

### RESEARCH ARTICLE

## PSYCHOLOGY PHILOSOPHICALLY SPEAKING: HERMENEUTICS HELPING HEALTH STUDIES

Tony Wilson\*

Universiti Malaya

\*Corresponding Author Email: [tonyjwilson@yahoo.com](mailto:tonyjwilson@yahoo.com)

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### ABSTRACT

Hermeneutic philosophy can shape psychology analysis, generating formats structuring an application to data. These formats are suggested to be Hermeneutic Underwriting Themes (HUTS), behaviorally focused themes evident in Aristotle, Heidegger, Gadamer and Ricoeur's philosophy, central to their thinking. Their uses can be valuable for exploring research participant experience.

In this paper, which draws intermittently on earlier publications, I am suggesting engaging with hermeneutic phenomenologists further is helpful in coming to terms, or thematizing, a health studies research participant narrative contribution. Central to these hermeneutic phenomenologists' scholarship, thus plausibly regarded as being philosophical hermeneutic underwriting themes, are fundamental themes, HUTS, to which participant narratives can be related, located, placed within, so enabling the researcher to structurally establish their primary thematic identity.

Pursuing this procedure enabled by hermeneutic theorists, a set of questions can be directed at participant experiential responses in discussion, assisting their allocating to the most appropriate Hermeneutic Underwriting Theme (HUT). Located within, named in terms of their respective HUTS, participant existential themes are generated from responses, enabling the structured presentation of respondent narrative reflections. On the following pages, eight questions focused upon this data are presented, allowing the responses to be identified, named thematically and so appropriately located within HUTS. Discerning in analysis or question a research Hermeneutic Underwriting Theme such as a person articulating their personal identity can position this narrative with further psychological perspectives (e.g. identity development in Attachment Theory (Bowlby).

### KEYWORDS

Hermeneutics, Philosophy in Practice, Thematic Analysis

## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Psychology philosophically speaking: hermeneutics helping health studies

Hermeneutic Underwriting Themes, being widely implicit in human practices, can sponsor research questions focussed on foregrounding their presence with research participant experiential statements, thereby enabling the latter's thematic identification. A resulting structure of HUTs can initiate accommodating research participant subthemes

Practices are structured: they 'necessarily imply certain routinized ways of understanding the world, of desiring something, of knowing how to do something' (Reckwitz, 2002). Here, Reckwitz was foregrounding the implicitly informed and interpretative, behavioral, goal-directed recurring nature of social practices. Listening to health studies participant practices, how can they be 'read' as emanating from broad pictures or frameworks, horizons of understanding' (Gadamer (1975) experience, projecting meaning in lives? Have these participants thereby sustained or further defined, refigured their identities? Interpretation is the analysis or working out of 'lifeworld' possibilities through a researcher's understanding. 'Life-worlds provide a set of horizons for all human activity', a 'living context for the (therapeutic) pursuit of purposeful social and cultural life' (Ricoeur, 1988; Husserl, 1970; Moran and Cohen,

2012).

Analytically, using a life-world lens, hermeneutic theory is equipped to 'examine the concrete particulars of an individual situation and say something about its more universal features'. Generic, goal-directed, yet unthinking practical engagement of daily life, everyday taken-for-granted activities can be focussed on as tacit practices (Eatough and Shaw, 2019). In this, hermeneutics offers its 'higher-order structure for the analysis' (Smith and Rhodes, 2015).

'Experience is indivisibly woven into the person's lifeworld' (Eatough and Shaw, 2019).

Hermeneutics, with its core themes of humanity's being embodied, equipped and emplaced within horizons of understanding, is appropriate underwriting for qualitative psychology (Gadamer, 1975). Gadamer, moreover, examines the hermeneutical phenomenon through the metaphor or model of integrating conversation between two people (Gadamer, 2004). Such image positions hermeneutics as particularly close to a discussion between researcher and participant. 'It allows something to "emerge" which henceforth exists'. With both, a 'common subject matter is what binds the two partners, the text and the interpreter, to each other' (Gadamer, 2004). Thus, a participant existential theme can emerge from a 'dialectic of question and answer' (Gadamer, 2004).

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As focus for qualitative psychological investigation, Hermeneutic Underwriting Themes are prior characteristics, or features, of human practice. They can be anticipated as being discernible during research discussions. Hermeneutic Underwriting Themes, HUTS, are locations from where in the research setting, structured questions can be asked of participant practices or answer is situated, enabling their themed development at the heart of analysis as participant existential themes. With the following discussion eight HUTs are foregrounded where participant narratives can be placed. Themes equally represent homogeneity, from which more focused analyses can be commenced.

Research participant existential themes are their 'horizons upon experience'. Hermeneutics reflects upon understanding as their fundamental mode of being in the world, enabled or elided by their tacit position on the cultural perimeters or horizons from which they engage with experience. Horizons of responding to an experience can be mentally liberating or denying. People can amend, articulate further, achieve distance from their surrounding representational framing of a perception. 'Horizons provide perspective by being the implicit and explicit beliefs that furnish the context for understanding' within a hermeneutic interpretative perspective (Vessey, 2009).

Enabled by systematic philosophically tuned questioning, participant experiential narratives (PENS) support the research's thematic analyses of practices. Below instances are provided. Debate can occur over how philosophical writing relates to empirical data, but it is important to signal with a hermeneutic narrative of research how the former approach can engage within analysing the latter. From such a beginning, we start out from a description of ourselves as we are in the midst of our day-to-day practical affairs, being caught up in the midst of a practical world (Guignon, 1993).

Thematic conceptualizing, gradually achieving its textual excavation, widening this insight, moves from participant linguistic narrative to researcher ideational statement. Reflexively viewing this perception, analysts are within their hermeneutics, recognizing the impact of their horizons of meaning on their eventual interpretations (Shaw and DeForge, 2014). Philosophical research can site participant perception within core aspect of human understanding immersed with emplaced practice, so 'connecting ontologically based philosophy with practical research' (Conroy, 2003).

Discussion from a HUTS perspective asks participant practice thematic questions which can position participant experiential account as being a structured finding in interview responses. It is philosophy en route to its psychological insights, as an 'illuminated quotidian' (LeMahieu, 2015). Hermeneutically distinct broad structures are instantiated by varying behaviour modes. They are 'a priori', universal narratives within which are 'specific orientations' (Motta and Larkin, 2022). Questions may be asked of participants formulated appropriately to their situation. However, responses can be identified in terms of underwriting theme and thus allocated to a HUT accordingly. Below, a participant in 2012 paper is experiencing chronic pain (Ahmad and Talaei, 2012). Her response to interviewing, the present author suggests, can be interpreted thematically as displaying *phronesis* (practical wisdom). In which case this participant experiential theme can be placed in HUT1 (below), although it also manifests features (such as being equipped) associated with other HUTS.

Questions asked of research participant practical consciousness, receive responses in terms of their discursive consciousness involving knowledge which actors are able to express on the level of discourse, a reflective horizon of day-to-day life (Giddens 1991). Discursive consciousness is what is heard within discussion, making explicit (in so far as it is possible) a person's earlier, embodied, little reflected on habituated tacit understanding (Wilson 2018).

Researcher and participant 'understanding emerges (with) the fusion of these horizons as the two are brought together in dialogue' (Gimbel, 2016). Perspectives, thereafter, can be extended, horizons of understanding 'fused', or indeed, reviewed and reconsidered. Hence understanding as a procedure 'requires and perpetuates a mode of differentiation' (Davey, 2006), (Wilson, 2022(a)).

Gadamer writes on the interpretative process: in our analysis of the hermeneutical process, we saw that to acquire a horizon of interpretation requires a fusion of horizons. This is confirmed by the verbal aspect of interpretation. The text is made to speak through interpretation '(Gadamer 2004: 398). Innovation, the audacity of a metaphor, broadens our view of the world' (Grondin, 2015).

On the following pages, eight questions for research participant data are presented, enabling responses to be appropriately located in HUTS, thereby interpreted thematically as being participant existential themes. In posing these thematic questions across a terminological terrain, a 'meshing of theoretical and empirical viewpoints enabled by hermeneutic core constructions' is sought (Smith, 2019). HUTS contain or 'articulate the main claims' (Larkin, 2021) in a health study. With HUTS established, shared respondent themes may be positioned in these spaces.

## 2. ESTABLISHING PARTICIPANT EXISTENTIAL NARRATIVES WITHIN HUTS

### 2.1 Thematic questions for allocating health study responses

#### Exemplar answer references

Exemplar 1 Source: Understanding Chronic Pain, Journal of Advanced Social Research (Ahmad and Talaei, 2012).

Exemplar 2 Source: Stigma and the Delegitimation Experience: An Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis of People Living with Chronic Fatigue Syndrome, Psychology and Health (Dickson et al., 2007).

Exemplar 3 Source: The Personal Experience of Chronic Benign Lower Back Pain: An Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis, British Journal of Health Psychology 3, (Osborn and Smith, 1998).

Exemplar 4 Source: present author's research

Exemplar 5 Source: Beyond the Divide between Cognition and Discourse: Using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis in Health Psychology, Psychology and Health 11(2), (Smith, 1996).

Exemplar 6: Source: Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis' in J.A. Smith (ed.) Qualitative Psychology: A Practical Guide to Research Methods. (Smith and Osborn, 2008).

Exemplar 7 Source: a colleague's research as is the further exemplar discussed in this section.

Exemplar 8 Source: present author's research.

#### 2.1.1 HUT (1) Being engaged in practical wisdom

- How is the participant taking care of themselves, *engaging* in practices with *phronesis* (Aristotle) or practical wisdom? (Warrington, 1963)

Exemplar: A participant experiencing chronic pain, I'm 'keeping myself alone, control myself in the room'.

Here, questions focus fundamentally on the participant's 'making sense', their understanding-in-practice or their *phronesis* (Aristotle), an ethically infused practical wisdom. Gadamer claims in *Truth and Method* in 1975, the hermeneutic analysis of human understanding was anticipated by this Greek philosopher, a historical conceptual connecting presented by Warrington (1963).

In Ahmad and Talaei's paper, understanding chronic pain, being a lived experience, positioning her perpetual practice, a research participant reflecting upon her chronic pain narrates: - 'I'll avoid light ... noise, too many people around get me upset' (Ahmad and Talaei, 2012). Seeking sanctuary in secure space, a separate room, she presents her interpersonal wisdom evoked in *phronesis*: 'keeping myself alone, control myself in the room'. Here, anticipating further hermeneutic features of activity, one can say that emplacing her routine is an embodied practice equipped by readily available room, affectively represented, articulated within her material 'horizon of understanding' as refuge, an equilibrium, completing a hermeneutic circle, venturing out and returning to 'control' in a room (Gadamer, 1975).

Likewise, an inhabitant of extra-care housing records his security, 'I do like to do a little walk each day around the perimeter', affectively aligning his engaging in *phronesis* (Shaw et al., 2016). As a further instance, students discussing 'our role in creating happiness' can be positioned considering a course of practical wisdom, *phronesis* (Esmaeil et al, 2024).

Researchers have argued the 'development of Aristotle's practical philosophy plays a key role' for the 'philosophical hermeneutics of Hans-Georg Gadamer' (407) (Svenaesus, 2003). Subsequently, Duvenage confirmed, Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics is deeply influenced by

the concept of practical wisdom (*phronesis*) in articulating a framework for understanding practices (Duvenage 2015).

### 2.1.2 HUT (2) Being embodied in care-directed practices

- How is the participant *embodied* in caring (Heidegger's *sorge*) practices seeking support? (Mulhall, 2005)

Exemplar: A Participant: 'I know my own body and I know how I'm feeling and I know this is not depression'

Narratives of embodied selves in care-directed purposive practices are here central. As one exemplifying instance, faced with his physician's narrative of his symptomatic depression, such as insomnia, presented in discussion, a medical participant protests that, 'I said "It's not depression, I know my own body and I know how I'm feeling and I know this is not depression"' (Dickson et al., 2007). This experiential narrative of reflection foregrounds the theme of embodiment within a participant 'making sense', caring meaning-bearing behaviour, a framework for *phronesis*.

A participant in Willig's research on 'extreme sport' repeatedly releases her 'audible intakes of breath' in underwriting her own participant experiential theme of the 'tense and exciting nature of her experiences' (Willig's 2007). Her embodied interpretative horizon of understanding her practice, furthering an assertively sought for subject of sedimented caring, is re-presented beyond words.

In Eatough and Shaw's presentation of their medical participant who is experiencing Parkinson's Disease, her personal capacity and its loss, emerges in experiential statement (Eatough and Shaw, 2019). Barbara's embodied horizon of understanding, care-directed in 'battling all the time', her coping is to deal with her issues as generated by the evil twin. Habituated practice, notably engaging with her morning routine, is like a tortoise in furthering goals. A sense of embodied self can seem more than 'minimal' in illness, being conspicuous, presented-at-hand (Heidegger).

Hermeneutic theory of practices analyses ubiquitous human understanding incorporated in everyday activity. Heidegger's thesis of understanding's temporal dimensions asserts a consecutive 'moment' of 'fore-having' resource, 'fore-seeing' possibility and actualising this 'fore-conception'. People care about things (*Besorgen*), themselves (*Selbstsorge*) and feel solicitude for other persons (*Fursorge*) (Heidegger, 1962). Heidegger explicates the purposive aspect of practices: 'we are constantly prefiguring, refiguring, and configuring our experience' (Kearney, 2015). Experience is integrated spatio-temporally as directed across three phenomenological moments.

Caring genres exemplify a hermeneutic account of *a priori*, necessary aspects ('moments') of our understanding: for this is fundamentally (or 'primordially') characterized by daily, practical concerns, 'concernful, practical dealings' with possibility (Moran, 2000). Caring is equally at its core embodied and equipped, again fundamental features for the hermeneutics of understanding. People tacitly anticipate or project (pre-understand) experience in their very account of the present. Heidegger's emphasis on a practical understanding (*sorge*) preceding our analytical understanding continues Aristotle's prioritising practical wisdom, constructing an 'intentional arc' of meaning in practices (Merleau-Ponty, 1962). In related discussions, practical understanding is directed from tacit, affective 'horizon of understanding' towards 'object of intention' (Husserl) or its noetic 'aboutness' (Gadamer, 1975; Moran, 2013). Caring represents from a person's valuing perspectives, their own concern, the affective horizon of understanding their circumstances.

### 2.1.3 HUT (3) Being equipped for ready-to-hand practices

- Does the participant regard their body as *equipment* (Heidegger's 'tools' (*Zeug*)) normally 'ready-to-hand' for practices but now signalling dysfunction? (Mulhall, 2005)

Exemplar: participant: 'I always thought you had pain to tell you when there was something (bodily) wrong'.

Here, following Heideggerian philosophy, the hermeneutic distinction can be made between routines, or 'ready-to-hand' practices, times when participants' attention is upon their goals and their turning to examining these practices, 'presented-at-hand', becoming a new nurse focus of attention. There 'understanding *how*' is replaced by 'understanding *that*', a reflective or theoretical posture.

A participant in Osborn and Smith's research on lower back pain engaged

in practice, 'presents-at-hand' her body as if broken equipment, 'I always thought you had pain to tell you when there was something wrong', representing dysfunctional being seeking specific goals (Osborn and Smith, 1998). Likewise in Holland et al., 2018 paper 'Thresholds of Size' a respondent affectively remembers her 'too big' body being problematically 'present-at-hand' (Holland et al., 2018). In Heidegger, interpretative understanding is a constitutive 'feature of every human being', presencing unready-to-hand equipment (Dallmayr, 2009).

A further participant in Osborn and Smith's research, Linda, reflects upon her earlier lived experience, caring, deeply affective for 'I can't do half of what I used to do'. Here her bodily 'equipment' is not ready-to-hand, for it has been 'cut down'. Her behavioural horizon is temporally limited: they say life begins at 40, people 'flying their kite', 'I used to work like a horse' (Osborn and Smith, 1998). Within Heidegger's terms, 'where the "ready-to-hand" falters, is focused upon or is disrupted, experience is of the present-at-hand, here a participant experiential narrative (Heidegger, 1962).

The body functions materially as disabling or enabling 'equipment'. The theme of illness as 'unhomelike' being is considered in a *Phenomenology of Illness* (2016). Carel argues there, 'habits, routines, expectations, and norms may be disrupted or even destroyed by illness' (17). In behaviour is signalled embodied recognition, not least in coping with recurring health issues. 'By means of the lived body human agents possess (...) "knowledge in the hands" (Merleau-Ponty, 1962).

For Heidegger, practices involve the process of human sense-making or the 'event-structure' of equipped understanding. Things encountered are 'usable, employable in the pursuit of purpose' or 'in Heidegger's terms, they are not just present-at-hand, the object of theoretical contemplation, but handy or ready-to-hand' (Mulhall, 2005). We understand our potential for being-in-the-world as our participation in it, in terms of what is ready-to-hand – that is, what is available and usable – or not, in which case it is termed "present-at-hand" (Heidegger, 1962). Persons implicitly, that is, pre-consciously interpret entities which surround them as being equipment so (dis)enabling their 'being-with-others' (Heidegger, 1962). 'Equipment' includes sense-making narrative. 'We first of all understand the world through the equipment and practices within which we dwell' (Van Manen, 2007). Everyday equipped practices are implicitly experienced in Heidegger's phraseology as being 'ready-to-hand' where an agent's focus is elsewhere, yet paradoxically they also exercise and tacitly put into place a multiple set of presuppositions, being a participant's 'horizon of understanding', that marketing, media or psychological research explores in qualitative research. In doing so, 'reflective agency emerges from pre-reflective activity' (Martin and Sugarman, 2001).

### 2.1.4 HUT (4) Being emplaced in horizon of understanding

- How does the participant *emplace* her/himself culturally, occupying an interpretative 'horizon of understanding' (Gadamer) their circumstances? (Vessey, 2009)

Exemplar: A participant: (I'm) glad to be back to the surroundings where I was grown up.

From the perspective of phenomenology research, it was Husserl who initiated its particular concept of a 'lifeworld', delineating presentations of everyday lives shaped by 'horizons' (Husserl, 1970). Researchers drew upon this evocation of a cultural and historical context as 'horizon of understanding', a spatial metaphor and mode of situating Heidegger's 'practices' (Gadamer, 1975). On a 'horizon of understanding', the 'sediment of past experiences' is being 'converted' into 'dispositions for future actions', action embodying affective cognitive recognition (Wallenborn and Wilhite, 2014)

In a Chinese Reunion Dinner, a male (75 years old) celebrates encircling by his lifeworld, 'after a year of hard work we come together', enjoying embodied 'horizon of understanding'. A lifeworld is foregrounded. This is a participant experiential narrative (PEN), group shared, or 'horizon of understanding' group shared (HUGS), being-with-others, affirming a collective cultural identity.

Horizons mark out 'habitus', (in)forming agential practice as in Chinese Reunion Dinners (Bourdieu, 1990). Participants are potentially 'predisposed' (Burkitt, 2002) to respond within modes unreflectively held as appropriate to the culinary event through their habituated action: 'we have dinner and then we can share all the things among ourselves, family members especially'.

'(I) came back to the homeland, feeling so warm and so comfortable and



glad to be back to the surroundings where I was grown up', a female Chinese Malaysian confides to her focus group, celebrating her life-worldly 'ontological security' (Giddens, 1991). This is signaling to a singular lived experience where ready-to-hand 'surroundings' enable 'feeling so warm and so comfortable'. In 'Crafting Joy' (Esmaeil et al, 2024), society's members 'showing appreciation for others' evokes a communal horizon of understanding implicit in participant reciprocity.

Incorporating the hermeneutic spatio-temporal metaphors for themes as being a 'horizon of understanding', it appears appropriate to present themes and subthemes as hierarchically ascending or descending representations of 'surroundings'. Participant actions can be interpreted or perceived, seen, thematised from a broad - or narrower - horizon of understanding such as 'homeland'.

Gadamer argues 'hence essential to the concept of situation is the concept of "horizon." (...) Applying this to the thinking mind, we speak of narrowness of horizon, of the possible expansion of horizon, of the opening up of new horizons, and so forth' (emphasis in original) (Gadamer, 2004). That is 'a horizon is not a rigid boundary but something that moves with one' in practices (Gadamer, 2004).

### 2.1.5 HUT (5) Being affectively engaged in practice

- How is the participant *affectively* orientating her/himself (Heidegger, 'attuned') towards their surroundings? (Mulhall, 2005)

Exemplar: A participant dialysing at home would be, I'm still being myself. I've still got my identity'.

Exemplifying his research, Smith (1996) considers an engaged participant reflects on her 'becoming part of this machine' for she is 'really fed up with the repetition' of routine 'passive' involvement with the practice. Enunciating this affective identity experiential theme, the ready-to-hand relationship with hospital equipment is resisted: 'dialysing at home would be - I'm still being myself'. However, an embodiment and equipment unhappily merge in hospital being-with-others, understanding-in-use. Cultural and social dimensions of such a horizon of understanding place and distancing movement can be explored. More widely, the ideological dimensions of such a switching as this from public to private support, if it is broadly occurring can be considered. Social structures are 'constituted in and through recurrent practices' (Giddens, 1982).

Following Smith et al., Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis is (in)formed by a philosophically hermeneutic narrative of human understanding as a 'practical engagement with the world', 'self-reflection and sociality, affective concern, and a temporal, existential location' (Smith et al., 2009). This statement establishes core concepts high in a hierarchy of IPA's interpretative horizons of understanding or a researcher's tier(s) of themes, abstract, distant from the particularity of research participant contributions. Attuned to these concepts, researcher themes 'contain enough particularity to be grounded and enough abstraction to be conceptual' (Smith et al., 2009). Analysis sees and notes, conceptualising particularities in participant contributions extending, for instance, to support for identity studies related to research, *A Secure Base: Parent-Child Attachment* (Bowlby, 1988).

### 2.1.6 HUT (6) Being, articulating their Personal Identity

- Is the participant *amending* (Ricoeur, 'refiguring') their identity (see Ricoeur, 1981)?

Exemplar: A participant: moving to a desert island 'I'd still be a miserable old git, but it wouldn't matter'

Research participants can be preoccupied with configuring or 'refiguring' personal identity, producing narrative meaning 'worked upon and formed' (Ricoeur, 1981). To take a particular case of self-understanding (self-creating), a potential patient afflicted by his chronic pain imagines moving to a desert island where (in his own words) he'd 'still be a miserable old git but it wouldn't matter, it's only when other people come around that its matters' (Smith and Osborn, 2003).

Using conceptual resources implicit in hermeneutic analysis, one can say that his 'dream', his thematic imagined newly equipped practice of embodied *selbstsorge*, a concern for self, would embed, emplace 'easier' material and metaphorical horizons of understanding: 'just be yourself, it doesn't matter what you do' so far away from 'having to put on that front'. As Smith and Osborn thematise: 'self/identity and relationships define pain experience' (Smith and Osborn, 2003).

A female respondent in Penman and Omar's research in 2011 carried the 'refiguring' of her identity articulation forward with talking about achieving her 'sense of security' through eating the food from 'home' (Penman and Omar, 2011). She presents embodied narratives of consumption, thereby establishing a sense of identity, 'as it has always been'. Cultural memories incorporate in behavioural movement. Securing their affective attachment to place, 'everything (people) touch and do is infused with the underlying order that gives them their expectations of the world' generated by their source society (Miller, 2008). Themes signal aligning, positioning on 'horizon of understanding', a 'horizon within which we know where we stand, and what meanings things have for us' (Taylor, 1989).

### 2.1.7 HUT (7) Being aligned with/ alienated from a Life-World's event

- Is the participant *aligned/alienated* (Ricoeur, 'distanciated') with/from events which are intervening within their familial 'lifeworld' (Ricoeur, 1981)

Exemplar: Participant: in a Chinese Reunion Dinner, 'you really have to focus on the dinner, not on the phone'.

Ricoeur's spatio-temporal concept of 'distanciation' particularly evokes distance as source of political detachment and criticism of power bearing ideological content. Hence it is appropriate to use such a mode of reflecting when discussing a narrative where the participant distances from advertising as culturally unacceptable intrusion (as during a family Chinese Reunion Dining). The idea of 'distanciation' signals alienated separation from 'horizon of understanding' (Ricoeur, 1976).

Tracing out political aspects of power embedded with horizons of understanding, culturally underwritten, 'an ideology permeates people's quotidian practices', thereby structuring embodied actions' (Susen, 2014). Horizons of understanding can be challenged, becoming disputed territory as 'schemes of perception and appreciation deposited, in their incorporated state, in every member of the group, i.e. the dispositions of the habitus' (Bourdieu, 1977).

Interviewees during their Chinese New Year Reunion, very much celebrating the in-person family occasion, are protesting against a telecommunications advertising image which presents the conversational reunion gathering as being a digital cellphones communication. 'Offensive, it breaks the Chinese tradition' (a male participant experiential theme). Aligned with this Chinese New Year life-world, they are culturally and politically distancing as identities from the cellphone advertising disrupting of 'previously taken-for-granted' familiarity (Moores in Krajina et al., 2014).

His outburst, with his backing away, marking cultural distance, is a theme shared by family participants, here a group experiential theme, perhaps appropriately also designated a HUG or the horizon of understanding' group shared. As an experiential theme it can be allocated with the HUT (hermeneutic underwriting theme) as his alienation from inappropriate advertising, 'distanciated' in close, family, gathered embodied understanding from a would-be powerful media marketing of the Chinese New Year. 'Cultural estrangement' from representing enables critiques (Ricoeur, 1976).

Within 'productive distanciation', the 'predicament of cultural distance would be transformed into an epistemological instrument', a 'hermeneutics of suspicion' (Ricoeur, 1976).

Horizons can be material as well as being also metaphorical. During one Chinese New Year Family Reunion Dinner in Malaysia a male Chinese participant reflected, 'we have dinner and then we can share all the things among ourselves'. But 'my brother-in-law is a Muslim' (...) they use a separate wok to cook for him. No pork ... and everything that they cook for him is halal' (Wilson, 2022(b))'.

Yet meeting together, they share materialised horizon, establishing their family reunion: - so 'my sister will sit on a separate table which is still together (with their family) and we will have the Reunion Dinner together but they will have the Muslim food'. Their accounts are positioned across the metaphorical integrating horizon of understanding, an affective HUG as celebrating their family reunion, a 'horizon of expectations and rules' (Jauss, 1982).

Practices assume a tacit equipping by 'tool' (Heidegger) or their 'affordance' emplacing a habituated embodied 'horizon of understanding' (Gadamer), their 'habitus', the familial 'knowledge in the hands', as in a Chinese New Year (Gibson, 1986; Bourdieu, 1977; Merleau-Ponty, 1962).

Reunion Dinner. Affective 'embodiment is the creation of a memory by repetition' (Bourdieu, 1977). The 'lived body can be the carrier of (a) personal past' emplacing ethnicity (Koster, 2017).

### 2.1.8 HUT (8) Being - through achieving a Consensual/ Contested Boundary Object'

- Is the participant *attaining* a consensual yet contested 'boundary object'? (Star, 2010)

Exemplar: Participant: immersion in a mall 'feels like the second home', so enhancing her emotional security yet the mall is marketed as consumer 'exploration' challenging their emotional security

Understanding in practice presented by the participants in research may represent diverging views of a 'boundary object' (Star, 2010). Such an entity (or process) is the focus of competing or a conflicting narrative again where Ricoeur's concept of 'distanciated' reading of power or ideology is relevant for diverging significance in a status embedding hierarchy of contested (mis)representing.

Profit-seeking mall management marketing a mall as a place for 'exploration' and its visitor enjoying returning as a 'home from home' regard this 'boundary object' (Star, 2010) from different 'horizons of understanding' whose status would diverge in a political economy of consumption. As emplaced in returning, consumer horizons of understanding may be seen to mark the 'wider context of ideological competition and resistance from below' (Curran, 1990). An urban shopping mall enunciates 'different social significances' from 'diverse viewpoints' (Hawkins et al., 2017).

## 3. CONCLUSION: PHILOSOPHICAL PSYCHOLOGY OF PARTICIPANT PRACTICES

Hermeneutics engages with embodied understanding as fundamentally informing being- in- the-world, the location on the cultural perimeters or horizons from which we interpret experiences. With positioned practices people further establish identity. Affective horizons of understanding can align, locate, place, position, shape or structure practices as bodily incorporated. While Husserlian phenomenology posits presuppositionless intuitive knowing, Heidegger's hermeneutic philosophy underwriting theme posits humanity being there (*Dasein*) as always already interpreting the world in an integrating horizon of understanding perceptions (HOUP), through the hermeneutic circle of understanding. 'The person becomes the universe of exploration at the outset.' (Smith, 2021). Thus, thematic discerning establishes how research interviewees are aligned in horizons of understanding. In a 'fore-structured' (Heidegger) understanding pervading their everyday practices, people project their intelligibility from cultural horizons as 'principles of vision and division' (Bourdieu, 1998). Spatio-temporal images, metaphors, are at the heart of hermeneutic philosophy, there to 'picture' the process of empirical human sense-making, available analytically to reflect upon the 'event-structure of all understanding' (Gadamer, 2004).

### A 'Lens' for Participant Existential Themess

#### Theme Names Nominated by Hermeneutic Theories

Participant narratives of practice can be identified thematically as being participant themes, by being allocated, or aligned, with one (or more) of the following HUTS, signifying a participant-understanding-in-practice, presuming, projecting, producing narrative:

- Engaging in embodied activity exercising their perception of practical wisdom (Aristotle)
- Focused on goals for recurrent behaviour or presenting a problematic process (Heidegger)
- Exhibiting equipped knowing-how with 'tools' (broadly interpreted) or issues (Heidegger)
- Placing practices within tacit 'horizons of understanding' or their perspectives (Gadamer)
- Exhibiting an affective perception of practices as 'attuned' to circumstance (Heidegger)
- Discussing practices which are articulating or 'configuring' personal identities (Ricoeur)
- Aligning with or alienated ('distanciated') from aspects of practices or

the world (Ricoeur)

- Attaining a practical understanding which is divergent from powerful alternatives (Ricoeur).

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