



Editorial

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

The current edition heralds a new era for the *Indo-Pacific Journal of Phenomenology*. Not only does this edition see the launch of a functionally more user-friendly website, but it is also the first edition to be launched under the banner of the University of Johannesburg, the journal recently having relocated to a new South African home.

As intimated on the website during the course of the past year, on 1 April 2008, after a 32-year career in Rhodes University's Department of Psychology, the Editor-in-Chief bade his farewell to Rhodes University (a great institution set in a smallish sleepy-hollow town in the Eastern Cape) to take up a similar post at the University of Johannesburg, the metropolis surrounding which is sometimes referred to as the "New York of Southern Africa".

The Department of Psychology at Rhodes University was at the forefront of qualitative and especially phenomenological frontiers of thinking in southern Africa for many years – thanks, initially, to the influence and inspiration since the early 1970s of the then Head of Department, Professor Dreyer Kruger – and saw several of its key staff joining the diaspora of phenomenologists spread across the northern hemisphere. It was largely through this diaspora that the *IPJP* emerged, with its early development spearheaded through the collaboration of Professor Robert Schweitzer (a graduate of Rhodes University and now teaching in Psychology at the Queensland University of Technology, Australia) and Dr Trish Sherwood (senior lecturer and researcher in the Faculty of Regional Professional Studies at Edith Cowan University in Bunbury, Western Australia, and currently Director of Sophia College of

Counselling). After nurturing the journal through its infancy, Robert Schweitzer stepped down as its first Editor-in-Chief and the mantle was handed to the current Editor-in-Chief.

The past few years have seen the *IPJP* surviving into adolescence, and some commentators might even go as far as to assert that it has developed into a responsible and well-balanced academic youngster. Of course, as with all healthy growth, it is never the work of just one parent, but rather the entire family – or, as is said in Africa, the village – that contributes towards the overall well-being of its offspring. This has certainly been the case with the *IPJP*, which owes the course of its development to the commitment of each and every Board member as well as the editorial team and the two main webmasters who have overseen the journal's site over the years. The journal's first webmaster, Nathalie Collins, was responsible for the design of the initial site and the journal's current logo amongst many other early innovations which were central to the journal's development as a top quality publisher, especially at a time when online publishing was still in its infancy. After several years of dedicated work on the journal, Nathalie stepped down in 2007 owing to increasing work pressure, and the site continued to be maintained by the Editor-in-Chief until another suitably skilled and committed webmaster could be found. Such a person materialised this year when Dr Gert Kruger (Department of Psychology, University of Johannesburg) volunteered his expertise. Dr Kruger set to work revamping the site, the result of which is the exciting new look and feel of the now more user-friendly and interactive *IPJP* website.

The *IPJP* is a joint project of the Humanities Faculty of the [University of Johannesburg](http://www.uj.ac.za) in South Africa and [Edith Cowan University's](http://www.ecu.edu.au) Faculty of Regional Professional Studies in Australia. This document is subject to copyright and may not be reproduced in whole or in part via any medium without the express permission of the publishers.

The *Indo-Pacific Journal of Phenomenology (IPJP)* can be found at www.ipjp.org.

In view of the Editor-in-Chief's relocation to another academic institution, it made sense that this should also become the new academic home of the South African side of the *IPJP*. It is at this point, therefore, that Rhodes University should be thanked for its financial support of the journal over the past several years, and that the Faculty of Humanities of the University of Johannesburg is, in turn, to be thanked for its unhesitating willingness to contribute towards the ongoing maintenance of the journal. That said, it is essential not to underestimate nor overlook the sterling and ongoing support that the *IPJP* has received from the outset from the Faculty of Regional Professional Studies at Edith Cowan University.

Like all healthy, forward-looking and well-balanced adolescents, the journal needs to look towards long-term sustainability as it moves towards adulthood and independence. While the *IPJP* remains committed to the spirit of open-access, and holds dearly to the notion that the acquisition of knowledge should not be restricted to only those who can afford to pay, the fact is that even online journals have costs to cover, despite much of the work being done by a committed few on an entirely voluntary basis. After extensive discussion and consideration over quite some time, it was eventually decided to adopt a best practice open-access model: Full access for all interested readers will continue as it has since the inception of the journal in April 2001. By contrast, authors (apart from those invited to contribute reviews, guest commentary and so on) with institutional support will be asked pay a modest publication fee per paper. In line with the journal's continued adherence to the principles of open-access publishing, authors will not be expected to pay from their own pockets, and those with no institutional support will not have a fee levied; the fee will also differ according to each country's development ranking on a number of widely used criteria. To this end, we are currently in the final stages of negotiating with a South African publishing house in order to ensure that almost all of the journal's financial needs will be taken care of. In due course, we will have more news on this front; in the interim, readers considering submitting their work for possible publication can rest assured that the journal management will give ample warning before any of the current submission policies are changed.

The papers included in the current edition originate from places as far apart as Poland and Taiwan, China, India and England, Australia and the USA, indicating that the influence of not only phenomenology itself, but of the *IPJP*, extends across the globe. This fact places enormous responsibility on the editorial team – and, in particular, the peer review process – to ensure that the papers approved for publication, and as such

made available to the world at the press of a computer button, are of a standard of scholarship worthy of representing the field. In this regard, Amedeo Giorgi's paper in this edition (reprinted with permission, with minor editorial changes, from *Análise Psicológica*) points to the need to acknowledge that “what is being practised today needs improvement”. His analysis of methodological inconsistencies in six dissertations that purport to have followed the phenomenological method serves as a salutary reminder of the too often disregarded imperatives of pure phenomenological research that define it as distinct from other qualitative approaches. As Giorgi points out – even when the basic principles of phenomenology are cited correctly, they are not always fully understood, and nor are they always implemented meaningfully.

Ian Owen, however, questions both the claims of Husserlian phenomenology and the conformity to Husserl's intended focus of what he terms object-oriented empirical phenomenology, arguing that what needs to be acknowledged is that research of any kind, including all phenomenological research, “can only operate hermeneutically”.

Taking the quest for a renewed conception of phenomenological theory and practice even further, Hsiang Hsu envisages a future phenomenology that can, he contends, through a speculative retooling of some key concepts of these two major Western philosophical traditions, articulate productively with certain grounds opened up by psychoanalysis.

The remaining three papers in this edition are no less challenging of conventional conceptions and approaches. While very different in theme, they are thematically linked by their own linking of their respective foci to artistic creativity. Proceeding from the perspective of psychiatric phenomenology, Eva Cybulska questions both the traditional diagnosis of Nietzsche's psychiatric condition and, in light of this, whether his three cardinal claims were in fact delusions, in the process challenging the contemporary understanding of what it means to be delusional, and pointing to the difficulty of distinguishing delusion from poetic creation. Taking a more abstractly analytical tack, Alin Cristian probes the problems posed by heroic self-sacrifice to Heidegger's ontology of finitude, conceptualizing the essence of self-sacrifice as, in effect, standing for “the deliberate actualization of Dasein's possibility of its impossibility”. Self-sacrifice – in the sense of using one's own death as a medium for the inscription of meaning – is presented as analogous with Heidegger's conception of the act of creating an artwork: even though the essential requirement for the creation of a piece of art is the existence of the artist, “the artist

remains somewhat inconsequential as compared with the work, almost like a passageway that destroys itself in the creative process for the work to emerge". In contrast, Daniel Webber focuses on the creating of an object as an extension of the self. Coming from a family of Australian surfers and surfboard manufacturers, Webber presents a phenomenology of design based on spatial perception, using surfing and the design of surfboards as a vehicle for understanding spatial perception as an interplay between temporal and spatial relationships that is perceptually overlapped by sound, movement and meaning. Making forays into the field of neurolinguistics, Webber points to speech as analogous to surfing. While the movements of the tongue during speech can be likened to riding a surfboard, the sense of movement induced by the speech sounds is analogous to manoeuvring the surfboard. So, too, "Just as the components of language are assembled to generate speech sounds in the vocal tract, the components of surfboard design are assembled to generate manoeuvres on the wave". Evident in both language and surfing, Webber asserts,

is that creativity stems from the ability to engage temporal relations, such that spatial relations emerge spontaneously.

The current edition concludes with reviews of two books, quite different in character. The first, *Love's Pivotal Relationships: The Chum, First Love, Outlaw and the Intimate Partner* by Richard Alapack, uses a hermeneutic phenomenological vehicle to explore four central human relationships of love. The second book, by Hagi Kanaan, with the intriguing title *The Present Personal: Philosophy, and the Hidden Face of Language*, attempts, philosophically, to examine a situation that philosophy has stopped bothering about, namely "the problem of prioritizing the language of information in which the individual is irrelevant".

In conclusion, and on behalf of the Board members and editorial team, I invite all our readers to feast upon the tantalising array of ideas to be found on the platter of this edition, served through the functionality of our newly revamped – and, hopefully, now fully user-friendly – journal site.

About the Author



Professor Christopher Stones, previously of Rhodes University in Grahamstown, South Africa and currently Professor of Psychology in the Faculty of Humanities 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, social and research psychology. He is Vice-President of the South African Association for Psychotherapy and 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 on-line journals. Using both natural scientific quantitative methodologies and phenomenological approaches, 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 professional board as both a research and a clinical psychologist, and conducts a part-time clinical practice with particular focus on adolescents, young adults and families, as well as offering long-term psychotherapy. In addition, he is regularly called on to serve as an "expert witness" in medico-legal (civil and criminal) court proceedings.