

*Editorial*

by Dr Robert Schweitzer

This edition of the Journal coincides with a pledge by supporters of the Public Library of Science (PLoS) (www.publiclibraryofscience.org) to foster collegiality in the world of publishing biomedical research. The PLoS believes that the permanent archival record of scientific research and ideas should neither be owned nor controlled by publishers “but should belong to the public, and should be freely available through an international online public library”. What is the relevance of this pledge to scholars involved in contributing to and participating in the IPJP?

The pledge by the PLoS needs to be seen in a global context where traditional research and scholarly activities are generally funded by public bodies. The resulting papers are owned and published by multinational publishing houses who then sell the rights to access information to a readership and in the process, earn profits for their shareholders, often running into billions of dollars. The current system raises many issues, not the least of which relate to the principles of access to information and the potential results in terms of information rich and information poor communities.

The IPJP, founded to serve a multicultural community in our region, is at the forefront of a new genre of Journals. Our Journal is based upon the principle that public funded research and scholarly activity should be freely available

to all scholars engaged in research, public debate and teaching, thereby furthering the boundaries of knowledge for the larger social good.

The PLoS is advocating a further step, that is, that journals allow integration and interconnectivity in relation to the electronic searching of journals. As an editorial committee, we fully endorse this initiative and intend to explore options to provide “an open architecture” to extend accessibility to material published in the IPJP.

We invite our readership to join over 27,000 scientists from 172 countries to sign the PLoS open letter, and thereby encourage free access to and unrestricted distribution of scientific and scholarly reports.

The current edition of the Journal builds upon phenomenology as a methodology to demonstrate some outcomes from the “practice of phenomenology.” Steve Edwards in his evocative contribution ‘Phenomenology as intervention’ explores the contribution of phenomenology in relation to research and psychotherapeutic interventions based upon the very personal experiences of the author and his knowledge of the literature. The paper is unique as the author draws upon the life-world of the Zulu speaking people in his homeland, South Africa, and Husserl and others who constitute part of a dominant European philosophical

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tradition, as he explores the topic in relation to research and psychotherapeutic interventions. In his synthetic review, he reminds the reader of such fundamentals as psychology representing the "speech of the soul" and the aspirations of the discipline, the nature of self being found within relationships with others, and a primary attribute of being human-care for others through relationships. He concludes "as phenomenology continually transforms from a more purely philosophical movement...concerned with critical theory into an interventionist approach and method in applied human and social sciences, its practical value will become increasingly realized."

Jennifer Barnes in her study "The Lived Experience of Meditation" makes a unique contribution, both in terms of her topic and the methodology, which she utilises to explore her topic. In her investigation she examines the lived experience of meditation through an investigation of her own experience which provides the basis for her further explication of the topic. Through the process of her study, she adds to an understanding of Moustakas' contribution to a heuristic phenomenological methodology. She 'owns' her personal experience of the phenomenon rather than adopting the more common dispassionate approach, which is so evident in the more dominant approaches to research.

Patricia Sherwood utilises a phenomenological methodology to explore client experience in psychotherapy. She not only examines issues relating to healing but the potentially taboo area of psychotherapeutic episodes experienced as harmful. The findings have significant implications for the training of therapists and the practice of psychotherapy, which are addressed in the recommendations resulting from her findings.

It gives me great pleasure to refer to the inclusion of a short history of phenomenology in South Africa by a personal mentor, Professor Dreyer

Kruger. Professor Kruger (or "Prof" as he was known to many of his students in the 70's) was an original thinker and an influential teacher to a significant cohort of his students who continue to encourage another generation of students to include phenomenological critiques of knowledge in their thinking and writing. Probably more important than his ideas was the humanness, which he communicated to his students, and which goes unmentioned but not unnoticed in his writings! I hope that his contribution will also serve as encouragement to other teachers to contribute their own "personal histories" reflecting the development of ideas in our region and beyond. As articulated by Thomas Kuhn, what we believe to be true or of value is, in reality, the result of agreement by a community of scholars. So on behalf of myself, and his other like-minded students, I wish to publicly thank Professor Dreyer Kruger for his inspiration and example, which has served many of us well.

Overall, this edition provides several examples of the value of phenomenology as a methodology in investigating phenomena that otherwise, would be outside traditional natural scientific approaches to understanding human experience. The papers also serve to inform us about practice of phenomenology within Australia and Southern Africa.

We invite investigators from all parts of the Indo-Pacific region and further abroad to submit papers for consideration for future editions of the Journal. Needless to say, the success of the journal will be the result of participation, dialogue and the interchange of ideas from a wide and enthusiastic colleagueship.

About the Editor

Professor Robert Schweitzer is the Associate Professor and Head of Counseling Studies at the School of Psychology and Counseling, Queensland University of Technology in Queensland, Australia.

Dr Schweitzer is the Editor-in-Chief of the IPJP. His doctoral studies, at Rhodes University, entailed completing a thesis which was a phenomenological study of dream interpretation among urban and rural Inguni people.

Dr Schweitzer has published widely on psycho-social aspects of the family, of adolescence, and

of mental health. He is regularly consulted in the area of professional development and the supervision of psychologists.

His areas of research interest include process and outcome studies in Psychotherapy and Indigenous healing.