



Editorial

by **Christopher R. Stones**
Editor-in-Chief

While in the process of preparing the current edition of the *Indo-Pacific Journal of Phenomenology* for release, my beautiful and beloved mother, Marjorie Stones – who, just eighteen months earlier, on her 90th birthday had been awarded lifelong membership of the Seniors Exercise Club she continued to attend regularly – died in her 92nd year just before dawn on a Friday: a public holiday in South Africa, known as Freedom Day since 1994, the formal end of the Apartheid regime. By quite uncanny coincidence, her birthday had since 1994 fallen on yet another public holiday, aptly named Heritage Day: a holiday designed to celebrate the cultural diversity of a country with 11 official languages in addition to sign language, not to mention the languages of the vast number of immigrant groups from Europe and the East in addition to multilingual refugees from Central Africa. Despite more than 70 years in Africa, my mother's own tongue remained Yorkshire English in accent, lilt and turn of phrase. Indeed, as Heidegger so poignantly put it, "Language is the house of being. In its home [one] dwells" (1947/1993, p. 217).

Yet what I, while still in the time of mourning, celebrate is that my mother's life-definitive dates will always be commemorated annually in the country in which three generations of her and my father's descendants live. As Heidegger noted, "Life and death run counter to one another. To be sure. Yet at the extreme point of opposition things that run counter turn most intimately towards one another" (1944/1979, p. 18). How apt to have the day of one's birth, and hence one's own embodying of one's heritage, celebrated by an entire country on a day dubbed Heritage Day, and then to have the release of one's spirit from one's body occur on a day dubbed Freedom Day. What are the odds of the metaphoric significance of national public holidays becoming the

definitive metaphors of an individual's own lifespan, of the public becoming so intimately the personal?

And yet Heidegger (1941/1982), of course, pointed to that possibility in his focus on the meaning for human being of the repetition of festivals – public holidays lived both as breaks from the everyday routine and as celebrations of shared cultural identity. For Heidegger, "the calendar is properly a *Festkalender*" (pp. 64-65), in that "the cycle of festivals determines the calendar, giving order to time" (p. 66) and thus being "the ground and essence of history" (p. 68): personal history and future possibilities as much as culturally significant past events. The ritual of the cultural calendar of festivals is about being-in-remembrance and being-in-the-rhythm-of-time. The repetition of festivals, of public holidays, like the personal remembrance of days marked with "a white stone" (Dodgson, 1856), is about being-with others in commemoration and celebration of the significant, the out-of-the-ordinary, the beyond the everyday. And in that shared space of time out of the routine flow of the inattentively, almost automatically, lived everyday, the individual's "authenticity" is foregrounded and becomes defined: the communal becomes the individual, and the public becomes the personal.

And yet, while death and birth are the two "ends by which Dasein's totality is closed around" (1927/2010, p. 425), with one's own death one's "ownmost non-relational possibility" (1927/2010, p. 241) – one's own death, Dasein's impossibility, is not something one can oneself experience. Thus our only experience of death is the death of others. And the only experience of our own death is that of others. In our Being-in-bereavement we, having been thrown out of the routine rhythm of the everyday, come more authentically into knowing our

own Being-towards-death: not as an end-point, but in so far as Dasein “always already is its end” (1927/2010, p. 236) and death thus “an eminent imminence” (1927/2010, p. 240) from the moment of birth.

Ultimately, all that outlives our embodied subjectivity and the possibilities lived are heritage and legacy – with heritage itself a self-perpetuating legacy passed on from generation to generation over the centuries: the history of successive ancestral human attachments intermingled with our blood to account for our own and our future descendants’ distinctive physical features and traits, and what we leave of our life endeavours and possessions, along with the meaning attached to these, to those who live on. And then there is what remains of ourselves in the memories brought to consciousness by others reliving in sudden moments what moments of our own life signified in their experience of us. In all this, there is Heidegger’s notion of the bereaved’s “being-with” the deceased by “lingering alongside” in mourning, care and commemoration – and on the fact that “being-with always means being-with-one-another in the same world”, albeit only “*in terms of this world*” (1927/2010, p. 222).

Unrelated though it may seem, this brief contemplation on the significance in relation to the *Festkalender* of my mother’s life-definitive dates captures the broad focus

of the papers included in this edition of the *IPJP* on *embodied subjectivity* – whether related to dealing with obesity and men’s sense of self and lived experiences before and after undergoing bariatric surgery (as in the paper by Karen Synne Groven, Birgitte Ahlsen and Steve Robertson) as opposed to the phenomena of bodily agency and resistance as central to adolescent girls’ experience of being referred to and participating in a lifestyle intervention programme (as in the paper by Karen Synne Groven and Kristin Zeiler), or corporeality as a core dimension of professional development and in understanding how academics learn to use technology to facilitate learning online (as in the paper by Anthony Isabirye and Mpine Makoe), or the role of attunement to somatic cues and not only group dynamics but also inner dynamics in the course of acting as a system psychodynamics, or group relations, consultant in an intensive diversity experience event (as in the paper by Aden-Paul Flotman). Not only are the innovative methodologies and interpretative frameworks employed by various of the authors of interest, but, in terms of human interest, the research findings reported are in many instances deeply moving, along with being informative.

In conclusion, I am pleased to report that the current flow into the Editor’s inbox of worthy submissions from all corners of the globe bodes well for the future of both the *IPJP* and phenomenology.

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About the Author



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Professor Christopher Stones, previously Head of the Department of Psychology at Rhodes University in Grahamstown, South Africa, and former Professor of Psychology at the University of Johannesburg, has enjoyed a lengthy academic and research career, in the course of which he has taught in the areas of physiological, clinical, forensic and social psychology, as well as research methodology. He has served as Vice-President of the South African Association for Psychotherapy since its inception, and as past Chairman of the South African Society for Clinical Psychology. Editor-in-Chief of the *Indo-Pacific Journal of Phenomenology* since 2003, he is also on the editorial panels of two other online journals. Professor Stones’s research interests are in the areas of identity, attitudes and attitude change, phenomenological praxis and methodologies, abnormal psychology and psychotherapy, spirituality and religious experience, in all of which areas he has published extensively. An Associate Fellow of the British Psychological Society, with which he is also registered as a Chartered Psychologist, Professor Stones is registered with the South African Health Professions Council as both a Research and a Clinical Psychologist.

Currently, Professor Stones conducts a full-time clinical psychology practice at a health-care centre, and also serves as a consultant in the fields of forensic investigation and behavioural risk management.

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