



Editorial

by **Dr Christopher Stones**

It gives me great pleasure to preside – as Editor-in-Chief – over the release of this new-look journal website.

For first-time readers it might be apt, at this point, to provide a brief historical background to the origins of this journal. While there are several other on-line journals dealing with the phenomenological paradigm, they all essentially cater for European and American writers situated in their respective geographical spaces and therefore are largely concerned with European and American issues. By contrast, the Indo-Pacific Journal of Phenomenology aims to capture the works of phenomenologically-oriented social scientists in the Southern Hemisphere, although this is not intended to be exclusive.

The journal, brainchild of Dr Trish Sherwood, currently Senior Lecturer in Sociology at Edith Cowan University, Bunbury, was the eventual outcome of ongoing and enthusiastic discussions - arising from a phenomenology study group - between herself, Associate Professor Robert Schweitzer (who was the first editor of the journal and remains on the editorial panel) and Stuart Devenish. At the time, Stuart was a religious studies doctoral student in the Faculty of Regional Professional Studies on the South West Campus of Edith Cowan University. After various deliberations it was agreed to launch the

IPJP with Dr Schweitzer as Editor-in-Chief and Stuart Devenish as its Executive Secretary <http://www.o-p-o.net/essays/DevenishArticle.pdf>.

Over its brief but active history, the IPJP has had numerous “hits” and has begun, gradually, to establish itself as a relative heavy-weight albeit newcomer to the field of phenomenological publications. One of the reasons for its success was that the Editor-in-Chief and Executive Secretary worked tirelessly to ensure that each release of the journal contained a diverse range of quality papers, and with each edition of the journal, its stature grew exponentially.

In the spirit of growth and renewal, the Board then took the decision, led by Dr Schweitzer himself, that there needed to be a change of the two main portfolios, namely Editor-in-Chief and Executive Secretary. After negotiations and a careful study of the various logistics involved (entailing both Edith Cowan University and Rhodes University), it was agreed that I would take over the portfolio of Editor-in-Chief and have relative carte blanche in determining the future tenor of the journal. As part of the hand-over process, I invited Prof Hennie van der Mescht to be the Executive Secretary. In resigning from their respective positions of responsibility, I wish to thank and honour Prof Schweitzer and Dr Devenish for their continued

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dedication to the IPJP and the field of phenomenology.

Importantly, the Editorial Committee has, on the whole, remained unchanged - for which I am extremely thankful as the assembled team has been doing sterling work to date. As part of the new mandate, the journal is hoping to augment the editorial panel with additional internationally-renowned scholars in the field of phenomenology. Another substantial element in any journal's continued "existence" is the crucial role played by the often-invisible but ever-present webmaster. In the case of the IPJP, we are exceptionally fortunate to have the skills of Nathalie Collins, to whom I wish to express my sincere appreciation for her dedicated and creative efforts in ensuring that the website remain user-friendly and functional.

In view of the IPJP being the only one of its kind in the Southern Hemisphere, it is of paramount importance that its endeavour remains that of catering for as wide an audience as possible within the Southern Hemisphere while simultaneously being mindful of its international audience within the global context in which we all now live.

In due course, the journal hopes to introduce special editions, each focussing on particular orientations or themes within phenomenology. We also hope to have a dedicated biennial postgraduate student edition.

The present edition is fortunate to have a marvellous Guest Forum piece by Lester Embree entitled "Generational Phenomenology" which aims to explicate the observation that there is, indeed, a generational dimension to the socio-cultural world and that this fundamental life-world dimension has a profound influence on the existential fabric of our being. Embree's paper further offers comments on how attitudes towards one's own generation as well as other generations can be analysed reflectively.

The other papers in this current issue cover a diverse range and the contributors hail from several different philosophical as well as socio-political and cultural backgrounds. The first paper by Jenny Barnes deals with phenomenological intentionality and the state of "ego-lessness" that is reported to occur during certain meditative experiences. When conducting such research, argues Barnes, one is necessarily confronted by the limitations of the "method" which aims primarily "... to capture the essential structures of lived experiences" rather than the "... experiences of deep meditative states". Her paper proceeds to explore issues of "method".

The concept of "the unconscious" has been widely used in European philosophy and psychology for at least a century and a half. In a soon to be published book, David Edwards and Michael Jacobs examine some of this history and look at how "the unconscious" and unconscious process are conceptualized within the different discourses of contemporary psychotherapy. The paper by Edwards deals more specifically with mythic and theoretic aspects of the concept of 'the unconscious' in popular and psychological discourse and is drawn, in part, from this book. Edwards examines how the concept of the unconscious takes on different meanings as theorists draw it into an epistemological system based on two different cognitive systems. Using Langs' distinction between "mythic" and "theoretic" ways of knowing and relating it to Teasdale's distinction between "implicational" and "propositional" knowledge, he shows how debates about the nature of "the unconscious" often flounder on the failure to recognize which of the two epistemological frameworks a theorist is tacitly appealing to.

Informed by the investigative thrust of phenomenological inquiry and the "phenomenology of intersubjectivity", the overarching aim of the next article by Zelda Knight and Bruce Bradfield is to provide an illumination of the experience of being diagnosed

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with a psychiatric disorder, and thus being “a labelled individual”. This paper seeks to explicate the impact of the psychiatric label upon the labelled individuals interpersonal and intersubjective presence as experienced outside the psychiatric institution.

The final paper in this issue of the IPJP has been penned by Rex van Vuuren who sought to amplify an ongoing debate within the field of therapeutic psychology regarding whether the therapist should bring “ontological concerns to the fore” in order to better clarify the nature of the patients’s dilemma. Van Vuuren’s paper makes use of a therapist-patient encounter and the therapist’s intuitive reflections upon the gift of a sea-shell by the patient to the therapist.

Enjoy this volume!

About the Author

Dr Christopher Stones is the Editor-in-Chief of the IPJP and is also head of Psychology at Rhodes University in South Africa.

Dr Stones has a lengthy academic and research career, having taught in the areas of clinical,

social and research psychology. He is Chairman of the South African Society for Clinical Psychology as well as Vice-President of the South African Association for Psychotherapy. He is also an Associate Fellow of the British Psychological Society and on the editorial panels of two other on-line journals. He has published extensively using both natural science quantitative methodologies as well as phenomenological approaches particularly in the areas of religious experience, identity and change management. Professor Stones has a part-time clinical practice with a focus on adolescents, young adults and families as well as individual long-term psychotherapy. Additionally, he is regularly engaged as an "expert witness" in medico-legal (civil and criminal) court proceedings.

His areas of research interest fall into the field of attitudes and attitude change, phenomenological praxis and methodologies, abnormal psychology and psychotherapy, spirituality and religious experience.

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