the particular.

This involves the retention of some ideas (as re-interpreted in context as relevant), the scrutiny and dismissal of others, the potential return to others (again, re-interpreted in context, now deemed relevant in a new context) and the thesis/antithesis/synthesis rhythm that not only contributes to our individual understanding but also to our collective and common understandings ('collective' again not necessarily humanity-wide, society-wide, community-wide, but 'common' to those who share or are privy to these understandings ) as

part of the times we're part, providing the history and interpretations of traditions which act as foundations to upcoming generations to exist within, to find concerns within and react toward and build on productively.

Through our hermeneutic reflection, we are able to unpick and critically analyse certain compound traditions and cultures, through the imaginative application of one possibility we've learned in one context, to another situation. We witness things different to the traditions we've begun in (i.e., been socialised and acculturated within) and through the fusion of our horizons (preunderstandings/ expectations) with new experiences, we are exposed to new ideas which we interpret differently (producing a new particular understanding). It is through this encounter with the unfamiliar new understandings (and the critical reflection involved in our interpretations) which broaden our horizons and understandings.

Reflection occurs when we're in the so-called 'occurrent' mode of critical engagement, when we become concerned and seek understanding through deliberation. This is where/when something is deemed questionable - an implicit yet key aspect of Gadamerian interpretation, reflection, self-reflection, recognition. The basis for this reflection is based in the wisdom we arrive at this moment with (through reflective deliberation). This is the very essence of our hermeneutic intentionality, and Gadamer's perceived purpose of dialectical engagement; To supplement our finiteness through the critical appropriation of others understandings into the particular lived context of one's life, one's horizon until that point.

### **Deliberation and ‘Imaginative reflection’ (*intuition*):**

The self-reflective consciousness needs to survey its current awareness of possibilities (Gelven, 1989, 57). Therefore, how do we reflect on meaning and possibility? Gadamer recognised this issue and so progressed the “Hermeneutic Intentionality” premise further, adding “imaginative reflection” (conceived of as a form of *intuition*) as integral to our occurrent mode of existence (Gadamer 1966/2008). Here, the self-reflective consciousness taps into its awareness of possibilities (its deliberative *wisdom*) vis-à-vis the situation at hand/unavailability as interpreted.

Within the deliberation of phronesis, Gadamer (1966/2008) felt the type of intuition used in these purposeful modes of being required “imagination” as a forum for reflexive contemplation. He outlines an “intuition-thought-imagination” (Lengyel 2017;24) that surveys, and reflectively engages with past meaningful experience and awareness of possibility as is applicable to the occurrent, purposeful mode of existence the individual now inhabits.

That imagination here has a “hermeneutical function and serves the sense for what is questionable” (Gadamer, 2008;12), imaginatively surveying issues and further interpreting past-experiences of prior, purposeful resolution as appropriate to a similar or foreign scenario; Intuition as sourced from the imaginative synthesis of past experience and lived meaning.

These “echoes” of purposeful experiences – the perceived “possibilities of human existence” as acquired through prior experience (of past-purpose and past possibility in *present*)- as well as the sense of possibility that resides in language (i.e., The historicity of our understanding, here in the form of meaningful “*presuppositions*” ) are considered by the individual as they relate to similar prior purposeful-experiences and wider meanings as are meaningful *specifically to the individual*; as accrued and subsequently informed through their unique lived experiences.

This presuppositional “possibility” is meaningful as it relates to all other past, present and future experiences as they inform and relate to this perceived possibility. This sense of possibility provides the foundations for the individuals own unique *intuition* (i.e., the self-reflective, hermeneutical consciousness as it associates with its *awareness of possibilities*).

In this intuitive phase, Gadamer does not conceive of this imagination as necessarily *visual*, but as the capacity to synthesise prior meanings or presuppositions acquired through unique lived-experiences of the individual with that which is encountered or that which is concerning, unavailable or questionable to us. This is to achieve a *tentative* understanding of the situation, and to consider a *tentative* solution based on the synthesis of the situation before us, and the presuppositions of possibility we already hold. Amidst this imaginative reflection, further recognition of assumed possibility occurs - an event of understanding producing a tentative solution; an “idea” - a (tentative, non-exhaustive nor absolute) understanding of the questionable situation, imagined as “resolved” by the individual, based on an imaginative



reflection of the current situation before them as is unavailable or obtrusive. An imaginative interpretation of the issue at hand. A possible solution - a concern imaginatively supplemented by presuppositions of previously interpreted "possibility" ("tentative" as no understanding is comprehensive and thus neither is it absolute nor exhaustive) (Gadmer, 1960; Grondin, 2002). Made comprehensible, approachable and solvable by presuppositions based on our past experiences, here made relevant by our interpretation in context of a moment anew. Here the individual produces a tentative understanding of this particular issue.

However, given the finite capacity of our understanding, we still may seek more understanding to apply this tentative solution. This is where Gadamer's dialogue begins to take centre stage, in its active, *socially-directed* search for understanding, for interpretable possibility, possibility that brings about Being (i.e., our future, our potential, our interpreted possibility which directs us). In these inquisitive, social encounters we engage in dialogue, we fuse horizons, we recognise possibility as interpreted within Self and then seek to apply this new understanding of possibility.

Through a hermeneutic circle (see Methodology, Chapter III) of deliberative understanding, we engage in dialogue, we learn, we reflect, we seek other complimentary/contradictory understandings, we learn, we reflect, we consider the whole by means of the parts, and the parts by way of the whole.

We scrutinise by reflecting on past experience, past understandings in totality, as *wisdom* (*phronesis*). This practically-oriented understanding works on its own rationality and is not teachable as method, not verified through method, not reducible to rules or methods, oriented toward the case at hand. It is *intuitive*, based on past-experience and understanding.

To Gadamer, this entire experience is *social* and *historic*. In the first instance (regarding our tentative “idea”), we achieve this understanding through social means – even understanding that occurs in the “isolation” of one’s thought is never isolated nor transcendent and is always social – through the linguisticity and historicity of our understanding that occurs in and through language. In the second, understanding is actively sought through consultation, through dialogue, through actively social means. However, given the tentative nature of human understandings and the underlying temporality of our primordial being in the world, it is quite possible that even if certain understandings held are taken for granted as *applicable* (*as possible*), due to the notion that our circumstances and the world we exist in are always temporally-effected, always changing, this tentative idea will require additional “new” understanding / supplementary know-how as to practically achieve it, the understanding to apply and to reproduce this imagined idea. Thus, to Gadamer all understanding is tentative, open-ended, always emerging, never comprehensive and thus hermeneutic being are always intentionality driven to seek more understanding. This is how this tentative understanding itself becomes “meaningful”: The structure of our experiences.

## **Where does this leave us?**

Above we mentioned the recent trend for work grounded in Functionalisms' Market-economic background (e.g., dynamic market processes) attempting to produce more 'anthropomorphic' iterations of the so-called 'Entrepreneur' through its a blend between macro and micro concepts used at both levels of analysis without being properly adjusted, and recognition of this incommensurability has become a central issue of concern to the field (Packard 2017; Dimov, 2011; Popp & Holt, 2013).

How Functionalist research is developed around the abstractions of the act of opportunity exploitation and 'the market', recognising how the field appears to now be working backwards to flesh-out these reduced models and skeletal frameworks, to gain more insight into the phenomena we study.

However, this research suggests that not enough attention has been given to fields underpinnings ultimately being an epistemologically-inclined approach which does so again not by considering primordial, nonconceptual meaning and experience, but considering these factors as nonprimordial, conceptual objectifications, and further, not enough attention being given to the underlying conception of Being at the root of these ideas and discussions.

When considered through the above outlined phenomenological approach, rather than begin this discussion from the start point of A-historical abstraction as intentionally reduced for sake of parsimony, the hermeneutic phenomenological inquiry begins from a representation

of the primordial, hermeneutic Being in a comprehensive fashion, spanning complicated interconnections between the individual human and its interconnectedness with humanity – both in the present and with regards to our generations, both through history and forward) through language, interaction and interpretation (represented here as comprehensively as language/research restrictions will permit).

This approach suggests a focus on meaning as the structure to our experiences as such is considered integral to this conception of human Being as social, historical and hermeneutic, and thus is consider integral to gaining understanding of phenomena experienced and existent as part of this broader human existence.

Prior to reviewing current discourse in Entrepreneurship Studies based around ‘Phenomenology’, ‘Context’ and ‘Language’ this inquiry will briefly situate the concerns of the Functionalist inquiry (Here, “the act of opportunity exploitation”) within the concerns of the above outlined historically-effected, intentionality-driven “Hermeneutic Being”, as to reconsider the reduction of this experience as presented through notions of abstraction and deterministic teleology. To consider the act of “opportunity exploitation” as it would be under hermeneutic phenomenological terms. This aims to show that this is potentially a shard of the greater experience under investigation and that in its isolation we dimmish its interrelatedness to a broader experience. Here under hermeneutic phenomenological terms, an individual appears to act as to accomplish a specific end, but also, they act in the cannon of a greater

context of *meaning* – the same layered meaning as accumulated in historically-effected consciousness, sourced through meaningful experiences within the social realm (Fast, 2018). Therefore, when one acts, one acts not only to accomplish this task at hand, but also due to the meaningfulness of the act within the totality of consciousness.

The meaning, significance and purpose of this act may be interpreted as significant as to remedy an issue at hand either that which is present, or that we are conscious of, such as a greater life goal, to fulfil a broader purpose or as a meaningful learning experience in itself, in that one acts as to achieve a goal, but also further, as to realise “some possibility of human existence” (Okrent, 2000;191). To act as to also acquire *understanding* and (*eventual presuppositional*) *meaning* – a referential experience that informs consciousness of *possibility*.

The accumulative mass of historically-situated experience that make the individual *what-they-are* not only shapes their awareness of possibility, but also their broader understanding and reason. Thus, meanings, values and purpose that have incrementally developed through meaningful experiences throughout the lifetime of the individual (here, the so-called “Entrepreneur”), and contribute to their future intentions. This “lived-meaning” offers a unique discernibility specific to the individuals broader, situated concerns and prioritisations as socialised (Fast, 2018; Cohen and Omery, 1994).

Therefore, neither the *act* nor the *end* are ever truly considered completely in isolation (nor are they ever ultimately finite or complete, they are always open-ended as part of an on-going existence), but within a tentative attempt at appeasing some concern of hermeneutic Being.

The *act* becomes meaningful in the context of one's intentional directedness, thus discernible issues are not simply ascertained and acted upon *in isolation*, but as part of the overall context of the individual as lived (as existent as social and historical). Not just the situation before them in presence, but the situation as situated in a greater context of experience, of meaning, of wisdom, of interaction, of language, of tradition, of socialisation, the greater context of the individuals socially and historically-effected existence.

This is where we can begin to realise the teleological limitations of the Functionalist conception of the 'Entrepreneur', as compared with the so-called hermeneutic Being of Gadamer's thesis.

That by extension, "Entrepreneurship" can be understood as having a greater purpose or meaning other than the act of attaining opportunity. That "Entrepreneurship" is the product of a totality of meaningful experience, directed by a hermeneutic intentionality, driven to (so-called) entrepreneurial experiences and action. Meaning as situated, meaning as historically-effected, Meaning as co-determined.

The Gadamerian hermeneutic phenomenological perspective sees the Entrepreneur's sense of purpose as potentially broader than the "profit opportunity" motive. And significantly this is

a ‘purpose’ informed by both the particularness of our hermeneutic intentionality and the historical co-determinedness of our Being (as outlined above). That the acquisition of a “profit opportunity” may or may not contribute to one’s experience of Entrepreneurship in a *meaningful* way (or a way deemed particularly significant to the individual ‘Entrepreneur’).

A Gadamerian approach enables us to survey the broader *meaning of the experience in consciousness*, as historically effected. To be able to contemplate the entire phenomenon of Entrepreneurship as experienced, a Gadamerian approach pursues an understanding of the *meaning* of Entrepreneurship by the individual, as historically-effected. The perceived structure of their experience. Therefore, as outlined in Chapter I, this research is not an ontological inquiry into “*profit opportunity*”, but one into the ontology of subjectively-interpreted *meaning*.

The next and final part of this chapter will now review current Entrepreneurship Studies literature already taking a phenomenological approach to research as well as work focusing on language and context as to show how a Gadamerian hermeneutic phenomenological approach would fill a current gap in this literature. This is then followed by an outlining of the hermeneutic phenomenological methodological approach employed in this inquiry, as a means to address this gap in our current studies through an exemplary hermeneutic phenomenological inquiry into the lived experience of Japanese-language “Entrepreneurship” – KIGYOUKASEISHIN.

**Literature review part 3:**

**Phenomenology, interpretation and language in Entrepreneurship studies.**



### **Literature review part 3:**

#### **Phenomenology, interpretation and language in Entrepreneurship studies.**

Now that we've established the purpose, focus and perceived benefits of a hermeneutic phenomenological approach to entrepreneurship research, this research will now review the main literature already utilizing a phenomenological approach as well as those taken into consideration languages relationship with experience. Although phenomenology has been tapped as an exciting direction for Entrepreneurship Studies, the current literature applying a phenomenological approach is unfortunately small (Åsvoll 2012/2018; Berglund, 2007/2015; Cope, 2005/2011; Fast 2018; Popp and Holt, 2012; Seymour 2006; Shaw et al 2011). This current section will therefore outline a significant gap in the current literature not yet focusing on language, interpretation and experience missing from current Entrepreneurship studies by reflecting on the sub-fields phenomenological work to date, specifying how a Gadamerian hermeneutic ontological approach would address this gap. Finally, this section will begin to make the argument of entrepreneurship as a pluralistic and potentially an ontologically-relativistic phenomena, as accessed and experienced through language.

Cope (2005) is one of the few scholars appreciating the potential of taking up phenomenological approaches to the research of entrepreneurship in context. Cope stresses the unique and individual nature of those experiencers of "Entrepreneurship", that individuals interpret things differently in different times and different contexts (2005; 170) and so proposes experiential phenomenology as means to fully appreciate the uniqueness – and

relative diversity - of the individual 'lived experience' of Entrepreneurship. Cope's intention is to explore "the meanings and explanations that individuals attribute to their experiences" (Cope, 2005; 168). Yet while Cope's paper focuses on such experiential accounts of the individual entrepreneur, it neglects to consider how such meanings are interpreted, and how this experience of interpretation contributes to the individual nature of these experiences.

Where Cope uses a phenomenological approach to investigate experiential accounts of the entrepreneur, Berglund (2007) considers the relationship between the conceptual, the proto-conceptual and the entrepreneurial experience. His paper promotes a phenomenological approach as well-suited to explore and appreciate the gap between "real-life occurrences and theoretical concepts on the one hand and the individual's interpretations of these occurrences or concepts on the other" (Berglund, 2007; 89). That both the lived-experience of Entrepreneurship as well as the abstract concepts ("abstract" as either "*description*" or as "*idealisation*") we absorb through the experience of learning and socialisation are all taken into consideration as *interpreted* and as contributing to the grander experience of Entrepreneurship. In that the first-hand experience of the phenomena as lived and understood as well as the second-hand experience of the phenomena as *observed*, *objectified* and *explained* (conceptualised), contribute to the meaning and interpretation of the experience for the individual and are important in how they inform the *intentionality* of the Entrepreneur, as well as their situated sense of possibility. Not just language as describing and interpreting

lived experiences, but also how scientific or theorised concepts and abstractions informs our experiences also. This research feels Gadamer's deliberative quality in his outline of phronesis – which deliberates the suitedness of the so-called universal and the particular - is a quality of Hermeneutic Being complimentary to this line of thought and offers much potential in this area moving forward (this is focused upon during the findings chapter VII part two).

Berglund touches upon notions such as proto-concepts (the formative stage of recognition of preconceptual phenomena/experience), which is an extremely interesting avenue of thought.

This research project values the essence of experience at length away from even the formative stages of such nonprimordial conceptual objectifications, seeking the primordial meaning that this Gadamerian phenomenological inquiry uniquely grants us access to.

Seymour (2006) takes a hermeneutic phenomenological approach to observing entrepreneurial interpretation, focusing on reality, opportunity and possibility. He suggests that “when things have meaning we have access to an entity”. This “*access*” opens up new possibility to the entrepreneur, and so the understanding of such an “entity” (either a phenomenon or concept more broadly, or a specific notion such as an “Idea”, “Purpose” or “Opportunity” etc.) is perceived to play a big part in the Entrepreneur's intentionality. That when things have meaning, the world becomes “a totality of references and a totality of possibilities” (2006;146). Seymour then stresses that we understand our world through “fore structures” and “presuppositions”, with our projections of possibility based on these prior-

experiences and understandings of the world. That we “understand our world in terms of the possibilities that we project” (Seymour, 2006; 145). Therefore, this is dependent on the notions we have access to.

Shaw et al (2011) consider such predispositions as potential limitations to entrepreneurial activity. Their paper enthusiastically promotes the “ontology of entrepreneurship” as a “legitimate and open field of enquiry into the event of entrepreneurship” (2011;13), yet explores entrepreneurial phenomena by considering its ontological limitations and confinements. They argue the study of ontology (through Hermeneutic Phenomenology) not only enables us access to such phenomena (and further related conceptualizations) as experienced, but access to the perceived ontological/phenomenological limitations these interpretations produce. The paper states that the Entrepreneur exists within an operational “field”, a field observed as a distinct construct of ontological limitation (2011; 1). That here, the Entrepreneur is required to “think within artificial confines” (2011; 1), a relative process that effects the reality of Entrepreneurship within this operational field, i.e., what possibilities are perceivably “real” and accessible to the entrepreneur, and how our interpretive experience of such concepts effects our notion of possibility. Although these issues are drawn attention to in the paper, the paper itself fails to explain what underlying, interpretive factors shape these “ontological limitations”. Therefore, we must go further to examine the interpretive factors and subsequent contextual, presuppositional structures of the Entrepreneur that shape such perceived realities.

### **Language, Interpretation and Relativism in Entrepreneurship Studies:**

“Language” has previously been approached in a variety of ways in the Entrepreneurial literature outside of the above outlined phenomenological contexts; These approaches have dealt with; Narrative (Bouwen and Steyaert, 1997; Hjorth and Steyaert, 2004), Metaphors (Dodd, 2002; Hill and Levenhagen, 1995), Rhetoric (Downing, 2005; Holt and Macpherson, 2010). As outlined previously, the social constructivist view recognises the significance of communication, networking, interaction, collaboration, consensus and the social aspect of entrepreneurship (Wood 2010; Felin and Zenger, 2009; Dimov, 2007; Sarasvathy, 2001; Shackle, 1979;). Yet few of these studies have taken into account the importance of language as the underlying interpretive medium to our experience of reality, nor of language as the context-specific interpretive filter integral to the construction of, or its relationship to, local subjective realities. The benefit of the Gadamerian approach is that we are able to observe the sense of possibility and meaning that resides in a language, to take into consideration the perpetuation of particular meanings, beliefs, notions of possibility and “limitations” to the experience as accessed.

This is beneficial when considering phenomena as a non-reducible plurality, to observe “variants” of the phenomena as relative to a local (interpretive) context. Relative experiences of phenomena based on shared-meaning that resides in language.

Therefore, how can we best utilise a Gadamerian approach to truly engage with the potentials of Hermeneutic phenomenology? This section will explore the gap which remains in the established literature by exploring work which has already touched on some of these themes.

Even though Lavoie's (1991) article focuses on the elusive "opportunity" construct, he promotes the benefit of a Gadamerian approach to entrepreneurship studies, suggesting a Gadamerian perspective on language is a "promising place to start", as Gadamer's view of "language speaking us" underscores the notion that "the process by which we comprehend the world takes place at the social level" (Lavoie 1991;48). Gadamer shows us that "the mind is already social before it's rational" (Lavoie, 1991;48), the individual already operates "within a linguistic process even when he (sic) is confronting nature" (Lavoie, 1991;48). That the human of the social realm - even in isolation - is socialised through language in *thought*, through the social legacies (of meaning, of common understanding) that reside within the language we use (Gadamer 1960/1966; Lavoie, 1991). Language itself is both *the* social medium and a *socialized* medium – its inter-subjectivity is contributed to by individual users' subjective interpretations, understandings and meanings through their own creative appropriation of language when utilised to articulate these understandings. While conversely, the negotiation of "Meaning" that occurs through conversation, dialogue and thought (and also the concurrent processes of learning and understanding) also contributes to our individually interpreted subjectivity itself, circularly standardizing aspects of the individual's subjective interpretation through socialisation (Gadamer, 1960; Watsuji. 1996; Spinoza et al,

1997). That interpretation occurs through language; therefore, our subjectivity is negotiated in accordance with the intersubjectivity, shared-definitions and shared-understanding that resides within our language (Gadamer, 1960; Lavoie, 1991; Bjerke, 2013).

(Gadamer's view of this will be touched on in the methodology chapter, and further discussed during the Chapter introducing the Japanese language, through Japanese phenomenologist Watsuji Tetsuro who shares similar positions toward language as Gadamer)

Continuing from this point, Lavoie is also keen for us to “appreciate the way language constitutes the basis of all understanding” (1991). Gadamer argues we are dependent on the medium of language to grant us access to the experience of understanding that further grants us access to an experience of phenomena, (e.g., of an entity, a concept, a notion, an intelligible object etc.) therefore, in line with his notion of the “linguisticity of understanding” it is through language we experience understanding (even implicitly).

### **Shared-understanding, Language and Entrepreneurship:**

From a Gadamerian perspective, language is thus receptacle to our common-sense and understanding.

The so-called “Entrepreneur” is socially-situated, language mediates these interactions, where what is understood is manifest through, and retained within, language itself. Bjerke's (2013) complimentary phenomenological work on the “Entrepreneur as sense-makers” (based on Spinoza et al's 1997 work on the “Entrepreneur as history-makers”) continues to explore the

significance of language and communication in our experience of common-understanding, on a shared-orientation and “world-view”, and the perpetuation of such. Similarly, to aspects of Gadamer’s “Historicity” and Heidegger’s “Thrownness” and “Availableness”, after we are born, become self-aware and are socialized; This world-view we access becomes an invisible norm (Gadamer, 1960; Heidegger 1927; Bjerke 2011; Spinoza et al, 1997). It “becomes part of what we take for granted in our everyday reality” (Bjerke, 2011: 41/ Spinoza et al, 1997) – Common sense ways of thinking inform our world-view and dictate our usual, granting us access to our quotidian experiences.

In accepting a plurality of experiential realities, Spinoza (1997) asserts that our “common-sense” and our “shared-understandings” contain our experiences to relative realities, pointing out that “everyday common sense is neither fixed nor rationally justified” (Spinoza et al 1997; 29); That “common-sense” is taken for granted and is unchallenged in the day-to-day, hiding differing, “alternate” realities (Spinoza et al 1997; 29). In that due to the mundanity of such, this “common-sense” is appreciated as an “*intrinsict*-sense” (Spinoza et al 1997; 29); In that shared-practices and experiences are taken for granted as absolute, that “once we have become habituated to a style, it becomes invisible for us.” (Spinoza et al 1997; 29); That our day-to-day realities manifest in the image of life as communicated within this common-sense. That our “ultimate ground for intelligibility” is common-understandings and the shared-practices they produce. There is “no rightway of doin things”, but our common-practice as



supported by common-sense and common-understandings influence the usual way of doing things our social reality becomes and reflects.

From the gadamerian perspective this “ground for intelligibility” is ultimately established and mediated by language. The same way that in Gadamer’s thesis “language constitutes the basis of all understanding,” (Lavoie, 1991) it also constitutes the common-sense/shared-understanding that is formed within it. Gadamer initially positions his “event of understanding” as a social endeavour that occurs through *dialogue*, but then develops this premise to mean that our thoughts are *already socialised* as language is our primary interpretive filter (see Lavoie, 1991). The manner humans interpret experiences is already socialised through language (Lavoie, 1991;Gadamer 1960), therefore the event of understanding that is the synthesis of the interpreted world of the individual is a socialised process to begin with as the world has already been interpreted through language (Lavoie, 1991; Gadamer 1960; Heidegger, 1959). Therefore, an “idea” is an event of understanding that is both rendered through our individual hermeneutic reflection and is also to some degree contributed to by our language (where history is operative), our experience of socialisation (where history is also operative) and is thus indicative of our situatedness, our codetermination, our attunement to history/our socialised environment. Our historically-effective socialisation, of our education and our integration into the social and cultural milieu of our times (*bildung*) (Gadamer,2018; Hegel, 2018) renders an idea as historically-effected, due to the historicity and linguisticity of our understanding.

Clark and Cornelissen (2014) take a socially-situated, language-focused approach to entrepreneurial ideas and sense-making, arguing that language-use in context contributes to conceptual sense-making and in a broader sense “opportunity realisation”. Although their study prioritises a Functionalist teleology, their discussion of language and sense-making lends to this current discussion the role of language in a potentially relativistic experience of the phenomenon of Entrepreneurship. They focus on the formative effect of language in the shaping of ideas and constructing meaning, arguing that dialogue is integral to both internal sense-making and external conceptual construction via articulation. That “Entrepreneurship” is fundamentally social beyond explicit social encounters, language being the root of this socialisation. They view language as both the “central modality for thought and as *the* medium for social interaction” (383, their italics). They draw upon the Whorf-Sapir “Linguistic Relativity” hypothesis (Sapir, 1951; Whorf;1956), subscribing to the notion that the “structure of a language shapes or limits the ways in which a speaker forms conception of the world” (Clark and Cornelissen, 2014; 387). That language as such mode and medium influences what entrepreneurs are able to imagine and infer as possible “opportunities”, and also how they communicate these thoughts during the subsequent realising of such ideas, opportunities and related concepts.

Taking this premise further, Clark and Cornelissen suggest that while the Entrepreneurs’ inner thoughts and subsequent imagination do matter, they are not yet externalised (or even necessarily “speakable” at this point) (2014; 387). What they argue is significant to the

process of realising such thoughts is “the point where ideas take form in the stream of an individual’s experience with external speech *reconfiguring ideas to fit the demands of spoken language*” (Clark and Cornelissen, 2010; 542, my italics). That as well as the primary Whorf/Sapir position that language shapes ideas and notions in *thought*, externalised communications must then also anticipate (and fit) the presuppositions of the listener. Referencing Slobin’s (1996) label of the phenomena as “thinking-for-speaking” they argue that the “realisation” of an idea or thought also depends on the manner of its *articulation*. That *language-shapes-thought* is the primary filter of interpretation, but thought then goes through a *secondary* interpretive filter to make thought *fit-for-interpretation* on externalisation into the social context. That the individual must pre-interpret the shared common-knowledge presuppositions of their interlocuter (Spinosa 1997; Gadamer, 1960). This calls back to Lavoie’s notion that entrepreneurship is to discern meaning within a qualitative situation.

These demands of spoken language resonate with Gadamer’s definition of “understanding” which he promotes in his article “language and understanding” (1966). That through language the individual is already tapping into a shared-understanding that resides in languages, as accumulated within and through the use of said language (e.g. not only explicit shared common-knowledge presuppositions of possibility/ understanding/ meaning etc. nor idiomatic terms of phrase, expressions, phrasing etc. but also implicit, shared grammatical-understanding, shared metacognitive-understanding and sociolinguistic

ritualization/embodied extra-verbal social practices). Language is “constantly building up and bearing within itself this commonality of world orientation” (Gadamer, 2007;96). Illustrated by the notion that beyond communication that takes place in language itself, “all extra verbal forms of understanding go back to an understanding that unfolds in speaking and in speaking with another person” (Gadamer, 2007;96).

As outlined above, communications must anticipate (and fit) the presuppositions of the listener – here referring to the broader common-sense and understanding accepted and anticipatable by the particular community (Bjerke 2013; Spinoza, 1997). These issues ultimately hark back to the Gadamerian perspective of the “historicity” of language, that even though the negotiation of shared-meanings/understanding create a *reality* as learning-event, these events of shared-meaning/understanding rely on the deep, presupposed structures of consciousness developed through ones culturally-embedded existence as an anticipatable knowledge-structure.

Clark and Cornelissen further suggest that we should take into consideration grammatical and semantic underpinnings of language, discourse and interaction (also historically-operative factors which contribute to the linguisticity and historicity of our understanding). What Slobin asserts are “the dimensions of experience that are enshrined in grammatical categories” (1996; 71). That beyond the social, traditional and historic context, the *linguistic* context also influences our realities and our experience of phenomena, and also of concepts as understood and experienced. Clark and Cornelissen here further contemplating the effect

of linguistic relativity on the “event” of understanding. Other recent entrepreneurship scholars have taken to linguistic relativity to explore the entrepreneurial process of understanding and its effect on decision making (Hechavarria et al, 2017; Hechavarria and Ingram, 2016) though none have yet considered the effect this relativity may have on entrepreneur’s interpretations of *reality*.

### **Language and the hermeneutic relativism of Gadamer’s “Hermeneutic Ontology”:**

Gadamer faced criticism from Modern, rational thinkers who interpreted key terms of his thesis within the broader lexical schema of the Enlightenment, viewing his notion of ‘Tradition’ as being too relativistic. However, at the same time Gadamer faced criticism from Postmodern and Pragmatic thinkers who felt Gadamer didn’t take this premise far enough. Although Gadamer himself goes to great efforts to lean away from notions of historic and linguistic relativism (in pursuit of more universalistic consistencies), other hermeneutics scholars (both critics and supporters) in his wake have interpreted his thesis as a form of linguistic/ontological relativism (Echiverria, 2006; Grondin, 2002; Hirsch 1967; Habermas, 1986; Sokowolski 1997; Vattimo, 2001; Rorty, 1979/2001;), claiming his argument defends the premise that language not only determines a *process* of understanding, but also an *object* (“*Gegenstand*”) of such (See Grondin, 2002). A number of scholars interpret Gadamer’s hermeneutics as what Echiverria (2006) summarises as a “Simple relativism” (Echiverria, 2006; Hirsch, 1967; Sokowolski, 1997) , in that the “same idea can be true for one person and not another” (Echiverria, 2006; 52). In that Gadamer’s “Simple relativism” is said to convey a

“belief that beliefs are true for those who hold them. They are not true for everyone, let alone objectively or absolutely true” (Trigg, 2002;59). Echiverra further describes Gadamer’s relativism as best understood as a “Sophisticated relativism” - it believes that potentially an objective truth exists (and is thus irreducible to the criticisms of parochiality Gadamer’s “historicity” thesis had been subject to) but nevertheless, the relativistic inclination of language and the hermeneutic legacies informing the historicity of our understanding, persuades and shapes our *experiences* of being and reality. In that “whether we are justified in believing something is true is a relative matter, but truth itself is not” (Echiverra, 2006; 52).

Quine also tackled these issues in his papers on the “indeterminacy of translation” (1960) and “Ontological Relativity” (1969). Quine feels we cannot give an account of “what there is” without first considering the medium by which we give that account (Quine, 1969/1948). That beyond focusing on the *objects* of an enquiry, we should more be focused on how a particular language *renders* those objects, as interpreted. That ultimately, we are dependent on the referential dexterity of a language, whose sentences are burdened with making ontological claims (See Gibson, 2004). Here Quine observes an inherent “indeterminateness” of reference; That we may attempt to translate an idea/notion/conceptual scheme/observation from one realm of interpretation to another, but there isn’t any guarantee that these observations are equivalent. There will always be “surplus interpretation” (Munitz, 1981) or “empirical slack” (Stroud, 2002). Therefore, Quine suggests we cannot determine “what there is” based on what we have names for or how our language allows us to describe and report.

Some linguistic/language systems (of both grammar and of “*historicity*”) may lack the mechanics/ the historical concern to perceive and articulate a phenomenon, concept or observation in such a way that another language may have the means to. Conversely, some languages may promote a prioritizing of specific factors of either objective or subjective entities, making particular observations more salient within those linguistic schemes (Brown and Lenneburg, 1954; Hall, 1966). Therefore, to evaluate the existence of a phenomena, we must take into account the interpretive filters that render its existence, as essential to understanding the essence of phenomena as understood in context. Not only does the language inform the phenomena, the phenomena as manifest circularly informs the language used to both describe and also to experience it. That emphasis on certain aspects of an experience may accentuated or side-lined as deemed significant in context.

Therefore, when Entrepreneurship Studies scholars such as Ramoglou and Tsang (2017) state “opportunity” is “a word drawn from the native language of entrepreneurs” (Ramoglou and Tsang, 2017; 2) it important for us to question the validity of such an assumption. It is important to stress this particular statement is not based on qualitative accounts of the experience, but an unsubstantiated claim based on the assumptions of other scholars (Wood, 2017). They continue “After all, “opportunity” is not a metaphor, as maintained by F&K and Kirzner (1999) ... The fact is, even if the word disappears from academic literature, the word and its equivalent in different languages will stay in daily usage.” (Ramoglou and Tsang, 2017;2-3) Again, this statement is also an unsubstantiated assumption, based within the

Functionalist/ Critical Realist headspace. From the so-called Interpretivists point of view, this statement provokes a critical response, as equivalent terms in non-English language Entrepreneurship are not necessarily associated to the phenomena as experienced, or necessarily prioritised within these alternate linguistic spheres. This is why it is imperative for us to engage in this type of research as to challenge these assumptions and clarify if such terminology is relevant to our study of Entrepreneurship. To navigate the space between hermeneutical contexts.

As will be discussed further below, Dallmayr (2000) sees Gadamer's thesis as the 'bridge' between these hermeneutical contexts (and useful in the modern era globalised era as possibility of a "dialogue of civilizations") however we must first endeavour to refine what we refer to as 'context'.

### **'Context' in Entrepreneurship studies:**

While many previous studies of Entrepreneurship have examined context in a variety of interesting ways (Bjørnskov and Foss, 2013; Zahra et al., 2014; Foss et al., 2013; Welter, 2011; Chalmers and Shaw, 2017; Chell, 2000; Downing, 2005; Fletcher, 2006; Lindgren and Packendorff, 2009; Sarasvathy and Venkataraman, 2011; Ucbasaran et al., 2001), few have examined the significance of the Entrepreneurs situated-*interpretive* context.

Fundamental differences in approach may introduce distortions to what we consider context as. The foci of 'Context' in Entrepreneurship studies seems to range broadly between, for



example, the national/regional determinants of Entrepreneurship (Acs & Audretsch, 1993, Downing, 2005; Reynolds et al 1994; Reynolds and Maki 1990; Andersson and Koster 2011), the national economic context - focusing on economic growth, on industrial infrastructure/nations capacity for innovation as to support regional economic activity (Nelson, 1993 ; Furman, Porter, & Stern, 2002;) institutional (Leff, 1979; Low and MacMillan, 1988; Zahra et al., 2006; Bruton and Ahlstrom, 2002; Boettke,& Coyne, 2009) culture (Fritsch et al, 2014; Audretsch, 2020), educational (Lee & Lim, 2005), to list a few.

To take the first category of context as example, many papers have recognised the national/regional context within which a venture starts as of significance, producing frameworks suitable for international comparative studies, in order to establish national variations of Entrepreneurship (Downing, 2005), developing studies to make cross-national comparisons of variation in new venture formation rates (Reynolds et al 1994; Audretsch et al, 2016; Dheer, 2017) which consider, for example, the impact of factors such as ‘government spending’, ‘political ethos’, ‘unemployment’ has on new venture formation and on technology transfer. The study and comparison of regional contexts such as ‘high-income countries’ (Reynolds and Maki 1990) and ‘regional start-up rates’ (Andersson and Koster, 2011; Baker 2005;) considering the international variation as a significant variable to study.

This also continues into comparative International Entrepreneurship research (McDougall and Oviatt , 1994; McDougall and Oviatt, 2000) examining how firms processes differ across national contexts and continue the study of processes as they relate to the discovery and

exploitation of profit opportunities occurring across national boundaries, as well as cross-national comparisons of these entrepreneurial processes. Once again, the focus of these studies remains on creating theoretical insights as regarding entrepreneurial processes related to the exploitation of opportunity internationally and cross nation (Barkema and Vermeulen, 1998; Zahra and George, 2002; Autio et al., 2000). This area of study recognises cross-national variations exists in such entrepreneurial activity (Ageev et al., 1995; Smallbone et al., 1999; Bygrave et al, 2003), however, much is based around the Austrian ‘Discovery’ perspective of study (Kirzner, 1979; Shane and Venkataraman, 2000). Others (Zahra and Dess, 2001; Lubatkin, 2007; Baker et al, 2005; Davidsson, 1995; Davidsson & Wiklund, 1997) have attempted to socialise their approach to these studies by evaluating factors such as a nation’s institutional, cultural, social context. These tend to either consider the nation as parameter for said contexts, or consider them as potential contexts renderin ‘the character of opportunities and the individuals who discover, evaluate and exploit them’ (Baker et al, 2005).

Zahra et al (2014) do an excellent job of recognising the absence of context in our studies as problematic and takes on this challenge by cataloguing different contexts Entrepreneurship Studies have endeavoured to study so far. However, in doing so, in categorising contexts by the perceived dimensions of context outlined – e.g., Temporal, organizational emergence and life cycles, Industry and market (Porter, 1980:), spatial, social, etc., - we diminish each as an interrelated factor of context, rendering each dimension into a meta-theoretical categorisation.

This ultimately looks to *contextualise our studies* rather than study context itself. This returns us to the insight of Berglund (2007), that this looks at ‘context’ more from the perspective of the academic, rather than at the phenomenological context experienced by the individual ‘experiencer’.

From this epistemological perspective, these dimensions begin to resemble *categories* (i.e., an epistemological frame of reference), a typology, a categorisation, a contextualisation of a *study* i.e., the context of a paper (a topic), a context for writing and reference, the result of the deliberate *organising* of ‘context’ rather than accepting its complexity. Through this compartmentalisation, so-called ‘contexts’ suffer from having artificial ‘boundaries’ projected onto them, conceiving of them as *separate*, not interconnected. It doesn’t appreciate them as necessarily complementary, necessarily complex, co-existent, interconnected, integrated nor further does it trace their root via a significant and useful conception of Being capable of realising these connections.

This reveals a significant problem with our disciplines approach to studying ‘context’ – if we approach context solely from the point of view of the scholar, it abstracts and further confuses what ‘context’ *is*. This where philosophical hermeneutics may be a suitable forum to appreciate the interrelated nature of such, which a Gadamerian approach would provide.

The above outlined ‘contexts’ might be better considered as *categories*, epistemological not ontological. These categories would indeed give us questions to frame our papers and inquiries when approaching context, however it may be necessary to consider context for

what it is from the phenomenological perspective; we need accept context/experience as interconnected, as overlapping, as *messy*, as experienced (Holt and Sandberg 2011; 256).

The above focuses in on layers or strands of context rather than recognising the ‘messy’ nature of context. This then asserts that the project at hand is to *uncomplicate* context through categorisation, rather than accept this as the phenomenon we are opting to explore, metamorphosing the task at hand to be to unpick context rather than to study it. To abstract it away.

As Zahra et al (2014) touch upon, first we need an underlying framework (or from the perspective of this research a suitable underlying notion of Being) in order for us to navigate context in all its complexity. While discussing the perceived challenges of as suggested contextualisation, they review: ‘while various national and regional level measures are available that recognise dimensions of the institutional context, there is a need to identify collinearities between different dimensions of context’ (Zahra et al, 2014; 494).

Here, Zahra et al should perhaps initially consider the ontological dimensions of *Being* (in context) which underpin these contextual factors, rather than the dimensions of *context in epistemological isolation* – in doing so this would present a forum to consider said contexts as interrelated.

This suggestion falls in line with this research and its consideration of a shift towards context as ‘hermeneutical situation’, to appreciate the phenomena of ‘context’ as ontological, in order

to accept all its detail and complexity as insightful to the phenomena we seek to observe, and not to abstract from it for the sake of parsimony. The Gadamerian perspective this research explores considers context as ontological and primordial and hermeneutic). This where philosophical hermeneutics may be a suitable forum to appreciate the interrelated nature of such, which a Gadamerian approach would provide.

This is where this research recommends a shift towards context as ‘hermeneutical situation’ as to appreciate the phenomena of ‘context’ for all its detail and complexity, and not to abstract from it for the sake of parsimony.

This ‘contextualisation’ from the perspective of the scholar returns us to the remits and borders of the Positivism, as Dallmayr (2000) states, the compartmentalisation of state holds its lineage in Enlightenment era ideas, which, while a useful tool for states craft and evaluation of nations GDP, comparing economies etc. From the philosophical hermeneutic position, such compartmental abstraction contributes to the incommensurability rife in our studies.

However, naturally as contributing to aspects of our individual biographical past, one’s cultural past, one’s historical situatedness, this research recognises the influence of the nation-state on our existence in this era. There is no confusion this construct is of course impactful on our hermeneutic existence and our lived experiences in the modern era, as too are all of the above outlined contextual dimensions and factors e.g., governmental policy (economic, foreign, migration control, education, health etc.); the laws of the nation, different

government regimes etc. this macro-level construct plays a significant part in the politics and economics we're both exposed to and involved in.

It also recognises 'national characteristics' of nations as meaningful and significant such as GDP, infrastructure, socio-economic factors (levels of education, employment, unemployment), healthcare systems, governmental policy, systems of law, local laws, international laws, national symbols, regional symbols, as too is any type of regional aegis of international bodies/architectures (e.g., the European Union) all factors in ones lived experiences.

This research accepts that social constructs and other notions such as 'nation', 'region', 'institution' etc. Undoubtedly have an impact on one's experiences, opportunities, understandings, intrinsic beliefs etc.

However, due to the homogenising quality of 'nation', 'region', 'institution' and other contextualisation of studies which are considered by papers mentioned in this section, this approach doesn't appear to do the phenomena of 'context' itself justice and does not include significant caveats afforded by a hermeneutic context point of view (e.g., particular circumstance language s diverse/always changing, particular circumstances

### **Summary:**

These issues of the context-specific, interpreted-reality of entrepreneurial experience concepts phenomena have not yet been approached sufficiently in Entrepreneurship

scholarship. What is significant in the Gadamerian thesis is the social/historical nature of our Being (as accessed through language), is integral to our Being as situated, modern human Beings, in complete contrast to the Tabula Rasa-like existence of transcendent consciousness as represented in isolation, or the contextless and teleologically objectified “subject” currently rife in Functionalist scholarship, reduced within the vacuum of Subjectivism. Thus, this research feels its suggested premise satisfies a significant gap in the current literature.

This research does not seek to confirm whether or not the Japanese KIGYOUKA is a phenomenon relative to the Japanese language, it just seeks a methodology that accepts the possibility of such plurality (relativistic or otherwise) and allows for us to explore issues related to such (See discussion of this in Chapter IX part 1).

Therefore, this research will employ a Gadamerian hermeneutic phenomenological approach to investigate the meaning and purpose experiences of the Japanese KIGYOUKA. The next chapter will outline this methodological approach in detail.

## **Chapter III: Methodology**



### **Qualitative research and Hermeneutic Phenomenology:**

A hermeneutic phenomenological inquiry is a qualitative research endeavour. Qualitative research studies the subjective perspectives of individual research participants, typically involving a small number of individuals and research sites. It is conducted in a “natural setting” and typically involves an extended, first-hand engagement with participants (Lincoln and Guba ,1985).

This hermeneutic phenomenological inquiry falls under the category of qualitative research, however there are many distinct differences between hermeneutic phenomenological inquiry and other kinds of qualitative research. This chapter will therefore focus on the main Gadamerian tenets this research adopts in its approach, as substantiated by the hermeneutic research methodology of phenomenologist Max van Manen (2016). It will then consider this approach within the context of the well-respected evaluative criteria for qualitative research established by Lincoln and Guba (1985), to show where and how Guba and Lincoln’s criteria share similar concerns to these tenets and how such is integral to this hermeneutic phenomenological inquiry.

A hermeneutic phenomenological inquiry is a qualitative research approach focusing on the experience of phenomena as subjectively interpreted and experienced by individuals, considering meaning-as-interpreted as the structure of experience.

This is accomplished through a collaborative phase of dialogical, phenomenological interviews with individuals who claim to have experienced the phenomena under investigation (here, “Entrepreneurship”, specifically in the case of this research, investigating the experiences of native Japanese-speaking KIGYOUKA 起業家 the “Emerging Business Specialist”).

The Gadamerian inquiry is understood as the co-creation of understanding between the researcher and participant, a collaborative, dialogical effort focused on both revealing and determining the meaning of a prior or ongoing experience of the participant (Gadamer 1960; Van Manen 2014). This is followed by an immersive phase of thematic analysis, with the aim of the investigation being for the researcher to act as hermeneutic tool interpreting and presenting the understandings achieved, as disclosed by participants and further interpreted by the researcher.

This chapter will therefore breakdown this research experience and detail the Gadamerian philosophical viewpoints that support this inquiry, the methodological approach of phenomenologist Max van Manen, outline the evaluative criteria for such inquiry based on Gadamer's notion of "hermeneutic truth" as well as ontological phenomenologist pioneer Martin Heidegger's notion of "Alethia" as hermeneutic truth, as well as considering all through the lens of Lincoln and Guba (1985) well-established evaluative criteria.

### **Gadamerian tenets as methodological approach:**

Gadamer made very clear in the second edition of *Truth and Method* that he wasn't presenting a prescriptive method in his work. Gadamer's concern was with that of the Aristotelian notion of *phronesis*; that of practical deliberation, of so-called wisdom (i.e., understanding) rather than univocal logic, reason or "knowledge". Thus, Gadamer was interested in the kind of understanding we can gain independent of the prescriptive methods of Scientism and Empiricism. Gadamer was not opposed to the use of methodologies which enable us to tentatively understand the phenomena we observe, their meaning as experienced, nor those which enable us to consider the essence of such meanings.

However, he saw the methods being adopted from the natural sciences into the so-called human sciences as the destruction of phenomena we aim to observe.

Gadamer was emphatic throughout “Truth and Method” that due to our human Being’s hermeneutical qualities (i.e., our interpretive nature) the methods we employ in our academic endeavours cannot be entirely objective (given the immanence of our hermeneutical experience and of our subjectivity as interpreted) nor can they be separate from the inquirer, thus beyond the methods we devise and employ, the very nature of scientific endeavour is value-laden due to our inescapable situatedness.

This is the hermeneutic *truth* in the title of “Truth and Method” which Gadamer perceives to underly our scientific *methods*, the core of his thesis. It was this notion that drove Gadamer to promote hermeneutic inquiry as to observe the phenomena of the social world.

These sensibilities manifest in the writings and approaches of phenomenological researcher Max van Manen, whose research methodologies have been well received and widely-respected within the phenomenological research community (1990, 2014). Although utilising a broad range of ideas from phenomenology’s lineage, van Manen in places shares similar concerns as Gadamer, in that van Manen’s qualitative phenomenology ‘does not let itself be deceptively reduced to a methodical schema or an interpretative set of procedures’ (van Manen, 2014;22). Rather, as Neubauer et al (2019) point out, phenomenology “requires the researcher to read deeply into the philosophies of this tradition to grasp the project of hermeneutic phenomenological thinking, reading, and writing” (Neubauer et al; 2019). To practice this and further, to deeply *understand* due to it. Polkinghorne (1983) suggests phenomenology is *methodological* rather than method-based. It is this methodological approach which van Manen sees best to capture the essences of meaning and experiences under investigation. Van Manen’s approach to phenomenological research is considered a “lived” set of

sensibilities which the reflective researcher is attuned to, and not a rigid criterium. However, this approach to research is still fundamentally dependent on a rigorous standard of trustworthiness and dependency of research. With regard to this research project, as well as the practical measures suggested by van Manen, this dependency of research will be ensured by the implementation of Lincoln and Guba evaluative criteria, outlined in detail throughout this chapter. This research therefore aims to adopt key tenets of Gadamer's philosophies into its research design, inspired by the methodologies employed by Van Manen, secured as trustworthy by both van Manen's dependable approaches, as well as following the benchmark evaluative criteria of famously presented by Guba and Lincoln (1985)

The key tenets of the methodological approach developed around Gadamer's Hermeneutic Phenomenology are "dialogue as fusion of horizons", the "historicity of understanding", "hermeneutic circle", as well as "the temporality of (hermeneutical) truth, of dialogue, of interpretation and of our understanding", (Gadamer 1960; van Manen, 1990; Whitehead, 2004).

### **Dialogue as 'fusion of horizons';**

As touched upon in chapter two, Gadamer viewed the act of interpretation that occurs during dialogue as a "fusion of horizons" – A horizon comprising of our so-called "preunderstandings" (*Vorverstandnisse*) – the prejudices, biases and presuppositions which accumulate through our individual prior lived experiences. Under the Gadamerian premise, these preunderstandings are considered the anticipatory fore structures which allow for that which is being interpreted to be understood in the preliminary. Horizons are thus the situated context of our individual understandings, understandings laced with presuppositions and biases historically-present in our language.

This premise is therefore highly significant to a researcher of the Gadamerian vein. The researcher understands they are unable to remove or eliminate their prior experiences and understandings, nor their situatedness from their horizon, therefore rather than attempt to artificially reduce this through phenomenological reduction or 'bracketing' ('epoché') the researcher accepts this prior experience is inextricably linked to the act of interpretation (Whitehead, 2004;513 / Thompson, 1990). That as research tool, the researcher interprets findings, interprets meaning, serves as a hermeneutic vehicle to gain understanding and from the situatedness of the researcher, present these findings disclosed as such.

However, this therefore requires a conscious and deliberate reflexivity by the researcher - to both reflectively acknowledge *and* critically engage in the fricative *aufheben* (sublation) of these horizons as they fuse to produce 'understandings'. This said, the researcher cannot reflect themselves out of their own horizon, nor can they bracket their role as researcher out of the pretence of the discussions held (as framed as part of a specific research project, as disclosed to participants), however this presence of the researcher's horizons is both in mind as the researcher engages in research (vital to the hermeneutic premise of the researcher as tool *as historically-effected*) and are also disclosed throughout the research project (highlighting the hermeneutic premise of the researcher as tool *as historically-effected*).

The researcher remains conscious of these factors as they relate to each participant, as well as how they contribute to these 'fused' understandings when taking a participant's accounts of experience into consideration, as well as to reflect on one's own situated biases in relation to those of the participant. To recognise the historical and situational biases of both their own, as well as the participants, horizons. The "fusion of horizons" is therefore seen as a dialectical interaction between

the situated presuppositions of the researcher and those of the contributing participant. This “fusion of horizons”, this phase/place between familiarity and strangeness, this “in-between” is thus considered by Gadamer as “the true locus of hermeneutics” (Gadamer, 1989;295). Gadamer (1960/1989) presents hermeneutic inquiry as a process of co-creation between the researcher and the participant.

The researcher must also remain aware of their understandings as they change throughout the course of a research project. As outlined in Chapter 2, It is important to note that our “horizon” is not limiting to our understandings. On the contrary, through mutually open interactions, through this fusion, we effectively broaden our horizons, as we interpret new meaning into our prior lived context. To overcome limited perspectives and to develop new perspectives through understanding. The individual researcher “grows” in and through understanding, broadening their situated understanding.

We do not progress through nor conclude the research project with the same understandings we entered into it, neither do we encounter each participant with the same understandings we encountered the last (see hermeneutic circle below). Thus, the research also needs to provide an explicit statement that the result of this phenomenological inquiry is the result of such experience of collaboration and also of all participants historic situatedness. Another key issue to be explicitly disclosed is that as well as the notion that as academics, hermeneutic experience underlies all of our academic endeavours, our Horizons as academics are also framed by the institutions and traditions, we partake in.

The situatedness of the researcher’s horizon as well as their own unique experiences will by extension affect what they choose to investigate, the perceived purpose of the research, the angle, approach and methodology deemed most appropriate to satisfy this purpose, their analysis of the findings, what findings are deemed most significant, their communication of the research conclusions.

Thus, on the part of the researcher, it is their responsibility to be reflective of this situatedness and of their prejudices and biases, disclosing such throughout their research.

### **The “Hermeneutic circle” of interpretation:**

Initially presented by Heidegger, later revised by Gadamer, ‘The hermeneutic circle’ is a metaphorical notion which describes the iterative movement of the hermeneutic researcher as they (necessarily) move between “the part” and “the whole” as to gain a respective/complementary, finite understanding of each. (Gadamer 1975, Heidegger 1927).

This is the idea that the researchers understanding of a “text” as a whole is established by reference to its individual pieces, which themselves gain a deeper meaning in the context of their whole.

The hermeneutic aspect comes from our bouts of interpretation and reflection that are required to achieve our tentative understanding during this iterative experience.

Through cycles of engaging with both the whole of the text and its parts, through the iterative motion of reading, reflecting, writing, reflecting, switching back-and-forth between parts, the whole, aspects of the parts in the context of the whole, the whole as it imbues aspects of its parts, the hermeneutic researcher develops an interpretive understanding of the lived experiences they have become privy to.

This approach is significant in bringing together Gadamer’s notions of dialogue, fusion, understanding, through this hermeneutic, iterative circle of learning, seeing the researcher engage in an intuitive *phronesis* also – a gradual, natural, practical understanding achieved through a broad social experience of inquiry, reflection, understandings and meaning (to a degree this mirrors how we understand in our day-to-day life, not through method nor process but through a backwards and forwards of interpretation and reflection, on parts of overall situated wholes). The aim here is to

achieve “understanding”, thus this immersed approach is deemed significant as to achieve such understanding.

The researcher must experience a deep immersive engagement with the accounts of the participants (the “experiencers” of the phenomena under investigation). From the initial dialogical interaction with the participant (outlined in the next section) then through listening to the recorded interviews, through the transcription of interviews, through reading, thinking, writing, re-reading, reflecting and re-writing (van Manen, 2016).

This is a depth of engagement necessary as to achieve a deep understanding of the participants accounts as to provide the rich description integral to this research approach. To provide the reader with a vivid and contextualised essence of the understanding achieved by the researcher throughout this hermeneutic research experience.

These research qualities, while providing the thick description integral to this manner of research, also confirm a depth of engagement with the accounts (as achieved through this iterative experience of interviewing, transcribing, reading, thinking, writing, reflecting, interpreting and understanding), that offer the reader example of trustworthiness and dependability essential to presenting rigorous hermeneutic phenomenological research. (This depth of engagement will be further outlined throughout the remainder of this chapter).

As this begins to allude to, this reflectiveness is at play throughout all of the research process, not only within the process of the “fusion of horizons”, but throughout the entire reflective phases of the “thematic analysis” of the accounts.



At all stages, the researcher begins with vague anticipations of the whole leading into the research (the conditions of such are described briefly below) and these anticipations become revised into tentative understandings where possible meaning has been introduced to the researcher. e.g., the meaning of the phenomena via their initial interactions with participants, their experiences of the lived-context of participants, the interviews with the participants, the transcription of interviews, the accounts disclosed by participants, the immersion into the reflective thematic analysis phase of the research etc. the more the researcher moves between these parts of the research and the perceivable “whole” of the research, the more understanding emerges. Gadamer felt this “hermeneutic circle” of interpretation is ultimately open-ended and ongoing.

This therefore means participants are effectively invited into an “ongoing conversation”, albeit it one the researcher is having. Koch (1995) describes this development of the researcher’s horizons through such experiences as a “dialectic between the pre-understandings of the research process, the interpretive framework and the sources of information.” (1995;835) Therefore, as Koch alludes to through mentioning the presence of our “preunderstandings” coming to the research, this process of co-creation occurs within a circle of understanding already established prior to an initial interview having taken place. The pre-understandings of the researcher here include their prior understandings of the topic, their preliminary readings, the philosophical perspectives the research is further considered within (i.e., Interpretivism, Functionalism, Feminism, Post-structuralism etc.) as well as the horizons of the participant, their understanding of the research context, the on-going context of the research and so on. (Laverty, 2003; Polkinghorne 1983; Whitehead, 2004; Koch 1995) Therefore, the results of this process include “the self-interpreted constructions of the researcher and each participant, thus reflecting many constructions or multiple realities” (Laverty, 2003).

Thus, hermeneutic research therefore demands the self-reflexivity of researcher as they are the interpretive research instrument taking into account all these layers of understanding, experience, institution, purpose, expectation. This sees the researcher actively interpreting and constructing understanding of experience, while simultaneously questioning how those understandings and interpretations came to be (Laverly,2003; Polkinghorne 1983; Whitehead, 2004, Koch, 1995, Hertz, 1997). This is achieved by the researcher actively engaging with the hermeneutic circle, moving backwards and forwards between both the accounts of the individual and the broader research context.

#### **“Temporality” and tentative, open-ended understanding of phenomena:**

The problem with any endeavour that aims to observe temporal phenomena is that our inquiry does violence to the phenomena under investigation by assuming we can “stop” it, mid-way. and capture it (van Manen, 2014). Gadamer believes understanding is open-ended, thus understanding is never complete, always changing, always tentative, never comprehensive. (Caputo, 1987). Therefore, in hermeneutic phenomenological research, a definitive interpretation is not sought, nor even considered possible (Laverly, 2003; Annells, 1996; Kvale, 1996; Ormiston & Schrifly 1990).

The research thus only achieves a temporary understanding of the meaning of the phenomena experienced, recognising that the produce of a hermeneutic phenomenological inquiry only (Whitehead 2004; 513). It aims to present non-comprehensive, a non-permanent, not fixed representation of meaning. Gadamerian position accepts that the result, at best, is the essence of a meaning, and that such inquiry is not intended to present a representation of atemporal certainty (Faulconer & Williams 1985).

It is therefore understood that for each participant involved with the research – the “interviewee” (the experiencer of phenomenon, research participant and co-author of understanding) - the “interviewer” (the instigator of the inquiry, researcher and co-author of understanding), as well as the readers who come to the research either once, twice, or time and again, each participant’s interpretation of the text is understood to change over time, as time passes, and as their horizon evolves (Whitehead, 2004).

### **The hermeneutic phenomenological interview:**

The hermeneutic phenomenological interview is a collaborative, conversational, dialectical venture, oriented toward interpreting experience and experiential meanings (van Manen, 2011). The purpose of the interview is to firstly establish the individuals experience of the researched phenomena, and then for the researcher to gain an understanding of this experience through dialogue with participants. It is imperative to outline that at this stage, it is not suitable to describe this process as “gaining information” or “collecting data”; The idea of “gaining understanding” is considered more apt (Fleming et al, 2003; 118). The researcher here uses themselves as a “research instrument” to develop a deeper understanding of the experiential account under investigation. (Fleming et al, 2003; 117).

As outlined in the previous section of this chapter, Phenomenological understanding occurs through the “fusion of horizons” (Gadamer, 1960) of both the researcher (- their situated preconceptions) and the participant (- the historical situatedness of their reflective accounts of the experience). The purpose of such an approach is to facilitate a mutual “immersion into the subject matter” (van Manen, 1984), through the “fusion of ideas” of both the researcher and their participants. It is therefore suggested that a phenomenological question should be “lived”; The researcher must effectively “pull” the participant into the question (van Manen, 1984;8), or more specifically, pull them into a mutual

interpretation of the phenomena. The goal being to “co-create” understanding with the participant (Vandermause and Flemming, 2011; Crist & Tanner, 2003). This occurs through the critical use of “imagination, the hermeneutic circle and attention to language” (Laverly, 2003; 30). The phenomenological method consists of the “art” of being “sensitive to the subtle undertones of language” and being able to “attune to the deep tonalities of language” (Van Manen, 1984; 24) as to constantly question the experience, and with equal importance, maintaining a reflective awareness of the context of its interpretation vis-à-vis the researchers own situated “horizon”.

This process requires a flexibility and receptiveness from the researcher; Their role is to firstly provide the interviewee a forum to recall their experience, and then to further sustain a process of critical engagement with their account, enough for the researcher to gain a satisfactory understanding of the meaning of the experience as interpreted. The role of the researcher is not to persuade particular narratives from the participant, only to provide a consistent, attentive examination of their account as to elicit as much detail and gain as much detailed understanding as possible (van Manen, 2011). This dialogue eventually develops an “integrated statement” (Laverly, 2003; 30) about the experience. It is through this process of collaboration and comprehension a phenomenological text emerges (Van Manen 1984/2011; Laverly, 2003).

### **The interview process:**

The participant is informed in advance about the focus of the interviews. This gives the participant time to deeply reflect on their experiences in preparation for the interview.

Questioning focuses on the participants experience of outlined phenomena (and other supporting themes of interest as they arise). This takes place during a single interview in two stages, or where time permits, across two separate interviews to give the researcher more time to digest the information acquired and to reflect in greater detail on previous accounts transcripts etc (Van Manen, 2011). The interview starts open and semi-structured, with the focus of the interview being on the participants accounts of their personal experiences of “Entrepreneurship”. Whereas the first interview/phase gains access to the interpretation, the second stage investigates how this meaning came about. The benefit of this staggered process is to firstly gain an account of the experience that considers itself “unbiased”, looking at the experience as simply as that.

The second step deliberately draws the attention of the participant to their own interpretive process and situatedness, as to reflect on how this has affected the “reality” of their experience. This phase offers the participant opportunity to reflect on the hermeneutic phenomenological themes raised throughout this research – Their “preconceptions” / “prior-knowledge” / “foresight” / “projection” – How these factors came about and how they relate to their experience of entrepreneurial endeavour (expectations /inhibitions /opportunities /failures/ missed-chances/ risks/ etc). This then becomes a focused, collaborative effort to understand contextual meaning-giving factors that have contributed to their entrepreneurial experience. The researcher aims to understand the meanings in the experiences, and also in the account of the experience, so attention is also paid by the researcher to the use of language by the participant (turn-of-phrase, didactic/discursive idiomatic phrasing, conceptions of self, other etc. as articulated from the situatedness of the interviewee, situations articulated/ framed differently to the researcher’s “horizon” etc.) (van Manen, 1984, 2011; Laverly, 2003). This in the

first instance produces an “almost” pre-reflective account of experience as recalled, as interpreted, as experienced, and also secondly develops a more critically engaged “understanding” (as co-constructed by both parties) of that experience in context.

This is a collaborative, dialogical effort to co-author accounts of participants’ experiences, as meaningful, understood and interpreted. Therefore methodologically, within a phenomenological inquiry the researchers approach to “questioning” is highly important also. To reference Gadamer’s thoughts on the dialogical process and the understanding gained from this process, he says:

“Understanding is always more than merely recreating someone else’s meaning. Questioning opens up possibilities of meaning, and thus what is meaningful passes into one’s own thinking on the subject” (Gadamer, 1960;375) and it is in this process of allowing what is meaningful to pass into one’s own thinking, to be interpreted, recontextualised into one’s own prior-situatedness that the fusion of horizons begins to occur (contributing to and further expanding the horizon of this situatedness, one’s development, one’s learning, one’s growth). That is accommodated within the hermeneutical approach.

Therefore, openness is deemed critical (Koch, 1996) yet van Manen cautions against completely open-ended or unstructured interviewing, promoting a “conversational” approach to phenomenological interviewing, more in line with Gadamer dialogical approach to understanding (van Manen, 2016). Gadamer’s dialectic focuses on the “Being” that can be understood through language. The understanding of “meaning” negotiated by “*I*” and “*thou*”, “thou” as open and respected counterpart rather than “*you*” as hostile opponent of debate. Both Gadamer and van Manen draw our attention to Socrates and his comparison of the structure of conversation to that of

“friendship” (Plato, 1962), that the rapport necessary to collaborate at the hermeneutic level is like talking together as friends (van Manen, 2014). Due to the collaborative nature of the interview a combative stance where participants attempt to “out-argue” each other, is the point where the conversation disintegrates (van Manen, 2014). Thus, openness from both parties is integral to a situation conducive to “understanding”. As Gadamer states: “To reach an understanding in a dialogue is not merely a matter of putting oneself forward and successfully asserting one's own point of view, but being transformed into a communion in which we do not remain what we were” (1960;375).

### **Gadamer’s understanding as “agreement”:**

Continuing from above – interlocutors share a fundament underlying agreement with regard to the issue being discussed and the foundations upon what discussion takes place. This is not necessarily sharing the same opinion, but recognition of the shared underpinnings which make communication possible (Gadamer, 1960; Grondin, 2002).

This agreement of understanding is not necessarily of two people of the same ilk or opinion, but simply that a subject matter had been agreed upon. Thus, two people from vastly different backgrounds, holding vastly different opinions can come together through the openness of dialogue and their fusion of horizon, as this is a process to gain understanding from Other, not to battle one’s way to an absolute resolve.

As Gadamer describes “the art of questioning” as “being able to go on asking questions i.e. The art of *thinking*” (Gadamer, 1975;330. My italics). That the reflective researcher, must be able to have the methodological sensibilities outlined in the previous section innately manifest within their disposition;

to be reflective, to react in real time at several different levels of thought regarding the participants experience of the phenomena, their interpretation, the manner in which they recall the experience, its situatedness, as well as language use and to have the want to understand and to question accordingly.

This requires the researcher to imaginatively reflect as to interpret, and as to continue asking the questions required to gain a deep sense of understanding.

It is noted that the interviewee “becomes the co-investigator of the study” (van Manen, 1990:8) – that even prior to the interview process, the participants often agree, in some manner, to participate and volunteer themselves due to an active interest in reflecting on their experiences, in spite of the significant commitment agreeing to participate in such a research project actually is.

In this context van Manen (2014) and Kvale (1996) both stress while it is extremely important to pay attention to all the above outlined factors as related to that which is said *explicitly*, they also stress the importance of paying attention to that which is *unspoken*, to read ‘between the lines’. (This is extremely important as to understanding and present the meaning of the experience shared, for the researcher to be alert to the supposed shared understandings that provide the foundations for communication, as well as consider those which reside in language and to consider how they relate to the experience shared and its communication). Therefore, verbatims do not necessarily preserve all of what is ‘really’ communicated in interviews, just that which is spoken (Laverly, 2003).

This is ultimately important due to the broader notion Gadamer alludes to through his themes of temporality, “nothing that is said (in a dialogue) has its truth simply in itself, but refers backward and forward to what is unsaid. Every assertion is motivated; that is, one can sensibly ask of everything said, ‘Why do you say that?’” (Gadamer, 1976:67).



The foundations of Gadamer's dialogical inquiry are the hermeneutical truth is that of disclosure and revelation (see later in this chapter).

With the foundations of this research based in a hermeneutic ontology, the hermeneutic phenomenologist appreciates that "understanding the Other can never be achieved totally" (Fleming et al 2003; 117) as, in phenomenological terms, the Other is a constant development (Gadamer, 1960).

This is accepted and research is satisfied by the documentation of the understanding achieved and the interpreted essence of the experiences disclosed, as presented within the submitted texts. These interviews as well as the supporting research methodology are designed to gain understanding of meaning as experienced, as subjectively interpreted, and not intended to ascertain objective representations of "fact". The purpose of this research being to "discover" rather than "justify" (Cope, 2005;171).

### **Transcription:**

The interviews are audio-recorded, and then transcribed verbatim. Once transcription occurs, the account can then be considered a textual "object of reflection" (Van Manen, 2011), that both researcher and interviewee can revisit and critically reinvestigate once again in collaboration. This text ultimately documents both the experiential account of the phenomenon, and also the hermeneutic process used throughout the interview to expose experiential meaning. When the research is complete, these texts become the phenomenological "examples" (van Manen, 2017; 814) that the researcher works with to examine these experiences, interpretations, and the experiential accounts of concepts as interpreted. Researchers observe the experiential meanings in the texts. From these accounts the researcher is able to find common themes attributed to the experience, in the established interpretive

contexts. These characteristics are documented and then analysed further, with contemplation of how they relate to the interpretive contexts established within this hermeneutic study.

**Participants, not “samples”:**

Phenomenology uses a purposeful “criterion approach” when participants are being selected, in that they are considered with regard to whether they meet predefined criteria (van Manen, 1997, 2014; Giorgi, 2009; Cohen, Kahn, & Steeves, 2000; Colizzi, 1978). Such purposeful criteria are developed around the specific phenomenon under inquiry, chiefly seeking participants who claim to have experienced such phenomena and are willing to share their experiences and disclose the meaning they associate with such. This is not focused on representing generalisable “sample” of a demographic, but on presenting individuals who “offer a picture of what it is like to be themselves as they make sense of an important experience” (Cohen, Kahn, & Steeves, 2000; 50), an experience the researcher is interested in gaining understanding of.

(With regard to the selection of participants for this inquiry, please see Chapter V “Introduction to findings”).

The terms “sample”, “subjects” “sample-size” are considered quantitative/ positivistic terms and so as notions in themselves, hold little relevance in Hermeneutic Phenomenological. Phenomenologists approach research in terms of “Collaborators “co-investigators” or “participants” (van Manen 2014, 2017). Seamon, (2015) articulates his thoughts on this issue in an especially informative and articulate manner:

*“Though some phenomenologists do, I never speak of "sample" or "sample size" or "subjects" or "data." These are all quantitative/positivist terms that have little lived grounding phenomenologically. More accurate terms are "respondents," "co-researchers," "participants," "evidence," and "descriptions." Terminology plays a major role in understanding and conducting method, so one should use a language in sync with the basic methodological principle of phenomenological research—that the phenomenon is allowed to reveal itself in its own time in the manner and language whereby it can best be and express itself” (Seamon, 2015).*

Whether a Phenomenological researcher chooses to use the terms listed by Seamon above or not, the point Seamon makes is one should be extremely alert to terminology used to describe these highly loaded and nuanced aspects of the phenomenological research experience.

The phenomenologist seeks to understand the experience of phenomena under examination. yet prior to conducting the research, the researcher is not privy to the multiple layers of meaning that might become apparent through the research. Therefore, van Manen and other phenomenological researchers do not prescribe a fixed number of interviews deemed necessary to achieve this understanding, but instead recommend the interviews continue until saturation of theme.

However, other qualitative researchers considering Phenomenological research promote studies with limited amounts of participants. For example, Morse (1994) suggests a minimum of six, Haase, (1987) suggests 6-10 participants, while Creswell (1998) recommends somewhere between 5 – 25. These recommendations give us an impression of how intimate a research project the inquiry should ultimately result in, as for the researcher to manage and maintain an attentiveness to the individual accounts of participant, as well as be able to achieve an immersive approach to the project as a whole.

### **Thematic analysis:**

When we think about ‘Themes’ we think about a concrete end-result, what has been plucked out of something, what is established, a title, a rubric, a heading. This is the opposite of a phenomenological theme in essence; A theme here is the emerging structure of experience, the meaning of an experience as apparent to the researcher. This may eventually be recognised as such and presented to the reader as a disclosive theme, however prior to that presentation, ‘Theme’ here refers to and *essence* of a structure of meaning. It is these essences we seek to bring form to through reflection, that which emerges with understanding and that we give shape to as it seemingly presents itself to us through our reflective interpretation. In that, when we endeavour to analyse phenomena, we are attempting to “determine what the themes are, the experiential structures that make up the experience” (van Manen, 2016;78).

Van Manen describes the qualitative phenomenological “theme” as “the experience of focus, of meaning, of point” (van Manen, 2016; 87). Themes are “intransitive”- in that “themes” are “not objects but encounters at certain points or moments in a text” describing “an aspect of the structure of lived experience” (van Manen, 2016; 87). Theme is the “means to get at the notion” (van Manen, 2016;88), that theme is a “tool for getting at the meaning of experience” (van Manen, 2016;88). “Theme” is said to “give shape to the shapeless” in that theme “fixes or expresses the ineffable essence of the notion in a temporary and exemplary form” (van Manen, 2016;88). Therefore, we are not seeking to objectify this meaning through thematic analysis.

In this context, it is noted however, we shouldn’t consider “themes” as “conceptual formulations or categorical statements”, as “lived experience cannot be captured in conceptual abstractions.” (van

Manen, 2016;79) However, it is stressed that “theme” is always “a reduction of a notion. No thematic formulation can completely unlock the deep meaning, the full mystery, the enigmatic aspects of the experiential meaning of a notion” (van Manen, 2016;88).

**“Immersive reflection”, “Coding” and “Phenomenological examples”:**

Hermeneutic Phenomenological inquiry aims to capture a “now” (van Manen, 2017;813) of once before, as interpreted, experienced, ruminated upon, and then retrospectively recalled by the experiencer - the “interpreter” of the lived experience (Here the KIGYOUKA-Entrepreneur). These accounts are then further interpreted and understood within the situated “Horizon” of the researcher also.

These experiences are then presented to the reader of the inquiry accompanied with the phenomenological writings of the researcher (these reflections deemed integral to the hermeneutic phenomenological process) as well as examples of accounts as considered representative of thematic structures of experience and meaning that have emerged through the process of phenomenological interview (between researcher and participant), then reflection and thematic analysis (as endeavoured by the researcher), represented and presented as to satisfy a want of understanding from an unknown but anticipated readership.

This experience as both lived and recalled (by the participant), as well as this interpretation as presented (by the researcher) are what would be described as the essence of hermeneutic phenomenological inquiry.

Thus, in accepting this notion of collaborative interpretation, as well as also accepting the transitory nature of interpretation (as outlined previously in this chapter), van Manen's Hermeneutical methodology seeks not to present objectifications through data or "code". Van Manen wholeheartedly rejects these terms and considers that the very act of approaching thematic analysis in such a manner is a misunderstanding of the phenomenological endeavour. That "those who claim to conduct phenomenological analysis through the use of methods or techniques of categorizing, abstracting, counting, and so forth completely misunderstand the basic idea of phenomenology." Thus, van Manen argues that the terms "data" and "coding" is incompatible with phenomenological inquiry. He feels that "it is actually somewhat bizarre to use the objectifying term "data" for phenomenological inquiry as phenomenology is concerned with meaning and meaningfulness rather than "informational" content". If pushed, rather than referring to these examples as "data" or "codes" when referring to them as transcribed and artifact, the term "meaning units" is more apt (Giorgi,1970/2009). However, as van Manen observes "methodologically speaking, phenomenology does not rely on (numerical, coded, or objectifying) data but rather on data as 'phenomenological examples'" (van Manen 2017; 814). Therefore, rather than codifying data, this research project seeks to present "phenomenological examples" of the experience of interpretation and understanding (Here, "examples" of the interpretive experience of KIGYOUKASEISHIN - as experienced and understood, as accessed through the Japanese language). Therefore, the process of connecting with the interviews as transcribed will not be referred to as "coding". "Coding" is a term van Manen sees fit for variants of qualitative research such as ethnography or grounded theory, however, as the thematic drawing of meaning from phenomenological transcripts is a more prolonged, meditative, lived reflection (of the experiences disclosed, the meaning revealed and the understandings recognised), van Manen steers away from

such “nuts and bolts” terminology not focused on the reflective experience of the researcher. While van Manen does support the use of highlighting and note taking, he still errs away from approaching this process as a process of “coding”. While this may seem like a semantic matter, the semantics are important as reductive descriptions of this process detract from the immersive measures required of the researcher as they reflect on this on-going reflective experience. Immersing oneself not only in the transcripts of the interviews, but through bouts of prolonged engagement with the participants as well as reflective periods immersed in their lived lifeworld context, the researcher immerses their thoughts and Being in the project.

As is outlined earlier in this chapter, the researcher is a “research instrument” and their “Horizon” is integral to the reflective process, as is the reflective thoughtfulness of the researcher within this fusion of horizons, thus the note taking, “coding”, “labelling” etc. these functional aspects come after the researcher has connected with and is immersed within the accounts.

It is not a process to be checked off a procedural check list, a stage in a process of coding; This is a circular, lived, process of understanding and further fusion beyond the process of the interview; to get deeper and deeper into the understanding and meaning of the phenomenon as experienced by the participant. Therefore, this process is better conceived of as a phase of finding relevant phenomenological examples, practically supported by the note-taking and highlighting.

Thematic analysis involves the “wholistic and line-by-line readings of transcript material attending to the meanings embedded in the text” (M.A van Manen, 2014; 282).

This pertains to not just verbatim quotes, and not simply to the meaning interpreted in this “part “(of a “whole”), but attending to the conceptual, idiomatic, etymological, cultural, organisational,

institutional aspects of the language used by participants as they account their experience, while also (in the case of this research project) paying attention to participants reflections of how language has affected their experience (i.e., Jargon, concepts, colloquialism, loan-words etc.) including the manner these reflections are dwelled upon and further disclosed. This is for the researcher to pay attention to whether such meaning is disclosed and communicated in similar ways across participants, as for the researcher to gain a deeper contextual understanding of the phenomenon as experienced. Not only gaining understanding from the meanings disclosed of the individual but reflecting on these meanings in context. This includes the overall context of the research.

### **Gadamer's "Hermeneutic truth" and Heidegger's "Aletheia:**

Gadamer's *Truth and Method* (1960) was critical of the Subjectivism, Scientism and Methodologism which had begun to take hold in the so-called "Human Sciences" of the mid-20<sup>th</sup> Century. Gadamer was not anti-science nor even anti-method *per se*, however he was attempting to warn of what he felt was the impending tip toward a wholesale reduction of the Social Sciences (and of Western philosophical thought) due to totalizing tendencies of Positivism (Barthold, 2020). This was not in some bout of ideological preservation, but so as both the Natural Sciences and the Human Sciences could co-exist at their most productive and most beneficial (Gadamer, 1960, 1989). He saw his hermeneutics as a means to support all our academic inquiry. Thus, Gadamer aimed to show that the Truth derived from method requires a deeper, more extensive, all-encompassing truth to represent the human domain these endeavours occur within, to reinitiate truths domain to that beyond "method". This was a critique of the both the scientism of method, as well as the reduction of our human being and understanding as represented through the methods of positivism.



Due to the situatedness of our human understanding, Gadamer claimed it impossible to reduce all “truth” to the scientific method which provides the natural sciences with its unifocal knowledge. In fact, he wanted to suggest – much in the way that Heidegger had suggested through his primordial DASEIN, that we require a broader notion of Being to accommodate our “Being” - that these forms of methodological truth are dependent on a “deeper sense of ‘hermeneutic truth’” (Barthold, 2020).

As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, Gadamer is not anti-science and celebrates any means we have to understand. However, Gadamer was wary of positivisms tendencies to apply itself beyond what he perceived its beneficial reach to be, and in doing so was reducing the scope of a disparate range of academic endeavours by suggesting academic inquiry to have one character, principle, or application in-line with that of the natural sciences.

The objectivity-focused, positivist model of truth which Gadamer here refers to makes the underlying assumption that humankind has the ability to directly access the world at an objective, bracketed distance. To view it in isolation, separate from the subjectivity and interpretation Gadamer perceives is constitutional to our human condition.

However, “Truth”, for Gadamer, is not a result of an epistemic, knowledge-centric, objective relationship with our world. It is behind this, beneath this, around this, the hermeneutical truth that Gadamer alludes to. Gadamer argues that not only is the meaningful understanding sought by the human and social sciences irreducible to the objective knowledge of the natural sciences but that there is a “deeper, richer truth that exceeds scientific method” (Barthold, 2020).

To illustrate this Gadamer once again returns us to Aesthetics and to Art. Gadamer uses art not only to illustrate our production of understanding that occurs between presentation and recognition, but that through these notions, Gadamer presents art as serving as “the paragon of truth” (Barthold, 2020). For

Gadamer, the production of understanding arrives from revelation, from being changed by something presented to us, something beyond us prior to that moment. Hermeneutic “truth” is an event where one encounters a something that is beyond oneself. An “experience in which one is drawn away from oneself into something beyond oneself. To experience truth requires losing oneself in something greater and more extensive than oneself” (Barthold, 2020). The recognition elicited by presentation, unconcealment. As is the case when we encounter Art.

Prior to this event of “hermeneutical truth” is a disclosure, an unconcealment, an openness. The primordial truth of unconcealment that is the root of this event, this happening. This is the Heideggerian notion of “Aletheia” as truth (the core evaluative criteria which underpins Van Manen’s methodology - Heidegger, 1998; van Manen 2014).

Heidegger believed that one of the fundamental failures of post-Platonic Western metaphysics was in the viewing of “truth not as the temporal occurrence of unconcealedness but as the constant presence of eternal objects” (Lammi, 1991:491) Heidegger presents the ancient Greek term “Aletheia” as a hermeneutical truth, of disclosure, unconcealment and openness (Heidegger, 1998; van Manen, 2014). van Manen elaborates that rather than the ancient Greek notions of *veritas* (truth) and *falsum* (false) that had been initially inherited by the social and human sciences - notions which derive from militaristic terms corresponding with victory and defeat - have the “implicit mission of conquering the ‘real’ by means of discourses of representation and theories of cognition” (van Manen, 2014;342).

Aletheia doesn’t rely on a “adjudication between the true and the false in terms of fixed principle”.(van Manen), in that “The primordial sense of truth as revelation does not have an equiprimordial sense of falsehood corresponding to it.” (McGrath, 2003; 47) Here, “the unrevealed is

not false, but hidden”. (McGrath. 2003;46). That integral to all inquiry is this interpretation and this revelation. This revelation and interpretation.

It is this principle that drives hermeneutic phenomenological research. Through the revelation of meaningfulness, we gain access to understanding. Truth as Aletheia is the essence of something “derived from the study of meaning and meaningfulness” (Van Manen, 2016; 342/343).

### **Hermeneutic Phenomenological inquiry and Guba and Lincolns evaluative criteria:**

As outlined in the first chapter of this thesis, the broader methodological hegemony of sociological positivism had a normative effect on the “social scientific” endeavour, marginalising the understanding sought by the humanities in favour of the scientific rigor and unifocal knowledge integral to the approaches of the natural sciences.

This evaluation criteria sought “truth” (*Veritas*), “applicability”, “consistency” and “neutrality” in an attempt to emulate the corresponding criteria of the scientific positivism of the natural sciences – “internal validity”, “external validity”, “reliability” and “objectivity” (See, Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

This was deemed a “replication perspective” (Sparkes, 2001) due to the unsophisticated, analogous nature of the language and terms corresponding with the natural scientific approach. However, when we consider the qualitative endeavour, it is apparent that the purpose and outcome sought from this line of inquiry seeks to achieve outcomes not suited to this evaluative criterion, it was understood that qualitative approaches required its own specific criteria. As Huttenen and Kakkori point out “The aim of qualitative research is not to produce photocopy-style pictures of objective reality; rather, qualitative research deals with worlds of meanings” (2020;4). Guba & Lincoln (1994, 2005) posit that

the notions of reliability and validity pertain to investigations that view the world through a Cartesian subject-object. This is perceivably not suited to qualitative research.

With this in mind, Lincoln & Guba (1985) suggested a criterion of “credibility”, “transferability”, “dependability”, and “confirmability” that has since been the mainstay for most qualitative research projects. Even though others also sought to provide additional improvements to the qualitative evaluative framework - such as Sandelowski’s (1986) contributions of “fittingness” “auditability”, and “confirmability”, Burns’ (1989) “descriptive vividness”, “methodological congruence”, “analytic preciseness” and “theoretical connectedness”, Leininger’s (1994) additions of “meaning-in-context”, “recurrent patterning”, and “saturation” - aspects of these contributions have made their way into the consciousness and lexis of qualitative researches’ evaluative criteria, however it is Lincoln and Guba’s 1985 criteria that remains the foundation for the gauging of the trustworthiness of qualitative research.

This said, this does not fully guarantee a one-size-fits-all applicative value or relevance to the phenomenological inquiry. Therefore (in this final section) these issues will be discussed through the lens of a Gadamerian/van Manen-style methodological approach to research as to see how it is applicable here, to the hermeneutic phenomenological inquiry.

### **Trustworthiness:**

Even though this hermeneutic phenomenological research does not seek an outcome representing objective fact, the trustworthiness, rigor and credibility of the research still needs to be ensured.

Although there is not yet an agreed, universal set of criteria concerning rigor in interpretive qualitative

research (Beck 1993, Denzin & Lincoln 1994, Brink 1987, Guba & Lincoln 1994, Rolfe 2006, Sandelowski 1993), the general consensus states legitimacy of “knowledge” (i.e., one’s contribution to academic discussion) depends on a demonstration that research is trustworthy and believable (Fleming et al, 2003). As outlined above Lincoln and Guba’s (1985) criteria for qualitative research as to achieve this trustworthiness was built around notions of “credibility”, “transferability”, “Dependability”, “confirmability”. The remainder of this methodology chapter will now review how these conditions (and their corresponding techniques) are applicable to the hermeneutic phenomenological inquiry (especially with regard to van Manen’s phenomenological approach).

### **Transferability, Generalisation and “Thick Description”:**

Lincoln and Guba’s first criterion is “transferability” (Lincoln and Guba, 1985), the notion that research may be able to reveal that the findings of a research project may have an applicability in other contexts. Transferability is thus the quality of a study which provides readers with enough supporting information about the findings that the reader can judge if the findings could possibly be applicable to similar contexts beyond those of the study. The main method of providing this, is to provide “thick description” of these contexts and factors as will be discussed throughout this section.

However, before this the issue this sense of transferability sits precariously close to notions of generalisation, so it is important to make clear how “generalisation” is dealt within Hermeneutic phenomenological research.

Van Manen posits “The only generalisation allowed in phenomenological inquiry is “never generalise”. And yet, in some way we could speak of phenomenological understandings as

generalised” (van Manen, 2014; 352). “Generalisation” here is not the same as empirical or quantitative generalisations, in that they are not used to draw conclusions of validity of study, nor to make claims of truth as *veristas*, nor do they concern fixed, eternal objects. Phenomenological study does not “yeild generalisations in the usual empirical sense” (van Manen,2014; 352). What van Manen is referring to is two types of phenomenological generalisations not used to draw conclusions of validity of study: “Existential” and “Singular” (van manen,2014; 352 ). “Existential generalisation” refers to “recurring aspects of the meaning of a certain phenomenon”, and “Singular generalisation” refers to phenomenological examples that make it possible to consider what is “universal” about the observed phenomenon, as observed (van Manen, 2014). However, the key difference here is that these generalisations do not serve to lay the foundation for claims of the scientific objectivity of quantitative or empirical studies, nor are they in any way representative of an empirical “sample”. These generalisations are recognised as the unfixed understandings and meanings interpreted, understood and co-authored by researcher and participant. They are recognised as holding the ephemeral qualities of “essence”, and the temporality that is associated with interpreted understanding and interpreted meaning (See “Gadamerian Tenets” in this chapter, “Temporality”). Thus, to the researcher, these generalisations are understandings and meanings that share these unfixed essences, therefore the phenomenological examples presented in these studies should be appreciated by the reader in this manner also (see temporality in this chapter).

Lincon and Guba (1985) remark that unlike these essential, hermenutic generalisations, empirical generalisations are “assertions of enduring value that are context-free” (1985;110) and so see little relevance of such in interpretivist and subjectivity-focused qualitative research. Therefore, they

recommend the reader seeks this notion of potential “transferability” rather than seeking broadstroke generalisation.

### **Thick-Description:**

In order to do this, qualitative researchers should provide detailed and robust accounts of their experiences during the research process. This involves providing contextual details as considered relevant to the research by the researcher. This potentially includes (but is not limited to) details regarding the research setting, the circumstances the individuals first met, the interviewees state on the day of interview, their historic/personal circumstances leading up to the interview and/or other factors relevant to the researched phenomenon and the researchers research experience that give readers a fuller understanding of each interviews research setting and broader (individual, social and cultural) context as a whole. To the degree that the researcher includes their reflections on all aspects throughout this “fusion of horizons”, reflections on the social and cultural contexts of the findings as interpreted to be relevant to the research as presented. This is especially significant with the Gadamerian approach, as Rashotte & Jensen (2007) point out “What are the traditions in which we participate that are relevant to the phenomenon under study?” (Rashotte & Jensen 2007; 106 / Gadamer, 1960/89, pp. 3–42). Throughout this inquiry itself, the researcher goes to great lengths as both the hermeneutic tool for the reader, and also as curator of the inquiry to outlay the traditions and broader context in which the both the substance of the accounts (e.g., the retrospective context of the experience which the presented phenomenological examples represent) as well as the lived-context in which the dialogical understanding attained by the researcher occurred within. Rashotte & Jensen (2007) point to Fine et al. (2000) who ask “Have the “voices” and “stories” of individuals been

connected back to the set of historic, structural, and economic relations in which they are situated?” (2000, p. 126).

Thus, in providing this thick description, the researcher is not only considering the horizon of their situated self and the situatedness of the participant, but also anticipating the situatedness of reader coming to the work, based on broad, anticipatable factors such as main language of publication, intended audience, publication outlet, research institutes etc. (This is significant in this research project as the researcher acts as a hermeneutic mechanism between the English language reader – here, anticipated as having minimal understanding of the Japanese language social milieu/ social experience - and the experience of KIGYOUKA as situated within the Japanese-language, historic context).

This information regarding the circumstances within which interviews were held helps the reader decide whether or not the study and its outcomes/reflections/findings are transferable to their own situation, and also brings to the reader attention implicit biases that may have affected the responses of participants. Yet Lincoln & Guba (1985) assert that it is “not the naturalist’s task to provide an index of transferability, it is his or her responsibility to provide the data base that makes transferability judgements possible on the part of potential appliers.” (Lincoln & Guba,1985; 316). It is thus the readers role to ascertain the transferability of the research to their own circumstances, yet it’s is the responsibility of the researcher to provide the reader with enough detail to do so, within the limits of the capacity of the research project. Readers may deem the research not transferable to their circumstances, or partially transferable and not the entire conclusion. This “thick description” is thus an integral part of the qualitative research design.



**Credibility:**

Lincoln and Guba (1985) describe “Credibility” as conducting research where participants accounts are represented clearly and accurately and are faithful to the interpretation agreed on by participants. Accuracy of the findings i.e., the researcher represents any communications by participants in a manner considered to represent the communication as was intended by participant. This is through a process of participant checking by the researcher where and when ambiguities arise. This also must take into consideration the subjective process of interpretation any communication is subjected to by the situatedness of the researcher (so to be representative of this, accounts must also be authentic to the interpretations of the researcher also). At a meta-level (meaning here, the preserve of the reader) we are to take into account the functional process of both researcher and participant achieving understanding, accepting the end result is a product of collaboration. Thus, verbatim transcriptions of phenomenological examples included in the research are to be included (here, all original Japanese-language verbatim transcriptions of examples presented in the findings chapters *in English*, are documented in their original Japanese-language in the appendix chapters), yet are also to be supplemented with the above outlined thick description that both explicitly situates the accounts of the participant and the participant their selves while implicitly being situated by the situatedness of the researcher their self.

**Prolonged engagement:**

This involves spending adequate time in the research context observing various aspects of a setting, speaking with a range of people, and developing relationships and rapport with members of the culture. This is not only for the researcher to develop and build understanding of the interviewees

lived-world context, but as to develop rapport with participants and to build trust, as this “facilitates understanding and co-construction of meaning” (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006) between researcher and participant. Thus, “prolonged engagement” is the amount of time spent with participants as to better understand statements and experiences in context.

### **Persistent Observation:**

“persistent observation” refers to a focus on the broader aspects of the context or situation that are relevant to the phenomena under investigation. It requires the researcher to “identify those characteristics and elements in the situation that are most relevant to the problem or issue being pursued and focusing on them in detail” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; 304), in that if “prolonged engagement provides scope, persistent observation provides depth” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; 304). Thus, “persistent observation” ensures a depth of understanding gained from the research, within the scope provided through “prolonged engagement” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

### **Member Checking:**

This involves checking with participants in order for establishing the validity of the observation’s interpretations and understandings of the researcher. This is a tricky topic with regard to what this notion stands for. “Member checking” is based on the assumption of their being a “fixed truth of reality” to be interpreted by the researcher and then confirmed by the respondent (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006; Morse, 1994; Angen, 2000 Sandelowski, 1993).

The hermeneutic phenomenological inquiry is based around the checking of understanding; however, this is not in pursuit of a “fixed” truth or objectivity. This is a collaborative endeavour

involving the disclosures of experience of the participants and the interpretation of these accounts as interpreted into the situated horizons of the researcher. They are thus both deemed essential to the hermeneutic phenomenological research experience. This act of collaboration it is in itself a process of member checking from the perspective of the researcher attempting to understand. A constant cautious, detailed, dialogical process of inquisitive questioning, interpretation and reflection. The hermeneutical endeavour can be seen as the rigorous circle of checking and agreement on the researcher's interpretation between researcher and participant. Thus, member checking was employed throughout this research project from the perspective of the researcher gaining understanding and confirming that understanding is accepted by participants.

**Confirmability:**

This then brings this discussion to Guba and Lincoln's notion of Confirmability, one that shares aspects of the outlined notion of "member checking" (Clayton and Thorne, 2000), however here the focus is on showing the neutrality of the researcher and being able to outline how interpretations and conclusions have been reached (Tobin & Begley, 2004). This can be demonstrated through the use of direct quotes in the write-up of the research helps the reader to see how the researcher reached their interpretations of the text. (Fleming et al 2003). Koch (1994) suggests the researcher include indicators of these understandings, reasonings, analytic choices and decision-making throughout the study, so readers can understand the basis for such reasoning in the context of the research as presented.

## **Dependability**

Guba and Lincoln encourage researchers to present a clearly documented account of their research findings. If readers are able to see the research project and the manner in which the researcher progressed through the task of developing a trustworthy research contribution, this allows them to better judge the dependability of the research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Kvale (1996) also suggests areas deemed to influence the dependability of research findings, centred around the behaviour and actions of the researcher. The first being during the “data” (gaining understanding through dialogical-interviews) collection phase, then, during the transcription of the interviews (referring to the accuracy of the transcript), and finally, during the thematic analysis phases.

For example, with regard to the first issues, to make explicit the researcher’s avoidance of prompting particular answers or asking leading questions during the interviews (Francis, 1996;38; Kvale, 1996;157). Naturally, the hermeneutic phenomenological researcher is extremely alert to the biases and preunderstandings of their own horizon, and deliberately focusing on those of the interviewee, so to impregnate the interviewees views with that of their own would render the inquiry moot and void. As has been outlined previously in the chapter, the phenomenological researcher is extremely vigilant with regard to manner in which they elicit the revealing of the meaning at the root of the participants experiences. It is counter-productive for the interviewer to allow persuasive bias to lead the hermeneutic phenomenological interview – it is a collaboration between both parties, both of whom have no other vested interest in engaging in these interviews other than to reach an authentic understanding of the participants experiences, thus during the reflective engagement the interviewee

frequently goes along with the interviewee, questioning where relevant, acquiescing when necessary to allow the interviewee to provide as much detail about their experience as possible, specifically on their terms. This tenderness and attention-to-detail is also practiced throughout the transcription and thematic analysis stages. It is part of the research methodology for the hermeneutic phenomenologist researcher to *interpret* the context of the findings, to act as a research instrument as to convey the essence of the meanings revealed and understandings achieved through the research as vividly as possible, in line with the “thick descriptions” mentioned above, within the context of the interviews, as well as from the “prolonged engagement” as well as the “participant observations” phases of the research project. However, throughout all of these phases, the researcher remains impartial, only providing their understandings an insight to present the findings as appropriate.

## **Chapter IV: Research context.**

## **Chapter IV: Research context - Introduction to the Japanese language as experienced.**

This chapter offers a brief introduction to the experience of Being as considered through the Japanese language, as presented by Japanese phenomenologist Tetsuro Watsuji.

This section will give a foundational introduction to the experience and meaning of “Being”, as facilitated by the Japanese language and considers Watsuji’s thesis of Being as “NINGEN”, a notion he feels represents the condition of Human Being as experienced, understood and conveyed through the Japanese language. It introduces other such key notion relevant to this issue (and to this research more broadly) such as AIDAGARA, SEKEN and YONONAKA notions considered extremely important to the Japanese experience of consideration of Being (the social spatio-temporal notion of YONONAKA becoming significant throughout this research).

### **Introduction to Watsujian Being: NINGEN**

The Japanese phenomenological philosopher Watsuji Tetsuro was dissatisfied with Heidegger’s neglect of spatiality and otherness in his work “Being and Time” (1927), so further explored these concepts as he considered relevant to the subjective Japanese experience of “Being” in his thesis “Rinrigaku” (“Ethics” 1996).

Where Watsuji similarly shares a similar appreciation to Gadamer’s perspective that language is of significance our experience of “Being”, he too was also compelled to contribute to our discussion of Being as experienced, as represented. His critical appropriation of Heidegger resulted in discussion centred around human Being as NINGEN, what this following section will now discuss.

Whereas Heidegger felt Subjectivism abstracted from the interrelatedness of primordial Being’s mode of practical existence with regard to our tools, our embeddedness and our “Being there”, Watsuji felt

Heidegger's reaction in DASEIN abstracted from the interrelatedness of our interhuman connections between Self and other humans. However, Watsuji felt this was not down to Heidegger, but was further rooted in the Western abstraction of 'Individualism' (as especially apparent in the post-Enlightenment Positivist endeavour focusing on the isolated individual), which he saw was the "origin of many sorts of misconceptions" (1996:9) in modern philosophy. That the inherent individualism that is the basis of Subjectivist theory fundamentally abstracts from and reduces our representation of human Being.

Here, Watsuji positions himself somewhere between early Heidegger and Gadamer's thesis (the latter's, at this point, not yet established) as he begins to meditate on the relationship between language and Being, the interhuman-ness of Being and the shared-subjectivity of our social and historical existence.

In RINRIGAKU, Watsuji remarks "Incidentally, words are among the most marvellous things that we human beings have created" (1996:10). From the Watsujian perspective, words are considered "the furnace by means of which merely subjective connections made by individual human beings are converted into noematic meaning" (1996:10). Here, Watsuji references the preconscious phenomena and subjective act-connections we as humans become compelled to articulate, conceptualize and communicate through language, which are made conscious in this transition. From Watsuji's point of view, words make conscious meaning of our preconscious Being. This relationship between language and these subjective act-connections heavily contribute to Watsuji's thesis on Being as experienced, as accessed through the Japanese language.



What was absent from Heidegger's primordial conception and deemed highly significant by Watsuji was the extended, subjective-space *between* individuals that acts as existential, experiential and cultural sinew; What he referred to as "subjective spatiality" (1996:165), "subjective extendedness" or "spatial extendedness" (1996:155). Watsuji felt that the isolated subjectivity at the core of the Subjectivist (or Western Individualist philosophy) thesis has no connection with matters of action, interaction nor shared practice generally (1996:9). That isolated-subjectivity abstracts from the "practical connections between person and person" (1996:18) and thus reduces the shared-subjective experience of existence.

Watsuji viewed the individual as a "Hybrid", that our Being is an irreducibly "double structure" (Watsuji, 1996:22), where "Self" is annexed by the subjectivity of "Other" (Watsuji's point ultimately being where "Self" and "Other" are annexed by the subjectivity of *each other*). This is what Watsuji considered as an "extended subjectivity", existing within the experiential space between individuals. The space between individuals Watsuji dubbed "AIDAGARA" ("Between-ness") (1996).

This is a key point which both Watsuji and Gadamer share which is mostly absent in Heidegger

This was something Watsuji found intrinsic to the Japanese conception of human existence which he centres his thesis around – that of *NINGEN*. Watsuji gushes; "The Japanese language therefore, possesses a very significant word: namely *NINGEN*" (Watsuji, 1996:15), in that the Japanese language produces a "distinctive conception of human being." (Watsuji, 1996:15), something Watsuji felt was significantly representative of the Japanese condition of Being as experienced.

This following section will further explore the significance of the Japanese language in the experience of "Self" "Other" and "Environment", the role of language in these conceptions, and the significance

of NINGEN (and by extension the notion of the YONONAKA) moving forward in this phenomenological inquiry.

### **Unpacking NINGEN; The experience of NIGEN through the Japanese language**

To begin, A fundamental concept within the Japanese ontological realm is the spatiotemporal notion of “MA” (間). Ma is spatial, is temporal as both relate. “MA” is recognition, acceptance and contemplation of “space, room, an interval or a pregnant pause” (Matsumoto, 1988; 50). Within Japanese language milieu, such MA (“space/moment”) is not *empty per se*, but as loaded with purpose or inference. It is social, historical, environmental. “(I)t is the moment that allows one to be aware of and part of his (*sic*) surroundings” (Matsumoto, 1988; 50). That “MA” is perceived as significant in recognising the interconnectedness of relationships between “Self”, “Other” and “Environment”. MA is apparent throughout much experienced within Japanese social milieu, socially, in the arts, in theatre, poetry, architecture, interior design and in general communication and expression (See Matsumoto, 2020). This is a rudimentary introduction to the notion of MA (due to the limitations of this research project) however, with this now established, we can now begin breaking down the conceptual notion of “NINGEN”.

“NINGEN” (人間) is the Japanese word for “Human” or “Humanity” that takes meaning from the two logographic symbols for “Person” (人 - “HITO” or “NIN”) and “(Subjective) Space” (間 - “MA” – see above, or “GEN”). Here “Humanity” is recognised by the Japanese language conception of such not as “*individuals en masse*”, but also recognises the shared, subjective space *between* these

individuals as integral to their Being, which binds them and their existence; a bound and interconnected humanity. Bound by what Watsuji refers to as ‘*Betweenness*’ (‘AIDAGARA’- see above); Watsuji sees that NINGEN is not just separate, individual humans in isolation. NINGEN refers “not merely to an individual “human being” nor merely “society.”” (1996;14,15). NINGEN is both the human individual as well as their extended subjectivity, humanity en-masse.; The individuals and the act-connections *between* individuals that develop understanding, relationships, and that is ultimately comparable to the community or society or civilization that exists between person and person. That such dialectical unity exists in all humans and is inherent to the human condition.

Elaborating further on the thematic importance of such extended subjectivity within the Japanese social milieu, WATSUJI dwells on the notions of SE-KEN (世間) and YO-NO-NAKA (世の中) , concepts similarly concerned with the significance of spatiality and shared-subjectivity as deemed integral to the Japanese conception of human existence. It is thus worthwhile exploring these concepts also as to illustrate further the importance of such extended subjectivity and the dynamic qualities of NINGEN.

### **SE-KEN ( 世間 ) and YO-NO-NA KA ( 世の中 ): - “世”**

**世 (SE/YO)** - The first syllable in each phrase - “SE” and “YO” respectively (**SE-KEN** 世間/ **YO-NO-NAKA** 世の中) both share the same logographic KANJI character “世” (SE/YO). 世 (SE/YO) in isolation uniquely signifies something similar to “A Time” “A Generation” “A World” or “A

Society”, and is used to express a spatio-temporal realm highly significant to the Japanese essence of Being.

The essence of the term SEKEN (世間) signifies a community of people who share existence in daily life e.g., a society, a public, a world (of an *era*). SEKEN 世間, made up of the above-mentioned “世” (SE - “Generation”/ “World”) and “間” (KEN – “Space”). KEN shares both the same conceptual meaning and KANJI character as GEN from 人間 NINGEN - “Humanity” (outlined above), and both uses share meaning derived from the above-mentioned spatiotemporal concept of “MA” (“間”).

Hence SE-KEN 世間 pertains to a subjectively-spatial, spatiotemporal “era” or “environment”, a significantly augmented conceptualisation of what we in English might refer to as “The Public” – a comparatively vague and static equivalent.

In the term YO-NO-NAKA, 世の中 as previously mentioned, YO 世 shares the same Kanji/ notional meaning as SE (世- World/Generation), NO is a possessive particle signifying “belonging to”, and NAKA indicates “the middle of something”. This conceptually communicates *the centre of the “YO 世”, that which is within “YO 世”, meaning something like “within the era/social-world”*. Thus, YO-NO-NAKA means “The Times” or “The Society” or “The World” (of an era). YONONAKA is an extremely important notion, what Watsuji highlights as a “communal existence regarded as a subject”

(1996:18). (This is an extremely important notion throughout this hermeneutic phenomenological inquiry – in the findings chapters and subsequent discussion chapter).

世 (SE/YO) is an interesting notion in Japanese as it signifies “A generation” and “A world/A society” simultaneously. With the twinned concept of “World” and “Generation” integral to 世 (SE/YO), Watsuji observes that 世 “transits temporality and at the same time means something spatial, *something to get away from or to wander in.*” (Watsuji, 1996;18. My italics).

A (subjective)-space and a ‘time’ – the shared understandings/interpretations of a time as temporal.

Therefore, as integral to the notion of “Generation” as is the notion of a *temporal* sublation, the distributed subjectivity shared by a generation (a *society*) binds them *spatially* i.e., *subjectively* through distributed subjectivity (The shared-subjective qualities of a generation).

What is significant about the terms SEKEN and YONONAKA is not only do they contain such a distinct conception as 世 SE/YO, but that 世 SE/YO are here modified by the accompanying syllables to present a fuller notion still. A notion also combined with 間 KEN (signifying the “betweenness” of “subjective-space”) or NAKA 中 (equated to “in” or “centre”, but more distinctly “within”).

These terms (KEN, AIDA or NAKA) have a spatial significance as Watsuji points out, *not* characteristic of the reduced concept of “*in*”. In that KEN, AIDA and NAKA here express spatial notions/ parameters that inherently comprise of human relations as well. Watsuji makes clear that these human relations are not objective relations established through subjective unity as is the case

“with spatial relations between object and object” (Watsuji, 1996;18). These subjective act-connections between person and person (such as “communication” or “association”) concern themselves with other humans as respective *subjects*. This implies we cannot exist within AIDA or NAKA without acting *subjectively*, while at the same time, we cannot *act* without maintaining some kind of AIDA or NAKA. For this reason, Watsuji summarises that AIDA and NAKA imply “a living and dynamic betweenness, as a subjective interconnection of acts.” (1996;18).

With this in mind, we can see how such words as NINGEN, SEKEN and YONONAKA each convey “something like a singular subjective entity” (1996:18), that SEKEN and YONONAKA refer to “communal existence regarded as a subject” (1996:18). Watsuji feels the value of such notions as SEKEN and YONONAKA is that they convey both “the temporal as well as the spatial characteristics of such subjective communal existence” (1996;18) This is important as it communicates the sense of a subjectively extended entity, an entity which undergoes “constant transformation” (1996;19) through a “constantly moving interconnection of acts” (1996;19)

This quality therefore is integral to such representation of communal Being as NINGEN/ SEKEN/ YONONAKA, illustrating not only the temporal quality but also the “historical, climatic, and social structures of human existence” (page 19). That SEKEN and YONONAKA signifies a “human existence that is historical, climatic and social” (Page 19). This *climatical* notion absent from Heidegger’s and Gadamer’s “Being” is extremely significant as we consider the Japanese relationship with experience and with regard to the specifics of this research project, when we consider the KIGYOUKAs relationship with the YONONAKA.

Therefore, this final section offers a brief introduction to Japanese grammar as relevant to the conception of NINGEN and of Watsujian spatial subjectivity (AIDAGARA), as relevant to this study moving forward. It will focus on the grammatical underpinnings of Watsuji's NINGEN thesis and how language plays a significant part in this experience. It will briefly outline how Japanese grammar facilitates the (extended-subjective) experience of NINGEN, as well as the lived, shared experience of AIDAGARA facilitated by Japanese grammar (and how this further feed into other experiences as accessed within the Japanese milieu).

### **The Japanese Language: A brief grammatical and semantic overview.**

This is intended not to be a comprehensive review of Japanese grammar/semantics, just specific aspects of Japanese grammar deemed relevant to this chapter's discussion regarding Being, useful for revealing the meaning held in accounts provided by Japanese-language participants presented in this research.

Japanese is a high-context language. This means due to grammatical characteristics of the language as well as communication strategies developed resembling such, there is a dependence on nonverbal and less-direct verbal communications. In the Japanese case, this encourages a dependence on common, background understanding (the broader "context" of our communicative milieu) as to supplement for an absence of explicit communications. Although vague, these inferences are arguably as recognisable and similarly as understood as explicit statements made in low-context communications.

Japanese is "setting-oriented" or "environmentally-oriented" (Kim, 2010; Masuda & Nisbett, 2003).

In the English sentence "Where am I?", "*Self*" is the focus of the sentence. Yet the Japanese

equivalent would ask “Where is *here*?” (“ここはどこですか”) - the observation “here” is environmentally-focused (Kim, 2010). Grammatically in Japanese, there is a less emphatic subject-predicate distinction, thus the speaker is also able to omit the subject after it has been established.

(REF) The sentence “音が聞こえます” (Oto ga kikoemasu – “...can hear a sound”) could possibly be referring to “(‘I’) can hear a sound” or to “(‘you/we/they/that/this/it’) can hear a sound” without acknowledging the subject verbally, all depending on context (the speaker could also be referring to the environment itself). The sentence “暑いです” (“Atsui desu”) (“... is hot”), again could be “(‘I/you/we/they/that/this/it’) is hot”. This conveys the sensation or observation as a (potentially) shared experience, for those within the parameters of the communication. This absence of a subject omits the centrality of the individual from a communication, broadening its inclusion. the individuals’ compartmental individuality can at times be appreciated as less-explicit in Japanese (than in English, for example), due to its implicit, at times *blended* representation of “*Self*”, “*Me*” or “*I*”. It is this setting-oriented holism that affects the Japanese construal of self, society and environment. That experience is communicated as one which may affect or include the immediate unit, and potentially others also. This shares understandings and experience in a less compartmental way, a less *focused* individual experience, a *shared* experience (what much of Watsuji’s thesis regarding NINGEN/YONONAKA is based on). Thus, we begin to see the salience of the subjective act-connections as experienced through Japanese as even when language makes conscious these connections, it does so in an implicit fashion. This in part begins to contextualise much of Watsuji’s stress on the importance of spatial subjectivity and also his reverence of NINGEN as representative of Being.



Watsuji observed the depths of such setting-focused immersion in his thesis on the Japanese environmental milieu (“*Fuudo*”), as a fundamentally integral aspect to the Japanese being itself. That from a Japanese perspective, we are envired by both our natural surroundings and (simultaneously) our social dimensions, existing within both our natural climate and our human climate. In Berque’s (1992) contemplations of *Fuudo*, he describes that of a lack of subject *blends* the “subject” with its surrounding environment, creating an open, interactive plane (BAMEN – described as “plane” or “ambience” – see Berque, 1992). This therefore encapsulates the significance of contextuality in the Japanese sphere; that one in essence fits in with one’s surroundings because the experience “Self” is (*indistinct*) from that of “Other” and surrounding “Environment”. For example, JIBUN, is the word the Japanese use to refer to “One’s Self” (E.G., Myself yourself her/his Self-etc.). “自分” is made of two separate characters; “自” (“*Ji*”) meaning “*of self*” and “分” (“*bun*”) meaning “(as) *part of*” (as a suffix); Indicating one’s “Self” is in effect a fractional part of an overall whole. Reflecting a sense of “Self” being a unitary part of an environmental “whole”.

This chapter has introduced Watsuji’s notions of NINGEN AIDAGARA SEKEN and YONONAKA, as well as introduced aspects of the Japanese language which support Watsuji’s descriptions of the experiences of such existential notions.

This chapter will conclude by briefly outlining seven terms relevant to this discussion focusing on their logographic representations and/or meaning:

“(An established) Business”

KIGYOU

企業

<p><u>Ex. Compounds/Use of 企</u></p> <p>企てる (Verb) KiWadateru To plot, to plan, to scheme, to attempt, to try</p> <p>企画 (Noun) KiKaku A plan, A Project</p> <p>企画する (Verb) KiKakusuru To put together a plan, to plan</p>	<p>企</p> <p>“K1” Plan Undertake</p>	<p>業</p> <p>“GYOU” Business Vocation Arts / Performance</p>	<p><u>Ex. Compounds/Use of 業</u></p> <p>事業 (Noun) JiGyou An enterprise, a business</p> <p>授業 (Noun) JyuGyou A class, a lesson</p> <p>業界 (Noun) Gyaukai The business world, trade</p>
<p><u>Notional Meaning :</u></p>	<p>Planned Undertaken</p>	<p>Business /Venture</p>	

“A new venture / a start-up\*”

KIGYOU

起業

<p><u>Ex. Compounds/Use of 起</u></p> <p>起きる (Verb) OKiru To wake up, to awaken</p> <p>起こる (Verb) OKoru To Happen, to occur</p> <p>起源 (Noun) KiGen Origin, beginning, rise</p>	<p>起</p> <p>“K1” Awaken Rise Emerge Happen / Occur</p>	<p>業</p> <p>“GYOU” Business Vocation Arts / Performance</p>	<p>See 業・“GYOU” (above)</p>
<p><u>Notional Meaning :</u></p>	<p>Emerging Awakening Occurring</p>	<p>Business /Venture</p>	

(Tables 1 KIGYOU 企業 and 2 KIGYOU 起業)

**"Emerging Business-Specialist\*"**  
**KIGYOU**  
 起業

<h1>起</h1> <p>"KI"                  Awaken                  Rise                  Emerge                  Happen / Occur</p>	<h1>業</h1> <p>"GYOU"                  Business                  Vocation                  Arts / Performance</p>	<h1>家</h1> <p>"KA"                  Specialist                  (suffix)</p>
Emerging Awakening Occurring	Business /Venture	House Family Specialist

(Tables 3 KIGYOUKA 起業家)

## **KIGYOU, KIGYOU, KIGYOUKA:**

Included as a reference point, the First “KIGYOU” (企業) in table 1 describes an established, functioning business or company, used as those terms would be in English to refer to such an established business.

KIGYOU (起業) in table 2 refers to an “emerging” or “awakening”, “happening”, “occurin” business, what the English language might refer to as a “Start-Up”, a “Venture”, a “New-Business”.

Both share the same pronunciation (KI GYO-U) however as outlined, the first Kanji-Character is different for both terms, yet they both share the second Kanji-Character GYOU.

This research will primarily be focusing on the KIGYOUKA (the “emerging business specialist”) and thus the second variant of business outlined here is that which is of relevance to this study. This KI 起 HERE means to awaken, to happen, to emerge, to occur. GYOU 業 by itself represents the concept of business or vocation generally. The second KIGYOU is the crux of the notion of the KIGYOUKA 起業家 the “emerging business specialist” (KA 家 meaning “Specialist”) etymologically outlined in table three, the experiences of whom this research is to centre around.

“Opportunity”

KIKAI

機会

<p><u>Ex. Compounds/Use of 機</u></p> <p>飛行機 (Noun) HikouKi Airplane</p> <p>危機 (Noun) KIKI Crisis</p> <p>機能 (Noun) KiNbu Function, Facility, Faculty</p>	<p style="font-size: 48px; text-align: center;">機</p> <p style="text-align: center;">“KI3”</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Machine/ Mechanism/ An Opportunity/ the Right Time/Moment/ Resourcefulness</p>	<p style="font-size: 48px; text-align: center;">会</p> <p style="text-align: center;">“KAI”</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Meeting Association</p>	<p><u>Ex. Compounds/Use of 会</u></p> <p>会議 (Noun) Kaigi A formal meeting</p> <p>会う (Verb) Au To meet.</p> <p>社会 (Noun) Shakai Society</p>
<p><u>Conceptual Meaning :</u></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Mechanism The right time</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Meeting</p>	

“Opportunity”

KIKAI

<p><u>Ex. Compounds/Use of 好</u></p> <p>好き To like (dearly)</p> <p>好み As-you-like To-your-liking</p> <p>好調 Favourable</p>	<p style="font-size: 48px; text-align: center;">好</p> <p style="text-align: center;">“KOU”</p> <p style="text-align: center;">To Like Fondness What one likes</p>	<p style="font-size: 48px; text-align: center;">機</p> <p style="text-align: center;">“KI”</p> <p style="text-align: center;">a machine/ mechanism a loom an Opportunity to do The right time/moment</p>	<p>See 機・KI (3) (above)</p>
<p><u>Conceptual Meaning :</u></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">A Liked A Pleasing / A Fond</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Mechanism The right time</p>	

(Tables 4 KIKAI 機会 and 5 KOUKI 好機)

## KI-KAI (機会) and KOU-KI (好機)

Both phrases represent the notion of an “opportunity” or a “chance”.

“KI” 機 being the common link in the two phrases – KIKAI (機会) and KOUKI (好機)

“KI” signifies a “mechanism” (commonly used in technological terms) but also refers to “the right time or moment”, and further still a “moment of being moved into action” (It shares the same pronunciation with both KI above, but also has a different Kanji-character/meaning).

“KAI” (会) meanwhile, signifies a meeting (as in a gathering, a congregation), while the same character is used to express the verb “to meet” (会 う “AU”).

So, KIKAI (機会) offers a conceptualisation of a meeting that acts as a conduit, a mechanism, a means to facilitate opportunity, “the moment of being moved into action”, a mechanism to enable a potential of such, a potential within a greater context, a next step. It carries an essence of “a meeting of the right moment (to enable)”, “a meeting of enablement”, “an encounter with enablement”, an enabling moment of sorts. With regard to the notion “encounter”, this here is not necessarily a binary encounter; KAI implies a congregation, a gathering so therefore implies a coming together of several factors, a “meeting” in this sense. Therefore, it could be argued KIKAI represents something similar to the coming together of several factors.

KOUKI (好機) meanwhile feature KOU meaning “pleasing”, or “liked/loved”, or something similar to “as-you’d-like” and is followed by the above outlined KI (機). Thus, KOUKI’s nuance is something like a liked “mechanism” or a pleasing “moment”.

While not perhaps at the centre of the minds of those who use the phrase on a day-to-day basis, the underlying essence of both of these terms compared to the English language “opportunity” is this is not necessarily describing something to be *capitalised on* per se, but rather, an enabling set of circumstances related to something opportune or sought, be it profit or related to prior thoughts, hopes, ideas, designs, contemplations.

**BIJINESUCHANSU (ビジネスチャンス・チャンス) and CHANSU (チャンス):**

These Japanese-English terms are derived from the English terms “Business Chance” and more simply “Chance”. BIJINESUCHANSU is used solely in business affairs, however CHANSU is used in more day-to-day circumstances. Both refer to a Chance or Opportunity, however the nuance for all four terms mentioned here (KIKAI, KOUKI, BIJINESUCHANSU, CHANSU) will be discussed throughout the findings, discussion and conclusion chapters.

## **Chapter V: Introduction to the Findings:**



**The Horizons of the researcher: potential prejudgements, assumptions, presuppositional prejudices.**

As outlined in chapters II and III, the situatedness of this research is recognised. While open-minded and seeking understanding about the particular essence of participant's experiences as KIGYOUKA, as is the spirit of the hermeneutic phenomenological inquiry I'd like to reflect on and disclose my preunderstandings deemed relevant to this research, as to outline potential prejudgements, assumptions, biases, prejudices, fore-judgements and declare these as significant to this qualitative research endeavour, and to the co-creation of understanding achieved as presented throughout.

**The Horizons of the researcher: Pre-understandings and the historical situatedness of such.**

I (the researcher) will now broadly outline the historic nature of the preunderstandings I arrive at this project with (as deemed relevant) which have worked as the foundations for the suggested research premise, as well as recognising and disclosing those which have formed throughout the course of this research.

In this context, my preunderstandings fall into three significant categories. This said, although categorised for ease of presentation here, it is recognised these are not compartmentally *separate* and are themselves to some degree interconnected and influential on each other. However, for the benefit of the reader, these pre-understandings will be disclosed/reviewed via these three categorisations:

**The cultural** – My (the ‘researcher’) British, English-language upbringing and lived experiences as a native English speaker, as well as my lived experiences as a Japanese speaker within Japanese language milieux as complementary, comparable or integral to one another, as may be foundations for reflection and juxtaposition, as may have contributed to this the proposal of this project implicitly or explicitly.

**The institutional** –

A. My knowledge and understanding of ‘Entrepreneurship’ as an academic researcher, as situated within the current discourse of Entrepreneurship studies, both as theoretical or based on qualitative research i.e., vocational/lived experience.

B. My knowledge and understanding of ‘Entrepreneurship’ via the sub-culture of ‘Entrepreneurship’ as community of practitioners and enthusiasts.

This would be considered to be based mainly as what might be considered ‘Western’, anglosphere Entrepreneurship Studies and Entrepreneurial communities. My familiarity with and exposure to such is recognised as impacting my alertness to and/or the perceived saliency of certain ideas, themes, notions many explored in chapter II part I. e.g., discussions of ‘opportunity’, ‘emergence’, traits and characteristics associated with so-called ‘Entrepreneurs’ and other significant premises as prominent in mainstream and fringe discussions of Entrepreneurship in the anglosphere. This includes the influence of both the orthodoxy and the heterodoxy factions of the field, how they have previously shaped

discussion of ideas within this discipline, and my exposure to such as influential to the shape of this project (as substantive or reactionary).

**The research project** – this includes aspects of the above two categories however is more specific in reference to what the researcher has been exposed to throughout this particular research project; what had been researched as related to this particular line of inquiry (i.e., discourses and schools of thought outlined in chapters I-IV) throughout this paper until the qualitative portion begins, then - as discussed in chapter III - the influence on my understandings and expectations each interview had, as each participant disclosed details of their experiences.

We reach a point in the research where I have been exposed to themes associated with the phenomena of Entrepreneurship from both orthodox and heterodox discourse within the field of Entrepreneurship Studies. This refers to my understandings of key themes presented by the disciplines mainstream such as e.g., ‘profit-opportunity’, ‘opportunity’, ‘the market’, ‘market acceptance’, ‘propensities’, ‘objective data’, ‘alertness’, ‘emergence’, ‘teleological determinism’, ‘cartesian separation’ etc. (as discussed in chapters I and II), as recognised as significant themes within this discourse, as well as ideas I myself draw attention to (in step with others who have taken a phenomenological approach to entrepreneurship studies research) via my proposal of a Gadamerian hermeneutic phenomenological inquiry e.g., ‘hermeneutic intentionality’, ‘hermeneutic understanding’, ‘Being as historically-effected’

‘historicity / linguisticity of understanding’ ‘meaningful experiences’, ‘meaning as essential to experience’, ‘the significance and nuance of language’, etc.

In reaching a point of comparing the literature – the orthodoxy and their problems of incommensurability, the heterodoxy and their problems of establishing a suitable foundation/underpinning/framework to build an alternate approach to the study of ‘Entrepreneurship’, and the evaluation of such discourses and issues vis-à-vis the research I conducted exploring the potentials of a hermeneutic phenomenological approach to study – I reached the conclusion based on this research that a hermeneutical phenomenological approach was deemed useful for addressing this gap in the literature. Naturally some of the ideas essential to this approach were deemed useful to addressing the task at hand by the researcher, however these notions are put to the test by the complimentary methodological tenets outlined in Chapter III as well as through the rigour of the dialectical research process engaged in during the phase of the creation of understanding achieved between researcher and participants.

**Preunderstanding, assumptions, expectations prior to the qualitative portion:**

With regards to my presumptions, assumption, expectations etc. created prior to or during the secondary research phase of this inquiry, my engagement with the key themes and ideas as outlined above would naturally make me aware of or drawn to any of the topics or themes outlined in chapter I-III, as highlighted by any of the schools of thought outlined in those chapters.

However, it is recognised any such assumptions were also integral to this project. This is naturally how the hermeneutic understanding of this type of project is seen to be achieved (See chapters II, III). This said, an essential part of this approach is also fundamentally being open to having these assumptions contradicted by the revelatory aspects of this fusion of horizons.

Whereas this research considers the benefits of the hermeneutical phenomenological approach to studying so-called 'Entrepreneurship' (here KIGYOUKA/KIGYOUKASEISHIN) and the possibility of the intentionality driven 'Entrepreneur' as oppose to a teleological iteration of such, a key benefit of this approach is being able to learn from experiencers of the phenomena being discussed, and the possibility of having assumptions (both of the researcher and the research community) contradicted.

These contradicted assumptions may be in regards to differences between any of the understandings I arrive at this research project with, or understandings achieved during the primary phases of this inquiry regarding the tenets covered in secondary research 'literature review' which frame this project (e.g., contradiction of ideas stemming from the Functionalist school of thought [for example, 'opportunity' not being central to these experiences as interpreted], or contradiction of Phenomenological assumptions [for example, these experiences not being fundamentally built around a broader *purpose* beyond solely exploiting opportunity as hermeneutically directed, not being deemed relatively social

experiences etc. opportunity *is* separate or distinct from entrepreneur, is ‘discoverable’ etc.), or to any of my own assumptions based on (or prior to exposure to) these ideas. This culminates in an understanding stemming out these assumptions (as discussed within the context of this project), as either complementary or contradictory.

The secondary research as prepared and outlined during the ‘literature review’ sections of chapter’s I,II,III and IV provided some implicit presuppositions I enter into this research with and thus they partially frame the approach to and discussion of such phenomenological findings, however whether supportive or contrary of these expectations, the revelations of the meaning and essence of these experiences as disclosed lead this inquiry, and create a basis for the understanding achieved during the interviews/thematic analysis.

Thus, whereas I may be alert to any of the main tenets of these schools of thought as they relate to these broader discussions within which this research situates itself, my intention was to gain accounts of understanding, whether deemed to be related to this academic context or not, to then be able to further discuss such within this academic context. However as is established in Chapters II and III, complete detachment or distancing is not deemed to be achievable from the Gadamerian perspective outlined, thus all of the above pre-understandings are integral to the findings as presented and also to the discussions of such held afterwards.

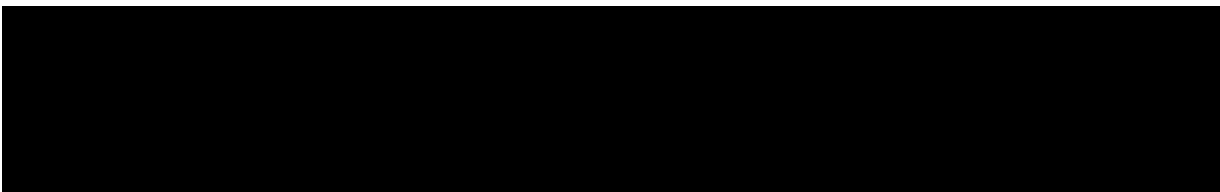
Therefore, based on the approach outlined above, I present understandings and phenomenological samples deemed representative of the essence of these experiences as

reported and understood. As accommodated by this approach, the openness of the interviews allowed participants to guide me through their experiences openly, with my critical engagement checking to clarify and to further gain understanding of these accounts.

The phenomenological samples selected and presented here, as well as the discussions built around them in Chapter IX, include those in line with certain themes of interests to the disciplines and discourses outlined in chapter's I-II (e.g., So-called Functionalist discourse on 'Entrepreneurship', as well as the posited Hermeneutic Phenomenological approach to the study and discussion of such) as well as those revelatory or contradictory to such.

Accounts of experiences and the understandings achieved during the qualitative portion of this research (as either supporting of, or contrary to the theories, concepts and ideas presented in these chapters) were included based on the criteria that they were presenting an understanding of experiences as both particular as well as drawing attention to potential similarities in the essence and meaning held in these accounts. The samples presented represent the essence of meaning and the understanding of them both I and participants created in agreement.

### **The Horizons of the researcher: biographical aspects**



[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] The researcher was not raised nor formally educated in Japan.

The researcher sees this bi-cultural experience as the footing between the two domains central to this inquiry (anglosphere Entrepreneurship research – Japanese language ‘Entrepreneurship’ as lived): the academic discussion of ‘Entrepreneurship’ (outlined in Chapters I and II) situated within the anglosphere, and then the realm of interest to these discussions (as suggested by the researcher) - the lived experiences of the Japanese KIGYOUKA.

However, expectations and prejudgements based on these backgrounds were continually critically reflected on, updated and reevaluated. They were also seen as the foundations for the reflective juxtaposition between the horizons of the researcher and those of the participants, and also useful for the presentation of this research to its anticipated audience (anglosphere academics, learners and practitioners of Entrepreneurship).

Common ground between the researcher and participants here might be my research background in ‘Entrepreneurship’ as well as interactions with non-Japanese ‘Entrepreneurs’ while also being privy to common understandings of the Japanese language milieu, and of life in Japan/Japanese language environments. (This ‘common-ground’ is expected to increase during the period qualitative research and concomitant and thematic reflection).



However, prior to preparing for this research, the researcher had no in-depth understanding of the lived experiences of KIGYOUKA, nor of their experiences of KIGYOUKASEISHIN.

Preparation for the research began with the researcher spending a brief time within multiple entrepreneurial communities in Tokyo, Japan. This involved casual, informal interaction with creators, KIGYOUKA, “Start-Ups”, Start-up staff, venture managers, CEOs of small to medium businesses, Start-up community events organisers and volunteers. Naturally, given the researchers background, the researcher had experience interacting with Japanese nationals from a wealth of different lived-experiences and backgrounds, outside of those who recognise themselves as KIGYOUKA.

This said, the questions asked to the KIGYOUKA interviewed here were as to gain understanding of their individual experiences as deemed meaningful, with regard to their starting of a business/venture as well as their experience of this phenomenon more broadly.

Thus, the researcher did not have an understanding of any of the issues raised in the context of the individuals interviewed prior to the interviews, and all questions asked were intentionally done so to gain such tentative understandings.

### **Japanese/English-Language housekeeping:**

These phenomenological examples present the KIGYOUKA's reflections on meaning, experience, interpretation, understanding, purpose, intuition as well as reflections on common-understanding and their experience of language. Their own experience of interpretation, of experience, of purpose, of meaning, of communication, of language. Their interpretations of experience, existence, meaning, communication, language and the lifeworld they exist within (as accessed subjectively, through the Japanese language) as well as reflections on the interpretive process, language and common-understanding.

All interviews were conducted in Japanese. They were then transcribed (in Japanese) and then thematic analysis (phenomenological reflection, note-taking, analysis etc.) took place both in Japanese and English, as to prepare and finally present the findings in the English language. This sees the researcher as not only the subjective interpreter of the meanings and understandings reached, but also the hermeneutic phenomenological medium for translating these experiences into an English-language representation of them.

That which is presented here is the product of the mutual collaboration and co-authorship of understanding reached between the researcher and participants, based on the participants reflections of their own experience and interpretations (a collaborative, dialectic process that took place in Japanese) as well as the researchers subjective interpretation of both experience and especially the meaning of this accounted experience as experienced in the Japanese language, into this English-language "phenomenological artifact".

As a hermeneutic phenomenological endeavour, these findings chapters also include the researcher's thick descriptions of the broader lived contexts of each participant (as conveyed personally by them to the researcher when disclosing the meaning of their experiences, as well as instances of such as observed first-hand by the researcher) as well as detail of the broader context of the meaning as situated, the broader, historic context participants share (e.g., Japanese language milieu). This involves the researcher interpreting the experience being conveyed by the individuals, to thus portrait their experience as accessed, understood and conveyed by them. Naturally these accounts were expressed through the Japanese language, interpreted and understood by the researcher, further interpreting these accounts and the understanding achieved through them into English.

Therefore, any nuances specific to the Japanese experience as relayed by the individuals will be detailed as interpreted and as deemed as significant by the researcher.

**Substantive “phenomenological examples”:**

The Japanese language while known for its tacit communication-style, and for the reading of “the air” (i.e. common-understandings/shared-understandings – See Chapter VI ), is also known for being descript and environmentally-focused (i.e. contextually-focused as outlined in Chapter IV), with the “conclusion” of an communication often delivered at the end of an account, rather than summarised immediately at the beginning in summary, allowing for some communication to appear vague until that point. (Something commented upon by many of the KIGYOUKA themselves during these interviews – see chapter VIII).

Therefore, this has been a challenge in itself presenting the findings in a way that still remains meaningful when presented translated in English. Unlike approaches typical to English language phenomenological (and other qualitative research) findings, one “point” (one “meaning unit”) made by participants might spread over two or three block-text pull quotes. This has resulted in presenting fuller, “*richer*” accounts per meaning unit than might be typical in research that presents accounts originally conveyed in English.

### **AIDZUCHI:**

AIDZUCHI are the frequent phatic interjections used in Japanese by the listener to convey that they are paying attention and that they understand what the speaker is communicating. This is to reassure the speaker that the listener is actively involved in the conversation. This is typically engaged in through Japanese equivalents to “umm”’s “ahh”’s” “I see” “oh right”, “I understand” etc. Therefore, due to space limitations/convenience for the reader, occasions where the researcher and/or participant partook in episodes of Aidzuchi will be omitted from the excerpts included within this document, indicated with a “ ... ”. However, where an excerpt jumps ahead or omits some of the interview content (again for issues of space and/or for emphasis of a particular issue spread over several moments of the interview.) this will be indicated by “(...)”.

## **Questions:**

As outlined earlier in this section, interviews were semi-structured, dialectical ventures focused on clarifying meaning and gaining understanding.

- It is important to note that in all cases the interviewer focused on broad questions regarding their historic experiences as KIGYOUKA, following up where and as deemed necessary as to gain understanding of the experience.
- The interviewer DID NOT mention the following prior to the participants mentioning them:  
  
“NINGEN” (and “NINGENSEI”) “YONONAKA”, and “JIDAI-NO-NAGARE” (the so-called “flow of the times” as mentioned by participants, shown in accounts presented in Chapter VI) as to not steer accounts away from that of the individuals own experiences, but then when mentioned by the participants, follow-up questions were asked where deemed necessary by the researcher.

## **Participant recruitment and access:**

As phenomenological inquiry takes a criterion approach (van Manen, 1997, 2014; Giorgi, 2009; Cohen, Kahn, & Steeves, 2000; Colizzi, 1978; - See Chapter III), participants were recruited/accepted to participate based on their criteria that: Participants felt they had experienced starting a venture and thus related to the term KIGYOUKA (“Emerging Business

Specialist”) and further recognised the term “KIGYOUKA-SEISHIN” (“The Spirit of the Emerging Business Specialist”) as meaningful/relevant to their experiences. This collaborative, hermeneutic phenomenological approach was thus dependent on both the researcher and the participant agreeing that the participant fit this criterion. As outlined elsewhere in this chapter, participants were invited to participate from across multiple different regions of Japan, and from a variety of both related and unrelated industries, based simply on the participants fitting this above-outlined criteria.

Of the 22 KIGYOUKA interviewed 12 were recommended through acquaintances both in and outside of the broad KIGYOUKA community (including academics, event staff and other non-KIGYOUKA acquaintances) who understood the purpose/criteria of the inquiry recommending KIGYOUKA who they thought fit this criterion. These intermediary parties then introduced the researcher to the suggested individuals and when the researcher felt the individual fit these criteria, and the individual also felt they fit these criteria, and that also they wanted to participate, each party agreed on moving forward with the inquiry. The remaining 10 participants were contacted directly by the researcher, who presented the premise and purpose of the inquiry to these individuals, and asked if – due to their apparent fit with the research criteria – they would like to participate in the inquiry. This resulted in 22 participants initially agreeing to take place in this inquiry.

As a researcher, I was highly fortunate to be welcomed into many KIGYOUKA communities across Japan, and warmly welcomed by the KIGYOUKA participants who took part in the

inquiry to inquire about their experiences (and their perceived meaning of these experiences).

Many of the KIGYOUKA interviewed spent significant amounts of time before interviews

getting to know me and understand the purpose of this research, and allowing me to get to

understand them, their background and their experience in context. Only 3 of the 22

KIGYOUKA interviewed decided they did not want to include their accounts in the research,

or to continue past the initial interviews. This said, all interviewees were forthcoming and

extremely obliging to my questioning, both on and off record.

### **Credibility:**

In line with Guba and Lincoln's (1985) "Credibility", this research project rigorously

conforms to notions of "Prolonged Engagement", "Persistent Observation" and "Member

Checking". This hermeneutic phenomenological research finds these three evaluative criteria

most appropriate to preserve the credibility of this research project. As is outlined in the

methodology section, this research seeks truth as *Alethia*, as Gadamerian hermeneutical

revelation, as disclosed by participants and as interpreted by the researcher. The

trustworthiness of all accounts is assuring throughout all aspects of this research process.

However, as outlined in chapter III, this research does not seek objective truths,

nevertheless it maintains a consistent reflexive attention to detail as to assure the credibility,

dependability and trustworthiness of the findings as presented, and as interpreted. To assure

the following evaluative criteria were engaged in:

## **Prolonged engagement:**

### 1. Time with participants:

All interviewees were busy KIGYOUKA, with limited time available. This said, 15 of the 22 KIGYOUKA interviewed allowed for multiple meetings prior to the interviews (As outlined in the intro to findings sections), typically 2-4 hours of getting to know each other etc. The same number of participants also continued participation after the interviews. This was also supplemented by deliberate/accidental encounters with the KIGYOUKA after the interviews at social events such as conferences, seminars, workshops etc.

### 2. Time within context:

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED], building contacts and developing an understanding of the context of the research in broad manner through an initial ethnographic submersion into the Japanese entrepreneurial community (more accurately, subsets of communities that overlap, interact or remain distinct from one another due to sectoral difference, geography etc.), within both the greater Tokyo area and its surrounding prefectures (the “Kanto” area) as well as the “Kansai” (Osaka, Kobe , Kyoto) regions. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]





**Member checking:**

The researcher saw this aspect of the research as due course/process as the premise of this phenomenological inquiry was to gain a detailed understanding of participants experiences thus, lots of enthusiastic yet tactful double checking occurred both on-record during the interviews, as well as off-record during the prolonged engagement phase as to gain deeper contextual understanding of issues is closed within accounts.

This is a core part of the dialogical research approach, to create understanding and to check with the individual that they are understood correctly. Much of Gadamer's premise of understanding as agreement relies on the open and collaborative venture of achieving such understanding,

Throughout the period acquiring interviews and understanding, such checking was employed as to both gain an authentic understanding of these experiences, as well as to present a credible understanding of experiences, interpretations, experience and understandings of the KIGYOUKA in context.

As a reflective researcher, it was constantly my default to question even the most mundane of acts, experiences, opinions, interpretations also asking the KIGYOUKA to reflect on these issues deeper than they perhaps usually would. Although many of the participants were extremely busy, all of them highly obliging, reflecting on each question as to communicate an as nuanced account of their experiences as possible.

Much of this off-record checking was done in informal settings such as restaurants and cafes, waiting for transportation and in environments where the KIGYOUKA could indulge the question and in most cases relish the chance to reflect on their experiences, answering such with great enthusiasm.

**Problems encountered:**

As both Gadamer and van Manen observe, the collaborative nature of the interview should flow like “friendship”. There was no combativeness nor hostility in any of the interviews, but three of the total 22 interviews (three also of the eventual 19 included) became more subdued when the recorder was put on, acting as obstacle to the flow of the discussion. This said, lots of the supplementary time spent with the KIGYOUKA helped me understand their experience (and their accounts of the experience) in an in-depth way. So, the essence of their experience was checked to be understood off record.

**Participants pseudonyms and summary:**

The 19 of the 22 participants who wanted to include their accounts in the research are here listed. However, to retain the anonymity of participants, each KIGYOUKA has been given a pseudonym and corresponding acronym. All KIGYOUKA who contributed to this research were either originally from or currently based in either the greater Kanto area (Specifically here, within Tokyo-city, Chiba-prefecture or Kanagawa-prefecture) as well as the greater Kansai area (Kobe-city, Osaka-City, Kyoto-City and the surrounding areas), yet to retain participant anonymity, each participants locale will not be specified. All participants are native Japanese speakers, bi/or multilingual where stated.

For details, see table on following page:

**Participants (pseudonyms), plus brief biography:**

"Mrs Be Bold" ("MBB")	REDACTED
"Mr B Tech" ("MBT")	REDACTED
"Dr Cap" ("DC")	REDACTED
"Mr Chef-App" ("MCA")	REDACTED
"Miss Content Design" ("MCD")	REDACTED
"Mr. E-Commerce" ("MEC")	REDACTED
"Dr Emergency" ("DE")	REDACTED
"Mr Good Jobs" ("MGJ")	REDACTED
"Mrs Healthy IoT" ("MHI")	REDACTED
"Mr Laser" ("ML")	REDACTED
"Mr Meat-Marketing" ("MMM")	REDACTED
"Mr Medical-Venture" ("MMV")	REDACTED
Mr Pizza Jed-i ("MPJ") –	REDACTED
"Mrs Rivers"	REDACTED
"Miss Sake K" ("MSK")	REDACTED
"Mr Spaceman" ("MSM")	REDACTED
"Mr Tele-App" ("MTA")	REDACTED
"Mrs Techno" ("MT")	REDACTED
"Mrs Wonder Work" (MWW)	REDACTED

### Glossary of Japanese terms:

Japanese Characters	Word as Romanized	Meaning (of compound Kanji)	English equivalent
起業	KIGYOU	Awakening/emerging Business	New Venture/Start-Up
起業家	KIGYOUKA	Awakening/emerging Business Specialist	“Entrepreneur”
	KIGYOUKA-SEISHIN	The spirit of an Awakening/Emerging Business Specialist”	“Entrepreneurship”
機会	KIKAI	Mechanism Meeting/Encounter	Opportunity
好機	KOUKI	Liked Mechanism	Opportunity
ビジネスチャンス (チャンス)	BIJINESU-CHANSU (CHANSU)	Loan word from English – “business chance”	A business “chance” / Opportunity
失敗	SHIPAI	Mistake/Losses	Failure /a miss /a mistake
間柄/間から	AIDAGARA	Quality/ characteristics of (“-ness”) between/ relationship/  Between-ness/ (Subjective) space	Shared subjectivity – The subjective relationships between people.
人間	NINGEN	People / (subjective) space	Humankind/Humanity
世の中	YONONAKA	The centre of the shared era/time	The world/times
世間	SEKEN	Shared era/World (subjective) space	
仲間	NAKAMA	Relationship space (subjective)	Peers/Companions/Friends – specifically, the relationship/understandings between acquaintance
間	MA	Subjective-Space	Also known in the West as ‘negative-space’ (However, nuance in the Japanese context is slightly different to when this notion is translated into the English language context)
時代の流れ	JIDAI-NO-NAGARE	Era/generation/time’s Flow	Flow of the times / era changing
空気	KUUKI	AIR/SPACE ENERGY	The ‘air’ of a situation, the unspoken air of a situation, the background

			understanding of a situation.
空気を読む	KUUKI-WO-YOMU	Read the KUUKI (See above)	To read the 'air' - to read situation based on the common understanding between individuals involved or broader common understandings.
人間性	NINGENSEI	Quality of NINGEN (See above)	Humanity (Quality of being human)
人間関係	NINGEN-KANKEI	NINGEN-relations	(Inter) human relations
信頼関係	SHINRAI-KANKEI	Trust-relations	Human trust-relations
心	KOKORO	Heart/Mind	One's heart/mind
志	KOKORO-ZASHI	Hearts aim	Will/ Aspiration
三方良し	SANPO-YOSHI	Three-way goodness	





**Chapter VI – Findings chapter one: “Purpose”.**

## **Chapter VI – Findings chapter one: “Purpose”.**

Findings chapter one presents accounts that fall under the theme of “Purpose”:

Accounts reflect on the subjectively-interpreted purpose of participants’ individual experiences as KIGYOUKA, as meaningful to them. The meaning of these experiences and the purpose they are interpreted to address. This chapter presents participant accounts reflecting on their original experiences of interpreting the purpose of their venture, and of the starting-up of a venture as purposeful. This includes their reflections on the purpose of their experience of KIGYOUKA-SEISHIN and of their starting of ventures.

Themes represented in this chapter fall into two sub-themes:

- Contextually-oriented concern
- The “Flow of the times”

As is typical of the hermeneutic approach (outlined in chapter III), the researcher will provide thick contextual description of these accounts as historically and socially situated as to reveal the meaning of the accounts as experienced. This dwells on meaning and language, both verbatim and as inferred. Through these first accounts (especially the initial account Mrs Techno, “MT”) the researcher takes the liberty to introduce relevant Japanese themes both as mentioned and significant, and also as relevant to accounts across the findings’ chapters, as to help to reveal meaning within these accounts as situated. Thus, this first section serves to layout accounts of the interviewed KIGYOUKAs perceived purpose of their venture, but also serves to present supplementary notions, where raised by participants and as significant more broadly, as to give the reader a richer understanding of these

purposes and their meaning as understood in context. These understandings here will enable the  
navigate to gain more understandings of the meanings and themes presented in chapters VII and VIII.

**“Purpose” part one: “Contextually-Oriented Concern”.**

**Mrs Healthy IoT (“MHI”):**

Mrs Healthy IoT (MHI) had noticed a problem in the eating habits and broader lifestyles of office workers of her generation. For a long while, she had wanted to start a venture as to address these issues, but felt she lacked the practical experience required to do so. Having a tentative idea, MHI sought to gain understanding and experience as to eventually start her own venture.

MHI’s first venture was a software “Spin-out” from her previous company, something she embarked upon as an experiment, considering the purpose of that venture ultimately as a learning experience:

MHI  
*Then, as you’d expect, we started-up from a ‘Selfish Heart/Mind’,  
like a ‘We-wanna-do-things-as-we’d-think-to’ kinda-thing.*

A.

This spin-out was seen as a chance to learn *how* they’d “do things as (they)’d think to”, yet as expressed in the example above, MHI considers this to be a “selfish” attitude (something she assumes is a common assumption – an issue discussed further throughout chapter VIII). Having achieved the meaningful (and purposeful) learning experience of starting-up through this spin-out, her second venture served the greater purpose she aspired for with the initial venture. As she immediately continues, her current venture provides healthy, convenience food for office-workers through Bento-Boxes, IoT automation devices and supplementary lifestyle coaching:

MHI:

*However, this second start-up is like "is it okay for society to stay like this?", so, rather than 'for the sake of profit', as you might expect we were like '... for the people eating-out, for the sake of those people, for the sake of a generation - shouldn't we do something?'. So, is it really necessary to build a structure/mechanism for that? That is where I started moving my mind. Yes. That's why two exist. Yes.*

B.

From these insights we can see how both experiences have contributed to servicing the same purpose.

Initially, MHI span out as to have the freedom to learn how to do things the way she wanted to, and then through this experience, she developed a “structure” or “mechanism” to deliver an education of healthy-living to a generation she has interprets as neglected. This was achieved over the experiences of starting two ventures. Both servicing the same subjectively-interpreted purpose.

This issue (of a lack of healthy food for offices) was something MHI had been thinking about prior to the spin-out, something she'd noticed while at her previous company. She recalls her process of reflection, while specifically noting she usually starts with herself and then looks for similar problems in her surrounding environment:

MHI:

*“...Right at the beginning, (I start with) myself, yeah.  
Then... firstly, I find a 'definitely-this-kind-of-things-a-problem-isn't it' type – 'problem'.  
Yeah. I find problems. Problems.  
Then, that problem...next I think like – 'What will I do and can I solve it?' ...”*

C.

MHI has an auto immune disease, one she defines in her account as a so-called “lifestyle disease”.

She was spending a huge amount on medicines each month, so looked toward understanding the root

of the problem. Through her own research she realised her health issues were able to be remedied relatively easily, simply through lifestyle and diet changes. However, this “sense” was something she believed was not “common-sense” between her peers and the generation she was a part of.

MHI:

*“This time, in the case of the food venture, I was, well, sick. This was able to be solved with food. So then, our surrounding employees, the employees of my company also, whatsit, their food was just sweets and bread etc., and well... they became fat. Then, the result of their health examination too, had come back worse. The ‘problem’ of them possibly becoming sick, if this was the case, came about. This, undoubtedly, even in other companies, this is happening the same isn’t it, I thought. This - they could get sick if left unchecked – this could be that kind of problem... Yeah. So, starting with myself, the problems of the people arou... near me.”*

D.

Starting with herself, she reflects on her own experiences and then sees if this is applicable to the people around her as well. Then, during this occurrent reflection, she further makes the assumption that what was happening in her office must also be happening in offices elsewhere:

MHI:

*“With that, the same thing is happening elsewhere, people working in offices ... don’t exercise. (Their) food is unbalanced. (They) Love sweet things. Only carbohydrates... However, erm, I first thought about it at the office (her previous company prior to spinning out) but... so starting from me, my office, the surrounding, erm, working people, but to look at doing that... in a wider range, all over Japan, people of the world, eventually I wondered what kind of meal is good for the body, what kind of food, if you were to make it, like, you’d become clean/healthy type-thing, to become the self you want to, everyone doesn’t know, everyone doesn’t understand how - that’s what I thought.”*

E.

Making the assumption that the particular revelation she had realised isn't common understanding - something absent within the current generations' common understandings - she looked to provide those citizens in the same situation as herself and her colleagues with this understanding as a solution to this problem, in advance of it. She assumed a gap in the public's understanding and sought to address it by presenting a scheme – an integrated lifestyle and wellness-solution derived from her above outlined lived experiences, aided by her background in software. She saw this as a tentative understanding of the problem and had dwelled on a solution, based on hers:

MHI:

*Well, in order to solve that, they should eat, erm, a really optimum meal, erm... I thought that there was is definitely the need, the necessity, there to make and provide what you'd call an optimum meal.*

F.

From these reflections of her private life, and observing those around her, she believed there was a need to be serviced. Based on these reflections of her own experience, she ascertained a problem, gained understanding to address the problem, and then applied these understandings as a tentative solution. Through this process of reflection MHI arrived at the assumption that this was a need/necessity to be serviced more broadly. She now not only provides healthy meals to offices across Japan (through food encapsulation solutions and IoT technologies developed in house by her venture), but also offers a broader education of such lifestyle to a generation of office workers she perceives as left behind and neglectful of their health.

A characteristic of many accounts in this sub-theme share is the discernment of a *tentative* need or necessity, rather than viewing such as a so-called “profit-opportunity” (or ascertaining such through

objective data). MHI outlined through much of her account that for her, being a KIGYOUKA entails understanding/recognising something absent from society, and to provide that which is believed to be necessary. She touches upon this societal/contextual-orientation when asked what she considers essential to her experience of being an KIGYOUKA in Japan. Here, she fleets between generalised comments and reflections on her own KIGYOUKASEISHIN.

MHI:

*“One thing... erm, how can I put it. One thing is “I want it to be this way – type of thoughts”, isn’t it. Rather than something that is essential (to her KIGYOUKA experience), as a KIGYOUKA I think “It’d be good if we had this”. Yes. Well, it’s, uh, what is the business for, so that, in order to - as you’d expect - to change the YONONAKA’s society, to make it better, yeah. (Coughing).*

*You want a business to have a clear “what for” part.”*

G.

As MHIs accounts display, she reflected on her own experiences and saw where these experiences could help the broader environment. A civically-minded (i.e., contextually / environmentally-focused) necessity-driven purpose, addressing what MHI deemed was absent or needed in and by the YONONAKA. A key theme binding accounts in this subsection (and to some degree the foundations of all phenomenological examples in this chapter) is that they in some manner also consider a “what for part” as an essential premise, something focused upon in these accounts of purpose. “Miss Sake K” (“MSK”) illustrates this in her purpose for starting up:



**“Miss Sake K” (MSK)**

MSK:

*... so, no matter what there were problems. So, wha-, to say what, what kind of problems there were, I myself, I gave birth to my daughter, then, working fulltime, well... when I came back to my workplace as an employee, erm... well... it's like moms aren't given important jobs kinda-thing...  
Erm, it was, what you might call a frustrating experience...*

H.

Having felt a sense of discrimination within her previous company with regard to working-mothers not being given work with a sense of responsibility, Miss Sake K recognised this was a bigger problem beyond her own personal experiences, and so started her own company with the intention of developing a more inclusive approach to HR and management. Reflecting on the purpose of her venture she continues:

MSK:

*Then, at that time, ah, I started a business, so, I wanted to create a company that can accept various ways of working -kinda thing, that was the start.  
So, basically, even mothers, erm, how can I put it, can say they're worthwhile, like being able to manage, it's a great big word but to offer "work with a sense of responsibility" ...  
"let's build an [organisation] like that"- that kinda thing was the start.*

I

That even beyond having an initial business idea to develop a venture around, her focus was on developing a venture (an “organisation” as she puts it) as to employ others keen to spend their days doing work of substance, yet providing these employees a flexibility to allow them to deal with the realities of their responsibilities outside of work also.

Miss Sake K had already had experience co-starting a venture, an initiative that came about while she was interning at a company in India. The venture was a for-profit Start-up that aimed to provide solar-powered lighting to developing communities, with a focus on providing employment to struggling mothers within these communities. This was her first encounter with business (her academic background was in foreign languages and English literature). The core idea regarding the technology was generated by her then business partner who asked her to be the venture management dealing with the “business side” of the venture. Yet the technology was significantly underdeveloped, and didn’t satisfy the outlined purpose so the venture ceased from being active. She returned to Japan disappointed, however, MSK had gained meaningful insight and an important and unique learning experience. On entering the workforce back in Japan, she realised the premise of providing a workplace for mothers to work to their best capacity still seemed to be relevant there also, and thus saw the notion of starting her own venture as method to address this problem. While discussing the notion of retaining her venture’s original purpose in relation to potential growth, she states:

MSK:

*As you’d expect, that experience in India is strong ... Um, what remains in my heart/mind is, no matter what, with regard to the opportunity to educate poor women and their children is, well, nobody protects them, what we wanted to do is to make jobs, properly educate those mothers, ... and then give her a salary according to the local standard then, as a plus, the company will provide support so that the children can go to school during the day.*

*Well then, if we can do that, moms are happy, and the future of the children is not affected by the environment in which they were born, and there is a chance for them to have future opportunities. Well, I think it's okay to give such an opportunity to (even) just one adult... Well, because I want to do that (in the current venture in Japan), I want to increase the size of the company and the number of people who work...*

J.

Her current business is a web and app-based tool for translating the nuanced experience of drinking Japanese Sake (similar to how the complexities of grape-wines are described, distinguished and understood). Her academic background, her time living abroad (both in India and Australia) and also her proficiency of English (as well as several other languages) assisted her in ascertaining this premise as an issue of concern and her idea as a useful solution. To address the culturally-situated factors related to the Sake-drinking experience that often alienate it from drinkers outside of Japan. Yet beyond this highly interesting and unique idea for a business, Miss Sake K views her businesses' purpose as to be an (inter-relational) "organisation" servicing a need within society through the existence of the venture itself (i.e., offering employment to working mothers)-as well as this offering of a useful service to the public. This self-reflection-cum-civic-mindedness was the original driver for her to start her venture. This business has been her 3<sup>rd</sup> time starting a Start-up venture, each venture quiet drastically different, however each had the common aim of providing such an "organisation" and each became a learning experience in itself, gaining understanding, as directed with this goal in mind. Miss Sake K (MSK) perceives her venture as a forum to accommodate people facing similar struggles she'd encountered working as a working mother in Japan. It is under this premise she considers how she feels growth is perceived and her approach to it:

MSK:

*To be honest, I myself I'm not really interested in money, well, is that good or bad? (laughs).*

*I like eating delicious food, I like that type of thing but...*

*Well, I don't really care about living in a big house or wanting to drive a big car.*

*If we're talking about that kinda thing, I'm the type that's fine with just sharing.*

*But rather than that, as you'd expect, erm, (to expand for) those who just by being a woman can't make their dreams come true, well, to give them another chance for vocational training, to work our hardest, and then for those, for those women, those who smile ...*

*- for self to be happy is for things to always be to be consistently the same, so there,  
the larger the company's scale, the more smiles it will have.*

K.

As saccharine as such may sound to the English-speaker, these quite sentimental turns-of-phrase (e.g., expanding for the “smiles” of her employees) are less mawkish in the Japanese context, and MSKs intentions appeared sincere, driving her to endeavour to start a venture. Here she states she herself is not interested in money, however, when discussing the growth of the venture and the security of her employees, she is firm that earning money is important as to sustain the venture, as for it to serve its purpose within society:

MSK:

*Many Japanese people say, "you mustn't make money", NO, it's good to make money,  
but it's just how to make money, after, so on, An-, something I held with me for a long time, that's,  
what I cherished, SANPO-YOSHII "three ways". Customers, employees, and their regions, well,  
it's like that everyone in the stake will be happy...*

L.

Here she mentions the Japanese philosophy of “SANPO-YOSHII” 三方よし literally “three-sides good” or ‘three-way satisfaction’. This refers to the notion that in business what benefits 1. you the individual, should also benefit 2. those you work with (partners, customers, clients etc.) and 3. society at large, ultimately. Thus, circularly benefiting the buyer, the seller and community/environment as a whole. As outlined above, MSK seeks to satisfy this idea by producing a venture that contributes to society through enabling and (nurturing) her employees. yet as she alludes to, this takes money to expand and to support the perceived purpose of the venture (in the SAPOYOSHII context).

This inclination to service her broader environment could be considered as her ventures “what for part” as mentioned above by Mrs Healthy-IoT (something apparent in most accounts in this chapter).

**Mrs Techno (“MT”):**

Similar to MSKs account, Mrs Techno (MT) felt she had encountered a “ceiling” to progression at her old company and so left to start her own – to work as she’d want to. However, beyond her own personal want to develop a work environment to grow, she states the purpose of her venture is also contextually-oriented. She perceives her venture purpose to be two interrelated issues - “*human development*” and “*social contribution*”:

MT:

*“Well, its human development and social contribution. ...Since it is a software company, we use machines and make things, with people, people make them by hand. Handmade by people. Moreover, even if you have the ability (to do something), if you have low KOKOROZASHI, as you’d expect, you cannot do good things...”*

M.

As Mrs Techno states, even though they’re a software company, humans, people, make their produce.

Thus, the human aspect of this venture is considered vital in achieving her purpose of “social contribution”. This requires us to further unpack some of the notions MT refers to during her account.

To begin, two terms MT uses in relation to the perceived purpose of her venture (terms useful to further reveal the meaning in her account) are “KOKOROZASHI” (seen above) and NINGENSEI (used elsewhere and throughout her account). KOKOROZASHI means “will” or “aspiration” (verbatim it means “heart’s purpose/ focus/ goal/ target”). Its nuance is important as used within the greater context of her reflection on her ventures purpose. KOKOROZASHI carries the inference that this will or aspiration should also service some civic or societal duty (this is not explicitly represented in the phrase logographically, however the term as understood carries this undertone - See Yokoyama and Birchley, 2020). NINGENSEI is mentioned later during her reflection on purpose, but is relevant

throughout these examples: NINGENSEI refers to one’s level of “humanity” (Here, the *condition of being human*) with regard to an individual’s ability to maintain and service interpersonal relationships and person-to-person communications, in accordance with commonly understood and accepted social protocols. Unpacked, the term contains NINGEN – Our broader “Humanity” (here the collective noun, however when considered as NINGEN, our focus is on its AIDAGARA; the “betweenness” of shared subjective-space *in-between* individual human beings as socially and historically situated - see Chapter V for more details), and the suffix -SEI as in “quality of” (e.g., the *quality of being female*, the *quality of being male*, the *quality of being NINGEN*). That to be “human” (more specifically here, to be ‘NINGEN’) one is to understand how to interact and to behave with others.

These qualities of KOKOROZASHI and NINGENSEI inform each of MTs outlined purposes, while at the same time also highlight the interrelatedness of “*human-development*” as it contributes to an empathetic “*social contribution*”. As complex as it is, it is this *interrelated notion* which MT perceives to be the core purpose of her venture. The following phenomenological examples from MT further reflects on qualities of KOKOROZASHI and NINGENSEI as she feels they contribute to this purpose. Continuing from the above statement, she elaborates on how aspects of ones NINGENSEI contribute to achieving this social contribution, and why human development is of equal importance to achieving this.

MT:

*Then as you’d expect, with the culture unique to the Japanese people, what you’d call “you-can-understand-without-saying”, the ability to “read” in such a situation is very important.*

N.

As this was a recurring theme throughout many of the accounts included in the finding's chapters, we will endeavour to unpack what MT means by the term 'read' (読む). Being able to *read*, here means to 'interpret a situation as commonly understood' to some degree *empathetically*, to be able to read what might be interpreted as the "common" understanding of a situation.

Due to the grammatical and semantic idiosyncrasies of the Japanese language briefly touched upon in chapter V (e.g., lack of subject predicate), communication using the Japanese language often has a dependence on requisite background understanding of a situation; on assumptions, on expectations.

This is to compensate for portions of a communication not made explicit verbally or due to this context dependence. Japanese speakers also tend to self-contextualise, depending on the context of a situation (Maynard, 1989/1993). In many of these social scenarios, the so-called "reading of the 'air'/'atmosphere'" (空気を読む KUUKI-WO-YOMU) is essential as to ascertain the meaning of potentially unverballed portions of a communication from picking up on implicit, supplementary, situation-specific cues (an understanding of such expected of interlocuters) or refers to sharing a common reading of a situation as to respond 'appropriately', as expected.

KUUKI (空気) here refers to a social "air" (or further "atmosphere") - the implicit, situation specific background understanding (and by extension, the anticipations and expectations related to such) imparted during socialisation, which the above-outlined type of tacit communication (and other aspects of the Japanese language communicative milieu) sometimes depends on.

The term 読む YOMU (*to read*) here is to also *listen to, to comprehend* and to be *observant toward* these unspoken, metacommunicative, sociolinguistic cues one explicitly understands is expected of a particular situation. Grammar/phrasing, context and supplementary background understanding helps one to infer that which is meant. Thus, for one to be a mature and competent member of society, it is perceived that one should be able to read and comprehend these cues (as relative to ones NINGENSEI).

Thus, “reading” is highly important – the reading of people (their concerns), the reading of a social situation and as outlined further in part two of this chapter the “reading of the times”.

It is through this dependence on background understanding (as well as the sometime lack of a distinct subject in communication, giving a sensation of a shared or bonded experience) interlocutors are able to share a sensation of empathy, and to anticipate each other based on this reading of their “air” and the following of the social protocols expected of them. It is this empathetic understanding of customers and of the YONONAKA that “*the ability to ‘read’ a situation*” is in reference to. As MT continues:

MT:

*So, “if you say it, we’ll do it” is kinda obvious in a job, but even if they (customers) don't say it, there is a culture where you can take a stand from the customer's point of view and understand the customer's side, if you really think about the customer, so how quickly and uh ... there, it's not possible to go into that place unless you are very mature as NINGEN.*

O.

The individual needs to be able to “read” as to empathise with the customer, to anticipate, to see the needs of the customer as the customer would see them. Mori (1979) calls this the “binary rapport”.

That for Japanese speakers, “what opposes ‘you’ is not the ‘self’ but rather what opposes ‘you’ is also



a ‘you’ from the point of view of ‘your you’” (Mori 1979; 63/64 – For translated version provided here, see Maynard, 2002;68). This empathetic rapport is a key premise in Japanese language communication (as well as an articulate manner of describing this relational experience). It is this level of anticipatory understanding that is expected of socially mature NINGEN. The “your you” that is possible through empathy, an empathy accessed through an assumed “mutual” understanding/interpretation of a situation, based on the shared-background understanding present within the YONONAKA. This level of NINGENSEI is important as to participate socially as to provide a standard of service MT assumes is valued by the YONONAKA.

To be able to do this, one must be able to read society, to read the common-understanding shared between actors in the YONONAKA. To intuitively read a situation through these anticipatable *expectations*.

MT:

*... Communication skills are also like that, and so is the fact that you have to know the industry of a customer of the company, and of course, because we are engineers, in the sense that you have to know IT technology as well, you have to study a lot. With that meaning, as you’d expect, I think there is that growth as a person (within the stated purpose), so I mean the ability to communicate, the ability to involve people and work together toward a certain purpose ...*

P.

Thus, this statement outlines that the venture’s purpose is twofold; to develop people to a standard where they have both high KOKOROZASHI and a high standard of NINGENSEI to service the purpose of the venture the KOKOZASHI is servicing. To develop *both*, as to develop employees who

have “the ability to communicate, the ability to involve people and work together toward a certain purpose” as to then be able to develop the above-mentioned “social contribution”.

That communication and relationships are so important to the venture existing as purposeful.

MT mentioned that the old-fashioned ways that she interpreted had acted as a ceiling to her progression, was a part of a culture she wanted to improve through the existence of her venture:

MT:

*So, when I started a company, even though I had a strong KOKOROZASHI, I couldn't work without that environment (of the calibrated company), so, with that, with the desire to change (previously outlined outdated aspects of) society, IT can work anywhere, so to speak, erm, even without a box or a building like this, you can work with one computer, I thought that if I had technical skills, communication skills, and high NINGEN-SEI, I would be able to work alone.*

*(...)*

*I think I can really create an environment where I can work better. For that reason, um, it is necessary to train people, and I think that by doing that, society will become richer, won't it?*

Q.

There may appear to be an irony here in that she is emphasising the necessity of a social humanity (her “high NINGENSEI”) as to be able to go independent. But significantly, this is precisely the meaning MT aims here to convey— In that even to pioneer, to establish things as she'd do them, she still must be able to both read, and further, appease/appeal to the sensibilities of the established social milieu. In the above example, MT felt that if she had the qualities listed, she could create a venture complementary to this balance of pioneership and satisfying of expectations. An environment of (and

conducive to developing) the high-NINGENSEI that to her, is vital to achieving the purposes of providing a contribution to society. It is also perceived as necessary to develop a shared sense of purpose, a shared sense of KOKOZASHI, as calibrated. That to change a culture, she needs to develop a culture of her own, a manner of doing things. However - significantly - it is perceived that it must be one that is both in chime with her aspirations, as well as a manner that is accepted (and contributing to) the YONONAKA (an understanding achieved through an historically-situated reading of Others, and the YONONAKA more broadly) as to make this social contribution.

**“Mrs Be-Bold” (MBB):**

“Mrs Be Bold’s” trigger to starting her own venture was also through an experience of not being able to enter the workforce while being a mother (outlined in chapter 2). However, when asked about the purpose of her entrepreneurial activity (put to her by the researcher as her “KIGYOUKA-activity”) more broadly, she answers:

MBB:

*“My KIGYOUKA activity’s (main purpose)” ... is it too much to say a “contribution to society?” – but, the biggest form of contribution I can do... I guess?*

*Well, for example, if I was a musician, I’d sing a song, express myself, for example, to get money, people who express themselves by painting, all of them, (there is something like) “one’s own ability” to express something, like an “expression to society”, they have that kind of “income” form to them don’t they?*

...

*So, I think I probably want to do that with business.*

*I want to try my own power (capacity), not in a picture or something, but in the form of a business, I would like people to be happy (joyful/appreciative) and in that, if I can make money, I’d be most happy (grateful).*

*R: Hmm... kind of like a "business-art" ("art" through the medium of "business") ...?*

*MBB: Hmm, perhaps, if we were to express something through it..."*

S.

MBB has started two ventures, without having any prior business experience or formal business education. The first e-commerce venture served an immediate purpose of working from home while having children. However, on understanding her capacity, MBB started a second for-profit venture this time developed around a so-called "what-for part", addressing a societal issue of concern to MBB, the current generations "food-waste" problem. Based on her observations of the times (the YONONAKA), MBB sees her KIGYOUKASEISHIN, her venture and its activities as a medium to have a dialogue with society. To present an expression – a communication of both an issue and a perceived solution - as to start a dialogue with society. It becomes clear that she is referencing creating something of value, expressing herself in a way that is of value to others/ valued by others. She perceives her KIGYOUKA activity as similar to an artist who creates value from nothing, through her interpretation, she develops something of perceived societal "value". Value as ascertained through this (implicit) dialogue with society, as she reads, understands and communicates with the YONONAKA, making her contribution in way of a suggested, tentative solution (her expression) to an issue perceived of as being of mutual concern.

Of her two ventures, one is an extremely popular online e-commerce business, the other is a for-profit venture dealing with food-waste. From a Market-economic perspective both of these ventures could be describe as of Entrepreneurial arbitrage (as she profits from price discrepancies between markets), yet from MBBs first person perspective, she views the ventures themselves as her mediation of

goods/services as her contribution to society, understood through her expressive interaction with society.

**“Mr Tele-Applications” (MTA):**

MTA has started multiple ventures providing internet telecommunications services, as well as telecommunications apps and tech. Having lived abroad for several years he felt frustration through the lack of mobile Wi-Fi across international borders available to Japanese citizens. Based on these experiences, imagining the frustrations of other Japanese travelling abroad, and empathising with foreigners living in Japan sharing similar frustrations, he started a venture to remedy these issues.

Reflecting on the main purpose of his KIGYOUKA-activities, he says:

MTA:

*I think business is something that delivers value to society, and I think that money will arrive after that, give something, and in return, in return, money occurs. ...*

*In the end, so I think that making money is, in the end, making money is a consequence.*

*First of all, within the YONONAKA, even if people pay money - this is at first - I think that things will start after providing wanted products, desired services, so my way of thinking of my business is to provide “wanted things people are willing to pay for “(up-to/until-payment-wanted-things) the things which that society, those people want, the things that are necessary to society.*

[...]

*Well, ultimately, I think it's value, I think it's a business activity to provide that (value) to society and people.*

T.

His purpose is perceived to be providing something of value to society in the form of a necessity, something so necessary that it would be paid for. His trigger to starting up stems from reflecting on

frustrations in the day-to-day that he feels goes unnoticed, or are accepted by the public. As outlined in Chapter VII part 2, MTA feels he has never sought “opportunity”, but instead seeks to improve things. Here he mediates on that:

MTA:

*For example, for me, absolutely the start was frustration. What I was dissatisfied with.*

(...)

*Somehow, I thought something should be improved, so a business was born, that's how I think.*

*Then, is this something I myself would actually, really want to try, something I'd want?*

*Meaning, well, erm ... that doesn't mean that it will be accepted by other people and others, but at the very least, well, I will do business, and if I was to do business, I think that means I'd be facing a commitment to the next five years or ten years. Well, when that happens, I feel like I'm likely to break in the middle if it's not something, a product or service, I want I myself.*

*Why, whether or not it will be accepted by others, of course, may be important, but me, to make a choice rather than that (acceptance of others), is it something I myself really want?*

*This, erm, the materials to my judgment, erm, "is that what you yourself want to do?", If it was my business. Erm, "Can I do it?", "Can't I do it??" This will be used as my judgment material.*

(...)

*If it was just a case of whether it seems like it'd make money, well, I've got tons of them (ideas) but, well... if it's something I don't really wanna do I won't do it.*

U.

Through the criteria of *is-it-a-necessity-that-people-will-pay-for* and *is-it-something-he-himself-would-use?* This is the indicator of whether he feels it would be considered necessary in the YONONAKA. So again, starting with “Self” and applying his own reflective interpretations of problems experienced (e.g., frustrations) to the YONONAKA, anticipating them as a shared problem, but accepting his reading of the YONONAKA might not be shared by all participants of the YONONAKA. He addresses an over-lay between his interpretations of a situation, his tentative

solution, and those who accept this perspective. Those who have experienced similar experiences to him, those who share similar perspectives might accept his suggested solution.

**Mrs Wonder Work (MWW):**

MWW:

*I was originally a manufacturer's researcher, a chemist. Well, erm, I was doing research on pharmaceuticals, errrm, medical, and medicine ... So, this medicine goes from research, lab-level to the commercial -level, so it's a long time ... It takes 10 years, 10 years ...Erm... what I'd be doing now, like, is a long time before coming to the store...So, I couldn't feel any sense of reward, in my previous job.*

V.

Mrs Wonder Work (MWW) started her own aromatherapy company (utilising her pharmaceuticals background), as to apply her background to something she could enjoy and feel worth from. However, surprised at how competent she became at running a business, she began to reflect on why it took her so long to leave her previous job. Through this reflection she realised a lack of understanding/experience put her off. However, during this moment of reflection she realised the potential value in her lived-experience of “starting-up” to *others* who wanted to but hadn't. She was then eventually driven to use this experience as the premise for a second – currently her main – venture, a venture envisioned as to help other women stuck in under-satisfying jobs to do the same. MWW is now an Entrepreneurship Consultant specialising exclusively for female clients, where she feels she is able to see results in her clients almost instantly. MWW's first “Start-up” was seen as necessary to allow her to do something as a vocation that she could perceive as worthwhile (i.e. a perceived good use of her time), but then using this meaningful learning experience as the foundations, she empathised with others not able to achieve a sense of reward or purpose through their job, who felt they weren't

confident enough to start-up without a formal learning experience and/or a trusted support network already in place.(See Chapter VIII for more accounts stressing the importance of consultancy and trust). MWW reflected on this issue. and believed this was a need to be serviced in the YONONAKA:

MWW:

*Right now, erm, we're doing this consulting work, and there, I'm helping women to start businesses, uh, to "start-up", and to "stage-up" ...  
My job is to change their character into "value" ...To make that person's character, erm, into a form that sells.*

W.

In this venture MWW eventually satisfies her own needs to observe the results of her efforts - by helping to develop the 200-strong entrepreneurial community she attends to-on a daily basis, something she perceives as a persistent and on-going process - in itself perceivably providing something of value to the greater community. What is interesting here is her ventures purpose is to develop future KIGYOUKA, therefore this account acts as an illustration of the meaning of KIGYOUKA as considered within the Japanese milieu that the KIGYOUKA is perceived as providing something of value to society and also MWW illustrates the "KA" ("家") of the KIGYOU-"KA" ("起業家") (i.e. Emerging Business "*Specialist*") an authority of experiential know-how within a community, to offer an expertise of "value" to the broader community.

Under a similar definition to MTA's notion of "value" above, the "form that sells" that she prepares the fledgling KIGYOUKA to develop into is perceived to reach its sales point (point of relevance to society, something of value that addresses a need or necessity, in a manner accepted by society.)



With regard to developing this “value”, MWW reflects on her so-called “stage-up” process:

MWW: *...for example, if you want to open a café or a restaurant, how to make a business plan ... How to connect with the necessary network, and... the rest is how to educate employees.*

R: *Oh, yes. Oh - can you tell me (about that) in a little more detail?*

MWW: *Yes. The staff's ... erm, manners, erm, yes, the staff's... the customers, manners when dealing with customers ... I'm not teaching (that), but I introduce them to a manner's teacher, to an instructor.*

R: *Oh, yes. Erm, that, what kind of language does that instructor teach? Is it kind of like honorific-language?*

MWW: *Oh, they also teach honorifics, and, you know, when you interact with customers, you should be careful, or from the way you bow ... so, how to pass a menu, how to arrange chopsticks, how to arrange the dishes.*

R: *Oh, it's ways of doing things properly then...*

MWW: *That's right.*

X.

“Properly” here again addresses a common understanding/expectation of what is “proper”. Value as to be a valuable contribution to society like MT says above. What is expected by society, what is accepted by society. To develop value, as in develop oneself to become “valuable” to society (naturally the criteria of this “value” is as deemed valuable within this local social standard - Value as to be a contribution to society, as MT alluded to earlier. Her role therefore is to develop the so-called NINGENSEI of the fledgling KIGYOUKA, in terms of their communication strategies as to be in line with expectations of the YONONAKA, as well as to develop and also to signal, an empathy with the

customers through common practice as understood to be proper. etc (see chapter 3), as to make them acceptable.

This is interesting as this sells the format of KIGYOUKA as understood as an agent whom satisfies the needs of the YONONAKA by providing solutions of value as understood (as commonly accepted). With regard to her own purposeful actions, she feels it's her duty also to service the explicit unmet needs of her clients:

MWW:

*Yeah, if anything, I think of the customer's voice as saying, "I think there's a need for this." For example, I'm going to open a co-working space next, there were increasing discussions saying, "Are there any good coworking spaces?", so I think, "Oh, I have a need".*

Y.

So not only satisfying needs stemming from her own frustrations, but listening to the frustration of her clients, the times/YONONAKA etc. using her broader experiences to address these needs.

Mr Medical-Venture also feels this way, in that his experience as a KIGYOUKA is to address an explicit need by the YONONAKA. Yet rather than steering people to become a "formalised" KIGYOUKA, he makes a point that for him it's about the substance not the semantics:

**Mr Medical-Venture (MMV):**

MMV:

*With regard to becoming a KIGYOUKA, rather than becoming a KIGYOUKA I think what you do doing that business is important. So being an KIGYOUKA isn't really that important, erm,*

*that even as an individual, whether a position hired by a company, an extreme example – whether it's a housewife or whether it's something else. If you have a stage, I don't think (being a KIGYOUKA) something to fixate on. Yes. However, well, this time it was a matter of starting a business, so it was to provide a medical service that does not exist in the YONONAKA, ah, well, at least in Japan, so I started a business. It was easier to do it, so I started the business.*

Z.

The purpose of a venture (in MMV's mind) is to provide a service that does not exist in the YONONAKA. The name and characteristics expected of the KIGYOUKA are insignificant compared to the service they provide the times, as KIGYOUKA. Reflecting on his above-mentioned choice to start a business as to do this, MMV clearly states his entrepreneurial activity's main purpose:

MMV:

*Well, the main purpose is, as I said just now, where something is dissatisfied in the YONONAKA, to say there's not enough, unmet needs isn't it, when there has been such a thing, I think it is a means to solve that.*

1A

This is why he directed his attention toward the medical sector, as to remedy what he perceives as a non-superficial dissatisfaction in the YONONAKA. To provide a substantive service addressing a “need” left unaddressed within the Yononaka.

MMV takes a cynical perspective on “opportunity” - driven Entrepreneurship (outlined in chapter VII), interpreting his actions as servicing a “need” rather than seizing a profit opportunity.

However, when this topic of “opportunity” was initially broached he presented a grounded twinning of these two issues. When asked what areas he might expect to find “opportunity” he states:

MMV:

*Well, uh, what you might call dissatisfaction in the YONONAKA,  
"I wish I had this (even though we don't) ..." type-thing, everyone is thinking a lot about this.*

*However, I think that whether money is linked or not is very important.*

*{...}*

*I think that there is a difference between a 'good-if-we-had-it thing' and a 'must-have' thing.*

*And even if it's a 'must-have' item, as you'd expect, well, is it something you'd pay for?*

*The essence of that, at the idea level,*

*it's not a discussion of "it would be good if we had this (even though we don't) ...",*

*it's about "I really want it and cannot bare to do without it / it's beyond endurance,"*

*- I think that's a business opportunity (BIJINESUCHANSU).*

1B

To address the notion of a "business opportunity" as inquired about by the researcher, he volunteers the example of he and his KIGYOUKA peers addressing an unmet need in the YONONAKA.

He is motivated by providing something absent of paramount necessity, and in doing so, he perceives this would effectively guarantee profit as its essential, not frivolous. However, he doesn't perceive of his actions as capitalising on a opportunity (nor being motivated by such), but as him addressing a need. Thus, to him servicing a necessity is both addressing the need in society, but also assuring the income of profit required to sustain the venture as necessary.

### **Mr Laser ("ML"):**

As will be outlined in detail in chapter VII, ML had his first experience of starting a venture as a university student, in a bid to fund his tuition fees, as to follow his passion for engineering to post-graduate level. This meaningful experience eventually provided the grounds for him combine both these things into one vision, resulting in the founding of a venture that enabled him to experiment freely as a Laser "super-engineer":

ML:

*The main purpose, right? yes. Well, first of all, ... well ... well, I think this is around motivation, but ... well, I'm an engineer (translation note: a "technologist"). so, what should technology be? As you'd expect, I think that the first priority is that we need to solve problems.*

*And then solving that problem with a new approach would be the ideal form of technology.*

*I think like that.*

IC

As an “engineer” (aka a “technologist”) – The purpose of his venture is to solve problems with “a new approach”. Thus, his venture’s purpose is also two-fold; to create an environment to be able to solve problems with ground-breaking approaches, and also to employ these ground breaking approaches to solve problems in the YONONAKA.

As is outlined further in chapter VII, ML found a lot of resistance from authorities of knowledge in the Japanese tech industry (as well as other research institutions). This frustration led him to start his own venture for him to have a forum to experiment without a sense of restriction. (This wouldn’t entirely be the case, given the embedded social nature of starting a venture in Japan, however this was the premise for starting the venture).

With regard to the root of his want to solve such problems (i.e., To provide something of value to the YONONAKA), ML gives an account of his initial experiences of experimenting with technology that he interprets as a significant and meaningful experience. He recalls being around elementary school-age and using an Apple Mac to make a programme that automatically generated songs and lyrics.

Seeing his friends appreciate the product of his programming (the automated songs) he says:

ML:

*"It was a very simple program but, ah, at that time, I started to think, I was creating (birth and putting out) value. So, that value is, additionally, a "machine" that creates more value isn't it?"*  
*(a "creates-more-value Machine")*

1D

That to him, the value of the machine was in the "value" created and further enjoyed by others. It created "value". In this experience, ML had experienced two revelations: Firstly, what had captivated him here was not the potential monetary value (as in a market value to be exploited by the creator) of the machine or the songs, but that the machine had produced something of value to others, a value he could understand. It was at this point he realised the notion of creating something that didn't exist, creating "value" from nothing (something appreciated, valued by Other). Through this revelation, he began to recognize creative, imaginative problem-solving as something of value to others. Secondly, (as alluded to in the first) through the pleasure he himself had also experienced from the experience of the songs (from the song and from the sharing in his friends' pleasure of them), his attention was drawn to him seemingly being able to empathetically realize the value of something to others (the notion of potentially being able to anticipate something that is of value to Other also). This understanding was extremely significant and meaningful to him. Understanding this notion of creating potential things of value for others (and being able to realise its potential worth in context /a context of its potential worth) would be the catalyst to many of his life choices moving forward.

On graduating from graduate school as an engineer he had become the super engineer he had hoped to become, however even though he had a brief stint running a business to fund his university fees (see chapter 2) ML decided he wanted to develop his business acumen (as well as this inclination to

develop solutions). He deliberately joined one of Japans most prestigious manufactures where he would be coached on seeking “potential needs”;

ML:

*“So, when I was in the planning department of my previous job, (previous company’s name),  
(ML thinks out loud, half to researcher, half to self)  
something that doesn't exist in the YONONAKA ...  
well to say something that is not in the YONONAKA,  
erm, there are needs but, well to say “Needs” ...*

*(To researcher:) For example, if you break it down one by one – (things like)  
“it’d be nice if we had that, wouldn’t it?”,  
even unexpected things, things that people think it would be nice to have,  
are perhaps already made somewhere.*

*Instead, I was asked to do a lot of study and research on how to find “potential needs”.*

*Well, this experience was so good. Well, in fact,  
how do you make something like “Oh yeah!” –  
When you propose “It’d be good if we had this?”  
- The things you’re like “yes! yes!”-  
How do you make them?*

*And to make that kind of thing, what kind of technology do you mix?  
Do you want to combine various needs? Then how do you sell it?  
I learned a lot about that.*

1E

To anticipate these needs in the YONONAKA (or more specifically, prior to a conscious demand for them). ML outlines further in chapter two how this was a significant learning experience, developing his interest in providing value from nothing, value that speaks to the YONONAKA, understanding and anticipating its value in context. However, ML realized he wasn’t creating value from *nothing*, but through applying his technical understandings to an understanding of the times, reading the YONONAKA, anticipating the times ahead of him and considering a solution to a problem as yet

unvoiced within the YONONAKA, problems anticipated based on his presuppositions of an era, problems *the times are not necessarily consciously aware of yet*. To understand the times and to anticipate the issues of the times ahead of the times (this is elaborated on further in the next part of this chapter “the flow of the times”).

**Dr Cap (“DC”):**

DC: As you'd expect, that KOKOROZASHI of "solving social issues", I feel that is important isn't it.
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IF

Dr Cap (“DC”) started up both to develop and supply medical technology he and his family had invented, and to also address an issue of concern in his field regarding the dissemination of medical information, (the same type of medical information and research he perceives his invention would grant access to, and thus implicitly contribute to). He perceives his purpose is to “*eliminate and reduce information asymmetry*”. So even though his practical purpose for creating a venture was to facilitate the production of a technological idea, he feels the venture has a secondary purpose - a “mission” as he puts it - channelling his KOKOROZASHI to address a sense of civic duty. They developed a device to observe microscopic capillaries, however, certain of the benefits of the device (its practical use, as well as the relevance of the understandings it was capable of producing), he still felt he struggled to convey this relevance of such to the broader healthcare community in that immediate context. When explaining how he works backwards from an initial idea as imagined, he outlines how he saw the potential of his technology ahead of the times, explaining it was a struggle convincing people to take this aspect of the product seriously, given it was not part of the scientific discussion at the time:



DC:

*What I'm making, it's extremely new so, erm, I think many people did not understand this business in 2009 (when they started). Then, well, specifically, the opportunity to see capillaries (the reaction) was like "oh you can see them, that's interesting", so, looking at the capillaries, by looking at the capillaries patterns, you can understand lots of things, but people were like "you're just jabbering on for the sake of it aren't you?" but now, the importance of capillaries ... recognition has spread and due to the pattern of capillaries, we can understand a person's health condition.*

*Many people are now saying "oh yeah, that's right, isn't it"*

*That was down to ... I think we were able to make such through working with university professors and scientists, due to such communication of information.*

1G

That beyond the pessimism or disinterest of peers and colleagues, DC's belief was strong due to his tentative understanding of the device in an imaginable, anticipated future context. That he could see (imagine) a context where this would be understood as extremely useful, as considered relative to other current pursuits in his field. As is outlined in the next section, one of DC's – and many of the KIGYOUKA who were interviewed – main guides when considering an issue to be remedied is the so-called "reading" of the times /YONONAKA as to anticipate the so-called "flow of the times". This involves being able to anticipate how an idea would be relevant within an imaginable future context based on their current ability to read the times.

As mentioned, beyond their invention, the venture was developed as to achieve a broader purpose also. Having a product that grants people access to understanding as a tool to to produce new insights and medical information, DC was driven to make his venture a hub for producing and enabling the production of medical information intended to be accessible to all. As he explains the purpose of his initiative:

DC:

*Yeah, eliminate and reduce information asymmetry. Long ago before the internet came out, there wasn't any information. ...*

*Then everyone sought information. So, the people who has the information were winning, but now there is too much information, uh, whether or not you can firmly grasp the correct information, uh, those people's, erm, well, I think it's becoming an era when people can possibly achieve their life goals.*

*So, my mission is to make sure that correct, wanted information goes to the person who wants it, especially in the field of healthcare.*

1H

**“Purpose” part two: “The Flow of the Times”.**

This next part of the chapter focuses on the participant KIGYOUKA’s perceived experience of the so-called “Flow of the Times” (JIDAINONAGARE), how this relates to the purpose and meaning of their experiences as interpreted.

**“Dr Emergency” (DE) :**

DE:  
*Um... I'm a doctor, and if I say something unfounded like this, It's a bit... (laughs)*  
*Well, I don't know what to say, but in Japanese, there's what you'd call a "flow", I think.*  
*Like the so-called biorhythms.*

II

Even as a medical doctor, Dr Emergency (DE) recognises the significance of this subjective phenomenon. He compares it to “the so-called biorhythms”, recognising its experience as visceral, interpreted, although baring similarity to “natural” phenomena. DE refers to two aspects of this “flow” during his accounts – the first being the perceived temporal “flow” of the shared-subjectivity of the times, as “read” by the KIGYOUKA (the main theme of focus in this sub-section.) but also secondarily, concerning the apparent flow of “fate”, of “timing” bringing about matters of “coincidence”, of “destiny” with regard to fortuitous interactions (so-called KIKAI, KOUKI or CHANSU), which he uses to describe the experience of opportune encounters he had with collaborators and advisors which he interprets as of being “meaningful” (as he describes in chapter VII), interpreted as meaningful and significant within his own life and current intentions, deliberations, interpreting such as meaningful in that context), factors which he perceives to be bought about by the temporal flow of broader lifeworld context.

However, although both will be touched upon in the discussion chapter (Chapter IX, part 2), this subsection will mainly concentrate on this *flow* within regard to the first distinction outlined here.

When “Mr Space-Man” (MSM) was initially asked, based on his personal experiences, “what is KIGYOUKA?” and “What is KIGYOUKASEISHIN?”, he answered:

**“Mr Space-Man” (MSM):**

MSM:

*Put simply, as you’d expect, it is ... very much about greatly understanding society, society, the system, society’s system ..., err, I don’t mean making money but someone who finds pleasure making full use of that society’s system.*

*...And then, I guess you could you say, understanding the times. As you’d expect, there are things that flow in the times, and somehow, as you’d expect, like, the flow of the river too and the flow of the water also, usually in this way, if it were to flow down to the ground or something you’d somehow understand where it would go through to.*

1J

Throughout his account, MSM stresses the importance of anticipating the flows of the times (i.e., The greater context). The subjective interpretation of the “JIDAI NO NAGARE” (the “Flow of the Times/ era/generations) differs from the analysis of objective statistics regarding emerging “trends” or “markets”, market demand or industry data. MSM here outlines his interpretive experience of the “reading” of the era as it changes, and anticipating these changes.

This “flow” refers to the flow of shared-understanding (as outlined in Watsuji’s conception of YONONAKA or SEKEN), the subjective-space between people of an era- which effectively inform and situate the *experience* of an era - their greater context as commonly-understood, as it *flows* and changes temporally. This “reading” (a term used throughout these accounts) is an intuitive reading of

the shared-subjectivity and shared-understandings of the times. A reading of the YONONAKA and its supposed current, understandings, albeit the (non-comprehensive) shared-subjectivity of the times as interpreted through the individual's own interpretation and lived experiences. MSM sees this as integral to his experience as KIGYOUKA and to his interpretation of what other KIGYOUKA do more broadly. In that to him, the experience is necessarily dependent on servicing the shared-subjectivity and common understandings of the YONONAKA. This intuitive understanding is further outlined below, as he continues to illustrate his interpretation of the phenomena:

MSM:

*Yeah. Erm, like, a weather map also, at high pressure, at low, what you might say what area the wind will flow, as though you kinda know, like the strength of that era around that area kinda thing, so that you can see where the wind flows, like the strength of that time in that area, this areas industry is hot now, here is weak isn't it, well, perhaps it's similar to the social system I don't know but, I think that the social system will change after everyone understands the flow of the era to some extent, so as to match it. I think it will change a little later.*

1K

That according to his experience and interpretation, he/the KIGYOUKA is ahead of this change, they pioneer the change in advance by anticipating the needs and want of the YONONAKA.

“KIGYOUKA-SEISHIN” (To MSM) is being able to anticipate this flow. He immediately continues to detail his interpretation/experience, using an example of the occasional backlash from the public toward perceivably “successful” KIGYOUKA, as to reflect on the perceived foresight of the

KIGYOUKA:

MSM:

*"I'm sure those people could read the flow of the times, but the fact is as a social system, they didn't catch up. That's why the social system comes half a step later, so there, as you'd expect,*

*while understanding and making use of that social system, contrary to those people who follow the flow, (KIGYOUKA) through no fault of their own, read (the YONONAKA/ flow of the times)*

*I think there are quite a few people who kinda get 'raaa!!!' (angry)*

*so, I'm not that great with society so, but, conversely, before my eyes, a society that makes people - well, societies are also made by people, but, in that sense, it's kind of like it has a personality, I read a community of real folks.*

1L

That equally to him, all citizens effectively *read the times*, however, the difference being that the so-called KIGYOUKA pioneers through the solutions they offer to society (through their own individually interpreted, intentionality-directed experiences), contributing ideas to the times common understandings and common practices, the “half-step” ahead, their contribution sets this path, and that “half-step” being perceived as the amount of time for the idea to be recognised, understood and applied, and to become explicit in the times. He also describes the character of society is as readable and as recognisable as the human characters that make up that society, the people he interacts with as individuals. Through experiencing the subjective-space between the communities he works with, as well as situated within this broader collective that constitutes “the times”, the YONONAKA, as distinguishable, as readable, as understood. As understood at distance (e.g., the common ideas and understandings of a generation) and as understood through the intimate interactions and act connections MSM has experienced first-hand. As Watsuji alluded to, SEKEN and YONONAKA seem to be experienced as what might be described as a “communal existence regarded as a subject” (1996:18).

**“Dr Cap” (DC):**

DC:

*Oh, yes, well, as you’d expect, firstly there are the “flow of the times” isn’t there?  
There is a big flow of the YONONAKA, and at places along it, business gathers...*

1M

Dr Cap’s perceived experience as described is akin to being *topographical*; as a vivid temporal flow, taking into account the preconscious, alluvial components of the generation as they (begin to) come into consciousness, as they become recognisable to the KIGYOUKA, recognising such “ahead” of society and seek to address these issues and to develop business around them. When later asked about his sense for “Risk”, he refers back to this prior discussion:

DC:

*“Sense of risk” ... Hmm ..., now, I really can’t read the flow of the times.*

1N

As outlined in the last section of this chapter, in 2009 when he started his venture, he was ahead of this flow; he could see the value in his product ahead of time. Yet now, a problem for him is interpreting the current flow of the time. Not being able to “read” the current era to the degree of anticipating the next, therefore, not being able to imagine whether his current ideas would be of value in a future context. He feels this would indeed dampen or impede his sense of whether a venture is risky.

“Mrs Be Bold” cites the “flow of the times” as the background-context to a social problem, one she recognised and turned into a business:

**Mrs Be Bold (“MBB”):**

MBB:

*Ah, but regarding food-waste reduction, you’ve got the “flow of the times” - the background/context to that becoming a social-problem...*

10

Here MBB cites the broader context as the foundations for the concern, recognised as dynamic and temporal. She anticipated the flow of the times (specifically, aspects of the shared-understandings of the YONONAKA) changing direction. During her interview, MBB went into detail talking about how SDGs (“Sustainable Development Goals”) had recently entered into public consciousness and due to her own interest in this area, felt she was able to anticipate this impending consciousness prior to its explicit uptake.

She mused on the changes of generational attitudes -the sublation of the times, the transition from one over-worked yet economically well-off generation flippant about food-waste, to a similarly over-worked generation who were becoming aware of this issue as an issue of concern. Recognising this intuitively, recognising public discussion of the topic becoming more frequent and salient. She saw this as the context within which a concern would come into the public consciousness that she could address, developing a business around this anticipated “direction-of-flow” in common-understanding within the broader social consciousness.

MHI also saw a concern developing in the times, however she felt it was *preconscious*, that no one had *noticed* it as an explicit concern thus she felt it was up to her to bring people’s attention to this through the suggestion of a solution (outlined above).



As MSM states above, eras “*change after everyone understands the flow of the era to some extent, so as to match it.*” In that opinion and understanding is eventually shaped by the flow of the times as it becomes the inescapable context we exist within (as historically-effected). MHI here responds to this, circularly suggesting that as these opinions gather, it is up to her to change them:

**Mrs Healthy IoT (“MHI”)**

<p>MHI: <i>So, gradually, as you’d expect, everyone’s opinion gathers according to the “flow of these times”, and I think we should try things to change it ...</i></p>
---

1P

That as mentioned, MSM previously interpreted that “the times” (i.e., the YONONAKA) catch-up with the changes the KIGYOUKA implement *a step later, in accordance with these “flow of these times”,* thus circularly, she sees it again as her responsibility to change it.

This is in reference to the perceived *stagnancy* that occurs after change has become accepted and becomes the norm, the status-quo as oblivious to itself, as stagnant, becoming a “concern” (e.g., the oblivious generation who were not aware of their diets being bad given the “normalcy” of office life in that generation, the focus of MHIs concern)

As MHI mentions in her above account regarding her idea for her venture, her reflections were initially concerned with a gap in the understandings of a generation, whereas MBB saw the change come about itself and she devised a venture to facilitate this change. MBBs approach was to facilitate nascent change she observed in advance of it, whereas MHIs approach was to instigate this change herself with ideas.

However, a similarity between MHI's account and MBB is they both read the general atmosphere of the times. When asked to elaborate about her learning experiences regarding KIKAI, KOUKI and BIJINESU-CHANSU, she simply stated "FUINKI." (雰囲気 - the Japanese term for atmosphere/ambiance). When I asked her what she meant by this, she reflects:

MHI

*Hmm. I don't know...For many years, healthy eating and health have been addressed. Yeah. But, the national system...We need to raise the entire nation, the health of the people who work, um, I mean the entire country's erm, "health management," so, as you'd expect, business will go up (improve), will develop, due to that, the people who work at that company, that company, being healthy. ... Yeah, that's why there is a movement in the country to do such "health management", as one of the strengths of a company (generally).*

*Yeah. So, I judged that this would be a great KIKAI. Even though, we were doing it before that so, ha-ha-ha-ha uh, yes, we were doing it from before, then "health management" started to come to the front, um, it is starting to come to the forefront, so now is a KOUKI, yeah. I really feel that "a good CHANSU is coming!"*

IQ

MHI realised this would be a significant area of concern and thus not only offered a solution of value to the times, but the times concurrently caught up with her venture (i.e., the nation's health-management schemes) and she was ahead of this, managing to contribute to it. From both reading the times and, subsequently, being able to intuitively anticipate their flow.

**Mr. App-Chef:**

This notion of intuitively anticipating the times is significant to MAC's KIGYOUKA-experience also, to the degree he feels he is sometimes ahead of the times. This starts with his "reading of the times", as he then gave example of:

MAC

*... However, this "chef-outing", it's making a culture, I thought we have to make a culture (of using such a service), as you'd expect, Japan doesn't really... there's not that kind of culture so...  
However, erm, as you'd expect Japan also, the times have come and changed, Well, in our mothers and grandfather's generation, women were at home, men worked outside. But women work now don't they. Women are very busy and men do housework, I don't have much sense that women "protect" the kitchen now so*

*But our target is, basically as you'd expect that, parenting [...] (parenting is) our business target isn't it. As you'd expect, if you've got a baby, you can't go to a restaurant. ... but erm, people want to do birthday parties and stuff, at Christmas and things, people want to party.*

*So, because of that, erm, well, at that kinda time, we, well, like this, I'm going to send a chef.*

*... Well, after that, in Japan, celebrities, and, uh, social media etc., if they can get excited like this,  
... Well, I wonder if it's going to be popular in this generation, kinda thing.*

1R

Similar to other accounts, MAC is also looking at this from a generational point of view, observing the shift in (gender roles) to a more balanced child-raising experience keeps both parents busy either working or house-bound, and in need of entertainment and relaxing. It is this flow of the times, this change in the times, that he has developed his idea around.

However, similar to what has been stressed by MHI and MT above, as much as it is about reading and understanding the times as they currently are, it's also about understanding how to contribute to the times *moving forward* (in a manner that is complementary, yet revelatory). it is about impregnating the times with an understanding which is not yet commonly understood (making a culture). To change understandings by offering a solution to a common issue/problem. And in this it is a change of culture

but is anticipated to be accepted (recognised as relevant, meaningful, to some – offering the public a way of understanding (approaching) the times before them, that once accepted, seeps into the public’s consciousness, contributing to the shared-subjectivity of the era in front of us.

To latch a change of attitude onto an idea as to usher in a new idea or understanding, as the times are changing. Changing this flow ahead of time, as similar to interpretations mentioned by MSM and MHIs in their accounts above. MAC then reflects on his ability to observe the times as to anticipate such:

MAC: *Me, within myself, how can I put it? A half-step. ...*

R: *half-step?*

MAC: *A half-step is 0.5. ... One step ahead, I'm probably good at finding the near future with good sensitivity. I think perhaps not like those researchers who are like in maybe 10 years, 20 years it'll be like this so... So how to find information quickly. So., I find it and do it right away. Then, after, as soon as I can do it, as you might expect, I will make a team, always make a partner, as you might expect, when I come up with this idea, if I call this person and this person and this person, I can team up ... So, I have to give it a try once. Then, if you try and it goes well, let's spread it out-kinda thing in that kind order.*

1S.

MAC appears to firstly tap into the environment around him at first, with regard to a concern he has observed either experientially or anecdotally, then imagines a tentative solution for this concern. From this initial intuitive stage, he supplements this idea with the information he perceives is required to reproduce this idea. Similarly, to MSMs comments in earlier in this chapter, he feels he is 0.5/a “half-step” ahead of the YONONAKA, finding the “future” (meaning a complimentary idea for an almost immediate future context) through his assumptions of the flow of the times. (as well as, to some

degree, contributing to this “future” through the development of his venture and of a complementary “culture”, bringing an understanding of the relevance of the idea into the public consciousness).

**Chapter VII: Findings two: “Meaningful experiences” and “Meaningful action”**

## **Chapter VII: Findings two: “Meaningful experiences” and “Meaningful action”.**

This chapter firstly reflects on accounts of the meaningful experiences that have informed the KIGYOUKA’s purposeful, entrepreneurial experiences. It focuses on accounts of their “events of understanding”, reflecting on how these prior, meaningful experiences are perceived to contribute to the synthesis of a purposeful idea. The chapter then reflects on accounts of “meaningful action” attempting to reproduce these purposeful ideas, here interpreted as significant, unique learning experiences particular to the participants individual purposes, ideas and acts of reproduction. This section reflects on experiences of “acting” socially and of “doing” “trying” and “failing” as meaningful learning experiences.

This chapter falls into two themes:

- Meaningful experiences and “Events of understanding”.
- Meaningful action as learning experiences (Acting, Doing, Trying, Failing) .

## Meaningful experiences and “Events of understanding”:

### “Mr Tele-Application” (“MTA”):

MTA:

*... from the time I was a student, I wanted to do something on my own, and I was vaguely thinking about it. ... I went to the “five-year system” technical college, then went to Australia... Just playing and working, playing around on a farm. So, I came back to Japan once, and I did a little bit of business-like sales, at a friend’s company, and well, I also found that I like talking to people, and I liked it quite a bit.... I then showed an interest in hotels, in hospitality, and so then I started working at a hotel. ... Then, uh, I went to Switzerland to study hospitality. So, I went to a hospitality school, a hospitality management school, and there, well, I studied there, and then, after that, (to self) was it half a year? I had already decided to do an internship for a year, but as it happened, at that time, around 21 years old, (to self) did I have an iPhone 3GS? I had my first iPhone overseas - In Japan, I used to use it on the internet until then, but then, when I went to Switzerland, I couldn't connect unless it was by Wi-Fi. ... Um, I hadn't intended to be there forever so I didn't sign a contract, over there I was in a dormitory, a school – kinda thing, Switzerland is in the middle of Europe, so I had a lot of holidays, so when I traveled to Europe, as you'd expect I used hostels, and so on and it was a frustration because I couldn't use the internet unless I was in my accommodation.... So no, wait, I thought. Foreigners coming to Japan It may be the same as myself. foreigners who come to Japan might be the same as me.*

A.

MTA considers this sequence of meaningful experiences to have informed the event of tentative understanding which prompted him to start a venture. Having been both travelling around Australia and living abroad on a semi-permanent basis, as well as observing customers living similar such lifestyles during his stint in the hospitality business, MTA felt that through his own experience he could empathize with others in a similar position, and thus he noticed a *frustration* that he felt required resolving. This led him to seek a solution to this problem:



MTA:

*So then, at the time, I googled, and it appeared there was like a sim card ... then, at that time, in Japan there was pocket Wi-Fi at that time but there wasn't so much overseas, then, ah, that kinda thing, if you offer it to travelers, they can use the mobile Internet anytime, anywhere, without being caught in one place. I understood that it would be really convenient in this era, in this era of travel, and if it was offered, would it be profitable? - kinda thing. (laughs) ... Yes. Simply, that, a demand – is (equals) - everyone wants it. They'd even pay for it; wanted things - equals - profit. simply that's it.*

*Then, I had wanted to do something since my school days hadn't I? Because of all that as well, I took a leave of school in Switzerland, I quit, well I was absent from school. ... So, I came back to Japan, started a corporation, and I founded that kind of product online, well, I started to offer it to travelers, and that's my beginning as a KIGYOUKA.*

B.

Here he states he did minimal market research in the form of a brief review of products already available, as surveyed through an internet search. However, what lead to him to start his venture was that he felt he “understood” the issue (albeit tentatively) as it was situated within the current era, through his lived experiences as existent within these times. He had recognized this issue as a concern himself and thus in tandem with his interpretation of the times, he recognized the *possibility* of this being a need, a want – something he intuitively realized based on his own previous lived experiences and interpretations.

**“Dr Emergency” (“DE”):**

When asked what how did his ideas come to mind, he initially mentions “technology”, but immediately corrects himself and elaborates on his ideas being sourced from his everyday occurrences as a doctor:

DE:

*For example, technology as well... There were two triggers. One is, I have three children. When my oldest child was in kindergarten, a friend went to Tokyo Disneyland And, it was the absolute last bullet-train of the night, they rode the bullet-train on the way back, it was raining at that time, so they slipped at the station and hit their head. Then, at that time we got a call from the child's mother, to my wife. So, she was "what should I do?". Naturally I haven't diagnosed the child, I haven't even examined her, and I haven't even seen her, but in that situation right now, I was going to ask them if she can answer type-thing, and if she could hear that, well, it was probably okay to take them home, it was that kinda thing I said. Ah... if that was real, as a doctor, when I talk to a patient, (I) do a medical examination, (I) do an inspection, and then I'm going to say it's okay to go home, but without doing such things I said maybe it'd be okay and sent them home.*

*Maybe it was my medical experience, my experience as a doctor, so I was able to make that decision but, for example ... You could incorporate this to an (smart-phone) application or stuff like that, couldn't you? that was the first trigger. So, rather than saying technology (being the trigger to his entrepreneurship), I pick up ideas from such everyday events, and use this technology to solve these daily problems and my research I am doing now. I think I'm connecting those kinda things.*

C.

The ideas which contributed to DE's starting of a venture addressed the day-to-day issues he had experienced as a doctor, which occurred in the real world - where accidents tend to happen - outside of the convenience of a hospital or Doctors surgery. Things obtrusive or unavailable to him (and in some manner to the general public whom he services). The basis for his technological innovation were real-life scenarios where the appropriate tools were absent, yet in the current era, AI technology is able to address these issues as he imagined. However, what has become important to him is the retention of the human element require to be a Doctor within these technologies, more specifically, to harness these human qualities:

DE:

*One more thing, I go abroad to conferences, so even then, there are people on the plane who get sick. So, uh, "help me doctor!" kinda of things happen, don't they... I've been there a few times, and even then, in the airplane, the engine is noisy, and I can't examine them... Even if I used a stethoscope, I couldn't hear it, blood pressure, it's too noisy and I can't measure it, so in the end, I look, listen to what they have to say, and based on my experience I decided that it was maybe alright, or not alright, if from this kind of experience, well, from a doctors experience also, well, if this type of thing, all of it, could be converted into data, you'd really be able to make a decision even better than a doctor would – this kinda thing was a trigger so, ah, this kinda thing is, like, ah, it's not NINGEN anymore, its computers in this era isn't it? In that time, I also have such data, my own research theme as a doctor, "statistics" kinda things, so because I may be able to connect such things, well, would it be possible to solve such everyday troubles I had with my own research theme etc. and with technology and stuff? When I thought about it, I was able to come up with a lot of ideas, and if that was the case, I could possibly do this technology, lead to those kinda things I think, didn't it?*

D.

Fusing his medical research background (working with quantitative data) with his practical background as a general practitioner, DE has helped to develop emergency communication technology with a strong appreciation for the utility and worth of the individuals lived-experience.

In the examples presented above, the tools of the current era weren't efficient enough to cope with certain circumstantial obstacles, so he had to rely on his *experience* and subsequent *intuition* as a doctor. He thus here realized that if he could make the experience of the doctor *a tool in itself* (in the modern AI era), it would be useful to all, even in absence of a doctor.

In both outlined occasions he used his instincts as a doctor and with AI he wants to adapt such – by means of the experiential, the empirical and the statistical, to renovate the emergency services infrastructure, by infusing the process of making a medical emergency call with an artificial version

of the very intuition he utilised in lieu of having adequate technology. This in itself is interesting as he is keen to stress throughout that it is *experience* not *technology* that has been essential to his ideation process. That to him it is not only vital to be inspired by his day-to-day experience, but to utilise understanding and intuition accumulated from such as the basis for new technology. That tech is simply the vehicle/medium.

One note regarding language use, although subtle, his use of NINGEN is significant in this context in that it's now not an era of the shared-subjective space between people in his interpretation, implicitly describes the perceived relationship between the user and the technology, that it is a unilateral process that evaluates the individual, based on the experience of the doctor, rather than the intuitive experiential qualities of the original doctor.

**“Mr. Laser” (“ML”):**

Mr. Laser (ML) runs a pioneering Laser technology firm, with a variety of applications from household appliances to military lasers. As he mentioned in the previous chapter focused on “purpose”, his passion centres on ascertaining potential needs, to recognise and create value from “nothing” except his reflective understanding of the times (and ultimately anticipating their “flow”). ML lived in North America for parts of his childhood and reveals that at American school, he was encouraged to think broadly, to discover, to invent, and to channel his inventiveness, to the degree he recalls that he had thought about starting a business even then:

ML:  
*...Yes. Well, the first time I thought about starting a company was when I was in sixth grade. ...  
This is from when I was in America, and, like I mentioned earlier, when I was immersed in*

*computer programming with my friends, well, by making programs, I understood that I could do many things. ...So, at the time, I was in elementary school, so I really didn't understand anything about the YONONAKA but, erm, while creating various programs, I was actually able to make many programs that would make friends and teachers happy. ... Then, while that kind of thing was actually being done, I was talking to an American friend that this is a business, So, why don't we make a company together? I talked about that at that time. {...}*

*...I think it was probably an environment where you could have that kinda day-to-day conversation, where even a kid like that could say something like "Wouldn't it be cool to start our own business?" Then, at that time, well, I didn't actually start a company, well, but, I started to think at that time that it would be nice to have a business.*

E.

As an adult he realises a significance of understanding the YONONAKA, but at this time the significance of that childhood experience was that he understood the value of his actions, in how well they were received by those around him. This was enough for him to conclude that this premise (value for others) constituted a "business". Through this understanding, he had also interpreted *possibility*.

As a child in America his curiosity was encouraged and he feels it was due to this environment (and the sense of possibility taught), that he (even at that age) had realised that he could turn something he liked into a business. There was such a possibility. When he returned to Japan, this inquisitiveness and enthusiasm remained. To the degree he very keenly wanted to go to university to channel his passion;

ML:

*So, when I came back to Japan, and, erm, I really liked making things, but, erm, when I was a student, erm, I wanted to go to graduate school, but since it was a national university, if I thought of going to university, even though the tuition was cheap, well, I was at a university in Kyushu, so I had to earn a living, as the university classes were so interesting. ... I didn't even want to work part-time anymore, and I just wanted to spend every second on my studies and research and stuff. I had a lot of fun in college. So, so then, erm, in order to, erm, earn a bulk of tuition and living expenses, I actually started a company.*

*That was - I'd previously had the experience of working as a interpreter, and that interpretation jobs' boss, was my home-tutors father. Well, Japanese used cars, Japan - taxi, and, uh, the car inspection is very quick.*

*... Yes, that's why you have to do a lot of car inspections, so it's costly, so taxi companies sell all their old cars and buy new cars.*

*...as these are still running vehicles, ... if you export to Southeast Asia, for example, you're subject to custom duties, so if you break it up as parts, you don't pay tax.*

F.

As these circumstances presented themselves as a (profit) opportunity to support his time at university, he endeavoured to support his dream of becoming an engineer with an entrepreneurial endeavour. Utilising his prior experience of living internationally, his ability to speak English fluently, as well as his interest in mechanics and engineering, he started his first venture, purely as an activity of arbitrage, selling old taxis and car parts internationally with the purpose of funding his university tuition fees. The purpose here was to allow him to pursue his passions to Masters level, yet as he relays, this was to be a meaningful learning experience in itself. He learned about business through the experience of such, an experience he greatly benefited from in the long run, and opened his eyes moving going forward. Interestingly, he was driven to arbitrage to fund his passion, a passion that would later become the blend of the two passions; Running a business as to accommodate his pioneering inquisitiveness:

ML:

*The company ended up being ruined by people who were very scary, with a lot of harassment. So, well, well, the company went bankrupt, well, i mean, it closed, but it was a surplus bankruptcy, so I was able to graduate from university and graduate school, so I was glad.*

*From that time, at that time, really, before doing business, my dream was to be a super engineer, and I wanted to become a business operator who could do anything, but, erm, if you actually do business, you can make great money and have fun, and because I understood that, I started thinking that I would like to work as a super engineer and also as a business.*

G:

This sense of possibility was a moment of realization. Where he realized the potential benefits of starting his own company. At this point he began to develop a plan based around having his own business to harbour his enthusiasm for problem solving and discovering potential needs/ creating value. Looking for understanding to gain a sense of what was possible, he decided it was important for him to gain experience in the industry and so applied for Jobs. As outlined in the previous chapter ML was coached at the company he joined after grad school to seek and develop “potential needs”, and it was through this experience that he brought these senses of possibility together:

ML:

*“To become both a super engineer and KIGYOUKA, what, what should I do now?”– type thing, amidst thinking about these things, at that time, I went to the most profitable manufacturer in Japan, the planning department there, then - “let’s go there, understand how to make money, understand the reasoning, and then start a business” - I decide let’s do this for 10 years, so at that time, at the most profitable company (in Japan), a company in Osaka called (company name), but well, actually, I entered into there, it was the 9<sup>th</sup> year, no, the 8<sup>th</sup> year, I actually went to the planning department, then when I went to the planning department, I was going to business planning by myself, so I did those things, the reasons for making money, “Ah, I see!” I understood, and so, for the first time there, I came across the technology called “laser,” and was like was like “Wow! This is amazing interesting!” yet even though the founder, the founder of that company, said “Let’s do more lasers”, there was no motivation to do so at all, so I promised “I will do it myself - please don’t get in my way” and certainly, 15 years ago, I made this company.*

H.

On both realising how to sustain a business (i.e., “the reasons for making money”), as well as discovering a technology he could understand the potential of (but was not being pursued to what he felt was its fullest potential), he left and finally started his own venture where he could pursue the potentials of laser.

**“Ms Rivers” (“MR”):**

MR  
*At first, I didn't think I wanted to be a KIGYOUKA.*

I.

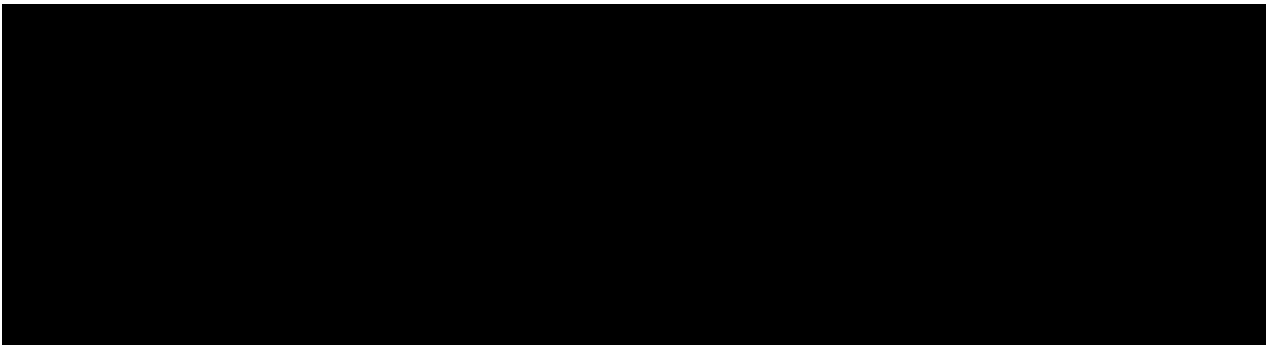
It was circumstance which led to Ms Rivers realising starting her own venture was a possibility, a possible option for her as to support her family financially as a single-parent. A progression of unique and (subsequently) meaningful experiences that informed each other and her eventual decision to start up. Initially, her first experience of observing the operations of a business was the restaurant her parents ran, where she worked through school:

MR:  
*Well, I used to work part-time and went to school and stuff, but I really liked my job.  
Well, after that, well, um, my friend's friend failed their business and came to (Small city name)  
where I lived, uh, they failed in the business, so in Japan If you make one mistake,  
it takes time to do business under your name.  
(...)  
Yeah, so there, at me, us together, like, “won't you do this with me?” kinda conversation came  
about. Then, well, in the sense that I was helping my friends, the first thing, was starting that  
company, was the initial first thing. Yeah. In fact, To KIGYOU (start-up), my first KIGYOU, the  
trigger, was there.*

J.



This stigma toward failed KIGYOUKA is elaborated upon in Chapter VIII. [REDACTED]



MR:

*...So, after that, as you'd expect that, yeah, I realized that rather than working, really for me, it suited me better to start a business.*

K.

[REDACTED] and given the limitations of employment options deemed available to working mothers (as touched upon throughout accounts in chapter six) her sole purpose for starting up was thus to find a consistent means to provide for her family as the breadwinner (a purpose that then evolved into maintaining a venture as to provide employment within her community, similar to the contextual-concerns which MSK, MEC, MTA and others have mentioned during these accounts.)

Through this event of understanding she realised that by working for herself she could manage other aspects of her life. So, having realised starting up might suit her situation, she initially looked a different form of self-employment, one being a bakery franchise. This progressed into taking on a cosmetics franchise (which she felt was more suited to her own interests) that then lead to her starting her own cosmetics distribution company.

**“Mr B-Tech” (“MBT”):**

When MBT reflected on what purpose he perceived a venture to hold generally, he gave an example from within his own thinking prior to starting up:

MBT:

*...Evidence that I myself (JIBUN) had lived, right - what (is it) I wonder - I want to leave something within the YONONAKA... that kind of feeling was really strong ...wasn't it, so, society would, even if I myself (JIBUN) was to pass away, I'd leave something, like that, something we treasure/value to be inherited kind of thing, that kind of thing, that was the main purpose wasn't it.*

L.

It's worth noting, MBT chooses to use JIBUN rather than other, more *Self*-focused, pronouns available as to convey his reasons. 自分 JIBUN logographically breaks down to “Self” 自 and “Part/Portion” (of an overall whole) 分, and thus MBT is expressing the perceiving of his self as a fragment of a broader, overall whole (i.e. of society, NINGEN, The YONONAKA etc). If translated into English absent of this nuance, to an English reader, this statement might appear conceited or simply concerned about his legacy, however this is an expression of MBT's sense of obligation to the YONONAKA, that he hoped his legacy would be to service an absence in the YONONAKA. After clarifying this, MBT gave reflection on his thinking and reasoning at the time he started up.

MBT:

*I started up... 2002. And after, I understood that the YONONAKA would change, from this, via the internet, well then, “via that change, I want to grow my business”, from this time around 2002, I've been completely thinking about that.*

*... Well, to say the purpose, I was very interested in creating a lot of jobs, where the YONONAKA was changing, becoming more convenient, and becoming bountiful due to IT, well, with that, I started with the purpose of expanding the company so that the company I was doing remained in the YONONAKA ... under that purpose we started.*

M.

Understanding the significance of the internet on the YONONAKA right at the cusp of its rise, he felt that this was a way to implement something of long-standing relevance to society. That the venture

took shape with this legacy in mind, to exist not just in presence, but by anticipating the internet's radical impact to our human existence, MBT believed this was an area that would continue to serve purpose, as it adapts into the future.

**“Mrs Be Bold” (“MBB”):**

MBB is currently one of the biggest online retailers for fashion accessories in all of Japan, with an equally as popular second venture that addresses food-wastage. However, before she started up around the age of 30, she had never had any experience running a business, nor any educational background in business nor Entrepreneurship:

MBB  
*erm, the reason for me starting up, erm, at that time {...}*  
*I had 2 kids...A 3-year-old son and his not-even-9-month-old, younger brother. Then, up until then I'd, as is usual, been to university, worked for a company, then, well, I spent a year abroad in Korea studying Korean, and then came back (to Japan), got married... that... it was a completely different life prior to starting {a business} ...*

N.

As recalled in chapter one, she wanted to get back in to the work force and went to hundreds of interviews but repeatedly failed to get hired, regardless of her credentials:

MBB  
*failing the interviews played on my mind to such a degree, that, hiring myself, whatsit, how can I put it – “Employing myself” ... So, if I could create a "job" by myself, erm, if I was to become a company president myself, nobody could fire me, (Laughs) ...*  
*Then - like that - my thinking changed.*

O.

This was MBBs initial event of understanding, that if she could employ herself, she could circumnavigate the hiring process, thus solving her problem. Yet her main problem was, as she

immediately iterates, at this point, she had no business experience nor understanding, and didn't even have an idea for a business:

MBB

*Then, in that, I thought I could become a company president and really work my hardest, but at that time, I had no skills, no experience, had no understanding of those type of sales, of course had no understanding of business either, erm, so whatever (you) do's okay cos (you) don't understand anything. Regardless that, just that kinda strong feeling of "I wanna do something!" As you'd expect, even though I'd become a mother, I really wanted to show "I can do something too!"*

P.

Yet regardless of this determination, she was practically stuck, as she couldn't get her children into Kindergarten (the lack of places available being a big problem in Japan at the time). She was homebound yet was still persistent on employing herself, becoming her own boss, feeling she had a lot to offer society. She then recalls how the nascent rise in the internet served to allow her to both work from home as well as to realise what she wanted to do and then learn how to do it at her own pace:

MBB

*. . . just at that time it was the era of internet shopping when broadband was first coming in, in Japan. the internet was connected all the time. So there, well if it were an internet shop, I could slowly-slowly do it in the house, while my kids were there. So, with that, erm, ah, I tried to sell miscellaneous home-goods and things first.*

Q.

Yet even at this point she had no actual product to sell. The drive was to become self-sustaining even without an idea. However, in this occurrent, reflective state (trying to understand how she could

possibly employ herself), she interpreted certain meaningful events as “coincidences”, relevant to this active idea to start a venture, that took her to the beginnings of her initial online accessories store:

MBB:  
*erm, my life really is a stack of coincidences...*

*Erm, that, at the point where I was lost as for what would be good to sell – I hadn't got a product –*  
*On the radio, I won a trip to Korea... So, a trip going to Korea, 2 nights 3 days,*  
*while on the trip going to Korea, (...)*

*During those 2 nights 3 days, without sight-seeing, I completely just purchased goods, then, from*  
*taking that back home, - at that time I was still a “SENGYOUSHUFU”, y'know a “full-time wife”*  
*(Translation note – reiterates the Japanese phrase for full-time homemaker/ “housewife”),*  
*- so, little by little I took pictures by myself and started selling.*

*I began to learn by myself how to sell goods on the Internet, there wasn't anyone to teach me this*  
*at that time, not even any books about how to sell on the internet, so I began to sell (such) by*  
*myself.*

R.

With her prior experience of living both in Korea and Japan, she understood what products would be popular in Japan given Japan's cultural interest of the so-called “Korean wave” (“Hallyu” - the global popularity of Korean Dramas / pop music / cosmetics / fashion etc”) that was gaining popularity at the time.

She perceives the complementary nature of her experiences as “a stack of coincidences”, but saw this coincidence as meaningful in the context of her occurrentness. In that, she realised her past experience of living in Korea, her ability to speak Korean and her understanding of Korean culture could be used to develop a venture selling Korean such accessories, developing an outlet for them to be marketed towards a Japanese market.

**Mr App-Chef (“MCA”):**

MAC:

*What triggered my Entrepreneurship, right? Hmm... Well, since I was a little kid, I've been vaguely, vaguely, well, someday, I wanted to be a company president. I had a thought/feeling... However, erm, after I graduated from college, I went to a run-of-the-mill company, working for a company, and then around about the 8<sup>th</sup> year, erm, job... called a salaryman? Erm, I worked as a salesman. Erm, at a company called (Company name).*

*.. Yes. Then, uh, the company was, well, it was very tough, a learning experience... it was a good company, but it wasn't my favorite field. As you'd expect, I kinda had a strong desire to do something fun or something I liked, I wanted to do that kind of job. CHECK ... Then, when I was working, for example, when I entered into the company at about 22 or 23 years old, ... I thought about, Well, let's say you've worked for 40 years. So, what's the percentage of working time in the last 40 years? When I calculated it, it was roughly 35% to 40%. ... So, I thought it's a waste of life that this time isn't interesting.*

*And just then, my seniors (note: his older peers) had started their own company, and they're doing this, so, well, it's grueling, but they're kind of like themselves, so, as a salaried worker, I was grabbing at money that I just couldn't make, I really had a dream, and I longed for it, that was how it initially began.*

S.

His event of understanding - in the first instance - was the realization of problem – that something was wrong; he was wasting his life doing something he didn't enjoy. So, on having this realization, MAC did some soul-searching and realized what he had loved in his life, what were his most cherished working experiences:

MAC:

*When I was a college student, I was working as a hall staff member at a restaurant. And at that time, it was really fun, and I had a feeling that it just fit right. ... So someday, I had the feeling that I wanted to work in food and drink. Then, the other thing, um, just when I was thinking about entrepreneurship, I was about 33, 4 years old, about 4 years ago, about 5 years ago, um, just around that time the people around me were having children, and up until then everyone had partied, but gradually, gradually, gradually they'd have children and weren't able to come. ... Then, wondering why that was, and as you'd expect, they had had children and couldn't go. At*

*that time, in Japan, the term “catering” had just about come out but ... Well, “catering” in Japanese is “delivery”. ... It's not very interesting because you just make it and deliver things. ... Well, I was wondering what would happen if the chef went there, if I did it, So the first idea came up.*

T.

“Catering” is a loan word simply meaning delivery service – yet MAC pondered on whether the English language meaning of the word could be applied to a *send-out* home-chef service, using Chefs local to the area when they were in-between “gigs”. As outlined in Chapter 1, at that time he had also observed the change in the YONONAKA where both men and women were working and while sharing domestic duties (here, using his friends as example of this), an observation that led him to ponder the possibility of a need for an in-home chef service.

Thus, while reflecting on the frustrations of his job lacking satisfaction, dwelling on his cherished past experience of working in the catering industry and at distance watching his friends moving on into the next phase of their life (forfeiting the social life they’d become accustomed to), the synthesis of these meaningful experiences lead to his venture idea. Through observing a change in the times through the lens of his past experiences, he realised a current need for a home catering service.

Through this he satisfied a problem in him, and also serviced a need of the YONONAKA.

## Chapter VII part 2: “Meaningful action” - learning from doing/acting/trying/failing.

The following examples from MBB present insight into her experiences of learning from acting socially and from doing and trying as to gain understanding of possibility, as well as examples of her eventual application of this understanding as wisdom and intuition: When questioned about how/whether she learned to ascertain KIKAI, KOUKI, BIJINESU CHANSU, Ms Rivers asserts:

### “Ms Rivers” (“MR”):

MR:

*Yeah, yes. As I said at the very beginning, I don't learn (actively/formally “study”).*

*Well, I don't learn, but ... well ...*

*Originally, I wasn't a KIGYOUKA from the beginning, eh ... well, what?*

*I was repeating various small mistakes, what I “can't do”, what I “can do”, and...*

*well... I think I'm learning from experience. After that – from “inspiration”.*

U.

She specifies her definition of “inspiration” as used above in an excerpt below, but firstly, MR is keen to stress, as part of her Entrepreneurship, she doesn't actively learn tried and tested formal methods – business models, theory, generalised “know-how”. She feels she learns from experience, as to understand how to implement her specific, intuitive ideas.

MR didn't originally see herself as a KIGYOUKA from the beginning, due to her lack of a formalized business education, and the informal nature of her entrepreneurial experience. Yet she credits this lack of (formal) knowledge and her accumulation of unique, experiential-understanding as the root of her KIGYOUKASEINSHIN. Through developing a sense of *possibility* (understandings) recognised during these unique experiences of inadvertent experimentation, MR applies such intuitively to



situations she encounters relevant to her venture. Therefore, when asked how much “knowledge” she feels she requires to ascertain KOUKI, KIKAI, BIJINESU CHANSE she ponders the notion with a sense of distance:

MR:  
*Hmm, Yeah, knowledge (pensive).  
I act immediately. ... Then, acting immediately...  
My point is that rather than “knowledge”,  
“the field” is more important,  
So, I act immediately, move, and from there decide “good”, “no good”.  
I do not make my judgements either in my head or on paper.*

V.

As she elaborates upon throughout her interview, MR prioritises going out and meeting people – manufacturers, retailers, customers and other KIGYOUKA, heavily stressing the social aspect of her experiences as to gain understanding (in context) as to apply this understanding toward developing her (at this point vague) intuitive, tentative ideas.

Her judgements are then informed by this intuitive, particular, practical understanding as developed throughout these experiences. MR elaborates on how she feels she has gained this intuition:

MR ... *First of all, (I) act, meet people, feel out exactly what those people are and how they are, from there, and think about the next-step.*

*Thinking in the middle of nothing, its only in your own thoughts, isn't it.  
... So, can an answer come from the midst of that (nothing)?*

R: *Yes, I see... Oh, why, why do you have that (intuitive) feeling? Erm...*

MR: *Oh, ok. It's because I have no “knowledge”.*

R: *Oh right... please explain a little...*

MR: *Hmm, whether this is good or is bad ... I have none of that judgemental knowledge within my mind. ...*

*So, that's why.*

W.

MR is here stressing the social dimensions of acting/doing, of gaining understanding (understanding of the broader social environment as it plays in reproducing her tentatively-understood, intuitive ideas). The integral part these social dimensions play in her understandings (and how she prioritises “the field” over formal data, theoretical knowledge or methods). This stresses a practical application of the understanding gained from these social bouts of learning in “*the field*”.

She views her lack of formalised learning experiences/ (theoretical, method-based) *knowledge* as a tabula rasa-esque foundation for her ability to strategize so freely and intuitively, however she also believes the tabula rasa epiphany is a fallacy, that all ideas/ understandings/ approaches are informed by social experiences and lived experience, thus she prioritises this aggressively social approach, sceptical of second-hand “judgemental knowledge” (Universal how-to’s or methods, standardised approaches, business models suggesting how to do things “properly”), preferring to seek out *particular* understanding specific to her intuitive ideas *first hand* to gain understanding that both specifically services the task at hand, as well as circularly feeds into her intuition (as is elaborated upon throughout the following examples her account) rather than rely on industry information, generalised knowledge or theory. As she emphasised during this next example, she’d prefers *to make her own knowledge*:: rather than depend on industry information or established business models:

MR:

*So, in all, I act first,*

*from amongst those actions,*

*do lots of different analysis, make knowledge,*

*One by one (each client/ each product/ each instance) - all are different, right?*

*One by one (each instance), they're not the same way of thinking, right?*

*If things differ one by one, you have to change your mindset, right?*

*... So, a "pattern", there is no pattern. Yeah.*

*Yes, so for that reason due to there being no pattern, there is no knowledge (available, suited)*

*It's completely (freshly) a "zero" condition, always.*

*So, I immediately move to action, and get knowledge from the action, then from there,  
within myself I make a story.*

X.

As will be touched upon more in the discussion chapter, she interprets this understanding she has achieved through her actions within the context of herself (i.e., her own experience, understanding and imagination) as to create a story, a narrative, a canon from which develops a strategy (however as she has explained, this manner of strategizing not theoretical per se, its *intrusive*, its context dependent, and feels very much like Gadamer's notion of *phronesis*).

MR feels there is no formal pattern suitable for the unprecedented tasks at the heart of her unique entrepreneurship. No clean-cut business model suited to the circumstances she had created. There is no established knowledge available or suited.

She feels she has developed a relationship with her customers, so bases her future endeavours on the tentative understanding she has gained from servicing these different demographics gained throughout this trial-and-error of *just trying*.

She says she doesn't make decisions based on regular reviews of objective market information, but based on her judgement derived prior experiences, intuitively initiates a specific strategy for each product. She creates her own "knowledge" (i.e., her own understanding of each demographic).

Through trial and error, she strategizes until it sells (outlined in next section). Developing strategy as tailored individually to a product toward a specific demographic (as she considers a demographic based on her own interactions/encounters and supplemented by her own imaginative intuition), that

each strategy was developed around her outlined process of “making knowledge” from her own experiences and understanding. This experience and understanding manifests not only in “knowledge”, but more so in this intuition also. Something she stresses has been more important to her experiences than the “knowledge” itself:

MR:

*At an exhibition in Hong Kong, that place is one of the largest cosmetics exhibitions in Asia, when I went there, one product I thought intuitively “this will definitely sell!” So there, I immediately negotiated, and eh, came back to Japan, and although it was a Korean product, next week I flew to Korea, we had negotiations with the factory, got an okay, and promoted it to a Japanese wholesaler already the next week, and it was a big hit product that exceeded 800,000 in total, uh, when things go well, it goes Pow! Pow! Pow! smoothly like this.*

*So, something that, this... what exactly?*

*As you’d expect, there are things that I’d think - by inspiration - “this!”*

*I don't know if that says anything.*

Y.

“By inspiration – *this*” she means she is hit with inspiration - an impulsive or timely idea, an event of tentative understanding based on intuition. This presuppositional intuition informs/directs her understandings and actions, her “field” experience, her understanding of how to get a product to her customers, as well as her perceived understanding *of* her customers accumulates as “intuition”, tentative understanding applied practically, as manifest in this example of being “*inspired*” by such. her understanding of her client base.

### **Mr Medical Venture (“MMV”):**

Throughout his accounts, MMV conveys he is wary about prioritising methods over substance and also prioritises the purpose a venture is perceived to serve (e.g., a perceived need of the

YONONAKA) rather than exploiting random opportunity outside of this purposeful context. When asked about obstacles to his ascertainment of KOUKI-opportunities, he stresses that for him, this is relative to his prior-experiences, experiences that also feed his want to do something in the first place.

That he understands KOUKI as relevant to him via his prior experience:

MMV:

*Uh, a limit is... one thing must be "being inexperienced", my experience.  
I can't judge business opportunities for inexperienced things, and... I can't.  
And, for example, now, blockchain is in vogue ... I'm not sure about that.  
I'm not sure, so I can't judge. I can't judge, so even if someone says "let's do something in that",  
erm, it's a "Sorry!". And an "It's not for me". Then a "why don't you invite him? (someone else)",  
I say that. So, that, what you'd call a limit, ...  
Well, I think one (obstacle) is your own knowledge and experience.*

Z.

That to him, experience is integral to ascertaining KOUKI as relevant - due to the specific nature of KOUKI as interpreted i.e., related to one's purpose. As outlined in Chapter VIII, MMV takes a cynical view of the exploitation of "chance"-based opportunities outside of his ventures focus. As is also apparent in this example, MMV takes a cynical position towards those pushing a method of doing business over the substance of the business as purposeful. substance, with an equal rejection of prioritising (methodological/theoretical) knowledge over one's own experience. Explaining his reasoning of this, he uses an example of a "Block-chain" presentation from a seminar both he and the researcher were in attendance for:

MMV:

*So, (the presenter) was using blockchain. That's what that was about. ...*

*So, after listening to him, it wasn't that he particularly wanted to do another "blockchain" business. Simply, if there were some other means, convenient, er, energy, erm, distribution, or if there is another mechanism for delivering energy, I think that there would be no need for an (energy distribution) blockchain.*

*However, if there is a "blockchain", I think he's using it because it's very convenient, but in that sense...Knowledge...,*

*Its alright if you have it, but even if you don't have knowledge, if there is a great desire to do (something), I think there is a way to bring in the knowledge, and to bring in the people who have it.*

*So, as an answer to the question is*

*I think that knowledge is not that necessary.*

*although if you have it, it's not the worse situation. Yes.*

1A

When judging if something is relevant to his venture, MMV wants to have some kernel of resonance that builds upon and adds to his meaningful vision, in an equally meaningful manner. So he objects to frivolous, excess or faddy knowledge, knowledge not attached to the core purpose of his venture as he interprets relevant. "Block chain" is not necessarily integral to the main purpose of a solar energy venture, it's a distribution method or model. Thus, MMV uses the promotion of this distribution model as a so-called business "CHANSU" as an example of the type of CHANSU he stays clear of.

He doesn't feel this should be the focus of one's judgment of whether something is an "opportunity" or not). If the knowledge is integral to what the individual wants to do, he can see the benefit, but as he points out, for him, it's an urge rather than something distinguished or defined by applied

knowledge. Rather than adapting a venture to chase opportunities outside of his very specific understandings, he'd prefer to do something suits his venture

Here he states that having the desire to do something – and being uncluttered with non-integral knowledge – can be far more beneficial to him than the of learning generic models/methods.

He would circumnavigate having to learn a fleeting, non-integral method by bringing in specialists that have the sufficient expertise. However, MMV stresses this is hypothetical, should he have to.

In a bid to further check my understanding of MMVs sensibilities, I asked him a similar question from a slightly different angle. I asked him about how much knowledge he feels is necessary to firstly ascertain a relevant KIKAI-opportunity, and then move a KIKAI into action, he says:

MMV:  
*Um... I don't think it's a matter of knowledge. [...] but ... If knowledge determines your behavior, I think that a university teacher will probably act first.*  
*... Probably.*  
  
*I have a lot of knowledge. But as you'd expect, it is not about that knowledge, but that as you'd expect, it's about wanting to do it, so... the feeling of craving, ... I think I'm that kinda person.*  
*I think "I want to do this", so, I'm going to act, I think, so ...*

1B.

MHI shares the same opinion as MMV with regard to a need for knowledge, again preferencing prior lived experience and accumulated intuition:

**“Mrs Healthy IoT” (“MHI”):**

MHI  
*MHI: How much knowledge? Hmm, you don't really need it, do you?*

*While I go and do it, I learn while going - Aha ha ha ha ha ha (laughing)!*  
*Yup. I think that you do not need to know in advance. (From) the "heart".*

*R: Oh right. From feeling.*

*MHI: "Heart". "Soul".*

1C.

Much of MHI's account suggests she has gained most of the understanding she has sought through "doing", through experience, and values this occurrent, intuitive manner of learning. Mr E-Commerce (MEC) shares a preference for understandings derived from lived experience, rather than learning formally through taught knowledge and theory:

**Mr E-Commerce (MEC):**

MEC:  
*... first, the thing I care about is experience. And, thanks to having experience, in contrast to that (experience), if I were to study - "ah! They're saying this like this but... (I don't)", "They use this kind of word but...(I don't)", kinda thing. So, the way I remember things is the opposite (to those formal learners) - I don't remember from words. So, I hate "lean startups" and that kind of thing, well, when I say hate, I mean, people who go from words and say, "I'm going to 'pivot'" and I'm like, I think "Do you even know what that means!?" (laughs) ...*

1D.

Firstly, to clarify, when MEC implies something here through the use of "but" ..., it's in reference to him doing things differently to the methods taught formally (Methods he has observed at deliberate distance, fleetingly. "they do it like this but... (that's not how I do it)"). As is apparent from the broader context of his account, when MEC refers to "people who go from words", MEC is here referring to individuals caught-up in "faddy", un-lived terminology. His university background was not



in “Business” and so did not learn such formally. Similar to MBB (see below), he has learned his “trade” from experience and thus doesn’t apply terminology to the actions and experiences. Thus here, MEC is comparing his intuitive, purpose-driven experiences, to those aspiring to start up through formally taught methods and “how-to” guides that put the proverbial cart before the horse, allowing words/terminology to guide their experience of starting a venture. He juxtaposes the utterances of people who have learned these notions and (lightly-ridicules) them for perhaps not experiencing them in practice/not having learned them from experience. MBB has similarly had her prior/present lived experiences be her intuitive guiding factor while starting her venture. When asked about the amount of universal “knowledge” employed during her entrepreneurial activity, she reflects:

**“Mrs Be Bold” (“MBB”):**

MBB:

*Hmmm ... I don't think absolutely none at all, but it might be the minimum.*

*I try to act and see a little, erm, I mean to physically-sense it, to “understand it by skin”*

*What do you say in English, that ...?*

*(continues, still in Japanese) - What, “to realise from experience”.*

*... Then, well, if the reaction is good, try moving a bit again. ... Well, if the reaction is good, do a little something again, and if it really looks good, I will go full-on and 100% give the “Go” sign.*

*At first, it's really small. Whatsit, do you call it a “lean Start-up”?*

1E.

*\*(Translation note: version of an idiomatic expression meaning “Experience it directly/experience it by hand”)*

*Even though MBB’s ventures have continued to be extremely popular over the past 18 years, MBB didn’t learn about Entrepreneurship formally and so has a perceived distance from the strategic and theory-based “Start-up” terminology she’s encountered throughout these experiences (e.g., the honest*

question – “do you call it a “lean Start up”?”). Rather than initially considering such business models, MBBs approach to starting her venture was based on the practical application of skills she deliberately learned as she thought would be necessary to develop her venture as she had imagined (one which started off at home, selling products over the internet – something she had zero experience in, a nascent sector at the time). This was achieved through intuitively deciding what she might need to do, and then supplementing this plan with new skills learned from books where needed (i.e., photography for displaying products, Web/IT skills to make a web-shop etc.). However, these were skills to be practically applied in the day-to-day progressions of her venture as to advance her idea, rather than methods, theories or business models to strategically grow.

However, step-by-step MBB began to both develop her own growth strategies while incorporating “borrowed” aspects of formal business models into her approach as her venture grew. As the excerpt shows, she does recognise certain similarities between her approach and MVP business model/lean methodology. This said, she is keen to assert that her experiences have not been guided by such theory/methods. She is keen to stress her approach was guided by the intuition she has accumulated through these experiences of trial and error, as she ultimately learned about running a business by herself from scratch. She didn’t consciously intend to learn from trial and error, but through doing things in accordance with her intuition, she encountered meaningful learning experiences, and pioneered through the use of this intuitive approach. Continuing from the above example, she is here talking about times when she has deliberately studied as to acquire certain “knowledge”. She says:

MBB:

*So, I go on that kind of sense/ feeling, so erm, even if you have a lot of knowledge at first... Erm, knowledge, you study a lot then you... something ...that, launch system is actually, completely*

*different so, so in the end, while things are changing shape there's lots of things to do ... so, if it's the case that you're un able to take enough time to study I think that after trying to some extent... already from the beginning, it usually changes shape as you go anyway.*

1F.

That the learning process occurs throughout, regardless of any additional information learned in advance. Due to the temporal nature of these initiatives, she has been required adapt plans spontaneously and intuitively, and she believes it has been this type of activity she has learned the most from, and also feels a certain futility learning method and theory given the unfolding, spontaneous nature of her experiences until now.

As outlined in examples above, MBB didn't study business formally, so wasn't familiar with terms such as KIKAI, KOUKI, BIJINESUCHNANSU, "threat" "price" "promotion" (in a business context) prior to starting up:

MBB:  
*Yeah, yeah, yeah... I didn't study business administration at all so, there are various things like "KIKAI", "Threats", and various other things isn't there? "Making a deficit..." I completely didn't understand any of that I tell you. Something, that "price" and "promotion", erm, something... there's that kind of thing, isn't there?  
I was already doing it without knowing any of that so...*

1G.

Even though she had no formal business education, MBB had managed to take on those issues without knowing the jargon or terminology associated with them. These aspects of starting, developing and of maintaining her business came from simply trying as she assumed to would be correct to, acting as intuitively in-tune with the tentative potentials of her idea. From *living* her

business, i.e., from acting as she would do in any life-situation, learning, acting and inter-acting as her character and intuition lead her to, simply by being driven to understand these things as to support her endeavour, even when things she assumed would be of use were brand new to her:

MBB

*So, by myself, little by little I took pictures and started selling. I began to learn by myself how to sell goods on the internet, there wasn't anyone to teach me this at that time, not even any books about how to sell on the internet, so I began to sell (such) by myself.*

*...I really came to enjoy that... so, if you don't have any management knowledge, along the way, I didn't have any knowledge of how to raise sales or the internet and web, however, that was just really fun. "Finally, I can work!" I thought.*

*.... It was really just like "try and error" so...*

1H.

She uses the term “along the way”, that through these experiences she picked up new understandings from trying, making mistakes, from experience, and as she says, all guided by her own inclination of how things should be and what she should do next.

The Japanese-English “try-and-error” was used both here and in the following account by “Mr Tele-App” (“MTA”). For MBB, this wasn't necessarily describing the strategic development of a product or service, but a more comprehensive learning of multiple skills she intuitively interpreted (through the same source of her prior lived experiences) would be necessary to put to use *practically*, as to reproduce her idea.

MTA wasn't necessarily focused on achieving market acceptance nor on exploiting an opportunity to profit in isolation, but on applying a solution to a problem. This became apparent through a discussion regarding KIKAI:

**“Mr Tele-App” (“MTA”):**

*R: As a KIGYOUKA, from within your experiences, please give me a specific example of how you ascertained business KIKAI?*

*MTA: I've never done anything like that. ... Well, to say how I could do this business, when everyone really started to have an iPhone and wanted the internet for travel, when it was about the beginning of demand, it happened, I just kinda did it. I really don't know...  
I don't know if it's the answer to that question...*

1I.

As is apparent from his account, MTA did not focus on ascertaining (nor realised that he had ascertained) either an objective or a subjective “opportunity” per se (an objective opportunity to make profit, or a subjectively-interpreted opportunity that would help him to reproduce his perceived solution to a problem). He only intuitively assumed a demand, based on his reading of the times, and acted without prior industry information or market data. By applying his own frustrations to his reading of the YONONAKA, anticipating the relevance of his frustration/solution to others. With regard to the broader notion of ascertaining profit opportunity MTA states:

MTA:

*No one knows if it's going to be so profitable. Right? Cos, if you definitely knew, everyone could get rich, couldn't they? ... You can't “predict” so, as you'd expect, what'sit, by “Try-and-error”, that, as you'd expect, that's what everyone's doing, somethings go well, some don't ... that's the same as the big companies.*

1J.

MTA offered a service based on his assumption of a need within the YONONAKA. A “need” he has discerningly noticed based on his own lived experience, empathetically considering his concern a concern of the broader era also. He had a hunch, and so through trial and error worked out how to offer a solution to a problem (the main focus of his KIGYOUKA activity), but did so intuitively without any prior information guiding his intuition. Here, such intuition once again appears to perform a key role, as MTA says he doesn’t formally “learn”, but says he learns from *acting*:

MTA:  
*I don't "learn" (Laughs) (...)*  
*Well, that, well, one (example) ...I don't think I've learned apart from (my) business,*  
*with (my) business ... I'm not the kind who studies, I think ...*  
*Erm, (I'm the type who) acts, (I) do it and learn from acting so ...*  
*apart from that, I don't think it's something you can learn from paper...*  
*So, by that way of thinking, as you'd expect, all of it,*  
*it's about (your) way of thinking, isn't it, right?*  
*Well, one (example), when I myself (JIBUN) have thought something was inconvenient,*  
*So - "can I think of that solution as a business?"*  
*Does your thinking end at "yeah, that was inconvenient"? ...*  
*"Does it stop?" and simply down to that difference (in people), and as you'd expect,*  
*that's, ultimately, I think it's just about our mind and our way of thinking,*  
*and how far can we think about it. ...*  
*It's the same, dissatisfaction, and even if you experience it (dissatisfaction), different people,*  
*where does their thinking about it stop? Sheesh, something like "I guess it can't be helped"*  
*I myself say "This wasn't a good buy."*  
*does its end with an experience like "this places manner of working was totally inconvenient"*  
*-"Then what should I do?" kinda thing. ...*  
*I think it's just a difference of if you can think beyond that. Yep.*

1K.

Similar to MBT above, MTA here uses JIBUN in reference to himself, here in the context of a problem he has experienced that might be applicable to others in society, stating how he continues to

dwell on these things (as though he feels it's his duty as part of society as to solve them) calling out a hypothetical Other who doesn't dwell on such an issue deep enough or for long enough to either come up with a solution, or to realise that the opaqueness of their quotidian existence has stopped them from even recognising such as a problem. He feels he is observant to problems, and his thoughts about them go further than simply accepting those problems. He describes his experiences as though he is frequently aware of the "occurrentness" of the world around him, and thus challenging the "intrinsic-sense" of that which is accepted as day-to-day. Rather than passivity, he shuns the coping that allows one not to critically engage with things, curiously questioning almost everything he encounters.

MTA feels that due to his approach to learning - his "learning" from acting, from doing - he is less hemmed in by methods, by heuristic short-cuts, by "rules of thumb", ultimately questioning these things also. Therefore, without these formal teachings he has looked at things more broadly, with a broader sense for *possibility* by questioning matter of fact day-to-day (See chapter VIII).

**Chapter VIII: Findings (part three) - “Trust-relationships, language and common/shared-understandings”.**



## **Chapter VIII: Findings (part three) - “Trust-relationships, language and common/shared-understandings”.**

This chapter focuses on the importance of so-called “trust-relationships”, and the experience of such as accessed through the Japanese language. It explores accounts of a social bind which appeared through these accounts to be integral to these experiences, emphasising the integrated socialness of these experiences.as historically-situated. Discusses the significance of trust relationships and their implicit dependence on “shared”, common-understandings. Recognises a social situatedness as integral to these experiences and the significance of such as meaningful/integral to this experience.

Falls into two sub-themes:

- Trust-relationships and subjectively-interpreted opportunities (relative to “purpose”).
- Language, communication and common/shared understandings (dependence on context).

**Chapter VIII: Part one – Trust-relationships and subjectively-interpreted opportunities.**

**Mrs Healthy IoT (“MHI”):**

MHI :

*Uh, an obstacle (to ascertaining KOUKI)? Hmm... For example, not being able to get a collaborator. Not being able to get a partner. Well, after that, when the fund raising does not go well.... Well, uh ... yes ... and apart from that (nothing) ... I've many good (business) friends/peers ('NAKAMA') now, so yeah. When (business) spreads out more and more, when friends/peers ('NAKAMA') do not gather together. Yeah ... that would be an obstacle ...*

A

MHI uses a term typically translated into English as “Fellows”, “Companions”, “Peers”, “Friends”

(仲間 NAKAMA) as the term is considered similar to these notions, but broken down, the meaning of

NAKAMA doesn't derive from, nor is it plural of, the singular “friend”. The compound kanji for

NAKAMA means “relationship-space”, referring to the subjective space between two individuals or a

community of friends, their shared-relationship space. Slightly paraphrasing with the emphasis on this

aspect, “*When NAKAMA (shared-relationship space) does not gather together, this would be an*

*obstacle*”, stressing the emphasis on the importance of consultancy, trust and shared-understanding in

her experience of KIGYOUKA. Based on his experiences and in this context, “Mr BigTech” cites

NAKAMA as essential to his entrepreneurial experience in Japan.

**Mr B-Tech (“MBT”):**

MBT:

*Well ... I think (an essential aspect to his KIGYOUKA experience) is an equal understanding of the village society. To say why, if you don't understand the village or community, it's difficult to*

*continue and it's hard to gather NAKAMA together. If not, I think it would become difficult to keep starting a business.*

B

MBT here stresses a perceived importance of being able to have a mutual understanding of the community around him, seeing this as essential to his KIGYOUKA experience. He not only stresses the importance of community, but more of an *understanding* of this community (specifically, he is referring to an understanding of the shared-understandings *within* this community, this specific body of relations). MBT talked about how based on these mutual grounds of agreement (i.e., Gadamer's mutual understanding), he puts faith in NAKAMA of a similar level of experience to him as KIGYOUKA to help validate his own interpretations, based on their reading of the YONONAKA and their understanding of him and his venture:

MBT:

*Well, talking to various people, I feel for the first time that I can understand if this new Chance is a real Chance or not.*

*... The point is about half, that amount of people to say that it would be a problem, or 'you're possibly wrong about that', is just right.*

C.

Thus, to question his own intuition, he depends on the consultancy of trusted NAKAMA. A trust developed through, and based upon, this prioritised, underlying, sense of understanding. Having a trust in a (perceived) underlying, calibrated agreement on the issues of the times then allows for his own assertions to be scrutinised in a manner he feels comfortable with and actively seeks. DC also states he considers "People" as important to his experiences more broadly:

**Dr Cap (“DC”):**

DC:

*Probably “People” I think. Erm, what type of people you’re connected together with, I think that is highly important. I’m the same in private as well as in when I’m doing business too. I have a many, erm, mentors, teachers. ... So, with that in mind, I place emphasis on what kind of people we will work together with again.*

*(...)*

*One person’s thinking/thought/idea is small, isn’t it?*

*Because the things they know are also small.*

*As you’d expect, I think the existence of an advisor is important.*

D.

In a similar vein to MBT above, Dr Cap seeks trusted consultation. He feels one person’s perspective isn’t enough to consider a concern of the people of the times, therefore advice from the people around him is vital. Even though DC doesn’t use the term specifically, the quality of the advisor he describes is that of NAKAMA.

The substance of NAKAMA is that of trust, of peerage, of a mutual-understanding of the relationship shared and its qualities. A relationship with a mentor figure does have an underlying hierarchical weight, however the substance of trust in the relationship is what is indicative of NAKAMA. At this point in this chapter, it is necessary to briefly reflect on the observation of NAKAMA by phenomenologist Watsuji as help us see the meaning of these relationships as communicated by the KIGYOUKA in these accounts.

In Japanese, RINRI-GAKU means “Ethics”. The RIN which conveys the notion of “Ethic/Ethics” in this word also means NAKAMA. Thus, this notion of subjective-space relationships is that of ethics, of underlying trust established through the relationship. Watsuji considers NAKAMA as the most

important type of human fellowship. NAKAMA is “fellow” in general, but also a “specific form of practical interconnection” (Watsuji,1996;11) - NAKAMA is a manner of interaction through which people develop definite, specifically recognised connections with each other.

He notes that NAKAMA also shares meaning with KIMARI (agreement) and KATA (form), implying an underlying acceptance of the manner of the bond held between the two parties. Thus, this established, trusted relationship of NAKAMA takes many forms however it is always held in high regard and rarely taken for granted. MWW also feels this way regarding NAKAMA as valued, especially with regard to trust-relationships integral to NAKAMA. She reflects on a negative experience she had that she has now learned from:

**Mrs Wonder Work (MWW):**

MWW:

*Well, when you work with people who don't have very good NINGEN-relationships... Well, um, there's not much good about it, well, perhaps I should say, uh, I had something like that. Something like, "If you do it like this, it'll make money so...", I tried working on it, trusting the story of the person, with whom I have little acquaintance, but the conditions gradually changed... the situation where trust is still not yet possible... Well, I learned that it is not good and won't work if you ride only with such "profit". Therefore, as you'd expect, I want to work together (with someone) after having developed good human-relationships and also having understood people's personality.*

E.

MWW now strongly priorities this trust over a fleeting opportunity to profit. The importance of developing trust. Within the broad notion of NINGENSEI, there are the notions of “NINGEN-KANKEI” and “SHINRAI-KANKEI”. NINGEN-KANKEI closest English concept is “Human Relations” (Here communicated using the term NINGEN-relationships). The term features NINGEN

(as outlined in chapter VI) and “KANKEI” meaning “relations”, though it is important to dwell on the nuance of this term in context. KANKEI is logographically represented as “Gate” and “Thread” so the nuance here is slightly more regarding “*access*” and “*connection*”. Relationships here are regarded and acknowledged as tentative and fragile. MWW wants to deepen these human connections seeing this as more important than an arbitrary opportunity to profit from; Rather, this in itself would be an opportunity to sustain her venture. When reflecting on what experiences have shaped her sense of risk, MWW recalls:

MWW:

*... Ah, as I just said, this, erm, partnering with a person there was no “trust-relationship” (SHINRAI-KANKEI) with, I had unpleasant feelings,  
and It was a nuisance (MEIWAKU) to the people around me, erm, just,  
It was decided to firmly ascertain NINGEN as to what kind of people we would work with.*

F.

From this seemingly bad decision, MWW felt it was very important for her to prioritise the people she worked with, rather than pursue random “opportunities” to earn money (e.g., those presented to her without her having a depth of connection to it, or to the people involved). Using a phrase similar to “what kind of ‘*people*’ a person is”, she says she now employs a cautious discernment when considering potential collaborators. To pay attention to others level of NINGENSEI; The reason for this is broached when she uses the phrase MAWARI NI MEIWAKU (“*周りに迷惑*”). MAWARI 周りは the people around oneself (specifically, the surrounding environment of one’s self) MEIWAKU is to be troublesome, bothersome or burdensome to those around you, something to be vigilant of in

Japanese culture. This indicates her valuing of the relationships around her, and her recognition that less substantive initiatives through less established relationships might jeopardise the valued relationships she already has. Thus, given the value of these relationships, she chooses to maintain and protect those rather than risk them through “riding only with profit”. Prioritising of the relationships she has with those around her, not straining them through opportunistic endeavours.

**Mrs Techno (“DE”):**

MT:

*...I learned a lot about that kind of "trust-relationships" (SHINRAI-KANKEI) and things like that, and after I became my company, how can I put it, I wasn't able to do what I wanted to do, for example, I didn't have funds, I didn't have people, I had various such restrictions, I found out the importance of having people empathize with the things I wanted to do but couldn't do, gathering people, and "seeing things through together".*

G.

Here, there is a very strong emphasis on the perceived importance of people around herself, however, this is more than simply a sense of utility and support, this carries a sense of integrated-ness, an empathetic shared-ness which values the project at hand.

That these trust relationships represent not just a mutual trust of each other separately (as individuals, scrutinised), but a trust in the relationship itself, that they become “trusted-relationships”. A form of (practical) interconnection which develops along with one’s venture.

Thus NINGEN-KANKEI and SHINRAI-KANKEI are perceived to play an integral and integrated part in the progressions of one’s ventures. Not only is trust important at a practical level, its connection to self-belief and one’s sense of possibility is also significant. That self-belief and a concomitant sense of possibility appears to be informed by - and stem from - these trusting relationships with others.

As Dr Emergency (“DE”) elaborates. Separately from this immediate discussion, DE considers KIKAI and BIJINEUCHANSU to effectively “flow” with the times also, however unlike the flow dominantly outlined in chapter VI, here he refers to the meeting of people, and how this is perceived to be opportune (very specifically clarifying whether if I was referring to KIKAI and/or BIJINESUCHANSU when I asked him this question,). He deeply reflected and initially offered a broad generalisation of his experiences (regarding his experience the “flow” he deems is interpretable through the Japanese experience, outlined in Chapter VI part 2’s phenomenological example), prompting him to specifically mention his initial encounter with the Innovation and Entrepreneurship scholar who advised him on the development of his business:

**“Dr Emergency” (DE):**

DE:

*When things are going well, it works, it works, and when it doesn't work, it doesn't work.  
That's right, I think its fate ... It could be a relationship with a person, it could be a communication,  
... It may be an encounter with a new person, but I feel that it is very grounded. So, for example, if I  
didn't meet Dr. OO, ...  
I think I wouldn't have thought about starting the business...*

H.

This encounter, to him, was KIKAI and/or a BIJINESUCHANSU. His encounter with this academic convinced him his idea was of merit. This was both practical/functional – with regard to DE gaining understanding to apply to his venture, however it also caused his *confidence* to grow. It showed his tentative sense of possibility had legs. . (he also received “confirmation” that his *reading* of the situation was also deemed “valid” by a specialist).



It practically supported him by presenting a deeper “business” understanding of aspects of his idea he didn’t have prior to this relationship. Thus, presenting more tentative possibility to him, driving him forward to apply this understanding, and to also gain more collaborators to provide further support and understandings

He elaborates on this later, while talking about his entrepreneurial instincts – when asked where he feels these instincts resonate from, he says from his “head”. Whereas, at first, this appeared to the researcher he was perhaps referencing a “logical” or “rational”, even a “theoretical” *instinct*, however, when asked to be specific, he says this is regarding issues relating to his *confidence* - his instincts come out of being able to *perceive* an acceptance of his ideas as a mutually-perceived possibility.

DE:

*That, this KIKAI is... ah, this “this is a chance!”, “this isn’t a chance”, I feel that kind of thing just kinda comes like Ping! To here (points to his head).*

**Later (Asked to be specific) {...}**

*...Well, uh right, just before, last month? Last month, erm, this business opp... when I had this business idea for the local government, uh...*

*the thing that I thought maybe*

*“Oh, this is going to go well”.*

*When they looked me in the eyes and spoke with me (gave me their attention).*

*... So, “Bing!” It came. “Oh, this is probably okay”. ...*

*But those people who I think it's not going to go well with ...*

*for example, like, people who respond while touching their smartphones, because our eye lines don’t match-up and things, from that kind of people’s attitudes “Bing!” it (also) comes, I think, probably, for me.*

*When we talk, when we talked about BIJINESUCHANSE they answer with their eyes properly, with that kind of attitude, this person is probably interested in my story.*

*And, as a result, the people of the local government, the prototyp, erm... uh, no, if I'm able to do a new business application, I was told to please come and show them so that kind of thing, well so it's in that kinda situation isn't it, I think. ...*

*When they looked me in the eye and spoke to me, a BING went off in my head, what I mean is a mental image of understanding, that this will go well. (...)*

*It could be the result of talking to people, or when I said I could do this technology myself, well, what, it might have been the height of sensitivity, ...*

*It may have been a reaction of the people when I showed it to people.*

*But I think that's what led to my confidence. ...*

*That was, the evidence I thought "lets aim to start-up"*

I.

This mental image of understanding anticipates a *possibility*; The trust he develops through this confidence – through a confidence in him and an *acceptance*, an interest in his idea – he perceives this as indicative of both a mutual interpretation of his idea as a *possibility*, but also, as opportune circumstances coming together to assist with his idea. This perceived consensus between the two parties (the perceived shared understanding of the *potential* of the idea, of the possibility of his idea) again is seen by DE as both “opportune” and as meaningful. (As mentioned immediately above, its *meaningfulness* is considered opportune, as well as the actually substantive consultancy derived from the interaction.

That a collaboration between the two parties begins with a mutual agreement / enthusiasm / understanding of it, that is the foundation of a trust-relationship and is seen as “opportune”.

As will be outlined further during the next section of this chapter, this sense of trust is interpreted as “obligation”; not a *burden*, but a strong relationship to be treasured, to be valued, something as

mutually perceived as valued/valuable. To use the term “committed” e.g., a committed-relationship, removes the tentative and fragile quality perceived of the relationship, that these relationships are to be protected, to be monitored, to be maintained and treasured. Therefore, the researcher hopes the term “obligation” communicates to the reader the constant attention consciously invested into its maintenance.

These relationships (and similar such related “obligations”) are what MMV feels he has with his customers (a relationship similar to those described by MBB, MR, MPJ, MEC, MSK during their accounts). Thus, MMV signals he is highly cynical about the notion of a BIJINESUCHANSU (i.e., an opportunity solely to *profit*) not directly related to servicing the intended purpose of his venture:

MMV:

*Well, I say that many countries, including Japanese people, say there's a "CHANCE".*

*But is that real?*

*I think it's important for me as a KIGYOUKA to doubt.*

*So, erm, a KIGYOUKA, erm, how can I put it?*

*I'm saying that it's good to gradually challenge (yourself) and fail,*

*but, of course, that's true, but, on the other hand,*

*I think it's also necessary to have suspicion and doubts.*

*Is it real? Is this really what the customer really wants?*

*I'd check and confirm. ... Or feel, you yourself can feel it,*

*You can check it and its okay but, but, what can I say?*

*with such things as convincingness and empathy in hand I think it's very important to confirm business opportunities.*

J.

That it is significant (meaningful within his experiences) to him as a KIGYOUKA to prioritize the interpreted relationships he has in relation to his ascertainment, his interpretation of something as

relevant to his venture. He'd check, to confirm whether this is what his customer wanted, meaning he'd judge this *empathetically*. This very aptly describes the quality of such a relationship. That "CHANSU" risks not servicing his clients in the manner he feels they would want to be; thus, the priority is to service the trust relationship he perceives he has built with his customers, to understand what the client wants and provide that rather than take an unnecessary "chance" out-of-context of the perceived purpose of his venture. Prioritizing empathy and "matching-ness" (see next example) over the "chance" to profit:

MMV:

*There are some things that are not logically correct, but that they match (meet/suit/fit) or do not match. Hmm ... Well, for example, men and women, right, aren't necessarily ... pairs of beautiful men and beautiful women only, as you'd expect, it's about compatibility, yeah. There are some things that are not logical.*

K.

Thus, "opportunity" only works when servicing a purpose established by the KIGYOUKA. Thus, the rationality of capitalising on an opportunity simply to profit, this logic, is trumped by finding a business interest that is compatible to his venture and the section of the YONONAKA it services.

(This term "to match" and its nuance will be discussed further in the discussion chapter).

**Part two: Language, communication and common/shared understandings (dependence on context).**

**Ms Rivers (“MR”):**

As she works in 7 countries, MR reflects on how the Japanese language’s dependency on shared common-understandings. When asked how they affect her entrepreneurial behaviour, she states:

MR:  
*Well, that has a huge impact. ...  
Well, maybe if you’re a Japanese person who grew up in Japan, when you go abroad, definitely, erm, what can I say, it’s something you’re bewildered by. Because people in foreign countries do not have grey zones in their words, they say things clearly.*

L.

This “grey zone” is in reference to the potential ambiguities of “reading the air”. That a dependence on shared-understanding cultivates habits of assumed understanding – the assumption that one will be understood by saying very little – under the assumption that the shared understanding is so obvious, that everyone understands, even without explicit explanation. MR does business with seven countries and travels globally. When communicating abroad, MR feels there is no reliance on reading the air thus communication is more direct and explicit. This has been praised by MC as something of a benefit, that there is no second guessing and you’re able to do business and operate based on explicit communications.

**Mrs Healthy IoT (“MHI”):**

This dependence on nuanced communication, sustained by a perceived shared, common-understandings is what Mrs Healthy IoT (MHI) describes as a “culture of atmosphere”. With regard to

“reading the air” and a reliance on “atmosphere” (i.e., the tacit understanding of background shared-common understanding) she states;

MHI:

*Ah, Erm, things are slow to progress, aren't they?  
Because it's a "you understand that, don't you?" (i.e., assumption-based) -type KUKI ("air")  
so, at first, its slow to be transmitted (communicated).  
And so, in response to that there's an execution speed you must employ.*

*So, it's a "sense/feeling of the air (KUKI)",  
so, you're like "should I do this, I wonder?", "Is it okay if I don't???"- kinda thing (laughs).  
It gets like that. It doesn't produce a sense of speed. (due to the vagueness)  
Then, when I ask, "Are you doing well?",  
(the other party responds) "Eh? Did I have to do that?" ("Should I have done that?").  
(The situation) looks like that. Well, no one works until someone says "do it!"  
The atmosphere is like "I wonder, is it better for me to do this?"  
So, I realise there are people, people who do that emerge, that kind of...  
... there's possibly a kind of a "culture of atmosphere", isn't there?  
Yeah, so, erm task? When you do the task management in a form like "do this and this and this  
and this and this in hours and minutes", you can proceed at a tremendous speed.  
if there's none of this and there's just KUKI, things don't evolve.*

M.

Here MHI means she assumes the other party understands what she means (without any necessary explicit explanation), whereas the other party is perhaps feeling “should I do this? Am I supposed to do this” as these things aren’t necessarily *common-sense*. The KIGYOUKA (as venture manager) feels these things are explicit, integral to the fibre of the venture itself, so assumes the employee is able to intuitively realise what needs to be done, within the context of the venture as envisioned.

This goes back to Mrs Techno’s mutual issues of “human deployment” as conducive to achieving ones purposeful “social contribution” – that by calibrating the employees to a common-purpose, this

supplements *common*-understandings with a *venture-specific* set of understandings (effectively, a *culture*). MHI then reflects on how she strategizes toward this, reflecting on ones thought-process in Japanese in relation to these issues:

MHI:  
*Thinking in Japanese, hmmm ...*  
*Yes. First, you can't come to a conclusion first.*  
*In Japanese, somehow, it's kinda like, the conclusion is at the end.*  
*Yeah. That's why when talking - it drives you nuts!*  
*Therefore, there are many people who do not make a conclusion at first.*  
*...Yeah, that's why thinking in Japanese is, if anything, rather than drawing conclusions first,*  
*there's this kind of reason, that kind of reason, this, this reason, there are lots of reasons, and then*  
*the conclusion. that kind of thing.*  
*There's are lots of reasons like this, that reason, and this reason, and then the conclusion.*  
*(Laughs)... It tends to be that thought circuit. Yup.*

N.

Thus, MHI here reflects on the connection between this manner of communication and a lack of summarised bullet-point issues that she outlined as a necessary as strategic task management as to overcome this “culture of atmosphere”.

As outlined in chapter IV, grammatically Japanese illustrates the circumstances surrounding the main issue of a communication first due to its sentence structures. There the “scenario” (the “reason”, the main point of the communication) is effectively communicated first, rather than an initial summary or conclusion. Once again emphasising the environmental-focus of the language, that the scenario, the surrounding circumstances are presented first in Japanese.

This stresses the need to read between the lines also, and to the ambiguity of communications that without having a common-ground can remain ambiguous. Dr Emergency (“Dr Emergency”) presents

the positives of this experience more generally (in close relationships) and negatives of this experience as relevant to communicating in a Start-up (prior to these relationships being developed):

**“Dr Emergency” (“DE”):**

DE:

*The good side is... without saying too much you're understood. Somehow, if you want to do this, oh,” (DE’s name)”, it's implied that I want to do this kind of thing, this is an implicit understanding (laughs). Well, in a long relationship, we underst., we know each other, so I didn't have to say “one-to-ten”, I just say “one”, that’s already good enough. That's probably the good side. I think it's a good side of Japan.*

O.

There is a phenomenon known as “INSHINDENSHIN” (以心伝心 – “by means of heart, communicates heart”) referring to an implicit, interpersonal communication based on unspoken mutual understanding. This is less about *common*-understanding and more about specific, mutual understanding that has accumulated through common experiences. For example, where married couples who have been around each other for many years, they can guess or anticipate each other based on their intimate relationship and mutual past experiences. However, for a Start-up this shared experience/shared-understanding that is not “common-understanding” takes a long time to develop.

As DE continues:

DE:

*But the downside is, of course, when you try to talk to a new person, you have to say everything from “one” to “ten”, don't you? Well, of course, when you do business, naturally, in situations where you know “one” and next is obviously “two” there is a lot of people who just stop at “one”, so when you start a new business, for example, when you start a new business, no one understands what kind of thing the goal is. For everyday work you understand everything from “one” to “ten”,*



*but I'm talking about the future here.*

*"we've got this kinda future", "if we build this kind of future, things will be more convenient, won't they?" even if I say those kinda things, beyond myself, (no-one else) can understand, can they? as that's a "tacit" understanding, it doesn't connect.*

...

That... step by step, say one, say two, say three, say four, then at the end, say everything, you know ten, and they'll understand that kind of future is possible. Japanese people aren't used to that. They're accustomed to the tacit understanding. I think it may be difficult in terms of starting a new business.

P

Thus, this lack of shared, experiential understanding is of significant detriment to an organisation that has not yet developed its "organisational culture" so to speak (thus, see MTs Chapter VI account of developing this shared-understanding as to serve the purpose the venture was envision to serve in context.)

While still pondering this notion of shared-understandings, DE moves away from its effect on communications within a venture, and dwells on why common-sense understandings in the YONONAKA might inhibit people from starting up their own venture in the first place, in a bid to show how when common-understandings are explicit and why he decided to do it:

DE:

*Yeah, yeah, yeah. As you'd expect (in reference to an earlier reflection on his parent's encouragement of him to find his own way to do things), I think, "I do my own things myself."*

*In a Japanese society where there is a strong common understanding that all you have to do is do the same, even if I don't do anything, as long as I do the same thing, somehow, they will support me, and somehow, I can live a normal life. However, when we start doing new things, naturally, to do things without that common understanding/ that we do not have in common, if we do that, then we have to do it ourselves. I have to do my own thing myself.*

*Even if I say I want to do it this way by myself, I think that won't connect.*

*So, naturally, I had a life of working as a doctor without taking risks. But that's what every doctor does, like that, leaves college, leaves medical school, becomes a doctor, gains experience this way, finally being like this, becomes an "old grandpa", finishes - it is common-understanding that it would go that way, but no, it wasn't like that. (for him)*

*Even if you are a doctor, for example, if you gain various experiences, you may be able to challenge new things and change the YONONAKA, because you have experienced through your own work, but to the people who are around that, it's as though you are saying something different from the common understanding. Then you have to take the risk and do it yourself.*

*As you'd expect (that thing about) you have to do your own things yourself, that thing connected to my parent's belief, that, as you'd expect, I think that's possibly my belief*

Q.

DE conveys throughout his account, through the people he either already had trust with or developed through presenting his idea to them he gained a confidence which overcame this fear of failure (or more so the repercussions of failure, of burdening others or being seen as a burden), as is rife in the common-understandings of the Japanese milieu, something perhaps seen as a necessary aversion due to the interrelatedness described throughout this chapter.

Here he shows how him having the support and championing of his parents enabled him to take the risks others may have not. That the relationship between trusted-relationships, one's confidence and the importance of not burdening one's relationships contributes to what is seen as possible, or what one should do.

**“Mr Pizza Jed-i” (“MPJ”):**

When asked about tacit, common understandings, Mr Pizza Jed-I says regards them as harmonising factor, and important due to the perceived integrated-ness of trust relationships into his experiences as KIGYOUKA:

MPJ:

*... Implicit understanding, well, Japans so-called unique "harmonising breath" (...)*

*Well, there is a relationship of trust.*

*Well, it's a relationship of trust with this person. It's a relationship of trust with this farmer.*

*Well, I say a business partner, but it's a relationship with, or, well, a relationship with an end user.*

(...)

*It's a common thing in Japan that selling a proper thing, buying a proper thing is a trust relationship, so a business is built and that person is trusted. ...*

G

MPJ describes a trust-relationship that is not simply to *trust each other's integrity*, but for him, a trust that each party in the relationships *shares a common perspective*, a common understanding on how best to serve the so-called “end-user” as well as all other participants in this integrated, interhuman commercial chain/network, that is foundational to his experience. A trust that transcends simply the individual he collaborates with directly (in isolation), and extends to the individuals his *collaborators also work with*, based on a trust of the same discernment within the collaborator he has the trust relationship with, as relative to a common-sense criterion that lay foundational to this relationship, that both parties share an agreement/understanding of these issues – a harmonising factor of perceived “calibrated” perspective. That is what these shared-understandings provide his experience.

Thus, this trust relationship indicates a wilfully, mutually obligated relationship where all parties, vendors, suppliers, service providers - all of whom are *customers* who further result in an end-user -

they are all trusted as to serve commonly-understood meanings of a venture generally, its specific purpose *in context*, and the relationships associated with it. The implicit undertones of the venture as understood *as embedded*, and also as integrated within the relationships which maintain it (such as the situated expectations that reside in the criteria of NINGENSEI, for example).

However, MPJ also recognises a somewhat calibrated common understanding of both the criteria of these relationships (e.g., one's level of NINGENSEI) as well as the issue at hand as situated within the times. To have this understanding/ agreement is to have a sense of openness, a common-understanding, a common "agreement" on the times and on each other's understanding of those times.

In this integrated, interhuman activity, ultimately collaborators are required to also share the same attitude toward an issue as relevant to the fraction of the YONONAKA who also share the same perspective as the KIGYOUKA and their ideas (e.g., *customers*).

As outlined elsewhere in this chapter, because sometimes things aren't communicated explicitly, there is a dependence on shared-understanding and subsequently on this trust (i.e., trust in the relationship between individuals, but also a trust in the *shared-understanding* between the individuals also, that each is on "the same page").

MBT account feeds into the discussion started in MPJ's account. That relative to the outlined integrity provided by these relationships, this also creates an environment of extreme unforgiveness to others failures to meet these criteria, as though in letting down one person, the failing individual is letting down many of their peers and collaborators as well (and is potentially a liability to this interestedness):

**Mr B-Tech (“MBT”):**

MBT:

*I think there’s an environment that is unforgiving if you fail. For example, when people who went out of business have a new business, people say things like “Wait a second, are they okay (to do business with)?”*

S.

MBT highlights how the KIGYOUKA community can be sceptical of a person’s failure – what the persons failure is indicative of e.g., “could they read the situation ‘correctly’” (in line with common understanding), “Can the read the air/the times?”, “Do they have bad judgment of who they collaborate with” “can the communicate with collaborators/customers “properly”, “can they develop the required relationships?”.

In sync with the common-understandings that “90% of start-ups fail” and other hearsay there is a worry perpetuated by others (creating this cynical environment to start-up in) simply out of a mutual concern for the individual starting up (the risk they are taking) and naturally toward the others that individual might be letting down by taking this chance. This goes for both the friends and family of the would-be KIGYOUKA, and from fellow-KIGYOUKA alike, as MBT states:

MBT:

*...there is a lot of fear from the village society. For example, my friends from the company I first entered – “it’s not going to go well”, “we’re worried (about you)” - kind of things, they say a lot of such “negative keywords”.*

T.

This said, MBT recalls his close friends and wife were supportive of his choice to start up, however his parents and university friends were more pessimistic. With regard to their reaction, he says:

MBT:

*Hmm... once you make a mistake, it's always in your life as a negative.  
It's because everyone is afraid of that. So right, so, my friends at the company I first entered were  
saying, "It won't go well (Starting-up)", well they would stop saying that but...  
but KIGYOUKA are the opposite.  
If told "it won't go well" ... - "this is definitely gonna work out!" - I think so.  
Then, when about 10 years had passed, they were saying that then,  
"It's good that the business seems to be spinning properly, which is good."  
In that kinda way, as time passes, they'll understand you,  
but at first it's hard to comprehend, isn't it?*

U.

That in Japan, after 10 years, a small business will be accepted trusted and celebrated (depending on sector etc..). Thus, when a trustworthiness with regard to their ability to be dependable in this chain of economic relations is proven, then much of the concern is relieved. MT reflects on hitting this milestone and how only at that point did she feel she had the approval of her peers:

MT:

*Ah, uh, um for example, 90% of Japanese KIGYOU, will collapse within 3 years. ... As you'd agree, That's huge. So even if you say you started up, for the first three years it's a bit...I think that when people meet you, the feel they'll be asked to lend me money, or something like that. You're a bit shunned. ... 90, whatever percent, as you'd expect, collapse, so, the reason why they collapse is that funding – as you'd expect - doesn't go well. There are waves as a business, as you'd expect, so there are no continued customers, and because there are waves, banks don't lend any money for three years. So, I have to use my own money for 3 years, which – as you'd imagine- is difficult. So, if I try to use my own money for 3 years, I can't hire employees, or I can't grow my work unless I hire them. So that's insane, huh, it has become like a "negative spiral", So it doesn't work at all. So because there's that kind of foundation, even if you say that you started a company, you can't say "congratulations".*

(...)

*So, erm, everyone in Japan, if 10 years pass, we have a party celebrating your 10th anniversary ...  
So finally, it's societally recognized ... therefore, it takes 10 years.*

*It takes 10 years to be recognized as a KIGYOUKA.  
... So I can't even sign a contract with a leading KIGYOUKA at first.*

V.

Common understandings feed into trust. This goes back to the issues of trust relationships and why they're considered so important, and why ventures do their best to uphold good practice and adherence to the commonly agreed understandings/expectations/standards as expected in the YONONAKA, not only for the sake of the customer, but also as to maintain relationships with suppliers etc. essential to a venture's survival.

Based on her own experiences, MBB evaluates what's been essential to her experience as KIGYOUKA in Japan. she meditates on the resilience needed as to carry on after failures, reflecting on her brief time in the U.S./ Silicon Valley to offer comparison:

**Mrs Be Bold ("MBB"):**

MBB

*Well, "to not get dented" Erm, even if I fail, I believe I can do it once again and I don't give up.  
If you fail, it's a society that won't forgive you. I heard that when I went to Silicon Valley, like  
America, I would be respected if I failed. ... Right?  
People who challenge are respected, and even if they fail, they are respected...  
In Japan there's none of that "It'll be okay if you try again" - kinda thing.*

W.

As is outlined through the previous chapters, unlike other accounts above, when MBB started up she did so in isolation (meaning, in isolation from other KIGYOUKA) initially. This place of naivety benefited her as she just *tried* and (with great amounts of grit, effort and tenacity) Started-up.

Regarding the common impression of starting-up as a risk as well as the common understandings of this (and her being oblivious to this due to her complete lack of interest in business prior to starting up) she references some of things she currently hears with great frequency:

MBB:

*Maybe, erm, if it were now, "90% of people will fail if they start a business," or "It's hard if you don't have money" Kinda thing erm, lots of like,  
When you get smarter, you get scared and you don't think you can do it.  
But at that time, I didn't study too much, so I didn't know scary things.*

X.

MBB uses “Studying” here in reference to something like (she didn’t) “look into” (rather than the formal notion of study), here with regard to not looking into the social aspects of the Start-up ecosystem when she started up. Thus, for MBB, not reading the air/atmosphere, being almost “naive” to certain aspects of the Start-up experience (both practically and socially) is reflected upon here as an enabling factor to her Starting-up experience. Having recently spent time in Silicon Valley, California, she sees this optimistic “naivety” (with regard to a “can-do” attitude) as having more in common with a perceived American approach to starting up. Here she compares the two cultures with regards to communication styles more broadly, and then reflects on these issues in terms of respective environments for starting up within:

MBB

*(Regarding Japanese communicative milieu more broadly)*

*Somehow, I apologize right away, erm, and if something happens, I'm not saying "thank you", but no, I'm like, "I'm sorry," "No, not at all" and "Excuse me". Japan is humble, "humility is a virtue", so that's also a good thing, but if it's too humble, there's a point of negatively looking at yourself due*



*to being so humble. So, you don't praise yourself or your family so much in front of people, and boasting is a no-no, erm, whatsit, erm ... there's possibly a bit of a negative air?*

*Word usage and its social background may be a bit similar. As you'd expect, America looks at the bright side, speaks brightly, says good things like "That's great!!", and says "You're wonderful!"*

Y.

Even though she enjoyed her brief time in America due to MBB's personality also being similarly "bright" and enthusiastically confident, she nevertheless praises the good qualities of Japan's modesty and of humility. However, while appreciating this, MBB concedes that perhaps the lack of such a wildly optimistic "air" in Japan (and corresponding style of communication) results in a pessimistic background for starting businesses in.

**"Dr Cap" ("DC"):**

When the researcher asked DC about reading the air, the "intrinsic beliefs" depended upon by tacit communication in this context, DC similarly refers to his time living abroad in China with regard to how he interacts with such "intrinsic", day-to-day common understandings/attitudes/perspectives:

DC:

*Hmm ... well- I understand Japanese culture, but I try to avoid being bound/pigeonholed by that as much as possible. After all I went to China and I understood that Japanese common sense wasn't very common, and Chinese people live very freely and live happily.*

Z.

This time living-abroad and speaking another language allowed him to recognise and appreciate other cultures "intrinsic" beliefs. This resulted in a more distant (yet equally respectful, engaged) realisations of Japanese commonly-held understandings about starting-up. Acknowledging that there

is a lot of background pressure within the Japanese communicative milieu related to the perceived risks of starting up, I asked him why, therefore, did he make such a high-risk decision?

1A

DC: *Well, well, well, well, that's what I hear, but I think the risk is rather low.*

R: *Oh really?*

DC: *You're talking about starting up right?*

R: *Who did you hear that kind of thing from?*

DC: *.... Well, the country's Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry, (city name) and other officials say, "Why did you start a business?" "There is a risk, right?". On the contrary, I think that there is little risk. That is, the company I worked for after graduating from university was an electronics department ... it was a manufacturer of electronic components. It is a "point circuit board" maker.*

*At that time, there were many factories, so when I saw in personnel, I saw ... Well ...*

*in the old days it was very good, uh, that company,*

*in order to grow the company, those vital people were, naturally..., when the company grew,*

*what I think is Japan's... well, bad place/thing was, long ago,*

*the salaries couldn't go down, those of whose went up. ...*

*On the contrary, our generation, now, people in their 30s, eh, when the economy is bad, they get in and the salary doesn't go up, does it? (...)*

*Considering this difference is huge ... without these people (his ventures members), what can I say, With this member I thought I could make a high-performance company, so I thought that the risk of starting a business was low, so I'm doing it.*

Once again DC reflects on the importance of the people around him, taking into consideration his

mutual dependence on them and responsibility to them as the factors which lead him to start up,

valuing this fortunate situation of having a team he could rely on as opportune – and contemplating

the broader state of his generation's prospects – he decided to start up.

What is most significant here is that his experience challenged common-understandings regarding risk, about what a risk is, challenging the intrinsic beliefs of the day-to-day – the belief that joining a company is less risky than starting a company. And further this is all done through contemplating the broader era, DC considers the broader era, how times are changing. This is indicative of DCs above mentioned resistance to being pigeon-holed by commonly-held understandings of beliefs, critically observing the world around him and challenging common-sense assumptions.

This is something MTA strongly feels is integral to his experiences also. He goes into a mildly polemic rant about the how from his perspective common-understandings are taken for granted:

**“Mr Tele-App” (“MTA”):**

*MTA: ...I'm like “Why?” I don't really know which or what part, but I'm much pretty like “Why is that?”. That common sense, common sense, why do we have that common sense? Like I have to think about it until that point. It's my personality, isn't it?*

*R: Oh, do you have a specific example?*

*MTA: Hmm, well, the one I was talking about, what was that? Is 5% of canned beer really 5%? For example, um, well, I'm, this slipper now, when I come to college, I'm usually told that I like slippers.*

*But, well, why is it no good (not to wear them)? why's it not done?*

*Conversely, because it has demerit and downside - is it prohibited? Well, it's not exactly banned but... (laughs).*

...

*MTA: For example, if something is banned, then why is it banned?*

...

*MTA: Why is this speed limit here 60 km (km)? Like*

...

*MTA: Something like that, isn't it?*

*I: Is it like critical thinking?*

*MTA: Yeah, yeah, that's right! That's right.*

1B.

This returns us to the premise of the KIGYOUKA challenging common-sense notions, things taken for granted, being observed and inspected for how to better improve the situation. Not disrupting the status quo, but allowing curiosity to question it as to potentially improve it (based on their own experiences of it). This approach may or may not be the case for all KIGYOUKA (emerging business specialists). However, as has been apparent throughout these accounts, the KIGYOUKA interviewed all of them have ultimately done this just in the very gesture of starting their venture as MBB states above, she was oblivious to these common-understandings and thus this made things easier for her. Similarly, to MBB, MMV deliberately tries to ignore these commonly-held understandings, however his attitude stems from approximately 30 years-experience of business:

**MR Medical Venture (“MMV”):**

MMV:  
*Hmm... Let's see. ... When I was young, about 30 years ago, I was a person who cared about things around me.*  
...  
*I really cared about the people around me.*  
*However, I came to think that such a thing was not so important in working gradually.*  
*And, nowadays, there are times when it's better not to read the air...*

1C

## **Chapter IX: Discussion**

### **Outline of this discussion chapter:**

This chapter will initially revisit the researchers' horizons and preunderstandings as to establish the ground for the discussion of the findings this chapter sets out to do. Given the importance of language in this research, we will briefly establish how this research considers language.

This chapter is then divided into two parts:

Part one: reflects on what a Gadamerian approach has been able to reveal to us, initially discussing the boundaries set by Western, Modern epistemologically-focused approaches to Social Science research as well as the perceived limitations of foregoing historical, hermeneutic context.

This is followed by discussion of how Gadamer's (outlined in chapter II) and Watsuji's (Outlined in chapter IV) conceptions of Being as interconnected are complementary to one another and how such in the context of a Gadamerian hermeneutic approach (with its focus on language and meaning) allows our attention to be turned toward both the experience of this Being, as well as the interconnected semantic and grammatical qualities of these experiences. This part of the discussion chapter will consider to what degree such semantic holism (as well as the inquiry's broader philosophical underpinnings) has been beneficial to our investigation of the so-called KIGYOUKA and KIGYOUKASEISHIN, based on the findings presented in chapters VI-VIII. This is considered in step with the greater structure of

Gadamerian Being (as illustrated chapter II), drawing our attention to the significance of the 'YONONAKA' ('The times/society'- see Chapter IV) as well as the 'JIDAINONAGARE' ('The flow of the times') as disclosed in these accounts, as well as etymological essence of KIGYOU/ KIGYOUKA/ KIGYOUKASEISHIN in relation to the disclosures of participants as presented in the findings section and the understandings achieved through the qualitative portion of this research.

These ideas are then discussed in relation to themes and discourse prominent in mainstream 'Entrepreneurship Studies'; Significantly, that of 'Emergence', presenting suggestion of how this notion could be rehabilitated to benefit our studies via a hermeneutic ontological approach, based on insight achieved through these findings, considering 'Emergence' as *hermeneutic and historically-effected*.

We eventually reflect on the relevancy of Hegelian 'sublation' as well as the Gadamer-Habermas debate to this inquiry; Why Gadamer's rehabilitated notion of 'Tradition' vis-à-vis pre scientific understanding might be relevant to our discussions of the 'Entrepreneur' and 'Entrepreneurship' (via the insights disclosed by the KIGYOUKA participants during this inquiry).

Part two: meanwhile, will discuss the findings their selves in more detail, in context, returning to such themes as 'language, meaning and context' and the YONONAKA and the JIDAINONAGARE, as well as other themes which emerged across the interviews such as 'High-contextuality and contextually-oriented purpose', 'Reading the YONONAKA', 'subjectively-

interpreted opportunities/propensities’, ‘Trust relationships and Opportunity (KIKAI, KOUKI, CHANSU), , ‘Compatibility’, ‘Arbitrage’, ‘Commonly-understanding, sense of possibility and learning from experience’ ‘Value in the YONONAKA’ and ‘Venture as expression (of *insight*)’.



## **Introduction to Discussion Part I: The Researchers Horizons Revisited.**

The following discussion will focus on factors deemed relevant to the grander discourse this research sees itself part of i.e., English-language ‘Entrepreneurship Studies’ research, which might be categorised as taking an ‘Interpretivist approach’ from the rational perspective of mainstream Functionalist discourse, however due to the significant research presented in chapters I-V, recognises itself as a Hermeneutic Phenomenological endeavour considered as contributing to these ‘Entrepreneurship Studies’ discussions more broadly.

As outlined in chapters II, III and V, my horizon and preunderstandings are constitutive to the line of inquiry taken. This also includes the qualitative portion of this project, the research findings, including their thematic analysis and the following discussion of such. As outlined in chapter V, this refers to understandings derived from my institutional background (i.e., my academic research background), my familiarity with anglosphere discussion of ‘Entrepreneurship’ (as represented in this research and otherwise), my lived experiences outside of academia, as well as acknowledging the transformation of my pre-understandings during this research (recognising the significance of my ‘pre-understandings’ both prior to and as changing throughout the course of the research, acknowledging the interrelatedness of such through the lens of this Gadamerian approach).

Also constitutive to my horizons (disclosed here as relevant to this research project) are my prior lived experience participating within both English and Japanese language social milieux.

This means this discussion will endeavour to use this position to explore revelatory understandings gained during this research endeavour and to further discuss findings deemed of significance to these outlined discussion from this vantage point, as to highlight meaning and experience of significance to the broader discussions of the phenomena we currently refer to as 'Entrepreneurship'. We reach this point with the researcher exposed to the themes outlined in this paper prior to this chapter, significant as outlined and thus significant to this discussion in those respects. This introduction serves to disclose and remind the reader of my preunderstandings (as outlined in chapter V) in relation to the key topics explored here.

This includes my understandings of key themes presented by mainstream discussions of Entrepreneurship such as e.g., 'the market', 'profit-opportunity', 'opportunity', 'objective data', 'alertness', 'emergence', 'propensities', 'teleological determinism', 'cartesian distinction between opportunity and entrepreneur' etc. , as recognised as significant themes within these discussions by the researcher, as well as idea's the researcher brings to these discussions through the proposal of a hermeneutic phenomenological inquiry e.g., 'hermeneutic intentionality', 'hermeneutic understanding', 'meaningful experiences', 'meaning as essential/characteristic to experience', 'the significance and nuance of language', 'historicity / linguisticity of understanding' 'Being as historically-effected' etc. These

themes/disciplines and all those explored between chapters I-IV are recognised as contributing to this chapter's discussions vis-à-vis the research findings and the understandings achieved throughout this research.

Also deemed significant here, as mentioned throughout this chapter, notions such as the YONONAKA, JIDAINONAGARE, were not initially raised by the researcher, however over the course of the research their significance to these experiences as volunteered by participants has been recognised thus, they are discussed here.

### **Introduction to Discussion Part II: How this research considers 'Language'.**

As detailed throughout chapter II, a Gadamerian language-approach gives us access to more than an isolated focus on communication, metaphor, narrative etc. as previous language-focused Entrepreneurship research has explored (Bouwen and Steyaert, 1997; Hjorth and Steyaert, 2004; Dodd, 2002; Hill and Levenhagen, 1995; Downing, 2005; Holt and Macpherson, 2010) but on participant's hermeneutic understanding as historically-effected.

This research examines both the individual accounts of phenomena as experienced, as well as considers the historical situatedness of these experiences, examining the language used to express the meaning and essence of these experiences.

However, as is accepted in all areas of this research, 'understanding' itself is open-ended, never complete, always tentative, always changing, never comprehensive in-line with and as

part of our on-going temporal existence as it unfolds, thus aims only to present non-comprehensive, non-permanent, not-fixed representation of meaning, experiences and understanding.

This also applies to the notion of 'language' itself as 'unfixed'; Languages (and culture) 'change, transform, merge and contradict constantly' (Maynard, 2005;4) and this transition is also accepted here within the above conditions recognised as constitutive to this inquiry.

Maynard (2005) suggests, to refer to the 'Japanese language' as a homogenous whole is misplaced due to factors such as (and not limited to) due to regional and/or generational differences in experience of language, the uptake of new terms through exposure to such, all depending on one's experience of such. As Maynard states, the Japanese language 'contains different genres, registers and individual speaker variations. Language is filled with many different voices, and linguistic heterogeneity is the norm. as a result, explaining about 'the Japanese language' becomes an inherently partial task' (Maynard, 2005;4). This partiality falls in-line also with this research's position on the idea of experience as relative and particular and as in-line with our situatedness as effected by the linguisticity and historicity of our understandings also.

In-line with Maynard's thoughtful insight, the researcher would like to stress that the accounts and themes highlighted in these findings and in this research do not represent the experiences of all speakers of Japanese, nor all 'KIGYOUKA'. Each account is valued for its own insight and unique experiences as KIGYOUKA, all of whom here are native Japanese

speakers and/or raised bilingual as speakers of Japanese. There are naturally many other people who speak Japanese who will have completely differing unique experiences of both the Japanese language and as KIGYOUKA (as was also evident over the course of these interviews).

Given the limited nature of this inquiry (as well as its focus on experience and language) the findings section presents phenomenological samples deemed of significance to the scope and interest of this research project as outlined through chapters I-IV, and/or share similar particular meanings and essence. It is from the perspective of the Gadamerian Hermeneutic Phenomenological inquiry brought forth by the researcher that we consider experience and language as they co-exist in these experiences (as represented by accounts of these experiences and the co-creation of understanding formed during this inquiry). As outlined in chapter II and III, this Gadamerian inquiry considers our human Being as co-determined our individual hermeneutical intentionality - our own particular experiences driven by our unique and individual agency *as well as* influenced by our historical situatedness, however there are multiple overlapping historical, social and environmental factors at play here influencing our experiences, not only language as abstract in isolation.

Thus, here we can appreciate aspects as disclosed by participants as they are particular to the individual, and also as they appear to share a similar meaning or essence.

The use the situatedness of the researcher as *tool* (a native English-language speaker who is part of the academic institution of 'Entrepreneurship Studies' and who is also a Japanese-

language speaker, significantly familiar with Japanese language, social and cultural milieux)  
to draw attention to significant meaning apparent across these accounts. Discussion is then  
built around this premise.

## Chapter IX: Discussion - Part one:

### **Boundaries of Western Modernity: The limitations of foregoing historical context.**

Prior to discussing the findings in part 2 of this chapter, we will first consider what a Gadamerian approach has been able to reveal to us, which may have otherwise been obscured.

Descartes drew distinct boundaries between the *ego cogitans* and that of non-mental otherness, celebrating the autonomy of mind and of scientific inquiry (Dallmayr, 2000;825).

Whereas this methodological attitude may indeed be well suited to natural sciences, as has been outlined elsewhere in this paper, Gadamer (like Heidegger before him) felt the distinct compartmentalisation of the human individual forged through the rationalism of the

Enlightenment and central to the Positivism and Analytic Philosophy of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century was not representative of our human Being and thus this reduction of Being not suited to our investigations within the social sciences.

As Gadamer broadens, we are indeed individual, directed by our own particular concerns, our hermeneutic intentionality and our own deliberation. However, through LANGUAGE we are social, and through the linguisticity & historicity of our understanding we are socialised, acculturated and this is part of our essence also. Thus, we are historically-effected, historically-situated, part of the times, a times (a situating) as accessed through our

interpretation of those times. This interpretation is our reflective understanding where history is operative, in context.

Through this notion of our Being centred around the linguisticity and historicity of our understanding (as accessed through language and discourse) that highlights the interconnectedness of our Being, we step over boundaries demarcated by Subjectivism, as it sees us as bonded by and through language and discourse. Whereas the Modern, Western scholarship might conceive of our human Being as individual, self-contained ‘Atoms’ (Johnson, 2019;82), the hermeneutic phenomenology of Gadamer and of Watsuji (whose ideas this research builds upon) depict a much more integrated and holistic human existence – temporal, hermeneutic, social, historic.

Gadamer’s approach reveals to us dimensions of Being which are potentially integral to the social phenomena we seek to study, dimensions which are obscured/missed/omitted by Cartesian approaches, therefore a focus on the individual as demarcated by their corporeal matter or by their individual subjectivity appears to be misguided in this context; This reductive compartmentalisation may be detrimental to our examining of the very phenomena we aim to observe.

This section of the discussion chapter serves to draw attention to such ahead of discussing the findings in more detail as seeks to discuss the areas where a language-focused hermeneutical phenomenological approach draws attention to the limits of self-contained contemplations of human Being. Through this Gadamerian approach we become privy to the interconnected



aspect of our Being, and its importance in our evaluation of social phenomena. Through discussion of key themes which emerged through this research project's qualitative findings and thematic analysis (Significantly the YONONONAKA and JIDAINONAGARE), this section aims to consider where this inclusion of this interconnected holism may be of significance both for this investigation of the KIGYOUKA and other such 'Entrepreneurship studies', and what impact the omission of the historical, temporal, linguistic aspect of Being might have on our studies.

**Interconnectedness as accommodated through Gadamer, as inherent in the Japanese experience:**

In contrast to what might be considered to be within the tradition of Western thought, both Gadamer and Watsuji talk of Being as holistic, interconnected and contextually-dependent (Gadamer, 1960; Watsuji, 1996). Gadamer's notion of the 'in-between' which he suggests is the true locus of his hermeneutic ontology (1960), was an aspect of this interrelated Being apparent to Watsuji and expressed in his notion of AIDAGARA – the historical and hermeneutic sinew which binds individuals within the fundamental structure of NINGEN -, the interpreted substance of this hermeneutic ontology. This makes explicit the interconnectedness of Being presented in Gadamer's main tenet's which he himself does not fully situate as *Being-In-Relation-To-Others* (Johnson, 2019; Liederbach, 2015). Although there was no direct discussion between these two scholars, it's clear to see how both were

filling in blanks left out by Heidegger in 'Being and Time', and thus produce complementary work which both support and supplement many of each other's ideas.

This said, while Gadamer goes to great lengths in 'Truth and Method' to outline these dimensions of Being he feels are not strongly obvious to his peers (and in doing so, reminding us that these essential qualities are missed/absent in 'Western', Enlightened accounts of Being) Watsuji draws attention to how these notions are explicit in Japanese day-to-day language use, and so is the acceptance of them as essential to day-to-day life (Watsuji 1996, Liederbach 2015). In that whereas Gadamer felt the Western philosophical tradition missed this, Watsuji suggests this dimension of human existence is more obvious as experienced through the Japanese language (Watsuji, 1996; Liederbach 2015).

To further make this reduction clear, Watsuji is compelled to stress how these ideas are diminished during translations of such into other languages; In that, Western notions such as '*Anthropos*', '*Homo*', '*Man*' conceal this essential dimension of NINGEN and in their vacuumed compartmentalisation, abstract from what he perceives as its greater ontological structure (See Liederbach, 2015;71). English language authority on Watsuji, David Johnson (2019) details how a Gadamerian approach is deemed particularly well suited for expressing and representing the nuance of ideas such as NINGEN, stating 'the version of semantic holism that is closest and most relevant to our concerns is to be found above all in the work of Gadamer and the tradition he emerges.' (2019;21); In that, not only do Watsuji and Gadamer share a similar depiction of our Being as interconnected, but through Gadamer's

broader thesis we benefit from the ‘holistic and disclosive understanding of language and linguistics meaning’ (2019;21) integral to Gadamerian hermeneutic phenomenology, an approach to some degree capable of accommodating the ‘semantic and cultural density’ of ideas expressed by Watsuji.

Discussing the impracticality of translating the Watsujiian term FUUDO (See chapter IV)

Johnson draws our attention back to the environmental (contextual, climatical) qualities of to the Japanese-language experience of ‘Self’ Watsuji describes, which Johnson claims are also typically reduced in translation, deconstructing the dimensions of language which contribute to this experience. Johnson describes that the full, holistic essence of such meaning ‘depends on and emerges through a wider background of etymological associations, forms of usage and related terms, texts and practices’ (2019;21). Thus, not only is the idea as experienced made significant due to the contextual factors which constitute its essence, but the experience *and* expression of such are both informed by and contingent on the interrelated meanings as experienced broadly within the Japanese language milieu. (As is outlined in chapter

In a Gadamerian vernacular, ‘meaning’ – *the interpreted essence of a notion or experience* – is *dependent*. i.e., it depends on its broader context as a hermeneutical existence, as to exist as it does. *Meaning is not self-evident*; it depends on many interrelatedness factors. The expression, experience, (and arguably) existence of such is dependent on a broader semantic holism essential to the Japanese language. This semantic holism is accommodated by the Gadamerian approach.

In summary, the Japanese experience of Being is inclusive of these dimensions, the hermeneutic, the historical, the temporal and the climatical/the environmental and Self Other and Environment are essential to this existential experience and to this ontological entity which (from our anthropocentric view) is 'human Being'.

Thus, by utilising a Gadamerian approach to investigate the KIGYOUKA, we are able to meditate on themes such as YONONAKA and JIDAINONAGARE) As was disclosed as significant throughout the accounts of participants (see below).

### **Significance of YONONAKA/JIDAINONAGARE, etymological essence of KIGYOU**

#### **Part 1:**

The Gadamerian approach (with a focus on language and meaning) allows us access to the essence of individual experience, and when considered in combination with the greater structure of Gadamerian Being (as illustrated chapter II), our attention is thus draw to the significance of the 'YONONAKA' ('The times/society' - see Chapter IV) as well as the 'JIDAINONAGARE' ('The flow of the times') as disclosed in these accounts. This approach (based around Gadamer's conception of hermeneutical Being) thus gives us the vantage point to consider the interconnectedness of KIGYOU/ KIGYOUKA/ KIGYOUKASEISHIN vis-à-vis these significant terms - 'the times' and the so-called 'flow of the times' - as integral to this hermeneutical experience; In what manner the KIGYOU/ KIGYOUKA is impacted by the effect of history and of sublation via this suggested interconnectedness.

A language approach is also advantageous here in that we can unpack the semantic underpinnings of this hermeneutic experience, but also, it allows us to reflect on the etymological essence of the terms 起業 KIGYOU ('emerging/awakening/happening/occurring venture') and 起業家 KIGYOUKA ('emerging etc. business specialist') vis-à-vis the meaning/essence of experiences revealed in these accounts to further appreciate the significance of such.

As Johnson states above, this hermeneutical experience depends on many implicit factors such as the etymological, semantic and grammatical background 'Meaning' is interpreted within (aspects this paper begins to outline in Chapter IV). The Japanese language's less emphatic subject-predicate distinction arguably grants us access to a comparatively less 'compartmentalised' experience (than, for example, might be experienced through the English language), an arguably more *interconnected* experience, one which both blends and binds Self, Other and Environment (both 'natural' and 'social' context) through a sensation of experience as accessed, where these central aspects of experience *meld* (Berque, 1992; Watsuji, 1996). It could be argued the hermeneutical experience of such is facilitated by factors such as this lack of subject-predicate distinction, itself another contributing factor to the 'high-context' (Hall, 1966) / 'contextual' orientation of the Japanese language i.e., it's so-called 'environmental' focus (Kim, 2010), as well as a contributing factor to the necessity of the tacit communication/dependence on background understanding (Gudykunst, 1993)

mentioned in chapters IV/VI/VIII, all contributing factors to this experience of meaning and of experience itself.

To briefly explore the socialised aspect of this experience; In order to reduce uncertainty in such potentially indistinct circumstances, these grammatical idiosyncrasies are compensated by sociolinguistic practices attuned to this experience of Being (Gudykunst 1993; Maynard, 1989, 1993). In ode to this contextual orientation, the emphasis of such practices is on listening (Cook, 1999), reading (Yoichi, 2010) and on other as *thou e.g.*, the binary relationship of 'Your you' (Maynard 1993, Mori 1979) (again, a relationship perceived to implicitly also include environment/ context etc. as both parties are environed). Maynard highlights the situational occurrence of a '*self-contextualisation*' involving phases of '*contextual interpretation*' and further '*contextual transformation*' (highlighting the part of context/environment in this relationship). 'Self-contextualisation' here depends on an underlying acknowledgement of this interrelatedness to other and environment as situational context; An interconnectedness to and sensitivity toward other as both 'your you' and equally, recognition both parties are merged with environment, 'oneself/other' as 'your you/situational context', thus contributing to this experience of an interactive plane ('BAMEN') (Berque, 1992, Maynard, 1993)

N.B this 'context' Maynard draws our attention to is recognised by the researcher as baring similar essence to one's 'hermeneutic situation' - the interplay between one's lived experiences and prior understandings - the difference here being the more apparent

interconnectedness between Self/Other/Environment as evident in the recognition of circumstances i.e., the above-mentioned environmentally attuned ‘context’ one exists a part of in those circumstances. However, what is significant in this definition as relevant to this discussion in particular (not explicitly explored in other hermeneutic contexts outlined through this research) is this conception highlights the relevance of socialised and sociolinguistic factors learned during socialisation (the so-called ‘meta-knowledge’ required for social interactions in our social environments) to interaction and existence within this hermeneutic context; Maynard suggests this interpretation/transformation relies on *anticipation* and an understanding of what is expected within this interactive plane as socialised – reading a situation *as a text* - interpreting a situation, recognising a situation. That integral to this hermeneutic experience are these anticipatory fore-structures one is exposed to through these particular aspects of the socialisation experience in some Japanese-language milieux.

This returns us to the findings (Chapter VI part I) and what MT and other participants referred to as ‘reading’ (i.e., intuitively *recognising* and further *anticipating* while interpreting) in Japanese social milieux and the seeming experience of an ‘empathetic’ attunement to this greater socialised context.

This underlying contextual orientation as well as these implicit foundational understandings contribute to the AIDAGARA that binds the ontological structure of NINGEN; Contexts /

circumstances as established as codetermined during socialisation (Maynard, 1989, 1993; Cook, 1999; Yoichi, 2010).

Looking at this experience through the lens of Gadamer's co-determinedness and Watsuji's NIGEN/AIDAGARA, it becomes easy to see why the YONONAKA - and further its sublative change (it's *'flow'*) – are integral to these fundamental hermeneutic experiences, these somewhat contextually-oriented experiences, as the hermeneutic Being is co-determined by this relationship with such (as is the 'subject' the YONONAKA itself - it's generations and its transitory manner of Being provided by the *productive* and *transformative* nature of hermeneutical understanding, itself co-determined as both productive and historically effected . The saliency of these experiences highlighted by the outlined semantic and grammatical factors.

This 'environmental' (social, contextual) orientation alluded to in participants accounts outlined in chapter VI part I - e.g., MT's recounting of the importance of notions such as NINGENSEI KOKOROZASHI and the two interrelated issues - "*human development*" and "*social contribution*" as well as an outward focus on *reading* - help us to consider the significance of the YONONAKA and the flow of the times to the experiences as mentioned through this orientation;

Should we take into consideration the above outlined grammatical, sociolinguistic (interactional norms as socialised) metacognitive preunderstandings established during socialisation we become privy also to a framework of assumptions which in some capacity



underly and provide some of the historic structures of the YONONAKA, assumptions which from a Gadamerian perspective play part in arriving individuals at questions, recognitions, understandings and conclusions drawn.

(As will be discussed in part two of this chapter, where assumption played a significant part in the interviewees experiences i.e., the assumptions they had for a solution based on particular deliberation over a situation read as both particular yet imaginably ‘common’ and relatable based on perceived shared experiences of these historical structures).

Thus by ‘reading the times’, there is an innate reading of situations both as occurrent and particular as well as situations as socialised, recognising the co-determinedness of one’s particular concerns as rooted in the times (e.g., as relevant to this immediate discussion, through the lens of a particular generations/cohort/community’s experiences of socialisation, for example).

This anticipation also thus extends to *reading the flow of the times* (mentioned throughout these accounts) as this in itself is based on reading and anticipation, intuitive guess work based on one’s own particular understanding as supported by anticipatory fore-structures learned during socialisation (Maynard, 1989, 1993; Cook, 1999; Yoichi, 2010).

## Significance of YONONAKA/JIDAINONAGARE, etymological essence of KIGYOU

### Part 2:

Having briefly explored the contextual-orientation of these experiences and notions, lets now return to considering the interrelatedness of the YONONAKA, JIDAINONAGARE and KIGYOU, KIGYOUKA, KIGYOUKASEISHIN at the etymological and the experiential level.

The ‘flow of the times’ JIDAINONAGARE (時代の流れ) itself etymologically alludes to *aufheben* sublation as this breaks down to the flow (流れ NAGARE) of the times/ generation/ era changing (JIDAI), something more apparent when we consider the logographic meanings of the term. JIDAI 時代 – 時(JI) meaning ‘time’ and 代(DAI) meaning ‘to change, convert, replace’ (and circularly, also meaning ‘generation’/’era’ in itself) – punctuated with 流れ (NAGARE), ‘to flow’, resulting in an essence of ‘the flow of the converting times/eras’ (a notion intrinsically rooted in *change/replacement*). To further relay these semantic connections, the term SEDAI (世代 - ‘generation’) featuring the same 世‘SE’ as YO of YONONAKA 世の中 (世 SE/YO - as outlined in Chapter IV meaning ‘times’ ‘society’ or ‘world’ as both spatial and temporal) and also the above mentioned 代 DAI (change/ convert/

replace/ generation etc.). Therefore, it could be argued these factors would make this sublimative, temporal quality more obvious, more explicitly part of this hermeneutic experience.

Thus to consider the etymological essence of KI 起 (to awaken, to emerge, to happen, to occur,) in this context (vis-à-vis YONONAKA and JIDAINONAGARE) alludes to this sublimation, this eventually changing state, an occurrence, an *emergence*; In tandem with the co-determination of Being as historical as in Gadamer's hermeneutical Being and in Watsuji's NINGEN as well as the temporal and contextual essence of hermeneutical experience disclosed through these accounts we can see that the etymological essence may pertain to this kind of awakening /occurring/emerging with the times, highlighting the significance of the times to the experience of these 'emerging business specialists'.

KI's 起 occurrence, emergence, awakening carries with it the nuance of arising as through *arousal – not in isolation (introspectively) but circumstantial (contextually)*. Dormant, sleeping, awoken.

Thus, when considered through the Gadamerian lens, through the lens of the historical interconnectedness of NINGEN/AIDAGARA, and in tandem with the insight achieved regarding the notions of YONONAKA/ JIDAINONAGARE, rather than simply “*starting*” something, this notion appears to tap into the idea of a coming about, of coming to, of happening and emerging, discreetly acknowledge the KIGYOU venture as part of times, awakening into those times, happening, *occurring* due to those times (i.e., due to the co-

determination of ones historically effected existence as social and exposed to shared ideas, experiences, traditions, intrinsic taken-for-granted traditions in the productive hermeneutical qualities of this experience, addressing a concern in/of the times).

From this vantage point we are able to consider the relationship between *the substance of the times* and the *substance of the venture*.

This *occurrence* has much in line with Heidegger's notion of the unavailable/the *occurrent*, recognising an issue of concern, and also with Gadamer's reflective *recognition, historical-effectedness and productive understanding* and when considered within the historical interconnectedness and environmentally/contextually-orientedness of Watsuji's thesis, we see similar essence revealed across some of the experiences shared by participants e.g., in line with accounts presented in Chapters VI and VII, a number of participants recount experiences of reflection toward something taken-for-granted of those times/within their generation triggered by their own particular problematic encounter with such, bringing the issue to consciousness. Then on recognising a problem (as concerned) the KIGYOUKA themselves produced their own particular solutions (understanding) based on their own particular experiences, recognising that given their own situatedness this was probably adaptable and of significance to others as similarly situated (The accounts alluding to such presented in Chapter VI, VII and VIII and discussed in further detail throughout this discussion chapter).

That all factors 'awaken', 'occur'. 'happen' with the times, as an issue becomes conscious within the times, the solution, the answer, the venture too become relevant in sync with the

times, it awakens, emerges as purposeful to address such. However, it may be the KIGYOU ('venture') itself which draws the attention of the YONONAKA, causing individuals to reflect on a problematic issue they took for granted (as MTA and others mention, where the public have taken-for-granted and accepted a problematic issue is simply unchangeable, anecdotally reporting instances where others have responded to problems with 「しょうがない」 or 「仕方がない」 meaning 'there's nothing that can be done about it', 'that's life' etc.).

These solutions then enter into the times, the public consciousness, as (re) interpreted and applied to individuals' particular circumstances as an *insight*; thus alluding to the perspective MSM articulates in Chapter VI, the times the YONONAKA catch up and the KIGYOUKA's observation of an problem as-yet pre-conscious existing in the YONONAKA, which positions the KIGYOUKA as perceivably one-step ahead of society, and circularly society 'catches up' through uptake of the insightful solution/ understanding/ way of life that they suggest as a product or service addressing such.

The co-determination of our hermeneutic Being as historical and situated in tandem with our own particular deliberations appears to provide the underpinnings for this rhythm;

- The individual's particular reflection (as historically situated/effected) → passed on to others as insight → insight is accepted as adaptable/ useful (as deliberated upon and interpreted to their particular circumstances) in part due to historical situatedness of

problem/solution -> 'Insight' permeates as 'Tradition' ->; Then: -> The Times  
change/transform (through deliberation, productive insights)-> so do problems issues  
concerns -> thus require new solutions and insights -> and so on.

Through a Gadamerian lens and in line with insight achieved through this qualitative work,  
we can observe the relationship between the experiences some of these KIGYOUKA and the  
YONONAKA. From the experiences outlined and as analysed through the Gadamerian lens,  
The KIGYOU (emerging business) and the KIGYOUKA (emerging business specialist)  
appear to be integrated within / integral to their times as their etymology alludes to.

Both Gadamer's Hermeneutic Being as historically-effected as well as the integrated  
relationship between NINGEN and the YONONAKA gives us access to a manner of  
considering our Being a situated, this situatedness and its transitory temporality, its sublation  
all integral to our Being, unfixed and context dependent.

Both as to consider the venture, but more so to consider our Being and our ventures as part of  
the times, manifest due to and integrated within those times.

The YONONAKA/flow of the times and the experiences and understandings of the  
individual's integral to these times, The (specifically) *hermeneutic* Being.

Understanding through fusion i.e., through interpretation, through sublation *is* change; thus,  
our understandings (as interpreted and historically-situated) *are the times*; our experience of  
understanding and application of those understandings *are* the times flowing. Concerns,

solutions sought, possibilities understood, tentative understandings applied, new concerns observed, new understandings sought and applied and so on. To recognise this amidst the notion of Being as concerned recognises the venture (the experience of offering a solution) as a part of the times, essentially, the times are a part of it (its purpose, its necessity, its existence). This is the *emergence of the times and the venture as integral to them*, not the emergence of the *venture in isolation*.

This meditation on the KIGYOUKA has given us the opportunity to consider a variant “Entrepreneurship” and to view the phenomena from an experience presenting vastly different characteristics to those typically focused on in mainstream Functionalist discourse, however it presents a phenomenon familiar enough to require the pondering of new questions within these discourses.

### **‘Emergence’ as hermeneutic and historically-effected:**

This returns us to the theme of emergence, this time from an interpretivist/hermeneutic phenomenological point of view.

When characterised by these temporal and contextual qualities, we might consider this KIGYOUKA-SEISHIN notion of *Spirit* to have more in common with Hegel’s *Geist* than is apparent in the notion of spirit typically associated with *Entrepreneurship* in the Functionalist literature (Koh,1996; Morris et al., 1993, 1994, Zeffane, 2014).

Through Gadamer, Watsuji, and the insight gained from participants regarding the significance of the YONONAKA in their experiences, we are able to appreciate this phenomena as interconnected, temporal, dialectical; it is a spirit of *emergence and interconnectedness* (and implicitly of *sublation* also) rather than a *spirit* associated solely with the personal traits of the individual ‘Entrepreneur’ in isolation (e.g., Baron, 2004; Shane and Venkataraman 2000; Galio and Katz, 2001; Sigrist, 1999; Galio and Katz, 2001), the abstract market economic process of the ‘Entrepreneur’ (e.g., Kirzner, 1979; Casson, 1982; Shane and Venkataraman, 2000; Shane, 2003 ) or an notion of ‘Emergence’ associated with entitative conceptions, focusing on ‘Emergence’ in relation to key concepts such as ‘opportunity’, ‘venture’ (e.g., internal processes etc.), ‘external environment’, ‘the market’ as dichotomised, separated and sectored (see below).



The experience of KIGYOUKASEISHIN given in these accounts more broadly appears to be one which is interconnected (as historically-effected) as well as through contextually-oriented concern (as historically-effected also). A grander notion of spirit interrelated with the YONONAKA and the JIDAINONAGARE.

As suggested in chapters I, II and III, in taking a Gadamerian approach we are privy to significant characteristics of a phenomena which otherwise may have been obscured. The term KIGYOUKA-SEISHIN (it's meaning in line with the essence outlined in this chapter above) allows us to appreciate the interconnectedness of our Being as individuals as interconnected with 'the times'. Thus, once again by employing a Gadamerian approach with its hermeneutical phenomenological primordial vantage point, we are able to see the potential significance of these issues to Entrepreneurship scholarship more broadly also, using them as grounds to potentially begin to rehabilitate this notion of 'emergence' as hermeneutic, historical, social and contextual.

This contemplation of 'emergence' goes beyond the 'emergence' discussed in three so-called creation approaches; e.g., The emergence of 'internal' strategizing, creativity, development, incremental decision-making and the part such plays in achieving market acceptance (Alvarez and Barney, 2010; Browder et al, 2019; Mintzberg & Waters, 1985; Klein, 2010), which as outlined in chapter II typically teleologically focused on incremental trial and error, on non-linearity, on blind variance etc. Elsewhere in other Functionalist considerations of emergence, 'environmental' factors tend to be considered again in market economic terms

and consider the emergence of ‘opportunity’ for the entrepreneur to capitalise on via observation of macro changes such as regulatory adjustments, new technologies, disasters etc. which are considered as impactful events which change the macroeconomic landscape causing new opportunities to ‘emerge’ during periods of flux (Busenitz et al, 2014:14; Eckhardt & Shane, 2003; Cohen & Winn, 2007; Dean & McMullen, 2007;). Research focusing on the venture, firm or organisation tend to be entitative contemplations of the organisation in isolation typically dichotomising the internal and external environment, implicitly positing them as ‘separate’, recognising emerging strategic process of a firm as ideally observant of and adapting to rapidly changing external environment with the teleological focus of exploiting opportunity or gaining market acceptance (Abell, 1980; Drucker, 2014; Hofer and Schendel, 1978; Alvarez and Barney, 2010; Browder et al, 2019;). The more radical creation and process driven approaches share more in common with the phenomenological approach in that entrepreneurial activity is positioned as temporal, emergent process focusing on notions of ‘effectuation’ (Sarasvathy, 2002), entrepreneuring (Steyart, 2007), and ‘the entrepreneurial journey’ (McMullen and Dimov, 2013) recognising ‘Entrepreneurship’ as a continually unfolding, ongoing process of becoming (Hjorth et al, 2015; Steyart, 2007).

However, what tends to be absent in many of these studies is this interconnection with ‘the times’ (as defined above in this chapter and throughout this research) as integral to this becoming, to this emergence.

The consideration of the emergence of a venture as both *hermeneutic* and *historically-effected*: Tradition, insight, reflection.

When suggesting a so-called ‘Interpretivist’ approach to investigating ‘Entrepreneurship’ Packard (2017) recommended how this could correspond to different levels of analysis, however from this Gadamerian approach we find such distinct levels of analysis are problematic, given the perceived interconnectedness of their tiers of experience/phenomena.

A Gadamerian approach arrives at this discussion at (different/varying ‘levels of analysis’) in its conception. The comprehensive hermeneutic Being of the Gadamerian approach spans different traditional compartmental levels of analysis as interconnected. The individual as interconnected with the times - their productive understandings, insight and conversation as integral to the times and their sublation (the change and growth of individuals and ‘the times’ they’re a part of which they contribute to, and which contribute to them as historically-effected) – rather than approaching research through compartmental discussion of distinct levels of analysis. Thus, the Gadamerian idea of Being suggests we don’t simply focus on the becoming of *the venture*, but of the becoming of the times; The venture as a part of those times, the times integral to that venture as historical and interconnected. A focus on the emergence of the venture as less clearly compartmental (as the product of the individual/s as historically-effected, within ‘the times’), rather than considered under traditionally entitative terms.

Rather, a focus on the emergence of *recognition, reflection* and *understanding* vis-à-vis the of an issue of the times from within the times they're situated – the significant symbiotic nature of the times and the venture via the individual as historically-situated.

The individual is the nexus point of this synthesis, this emergence, as critically reflective within the times ('the times' the product of our collective Being itself, as interpreted).

The contextual-orientation of the Japanese language alongside the focus of these accounts draw to the YONONAKA/'the times' and JIDAINONAGARE/ the 'flow of the times' allow us to observe this phenomenon in less demarcated terms, as interconnected.

The historically-effected venture (and related aspects such as its mutually situated customers and their concerns) a 'whirlpool' in this flow – a historically-effected microcosm of individual concern as co-determined, which produces a uniquely interpreted yet historically effected solution (co-determined also), which may seem relevant to others (i.e., the ventures customers) due to their situatedness, co-determination also, and given their own phronesis (deliberative, interpretive capabilities) to be able to adapt *insight* into their own particular circumstances. Here we can begin to consider the essence of this phenomena as 'the *venture as expression of insight addressing a concern of the times/a perennial concern addressed through the lens of the current times, as historically effected*'.

Let's now consider this further by revisiting our discussion of critique and tradition as brought to our attention by the Habermas/Gadamer debate outlined in chapter II, and how this

relates to the relationship participants recounted having with the YONONAKA aka the so-called 'times'.

### **'Tradition' and 'Critique' revisited: the YONONAKA, the times and critical reflection**

According to Gadamer our Being and becoming are integrated through our revelatory understanding, and our hermeneutic understanding depends on our context. Context is (i.e., includes aspects of) 'the times.

At the comprehensive level, 'the times' are this sublation outlined above and in chapter II; this productive understanding, insight and interaction. This retention, rejection, synthesis, production, communication and deliberative re-interpretation. We might consider 'the times' made up of (and contributing to) aspects of tradition, common-understandings, socialised understandings, shared events (and understandings of such), insight, intrinsic beliefs, legacy, heritage, 'old' ideas as reinterpreted, 'new' ideas as incipient. nascent and becoming, emerging issues, solutions, debates, burgeoning cultures and sub-cultures, adoption, adaption, rejection, demise, surpassing, *emergence* – all interpreted, further producing more understandings, further contributing to the substance of 'the times' as it/they *flows*. I.E., As it is produced and transformed through our individual interpretations and contributions.

‘The times’ for the individual meanwhile are ultimately the substance of their co-determined hermeneutic experiences, their hermeneutic *context* (to which they productively contribute to).

They encounter aspects of these cultures and traditions etc. and once (re-)interpreted into their own hermeneutical Being these notions are either absorbed and un-reflected upon further, taking such for granted as an intrinsic belief, or alternatively, certain particular circumstances have had them reflect on something as deemed problematic as it resides in the times, and a. they may simply reevaluate their impression, or b. concerned, they may strive to resolve such. This is critique as re-considered amidst Gadamer’s rehabilitation of ‘Tradition’ and ‘Authority’ as *insight* (insight as evaluate-able and acceptable/rejectable based on one’s own interpretive deliberations – See chapter II).

The authority granted to ‘insight’ stems from reflective recognition of *insight as applicable*; this can be something as inconspicuous as quotidian *know-how*, as refined *techne*, as understandings, ideas, methods passed on. Therefore ‘Tradition’ can be as inconspicuous as ‘house-building’, ‘door fixtures’, ‘folding clothes’, ‘wool craft’, ‘recipes’ ‘technology’ for example. These too can be altered, changed, challenged and are always necessarily *adapted*; however, they retain enough of the original idea to be a traditional idea. This includes historical idea’s we unconsciously subscribe to also i.e., reflected upon and then interpreted into one’s lived context of understandings and horizontal pre-understandings and presuppositions, taken for granted until made aware of such again.

Traditional ideas (ideas we're exposed to where insight has been relayed, retained and perpetuated) which are part of one's experiences as either adopted personally, or observed to be perpetuated so frequently it appears part of the common-understanding of the times ( granted authority as insight and not explicitly contradicted or challenged with a convincing alternate view); These ideas *may not be perfect*, may not be perfectly accurate solutions (and given the particular nature of our contextually bound concerns, may not be fully transferable to unique particular circumstances) yet remain unchallenged/unquestioned as the applicability of the insight/solution will *suffice*, thus they go on being habitually applied/accepted, unreflected upon.

However, when this problematic issue becomes explicit (i.e., becomes a *concern*) understanding (or applicable/transferable *insight*) is sought.

It is due to Gadamer's rehabilitation of 'tradition' vis-a-vis 'authority as insight' we can consider 'the times'/ the YONONAKA (the components of which were considered on the previous page e.g., tradition, insight, intrinsic beliefs etc.) as an integral component of these experiences and their hermeneutic context: The YONONAKA the connective tissue (the AIDAGARA) of all participants involved in the dialectical interactions intrinsic to the experiences of the KIGYOUKA e.g., either those who have noticed a concern, those who seek insight to address a similar concern, those who offer a solution or those who become conscious of an issue via exposure to a solution for such (realising they had been coping or that common understanding of the concern was it lacked a solution).

This returns to a theme touched upon by participants outlined in Chapters VI and VII; Where frustrated, they had noticed a problem and endeavoured to fix it, and further endeavoured to express a solution they believed suitable for others within the YONONAKA experiencing similar problems, as for them to adapt it to their particular circumstances. In some cases, this was a recognised problem but no (effective) solution had been suggested (i.e., was available), or was a problem others may not yet have been conscious of, an issue taken for granted in its mundanity and triviality (possibly previously reflected upon but personal experience and common-understandings to lead them accepting nothing could be done).

Take for example, ‘Tradition’ here might be a ‘towel’ - an idea we take as an intrinsic part of our daily habits, accepted, un-reflected upon. If a towel gets old, we might replace it, retaining the original suggestion of a towel as useful, however with the introduction of a contraption such as a ‘hairdryer’, we may re-evaluate our situation via this new insight.

A concern we seek to address in its essence may be of the times (e.g., regarding internet connectivity, impact of fossil fuel on the environment, leaking disposable nappies, cell phone screen protectors, stairlifts, energy prices, trouser braces, windscreen wipers, shoe laces, wine bottle openers, plastic bags, internet applications etc.), or this concern may be a perceivably perennial issue reconsidered within the context of current times, and through the lens of a solution developed *within the times*, like with the towel/hairdryer example above (as historically-effected and historically *effecting* – this addition to the ideas of Spinoza et al (1997) will be discussed further below).



These concerns are also not necessarily those which are immediately noticeable, they may be those which go over looked, but yet are problematic. Issues which may go unnoticed upon until prompted. There are also eventual break downs where solutions are no longer deemed fit for purpose as we reconsider them within the current times (given circumstantial changes, or 'new' solutions available).

These solutions may be adopted through exposure to such, and this uptake being down to the individual's deliberation of such, or alternatively, where insight of another recognises you (might) have a problem and offers an alternative (suggested by someone whose 'authority' of insight is accepted e.g., a family member, a friend, a teacher, a respected spokesperson, a celebrity endorsement etc. or as 'suggested' by a retailer in offering it as a product/service, which ultimately, is suggested by the so-called 'Entrepreneurs' who noticed these issues and provided a solution for them).

In our deliberative interpretations we critically reflect on and engage with old ideas and question their relevancy when our attention is drawn to them as concerned, or where *coping* (as a *sufficient* solution is available to us) we might only become conscious of an issue as problematic through insight as suggested/recommended (i.e., an alternative solution). This might be the case when people's understanding is taken for granted, not 'updated' or it wasn't completely suitable to a situation in the long run (i.e., a short-term fix accepted as an adaptable solution).

The intrinsic beliefs Spinoza et al (1997) mention are intrinsic until questioned, challenged and rejected. where exposure to a 'modern' ('new') or alternative solution reveals the currently accepted insight/solution as flawed or problematic, now reflected upon deeper.

Similar to the notion of unreflective availableness, if functioning to some degree, we may simply *cope* (Here used in tandem with Heidegger's meaning, but also expressing of the mundane notion of 'coping' as more generally understood). That this 'concern' as-yet still occupies an intermediary place, a *coping*, taken-for-granted-ness, which allows the concern to exist mostly un-reflected upon, unnoticed as or cope-able as being problematic, under-the-radar so to speak where the individual isn't yet conscious of the problem at all or the individual hasn't reevaluated the 'insight' (solution) previously applied to the problem in a current context.

However, when recognised as problematic by the interviewed KIGYOUKA-participants for example, a newer insight (a solution, a product, a service) is introduced, to potentially be adapted to one's particular yet 'contemporary' iteration of a problem, and the old 'tradition' the old 'insight' rejected when this new information, this new insight is imparted as a solution.

Thus again, this temporal notion of the times provides us the breadth of being to consider

The concern as a historically-effected, situated, idiosyncratic concern of the times, and solutions, understanding, insight too as situated to a particular time, context, ‘moment’, in need of a new solution or new ‘updated’ solution.

Based on the accounts presented by the KIGYOUKA-participants interviewed, it is this critical reflection (a key component of one’s experience of interpretation) which in the vast majority of accounts came about *circumstantially*, where the individual was forced to reflect on a situation as concerned, which either common insight or common understanding of a situation was contradicted, or their solution to problematic situation caused a taken-for-granted common understanding or intrinsic belief to be contradicted to some kind of benefit.

As Gadamer stated in reaction to Habermas’ claims of the necessity of pre-conditionless critique, here in this prescientific experience of hermeneutic reflection (where we might suggest the experience of so called ‘Entrepreneurship’ to ‘begin’ – or more specifically in philosophical hermeneutic terms, where its foundations lay and experience emerge from), such ‘precondition-less’ is seemingly less relevant, possibly diametrically opposite to the dynamic of the phenomena at hand and potentially detrimental to our account of the phenomena.

From the point of view this hermeneutic phenomenological inquiry takes, ‘The times’ as we experience them are integral to this critical reflection (thus to ideation) as our concerns

emerge from and as part of these times, so too do our solutions. (Even so-called ‘potential needs’ are still based on a *potential* use).

Therefore, when we consider the becoming of a venture, this perhaps should not be from the position of the individual as distinct in isolation as transcendental, in turn considering the venture *becoming* in isolation, but would perhaps be better considered as occurring within the times, the times and the productive essence of our broader human Being (as interconnected) essential to the emergence of the venture.

The times (as defined throughout this chapter) the basis for reflection and for production of a solution. And further, ‘the times’ as integral to both our individual as well as our more comprehensive Being *becoming* (through its co-determinedness as both *productive* and *historically effected*) and circularly thus we are integral to the becoming of the times also - through this reflective, productive synthesis of particular experiences (past and present) and the (historical) effectiveness of the times we exist in.

This returns to Spinoza et al (1997) and their notion of history-making; from the perspective this research and its engagement with the accounts of participants, this appears circular notionally and impactful actually; the KIGYOUKA is both (co-) made by history and also a productive contributor to history (the times/YONONAKA). Its impact being in this insight, insights as the KIGYOUKA’s making of effective history – as accepted or rejected, however a productive addition to our times as encountered/recognised or not. Via this interconnectedness with the times, they produce a particular solution through a historically-

effected synthesis, thus appearing relevant to those existing within the times and exposed to similar ideas, similar insights, similar traditions, and similar meanings experiencing similar concerns as interpreted (this will be discussed further in terms of subjectively-interpreted propensities in the second part of this chapter).

## **Chapter IX: Discussion - Part Two:**

## **Chapter IX: Discussion Part 2 – Introduction.**

This second part to the discussion chapter will be reflecting on the essential themes outlined throughout the three findings chapters previous. It focuses on meaning revealed and the experiences disclosed by participants as presented in the findings, as understood in context by the hermeneutic phenomenological researcher who presents this work. This discussion evolves around the meaning of these experiences, and considers such meaning as the structure of experience, taking into consideration how language and common-understandings inform these meanings and experiences. The discussion also contemplates the relationship between “Meaning” (acquired through events of understanding, as accessed through language) and the interviewed KIGYOUKA’s intentionality, understandings, horizontal presuppositions, prejudgements and anticipations, interpretations of possibility, and interpretations of purpose.

Therefore, continuing from discussions set up in part one of this chapter, part two discusses the common meanings shared across the KIGYOUKAs experience, as interpreted by the researcher. This section (nor the inquiry more broadly) does not strive to make statements regarding objectivity, nor claims of empirical generalisations of any group or sample, nor to provide the foundations for generalisation of the KIGYOUKA, nor any phenomenon/a more broadly. Once again, this discussion summarises the meanings revealed by the 22 KIGYOUKA interviewed, and the themes recognised by the researcher across these

interviews. This is considered only representative of the unique experiences of the individual participants (who recognise themselves as KIGYOUKA), as disclosed.

Through contemplating the themes, sub-themes and over-arching meta-themes outlined throughout the three findings chapters we can begin to develop a tentative understanding of these experiences as meaningful, and thus reflect on the meanings that are said to structure them. (The experiences of these participating KIGYOUKA as experienced, interpreted and understood through the Japanese language by our interviewees, and further by the researcher).

Two key terms that have become the thematic focus of the finding's chapters – the so-called “YONONAKA” (“the times”) and the so-called JIDAINONAGARE (“Flow of the Times”) were not initially mentioned by the researcher until volunteered as part of an account by the KIGYOUKA. However, terms whose English counterpart is of current interest to

Entrepreneurship research discourse (e.g., “Opportunity” – KOUKI, KIKAI,

BIJINESUCHANSU), were brought into discussion by the researcher at times during the interviews where this seemed relevant to discussion, in relation to on-going conversation.

This is made explicit here as for the reader to appreciate the significance of their meaning to the participants, as will be elaborated throughout this discussion chapter.

The phenomenological samples presented in the findings chapter are examples showcase both idiosyncratic experiences as well as emerging themes which became apparent throughout the



thematic analysis phase, and it is necessary to remind the reader of the vast amount of varying and idiosyncratic meaning experiences understandings disclosed as significant by participants beyond the samples and themes presented here.

The researcher would like to clearly state that this research does not make sweeping “broad-stroke” generalisations regarding experiences as accessed through the Japanese language, nor regarding the individuals who experience their lives through the Japanese language. The main tenet driving this research is that due to the idiosyncratic nature of our hermeneutic human Being, we should create approaches to research which accommodate and consider this diversity of thought and experience.

Therefore, even though this research looks at the relationship between language and experience, it is apparent to the researcher that the interpretive agency of the individuals considered here present a diverse number of unique experiences regarding a diverse number of concerns and diverse number of solutions addressing the subjectively-interpreted issues focused upon in accounts of these individual experiences.

However, these meaningful interpretations are also recognised as historically-situated, and thus this chapter also discusses any common essence, meanings or understandings essential to the interpreted meanings informing these experiences. Considerin both the unique and particular nature of these experiences as well as language and meaning as contributing to the structure of these experiences in part. This however does not mean that all nuance of meaning

will be interpreted exactly the same by all individuals within a given context, and is dependent both on the unique lived-context of the individual as well as the social and historically-effected context they exist within. Through the “fusion of horizons”, individuals can expand their horizons with understandings from outside their current situatedness, thus never becoming predictable or objectifiable.

This research thus recognises this diversity of individual *Being* (as unique and intentionality-driven) as well as this situatedness of *experience*, of both Japanese-language users and otherwise. With this in mind this initial section of this chapter will now discuss the researcher’s impression of the interviewee’s relationship with language as well as their relationship with common foundations for shared-communications and understanding achieved through such. This research thus focuses on the core and integral relationship the individual has with “the times” through their mutual “understandings” *as they flow*, with the individual as existent amidst these times. Recognising this as “Being”.

### **Language, Meaning, Context:**

As this research is a Gadamerian hermeneutic phenomenological inquiry, the researcher deems it is important to once again draw attention to the interconnected nature of Self, Other and Environment as they are considered to be experienceable through the Japanese language (See chapter IV, and part one of this chapter for details), in order to punctuate the essence of the themes revealed through these interviews, to present and represent the essence/meaning of the experience as communicated and understood in context. This refers to ‘experience’ as facilitated by the meaningful inter-relatedness of these notions (Self, Other and Environment) as they are understood and experienced in context. As outlined in part one of this chapter, this ‘understanding’ is considered to be achieved through a culmination of semantic factors (e.g., Meaning as derived from the experience of these notions as is facilitated by the grammatical structure of the language [For example, a lack of subject-predicate definition in Japanese], definition as understood through socialisation, logographic representation of themes, etc.) , as well as being impacted by particular, circumstantial factors (e.g., particular meaningful circumstances and contexts as uniquely experienced and interpreted), as interpreted.

By extension it is also necessary to once again mention the “high-contextuality” of the language, as facilitated by such grammatical characteristics and as relevant to this experience of interconnectedness. This cultivates a dependence of interlocutors on background ‘common’ or shared understandings (as socialised or as observed), and on ‘reading’ (i.e.,

understanding and anticipating/expecting) non-verbal common-ground “mutual”

understandings.

From the social perspective of the KIGYOUKA interviewed (based on the findings outlined in chapter VI, VII, VIII) this includes an experience of ‘reading’ (i.e., an attuned understanding of social cues and anticipated common-understandings) - of reading people, reading the ‘air’ (KUUKI – the non-verbal yet explicit subtext of communications), reading the ‘times’ (assumed ‘common’ events and understandings of an era) as situated-historically as social.

This relationship with/dependence on *common*-understandings is assumed to contribute to the impression of a perceivable *shared*-understanding (Further, a potential sense of perceived *empathy* – See chapter VIII). Many participants claim they read the YONONAKA, and through the descriptions given, it is apparent these readings were read *empathetically*, from the perspective of Mori’s “Your You” (Mori, 1979).

The contextual orientation outlined in part one of this chapter is broadly assumed to contribute to, grant access to, an empathetic, *contextually-oriented* sense of concern, the concerns directing many of the KIGYOUKA interviewed (See accounts in Chapter VI).

For example, when MHI reflected on her own lack of understanding, her assumption was that this was a gap in understanding across her generation and across the current times. Through a particular experience (her illness) which gave her the opportunity to reflect on issues she’d not critically engaged with (her own - and by extension her generations - seeming lack of

will/ability to cook healthy meals) she recognised this ‘tradition’ (i.e., an eventual status quo / adopted attitude as un-reflected upon, as accepted) was rife within people she considered of her generational cohort (and was to some degree present in generations either side of this also), as compared to prior generations. That somehow this attitude had been accepted as an acceptable status quo yet her own particular circumstances drew her attention to an alternative applicable understanding which she felt her generation was not privy to (as will be touched upon later in this chapter, through her reflections she realised this ‘tradition’ was *challengeable*); She experienced an issue of concern which caused her to reflect on the issue, and in recognising how it related to her, made the assumption that this would impact her colleagues, friends and people of similar circumstance. She thus conceived of it as an issue broader than her own in isolation, having the revelation that at its core it was probably an issue of the times (From MHI’s perspective), thus she sought to address it as a mutual “issue of the times”.

The same could for example be said of MTA’s frustrations with mobile Wi-Fi – that he assumed it must be a shared issue of the times, based on his own experiences (See Chapters VI, VII, VIII for other examples).

These realisations of course occur also through experiences in other (either high or low context) languages, however these notions stand out as important appear to the researcher to be important for us to reflect on the nature of Being of the participants (self-considered ‘KIGYOUKA’, native/bi-lingual Japanese speakers) interviewed, as so we can represent the

nuance of the meaning of their experiences, and also, as to communicate the essence of this meaning /experience to the reader.

As outlined in Chapter IV and discussed further the first part of this chapter, this sense of shared experience feeds into Watsujiian ideas such as AIDAGARA - “betweenness”, and how the experience of such melds Self/Other/Environment within notions such as the YONONAKA/SEKEN etc. (the NINGEN ‘inter-human subject’, as perceivable through this Japanese experience (Watsuji 1996, Berque, 1992). Therefore, the researcher feels it is important to draw our attention to this issue first as to consider these accounts through a Gadamerian lens.

To be clear, this is not to suggest the idiosyncrasies of the Japanese language have a *causal effect* on one’s experiences, however being a Gadamerian hermeneutic inquiry, this discussion considers the *relationship* between the language and experiences presented.

With this in mind the researcher would first like to draw attention to the interviewee’s seeming use of their own unique experiences as the basis for their venture-starting experiences, and further beyond these individual concerns. Discussing the seemingly contextually-oriented, necessity-driven experiences of the KIGYOUKA interviewed, as well as the purposes these ventures/experiences are interpreted to serve.

This discussion while focusing on the individual accounts of the KIGYOUKA interviewees, will jump between the individual accounts of the participants, and then the context of the

broader “times” and their “common”- understandings, which they reference when using the term YONONAKA.

However, these tentative understandings of common-understandings were not interpreted nor communicated as to represent an entire demographic, cultural group nor even serve as an entire, finite, fixed summary of the thoughts, feelings nor participants that make up “the times”. This is in reference to the fluid shared-understandings of an era. However, these opinions, values, understandings might not be recognised by *all* KIGYOUKA (interviewed or otherwise) nor *all members* of that era, these are simply common-understandings of an era as interpreted by the individual KIGYOUKA – all as tentative, never definitive, open-ended understandings that change or develop due to our human hermeneutic relationships as exists temporally. The YONONAKA is filled with various differing people with their own opinions and are not to be generalised. However the YONONAKA is in reference to the situatedness of the discussions of the times, issues potentially agreed upon as issues of the times, shared “common” understandings of the times (again to stress, not “duplicated” understandings, but understandings as subjectively-interpreted individually, yet recognised as agreed upon by others as an issue of the times, due to their mutually-shared lived-contexts and situatedness, as they overlap), and similarly “shared” experiences of the times, However, that does not mean that EVERYONE within those times will agree on these issues, nor does it mean they will be aware of them let alone accept them as relevant or understood.

The linguisticity of understanding (i.e., through Gadamer. all understanding is achieved through language), results in a common-ground that individual subjective-interpretations are achieved through, plus under Gadamer's notion of dialectical understanding, such events of understanding require an underlying agreement on something being an issue of concern either between the two parties or more broadly of the time, thus present the fertile commonly-shared grounds for individuals.

### **High-contextuality and “Contextually-oriented concern”:**

Many of the participant's accounts in chapter VI share a characteristic discernment of a *tentative* need or necessity, rather than position their experiences as the exploitation or discovery of a so-called “profit-opportunity” - a discernment based on a reflection on their own experiences of a concern or frustration, experiences based around deliberation and intuition, not on surveying hard, objective data.

The experiences broadly begin with the individual reflecting on an issue of concern from their own experience, something absent or obtrusive in their life and *frustrated*, they endeavoured to develop a tentative solution based on their own particular frustrations.

However, their frame of reference when considering the issue reflects on their own their struggles as a *part of those times*.



Through a seemingly empathetic, contextually-oriented sense of concern, the KIGYOUKA presented in Chapter VI - in some manner - appeared to reflect on their own struggles, somewhat ‘empathetically’ understanding how their own struggles apply to the times as understood.

They seemed to intuitively consider their issue of concern as one potentially an issue of the times in need of addressing, directing them toward the experience of starting a venture. In some manner addressing their own concerns while also addressing those of the times.

A blend of reading the shared-subjectivity of the times, as experienced within the times, through simply existing socially within those times and assuming a tentative and limited understanding of those times.

Many of these particular experiences appear to initially reflect on an issue, a concern, a problem, an absence, an obtrusiveness, based on their own individual experiences of such, and assumed this would tentatively be applicable to the YONONAKA., that this issue would also be recognised as a concern of the times (For example, MHI’s lack of dietary understanding, MSKs lack of a place to work as a mother, where she could achieve a sense of responsibility, MTA’s lack of mobile internet when traveling internationally). Their reference to the YONONAKA is in reference to the shared understandings of an era (as outlined above and discussed in detail in the following section of this chapter). Meaning their intuitive understanding of this as a potentially “shared” issue is grounded in their own assumptions and presupposition regarding these times, as existent within them. An attuned sense of their

existence within those times, reading the times as they happen around one's self, intuitively recognising the relevance of their concern to the times more broadly.

In this context, these ventures (of the accounts presented in chapter VI and VII) mostly appear to be *necessity*-driven, rather than profit-driven initially (although naturally profit is considered a factor throughout these experiences). This necessity appears to be ascertained through reflecting on this personal experience of absence, of obtrusiveness, then assumed this would be applicable to a portion of the YONONAKA, by the individual KIGYOUKA as part of the YONONAKA.

This leads to an attempt to provide something of value to the times. "Value" as empathetically assumed to be appreciated by the YONONAKA based on the KIGYOUKAs own experiences and also their assumptions and tentative understandings of the times (this will be discussed later in this chapter).

However, this is one aspect of the meaning of these experiences as contextually-oriented. Mrs Healthy IoT refers to wanting her venture (and hypothetical ventures more generally) to have a so-called 'what-for' part – what we might consider a *contextually-oriented purpose*, addressing a concern interpreted as a shared concern of the times. This ultimately represents the main themes of chapter VI. However, when considering this in the context of ventures presented in this inquiry more broadly, there is a subtle distinction in need of being made explicit; This seems to occur in two iterations of social contribution - this is either with problem-solving provided through a service or product which the venture provides (reading

the times more broadly), or through socially-focused problem-solving with the venture *itself* – i.e., the ventures existence itself has purpose (in a context), the venture itself addressing a contextually-oriented concern of the community (E.g., as was stressed in the cases of MSK MEC MR MT MBT). That even though these are all for-profit ventures, their focus resembles that of what is known as a “social venture”. This is apparent throughout most of chapter VI.

For example, during her account, Miss Sake K (MSK) stressed that the venture *itself* was ultimately the purpose of her experiences, to develop a hub or organisation that worked as part of the community/society. This contextual-orientation was made explicit with her reference to SANPOYOSHI (三方よし- “*The three-way good*”), and how meaningful it was to her with regards to the purpose of her venture. In tandem with her stated purpose (to provide an environment for individuals to work with a sense of responsibility, regardless of their home-life situations), her use of the term “Organisation” (組織 SOSHIKI) and not KIGYOU (“emerging firm”) or the loan-word BENCHAA (ベンチャー – from the English term “Venture”) is significant and noteworthy - especially in this context of use - as she is dwelling on the relational qualities that she perceives to be at the heart of her ventures purpose. Broken down, SO 組 means ‘to braid’ or ‘plat’ but also ‘association’, ‘to construct, to assemble, to cooperate’ while SHIKI 織 means ‘weave’ or ‘fabric’, again playing into this tapestry-like sense of interconnectedness.

The nuance of this term thus leans toward an integrated-ness of the venture within society.

Watsuji describes his “relational” account of economics and commerce as a broader, interconnected, “inter-human (ethical) organisation” (“人倫組織”) (Watsuji 1996; 489/ Also See - Shuttleworth, 2020;62), based on the previously outlined NINGEN relationships, interrelated and interconnected through their shared AIDAGARA and underlying act-connections. This description considers a “venture” or “company” not in isolation, but amidst the relationships that businesses accept as integral to their very existence (relationships with their clients, customers, their employees and greater context, their local environment etc.), the embedded and intrinsic relationships which both validate and constitute their existence. Thus, when MSK alludes to an ‘organisation’, she perceives that her venture acts as a hub of ethical relations within this integrated, inter-human societal existence (Watsuji, 1996; Shuttleworth, 2020). Of SANPOYOSHI, this not only benefits her, and her employees, but effectively society as a whole. Her purpose for this venture itself recognises a shift in the attitudes of the times as more single-mothers or mother taking the so-called “bread-winner” position exist and want to work, wanting their work days to be of substance like how she herself felt. That based on her own lived experiences and intuitive empathy, she became motivated to start a venture to address these issues.

This description of these interpersonal economic interactions/connections help us understand the meaningfulness of MSKs venture in context, its “contextually-oriented” concern, but also

reveals its meaningfulness as related to how MSK interprets the notion of SANPOYOSHII, and the context of how this notion is meaningful to her. It is also appropriate to consider this in relation to Watsuji's conception of the Japanese experience of "Being" as NINGEN, specifically the sinew of AIDAGARA (shared-subjectivity) that binds and bonds the individuals of the YONONAKA (a *shared-ness* akin to that the situatedness of Gadamer's historically-effected Being). This shared experience that NINGEN represents, allows us to further consider the impact of such on mutual understandings of "purpose" and of "value" (as will be explored throughout this chapter).

### **Reading the YONONAKA and the "Flow of the times":**

Following on from the above discussion of this contextual-oriented-ness, as discussed in Chapter IX part 1, the YONONAKA is ultimately the background, shared-subjective understanding of the times (as considered by Watsuji as "subject"). Issues as interpreted and as agreed on as an issue of the times. The times are both our lived hermeneutic context as well as the communications, insights and understandings engaged with. With the experience of the Japanese language depending so much so on assumption due to its high-contextuality (an assumption of implied "meaning", based on these "common" understandings), there is therefore also a broader requirement of, and dependence on, being able to "*read*" and of "*reading*" – "*reading the air*" and "*reading the times*" i.e. To make assumptions based on an observance of, and socialised attunement to, the expectations of others as historically-situated. An understanding of expectations and an expectation of (certain) understandings.

Thus, with this in mind what is apparent in these accounts is a somewhat empathetic connection between the reflections of the KIGYOUKA and the assumed relevance of the problems they have experienced/ recognised as it applies to the individuals that make up these shared “times”, as historically-situated, as part of the YONONAKA. To the citizens of an era. Based on their own individual experiences, as they exist within and relate to these shared presuppositions of the times.

This shared subjective-space of inference, recognition and understanding, this broader AIDAGARA, this background, “shared”-understanding, naturally is not fixed but temporal, dynamic, as understandings that are produced through individual’s fusion of horizons effectively contribute the sublative change of these times. As people understand through the revelation of what they recognise (and further interpret) in what is presented to them anew, grow and progress.

As touched upon throughout the findings (and the focus of chapter VI’s 2<sup>nd</sup> section “flow of the times”) many of the KIGYOUKA interviewed appeared to read (i.e., read, understand and anticipate) the “flow of the times”, reading shared-understandings of the times as to anticipate changes in the times. A “reading” and an “anticipation” based upon their historically-situated hermeneutic existence, anticipating a future context based on one’s experience of the present era. Aware of the temporal qualities of an era changing, and with it the broader contexts that constitute it. An era – as it *flows*.

With both the notion of the YONONAKA and its “flow” coming up throughout these interviews, this section goes to length to consider the *experience* of the notions as well as outlining the essence of their meaning as communicated during these interviews. “The times” are obviously of concern to non-Japanese speakers, (i.e., predicting potential market trends etc.) yet the focus here appears to be an interpretive experience of the times, far more intuitive, far more subjective than the notion of objective data-based market trend analysis (The YONONAKA too, its essence as experienced appears to more strikingly include this sense of interconnectedness). This also appears not to be primarily based on familiarity with an industry or sector per se (through prior experience in business either in the first instance, and not exclusively moving forward either – for example nearly all of the KIGYOUKA interviewed who had two or more Start-ups under their belt MBB MR MSK MGJ ML MMV MCA MHI did so in different sectors to their original Start-up, the only connection apparently being their broader lived experiences channelling their current concerns through the medium of a venture to serve a purpose, having had prior Start-up experience doing so). This stands contrary to the theoretical assumptions of the scraps of retained industry specific knowledge, as specific and relevant of the Subjectivist Discovery position and of the classic data driven conception of the Objectivist position.

However, it is reasonable to suggest similarities in the premise of the Discovery position and that of the historically effected consciousness of the Gadamerian position in that past experience plays into these experiences. This said, where the focus in the Discovery position

was assuming the Entrepreneur was implicitly or explicitly focused on exploiting profit opportunity, in the case of participants here, this occurred with regards to ideation and in reflection on day-to-day to day concerns vis-a-vis meaningful past experiences (see chapter VII). This could be said to be more apparent to the researcher due to the foundational tenets Gadamerian approach being more salient due to the manner of inquiry employed here, however, with regard to the experiences recounted and the understanding achieved of these accounts, it appears more likely that this approach provides forum for such insight, as without being led on these issues, participants disclosed accounts focused on addressing a concern or frustration and did not broach the notion of ‘opportunity’ or its exploitation until the topic was broached by the interviewer (See more detail accounts regarding ‘opportunity’ and ‘arbitrage’ below).

From this Gadamerian vantage point and based on accounts disclosed by participants and presented in Chapter VII, for those participants this phase was not initially reliant on objective data, but based on intuition gained through a historically-effected interpretation of the era’s preconceptions, presuppositions, biases, prejudices, assumptions and expectations. The individual as integrated with these times as part of their thrown, historically effected existence – their day-to-day situatedness as it directs and orients them and their concerns.

Many of the KIGYOUKA interviewed (For example, MTA, MR, MBB, MSM, MCD, MTA, MPJ, MHI) mentioned they had simply had an idea and tried it. No extensive collection of market data, just simply they had an idea that served a purpose, intuitively assuming their



venture would be well relieved due to its perceived necessity. They then further intuitively learned what they felt was necessary as to progress the idea forward. Social dimensions of this learning curve acted as their “data” (i.e., insight and understanding acquired from encounters with others deemed relevant to the task at hand e.g., friends, senior colleagues, experts, senior KIGYOUKA, other KIGYOUKA, suppliers, manufactures, clients, etc.) as these endeavours were seemingly initially built around gained, tentative *understanding*, rather than hard data (See Chapter VII. for examples). For them, their instinct was to look for answers both *intuitively* and *socially*.

This is not an experience which begins by surveying data and attacking a distinguished ‘profit opportunity’ – accounts put forward in chapter VII part 2 for example seemed to simply assumed there would be a demographic to address who shared a mutually-interpreted (or very similar) concern.

More so, while the “market” is recognised as a “market” (both MBB and MR referred to it as such), this “market” is not the essential noematic focus of the participants activities.

According to these accounts, there is an orientation toward what Watsuji describes the YONONAKA as, as a “communal existence regarded as a subject” (1996:18).

This eventual experience of bringing about a venture is a vested interest for the KIGYOUKA, but one from the point of view of “Your You”. Not based on the individual preference of the individual i.e., “this neighbourhood would be perfect for me if it just had a café”, but an integrated sense of obligation, “for the people of this neighbourhood, a café would be great”.

The reading of the times naturally does not mean comprehensive understanding of the times and societies, it is an intuitive experience based on one's own understandings and past experiences and by its very nature is open-ended and thus its interpretive quality is always tentative and never concrete.

However, this lack of "hard" data in the *preliminary stages* does not mean that so-called objective data is not used to substantiate these intuitive ideas or tentative understandings.

MCA states he taps into the environment of the times around him at first, through observing a concern either first-hand or anecdotally and then supplements his intuitive actions moving forward with information required to reproduce his idea. This said, it is the *interpretation* of that hard data into the context of his initial assumption, his use of the data as incorporated into his subjectively-interpreted tentative idea which is the interesting issue this interpretive perspective presents to us. This fusion, blending of that which is interpreted into the historically-affectedness of our being, the context of Self as situated, as lived. The intuition required to engage this data might not necessarily be an intuition directed toward intuitively exploiting *profit opportunities per se*, but an intuition directing experiences as to replicate ones imagined intuitive idea, intuitively informed by one's wisdom of the times as experienced.

### **The "Half-step":**

The notion of a "half-step" came to my attention throughout these accounts.

In MSM's case he interprets society as a half-step *behind* the changes the KIGYOUKA implement, with the YONONAKA and society catching up accordingly when the new ideas introduced/presented by KIGYOUKA are eventually recognised and enter the public's consciousness (naturally there are other means by which ideas enter into public consciousness, but this discussion focuses on those as contributed by KIGYOUKA). This point of view is shared by MCA, explicitly describing himself as being able to see things a "half-step" *ahead* of the YONONAKA, anticipating the flow of the times and addressing the needs and wants of the era ahead of time.

To understand the era, and thus being able to anticipate its flow from paying attention to the biases, assumptions and presuppositions of the Japanese language milieu. To anticipate issues of concern due to this intuitive reading of the times "0.5" ahead of the rest of society

Through the interviews and time spent with these KIGYOUKA this appears to begin simply through a broad, everyday connection with things, the issues of the times, the world as it changes. Not necessarily through any particular cataclysmic "events", not even issues as they become apparent as issues (which however is essential here), but more so, the individual simply experiences or notices issues of the times *before* they become recognised as issues.

Through reflection on their own *particular* circumstances (as historically effected), participants appeared to have noticed Preconscious issues existent in the times, causing them to further reflect on such in the context of the YONONAKA

This appeared to happen through a sensitive yet day-to-day observance of understandings, discussions and discourses *themselves* as significant, as meaningful. A sensitive observance of the shared-subjectivity and subjective act-connections between individuals, as a pre-conscious issue becoming/as it becomes an issue of concern. Through this reflection, the participants seemed to have gained an attunement (an awareness of them as significant, meaningful) to these pre-conscious notions prior to their explicit discussion, before they are conceptualised and made explicit. This is complimented by this above outlined attunement with the YONONAKA more broadly, at a 'day-to-day' level of existence. Their interpretation of pre-conscious phenomenon as it exists across the times they exist within.

This phenomenon is then brought into consciousness and made explicit from either the explicit articulations of the KIGYOUKAs solution/venture (thus helping the YONONAKA recognise this issue consciously) or through the momentum and gravity of the issue becoming clear to the times, as anticipated by the KIGYOUKA "0.5" of a step previous. (As mentioned elsewhere, the saliency of the issue to the individual may be due to other previous experiences as reflected upon as similar also).

Further, this seemingly involves the participants being able to imagine/anticipate how an idea would be/should be relevant within a future (upcoming) context based on anticipations of this shared-subjectivity, shared understanding (due to one's historical-effectiveness). Being able to understand a solution to an issue as it would *tentatively* be valuable to others in this anticipated future, upcoming context. Its value in (this future imagined) context as

empathetically understood by a situated reading the YONONAKA, anticipation of this issue becoming an issue of concern to others and further, by anticipating this perceived “flow of the times”.

To recognise the flow of the times – and anticipate the flow of the times – to *cater* to this flow is to *anticipate it* in advance (through being able to read it and its presuppositions, biases, expectations).

To anticipate its concerns and address them. Addressing them in line the upcoming *zeitgeist*.

That which eventually becomes apparent to broader society. They appear to pioneer the change in advance by anticipating the needs and wants of the YONONAKA.

Being attune with the YONONAKA in the above outlined fashion and anticipating the JIDAINONAGARE they sensed their solutions will be able to service the preconscious concern of the times they’ve noticed. Its *flow* from ‘preconscious’ to ‘conscious’ concern.

“KIGYOUKA-SEISHIN” (TO MSM) is being able to anticipate this flow. As an example (not presented in the findings), from Mr Space-Man mentions:

**Mr Space Man (“MSM”):**

MSM:

*...So, I try to pick up a lot of things. Something unrelated.*

*Even if I’m not interested. That’s why I sometimes read women’s magazines and websites.*

This is not him scouring for “data” or information, but to maintain a general understanding of the times, generally. Not to find opportunities, but to situate his own thoughts, ideas and existence within the broader times. When MSM says “something unrelated” this is not to seek opportunities outside of his realm of interests, but simply to feel part of the broader context of the time as is and as it flows. In his account, everything is considered in context. Situating his ideas within these times (both present and anticipated), as he interprets this as necessary to do as he exists.

Here, we can make suggestions regarding how the KIGYOUKA ‘push society to move forward’ or at least how they *appear to* and how this is in effect *circular*; As mentioned in part one of this chapter, 起業 KIGYOU ventures here seemed to be historically-effected and environmentally focused, thus ‘the times’ are the substance of ones reflections and thus play into their creation, however the venture either provides insight (in the form of product/service through the expression of the venture) which addresses a concern of the times in a novel or required fashion, or this insight draws attention to preconscious problematic issue/concern brining the YONONAKA to reflect on such and to become conscious of it.

Therefore, even though the KIGYOUKA may seem to be ahead, they are simply exposed to, made conscious of something in the times which is problematic due to their own particular circumstances and due to other particular circumstances have opted to address this through a form of insight they believe is adaptable within the YONONAKA (See Chapters VI, VII).

When the KIGYOUKA interviewed state they read the times or the flow of the times, it seems they effectively recognised a problem from their own particular circumstantial reflection (as historically-effected/situated), and then empathetically assumed this is a problem for others (due to recognition of mutual situatedness), to the degree they felt they can anticipate how a preconscious concern within the YONONAKA will become increasingly more prominent or they have significant insight to address a concern areas of the YONONAKA are already conscious of, and thus empathetically they offer solutions for this.

The mechanic of *sublation* – i.e., the transitory up-take/ retention of some ideas and the letting go of others as eras change - in individuals as they become conscious of notions these ventures present (both drawing attention to a concern not as-yet explicitly noticed, as well as drawing attention to a solution as presented), and as their understandings of *possibility* push society “forward”, interpreting our way into the “next” times, or simply the times as they flow into each other successively.

At this point then, the researcher would like to draw attention to a distinct characteristic of the interviewee’s accounts of this experience of “the times” – The impression of this experience as communicated and the essence of it as interpreted. As to do so, the researcher would like to make distinction between *the analysis of data of the times* (i.e., surveying objective data), and the occurrent embeddedness within the times these KIGYOUKA described.

This may seem obvious, but without the focus on practically-applied understanding and interpretation that Gadamer's perspective allows for, this is something so transparent its enormity may be taken for granted; To observe the flow of the times, is an *experience* of the times, an integrated, day-to-day experience of them. This is why intuition is so important to these experiences, as this assertiveness is based on an incremental understanding of the times that exists within the times as occurrent, as interested in the times around them, as concerned with the times around them. Embedded in these times. This is not the observation of decontextualised trends to exploit, but the integrated, deeply contextual observation of an issue, empathetically considered as reflected upon.

These experiences of the KIGYOUKA appear to focus on this shared-subjectivity of the times, a *reflective understanding* of the understandings of the times. Not on an a-temporal abstraction contemporised by recent or historic market data, but an abstraction as interpreted as lived, a living, dynamic, *subject*, a temporal flow of the eras common understanding and experiences as interpreted, tentatively understood and intuitively engaged with.

While participants did undoubtedly reference notions relating to the static abstraction of the market (e.g., the market, marketing etc.) these were mentioned significantly less compared with participants reference to the YONONAKA, the comparatively more fluid, tentative abstraction of the shared-subjectivity and shared understanding of an era.



Please let me stress, while the term “market” as well as terminology related to the abstraction of the market (e.g., the loan-word マーケティング *ma-keteingu* “marketing”, also the notion of the markets ICHIBA 市場) was also mentioned by the KIGYOUKA during these accounts, the central experience of the KIGYOUKA interviewed appeared to be focused on servicing the YONONAKA. The YONONAKA as perceived as a “communal existence” (one within which the individual is also a part of, existent within, and in turn, made up of) appeared to be the focal subject, the broader recipient of the KIGOUKAs problem-solving; Thus to emphasise, whereas there is recognition of the market abstraction (and by association, the profit that is acquired through servicing its notions of supply/demand) the driver of these experiences for 16 of the 19 accounts appeared to be the individuals reflection on their own experience of obtrusiveness or absence, the assumption of this concern being one of the times the individual is existent within, resulting in a subjectively-interpreted *need* or *necessity* absent within the YONONAKA to be problem-solved, rather than recognising a “profit-opportunity” to profit from. This said, at least 2 of these KIGYOUKA (MBB and ML) also stated they started their first venture to offer themselves either some form of employment when none was available or as some kind of financial sustenance, recognising such as the purpose of that initial venture. 6 more (MSK, MWW, MT, MR, MGJ, MCA) had similar notions of providing employment for themselves through starting-up mentioned in their

accounts of their initial trigger - their event of understanding of either a venture idea, or of an ideal that starting a venture would somehow serve a purpose to them.

However, these cases were all seeking another form of employment as to progress and flourish as they believed possible to do so given the right environment, so rather than simply to provide financial gain or support, the perceived purpose here for MSK, MWW, MT, MR, MGJ, MCA was as a means to progress as they'd like to, or would like to learn how to.

Subsequently, MSK, MWW, MBB, MCA, MGJ, ML, MR used the lessons learned through these unique first experiences of starting businesses, to start new ventures that incidentally were driven by contextually-focused concerns, disclosing an interpretation of the second ventures purpose as in some manner "necessity-driven".

## **Trust, relationships and “opportunity” (KIKAI, KOUKI, CHANSU):**

### **“Opportunity”: A preliminary meditation on “KOUKI”, “KIKAI”, “BIJINESU-CHANSU”.**

As outlined in chapters I, II, III and V, this research is primarily concerned with the interpreted ‘meaning’ of the experiences of the so-called KIGYOUKA, their experiences of so-called KIGYOUKASEISHIN, and their experience of starting a venture (due to the term KIGYOUKA roughly meaning “emerging venture specialist”). Therefore, interviewees were chosen on the basis that they recognised their selves as KIGYOUKA (or accepted that others had recognised them as this), that they felt they had experienced KIGYOUKASEISHIN and also, they had “had an idea to start venture” and all aspects of these experiences were discussed as deemed relevant to the participants experiences. However, amidst these discussions, given the prioritising of the notion of “opportunity” in English-language scholarship, they were also asked about their experiences of ascertaining “opportunity”, (here using the Japanese notions of KIKAI, KOUKI, BIJINESUCHANSU, as this section will now discuss). As this research project is focusing on the broad meaningful experiences of the KIGYOUKA, after the initial raising of the subject of “opportunity”, if the interviewees didn’t feel it was relevant to their experience, the line of inquiry would typically develop in a different direction. However, on occasions where the researcher was intrigued by the participants response, follow up questions were asked (however they did not necessarily dominate conversation).

Therefore, the researcher believes while this in no way a comprehensive portrait of the KIGYOUKA participants experience of “opportunity”, this is an open-ended starting-point to discuss the interpreted experience of “opportunity” (as KIKAI, KOUKI, CHANSU), and also to consider its significance in both this discussion of the KIGYOUKA, as well as other ‘Entrepreneurship Studies’ discussions.

This section will discuss the implicit meaning the terms KIKAI, KOUKI, BIJINESUCHANCE (introduced in chapter IV) appear to have for the interviewees in the context of their experiences.

Thus, the section will briefly consider the themes of “Subjectively interpreted (purpose-serving) ‘opportunities’”, “Compatibility as opportune”, “Trust and relationships” and “Trust and confidence”.

### **Subjectively-interpreted (purpose-serving) “opportunities”:**

Through the exchanges held during the 22 interviews, the terms KIKAI and KOUKI (as discussed in these interviews) more frequently than not appear to be interpreted by the KIGYOUKA interviewed as a *subjective opportunity* serving a prior, pre-established purpose. Naturally, the focus of this research is on subjective interpretation, however without specific and direct prompt, many of these accounts relaying their interpretation of KIKAI and KOUKI refer to an experience of opportunity that services a prior, established purpose which the KIGYOUKA had interpreted their venture would serve (or opportunities viewed as assisting

in establishing or maintaining the venture itself). KOUKI and KIKAI seemingly do not always refer to the epistemologically-objective “opportunity” of Functionalist discussion, but are often in reference to *subjectively-interpreted* opportunities deemed relative to the individual’s unique entrepreneurship, specifically the meaningful concern or perceived purpose directing this experience.

However, the term BIJINESUCHASU” (or “CHANSU”) appears to refer to opportunities interpreted as falling outside of the context of the specific purpose envisioned for the individual’s venture. To opportunities brought to their attention by others. As MEC illustrates in this example below (not included in the findings chapters).

Unlike the majority of participants, MEC goes into more detail about what he refers to as CHANSU, reflecting on a perceived relationship between his own experientially-developed intuition and any information brought to him from others regarding a so-called “CHANSU”

**Mr E-Commerce (“MEC”):**

MEC: *But, that, as information, it is very important to then know what to do with it.*

*So, with that kind (of information),*

*what can I say – should I call it KANEATE (“striking a balance”),*

*the experience within me, ah, intuition.*

R: *Intuition.*

MEC: *“This is amazing, isn't it?”, “This would work, wouldn't it?”*

- *that kind of thing is ultimately, intuition.*

“KANE-AITE” 兼ね合って loosely means “*striking a balance*” – here meaning striking a balance between the information presented to him (the “opportunity”) and the experience within him. Figuring out how it could work in his own situated consciousness, his prior experiences and understandings. That as he interprets it, how would it work in the context of his understandings and prior experiences (which ultimately provides the greater interpretive context of his entrepreneurial project). How to “contextualise” it, intuitively. Intuition as to guide him (in this synthesis of Self and information).

This again falls in line with Gadamer’s *phronesis* deliberative wisdom which lays forum to intuitive, imaginative reflection of perceived possibility as re-interpreted in a current, occurrent reading by the KIGYOUKA. Their past experiences as they inform their current concerns, interpreting this information as relevant to their pursuits or as otherwise dismissible. MEC cynically suggests it would only work (i.e., be a legitimate/viable ‘opportunity’) if align-able with the broader context of his concerns, experiences and his understandings, and believes it would be his “intuition” that would guide him to strike this particular balance. Otherwise, should it not be considered relevant to this broader picture (striking a balance with it), it would not necessarily be considered ‘opportune’ nor a worthwhile pursuit. To MEC at least, BIJINESUCHANCE here referred to information he

received or encountered considered as a potential “business opportunity”, albeit conceived of as distant, outside of the original preconceived purposeful context of his venture or as it currently stands - not interpreted initially as meaningful (i.e., significant or relevant), nor contributing to the original purpose of the venture as envisioned, as this information presents itself.

MMV also pondered BIJINESUCHANSU with similar scepticism; for him it was dependent on three factors, his own prior experience, whether it enabled him to provide a ‘necessity’ and above all, whether it was perceived as providing something his customers would want based on his interactions with them and in reference to the established relationship he and his clients hold between each other (this will be touched upon below). Through these factors he could interpret something as relevant to his entrepreneurial activity.

What is discussion worthy here is how these accounts present to us examples of experiences where the notion of fusion is relevant to the theoretical notion of opportunity exploitation. Specifically, the reflective synthesis of something outside of one’s context, into ones lived-context, through reflective interpretation. Fusion with regard to the individual needing to interpret ‘opportunity’ into their own circumstances for it to be considered *opportune* – not that it simply being an objective opportunity, but that it must be bought into/interpreted into the context of ones situated, hermeneutic Self. To interpret something in the context of Self as to even consider it opportune at all.

That the hermeneutic process of interpretation perhaps underpins the ‘opportunity exploitation’ notion, in a similar manner to how Gadamer feels there is a hermeneutic truth beyond scientific truth. That the abstraction of Kirznerian “*subjective discoverer*” requires interpretation to recontextualise “random” opportunity, to *interpret* irrelevant opportunity into ones prior-understandings.

This said, this doesn’t seem to be typical of the KIGYOUKA interviewed in their initial venture starting experiences (as is mentioned throughout this chapter and supported by samples presented in chapter VI, VII, VIII) – once again, accounts of these experiences rarely touched upon the notion of ‘opportunity’ unless prompted by the researcher instead outlining the perceived purpose of the venture and the experiences based around this. However, this seems to the researcher like a promising avenue of thought to consider how ‘opportunity’ is understood by the potential ‘entrepreneur’ or KIGYOUKA. One caveat to take into consideration here is that we consider the experiences of the interviewed KIGYOUKA, experiences we have already characterised as seemingly “*high-context*” (as enacted within the Japanese language milieu. Thus, this contextually-conscious interpretation of BIJINESUCHANCE may simply be characteristic of the experience of KIGYOUKA, due to the contextual nature of the Japanese experience. Perhaps in considering *low-context* experiences of entrepreneurship, the exclusive premise of “profit-exploitation” might be the singular motivator.



Also, there was often an unconcerned interchangeability between the terms KIKAI KOUKI BIJINESSCHANSU when used by participants (often referencing the phenomenon in equally vague terms as it is considered in our current field of studies!). Therefore, BIJINESUCHANSU was also used in reference to subjectively-interpreted opportunities and thus this does not mean that BIJINESUCHANSU (or KIKAI/KOUKI for that matter) was always in reference to a kind of epistemically-objective information-based opportunity outlined above.

### **‘Compatibility’ as opportune – “Matching” and “Meeting”:**

As outlined in chapter IV, the logographic representation of KIKAI 機会 rest on two kanji representing “mechanism/the right time” (機) and “meeting” (会), where the nuance of the word could be considered as referring to a “a mechanistic/opportune encounter”, taking into account the logographic etymology of the term presented here, as well as the meaning of the notion as communicated, as experienced, as understood.

What appears to be something of intrinsic importance in many of the participants experiences (as they occurred within the Japanese social milieu) is a compatibility based on *mutual understanding* (here, as in the Gadamerian underlying agreement of terms of engagement and recognition of such) and *trust*, and both circularly and simultaneously a further *trust in this mutual understanding and in the shared importance of ‘trust’* between parties (as was apparent in accounts from MWW, DE, MPJ in chapter VIII for example).

Through their accounts, participants such as MWW, MHI, DE, MPJ, MMV reflected on the significance of such to their experiences, while also considering the notion of KIKAI also, the nuance of such will receive some attention here in this section.

The complementary nature of this notional “opportune encounter” subtly implied in KIKAI (e.g., the blend of “right time” and “meeting”) is further deepened should we consider the connection between the meaning of “KAI” (“会”) in KIKAI (機会) where it is used in the verb “to meet” (AU 会 ㍻) and its overlapping connection to the very similar term in the verb AU 合 ㍻ meaning “to match something”. To draw attention to the nuance and connection in Japanese between “meeting” and “matching” (e.g., The nuance of something being “suited” in Japanese conveys an essence of “things coming together in a suited manner”), MMVs account presented in CHAPTER VIII, when discussing KIKAI, KOUKI, BIJINESUCHANSU, he mentioned:

**“Mr Medical Venture” (“MMV”)**

*MMV: There are some things that are not logically correct, but that they match (合 ㍻ - meet/suit/fit) or do not match. Hmm ... Well, for example, men and women, right, aren't necessarily ... pairs of beautiful men and beautiful women only, as you'd expect, it's about compatibility, yeah. There are some things that are not logical.*

As “Mr Medical Venture” touches upon through his use of 合う (AU- to match, to meet, to suit each other). This sense of “opportunity” is about things coming together as are suited together, not in a rational nor scientific fashion. This communicates at a very subtle level, that which is “opportune” is that which *meets*, which *matches*, which suits – returning us to the logographic representation of the term KIKAI 機会 is ‘Mechanism/Good-timing’ and ‘Meeting’.

This very much plays into the notion of trust-relationships being perceived as opportune – i.e., a matching or meeting which will be beneficial (see below). This equally applies to the *meeting* between the customer and the KIGYOUKA – both in the understanding provided by the KIGYOUKA, as well as the relationship mutually expected by both customer and KIGYOUKA

Much of these experiences centre around servicing a client-base perceived to hold a significant tacit-relationship with the KIGYOUKA, a relationship featuring mutually recognised expectations from both parties, based on a mutually perceived *similarity* (e.g., similar experience of a concern of the times), thus *a suitedness*. A servicing of a slowly developed rapport (a *trust*) with a client base, based on recognition of this *matchingness* between them, of the relationship between them, a relationship constitutive of aspects the times, the shared-subjectivity recognised between them.

Thus, when MMV is sceptical about CHANSU (i.e., “non-contextual” opportunity) he states that his concern is “Is this really what the customer really wants?” and states “I’d check and confirm\_ ...”. Compatibility, he prioritises what the customer wants.

Thus, his pursuits fall within the context of the established context of the venture (its perceived purpose, as interpreted by him), which is similar to the cases presented here, begins addressing a need as reflected on and as of the times.

Again, not chasing “chance” if it’s not in line with his impression of what customers want, if its “non-contextual” – servicing the customers he has developed based on this rapport developed due to their similarity of perspective – a similarity understood through tacit dialogue with them through suggested-service/product as solution answering their frustrations or as yet unasked questions.

Earlier MMV describes “CHANSU” being an ‘absolute necessity (as needed by society)’ but also clarifies that to him, it must fit these credentials while also addressing what the customer wants. This is within the context of a perceived purpose (of the venture), and an established relationship between him and his customers. MR MEC MBB and others all communicate a similar approach – that they will not take a chance outside of the context of their entrepreneurship – outside of the purpose. Therefore, “KIKAI” appears to be interpreted as an opportune encounter, whereas a “CHANSU” – due to it not being directly linked to specific known clientele – is seen as unnecessary, and thus a risk or dismissible as irrelevant. That although all of these terms are used interchangeably to some degree, the

researcher feels there is a nuance recognisable between what is described as an opportune encounter (KOUKI/KIKAI) and a “Chance”, however, from a Gadamerian phenomenologist position, all ultimately describe something subjectively-interpreted as “opportune”.

Thus, when MEC mentions his opinion of “opportunity” and CHANSU as 兼ね合って -

“*striking a balance*” - If we break-down this term we can also see that it features this sense of meeting/matching and compatibility, - “striking a balance” might be good for communicating the essence of the meaning, but verbatim it is something more similar to “*meeting a concurrent-ness*”, “*a meeting of as-well-ness*” that results in an essence of striking a balance. The quality of something being understood as of how best to match alongside something else.

### **NAKAMA and ‘trust-relationships’ as KIKAI/KOUKI**

As outlined in chapter IV and as evident in the accounts presented in Chapter VIII, in Japanese-language-milieus there is a dependency on shared understanding and further on trust. This is apparent through the layered importance put on SHINRAIKANKEI. However, practically also, if that trust is broken, so much of the social network required for this economic system to function is lost or severely disrupted (its perceived relational infrastructure).

Thus, for a multitude of integrated reasons based around these relations (as touched upon in Findings chapter VIII) everybody is heightened as not to fail and not to break trust. This trust

is checking each party shares the same understanding broadly, that the same shared-meaning is significant to the individual as it is to broader society.

Feeding into the above point regarding the importance of seeming “matching-ness”, and on trust and mutual agreement, what is very interesting is that on asking the interviewed KIGYOUKA – “how did (they) ascertain KIKAI/KOUKI/BIJINES CHANSU (– without initial clarification or specification as to whether this was in reference to objective/subjectively-interpreted “opportunity”) many instinctively mentioned “NAKAMA” or other people (mentors, fellow KIGYOUKA, close-friends) either in the context of their consultancy to reflect on whether others felt their instincts were “correct” (something which appeared to be prioritised over obtaining an objective resource such as “objective data”...) or – most interestingly - with regard to the development of “trust-relationship” between the KIGYOUKA them and their NAKAMA *itself* as being opportune.

To begin, let’s consider NAKAMA and other peers/mentors as “consultant”. NAKAMA are valued not only as trust-worthy companions who could potentially provide assistance/connections etc but more importantly, as fellow “readers” of the YONONAKA.

The YONONAKA is effectively the shared subjective-space between one-another that make up the times, and it this subjective space that is referred to in the term NAKAMA – the subjectivity you and your peers share. Therefore

an individual KIGYOUKA’s situated interpretation about something (based on their existence in the YONONAKA and their reading of the times) possibly shares some of the

same assumptions, the same lived-understandings as those as their NAKAMA (based on these implicit criteria rooted in the term NAKAMA).

In lieu of being a part of an established network or formally recognised organisation, the KIGYOUKA benefit from the support of a fellow business owner, a business fellow, a companion, a peer of the same times (an important factor for someone addressing a concern of the YONONAKA) and of a similar amount of KIGYOUKA experience as the KIGYOUKA (based on accounts from MBT, MT, MEC) – a genuinely perceivable peer of the times - this illustrates the essence of why the NAKAMA is deemed significant when considering future activity, as historically situated.

This allows the KIGYOUKA to put their ideas under the scrutiny of other KIGYOUKA as to see if their reading of the times is perceived as “correct” and that the issue discerned is relevant to the times.

Thus, the “trust-relationships” mentioned in chapter III which are based upon a mutual agreement that both parties are “reading from the same sheet” with regards to their understandings of the era and other implicit concerns (as deemed relevant to reading the times, and to acting in a manner expected by the YONONAKA) provide a significant foundation for such consultancy when considered with this utility in mind. Thus, it is easy to see how these relationships in their selves are considered “opportune”. The KIGYOUKA are thus compensated for putting so much stress on these relationships, thus they appear to be deemed “opportune”.

## **Arbitrage:**

With regard to the subjective interpretations of the experiences reflected upon by the KIGYOUKA, the act or experience of arbitrage (when not conceptualise as “arbitrage”), were not necessarily interpreted nor recognised to be an exploitation of markets, of profit opportunities or even as the act arbitrage at all. These factors may be observable through the lens of theory – a lens already concerned with developing “theory” – however to those living the lived experience of such, this appears not to be the main focus of their actions.

MR / MEC / MBB / MGJ / MSK could all be described as opportunity-driven arbitragers – explicitly engaging in strategy and approaches to business based around profiting from price discrepancies in different markets. However, by prioritising their subjectively-interpreted point of view through this interpretivist/hermeneutic phenomenological inquiry, we are able to view that their interpretations of this situation didn’t centre solely on the perceivable act of arbitrage, and their intuitive actions taken were not solely based on objective data. They were all more concerned with servicing a need of their customers, a culture of people within the YONONAKA.

ML also partook in arbitrage as to make money to get him through graduate school. Beyond the meaningful benefits of this experience (that lead him to take his own creative problem solving into his own hands and start a second business as forum for this creative problem solving), its interesting to take into account the intuitive, interpretive, lived-experiences that played into this act of arbitrage that is typically reduced when represented as a dynamic



market process. The circumstantial context of his arbitrage depended on his own very personal circumstances i.e., his international background, his ability to speak English etc. Even the manner he acquired the information regarding the taxi-scraping system he built his venture around, all boiled down to informal (i.e., non-business) acquaintances (i.e., trusted individuals) and their interpretation of the significance of the work to him given his international experience. This to him was meaningful as to make money when he wanted to, so he could advance his engineering understanding.

His motivation was to fund his education and stopped after he had acquired the money to support him. This is interesting as it required the meaningful layers of experience within consciousness for both his motivation and his meaningful action (i.e., the purpose of his entrepreneurship, to fund him through university) as well as a tip off of information regarding the so-called “opportunity”. That even when taking the steps familiar to the functionalist Kirznerian depiction of arbitrage, the phenomenological perspective allows us to contemplate the intentional motivation of the Entrepreneur here.

Note: that as the selection of purposes display, even simply “to make money” is purpose, that required an idea to engage in meaningful action to exploit a profit opportunity. Naturally the purpose of this research is to demonstrate that by utilising a hermeneutic approach we are able to hear and consider accounts demonstrating that intentionality directs an entrepreneur/KIGYOUKA toward a variety of individually perceived purposes, that surpass the finite limitation of the Subjectivist “profit” motive.

Again, from MRs subjectively interpreted point of view, she is doesn't conceive of her actions as exploiting opportunity – it's down to a dedication to the relationship she perceives she has with her client-base to provide them with what she intuitively feels would suit them.

**Ms Rivers (“MR”):**

R: *At what stage do you judge this as a business opportunity?*

MR: *Hmmm, “what-, opportunity” ... hmmm ... honestly, there isn't any of that.*

R: *Oh, right?*

MR: *because... If I think "This will sell absolutely!", I will keep doing it until it sells.*

She doesn't gauge the action as *exploiting opportunity*, she bypasses that analysis and leaps straight to the attempting to sell the product intuitively, and as is apparent from the other examples from MC, this is based on a belief that she understands her customer-base. A tension between her wisdom and expertise as recognised as such as well as her obligation to her custom-base and the perceived relationship each has with each other. Her initial incentive within the business was to empathetically serve them with her expertise – to offer “Your You” service by offering her expertise regarding cosmetics, so originally building a tentative understanding of her customers that “yes, my customers will want this”, she strategizes in the manner Evolutionary Realist approaches characterise. However, this is not perceived of as a “business opportunity” per se, nor is it even driven solely to “sell” *per se*, nor is it focused on

being accepted by the market as to result in the empirical manifestation of profit, but more so driven to *satisfy and to service*. MR obviously also understands this level of attentiveness is integral to satisfying the customer, ultimately integral to achieving *profit*, but also as she and other participants similarly communicated quite fervently, due to her interpreted personal integrated relationship with and obligation to customers as lived and appreciated (as considered from the position of “Your You”). This “process” is all in the frame of mind of servicing her clients who she has a perceived rapport with, through empathetically reading and understanding their “needs” while being able to offer a unique expertise, they are absent of. Naturally this is to a broad and (to be cynical) opaque, “unknown” demographic of individuals most she has never met, however through this feeling of the YONONAKA as subject, the same “Your You” empathy is able to be experienced and employed. This is where the YONONAKA is significant to these experiences. To look at market-economic abstractions of this interaction (as *transaction*) we miss the meaning of these experiences, the purposeful incentive which keeps the individual going, what they strive to *achieve*, in less fiscal terms. Thus, to develop our conceptions of the individual from dynamic process, we lose the value of considering her experiences as intentionality-driven, how they are meaningful to her.

### **Common-understanding, sense of possibility and learning from experience:**

A common bond between 17 of the participants is a tension between being able to read the YONONAKA, understanding a want or need present within those times (or being able to

anticipate such occurring within the ‘flow of the times’) while also having had experience challenging common-sense understanding and day-to-day “intrinsic” beliefs which effectively constitute some status quo present within the YONONAKA, suggesting such as problematic and providing insight to address such in the form of an entrepreneurial solution. (This relates to themes touched upon toward the end of part 1 of this chapter).

Many of these participants seem to have had less than ‘conventional’ experiences which have been meaningful, experiences that have perhaps in their selves challenged common-understandings, challenged typical common-sense understandings regarding life choices.

Those who have not settled for the status quo – those who have left companies (MWW MT MSK MTA MPJ MGJ), those who quit or rejected college, those who started their own companies – by reflecting on their current life and somehow interpreting a sense of possibility.

These experiences (with regard to the reflecting, interpreting a tentative possibility, trying it, learning, understanding and achieving what they anticipated in some manner that satisfied their initial trigger for doing it), these experiences appear to have resulted in the almost “breaking” of the KIGYOUKA’s belief in these commonly held, intrinsic beliefs. These have not only provided an instance of revelation for the KIGYOUKA, but have then become meaningful learning experiences *in themselves*, regarding “possibility” vis-à-vis the status quo, the day-to-day intrinsic beliefs we hold which may or may not be arbitrary. These revelations have then further put the KIGYOUKA in position of understanding to critically

pick apart common understanding and to challenge other issues that are problematic to others as to devise and offer a solution. reflectively challenged the status quo by observing that something could be better *not just for them*, but for the times more broadly.

However, as MTA states not everyone will like or feel what they're doing, but what they're doing is addressing a need with something they interpret as valuable.

### **Common-sense understanding regarding “failure”:**

In relation to this notion of challenging the status quo, and the lessons learned from such, this feeds into the KIGYOUKAs impression of failure. Failure as meaningful or significant.

Therefore, this section of discussion will now reflect on the commonly held perspective of failure in context more broadly to them further reflection how these experiences of trying and failing has not only contributed to participants sense of intuition and further Gadamerian *wisdom*, but also how it has helped them attempt unprecedented things.

The impression the researcher got from participants was that most thought few people in Japan try to start a venture because of common sense understandings regarding of the repercussions of failure (See chapter VIII). Friend's/family members were reported to have had a very strong belief that should their loved-one attempt to start a business and fail, that attempt alone would result in life-long ostracization from the business domain, as well as also affect their non-business friends and impression of them more generally, of them being perceived as a potential burden or dependent. (Commonly, in Japan), to start-up is associated

with risk, with dependency on others (both on other KIGYOUKA and also, more concerningly, on non-KIGYOUKA such as family and friends etc), and with the stigma associated with potential failure (outlined throughout the findings chapters) and the burden this would cause others. Thus, the notion of starting one's own business has a negative connotation, even when the things KIGYOUKA provide society are perceived to be of value to society. As, Yokoyama and Birchley (2020) point out, unlike its English equivalent (and also the reverence it holds within some English-language Entrepreneurship communities), the term "*disrupt*" has more far destructive connotations in Japanese, thus disrupting one's own life, the lives of those around oneself (i.e., by leaving a stable company, to disrupt the status quo by pioneering a new, experimental way of doing things) also adds layers of perceived irreparability to the depth of this stigma. Therefore, a lot of negative weight is carried in the background understanding of entrepreneurship in Japan, even as it resides in the language around it.

However, once a KIGYOUKA has been established (depending on industry, but when their venture has remained afloat for either 10 or 15 years) the KIGYOUKA then appears to be trusted, and even revered given their typical contributions to society. However, this faith in the KIGYOUKA begins with a highly pessimistic culture as the foundations surrounding most Start-ups.

MHI's initial software venture had no real civic contribution, thus her interpretation of her spinning-out was that she was being "selfish". Yet ultimately this act of so-called

“selfishness” turns into something effectively altruistic due to the risks taken as to offer something she realised would be of value to society, where others have not yet offered a sufficient solution.

She assumes it would be common understanding to consider the KIGYOUKA as a catalyst to make society better, but at the same time, she also realised it would be common- understanding to consider her actions as selfish starting up. This reflects a “latency issue”, a lag, or even a disconnect, a fragmentation in understanding from the layperson’s point of view that the modern convenience the KIGYOUKA initiate as innovators or pioneers, the ones which address problems and concerns of the times, are developed through such bouts of jeopardy. However, as discussed earlier in this chapter, as these issues are anticipated by the KIGYOUKA - questions answered in by the KIGYOUKA in advance of YONONKA affectively having to even ask the question explicitly, there may very well be such a disconnect between these factors.

As KIGYOUKA like ML, MTA, MCA, they offer solutions to “potential needs”. Finding solutions to as yet un-asked questions, taken for granted dissatisfactions or further still, solutions to issues as yet un realised. Observing the ...as reflected on through their own experiences as such concerns became explicit to them, empathetically extending this concern to the times.

### **Possibility – learning from doing, trying, failing:**

Many of the interviewees in chapter 2 (MBB, MEC, MBB, MTA, MWW, ML) stressed the value of learning from experience, from doing from trying, from failure. However, due to the stigma associated with starting up, it seems not many people take this risk. However, those that do (out of those interviewed in this paper), seem to break through this this intrinsic belief, and experience their own understanding – a subjectively-interpreted *possibility*.

Not, for example, an understanding of how they could achieve a certain idea per se, but a tentative understanding that if they try, and should they fail, this failure is not as catastrophic as they had once anticipated (well, an interpretation that it possibly *might not* be as bad). Thus, gaining experience from failure has disproven common hearsay, and through their trying again, has eventually improved the KIGYOUKAs understanding of what they're attempting to do (in the cases of the interviewees whose examples were presented in chapter VII part 2). Experience has revealed *possibility*. Not necessarily of how to implement an idea, but that it is possible to survive failure, and more so, *to be able to learn from it*.

The less-than-conventional life experiences of many of these KIGYOUKA have seen them challenge the common-sense understandings from their very first event of understanding they associate with their KIGYOUKA-experiences (as outlined throughout findings chapter VII). They've critically-engaging with day-to-day common, intrinsic sense. They've reflected on their own circumstances and questioned them. "Is this seemingly average, run-of-the-mill-job, actually waste of my time?" (to paraphrase MCA). "Are mothers really not able to do



work of value?” (to paraphrase MSK). “... to run a business?” (MBB). They’ve also reflected on their own surroundings and questioned them. “Is 5% beer actually 5%”/ “Is it necessary to wear slippers in doors” “Why is the speed limit arbitrarily 60 mph? (all examples paraphrasing MTA.) “Why do we only have junk food available in the office” (MHI), “Why not have a chef come to you?” (MCA), “Why only have functions in established venues?” (MSM). Reflections, concerns and imaginative solutions. The produce of mavericks and pioneers who question their surroundings having had an event of understanding which has enabled them to realise that it’s possible to do so.

“Mavericks” might be too strong a term, as the KIGYOUKA interviewed all appeared to care about the harmony of society, and didn’t seek to disrupt or destroy the status quo per se, they simply want to address the obtrusive or unavailable (either in their own life’s or that of their fellow citizens).

However, through other seemingly insignificant episodes of personal understanding which have contradicted common-sense understandings and the intrinsic beliefs of the times, they have gained a different sense of possibility with regard to pushing these perceived boundaries of possibility within the social realm of the times.

It appears many of the KIGYOUKA interviewed have not been deterred by the commonly held understanding that high percentage of KIGYOUKA do not succeed in realising their venture, and even more so, there experiences have also challenged the notion that failure equals unmanageable burden and ostracization. All accounts presented in Chapter VII section

2 show the participants benefiting from experience of learning from failure or from trying something without a commonly-understood blueprint of how to do it. Significantly, this would seem to be the common *essence* of these experiences. Intuitively doing something as they felt inclined to. Not *blindly* trying throwing all concerns to the wind, but trying based on their intuition and the learning as a result of these actions. The accounts of these purveyors show that due to the unprecedented nature of their ventures (with regard to the specific purposes they each individually aim to serve), there is no format for them to learn from. MC ML MBB MEC all take an almost evangelical position on learning from doing, trying and even failure (especially as to achieve to the unprecedented endeavours they interpret their “era-improving” actions to be).

Many of the KIGYOUKA interviewed had prior Start-up experience prior to starting their current venture (without the researcher’s prior knowledge of this in each case). The experience of the first start up seemed to be regarded as a unique learning experience not available anywhere else.

MBB ML MR MSK MHI MWW MGJ all learned lessons from their initial start-ups. Lessons that incentivised them to start their second venture (their perceived “better” Start-up), under the belief that starting a second venture (guided by the experiences learned from the first) would be useful, understood as meaningful and purposeful.

MBB MHI MR MBB MTA MMV MSM reject the premise of objective knowledge or information as being relevant to their experiences of initially starting up when retrospectively

looking back, suggesting their experiences were directed by *intuition* initially. This then led them to have various experiences where guided by intuition alone, resulted in perceived misses, failures, and undesired results (see chapter VII). However, these learning experiences from trying, failing, came primarily from “doing”, from acting based on intuitive impulses. Impulses which were related to a want to replicate the solution/ idea or service the purpose they had in their head. Intuition also sourced from the experiences leading up to the event of understanding that resulted in a tentative idea. This thrust of concern seeking understanding via a want to do, to understand how to, all resulted in understandings and learnings that were then further applied moving forward. Thus, MBB MHI MR MBB MTA MMV MSM credit the understandings of significance gained during these periods to learning from experience. This sense of possibility from doing, from understanding through practical achievements (dismisses) obstacles put forth by common presuppositions and assumptions. These intuitive experiences (and the possibility learned through them) have perhaps allowed the KIGYOUKA to question their prior presuppositions of possibility. By being directed by a purpose and gaining understanding as to address the concerns of her purpose, they discovered *possibilities*, possibilities that enabled her to do what she wanted to, while at the same time contradicting the intrinsic sense and hearsay that stated failure would be catastrophic. Naturally, failure is bad, but it is also a way we learn.

### **Value in the YONONAKA:**

With regard to the common thread throughout all of the KIGYOUKA interviewed, their KIGYOUKASEINSHIN appears to be informed by an anticipation of “value” from reading society, the YONONAKA, SEKEN etc. anticipating how the times will flow, and what will be of value (as addresses a concern) within those times based on their own situatedness and reflection on such.

Participants found a concern of the times which may or may not have been realised/noticed by the broader populous in the first instance, they then addressed this issue in an appealing way by understanding common expectations those times

Sought to address this issue in an appealing way, based on their understanding of the common expectations of based on their perceived understanding

“Value” here being interpreted as a necessity to society/the times. An anticipation of “value” from reading society, the YONONAKA, SEKEN etc. empathising with society through experience and understanding of ‘common understandings’ shared/present within the YONONAKA.

The presuppositions, ascensions and expectations the KIGYOUKA/YONONAKA share - of how to address a problem in a satisfying manner – ‘value’ as mutually-understood. The assumptions of the KIGYOUKA meeting the expectations of the YONONAKA, tacitly coming to an agreement on the legitimacy of a concern, and also on a (tentative) suggested

solution. A sense of possibility not only recognised by the KIGYOUKA, but recognised/accepted within the broader understandings of the YONONAKA also.

“Value” in the KIGYOUKA/YONONAKA relationship is conceivable as a mutual agreement on what is *necessary*; from the perspective of the YONONAKA and as ascertained as such by the KIGYOUKA. A mutual understanding of what is valuable to the greater shared-context.

From the individual KIGYOUKAs perspective, this anticipation, this understanding, is from reading the YONONAKA empathetically. From the researcher’s perspective, the value the interviewed KIGYOUKA try to provide seems to be to experience “Value” from the perspective of “Your You” (Mori, 1979) the Your You that is possible through empathy.

The researcher (based on a variety of other qualities of the accounts disclosed and presented through the findings chapters and this chapter) here draws conclusions and (acceptedly) makes assumptions, sensitively suggests the potential of this being the result of an experience as experienced through the idiosyncrasies of the Japanese language. A sensation exacerbated by the general sensation of a mutual experience (as facilitated by the lack of subject-predicate distinction), also facilitated through a heightened dependence on a mutual understanding (the shared “context” required for some communication - the mutual common ground as acknowledged and tacitly agreed upon) of the shared background understanding of the YONONAKA.

However, as stressed throughout - this does not mean ALL members of the YONONAKA nor ALL Japanese speakers will agree on the issues of the times, nor whether these issues are of concern, nor that a suggested solution is a good idea. All Japanese speakers, all individuals, are believed to have their own individual opinions, own individual values, own individual biases, own individual assumptions, own individual expectations due to their hermeneutic existence in the world. However, due to our situatedness, residual aspects of these common-understandings may contribute to some individual's perceptions of the times and issues of the times, issues of value etc. and so over-lap between their own unique and individual ideas and one suggested by the KIGYOUKA might result in an agreement on an initiative or venture as purposeful/valuable.

**Shared value:**

MBB refers to her KIGYOUKA activity as expressing herself in a way that is of value/valued by others, this plays into the mutual value mentioned by ML, value according to common understanding of value – a calibrated understanding of what's of value. As MTA stated, naturally, this value is not going to be appreciated by everyone – regardless of how strongly bonded by common-understanding participants of a generation are, naturally this does not translate to some absolute homogeneity of thought or opinion.

Amidst this agreement on what is a topic or issue of the times, there is of course diversity of thought and perspectives on such (as represented even here, throughout these phenomenological interviews). Yet a point that was commonly-share as revealed throughout

these interviews is that value is considered from the point of view of “Your You” by the KIGYOUKA, considering not only what is of value to “Self”, but that which is of value to “other” and “environment” also. An empathetic contemplation of service. MBB “expressing (herself) in a manner of value” appears to the researcher to be an extremely articulate way of how the researcher now understands these experiences; that expressing oneself is dependent of the corresponding interlocuter sharing a fundamental shared understanding – that to express oneself relies on a Gadamerian shared understanding/ agreement on an underlying issue, and how it is of concern. (Here, a Gadamerian underlying agreement on an issue being an issue to dispute or as the foundation to discourse).

Thus, the “value” produced by the KIGYOUKA is the product of an implicit dialogue between themselves and the YONONAKA. This involves a reading and understanding of the YONONAKA and servicing it with one’s “expression” – i.e. ones interpretation of the problems of the YONONAKA and ones perceived solution of the problem as understood as applicable through applying one’s own experience to the issue and assuming that this is applicable to the situation as experienced by others more widely.

### **Venture as expression of insight (of Meaning): KIGYOUKA/YONONAKA as**

#### **“interlocutors”:**

The researcher has said throughout this inquiry that theory is problematic when based on abstractions to begin with, when “idealised” or when these reduced theories and abstractions in isolation constitute our representations of (primordial) Being. However, the researcher has

also suggested the understandings achieved through a participatory, qualitative approach would be a good starting point to provide a substantial foundation for us to begin considering this phenomenon from – based on the accounts of those who have experienced the phenomena under investigation. To begin with *meaning* as to start building a tentative, non-fixed *outline* of the phenomena based these lived experiences of such, now we have recognised this phenomenon as something of interest.

Thus, the final part of this chapter will aim to summarise essential characteristics of these accounts. Not presenting *theory* per se (not one that conforms to the teleological obligations of Functionalist theory anyhow), but a manner of considering the phenomena experienced more broadly (i.e., experiences with overlap in their meanings, overlap due to historically-effected situatedness), while not reducing it to an A-historical representation. A manner to express the structure of these experiences, illustrating the essence of the experiences as communicated by the KIGYOUKA, through one of Gadamer’s illustrative examples – as this research approach has enabled us to do so.

Gadamer’s meditation on “Art as interlocutor” in *Truth and Method* and his essay “the Relevance of the Beautiful” (Gadamer, 1986) presents the notion that Art “says something to someone” (Palmer 2001, 70), in that “the experience of art is an experience of meaning, and as such this experience is something that is brought about by understanding” (Palmer 2001, 70). That art addresses us (Davey, 2007) – it speaks to a time, or more specifically, a mass, privy to the shared understandings of that time, experiencing, *interpreting* that art in context.



Gadamer suggests Art “cannot be satisfactorily translated in terms of conceptual knowledge” (1986: 69). As Davey accents, Art “does not simply refer to a meaning which is independent of itself” (Davey,2007). This artistry is a tacit communication dependent on our Hermeneutic Being and our situated, socialised, understanding of the times. (It does not mean it cannot have meaning outside of these times – of course it *can* - however it is always understood *within* a situatedness of a times as historic and social).

From the point of view of the KIGYOUKA interviewed, it appears to be the belief that there is a tacit dialogue between the KIGYOUKA and the YONONAKA.

Based on the accounts given in this hermeneutic phenomenological inquiry, a dependency on common-understanding as context for the venture, in the context of the shared-understandings of the times.

Thus, the researcher would like to suggest the KIGYOUKAs experience (and possibly other examples of so-called “Entrepreneurship”) as a tacit *dialogue*, a dialogue within the times where understanding is achieved and progressions are made.

A dialogue between the KIGYOUKA and the times; the individual reflects on reads the times, experiences the times, see’s an issue within the times they have experienced, responds to the times, the

The *venture* as meaning (articulation) and the KIGYOUKA and the YONONAKA as interlocuters in a similar manner to the relationship Gadamer suggests we have with art.

Here, the *venture* (as articulation/meaning, as expression of insight) is integral to the individual KIGYOUKA, the recogniser of this concern, understander of a possibility, the interpreter, and as the times are integral to them as historically-effected Being also, so too are they integral to the historically-effected venture they produce (a historically-situated solution for a concern as interpreted within the times we are thrown into) thus the venture, its meaning, its *significance*, is also historically-situated and due to this, it is *interpretable*. It is recognisable as a solution, as a possibility.

With art, we find meaning in it, we engage with it not in a passive manner but dynamically, interpretively, we find possibility, through the hermeneutic process of fusion, of sublation, interpreting meaning into our situated being, and recognising meaning and possibility in this.

The venture is meaningful, but dependent on the shared understandings of “the times” or as historically-situated to grasp its nuance, the understanding and possibility (solution) it presents. the citizen as a mutual inhabitant of the times (as historically situated) and also an equally Hermeneutic Being is able to recognise the venture as meaningful through its interpretation into their own situated, personal circumstances, as to consider its relevancy, its possibility presented.

Thus, the venture (and/or the product/service) says something to someone, it has “meaning” it is meaningful. This meaning requires the times for its context based on an underlying common-understanding.

From the Gadamerian hermeneutic phenomenologist position, the experience (meaning) of “Entrepreneurship” is fundamentally inseparable from the times it’s a part of, and thus is done violence to by being separated from such when considered. It cannot be limited to a decontextualised, conceptual knowledge, a theorising guided by a teleological in and out point. Even if the venture itself is decontextualised, it is interpreted as situated by the citizens who interpret its relevancy and recognised its possibility. However, its very existence is a product of the times, as interpreted. (even so-called... concern are situated in their interpretation).

“Entrepreneurship” requires its context of the times to exist within, *to be meaningful* (as this research position believes it fundamentally requires to be as to exist, to be). It therefore should be represented as *meaningful* not *meaningless*. The vacuum from meaning in which the Functionalist Entrepreneur exists within removes the underlying substance of the phenomena, the *meaning* derived from the times it is a part of integral to its existence and purpose.

**“Meaning” of a concern as “subjectively-interpreted propensity”:**

This relationship with the YONONAKA suggests the presence of *subjective/ subjectively-interpreted propensities* within our unfixed, ever developing, understandings as “the times” – that a times common or shared understandings (as historically-situated) provide this propensity to recognise a concern as a (similarly-interpreted) concern and a solution as a

(interpretable-appropriate) solution/possibility and for the uptake of an idea deemed payment worthy.

Through the historically-effectedness of Gadamer thesis we can consider mutually recognised (due to our historical-situatedness), subjectively-interpreted concerns as a subjective propensity (of the individual) or intersubjective propensity (of those who share an overlap of meaning, as historically-situated), rather than that of the objective propensity suggested by Critical Realists. The propensity to agree (with the Entrepreneur/KIGYOUKA, with others) that an idea is interpretable meaningful, significant, payment worthy. The KIGYOUKA answers an as yet un-asked question, a preconscious premise in the shared-subjectivity of the YONONAKA without explicit solution or potentially not even explicit concerns rendered “*put-you-finger-on*”-able yet. However, given the mutual ground of experience and understanding between that of the interlocutors the KIGYOUKA and the YONONAKA, it appears through their expression (their meaningful venture) the KIGYOUKA anticipates a question/concerned articulation and presents an answer ahead of or in time with this being asked (having read the times and realised the propensity for this issue to be an issue also for others).

This involves the understanding of these times from existing within those times, as to be able to engage with the times. By reading the times, by reading the preconscious subjective act-connections of our times, the shared-understandings of our times and from one’s own experience, realising a question, an issue, a concern (A “MEANING”) before it becomes

explicitly, consciously recognised by the times, or while becoming recognised (however not yet having a solution, an answer, perceived as meaningful, appropriate, engaging, useful). Of offering a solution, an answer to this as yet unanswered question, through the articulation, the *expression* of the venture (venture as “meaning, as “understanding” presented, interpreted by the individuals who encounter it who potentially recognise *possibility* in it, as relevant to their concerns – an answer).

This shared common-understanding is supposed and anticipated by the KIGYOUKA, and thus makes its statement of a perceived possibility within this context, assumed to be meaningful in this mutually-experienced context.

Thus, as all Beings are hermeneutic Beings, the customers read the same concern (“similar” concern as interpreted within the context of the individual) and seek a meaningful solution.

The individual citizen of the times considers the service/product presented, interpreted into their own situated context, and potentially recognises an understanding as possibility (as presented as meaningful by the KIGYOUKA as situated within the times).

This chapters contemplation of the relationship of Being within the times more broadly builds on the grounded accounts presented in this research. The methodical approach employed throughout this research has resulted in the findings discussed in this chapter as well as grounds to consider these ideas in future studies.

## **Chapter X: Conclusions**

This research has demonstrated the benefits of a Gadamerian approach to Entrepreneurship studies, not only as an alternative to Functionalist theory-driven research, but as an extremely well-suited approach in its own right. This research has presented the argument that the field of Entrepreneurship studies struggles to represent human Being, due to the foundations of its inquiry being based within reductive market-economic abstraction, focusing on the nonprimordial, objectified components of Functionalist theory, servicing its penchant for reduction, abstraction, and theoretical parsimony. It has been argued the prioritisation of such reductive abstraction has resulted in an eventual issue of phenomenal, conceptual, theoretical and paradigmic incommensurability within the mainstream discussions of the field.

This research has outlined a so-called 'Interpretivist-paradigm' alternative as to remedy, or to effectively side-step entirely, the outlined Functionalist issue of incommensurability, its Cartesian object/subject divide, and its problematic teleology.

This research has thus presented an alternative Hermeneutic Phenomenological methodological approach to the study of Entrepreneurship, as well as complimentary representation of Being. A Heideggerian, primordial existence in the first instance – one recognised by Gadamer as social and historically-effected in the next.

A broader contemplation of Being that due to its fundamentally hermeneutic existence, allows us to take into consideration contextual-nature of our Being, rather than de-contextualised objectifications of it, analysed and in isolation. An approach that prioritises our experience of meaning, prioritising the hermeneutic ontology of this meaning (the hermeneutic ontology of our interpretations, its situatedness and the historically-effected understanding and meaning it produces, all as integral to our

Hermeneutic Being), as well as recognising its noematic qualities as the structure and directedness of these experiences. Hermeneutic Being as the centre of our inquiry, and “Meaning” (the focus of our inquiry) as the structure of Hermeneutic Beings lived experiences.

Due to this, this research has argued a plurality of the phenomena of Entrepreneurship more broadly, with this study taking into consideration experiences of the phenomenon as accessed through the Japanese language. As out-lined throughout, this research is not an ontological inquiry into objective “*profit opportunity*” (as has been typical of studies situated within the dominant functionalist paradigm), but one into the ontology of interpretation and meaning, avoiding the reductive subjectivism at the heart of much of the field’s mainstream approaches. Avoiding cartesian separation of Subject (the “Entrepreneur”) and Object (the “profit-opportunity”), opting to consider the broader experience of the phenomena as lived, as *interpreted*. Through a collaborative, participatory, hermeneutic phenomenological inquiry, this research has benefited from its prioritisation of the insights of the experiencer (the interpreter) of these experiences as lived (the Japanese KIGYOUKA). This has thus been an inquiry into meaning and purpose as structures of experience, and has presented the essence of these experiences as understood.

**Benefits of a so-called ‘Interpretivist paradigm’ approach:**

This research does not deny the merits of Functionalist discussion. However, it does suggest that much is lost when the majority of discussions in our field occur within its paradigmic reimits. To look at this phenomenon through a variety of theoretical, conceptual, methodological and paradigmic



lenses helps to develop a fuller more comprehensive understanding of the broader phenomena we currently refer to as “Entrepreneurship”.

By accepting A., a plurality of the phenomena, by considering B. the hermeneutic intentionality of our (primordial, historically-effected) Being, and by C. accepting and listening to the subjective interpretation of the individual through a participatory approach to research, we have gained access to an *integrated* experience.

To look at these issues in isolation - the phenomena of profit exploitation, the phenomena of venture-starting, the phenomena of having an idea to start a business - however, seems to not take into consideration the phenomena of *experience* in itself.

By taking an Interpretivist-Hermeneutic Phenomenological position we are able to consider the phenomena of profit exploitation, the phenomena of venture starting, the phenomena of having an idea to start a business as experienced through the phenomena of *human interpretation*, as experienced as meaningful, part of a fuller lived experience that surpasses the isolated “profit-exploitation” oriented *acts* that functionalist research tends to focus on (given its original macro-focus).

These reductions reduce “Entrepreneurship” to certain acts in isolation for the sake of theoretical parsimony. However, this parsimony has been taken for granted as an ipso facto foundation for the field, which due to this *taken-for-granted-ness* (Burrell and Morgan, 1979) has thus been developed upon further.

This has resulted in a field broadly concerned with opportunity exploitation, transcendent of the contexts of our Primordial Being, and also the broader life integral to these acts. A field which sees it

fine to reduce our Being and the phenomena we experience to abstraction as to fit in with the inner workings of larger discourses (e.g., the abstraction of the market) however does not see it fit to consider Being within the larger context of our primordial existence (apparently limited by the parameters of its paradigmatic positioning, and the inevitable incommensurability such abstraction and reduction will result in).

Thus, by taking an interpretivist approach (specifically a hermeneutic phenomenological approach) we open our focus to the primordial experiences of the human Being.

This interpretivist view has allowed us to consider so-called “Entrepreneurship” beyond these taken for granted issues, and has resulted in research which benefits from the idiosyncratic detail that would otherwise be cast aside or abstracted from. We have been able to consider a richer reflection of the meaning that constitutes the experience of this phenomena. To consider the concerns that drive the human to experience entrepreneurship, beyond the limitations of parsimony the Functionalist teleology settles for.

By rejecting the implicit “subjective-isms” teleology bestows upon its representation of the Entrepreneur, we are able to consider the diversity of motivations such as the individuals interpreted “concern” and the meaningful “purpose”, of their experiences as directed. Primordial, Hermeneutical Being replaces the teleologically-ordained notion of the Entrepreneur, presented as though intrinsically programmed to achieve opportunity exploitation (under vague, non-descript circumstances). It gives a chance to consider our historically-situated context as it is integral to our intentions. And to opt to preference “intentionality” over “teleology”.

The experiences of the KIGYOUKA interviewed appears to have a diverse range of purpose and meaning, based on their own, intentionality-driven meaningful experiences. However, the majority of these experiences seem to focus on servicing the YONONAKA; servicing a need, fixing a problem, providing a mutually-appreciated value.

This said, through this approach we are able to see that not one of the interviewed individuals has perceived themselves doing this in entirely the same manner as another participant interviewed interpreted themselves to do so. None have had exactly the same motivations and thus none have resulted in the same outcome.

Here we focus on a human Being who has a *concern* and finds starting a venture useful to reconciling this concern. The subjectively-interpreted “concern” motive means that this “concern” could be resolved through other means as interpreted as suitable, however, particular individuals feel that their solution is either to start a venture or their concern will be appeased somehow through starting such a venture.

Rather than a fixed and ridged teleological outcome, the plurality motive accepts differing purposes outcomes as interpreted by the individual, diverse “intentionalities”, each integral to the hermeneutic existence of which they direct.

The default of Being considered as “concerned” does not necessarily mean this “concern” would necessarily be the same “concern” as those interpreted by others (although given Hermeneutical Being is histrionically-situated, it also means tis concern could also be the “same” or - more likely - *similar*) nor would it necessarily be addressed by all through the same solution. The solution is decided upon

by the individual based on their lived experiences as interpreted as meaningful, that take the individual to this experience.

The layered, interconnected meaningful experience presented in chapter VII part one allow us to examine examples of experience where these decisions were made not in isolation, but as part of a complementary, meaningful rationale, unique to the experiences of the individual. This layered, interpretive experience addresses many other issues meaningfully, not solely the exploitation of opportunity in isolation, nor the reproduction of an idea/solution in isolation, nor starting a venture itself.

This is why an Interpretivist perspective is deemed important for considering the lived experiences of noematic meaning as directing individuals to have the experiences, interpreting them as meaningful. By including this interpretative capacity in our representation of Being, we are able to consider notions of both subjectively-interpreted and objective-opportunities (should they exist objectively) as interpreted by the individual.

This experiential, interpretive approach allows us to appreciate that it isn't necessarily objective information regarding opportunities sought by the individual initially, it's the produced (not *reproduced*) understanding that occurs within the greater lived-context of our (historically-situated) consciousness, through the act of interpretation. Interpreting understanding, interpreting *concerns*, interpreting *tentative solutions*, interpreting *possibility*, intuitively recognising issues and intuitively seeking the understanding of how to remedy them (based on *phronesis*-esque "wisdom" acquired through lived meaningful experiences).

They endeavour to gain understanding to resolve this issue. That problem may be “a need to earn a profit” in its most basic iteration or it could be to solve a broader personal or societal issue. This subsequently might result in gaining objective information, acts of arbitrage, bouts of trial and error and opportunity exploitation (all issues considered in the Functionalist research outlined as “decontextualised” and in isolation, extracted from the lived-life it is a part of).

However, this does not occur in the vacuum of isolation. These concerns were ascertained due to the situated and meaningful lived experiences of the individual and for each, all these concerns were different. This Interpretivist (Gadamerian) approach allows us to be privy to this. To consider both our lived experience and situated-context as part of our Being. To start from the primordial dimensions of experience (e.g., nonconceptual meanings) rather than the nonprimordial reductions rife within the field of entrepreneurship studies currently. To provide a long-hand to build a short hand from – not to start from the reverse.

To observe a *primordial phenomenon*, and through doing so, offer a representation of the experiences we’re interested in, in as nuanced detail as possible, and as we are forced to reduce the findings achieved (as is necessary of all inquiry converting investigation into a communicative medium, to the written form) this format, evaluative criteria and approach in general gives us the capacity and forum to only reduce these experiences to language at our most articulate and detailed. To meaning and essence rather than objectified conceptualisation.

This inquiry was achieved through collaborating with and talking to the individuals who had experienced the phenomena under investigation. An interpretivist point of view allows us to focus on *Verstehen* understanding. To take a participatory, dialogical-approach to understanding, rather than

taking a disembodied approach attempting to understand from afar. To recognise the relationship between researcher and the experiencer. The bond we have through this hermeneutic existence, and in our interpretive understandings, our fusion of horizons. To recognise and accept this hermeneutic subjective-interpretive space as integral to the research process and then to further benefit from it.

Naturally, this approach has qualities open to critique: From the positivist point of view, no generalisable data is produced. "Sample" sizes are small so these experiences cannot be considered "typical". It does not strive for objective outcomes. It still has no universally recognised evaluative criteria (see the methodology chapter for detailed discussion regarding these issues). There is concern regarding researcher induced bias. (e.g., the persuasion of research to take a particular direction).

However, these are issues assertively addressed by a wealth of qualitative research scholars which this research stands on the shoulders of, informed by the approaches and safeguards aimed to provide a trustworthiness integral to the research itself (See chapter III). The phenomenological researcher realises that to deliberately persuade certain narratives from participants would be counterproductive to the type of research the researcher themselves has voluntarily sought to engage in, thus has - deliberately and quite explicitly - reflectively remained aware of both their situated preunderstandings (horizon) as an inescapability, however remains rigorously attuned to gaining understanding and representing understanding authentic to that disclosed by the participants as they themselves saw fit to disclose. The understanding sought through a dialogical-approach relies on both the openness of each party, as well as their situatedness. It depends on the scrutiny of dialogue between two horizons, as to achieve an understanding as situated, the understanding we aim to represent.

Hermeneutics scholar even prior to Gadamer (in this case, one of Gadamer's key influences, Dilthey) also promoted the hermeneutical truth behind our words and articulations strive to do justice to our

scholarly endeavours. That if our social scientific pursuits are to remain rigorous, they must rest on an acceptance of a hermeneutics of understanding. How our interpretations surround all our endeavours, as academics, as entrepreneurs, as human Being.

This hermeneutic space is key to achieving these accounts of experience and understanding of their meanings. By accepting the phenomenological representation of our hermeneutical Being - suitably including researcher and participant also as such hermeneutic Beings - this research believes it benefits from the role of the researcher as *integral*, as research instrument, and to the foundations of the research existing within the premise of Gadamer's Hermeneutic Truth (as trustworthy, rigorous, stringently dependable) we are equipped to seek out and gather detailed from participants who have experienced the phenomenon under inquiry. Fleshing out theoretical assumptions regarding the phenomenon of entrepreneurship as represented in Functionalist studies.

Beyond the accessing of the experiences, we aim to observe, we as scholars must also consider the significance of language more broadly as we endeavour to represent the first person lived experiences.

What we do when we endeavour to reduce the primordial hermeneutical historically-situated experience (as to present such as research findings).

As Grondin expresses: "in understanding, an expression (*Ausdruck*) is understood as the manifestation of a life-experience (*Erlebnis*), that our understanding strives to reenact" (Grondin, 2002;36-37).

This issue is relevant both to the day-to-day communications and understandings of the so-called Entrepreneur, as well as to that of Scholars - both as Teachers, and as Researchers.

When Ramoglou and Tsang (2017) state "opportunity" is a part of the day-to-day of the Entrepreneur, at this point they had already substituted lived, primordial-life as experienced, with an epistemically -

objective abstraction. They assert this word is in use, and make the assumption that it means the same for the individuals (here, “Entrepreneurs”) who use it in their day-to-day experiences as it does for them, as Academics.

This meaning of “opportunity” in isolation (as extracted from experience and re-considered context-free in isolation, or as conceptualised relative to greater abstraction) compared to its meaning in the lived, situated context of the *day-to-day* appear to have vastly different meaning, resulting in huge consequences for making such assumptions.

In the case of the KIGYOUKA, the individuals interviewed expressed similar notions through the terms KOUKI, KIKAI and BIJINESUCHANSU all equally as interchangeable, however the nuances allude to aspects of opportunity the objective variant does not allow for in its context of use. By prioritising the experience of the phenomenon under investigation we allow for the notion to be understood in context, its meaning, what it aims to express. The essence of that here has taken us to consider subjective, purpose-serving experiences interpreted as “opportune”, terms used as express this.

Kirzner did euphemistically use this term. However, so do the Entrepreneurs using it. Yet when they use it, they use it in a greater lived context of meaning. Amidst other words, in a bid to articulate an experience, an interpretation, an experience far broader than the abstraction-of-our-expressions allow us to convey. Language may allow us to access the world, but it only allows us to express it finitely. We can only comprehend it finitely. Thus, when our experiences are articulated, we can only *express* those experiences and others can only *interpret* those accounts finitely. This is accepted by



Interpretivism; however, it aims to represent these experiences with detailed illustration of the essence of these experiences, understanding this to be finite and historic.

Thus, putting so much pressure on one term (“opportunity”), one part of this experience, extracting it *from* experience, isolating it, reducing it to do so, building a field around this reduction, this A-contextual notion and then trying to re-consider this this newly abstracted iteration as though it was *lived*. This is why a-historical abstraction is so problematic. It expresses nothing lived. It expresses a concept, one which is not representative of the phenomena we are concerned with understanding. We miss *how* this word is part of the day to day. Its meaning in context. This is why the Interpretivist point of view regards context so highly and why this research feels it has benefited from a Gadamerian approach. We gain access to a broader context of meaning; thus, we can consider the phenomenon under investigation as lived.

This kind of qualitative research, framed through the Gadamerian prism, is seen as highly prospective and beneficial research position. However, this type of research is neither practical, nor is it without its flaws. The biggest practical draw back with regard to this Gadamerian hermeneutic approach is the amount time dedicated to such an inquiry, and the level of immersion required is an overwhelming.

The researcher has spent much of the past five years producing this research, two-three of these years immersed in the thoughts and experiences of others (e.g., the participant’s accounts) – an extremely rewarding experience in its own right – however, practically, it’s not an amount of time many people have to dedicate to one task.

The researcher was extremely fortunate to have been welcomed and warmly received by research participants keen to participate. However, this might not always be the case for all, and even in this

case, the amount of time and energy maintaining such a rigorous research time-table, juggling many very busy, highly-sought after KIGYOUKA was at times problematic and required an extremely disciplined research plan of action, as well as an assertive flexibility and compassionate reflectivity. As mentioned, even with a significant amount of background research, with time invested into a “courting”- phase with potential participants, with “getting-to-know-each other” preliminary meetings, note taking and reflection, vast amounts of preparation for interviews and then the interviews themselves, three participants decided while they had enjoyed the process until that point, they did not however want to include the interviews nor their comments and verbatim insight in the research. This of course is extremely disappointing (as these interviews were greatly interesting), however this is unavoidable and is something one must accept as a researcher. I am of course thankful to all participants who joined this project in whatever capacity they were able to and once again thank them for the willingness to participate and allowing access to their interesting insights (including both those included in this document and those who are not). This research has been arduous, laboured, immersed yet has resulted in an authentic snap-shot of *the essence of a moment* of the phenomena we endeavour to observe, therefore the researcher feels the approach, no matter how intense, has been worthwhile.

### **What we’ve learned about the meaningful experiences of the KIGYOUKA:**

Thus, we can see from the experiences of the KIGYOUKA interviewed, a diverse range of circumstances have led them to consider starting a business, leading to a diverse range of solutions,

products, services and ventures, even between those labelled as existing broadly within the same or similar sectors.

None of them have had the exact same experiences which of course is to be expected. However, starting-up has shared a similar meaning to some of these KIGYOUKA (e.g., having/addressing a contextually-oriented concern). Both this meaning as *situated* and this meaning as *interpreted* have provided intentionality with an interpreted-noematic structure which has been reflected in the disclosed accounts recounting the interpreted meaning of these experiences, these experiences as meaningful. Thus, the Gadamerian-Interpretivist approach has granted us access to observing both a diversity of experience, and where the essences of these experiences overlap or have similar meanings (what might constitute “phenomena”). This approach has offered a means to consider the meaning and purpose of their experiences, as well as a reflective interpretation of the concerns which directed these meaningful purposes (as situated).

A characteristic which 17 of the 19 presented accounts share is that these KIGYOUKA were motivated by an obtrusiveness or an unavailableness that they themselves had experienced. A concern in their life which needed addressing (be this a lack of money, a lack of employment, a lack of a productive work environment, a lack of appropriate tools, a lack of services, a lack of products, a lack of solutions etc.). Concerned, they meditated on this problem/concern and came up with their own tentative solution, either based on their own experiences or by reflecting on issues they’ve observed.

However, these KIGYOUKA would then reflect on their concerns and struggles as *a part of the times*, recognising their own essential nature as *a part of those times*. This meant their reflection on their

own struggles was empathetically extended to a tentative understanding of how their own struggles applied to “the times” (the so-called YONONAKA) they lived in, as understood.

These interviewed KIGYOUKA seemed to intuitively consider their issue of concern as one potentially as an issue of the times in need of addressing, directing them toward the experience of starting a venture. in some manner addressing their own concerns while also addressing those of the times.

Through a seemingly empathetic, contextually-oriented sense of concern, this leads to the intuitive discernment of a *possible* need (often deemed a necessity), rather than that of a so-called “profit-opportunity”. A discernment achieved through reflection on their own experiences, not on hard, objective data.

This interpretive experience was intuitive and seemingly based on their Beings integrated existence within the times, as a historically-situated hermeneutic individual.

Through a blend of reading the shared-subjectivity and the common-understandings of the times (as situated) - as *experienced as existent within those times* - within those common-understandings and shared experiences, reflecting on their selves and their own experiences *as a part of those times*.

This approach has enabled us access to the perceived importance of such notions as the YO-NO-NAKA and the so-called JIDAI-NO-NAGARE “the flow of the times” as part of the participants existence and further the experiences under investigation. We are able to see how the KIGYOUKAs situatedness is of paramount importance *to* their experience and to the perceived meaning of their experiences. This not as a concern of the *Phenomenologist* - but as voluntarily disclosed by participants *their selves*, without prompt.

Most of the KIGYOUKA interviewed appeared to “read” the times (i.e., like the idiomatic term to “read a room”, to intuitively analyse, to intuitively be in tune with), more specifically, the YONONAKA, through a historically-situated understanding of the times, reading the shared-subjectivity, shared-practices/events/experiences and common-understandings of the times. and amidst this, they felt they had intuitively anticipated the significance of an issue in the YONONAKA, by anticipating the “flow of the times” (intuitively expecting or anticipating changes in the times), an anticipation based upon their historically-situated hermeneutic existence, simply as existing as a situated, *hermeneutic Being*. Anticipating a future context based on one’s experience of the present era. Existing within the shared-subjectivity, shared-understandings and shared-experiences of an era – as it *flows*, as it is integral to historically-situated Being itself. As it changes, as it produces new understandings based on presuppositions of possibility present in the historicity of a common language and further, present within the broader social consciousness of that time. The temporal qualities of an era changing, and with it the broader contexts that constitute it. As it holds onto some qualities and let’s go of others.

Thus, the phenomena as experienced appears to be historically and socially situated, a historicity that informs the hermeneutic intentionality. To a degree it informs the KIGYOUKAs intentions and presumptions that a concern is or will be a concern of the times.

Presumptions which appear to inform the intuition of the KIGYOUKA, as in sync with the times (some fraction of the times sharing similar views and perspectives),

Be this an issue focused on a concern of the individual, or be it servicing an absence within the times recognised a possibly useful to the times. To recognise it as shared issue of concern.

Many described themselves as sorts of “problems solvers” (For example, ML, MGJ, MHI, MCA, MTA, DE, MCD, MWW).

Often recognising and addressing these potential needs, as relevant to their selves and anticipated as relevant to the others as part of the times, the YONONAKA through their own experiences and reflections on these experiences as part of the times.

Described through the discussion chapter as answering a question prior to it being asked, (or before it is even realised as a concern explicitly), noticing the issue prior to it being explicitly noticed by the times, noticing its presence/absence within our-shared subjectivity, in its preconscious existence within the times, drawing explicit attention to it with a *solution*. Prior to its conscious recognition by the public, or prior to individuals resolving this issue with a perceived adequate solution. It is this existence within one’s times which is meaningful to the KIGYOUKA interviewed, reading the times as they exist within them and anticipating their “flow”.

We are also able to consider the venture as empathetic gesture, through venture as provider of value as mutually recognised by the KIGYOUKA and of society, the KIGYOUKA as embedded within this society, as society, and thus as reflective, back-and-forth examination of one’s surroundings, understanding a problem, suggesting a solution and accommodating that solution. The perceived mutual bind of Self, Other and context presented in these accounts show these KIGYOUKAs perceived integrated-ness into their broader societal context as existent within and as NINGEN and also as existent within and integrally related to the YONONAKA, to the times.

While a significant quality of the “meanings” of these experiences has included addressing such contextual concern, this meaning appears to be informed by (and also address) the KIGYOUKAs

existence within a broader relational context. This was indicated by many of the accounts (MMV MR MBB MEC MT in particular) stressing a strong relationship and obligation to meeting the specific demand of the customers (as understood or anticipated) rather than hazarding a “risk” of an opportunity out of context from the ventures perceived purpose. This brings a more grounded and nuanced perspective of the “low-risk low-return” premise typically associated with Japanese Entrepreneurship.

That our focus here should perhaps be more focused on the importance of these entrenched, embedded relationships that steer KIGYOUKA away from such “unnecessary” risk rather than the fixed and limiting title of “risk averse”. The deep SHINRAI KANKEI outlined in chapter 3 illustrate the perceived depth of these relationships, as they hold obligation to collaborators/suppliers/manufacturers and customers alike.

The interpreted mutual bind between Self, Other and context show the complex depth of these obligations to society, to the times, to the YONONAKA and while profit is important, its important as to sustain the satisfaction of these greater incentives and purposes, to address the multiple concerns the venture is considered a solution for.

This contextual-integrated-ness is further highlighted when we are not only able to consider the KIGYOUKAs use of the venture as vehicle to offer a solution (product, service, teachings etc.), to service the concerns of the YONONAKA, but also instances where the venture was interpreted as the solution in itself.

To provide income, to contribute to society through venture as employer all naturally depend on profit, however as apparent through the meaningful accounts of these experiences, rather than “profit”

being prioritised and focused on overwhelmingly, here the KIGYOUKA appear to view “profit” as balanced with other incentives, as meaningful amidst a context of other meaningful aspects of the experience, meaningful aspects driving and directing the experience.

This importance put on relationships colours one’s interpretation of what a venture should be and also by extension, of what a “business opportunity” might be, here with a slightly different nuance to that which we as academics might refer to as “profit opportunities”.

From these interviews, use of the terms KOUKI KIKAI and BIJINESUCHANSU were perceived as more an "advantageous opportunity" as to achieve one's "purpose".

KIKAKI KOUKI BIJINESUCHANSU seemingly are not always used as to refer to the epistemologically-objective “opportunity” of Functionalist discussion, but are more often used in reference to subjectively-interpreted opportunities deemed relative to the individual’s unique entrepreneurship, specifically the meaningful concern or perceived purpose directing this experience.

*A subjectively-interpreted opportunity* i.e., circumstances which present themselves to the individual of which they subjectively-interpret as servicing a prior, pre-established purpose.

However, as the notion of KOKU KIKIA BIJINESCHANSU was rarely bought up by the KIGYOUKA themselves, the researcher feels this project benefited from a non-opportunity centric approach as to gain from that which was disclosed during the accounts, as recapped in this section.

The experience outlined by the KIGYOUKA interviewed were full of other equally (if not substantially more) significant aspects of their experiences, ones perhaps not as generalisable but however relatively significant.



The Gadamerian approach employed offers us an approach to consider “fusion” as the interpretive means deemed integral to the suggested exploitation of objective opportunities (should they exist), while on the other hand suggesting “opportunity” is generally subjectively interpreted as purposeful and relevant to the individual’s purposeful venture. By prioritising a Hermeneutical Being we are also not limited by an uninformed teleology – its underlying motivations vague and nondescript, we are able consider intentionality as interpretive, considering the past as to inform the future in present.

This Gadamerian approach has given us the means to investigate the phenomena as understood i.e., as referential to past experience and lived meaning, seeking understanding as concerned, and driven to apply such understanding as to resolves such concerns. As lived through the wisdom-based mode of *phronesis*, as intuitive, as deliberative, as interpretive.

It has also significantly granted us access to observe the experience of the KIGYOUKA as situated within the times it is a part of, and to recognise those times as integral to it.

The reading and existing within the times, dealing with the concerns of the times within the sublation, the flow of the times, allows us to recognise the sense of emergence, awakening or occurrence, etymologically associated with KIGYOUKA 起業家.

KI 起 (to awaken, to happen, to occur, to emerge) alludes to this sublation, this eventually changing state, an occurrence; That it awakens with the times, as an issue becomes conscious within the times the solution, the answer, the venture too becomes conscious in sync with the times, it awakens, emerges. Rather than “starting” something, this notion discreetly recognises the venture as part of times, awakening into those times, happening, *occurring* due to those times. This occurrence has

much in line with Heidegger's notion of recognising an issue of concern and Gadamer's notion of being historically-situated and sourcing understanding as solution from the times one is situated within (the perceived concern also historically effected).

From the experiences outlined and as analysed through the Gadamerian lens, The KIGYOU (emerging business) and the KIGYOUKA (emerging business specialist) both appear to be integral to their times as their etymology alludes to.

Both Gadamer's Hermeneutic Being as historically-effected as well as the integrated relationship between NINGEN and the YONONAKA gives us access to a manner of considering our Being a situated, this situatedness and its transitory temporality, its sublation all integral to our Being, unfixed and context dependent.

Both as to consider the venture, but more so to consider our Being and our ventures as part of the times, integral to the times as "the times".

The YONONAKA/flow of the times and the experiences and understandings of the individuals integral to these times, The (specifically) *hermeneutic* Being.

Understanding through fusion i.e., through interpretation, through sublation *is* change; thus, our understandings (as interpreted and historically-situated) *are the times*; our experience of understanding and application of those understandings *are* the times flowing. Concerns, solutions sought, possibilities understood, tentative understandings applied, new concerns observed, new understandings sought and applied and so on. To recognise this amidst the notion of Being as concerned recognises the venture (the experience of offering a solution) as a part of the times,

essentially, the times are a part of it (its purpose, its necessity, its existence). This is the *emergence of the times and the venture as integral to them*, not the emergence of the *venture in isolation*.

This meditation on the KIGYOUKA has given us the opportunity to consider a variant “Entrepreneurship” and to view the phenomena from an experience presenting vastly different characteristics to those typically focused on in mainstream Functionalist discourse, however it presents a phenomenon familiar enough to require the pondering of new questions within these discourses.

### **What a Gadamerian hermeneutic approach has enabled:**

To our hermeneutic Being, everything is interpreted.

As has been stressed already throughout this chapter (and throughout the thesis) Gadamerian hermeneutic phenomenology grants us access to a Hermeneutic Being, historically-effected, intentionally seeking understanding as to resolve issues, to progress and to move forward.

Understanding to overcome unavailability, understanding to comprehend an issue in a situated context. This has turned out to be an extremely useful manner to consider the experiences of the participants involved in this research, as many of these accounts have explicitly referred to their experiences as meaningfully having a relationship with the times (See chapter VI), while their intuitive experiences bare similarity to that of the discerning wisdom of Gadamer’s *phronesis* (see chapter VII). Thus, through taking this language and understanding-focused approach we have revealed the meaning and essences of these experiences outlined in the previous section of this chapter.

The “Entrepreneur” under Gadamer is simply a person who saw starting a venture as a solution to their concerns. The researcher as well as the inquiry’s participants (as participants) are also hermeneutic people with concerns (e.g., the researchers concern addressed through a research project, not an “entrepreneurial” venture). This acceptance of our primordial, hermeneutic existence in extension to all parties involved in this project has been seen as a benefit, an opening of Being within this project itself.

Gadamerian hermeneutic phenomenology not only benefits from prioritising “Hermeneutic Being” as its focus (in order for us to consider this notion of “interpretation” as integral to our Being) but also from its integrated notion that hermeneutic truth underlies not just the methods we employ in our academic pursuits, but as human beings, it underlies our interactions within all our experiences, be those considered purely subjective-interpretations, or the interpretation of the potentially objective also.

This research has suggested that without the interpretive sublation/ fusion of Self and the objects of our hermeneutic intentionality, our progressions and understandings would not be possible.

Acceptance of such allows us as scholars to value the hermeneutic ontology of Gadamer’s thesis as the “betweenness” integral to our interpretive experience of phenomena, of meaning.

This puts the focus of our research on meaning as interpreted, as socially and historically-situated, and as dependent on the lived experiences of the intentionality-directed hermeneutic Being. On this meaning as experience, as this experience of meaning as the phenomena we observe.

As outlined throughout this research, this research benefits in erring away from Cartesian subject-object juxtaposition as the main focus of the research, instead opting for an integrated view of the

phenomena under investigation.. One which is interpreted; the meaning achieved through this interpretation being the structure to our experiences.

This has given us the means to observe experience as primordial meaning, rather than to meditate on non-primordial objectifications. To consider both the interpretation of *primordial meaning as experience*, as well the interpretation of *information as experienced*, as deliberated, scrutinised, understood and applied as relevant. As *meaningful*. This is what Gadamer's interpretive phronesis enables us access to.

And to paraphrase Gadamer, the focus of this hermeneutic phenomenological inquiry is on this in-betweenness, on this hermeneutic ontology of meaning as dependent on Self, on interpretation, understanding and meaning, as integral to and informing Being, its sense of possibility and its intentions, directing its experiences.

As mentioned in Chapter II, to the hermeneutic phenomenologist, even the "act of opportunity exploitation" (when considered as directed by our hermeneutic intentionality) is a subjectively-interpreted experience, situated, interpreted within and dependent on the individuals greater lived-context of meaning and experience, as socially and historically effected.

Thus, this approach has given us a means to investigate the primordial lived-experience of "opportunity" (amidst the other equally – if not more – meaningful aspects of these KIGYOUKAs experiences) prior to its measured objectification, regardless of how it is assumed to be "objective" in Functionalist approaches. To prioritise experiences as outlined by participants, through semi-structured dialogical collaboration. The interpretive experience of what is individually recognised as

opportune (whether or not the focus of this is on making profit), as to see how relevant this notion was to the interviewees, by listening to their accounts of their experiences.

However, from the first-person perspective of the KIGYOUKA interviewed at least, this didn't seem to be a significant concern (meaning, a focus on profit-/opportunities being exploited) but more emphasis was put on them addressing concerns of the YONONAKA. The explicit notion of opportunity discovery, creation, exploitation held little conscious relevance to these accounts and the notion of "opportunity" (as KIKAI, KOUKI, BIJINESUCHANSU) rarely came up explicitly from the KIGYOUKA themselves throughout their accounts of these experiences (and please remember, the focus here is on the *interpreted meaning of these experiences*). The researcher was ultimately the party who brought this topic up, when and where this line of discussion seemed appropriate, as to clarify whether this was considered meaningful within the KIGYOUKAs experiences. Under these circumstances and regarding this topic, what was considered most relevant to these meaningful experiences was the above outlined notion of a *subjectively-interpreted* "opportunity" i.e., simply things which presented themselves to the KIGYOUKA, and were interpreted as relevant to the KIGYOUKA's preestablished purpose.

These concern-addressing, purpose-directed, contextually-oriented ventures appear to have been established on a purpose integral to the venture itself, thus opportunity alone doesn't seem to be a major incentive for the KIGYOUKA to move into action. "CHANSU" itself was scrutinised by MMV due to the level of risk its precarious notion alludes to, when juxtaposed with the dilemma it puts before the KIGYOUKA e.g., scrutinising whether the result of this chance would be relevant/irrelevant to an already established custom-base – its nuance here in Japanese precariously more cynical and sceptical, than the optimism of the English term "opportunity"). However, what

was discussion worthy here (in this case, not necessarily as prioritised by Interpretivism, but here, as relevant to the established, current discussions of “opportunity exploitation” in mainstream Entrepreneurship studies discourse) is how these accounts present to us examples of experiences where MMV MEC and MR discussed the interpretation of information presented to them as an opportunity, or a so-called “chance” (here recognised as something not interpreted by the individual as particularly relevant to their venture as purposeful, however recognised as having the potential to be a lucrative venture, *in some manner*). The potential actualisation of a propensity (whether this would be an objective or subjectively-interpreted propensity is outside the scope of this research, however the possibilities of such are discussed briefly in chapter IX and further below), not directly interpreted as relevant to their venture as canonically significant. Although this idea was either met with disdain or prompted a cynical response - and was only relevant to three of the accounts - these accounts potentially make the notion of sublation (here in the guise of Gadamer’s “fusing”) relevant to the Functionalist discussion of opportunity exploitation.

Specifically, the synthesis of something outside of one’s context, by interpreting it into one’s lived-context, through interpretation. Fusion with regard to the individual needing to interpret such (*hypothetically* objective) “opportunity” into their own circumstances for it to be considered opportune – not that it simply being an objective opportunity to be discovered, but that it must be intuitively brought into, interpreted into, the context of one’s prior lived-experience, wisdom, intuition, one’s situated, hermeneutic Being. To interpret something in the context of Self as to consider it at all. However, this Interpretivist research is focused more on the broader experience and application of this wisdom, intuition and interpretive fusion. The deliberative wisdom of phronesis allows us to consider

that which is questionable. This wisdom is the interpretation of the questionable into the scrutiny of past experience and understanding, into the realm of our imaginative intuition.

Thus, whether it be method, objective information, universal knowledge as encountered, the deliberative individual can adopt or reject this based on this sense of wisdom, from a lifetime of lived-experiences. From those of business as well as other meaningful experiences (arguably more so from the broad lived experiences within which one's business experience is situated and interconnected as meaningful within consciousness).

Thus, as was obvious through accounts in chapter VI, through experience comes intuition, an intuition which discerns that which is encountered as relevant or not. Many accounts in that chapter rejected the notion of theory, method or universal knowledge (and to some degrees information and objective data in the preliminary phases of their experience as KIGYOUKA), on the basis they had tried things and figured out for themselves what worked as relevant to their ventures perceived purpose. The KIGYOUKA had also challenged common-understandings, and through this, understood certain interpretations of possibilities unable to be taught to them; these understandings had to come from their own deliberation, their own recognitions, their own *particular* understanding in context, as to achieve the unprecedented task of reproducing their own idea of a venture as a (particular) solution.

**Dialogue with the times: KIGYOUKA as interlocutor, Venture as *meaning*.**

As mentioned in the Discussion Chapter IX, a Gadamerian approach does not offer us theory *pe se*, but offers us a manner to express the relational structure of these experiences (neither as fixed, nor as permanent). Through Gadamer's view of Art as interlocutor (outlined in the discussion chapter) we



can recognise the venture as *articulation*, articulation of an as yet “unnoticed” - i.e., not yet consciously recognised - concern and of a solution, *an answer, an understanding (“meaning”)* to/of this concern.

Through understanding that the meaning of many of the KIGYOUKAs experiences was to “address a need of the times by reading the YONONAKA and applying ones lived understandings as part of a solution”,

We are able to consider how hermeneutic Being is in tune with the times as *existent within the time*, how their own absence/concern might very well also be a concern of the times.

This provides the situated context for the issue to be considered beyond the individual, through the conduit of Self as part of the times. It is here the individual realises the issue as potentially a shared issue of the times.

Thus, through the notion of the Entrepreneur as reflective “reader” of the times (As Lavoie also touched upon in his opportunity-focused account - Lavoie, 1991), we can see the venture as “articulation” – (to quote research participant “MBB”, an “*expression*”) offering a solution to a perceived issue of the times *in advance of the times itself asking for one*. By reading the shared-understanding of our times. This reading of the preconscious subjective act-connections of our times and realising a question, an issue, a concern, before it becomes explicitly conscious, recognised by “the times”.

The experience of “Entrepreneurship” as a *dialogue*, dialogue with the times where understanding is achieved and progressions are made. The (KIGYOUKA) and the (YONONAKA) as interlocutors.

Here, the venture itself is the KIGYOUKAs form of expression, articulation, (understanding/meaning) addressing the concerns of the times, and by reading the times, by intuitively anticipating them. A dialogue with society where the venture answers, an un-asked question, KIGYOUKA recognising an as yet un-articulated question and then articulating it in tandem with a solution, making it explicit. As mentioned above this also goes for more explicit demands also, those unaddressed, so-called *unmet need*. This is also ascertained through the same experiences of understanding an issue to be an issue of the times through reflection on Self (As part of the times) and application (to those times). Once again, its stressed here this doesn't mean the times in their entirety; those with similar or overlapping interpretations of issues and solutions as relevant to their own concerns.

The KIGYOUKA recognises that an issue they themselves experienced *themselves* could possibly be a *shared* issue for others (due to a recognition of their shared situatedness within the times, the YONONAKA) and thus start dialogue by offering a solution, an understanding, an *answer*, through an intuitive assumption of its relevancy to someone, before an issue even becomes explicit – answering a need *empathetically*, understanding its relevancy to a need without the need having yet become a *demand*. (And also, where there are unmet needs – demands – servicing them too).

However, to suggest a teleological quality to this dialogue, removes those who did not achieve this articulation, the so-called failed individuals who did not find others who had read the times in a similar manner to themselves. From the accounts of those KIGYOUKA, these initial “mutterings” i.e., learning experiences of starting a venture which didn't communicate nor connect with the times, also served a purpose, a purpose integral to the rounded experience this research recognises as “Entrepreneurship” (i.e., to learn how best to address a concern). Thus, we can suggest “articulation”

as a euphemistic term for the experiences presented in these accounts. However, this is simply a metaphor. This said, one pulled from the lived experiences of the KIGYOUKA interviewed.

The real value of this research is those accounts and is presented as such.

Gadamer's analogue of "art as interlocutor" offers us an unfixed, situated notion to consider, rather than a ridged abstraction for us to adhere our theoretical contributions to. However, as has been stress elsewhere in this research, *all written word is abstraction*, yet the hermeneutic approach is not to *idealise* phenomena with these abstractions, something it is hoped the findings and analysis of this research has tread carefully to both present, highlight and convey. Taking into consideration the imperfections of such analogies/ metaphors/ euphemisms and simply using them and presenting them as a manner to communicate the essence of a phenomena, not as a definitive, scientific theory.

This gives us another way to view the social construct of the market as prioritised in Creation/ Evolutionary Realist theory, here focusing on the concerns of the times as perpetuated and engaged in through dialogue, through shared-practices within those times and through the expectations and presuppositions of those times. Implicitly redirecting our attention away from a "market", considering instead the citizens of a time (and their common-understandings/experiences). The difference here is subtle, but significant in where this discussion can go next. This Gadamerian view allows us to consider the KIGYOUKAs understanding of the times as to attempt to answer a question before it has been explicitly asked or that individuals are even conscious of.

By prioritising the Hermeneutic Being as our focal representation of the human Being at the centre of this discussion, we consider both the so-called "Entrepreneur" and their customers.

This considers the individuals (both KIGYOUKA and non-KIGYOUKA e.g., citizens, and further, potential customers) reading of, and *existence within*, the times (as historically-situated) is integral to this phenomenon, to this implicit dialogical relationship. For the KIGYOUKA to empathetically offer services or products, and for the individual to interpret and consider them as a viable solution.

This research does not aim to offer a comprehensive model of a fixed and infinitely a-historical phenomena. However, it does recognise similarities here between experiences disclosed by KIGYOUKA participants and aspects of those supposed by creation, ER and process theories (sans their teleological assumptions). These issues were reviewed during the discussion chapter, and while these reductions may resemble some aspects of some experiences revealed, they diminish, reduce and obscure the phenomena under investigation and the broadness of our contemplations of it by being limited by their own pre-established, pre-determined teleology. Forward thinking radical process theorists hold in their hands the most immediate re-alignment of focus toward a phenomenon that resembles a human experience, and their contributions have all pushed our field forward in exciting and revelatory ways (Sarasvathy 2001,2003; Steyaert, 1997, 2007 Steyaert & Hjorth, 2003; Dimov, 2007, 2011,2016; McMullen and Dimov, 2013, Luksha, 2008; Felin and Zenger, 2009; Foss and Klein, 2012; Lichtenstein, 2016;). However, this research also concurs with Packard (2017) that if the fullest potentials of these exciting approaches are to be fulfilled, then they might be better considered within an Interpretivist foundational forum, for them to be nurtured through its complementary sensibilities. To leave behind / move-away from relics of the cartesian approach and begin to reconsider these notions under a more open, less defined or fixed teleological end-point. Aspects of this have been touched upon by the experimental phenomenologists and radical process theorists this research admires greatly with each of their contribution jettisoning some limitation of a prior

representation of these phenomenon/ phenomena. However, this research still feels that by focusing on the “opportunity” (or even by focusing on the co-called “Entrepreneur”) we already begin from a predetermined, predefined criteria.

The underlying premise of this research – and its conception of Being – is based upon that of which we are all Hermeneutical Beings – and thus, this hermeneutical activity extends to all the citizens of our times that make up both our “Entrepreneurs” as well as our “customers”. They too are concerned, and historically-situated. In replacing the subjectivist version with the Gadamerian interpreter, we can now consider this contextualising of concerns as relative to situated-Self, in all cases. This research focuses on the individual who starts a venture to address these concerns. This notion therefore suggests that the “Entrepreneur” does not exploit objective opportunities, nor does it actualise objective propensities, but that human Being is a hermeneutical Being, addressing its concerns through a directedness to seek a solution (understanding), through interpretation, understanding and application of understandings.

Therefore, it is not simply (or even necessarily) objective propensities the individual actualises, but - given the hermeneutic essence of all Beings that make up our humanity - *subjective* propensities of the individuals subjective interpretations that make up the times they are a part of, as they subjectively-interpret their existence as historically-situated, as concerned and as in search of a solution as provided. That our concerns as interpreted overlap, and thus our solutions have similar meanings. The Gadamerian perspective allowing for both the individually-interpreted as situated within common historically effected meaning, allows for overlap of interpretation.

And thus, our mutual, historically-situated hermeneutical existence provides the grounds for our economic activity. The subjectively-interpreted propensities (of the individual's propensity to find something "meaningful" relative to their "concern") which commonly "shared-meaning" (s accessed through the historicity of our language) provides an era with the *propensities* of an interpretation of an issue (a concern) and a perceived solution as significant and meaningful to multiple parties, as uniquely understood within their own lived context. This is ascertained through the individuality our hermeneutic intentionality provides us, as well as how our interpretation of meaning is situated through the historicity of language and the subsequent historical-effected-ness of our Being.

Should these mutual, overlapping understandings be present in an era, it is supposed there is potential to support a venture should other factors be in place (i.e., a monetisation point) however, this is all dependent on the prioritisations of the individual considering these issues as meaningful, as directed (These "other factors" would be taken into consideration as part of the "actualisation" of such a propensity, it could be supposed, should we be inclined to theorise).

This research has helped us consider the possibility of subjective propensities of the YONONAKA, of the individuals as part of a social consciousness who are passed through with common understandings, agreeing on common issues. However, this is something beyond the capacity of this current inquiry, yet sets up a line of inquiry for future research.

The main benefit of this research has been the individual insights the 19 KIGYOUKA interviewed disclosed through their interviews, and the understandings they have heled to achieve regarding the meaning of the experiences as reflected upon.

The researcher believes the qualitative accounts achieved in this research have presented very interesting insights into the experiences of the highlighted KIGYOUKA. Interesting aspects such as the lived experience of the flow of the times, the notion of subjectively-interpreted opportunities and the importance of trust as social Beings, the likelihood of a contextually-oriented concern being meaningful within these experiences, as well as provided the footing to illustrate these ephemeral phenomena, such as the venture as meaning and the KIGYOUKA as interlocutor with the times, the idea that meaning perhaps imbues an era with certain subjectively-interpreted propensities to consider an idea as relevant.

It is unclear whether this observation has application to other - for lack of a better term - “*Entrepreneurships*” in different contexts. However, through engaging with the so-called KIGYOUKA through Gadamerian means (via the insights of the phenomenological experience of the Japanese language of Watsuji) we have had the opportunity to view the intuitive dialogical rapport between these KIGYOUKA and the YONONAKA.

To consider the individual as existent within the times and to consider the KIGYOU (emerging venture) as integral to the times, emerging through the times, in tandem with the times. An emergence based on the individuals hermeneutic situatedness within the times, contextually-dependent. A situatedness mediated and situated within the historicity of understanding, itself mediated by the linguisticity of our understanding. Thus, our historical-effected Being and our effective historical situatedness is mediated by *language*, as we are social Beings in search of understanding through dialogue and interpretation (both mediated through language).

This research has greatly benefited from a Gadamerian hermeneutic phenomenological approach and believes it has presented some extremely interesting insights as well as raised some even more interesting questions for future research (as touched upon in this conclusion). This research would once again like to thank all participants for volunteering their contributions and also for the detailed insight into their extremely interesting experiences.



Appendix:

Chapter VI: Part one

A:

MHI:

うん。で、やっぱり「自分たちが思うようにやりたい」という、そういうなんか「ワガママな心」からスタートしているんですよね。

B:

MHI:

ところが第二回目のこの起業っていうのは、「社会がこのままでいいのか？」っていう、だからもっと、その「利益のため」というよりは、やっぱり「食べて行く人たちとか、その人のため世のために、何かすべきじゃないか？」。で、そのための仕組みを作り上げるっていう事が、本当に必要なんじゃないか？っていうところが、自分の心を動かすきっかけになっています。はい。だから二つが、えっと存在しています。はい。

C:

MHI:

...一番最初は、自分自身とか、うん。で、きつとこういうことが問題かなあっていう「問題」を、まず見つけます。うん。問題。「problem」、見つけます。で、その問題を今度「どうすると解決できるか？」っていうの考えます。

D:

MHI:

今回食の事業の場合は、私が、まあ病気でした。食べ物で解決できました。で、周りの従業員、私の会社の従業員も、なんか、食べ物がお菓子とかパンとかばかりで、なんか、太りだしました。で、健康診断の結果も、悪くなって来てました。こう、もしかしたら、このままだったら病気になるかもしれない、っていう「問題」が起こりました。これはきつと、他の会社でも同じように起こっていったんじゃないかなあと思いました。...うん。ですので、まず自分から始まって、まわ...近くの人たちの問題。

E:

MHI:

それに伴って、これと同じ事が他でも起こっているじゃないかっていうことで、オフィスで働いている人たち...運動しない。食べ物が偏ってる。甘い物大好き。糖質ばかり...ただ、えっと、オフィスで最初考えてたんですけど、だから私から始まって、私のオフィス、で周りの、えっと、働いている人たち...でもそうやって見ていくと、もっと広い範囲で、日本全国、世界の方々、きっとどんなお食事をすると体に良いのか、どんなお食事をしたらこう、キレイになれるのか、とか、なりたい自分になれるのかってみんな知らない、みんな分かんない、んだと思いましたと。

F:

MHI:

じゃ、それを解決するためには、本当に最適なお食事、彼らが食べるべき、えーっと、最適なお食事っていうものを作って提供すると、えーっと、ニーズは必要性は必ずあるんだと考えました。

G:

MHI:

ひとつ...。えっと、どうしよかなあ。「こうあって欲しいっていう思い」ですね。

不可欠っていうよりは、私が、そう、いっ、起業家として「こうあってくれたらいいな！」っていう思いです。はい。えっと、それは、えっと、何のためにその事業、だからその、世の中の社会をやっぱり変えるため、よくするため、うん。(咳払い)その、「何のために」っていう部分を明確に持って事業をやって欲しいと思っていますと。

H:

MSK:

ですと、どうしても問題があると。で、なんっ、どういった問題があったかと言うと、私自身が娘を出産して、で、フルタイムで、まあ従業員で職場にカムバックした時に、あの一、まあ、ママには大事な仕事を与えられないっていうことで、

...

あの一、ちょっと悔しい思いというか。

I:

MSK:

で、その時に、あっ、自分が起業して、で、その一、色々な働き方を受け入れられる会社を作りたいな、っていうのがスタート、です。なので、基本的にママさんでも、あの一、なんだろうな、やりがいのあるっていうと、すごいビッグワードですけども、責任感のある仕事っていうのをちゃんとオファーできるし、管理できるような、組織作りをしよう、っていうのがスタートです。

J:

MSK:

やっぱり、インドで、その、インドでの経験が強く...あの一、心に残っているのが、どうしても、あの一、貧困層の女性の、その女性達の子供たち、の教育の機会っていう所が、まあ誰も守ってくれてなくて、私たちがしたいのは、仕事を作る、で、そこのママにしっ  
かり教育して、

...

で、ママに、あの一、まあ、現地で、現地基準のお給料を払う、で、それプラスその子供たちが教育に、ちゃんと日中行けるようなサポートを、会社がする。

で、そうしたら、ママさんも嬉しいし、子供たちの将来も、その生まれた環境に左右されずに、将来的なチャンスが、誰かまあ、あの一、得るチャンスがあるというか。まあ、そういうチャンスは、与える大人が1人くらいいても良いんじゃないかってのがあって...まあ、そういうのしたいから、会社の規模を増やすし、働いてもらえる人を増やしていきたい...

K:

MSK:

正直私自身が、あんまりお金に興味がない、っていうかまあそれ良いのか悪いのか(笑)。美味しいご飯食べるの好きですし、そんなんは好きなんですけれど...まあその、なんだろう、大きなお家に住みたいとか、大きな車を乗り回したいとかは、あんまり興味がなくって、それだったらシェアでいいよっていうようなタイプなんですけれども。

それよりも、やっぱりあの一、女性っていうだけで、夢を叶えられない人に、まあ、あの、もう一回職業訓練のチャンスを与えられて、それで頑張って、またその、その女性が笑顔になってくれる方が、

自分がハッピー、っていうのは、もう、それはずーっと一貫して一緒なので、で、それを、会社の規模を...大きくすればするほど、その笑顔も増えていくわけじゃないですか。

L:

MSK:

日本人は、「お金儲けしなきゃいけない」っていう人が多い中で、いや、お金儲けをしていい、ただ、お金の儲け方で、やっぱり「松下幸之助」とか、「渋沢栄一」とかが、あの一、ずっと守って来っ、あの、大事にしていた、「三方よし」ですね。お客さんも従業員も、その地域も、まあ、その利害関係にある人みんながハッピーになるような、っていうところが...

M:

MT:

えっと、人の育成と、社会貢献です。... ソフトウェア会社なので、機械を使ったり、モノを作ったりっていうのが、人で、人が手作りなんですね。人の手作り。でしかも、能力はあっても、志が低かったりすると、やっぱりモノが上手にできない...

N:

MT:

あとはやっぱ 日本人独特の文化で、「言わなくてもわかるでしょ」っていう、そういうところ読み取る力っていうのはすごく大切なんですね。

O:

MT:

...で、言ったらやるっていうのは当たり前の仕事で、言わなくても、お客さんの、えっと立場に立って、お客さん側について、「本当にお客さんの事を考えたらわかる」っていうふうな文化があるので、そこに如何に早く、えーっと...そこ、なんかその場所に入っていけるかっていうのは、すごく人間として成熟しておかないと、できない。

P:

MT:

コミュニケーション能力もそうだし、それから、その会社のお客さんの業界を、知っておかないといけないっていうのもそうだし、それから、もちろん私たちは技術者なので、IT技術も知っとかないといけない、っていう意味では、たくさん勉強しないといけない。そういう意味で、やっぱその、人としての成長、だからコミュニケーション能力とか、人を

巻き込んで、ある目的に向かって一緒に進むってような、そういう力っていうのは、いるのかなあというふうに思います。

Q.

MT:

で、私は、会社立ち上げた時に、あの一志が強くても、その環境がないと働けないっていう事があったので、そういう社会を変えていきたいっていう思いと、ITは、言わば、あの、どこでも仕事ができるし、

あの一、箱、こういう建物がなくても、パソコン1つで仕事ができるから、技術力があって、コミュニケーション能力があって、人間性も高ければ、1人でも仕事ができるんじゃないか、っていうふうに思ったんですね。

...

自分が本当に、より働きやすい環境を自らが作れるんじゃないかと。そのために、えーっと、人の育成が必要で、それをする事によって、社会がより豊かになるんじゃないか、っていうふうに思っています。

S.

MBB:

「起業家活動の」うーん...何だろう、「社会への貢献？」っていうと言う過ぎるのかな...。でも自分ができる、最大の貢献の形かなあ？

あの、例えば、...私が音楽家だったら、歌を歌って、自分を表現して、例えばお金を頂いたりとか、それを、絵を描くことで表現する人とか、みんな、“自分の能力”と何か表現、“社会への表現”と、

その“収入”みたいな形あるじゃないですか？

で、私は多分それを事業でやりたいんだと思んですよ。

自分の力を、なんか絵とかそういうのじゃなく、ビジネスっていう形で試してみたいし、それで喜んでもらいたいし、それで収入も得られたら、多分一番嬉しい。

R: 「ビジネスアート」みたいな...？

MBB: うーん、かもしれない、何かで表現するとすれば...

T.

MTA:

社会に価値を届ける物だと思っていて、えっと、お金が、その後に着いてくると僕は思っ  
ていて、何かをギブして、で、その見返り、in return として、お金が発生する。  
... 結局、だから儲かるっていうのは、結局その儲かるっていうのは、結果論だと思ってい  
て、

I: うん。

MTA: まず何か、世の中に、人がお金を払ってでも、えっと、欲しい物、欲しいプロダク  
ト、欲しいサービスを、こっちがまず、提供してから、物が始まると思ってるので、僕の  
ビジネスのその捉え方としては、その社会、も、人が欲してる物とか、社会に必要である  
物だとかっていうのを、お金が払っ、“お金を払ってまで欲しい物”を提供する、っていう  
のがビジネスだと思っています。

(...)

まあそれは、究極的に言うと、バリュー(value)価値だと思っていて、  
それを、社会なりに、人なりに提供する事が、ビジネス活動だと思ってます。

U.

MTA:

例えばその、あっ、ま、僕、絶対、その、スタートは frustration なんすね。自分が不満に  
思った事。

なんか、あー、改善すべきだと思った事から、ビジネスって生まれると、思っていて。  
で、実際にそれを、自分がホンマに、使ってみたい、欲しい物なのか？っていうのが、  
その、えっと、それが、イコール、他者、他人にも受け入れられるって事ではないだけ  
ども、最低限、じゃあ、事業しますよ、ビジネスしますよってなったら、向こう5年間  
とか、10年間とかは、コミットするわけじゃないですか。じゃあそうなった時に、ホン  
マに自分が欲しい物だとか、プロダクトサービスじゃないと、途中で折れそうな気がする  
んですよ。

なんで、他人に受け入れられるかどうかは、もちろん、まあ大事なんかもしれないですけ  
ど、僕は、どちらか言うと、それよりも、自分がホンマに欲しい物なのか？っていうの  
を、えっと、見極めの材料、えっと、自分がやりたいのか？自分のビジネスだったらね。  
あの、やるか？やらないか？の判断材料にしますね

(...)

儲かりそう、っていうだけだったら、いい、や、{いっぱいあるんだけど?}、なんか、ホ  
ンマにやりたいものではなかったりするんで。

V.

MWW:

私は元々、メーカーの研究職、ケミストだったんです。で、えっと、医薬品、あの一、メディカル、メディスンの研究をやってまして、...で、この、メディスンっていうのは、こう、研究、ラボレベルから、そのコマーシャルレベルになるまでが、すごく、じ、た、あの、期間が長い...10年、10 years とかかかるので、...あの一、今やってる事が、こう、お客様の元、お店に出るまでが長いんですね。...なので、やりがいを感じる事ができなかったんです、前の仕事が。

W.

MWW:

今は、あの一、コンサルティングの仕事をしていまして、で、そこで、女性で起業する、えっとスタートアップ、と、ステージアップのお手伝いをしているんですけど、あの一、その人の...持つてる個性、キャラクターを“価値”に変える...その人の特性を、あの、売れる形にするという事が...私の仕事ですね。

X.

MWW: あ、はい。例えば、あの、カフェを開きたい、レストランを開きたい、っていう方がいらしたら、事業計画の作り方、  
...であったり、必要な人脈との繋がり方、  
...であったり、  
...あとは、社員の教育の仕方。

R: あ、はい。あ、それは、もうちょっと詳しく、教えてくださいませんか？

MWW: はい。スタッフ、あの、マナー、うーん、そう、スタッフが、お客様、カスタマーと接する時のマナー、

...とかを、私が教えるんじゃなくて、マナーの先生を、インストラクターを紹介する。

R: ああ、はい。あの、その、そんなインストラクターは、どんな日本語を教えているんですか？なんか、敬語みたいな...？

MWW: あっ、敬語とかも教えてますし、あの、お客様と接する時に、どういう事を注意した方がいいか、とか、お辞儀の仕方から、  
... こう、メニューとかの渡し方であったり、箸の並べ方、食器の並べ方。

R: ああ、なるほど。はい。

MWW: はい。

R: ああ～、ちゃんと、やり方の...

MWW: そうですね。

Y.

MWW:

うーん、どちらかと言うと、お客様からの声で、「これにニーズがあるんだな」というのを考える。例えば、今度コワーキングスペースを開設するんですけど、「何か良いコワーキングスペースが無いのかな？」と言う相談が増えたんで、「あ、ニーズがあるんだな」というのを考える。

Z.

MMV:

起業家になるという事に関して、えー...起業家になるという事よりも、その企業を、す、をして、何をするかという事が、大事だと思ってます。ですから、起業家になるという事は、別にそれほど重要な事ではなくって、えーそれは個人としてでも、えー、会社に雇われたポジション(position)であろうが、あー、極端な話、主婦であろうが、あー、やろうと思ってやれる、ステージ(stage)があるのであれば、企業という...事にこだわることはないのではないかと考えています。はい。だ、ただ今回はまあ、起業するという事で、えーその、世の中にない、あー医療サービスを、おー、まあ少なくとも日本においては、無いサービスを提供していこう、という事だったので、えー、起業した方がやりやすかったから、起業したという事ですね。

1A.

MMV:

んー主目的は、あー、今も申し上げましたように、  
世の中に、何か不満とか、  
足らずと言いますか、  
アンメットニーズですね、  
そういうものがあつた時に、  
それを解決する手段だと思ってます。



1B.

MMV:

うーん、あの、世の中に、不満というか、こうあったらいいのについていうのは、皆さん、いろいろ思ってるんですね。ただ、...お金が、連動してるかどうかというの、すごく重要だと思ってます。

{...}

あったら良いという物と、なくてはならない、という物は、やっぱり違う、と思ってるんです。で、なくてはならない物でも、やっぱり、じゃあお金を払うのか？と。という、その突き詰め、アイデアレベルで、「あったらいいのに」っていう話じゃなくて、「本当に欲しくてたまらない物」っていうのが、ビジネスチャンスだと思ってますね。

1C.

ML:

主目的ですね、はい。えーっとまずですね、...うーんと〜...結構ね、まあモチベーションのところだと思うんですけども、えーっと...私は技術者なんですね。で、技術はどうあるべきかっていうと、やっぱりね、「困ってる事を解決しなければいけない」っていうのが第一にあると思ってるんですよ。

で、次に新しいアプローチで、その困っている事を解決するっていうのが技術のあるべき姿であろう、という風に思っているんですね

1D.

ML:

もうすごい簡単なプログラムなんだけれども、あ、価値を生み出してる、っていう風に、その時に思うようになって。で、その価値が、さらに価値を生むって、「機械」じゃないですか。ね？

1E

ML:

で、それは、私の前職である、(前職の会社名)っていう会社の企画部門にいる時に...  
世の中に無い物を、

世の中に無い物っていうか、  
えっとー、ニーズはあるんだけども、  
ニーズって、  
例えば一人一人見ると、あったらいいな、とも思ってもいない物、あの、あったらいいな  
と思うものは、たぶん既にどこか作ってるんですね。

そうじゃなくて、潜在的にあるニーズを、どう見つけるか、っていう事で、結構いろんな  
勉強とか調査をさせられたんですよ。

で、この経験がすごく良くて、えーっと、実は、「こんなあったらいいですよね」っ  
て、提案したら、「ああそうそう！」っていう物を、どういう風に作るのか？

で、しかもそれ、そういう物を作るために、どういう技術を混ぜるのか？

いろいろニーズを引っ張ってって組み合わせるのか？で、さらに、それをどういう風に売  
っていくのか？っていう事を、かなり本格的に勉強したんですよ。

1F

DC :

やっぱりその、「社会課題を解決する」と言うそのまゝ、「志」なんですかねえ...が重要  
な気がしますね。

1G

DC :

僕は作っているものは、すごく新しいものなので、あのーこの事業自体、2009年時点  
では、多くの方は分かってなかったと思いますね。で、まあ、具体的には、毛細血管見る  
機会が、「あっ、そんなん見れるんだ、面白いね」で、毛細血管を見て、この毛細血管の  
パターンで、色んな事が分かるんですけど、それは、「君が勝手に言ってるんだらう」っ  
ていうような事だったんですけど、今ようやく、その毛細血管の重要性っていうのが、

すごく認知が広まって、で、その毛細血管のパターンによって、あの、人の健康状態が分  
かるっていうのも、大分多くの人が「あっ、そうだね」っていう風になってきてますね。  
それは大学の先生、あの、科学者の先生との、あの、付き合いと、そういう、えー情報の  
発信によって、うまく作れてきていると思いますね。

1H

うーん、情報の非対称性を無くす事、減らす事。その、昔は、インターネットが出てくる前は、情報がなかった。

...で、みんな情報を求めた。で、情報を持っている人が、まあ、勝ってたのが、今度情報がいっぱいありすぎて、えー、正しい情報をしっかりと、掴めるかどうか、あの一、その人の、まあ人生の目的達成できるかどうか、っていう時代になってると思いますね。なので、その確かな、欲しい情報が、あの一、その人にちゃんと行くように、まあ特にヘルスケアの分野で、っていうのが、僕のミッションですね。

Chapter VI: Part two.

1I

DE:

うーん...医者で、あの、こんな根拠のない事言ったらアレだけど（笑）...あの一、何て言うかなあ、日本語で言うと、“流れ”っていうのがあると思うんです。いわゆる、バイオリズムのような。

1J

MSM:

単純にやっぱり、こう...社会、社会に非常にこう、システム、社会のシステムをすごく良く理解してて、...あの、まああの、お金儲けとは言わないけども、その、その社会のシステムを上手く駆使する事に快感を覚えている人。

と、あとは、時代を理解してるっていうか。こう、そのやっぱ時代は流れるものがあるし、その、なんとなくやっぱりこう、川の流れも水の流れも、普通こうね、地面か何かに流して行ったら、なんとなくどこを通るかやっぱり分かる気がするんですよね。こっちに行ったりしない訳だし。

1K

MSM:

ええ。あの、こう、天気図もね、気圧の高い、低いで、どの辺に風が流れるかっていうのが、なんとなく分かるように、その辺のその時代の強弱みたいな、今ここの業界が熱いな、ここが弱いな、まあ社会のシステムと似てんのかもしれないけども、その時代の流れがある程度、皆が分かってから、社会のシステムって変わってくと思うんですよ、それに合わせるように。

1L

ああいう人達はきっと、時代の流れが読めてて、社会のシステムとして追いついてなかった訳ですよ。

だから半歩遅れて社会のシステムって来るので、そこでやっぱ社会のシステムをこう駆使しながら、分かりながら、その流れに沿わせる人と、逆にこう先にね、あの、読んじゃって、ある程度こう、ワッとなっちゃう人っていうのは結構ね、いると思う。

で、僕なんかは、社会とかそういうのは、あの、そこまであの、凄くないんで、逆にこう目の前のその、人の作る社会、まあ社会も人が作ってるけども、ある意味、こうなんか人格を持ってるような物になってるし、なんか本当こう俗人的な人のコミュニティを読む。

1M

DC:

あっ、そうですねー、「世の中の流れ」がやっぱ、まずあるんじゃないですかね。... 世の中の大きな流れがあって、それに沿った所に、えー、ビジネスを寄せていって...

1N

DC:

「リスク観」...。ん〜...、今ってすごく、時代の流れ読めないですよ。

10

MBB:

あっ、でもフードロス削減に関しては、時代の流れがあって、その社会問題化している  
っている背景と、

1P

MHI:

だから、そういうことを少しずつ、こう時代の流れに沿って、みんなのやっぱり意見を集  
めていって、変化させて行くことをしようと思うと...

1Q

MHI :

雰囲気って何だろう...ん～...ん～、えっと。何ていうかな...。何年も前から、その健康的  
なお食事とか健康とかっていうのは、取り組みされてきました。うん。でも、あの一、ち  
よっと国、国の制度...国を挙げて、国を挙げて、働いている人たちを健康にしなきゃと  
か、えっと、「健康経営」ていう、その会社がその会社で働く人たちが、健康であるから  
こそ、その事業としても、やっぱり上向いて行く。成長して行く。...

うん、だからその健康経営をする事を、会社の戦力の一つとしてやりなさい、っていうよ  
うな動きが国の方にも出て来たんですね。...

うん。で、これはすごくいい機会だっていうのは判断しました。ところが、私たちはその  
前からやっていたので、はははは(笑)あ、はい、前からやっていて、で「健康経営」と  
かっていうことが、えっと、前面に出始めた、こうもっと前面に出始めて来たので、今こ  
そ好機、うん。「いいチャンスが来てる！」と実感してます。

1R

MAC:

...ただ、このシェフのその出張は、あの、文化作り、カルチャーから作らないとはいけな  
いと、思ってまして、やっぱり日本ってあんまり、そういう文化がないので、  
...ただ、あの、やっぱり今日本も、時代が変わってきて、えーっと、僕たちの、まあお  
母さんとかおじいちゃんの世代は、女性は家にいる、男性が外で働く。でも今って女性働  
くじゃないですか。...

女性がすごく忙しくなってるし、...あの、家事を男性もやるので、...キッチン(kitchen)を女性が守るとか、そういう感覚がもうあんまり無くなってるので、...でも、ターゲット(Target)は、基本はやっぱりその、子育て、{...}ターゲットですね、ビジネスターゲット。やっぱり赤ちゃんがいると、えっと、レストランに行けない。...でも、えー、バースデーとか、クリスマスとか、パーティはしたい。...なので、えーっと、ま、そういう時に、まあシェフをこう派遣する。...で、まあ、あとは、あの、日本で言うと芸能人とか、あの、SNSとかで、こう盛り上がりが出れば、...まあその世代では、人気が出てくるかなっていう。

15

MAC: ええ?...そうですねえ、でもなんか、僕は、自分では、何て言うの?半歩、

I: 半歩?

MAC: 半歩って言うと、0.5。

I: ああ、はい、はい。

MAC: とか、一步先、近い未来を、あの、感度良く、あの、見つけるのが多分得意なんです  
すね。

I: ああ、そうですか、はい。

MAC: 多分10年後、20年後こうなるだろう、みたいななんを、予測するその研究者とか、  
そういうのではないと思うので、

I: ああ、そうですか、はい、はい。

MAC: だから、如何に情報を早く見つけるか。で、見つけてそれをすぐやる。

I: あ~そうですか、はい、なるほど。

MAC: で、あとは、すぐにやれる、やっぱりチーム作り、パートナーを常に、やっぱり作  
っという、このアイデアが出てきた時に、ああこの人と、この人と、この人に、声かけ  
たらチームできるなど。で、一回トライしてみようと。で、トライ(try)して上手く行っ  
たら、広めようっていう、そういう、だいたい順番ですかね。

## Chapter VII: Part one

### A

MTA:

...学生の時から、何か自分でやりたいなあ、とまあ、漠然と思っていて。でも別に、高専5年制のところに行って、その後、オーストラリアに行って。...で、まあ遊んだり仕事したり、ファームで遊んだり。で、で、一度日本に帰って来てで、知り合いの会社でちょっと、営業みたいなセールスをしていて、まあなんかその、人と話す事もまあ、結構好きっていうのも分かったし、自分が。...で、ちょっとそのホテルの、そのホスピタリティっていうのに興味が出て、で、ホテルでその後働き始めて。...その後、えっと、ホスピタリティを学びに、スイスに行きました。なので、ホスピタリティの学校、ホスピタリティマネジメントの学校に行って、で、そこで、まあ、あの一、そこで勉強して、その後、まあ半年か、1年のインターンに行く予定はもうすでに決まっていたんだけど、たまたまその時僕が、21歳くらいで、iPhoneの3GSやったかな？初めてiPhoneを持って、海外、日本だったら今までインターネット使ってました、普通に。で、でもいざ、スイスに行くと、なんか、Wi-Fiの所じゃないと繋げない。...あの、ずっといるわけじゃないので、向こうのコントラクトは、あの、契約はしなかったんで、まあ寮だとか、えっと学校だとか、で、スイスってヨーロッパの真ん中にあるので、まあ結構休みが多かったんで、あの、ヨーロッパ旅行する時も、やっぱりその、ホステルだとか、自分の宿泊場所じゃないと、インターネット使えなくて、めっちゃフラストレーションだったんですね。...で、イヤ、待てよ、と。で、日本に来る外国人も、自分と同じかもしれん、みたいな。

### B

MTA:

で、そんな時にググって、で、それってSIMカードっていうものがあるらしくて、...で、その時、日本だったらポケットWi-fiもその時にあって、あの、海外だとあんまりなかったんですけど、で、あ、そういったものを、旅行者に提供したら、場所に捉われずに、モバイルのインターネットが、いつでもどこでも使える、と。...それは今の時代、今のあの、旅の時代に、あの、めっちゃ便利っていうの自分も分かってたんで、それは、提供したら、まあ、儲かるんじゃないか？みたいな。(笑)...はい。単純にその、あの、需要がある、イコール、みんなが求めている、お金を払ってまでもえっと欲しい物、イコール、儲かるんじゃないか。もう単純にそれだけです。

で、それで、学生時代から、なんかやりたかったな、っていうのもあったので、えっと、スイスの学校を、まあ休学、辞めて、まあ休学ですね。

...で、日本に帰って来て、株式会社を立ち上げて、オンラインでそういったプロダクトを、まあ、旅行者に提供するっていうのを始めたっていうのが、僕の、まあ、起業家としての始まりです。

## C

DE:

例えば、技術も、...きっかけは二つあるんです。一つは、僕、子供が三人いるんですけど、上の子が幼稚園の時に、お友達が東京ディズニーランドに遊びに行った。で、帰りの新幹線乗る、それは夜の1番最後の新幹線で、ただ、その時雨が降ってて、駅で滑ってこけて頭を打った。で、その時に、その子供のお母さんから電話がかかってきて、僕のワイフ(wife)に。で、どうしたらいい?当然僕はその子を僕は診断をしていないけども、診察もしていないし、診てもいないけども、今の状態だと、受け答えができるかとか、っていう事を聞いたら、あっじゃあたぶん大丈夫だから連れて帰っておいで、っていう風な事を僕は言って。

あっ、僕は本当やったら、医者としては、患者さんと話をした時に、診察をして、検査をして、大丈夫だよ、っていう事を言って帰すんだけど、そういう事をせずにもう、多分大丈夫だろうって言って帰した。たぶん、それは自分の医学的な経験、医者としての経験から、そういう判断ができたけど、これを、例えばアプリケーションとかに、落とし込めるんじゃないか、っていうのが、最初のきっかけでした。

なので、技術と言うよりも、そういう日常の出来事からアイデアを拾って、じゃあ、その、あ、その日常の出来事と、今の自分のやってる研究とかを、あっ、この、か、課題を解決するためには、この技術使えるかもしれないとか、っていう風なのが、まあずっとなんか色んな事あるじゃないですか。うん、そういった事をまあ、繋げていってるんだろうと思います。

## D

DE:

DE: もう一つその、僕は、あの、学会で海外に行ったりとかもするので、その時も、飛行機の中で、具合が悪くなる人がいるじゃないですか。で、えー、help me doctor!とかなるじゃないですか。で、何回か行った事あって、そんな時も、飛行機の中って、エンジン音がうるさくて、診察すらできないんですよ。

聴診器をしても、うるさくて聞こえなかったりとか、血圧も、うるさくて聞こえなくて測れなかったりとかするので、結局、見て、話を聞いて、自分の経験を元に、たぶん大丈夫、大丈夫じゃないっていう事を判断する、した、っていう経験からすると、まあ、医者の経験も、こういうの全部データ化をしていけば、医者よりもっとすごい、判断ができるかもしれない、っていう事を、きっかけだったので、あ、そういうのをもう、人間じゃないよね、まあ今の時代コンピュータだよ、って時に、自分もそういうデータ、う、あの、自分の医者としての研究テーマ、「統計」だったりもするので、そういった物に繋がるかもしれないっていう事があるから、まあそういう日常の、ちょっとしたトラブルとか



を、自分の持ってる研究テーマとか、技術とかで解決できないか？って考えたら、色々アイデアが出てきて、それだったらこれ技術できるかもしれない、っていうのに繋がっていった、っていうところですかね。

## E

ML:

はい。えー、私が一番最初に、会社を起こす事を考えたのは、小学校6年生の時の話です。...これはあの、アメリカにいる時の話で、えーさっきちょっとお話ししたように、コンピューターのプログラミングに、友達と没頭してる時期に、えープログラムを作る事によって、もう、いろんな事が出来るっていう事が、その時わかったんですね。

で、当時、小学生だったんで、世の中の事とか全然わかってなかったんだけど、えっと、いろんなプログラム作る中で、えーっと友達とか先生が喜んでくれるような、プログラムを実際たくさん作る事ができたんですね。

で、そういう風な事が、実際にできている中で、これは事業になるっていう事を、アメリカ人の友達と話をしてて、で、一緒に会社を作らないか？って話をその時にやったんですよ。

{...}

えーそんな子供でも「会社を起こしたらいいんじゃないか」っていう事が、日常的に会話をするような環境だったっていうのが、たぶんあると思うんですね。

で、その時はまあ、実際には企業はしなかったんですけども、まあでも、事業ができたら良いなあっていうのは、その時思い始めたわけですね。

## F

ML:

で、日本に帰って来て、で、えっと一僕モノ作りがすごく好きだったんですけども、えっと学生の時に、えっと大学院に行きたいと思ったんですけども、国立の大学だったので、大学に行こうと思ったら、学費は安かったんですけども、えーっと九州の大学にいたので、生活費を稼がなきゃいけないっていうのもあって、で、しかも、学校の授業があまりにも面白かったので、

もうね、バイトさえしたくない、もう1秒でも、自分の勉強とか研究に時間を使いた  
っていう、そんな状況だったんですよ。大学が楽しくてしょうがなくて。

で、それで、えっと、まとまった学費とか生活費を、えっと、稼ぐために、えーっと実は  
一回会社を起こしてるんですよ。

で、それは、通訳のアルバイトを、えーやったことがあって、で、通訳の、私のアルバイ  
トの雇い主は、家庭教師先のお父さんだったんですけども。えー日本の中古車を、日本  
ってあのタクシーとかね、えっと車検がすごく早いんですよ。

で、売った会社ってまだまだ走る車で、で、これをですね、自動車として、例えば東南ア  
ジアに輸出しちゃうと、関税がかかるので、バラバラにして、部品として輸出すると、関  
税がかからないんですね。

## G

ML:

すごいいろんな嫌がらせをする、怖い方々によって、結局会社はダメになっちゃったんで  
すよ。で、それで、えーっとまあただ会社は倒産、まあ倒産っていうか、閉じたんだけど  
も、黒字倒産だったので、一応、大学は卒業でき、大学院も卒業できたんで、よかったん  
ですけれども。

その時から、その時は本当は、事業をやる前は、スーパーエンジニアって言って、もう、  
何でもできる事業者になりたいっていうのが夢だったんですけども、えー実際事業やると  
すごいお金が儲かって面白いことができる、っていうのが分かったので、えっとスーパー  
エンジニアもやりたいし、事業もやりたいなという風に考えるようになったんですよ。

## H

ML:

えっとー...スーパーエンジニアと、起業家を両方やるためには、何が、今何をやるべき  
かって事を、いろいろ考える中で、その当時、日本で一番儲かってる製造業に行って、  
で、そこの企画部門、で、そこに行って、儲かる仕組みとか、理由っていうのを理解して  
起業しよう、10年間それをやろうって決めて、

で、私はその当時、一番儲かった会社で(前職の会社名)っていう会社が大阪にあるんです  
けれども、ま、そこに入って、で、実際えっとね、入社して、えー9年目、いや、8年目  
か、に、企画部門に実際に行って、で、えー企画に行くと、事業の計画とかを自分でやる  
んですけども、そういう事をやって、儲かる理由とかが、「ああ、なるほどね」ってわか

って、で、そこで初めて、レーザーっていう技術に出会って、「これは面白い！」という風になって、で、創業者、その、前いた会社の創業者に「レーザーをもっとやりましょうよ」って言っても、やる気は全然なかったんで、「じゃあ自分でやるんで、邪魔だけはしないで下さいね」っていう事を約束して、この会社を15年前に確か、作ったんですよ。

I

MR:

最初、起業家になりたいっていう事は、思ってた。

J

MR:

で、私もバイトして、学校行ったりしてたんですけども、まあ、仕事はすごい好きだった。で、えっとーその後に、まあ、うーんと、お友達のお友達が、事業に失敗をして、私の住んでいる金沢に来て、えー彼らは事業に失敗してるので、日本って一回失敗しちゃうと、自分たちの名前でビジネスをするのは、時間がかかるんですね。

(...)

MC: うん、それで私に、一緒に、こう、やってくれないか？っていう話に来て。で、私はお友達を助ける意味で、最初、うん、あの一、企業を始めたのが、一番最初。うん。実際、起業っていうのは、最初の起業っていうのは、きっかけは、うん、そこだった。

K

MR:

で、そこで、やっぱりこう、うん、自分で、あの一働いてるよりも、自分で起業した方が、私にはすごい、こう、合ってるっていう事に気づいて。

L

MBT:

うーん...。自分が生きた、生きてきたという証、をですね、何かしら、世の中に残したいなあと、いう風な気持ちがとても強くて、

...

ですね、だから、会社が、自分が死んでも残っていく、だったり、僕らが大事にしている事が、受け継がれていくとか、そういった事が、あの、主な目的になりますかね。

## M

MBT:

私が起業したのが...2002年。あと、これから、インターネットで、世の中が変わっていくっていうのが分かったので、じゃあ、その変化で、ビジネスを大きくしたいな、いうのを、この2002年の頃から、ずっと、思っていました。

...まあ、目的と言うと、ITによって、世の中が変わっていく、便利になったりとか、豊かになったりしていくところで、たくさん、こう、仕事生まれる事に、とても興味があって、まあ、それで、会社を大きくして、まあ、自分がやってた会社が世の中に残っていく、というところが、まあ目的として始めましたよね。

## N

MBB:

えっと、起業した理由は、あの、その時私はもうすでに2人の子どもがいて、で、男の子が3歳の、えーっと、長男と、えーっと、まだその時9か月の次男がいたんですね。

で、えーそれまでは、普通に大学を出て、会社で働いて、でまあ、1年、韓国に留学に行って、まあ、韓国語勉強して、で、帰って来て、結婚して、っていう、その、起業と全く違う人生だったんですけども...

## O

MBB:

...落ちることに、試験に落ちることに、試験っていうか、面接に落ちることに、あの一、悩むぐらいだったら、その、自分で自分を雇用して、なんか、なんだろう「employ myself」ってゆうのかな？

なんか、その、自分でその「職」を作り出して、あの、自分が社長になったら、誰も私をクビにはできないから(笑)。

...

うん、そういうふうに、考えをもう変えたんですよ。

P

MBB:

で、それで、自分が社長になって、頑張ろうと思ったんだけども、その時、あのー何もスキルもないし、体験とか、その商売のことも知らないし、経営ももちろん知らないし、えー、何やったらええか分からなくて。ただその、「何かをやりたい！」っていう気持ちだけすごく強くて。

やっぱりお母さんになっても「自分も何か出来る」って示したかったし...

Q

MBB:

ちょうどその時に、インターネットショッピングができる時代にこう、ブロードバンドになっている時だったんですよ、日本が。ずっとインターネットに接続しているっていう。それで、じゃ、インターネットのお店だったら、家でコツコツ出来るかなあと、子どもがいながら。それで、あのー、あっ、雑貨とかをまず売り出してみるんですよ。

R

MBB: あの、すごい偶然が重な<sup>かさ</sup>っていて、私の人生は。

I: はい。

MBB: あの、その、何を売ったらええか、っていうそのプロダクトが無くて、迷ってた時に、ラジオで、私に韓国旅行が当たって。

MBB: で、韓国に旅行に行く2泊3日で、韓国の旅行に行く間に、

{...}

その2泊3日の間に観光せずに、ずーっと買い付けをして、で、それを帰って来てから、まだその時、専業主婦です、“専業主婦”ね。で、自分で、えっと、少しずつ写真を撮って、売り始めるっていう事をし出して。で、インターネットで、商品をどうやって売ったらいいかっていうのを自分で、こう、学び初めて。

MAC:

起業家のきっかけは、そうですね。最初...えーっと、小さい頃から、子供の頃から、えーっと漠然と、ぼんやりとは、えーっと、いつか、自分でやりたいとか、社長になりたいっていう想いはあったんですけども、ただ、あの一、大学を卒業してからは、一旦、えーっと、普通の会社、カンパニーに勤めてて、...で、8年くらい、...あの、しご、えーサラリーマンというか、あの、セールスマンやってみました。えっと、(会社名)っていう会社です。

はい。で、えっと、すごく会社は、まああの一、厳しくて、勉強にもなるし、...良い会社だったんですけども、あんまり自分がこう、好きな分野ではなくて。あの一、やっぱりなんか自分が、楽しい事とか好きな事をして、仕事をしたいなっていう思いが強くなったんですね。

で、働いてる時に、例えば22、3歳くらいで会社に入って...えー、40年間例えば働いたとします。じゃあこの40年間のうち、働いてる時間って、人生の何割くらいなんだろうかな?っていうのは考えたんですよ。計算したら、大体35%~40%くらいだったんですよ。だから、この時間が面白くないのって、すごくなんか人生もったいないなって思ってた、

で、ちょうどその時に、僕の先輩達が、自分を会社をやってて、なんかすごく、こう、まあ、しんどいけども、なんか自分らしく、で、サラリーマンではこう、稼げないようなお金も掴んでて、なんかすごく夢があって、なんかそこに憧れたっていうのが、一番最初ですね。

MAC: ...の時に、レストランのホールスタッフをしてたんですね。で、その時すごくなんか、楽しくて、あの、フィット(fit)した感があったんですよ。...だからいつか、なんか飲食を仕事にしたいなっていう思いがあって。で、もう一つは、えっと、ちょうどその、まっ、起業を、えー考えた時に、...33、4歳くらい、今から4年前、5年前くらいで、えっと、ちょうど周りが、子供ができて、あの、今まで皆んなでパーティしてたんですけど、どんどんどんどんやっぱ子供ができて、来れなくなってきたんですね。...で、なんでかなって思ってたら、やっぱり子供ができて、行けない、と。で、ちょうどその頃日本では、あの、ケータリングが、言葉がちょっと出だしたくらいだったんですけども、

まあケータリングって、日本で言うと「出前」。

作って物をデリバリーするだけなんで、あんまり面白くないよなど。

:え、それやったらなんか、シェフ(chef)が行ったらどうなるのかなあとって、で、まずアイデアが浮かびました。

## Chapter VII: Part two

U.

MC:

うん、うん。もう、一番最初にも言ったけど、私、学んでない。うん、学んでないけども...うーん...元々、最初から起業家じゃないから、えっとー...うーん、何だろう、色々小さい失敗を繰り返して、していけない事と、していい事、そして、うーん...こう、経験から、こう、学んでいっていると思う。あとは、インスピレーション。

V.

MR: うーん、知識。私は、すぐに行動します。...で、すぐに行動して、要は知識よりも現場の方が大事だから、すぐに行動して、動いて、そこから、良い、ダメ、っていう判断をします。頭の中と、ペーパーの中で私は判断しないんです。

W.

MR: まず行動して、人と会って、その人がどういう人でどうなのかっていうのを、ちゃんと感じて、そこから考えて、そこから次考える。何もない中で考えたって、自分の思考の中でしかないじゃない。で、その中で何を答え出すの？

R: はい。あ、なんで、なんで、そういう感覚を、あーしますか？あー...

MR: あーオッケーオッケー。それは私に知識がないから。

R: あ...ちょっと、もっと詳しく...説明して下さい。

MR: あーうんと、私に、えっとーそれが良い、悪いっていう頭の中で判断する知識がないから。

X.

MR:

だから全てにおいて、まず行動して、  
行動の中から、  
いろいろ分析をして、  
知識を作って、  
一個一個、全部違うでしょ？  
一個一個、同じ考え方じゃないでしょ？  
一個一個、物が違えば、考え方を変えなきゃいけないでしょ？  
で、パターン、パターンは無いわけよ。うん。

そうそう、だからそのためには、パターンがないからこそ、知識がないの。  
真っさらのゼロの状態なのよ、いつも。だから、すぐに行動に移して、その行動から知識  
を得て、そこから、自分の中でストーリーを作っていく

Y

MR:

うーん...具体的な事例、えーっと、まず...香港の展示会に、化粧品展がアジアで一番大き  
いがあるんですけど、そこに行った時に、一つの商品が、これは絶対に売れる！って、直  
感的に思った。それで、そこでもう、すぐ交渉して、えーっと日本に帰って来て、それ韓  
国の商品だったんだけど、次の週には韓国に飛んで、その工場とも交渉して、えーっ  
と、オッケーもらって、で、もう次の週には日本の問屋さんにも、もうプロモーションし  
て、それでも、全部で80万枚突破した、大ヒット商品だったんだけど、うーん、上  
手く行く時ってというのは、パン、パン、パン、パン！と、こう順調に行く。

うん。だから、何かを、こう、何だろう？インスピレーションで、コレ！って思う物がや  
っぱりある。それが何かって言われても、わからない。



MMV:

MMV: あー、限界は...一つは自分の経験、を、未経験なものでしょうね。未経験のものに対する、ビジネスチャンスの判断は、できないですし、えーできない...です。で、えー例えば今、ブロックチェーンという物が流行ってますけど、

I: あ、そうですね、はい。

MMV: あれに関して、私はよくわからないんです。よくわからないので、判断できない。

I: ははは (笑) あっそうですねえ、はい。

MMV: 判断できないので、えーあれで何かやろうと言われても、うん、「ソーリー (sorry) !」と。私じゃない、と。

I: あ、はい。

MMV: じゃあ彼を誘った方がいいんじゃないか? という事は言いますね。ですからそれは、限界というのは、

I: はい。

MMV: えー、1つは、自分の知識であり、経験だと思いますね。

1A

MMV:

で、彼は、えーブロックチェーンを使って、という事をやってみました。で、彼の話聞いて、彼がっ、えーやりたいのは、えー別にブロックチェーンのビジネスを別にやりたいわけではなくって、

単にその、えー他に手段があれば、えーエネルギーを、あの一、便利...あの...配給といいますか、デリバリーする仕組みが他にあるんならば、ブロックチェーンって無くてもいいと思うんですよね。で、ただ、それが、ブロックチェーンがあれば、非常に便利だという事で、彼は使ってるんだと思うんですけども、まあそういう意味では、あの一...知識...が、あればいいんですけど、もし知識が無かったとしても、やりたいという気持ちがある、すごく大きければ、知識を持って来る、持ってる人を引き込んでくるっていう方法はあると思いますね。

I: はい。MVC: ですから、えー質問の答えとしては、知識はそれほど必要ではない、とは思いますが、あれば、あった事に越したことはないですけども。はい。

1B

MMV:

うーん...知識の問題ではないと、思いますねえ。

{...}

知識で、行動が決まるのであれば、恐らく、大学の先生って最初に行動すると思うんですよね。...恐らく。

知識はものすごくお持ちなので。でもやっぱりその、知識ではなくって、やっぱりやりたいという、こう...渴望する気持ちとか、そういうものじゃないかなあと思うんですね。

「これはやりたい」と思うから、行動するんだろうと思うので、

1C

MHI: んーどれぐらいの知識量? んー、あんまりいらなないじゃないですか? やっていきうちに学んでいく。アハハハハハハハ!(笑)。うん。事前に知識はいらなないと思います。

「ハート」。

I: あ、はい。フィーリングから。

MHI: 「ハート」「魂」。

*MHI: "Heart". "Soul".*

1D

MEC

...まずは大事にしてんのは、経験。で、経験があるからこそ、それに対する勉強したら、あ、これってこういう風に言ってるけど、こういう言葉で言うんだとか。で、僕は覚え方が反対なんですけど、言葉から覚えなない。だから“リーンスターアップ”とか、ああいうの大っ嫌いで、あの、嫌いっていうか、ああいう言葉から行く人達が、「俺ピポットするねん」とかって、「お前知ってんのかソレ?!」(笑)と思うん...

1E

MBB:

MBB：えーっと...全くないのはいけないと思うけど、最低限でいいかもしれない。私は、  
ちょっと動いみて、

I: はい。

MBB：あの、体感すると言うか、肌で分かると言うか。何て言うんだらう英語で。あの...  
なんだろ、「実感」？

I: はい、わ...

MBB：して、えっと、ちょっと反応が良かったら、またちょっと動いみて、

I: はい、

MBB：えー、で、その反応が良かったら、また何かちょっとして、で、本当にその反応が  
良さそうだったら、もう、100%、Go サインでバツて行く。って最初は本当に小さ  
く。何やろう、リーンスタートアップていうんかな？

1F

MBB:

そういう感じで行くので、えっと、最初にすごく知識があっても、  
えーっと、知識、すごい勉強して、何かをそのローンチシステムを、  
実は全然違うっていうことがあるので、

結局、形を変えながらやることが多いと思うんですよ。...

だから、あんまり勉強する時間取られるぐらいだったら、その、ある程度やってみて、も  
う最初からどうせ、ほとんど形変わって行くと思うんですよ。

1G

MBB:

うん、うん、うん...。私ね、あの一経営学を全然学んでなかったの、

こう、あるじゃないですか、こう、「機会」とか、えーっとなんやっただけ「脅威」とか、いろいろあるじゃないですか、こう、埋めるもんとかも、全然知らなかったんですよ。なんか、その「プライス」と「プロモーション」と、あの、なんか、あるじゃないですか。もう、そんなか全然知らずにやっていたので、

1H

MBB :

自分で、えっと、少しずつ写真を撮って、売り始めるっていう事をし出して。で、インターネットで、商品をどうやって売ったらいいかっていうのを自分で、こう、学び初めて。その時は、誰も教えてくれる人もいないし、本とかもなかったんですよ。どうやってインターネットで売るかっていうのがあんまりなくて。それを自分でやり始めて、...

で、それがすごく楽しくなって。

で、途中から、まあ、それも本当に経営の知識もなければ、売上の上げ方とか、インターネットのウェブの知識も無かったので、ただまあ、あの、本当に楽しくて。やっとなんか働ける！と思って。

{...}

なんか本当に“トライ&エラー”で...

1I

MTA:

I: 起業家にとって、ビジネスの機会をを見極めて、見極めた経験の中から、具体的な事例を挙げて下さい。

MTA: 僕、見極めとか、やった事ないですね。

I: うーん。

MTA: 僕が今このビジネス出来てんのも、えっとまあ、ホンマにみんなが iPhone を持ち始めて、旅行でもインターネットが欲しいっていう、需要の始まりくらいの時に、たまたま、ああ、やっ、やったんであって。なんか、分からん、その質問の答えになってるか分からないですけど、

1j

MTA:

誰も、そんな絶対儲かるかなんて、分からないですよ。...

ですよ？だって、絶対分かったら、皆んなお金持ちになれるじゃないですか。...

Predict は出来ないの、やっぱそれは、なんか、トライアンドエラーで、その、やっぱ皆んなやって、上手くいったものもあれば、上手くいかんかった物、それは大企業でも一緒。

1k

MTA:

MTA: 学んでないっす。ふふっ(笑)

{...}

MTA: まあ、その、まあ一つ、その、ビジネスと別に僕、学ぶもんじゃないと思っ  
て、... あの、行動して、やって学ぶ物だと思ってるので、... 別にその、こんなん、ペー  
パーで学ぶものじゃないと思ってるので。... で、その、考え方で、結局全部、考え方なん  
ですよ。じゃあ、一つ、自分が、ふ、不便だったって思った時に、じゃあそのソリュー  
ションを、びじ、じ、ビジネスとして考えれるか？「ああ、不便やったわ」で終わるか？  
思考が。... ストップするか？だけの違いなんで、... やっぱその、結局、えっと、マイン  
ド、その考え方だけの話だと思っいて、どこまで先を考えられるか。... その同じ、不満  
だとか、経験をして、どこで考え方が止まるかって、人それぞれで、... うわっ、なん  
か、「しょうもないわー」とか、自分全然「これ、買ったの良くなかったわー」とか、  
「この手続き不便やったわー」っていう、経験で終わるのか？「じゃあ、どうしたら  
いいの？」みたいな、

... その先まで考えれるか、だけの違いやと思うっすよね。うん。

## Chapter VIII: Part one

A

MHI :

あー、障害か...うーんと。例えばその協力者を得ることが出来ない場合。パートナーを得ることが出来ない場合。えっと、あとは、その資金調達が上手くいかない場合。  
...で、うーんと...そうだなあ...あとは別に、そうだなあ...。仲間は、良い仲間はたくさん、今いるので、うん。もっと、もっとこう広がっていった時に、仲間が集まらない場合。うん...かなあ？障害になるとしたら...

B

MBT:

うーん...平等な、村社会を理解できる事だと思います。なぜかと言えば、その村とかコミュニティを理解していないと、継続が難しいし、仲間も集まりづらいから、ですね。でないと、起業をし続ける事が、まあ難しくなるんじゃないかなあと思います。

C

MBT:

うーん、いろんな人と、話す事で、その新しいチャンスが、本当のチャンスなのか、どうか、って事が、初めて分かる気がします。

ポイントは、半分くらい、それ、そうなっちは困るとか、違うかな、って言う人いるくらいが、ちょうど良いですね。

D

DC

人かなあとと思いますね。あのー、どの人と一緒にいるか、が大事と考えています。...で、それはプライベートもそうですし、ビジネスする時もそうですし。僕にはすごくたくさん  
の、あのー、師匠、先生がいます。...で、その先生たちの言葉をしっかりと、  
受けて、で、それを参考に、どんな人とまた、あの、一緒に活動するかっていうのを重要  
視しています。

(...)

一人の考えだと小さいですよ。

知ってる事も少ないので。

やっぱり、アドバイザーの存在って重要だと思うんですね。

E

MWW:

うーん、人間関係があまり出来ていない人と、仕事をする...ちょっと、あの、あまり良い事がない、えー、と言うか、あの、というような事はありました。何か、「これをやるとお金が儲かるから」みたいな感じで、付き合いが浅い人の話を信頼して、取り組んでみたけど、ドンドンドン、条件が変わって行って... あー、信頼関係がまだできない状況...で、そういう「儲かる」っていうのだけで乗っていくと、いけないなというのを学びました。...だからやっぱり、人間関係も出来て、人柄も分かった上で、仕事は一緒にやろうと。

F

MWW:

...あ、今言ったように、こう、あの、信頼関係がない人と組んで、ちょっと嫌な思いをしたり、  
周りに迷惑をかけた事が、あの、ちょっと、人間どういう人と一緒に仕事をするか、しっかり見極めよう、という事になりました。

## G

MT:

...そういう「信頼関係」とかを、すごくそこで学んだのと、あとは、自分の会社になってからは、あの一なんて言うんですかね、やりたい事ができない、例えば資金がないとか...あの、人がいないとか、そういういろんな制約があって、やりたい事が出来ない事を、に対しての、人に共感してもらって、人を集めて、「一緒にやり遂げる」、っていう大切さっていうのを知りました。

## H

DE

上手くいってる時は上手く、何やっても上手くいくし、上手くいかない時は何やっても上手くいかないしっていう。そういう、まあ僕はそれを運命と思ったりもするし、それは人との縁かもしれない、コミュニケーションかもしれないし、新しい他人との出会いかもしれないけど、そういうのを、すごく根拠にしているような気がします。だから、例えば、OO先生に出会わなければ、起業は考えなかったと思うし、

## I

DE:

その、機会が、あ、これはチャンスだ、チャンスじゃないっていうのは、なんとなくここで、ピーン！と来る気がします。

...

あー、えっとね、この前、先月か、先月、あの、地方政府に、このビジネスチャン、ビジネスアイデアを持っていった時に、...あの...たぶん、「あっ、これ上手くいくな」って思ったのは、僕の話、目を見て話してくれたんです。

そこで、ピーン！と来たんです。ああこれはたぶん大丈夫だ、って。

だけど、上手くいかないなって思う人は、例えば、スマホ触りながら返事をしたりとか、視線を合わせなかったりするんで、そういう人の態度から、ピーン！と来てるのかもしれない、自分は。

話を、ビジネスチャンスの話をした時に、ちゃんと目で答えてくれるとか、そういった態度で、あ、この人は多分僕の話に興味持ってくれてる。



J

MVC:

えー多くの、国も含めて日本人も含めていろんな所が、チャンスだと言っています、言っています。しかし、それ本当か？と疑ってるみるという事が、あの一僕、起業家としては重要なあと思います。で、えーあの、起業家は、その、何て言うんですかね、どんどんどんどん、チャレンジして失敗したら良いいっていうことを、言いますが、もちろんそうなんですけど、でも、一方で、疑い、疑り深いところもやっぱり必要じゃないかなあと思ってます。本当か？と、本当にこれはお客さんは本当に欲しいと言っているのか？とか。

あの、確かめる。

MVC: んーもしくは感じる、自分が感じるでも良いんです、確かめるでも良いんですけども、えーそういうあの一、何て言うんですかね、納得性とか、共感とか、そういうところを持って、ビジネスチャンスを、おー...確かめていくっていう事って、僕はすごく大事じゃないかなあと思ってます。

K

MMV:

... あー論理的に正しいではなくって、合う、合わないっていうのもあるんだなと。うーん、その...まあ例えば、男性と女性がですね、えー必ずしもその、美しい男性と美しい女性ばかりが、こうペア(pair)になるのではなくて、やっぱりこう、相性というかですね、

L

MR:

うーん、あの、すごい影響を与えています。

...

で、たぶんこれは、日本で育った日本人だったら、海外に出た時に、必ず、うん、あの、一回何て言うんだらう、戸惑うところだと思う。なぜならば、海外の人達って、言葉の中でもグレーゾーンがないから、ハッキリ言う。イエス、ノー、ハッキリ言う。でも日本人はイエス、ノー、ハッキリ言えない。

## M

MHI:

あつ、えっと、物事が進むのが遅いですよね。

だから「そのことを分かってるだろう？」的に、えっと、く、「空気」なので、  
まず、伝わるのが遅い。

で、それに対しての、えっと、やらなければいけないっていうその「実行スピード」、うん。だから、空気感なので、「これやった方がいいのかな～？やらなくていいのかな～？」っていう(笑)この風になっちゃって、えっと、スピード感が出ない。で、ちょっと「ちゃんとやれてるの？」って聞いたら、「え？それやらないといけないんですか？」っていうような形になってしまっ。えっと、「やりなさい！」って言われるまで、みんななんかこう、動かない。で、なんとなく雰囲気「やった方がいいのかな～？」っていうので気がついて、やる人が出て来る、っていうような、なんかそういう、なんとなく「雰囲気文化」っていうのはあるのかも知れないですね。うん、なので、えっと、タスク？あなたは「これとこれとこれとこれを何時間何分でやりなさい」っていうような形に、きっちりやって、えっとタスク管理をやっていくと、ものすごいスピードで進んでいくんですけど。

これがないと空気だけだった場合は、進まないですね。

## N

MHI

日本語で思考する、(...)

...まず、結論が先に出ない。日本語は、えっと、なんだかんだなんだかんだ言うて、結論が最後になります。うん。なのでこう、お話ししてて、じれったいんですよ。だから最初に結論を言わない人が多い。うん、だからその、日本語で思考するっていうことは、どちらかという、結論から先に導き出すのではなくって、えっと、こういう理由、ああいう理由、こうこう理由っていう、理由がいっぱいあった上で、結論、みたいな。はは。(笑)

その思考回路になりがちだなと。うん。を、考えました。

O

DE:

良い面は...余計な事言わなくても、分かってくれる。なんとなくですけど、自分がこうしたいと思ったら、ああ、(DE の名前)は、こういう事したいんだなって事は、もう暗黙の、あっ、これが暗黙の了解ですわ (笑)。それは、うんと一、長い付き合いの中で、分かっ、お互いにお互いの事知り合ってるから、一から十まで言わなくても、僕が一を言っただけで、彼はもう十分かってくれてる、っていう、それが多分、良い面。日本の良い面だと思います。

P

DE:

だけど、悪い面は、新しい人と話をしようとした時には、当然これ、一から十まで全部言わなきゃいけない、じゃないですか。で、当然それが、えーっと一、ビジネスする時には、当然、いやいや、一を知ったら次二でしょっていうところが、一は一で止まってる人もいっぱいいるので、そこが、新しい事業する時、例えば、新しい事業する時って、みんななどという事がゴールなのか分からない、じゃないですか。日常の業務だったら、一から十まで全部分かっているけど、未来の事を話をしてるので、こっちは。こういう未来があるんですよ、こういう未来を作ったらもっと便利じゃないですか?っていう事を言っても、僕以上に理解はできないですよ。それは、暗黙の了解で、繋がらないから。

それが一個、一個、一を言って、二を言って、三を言って、四を言って、さあ最後、全部言って、十が分かって、ああそういう未来が出来るんですねって事が、分かってくる。もうそれが、それに慣れてない、日本人は。暗黙の了解に慣れてしまっているから。そこは、新しいビジネスを起こす面では、大変なのかもしれないなと思いますね。

Q

DE:

DE: うん、うん、うん。それは、やっぱり、“自分の事は自分です”だと思うんです、僕は。

I: ああ、なるほど、はい。

DE: 共通認識の強い、まあ同じ事さえしてればいいっていう日本社会だったら、僕は何もしなくても、同じ事さえしとけば、みんながなんとなくサポート(support)してくれて、なんとなく、まあ、普通の生活ができる。だけど、新しい事をするってなってくると、当然、共通認識がない事をするわけで、

I: うん。

DE: そうすると、あの一、自分でやるしかない。自分の事は、自分でやるしかない。自分でこっだけやりたいんだって言っても、それを、そこに繋がってくるのかなあとと思いますね。

I: うん。

DE: だから、当然、リスクを背負わずに、医者として働くっていう人生も当然、僕にはあった。だけど、それは、皆んな医者ってこうやって、あの、大学を出て、医学部を出て、医者になって、こうやって経験積んでいって、最後こうやって、おじいちゃんになって、辞めていくよね、っていう風な共通認識だったけど、いやいや、そうじゃないんだ、と。医者にだって、こっだけ例えば、色々経験積んできたら、新しい事にチャレンジできるかもしれないし、世の中変えられるかもしれないっていう事に、自分は仕事を通じて経験したから、

I: うん。

DE: でも、そうやって周りの人には、共通認識とは違う事を言ってるわけですよ。だったらそんな時は、リスクを取って、自分でやるしかない。やっぱ、自分の事は自分でやるしかないっていう、そういう親の信念につながっ、そこはやっぱ僕の信念なのかもしれないですね。

R.

MPJ:

うーん、えっ、暗黙の了解、まあいわゆる日本独特の、おーっと、まあ、“阿吽の呼吸”

: えっとー、うーん、信頼関係っていうのがね、あります。... えーこの人との信頼関係ですね。このファーマーとの信頼関係ですね。えー、ま、取引先って言いますが、どの関係、とかまあ、エンドユーザーとの関係ですねえ。

{...}

ちゃんとした物を、売る、えー、ちゃんとした物を仕入れた、っていうね、信頼関係っていうので、ビジネスが構築されて、その人をも、信頼していく、っていう事が、日本ではよくある事。

S

MBT:

MBT: うーん...失敗が許されない環境にあると置いて。

I: うん。

MBT: 例えば...会社を倒産した人が、また新しいビジネスをするってのは、「ちょっと、大丈夫なの？」っていう風に言われたり、...

T

MBT:

...村社会からの恐れもたくさんあるわけで、例えば、最初に入った会社の友達とかが、「上手くいかない」とか、「心配だ」とか、

I: はい、はい。

MBT: そういったネガティブキーワードを、たくさん言ってくるわけですね。

U.

MBT:

うーん...一回失敗すると、ずっとそれがその人の人生において、マイナスになる、っていう事を、みんな恐れているから、ですね。なので、私が最初に入った会社の、友達たちは皆んな、「上手くいかない」とか皆んな言う、言って止めるんですけど、でも起業家って、逆ですよ。「上手くいかない」言われた方が、「絶対上手くいくんだ！」って、思いますよね。で、それが10年ぐらい経つと、あの時ああ言ってたけど、「ちゃんとビジネスが回ってるみたいで、良かったね」と。いう風に、時間が経てば、理解してくれますけど、最初は理解しにくいですよ。

V.

MT:

例えば、日本の起業の90%が、3年以内に潰れるんです。...

そういうのがやっぱり大きい。だから、立ち上げましたって言っても、3年間はちょっとこう、会ったりすると、「お金貸してくれ」とか、そんなん言われるんじゃないかと思って、こういう、ちょっとこう、疎遠になるというか。90、何%がやっぱ潰れちゃう。だから、潰れる原因としては、資金調達がやっぱりうまくいかない、事業としてやっぱ波があるので、継続したお客さんもいないし、波があるから、銀行もお金一切貸さないんですね、3年間。だから3年間自分のお金だけで回さないといけない、それがやっぱ難しい。で、3年間自分のお金だけで回そうと思うと、従業員を雇えない、従業員雇えないと仕事が大きくなならない。だからすごい、ふ、“負のスパイラル”みたいになっちゃって、だから全然うまくいかない。だからそういう土壤があるから、会社立ち上げたって言っても、おめでとうって言ってもらえないんですね。

(...)

だからえっとー、みんな日本は、10年経ったら、10周年記念って言って、パーティーをするんですね。

...

MT: それでやっとな、社会的に認められる。...

だから10年かかるんですね。起業家として認められるのに10年かかる。

...だから大手の一流の企業と契約もできない、最初は。

V

MT:

W

MBB:

えーっと...「へこたれないこと」。あの一、失敗をしても、まだもう一回出来るっていうのを信じるといふか、諦めない。うん、あの、失敗するとなかなかこう、許してもらえない社会といふか...あの、アメリカとかも、こないだシリコンバレーに行ったら、「失敗したらリスペクトされる」って聞いたんですよ。

ね？チャレンジする人をリスペクトされるし、失敗してもリスペクトされるっていう...また頑張ればいいやっていうのがちょっと日本にはないので。でも、そこで諦めずに、人の目気にせずに、もう一回ね、違うビジネスでもいいし、辞めてもいいんだけど、へこたれずに、気持ちが折れずに、いてほしいなと思いますね。うん。

X

MBB

多分、あの、今だと「起業したらみんな90%は失敗するよ」とか、「お金がないと大変だよ」とか、あの、いっぱいこう、賢くなっちゃうと、怖くなって、できないと思うんですけど、私はその時ね、あまりにも勉強してなかったもので、怖いことを知らなかったんですよ。

Y

MBB

なんか、すぐに謝るし、あの一何かあったら「ありがとうございます」じゃなくて、いや、すっ、もう「ごめんなさい」「そんなことはないです」「すみませーん」みたいな言葉

がまず出るの。日本は謙虚な、“謙虚さが美德”だから、それもいいことなんだけど、あまりにも謙虚過ぎると、自分をなんかこう、すごく卑下しているっていうか、ネガティブに捉えちゃうところがある。で、自分のことも家族のことも、あんまり人前で褒めないし、自慢はダメだし、あの、なんかその、なんだろう、ちょっと、ネガティブな空気があるでしょう？

言葉使いと、その社会背景ってちょっと似てるかもしれない。アメリカはやっぱり、明るい面を見て、明るい言葉使いをして、いいことは「いいよね！」って言って、「あなたは素晴らしいよね！」って。

Z

DC:

うーん...あの一日本の文化は理解はしてますけど、あの、なるべく捉われないようにしてます。っていうのは、やっぱり中国語に行って日本の常識っていうのは、あんまり通用しないっていうのはわかりましたし、中国の人ってすごく自由に生きていて、楽しそうに生きていますよね。

1A

DC

DC: あー、それはよく、あの一、聞かれるんですけど、えー僕はむしろリスクは低いと思います。...あっ、起業？起業ですよ？

R: だっ、誰から聞(いた)んですか？

DC: あっ、国の経産省とか、大阪府とか役人の人が「なぜあなたは起業したのですか？」と。「リスクはありますか？」っていうんですけど、僕は逆にリスク少ないと思います。っていうのは、あの一、大学卒業して勤めた会社が電子部っ...電子部品のメーカーだったんですね。あの一、「ポイントサーキットボード」メーカーですね。でその時に、工場が何個もあります、で、僕、人事にその時入って、見た時に、えー...昔はすごく優秀で、えー、その会社が、あの一、事業伸ばす上で必要だった人は当然いて、で、事業伸びました、っていうときに、日本の...ま、これ悪いところだと僕思うんですけどね、えー



給料を下げられないですね、昔、給料上がった人。割に、僕たちの世代、今、30代ぐらいの人たちは、えー、景気が悪い時に、入って、給料が上がらないですね。

R: あっ、そうですね。

DC: この差がすごい大きいこと考えると、この人たちがいなかったら、このメンバーで、すごく、えー、なんて言うんでしょう、パフォーマンスの高い会社って作れるだろうなと考えたので、あっこれは起業するリスクって低いなあと思って、やっていますね

## 1B

MTA: ...“Why?”僕、結構、

I: うん。

MTA: どの、部分かどうか、分かんないですけど、僕、結構、「なんでそうなのか？」っていう、その、例えばその一般常識って、常識って、じゃあなんでその常識がある？みたいな。その先までもう考えてしまうんですね。それは、なんかもう、僕の性格なんですよね。

R: あ、そういう、あの、例え、あの、具体的な事例ありますか？

MTA: うーん、まあでも、さっき話してたやつも、その、何やろ？缶ビールの、5%が、ホンマに5%なのか？例えばあと、えーっと、まあ僕、今これスリッパですけど、大学に来る時に、スリッパがいの、一般的にはなんか、言われる。

MTA: でも、じゃあなんでアカンのか？逆にどういった、あの、デメリット、ダウンサイドがあるから、ダメ、禁止されてるのか？まあ禁止されてないねんけど(笑)。例えば禁止されてるものがあったら、じゃあ、何でそれが禁止されてるのか？

何で、この制限速度、ここ 60 キロ(km)なのか？みたいな。なんか、そんな、そんなところっすかね。

R: なんか、critical thinking みたいな？

MTA: うん、うん、そうっすね！そうっすね。

## 1C

MMV:

うーん...そうですねえ。...若い頃、えー今から 30 年くらい前は、私は非常に周りの事を気にする人間でした。

周りの事をすごく、やっぱり気にしてました。でも、だんだん仕事をしていく上で、そういう事は、あまり重要ではないなあと、思うようになりましたですねえ。で、えー最近では、あえて、空気を読まないようにしてる時もあります...

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