



Editorial

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

My sixteen-year term as Editor-in-Chief of the *Indo-Pacific Journal of Phenomenology* has been not only a spiral learning curve, requiring constant adaptation to new editorial norms and requirements along with the ever-changing horizons of the field of phenomenology, but – above all – meaningful, inspiring, energizing and positively challenging.

The *Indo-Pacific Journal of Phenomenology* saw its first publication in 2001 after the need for such a forum for the southern hemisphere had been envisaged by the Phenomenological Research Group at Edith Cowan University in Western Australia comprising mainly post-graduate students under the mentorship of Dr Patricia Sherwood. Given what Devenish (2003, pp. 5 - 6) refers to as the group's "strong connection with South African scholars deeply schooled in phenomenology through the Psychology Department of Rhodes University" – where there had been a long-established phenomenological tradition, spanning more than three decades, introduced in the early 1970s by Professor Dreyer Kruger – the journal eventually evolved as a joint venture of Edith Cowan University and Rhodes University.

Professor Robert Schweitzer, who completed both his MA in Clinical Psychology and his PhD at Rhodes University in Grahamstown, South Africa, during Dreyer Kruger's tenure and is currently Professor in the Faculty of Health at Queensland University of Technology in Brisbane, Australia, served as the first Editor-in-Chief of the *Indo-Pacific Journal of Phenomenology*. The Executive Editor for the first two years was Dr Stuart Devenish, then completing his doctorate at Edith Cowan University and currently Director of Postgraduate Studies at Tabor College in Adelaide, Southern Australia, while Carl Holroyd (a fellow postgraduate student at the time)

dealt with the layout. Among those most intimately involved in the early stages were Dr Patricia Sherwood (currently Director of Academic Programmes at Sophia College, of which she is a co-founder, in Brunswick, Western Australia) and various members of the original Editorial Board, seven of whom have, throughout the lifespan of the journal to date, continued to give of their expertise and time to help build the journal's reputation to become a scholarly publication of international repute. The *Indo-Pacific Journal of Phenomenology* has been extremely fortunate in this regard.

The *Indo-Pacific Journal of Phenomenology* was among the first electronic scholarly journals – which was very courageous, given that online publication was viewed as somewhat suspect at that time. How utterly, however, the perceptual terrain has changed over the two decades since! A pivotal role player from the outset has thus been the journal's webmaster. The first of these, Dr Nathalie Collins (currently Academic Director at Edith Cowan University), worked dedicatedly with the editorial team until 2007, and, along with designing both the original website and the journal's current logo, guided us through the intricacies of e-publishing.

In 2003, the editorship of the journal changed, placing me at the helm as Editor-in-Chief. During my term as such, I have had the joy of seeing the journal develop from neophyte to maturity and onwards to attain international standing and accreditation. With its stature progressively growing, mainstream publishers began to express interest in either acquiring the *Indo-Pacific Journal of Phenomenology*, or at least arriving at some mutually beneficial publishing agreement. What was nevertheless non-negotiable was that the journal was to remain true to its primary founding mission, which was

to encourage the dissemination of research in the field by providing an Open Access platform for scholars in the southern hemisphere. Importantly, the journal's mission was also to stimulate interest in phenomenology as a research methodology, and as such to assist aspiring young scholars to see their work published in a reputable journal without being deterred by the generally hefty publication fee required by most other journals. To this end, financial support to cover the production costs of the journal was therefore indispensable.

Initially, the journal was published with the sole and generous support of Edith Cowan University, but in 2004 Rhodes University began to provide additional financial support. In both instances, the universities made it clear that their funding was time-limited and intended to provide temporary respite for the journal to grow in stature and hence survive into adulthood – or, alternatively and sadly, to fade into the mists of not so much history as, given its non-mainstream orientation, fading human memory.

Since 2008, the journal has been published in association with the National Inquiry Services Centre (NISC) based in Grahamstown, South Africa – initially in conjunction with the University of Johannesburg, but, as from 2012, in close collaboration with the Routledge, Taylor and Francis Group on their Open Access portal – and all University support then fell away, the lifeline it had provided no longer being deemed necessary. At last, our journal project had thus come of age – and proudly so.

Throughout these past sometimes challenging, and yet often exciting and always enjoyably energising sixteen years, I have enjoyed greatly heartening support from members of the Editorial Board and especially from our Language and Copy Editor, who has devoted many, very many, hours to working on the submissions to ensure that, when finally published, each paper has been as perfect as possible in terms of fluency, factual accuracy, full and accurate citations and referencing, formatting and professional layout. In an age where ready access to internet sources has facilitated unscrupulous copying and pasting, forensic editing has also become essential to ensure plagiarism-free publication in the journal.

Life, its living and the many transitions this inevitably entails, inherently implies an impermanence of multiple aspects of it. In my case, one of these aspects is my engagement, for close on a quarter of my life, with the *Indo-Pacific Journal of Phenomenology* as its Editor-in-Chief. Sadly, the time has now come for me to step aside and thereby facilitate the ushering in of a new era guided by the fresh vision, commitment and enthusiasm that a new Editor-in-Chief will, I am certain, bring to both the operational organization and the scholastic advancement of the journal.

It is my fervent hope that, by retaining its focus on the

specifically phenomenological both methodologically and theoretically, the *Indo-Pacific Journal of Phenomenology* will continue to add value globally to the academic and scholarly terrain through the ongoing and regular dissemination of intellectually enriching, stimulating and thought-provoking material in the field.

This final edition under my editorship of the *Indo-Pacific Journal of Phenomenology* presents a smörgåsbord of thought-provoking papers from authors based as far afield as Botswana, Zimbabwe and South Africa on one continent, Lithuania on another, Canada on yet another, and New Zealand on a fourth, with topics ranging from the actual measure of a moment (Kenton Engel) to the possibility of experiencing interpersonal closeness in virtual learning environments (Luis Francisco Vargas-Madriz). In between those metaphysical extremes of the contemporary human experience of reality, there are the gender study foci on everyday human realities such as divorce and “real men’s” response to it (Kudakwashe Muchena, Greg Howcroft and Louise Stroud), and the feelings of guilt associated with female academics’ corporeal experience of constantly living “in-between” work and family commitments and demands and hence never being fully there for either (Agnė Kudarauskiene and Vilma Žydzūnaitė). Then there are the profession-based foci on, in the psychotherapeutic domain, clients’ response to self-disclosure by their therapists (Lorato Kenosi and Duncan Cartwright), and, in the educational domain, the possibility of addressing the current call in South Africa for the decolonization of the curriculum by shifting towards a “lived-experience and body-specific” curriculum conducive to drawing the learner into the act of learning and developing knowledge against the socially and culturally contextualised background of the lived world (Oscar Koopman and Karen Koopman). Of relevance to both education and clinical psychology, as well as to other endeavours concerned with behaviour modification and self-actualization, is the elucidation by Stephen Smith of “life phenomenology”, the emphasis of which on realizing the possibilities of becoming attuned to other sentient beings is demonstrated in his lyrically evocative reflection on his own aim to “bring up life” in his training of two horses by attuning to the temperament of each in order to build communicative rapport and ultimately “move in concert”. Finally, there is the exploration, in a paper grounded theoretically in Heidegger and Gadamer, of the effect of the space provided by a particular architecturally-designed place in creating a contagiously re-energising mood found to filter positively from there into other perfunctory regions of the organizational structure (Liz Smythe, Deborah Spence and Jonathon Gray).

As evidenced by the papers included in this edition, the dominant influence methodologically seems to have become Max van Manen, as opposed to Amedeo Giorgi previously, and the preferred research methods IPA and phenomenology of practice (as beautifully illustrated in

implementation by Luis Francisco Vargas-Madriz). Of interest, too, was noting the distinction between the Lithuanian authors' refreshing approach to the method section of their research report as opposed to the by now predictably formulaic approach of most. And yet that, too, has changed in the specifics of focus, emphasis and even diction over the years.

While I look back on more than 40 years of pondering with wonder the phenomenology of phenomenology, I leave you – dear readers, contributors, fellow scholars

and colleagues – with my most sincere thanks for your encouraging support, interest and engagement with the *Indo-Pacific Journal of Phenomenology* over the past almost two decades. In so far as your engagement with the journal has proven the importance of its *raison d'être*, you have made the efforts of all, both past and present, involved in the publication process infinitely worthwhile.

I wish the incoming Editor-in-Chief and the members of the Editorial Board well for the future.

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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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