



Editorial

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

The release of this edition of the *IPJP* heralds the beginning of the second decade of existence for the *Indo-Pacific Journal of Phenomenology*. Not only is this significant because the release of this edition attests to the reality that the Open Access initiative is sustainable but also, equally importantly, that it is able to develop a pedigree stable of high quality academic papers, both theoretical and empirical.

The current volume (11, edition 1) comprises eight papers spanning a relatively wide range of topics and theoretical interests. The first two papers emanate from the academic community in South Africa and both deal with the underbelly of what it means to be human, in the first case, the experience of violence by male juvenile offenders while in the second, the lived experiences of mothers whose children had been sexually abused by their intimate partners are delved into.

Peter Basson and Pauline Mawson explore the phenomenon of interpersonal violence amongst youth, which is highly pertinent at this time as international studies show that there is an increasing trend for youth to be exposed to violence in its many complex and multi-faceted manifestations. While previous research has tended to focus mainly on causative factors, and its relationship to brain injury, neurological deficit, illicit drug use and social contexts including involvement in gangs, Basson and Mawson's research has striven to get to grips with the experiences, thoughts and feelings of young offenders just prior to the committing of a violent act. Adopting a phenomenological approach, participants were interviewed in an open-ended fashion, leading to

findings that suggest that it is particularly the experience and interpretation of external events that serves to provoke violent behaviour. Moreover, the generated socio-emotional profiles characterizing the participants were mostly emotional in nature, especially including emotions of anger, rage and fury.

The second paper released in this volume, also emanating from South Africa, explores child sexual abuse and in particular the experiences of mothers whose children have been abused by the mothers' intimate male partner. Gertie Pretorius and her colleagues point out that while most of the literature on child sexual abuse focuses on the victims and perpetrators, there is a little research dealing with the experiences of the mothers of these children. The authors argue that this is a crucial lack in the literature since it has been repeatedly shown that the mother's role is central to the recovery of the sexually abused child but yet the mothers themselves tend not to be supported in their own trauma and, moreover, are often blamed for not being sufficiently vigilant or caring. Consequently, Pretorius and her colleagues set out to explore the lived experiences of these non-offending mothers. Using existential phenomenology as a methodological paradigm, the interview material was a thoroughly interrogated with a focus on the maternal experience. The results of this research indicate that the participant's experienced emotions similar to those associated with psychological loss, including emotions of disbelief, anger, guilt, depression, loss of trust and self blame. Pretorius and her colleagues raise a number of implications for clinical practice as well as recommendations for improved future research in this area.

Paper three in this edition of arises out of therapists' work in New Zealand with suicidal clients and the experiences of these therapists themselves when their clients, despite their best endeavours, nonetheless successfully commit suicide. Gabriel Rossouw and his colleagues used a hermeneutic-phenomenological method to gain an understanding of therapists' experiences as mental health practitioners when their own clients were successful in their pursuit of suicide.

This study sheds light on how the experience of these therapists can best be understood and, importantly, how the mainstream, largely 'medicalised', intervention strategies are not particularly helpful in many regards. Rossouw's paper goes on to describe the therapists' feelings after the client's suicide and how they, the therapists, feel unsettled and confused about their responsibilities within an employment context in view of the reported tendency of the employer to appear more concerned about the possible legal ramifications arising from the death of a patient in their care. The study reveals the profound guilt, doubt and fear experienced by therapists in this respect. The paper concludes with a suggested paradigm shift when working with suicidal clients.

The fourth paper in this volume, emanating from Israel, sets out to explore the "lived pain" of women electing to undergo in vitro fertilisation treatment to fall pregnant for the first time. In view of the world-wide increase in the use of IVF and especially against the socio-cultural imperative experienced by Israeli-Jewish women that "motherhood in Jewish tradition is a sacred mission shaped by God's own intervention", Hilla Ha'elyon and Chen Gross set out to better understand the pain experiences of 25 heterosexual married Israeli-Jewish woman undergoing IVF treatment for a first pregnancy. Arising from a series of semi-structured interviews, their research shows that these women's pain perceptions tended to fall into two distinct categories of discourse in which the women either did whatever they could to numb the pain through their sheer determination to become pregnant or those who chose rather to control the experience of pain through active negotiation and interaction with the medical decisions being taken in respect of the treatments they were receiving. The authors go on to report that despite this cohort of women sharing the same socio-cultural environment and physical circumstances, they nonetheless had varied and wide ranging interpretations of pain within the context of IVF treatment and the Israeli-Jewish 'atmosphere'. The paper concludes by suggesting that medical authorities might benefit from this additional understanding of contextualised pain discourse and so be able to provide more appropriate support to women undergoing IVF treatment.

The next paper by Elizabeth Smythe and Andrew

Norton, appropriately entitled "Leadership: Wisdom in Action" aims to better understand leaders who have a 'reputation of being impressive' and how the essence of good intuitively-driven leadership is always in 'play' by virtue of the leader being 'open to the moment' and acting spontaneously on wisdom born out of accumulated experience. The paper argues that while the 'know-how' of leadership tends to assume that a specific set of technical and learned skills is necessary to accomplish the goal at hand, the reality of human interpersonal encounter inevitably draws one into a dynamic relationship where being a leader has more to do with the ability to enact experientially acquired wisdom in the moment than using technical or formally learned skills. Drawing on a Heideggerian phenomenological research paradigm, Smythe and Norton engaged with a small number of acknowledged leaders, asking them to talk about becoming and being a leader, and to think about leadership and their own leadership experiences. In so doing, the researchers developed a series of lived leadership profiles which are elaborated in the paper. The authors conclude with the suggestion that emerging leaders might benefit significantly by being exposed to experiential encounters, and mentored by strong leaders in an experiential fashion.

The following two papers are essentially theoretical rather than empirical, but each points to a particular methodological framework that could be used to great effect within a qualitative methodological paradigm. In the first of these, Margareth Eilifsen in her paper "Capture the Unexpressed: Anecdote as a Device in Hermeneutic Phenomenological Research" explores the notion that an anecdote provides some form of experiential truth or "empirical evidence" in terms of fully comprehending an event or phenomenon. Eilifsen argues that although the facts of one's life are not unimportant they nonetheless do not necessarily tell the whole story, and that in terms of our 'lived experience', it is very often the thrust and sense of what lies between words and what is seemingly hidden in the patterns of the facts, rather than the facts themselves, that reveals the 'truth'. Although not a novel idea, Eilifsen posits that the articulated use of anecdote in hermeneutic phenomenological research can indeed be a powerful tool in revealing much about a life lived even though the anecdote itself might not be 'factual'. The strength of Eilifsen's paper lies in her showing that the thorough and systematic use of anecdote in qualitative research can be an effective tool in helping to better and more fully understand lived experience in a way that the use of words only is often unable to achieve.

The second theoretical paper, penned by Marc Applebaum, is a two part discussion regarding the teaching and praxis of qualitative research within the discipline of psychology. Applebaum points out that

the practice of phenomenological psychological research requires a careful articulation of the differences between ‘descriptive’ and ‘interpretive’ approaches to qualitative data since they each offer fundamentally different conceptions of perception, understanding and method as the two approaches constitute the research situation in profoundly different ways, even though within the philosophical tradition they do not represent an intrinsic antagonism. Applebaum suggests that if, as researchers, we fail to fully appreciate the epistemological foundations of our work, we run the risk of our research being dismissed as inadequate science. The current paper is a Husserlian investigation of the meaning of ‘method’ for psychology as a human science while the follow up article (appearing in a forthcoming edition) will

explore the meaning of ‘disclosure’ in science from a Husserlian perspective, discuss some of the implications of Gadamer’s rejection of Husserl’s philosophical method, and address some implications of the attempt to structure qualitative psychological research through the appropriation of Gadamer’s philosophical hermeneutics.

The final paper in this volume is an extensive and elaborated book review by Larise du Plessis of an emotionally powerful conversational-style text penned by Richard J. Alapack entitled “Sorrows Profiles: Grief, and Crisis in the Family”. The book’s title tells it all and says it as it is!!

Enjoy the compilation of papers, and learn from them – I know I did.

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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 online 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, and to contribute as a consultant in the field of forensic investigation.

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