



Editorial

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

The *Indo-Pacific Journal of Phenomenology* was born out of the desire of a small group of graduate research students and their academic mentors at Edith Cowan University to establish a platform that would give voice to at least some of the qualitative research being carried out in the southern hemisphere, and more particularly in the Indo-Pacific region.

Eventually launched in April 2001, the *IPJP* has seen significant growth over its seven-year history. Throughout this period, there has been unwavering support from its founding universities, Edith Cowan University in Bunbury, Western Australia, and Rhodes University in Grahamstown, South Africa. Whilst the early volumes tended to contain primarily research and theoretical papers submitted from South Africa and Australia, this trend soon changed, with the journal attracting an increasing number of submissions from both Europe and the United States.

Recent reader statistics show that the number of readers from Australia is relatively high (32%), closely followed by 28% of the readership coming from the United Kingdom, 9% from New Zealand, 4% from South Africa and 3% from the United States. Additionally, the statistics indicate that there is a small readership from countries as far afield as France, Singapore, the Philippines, Germany, Canada, Malta, Denmark and the neighbouring Scandinavian countries. By contrast, most of the submissions over the past two years have tended to come from the United States, Australia and South Africa, with a few from Scandinavian countries.

What is particularly interesting is that, although the journal's mission is to publish work originating

primarily from the southern hemisphere, it has increasingly included contributions from the northern hemisphere, especially from the field of philosophy. This development speaks volumes regarding the esteem in which the *IPJP* is held by academics and researchers throughout the international academic and research terrain. Analysis of the author particulars of the contributions published to date further indicates the capacity of phenomenology to create interdisciplinary links between not only the traditional fields of, inter alia, philosophy, psychology, anthropology, linguistics, literature and religious studies, but between more occupationally-oriented fields ranging from the caring professions to the corporate managerial.

Of concern, however, remains the gender imbalance reflected in the significantly lower proportion of papers submitted, and hence published, by female authors. While this trend may simply be a reflection of the under-representation of women in positions conducive to research at tertiary institutions worldwide, it is also possible that contemporary female academics may perceive their under-representation in the index of, for instance, the *IPJP*, as "proving" that phenomenology persists in its male-dominated origins: but what then of Edith Stein, whose achievement, it has been suggested, accounts for Husserl's? Either way, in order to address the current imbalance and identify the contemporary foci of female phenomenologists, a Special Edition, calling for the submission by specifically women of papers with a phenomenological focus, is contemplated. We would value your comments in this regard.

The most commonly used keywords to access

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material in the *IPJP* have been terms such as “phenomenologically related theories”, “Jungian”, “human sciences”, “intentionality therapy”, and, along with the term “phenomenological research”, “phenomenology journal”. Additionally, keywords referring to individual theorists such as Husserl, Heidegger, Gadamer, Sartre, Merleau-Ponty, Ricoeur, Levinas and Derrida, to mention but a few, have featured prominently in the journal’s behind-the-scenes data analysis processes.

The current edition comprises eight submissions as well as a book review. The themes of the papers range from the philosophical to the methodological, from the physical arena to the psychiatric domain to the landscape of lived memory; from hermeneutic understanding, time-consciousness, belief, sympathy and immortality, to suicidality, identity survival, and the meaning of touch in the arena of sport. Stylistically, the range similarly encompasses the full spectrum from the philosophically analytical to the procedurally preformatted, from the pondering and the ponderously profound to the profoundly poetic.

Two papers in the current edition focus on the contribution of Hans-Georg Gadamer, who died at the age of 102 in 2002. Ann Holroyd, in her paper entitled “Interpretive Hermeneutic Phenomenology: Clarifying Understanding”, elucidates the distinction between the philosophical orientation of Gadamer’s interpretive hermeneutic phenomenology and traditional hermeneutics. In addition to pointing to the quest of hermeneutics as not being to develop a procedure for understanding, but rather to clarify the conditions of understanding, Holroyd explores the implications of, in particular, Gadamer’s proposition that understanding is a mode of being before it is a mode of knowing, with all understanding thus self-understanding. David Vessey’s paper, “Gadamer’s Hermeneutic Contribution to a Theory of Time-Consciousness” focuses more specifically on a theme which, while accorded central significance in the writings of all the other major phenomenologists, Gadamer is generally thought not in fact to have addressed: the nature of time-consciousness. Vessey posits, however, that perhaps Gadamer does in fact present an account of time, but - apart from in a few obscure places where he addresses the issue more directly - in a form linked to his general focus on the character of encountering works as the paradigm for understanding hermeneutic experience. Vessey then proceeds to demonstrate that, by interweaving themes drawn from Gadamer’s aesthetic theory with his more direct distinction between “empty” and “full-filled” time and his emphasis on the sense of time as epochal and hence transitional, it is possible to delineate a theory of time-consciousness that places Gadamer

squarely within the phenomenological tradition on this classic issue.

In the process of checking the particulars supplied by the respective authors for the various references to Gadamer’s works, it became apparent, as pointed to in a footnote by Vessey, that, despite the purportedly comprehensive bibliographies compiled by Etsura Makita and Richard E. Palmer respectively, access to the publication particulars of Gadamer’s works is, unlike in the case of the other major theorists, not generally available. Owing to this obstacle, the existence of works such as Gadamer’s essays on time - which, Vessey asserts, “have not been mentioned in any of the major secondary sources on Gadamer’s philosophical hermeneutics”, due possibly to being perceived as “minor”, originally having been “published in obscure places” - is further obscured.

The continuing relevance to contemporary debate of the contributions of early philosophers is pointed to in the papers by David Dillard-Wright and Paul Macdonald respectively. In his “Sympathy and the Non-Human: Max Scheler’s Phenomenology of Interrelation”, Dillard-Wright points to the key value, in the context of contemporary animal ethics and animal rights discourse, of Max Scheler’s concept of sympathy as necessarily based on acknowledgement of and respect for difference. He further elaborates on Scheler’s notion of openness to sympathy for the non-human, and more specifically the animal other, as foundational to the development of not only the capacity for interhuman sympathy, but also so-called higher-order religious, artistic, philosophical and other cultural values. In more theoretically analytical vein, Paul Macdonald, in his paper on “Husserl, the Monad and Immortality”, argues that Edmund Husserl’s claim in the early 1920s that the transcendental ego, unlike the mundane ego, is immortal is an ineluctable consequence of, on the one hand, his relentless pursuit, at ever deeper levels, of a fuller grasp of time-constituting consciousness, and, on the other, of his increasing reliance on Gottfried Leibniz’s model of monads as the true unifiers of all things, including minds. Macdonald identifies and systematically delineates and elucidates the structural and substantive parallels between the 18th-century philosopher Leibniz’s notion of the monad and Husserl’s conception of “monad” as an alternative term to refer to conscious being of a kind more explicitly articulated in his later views on the primal ego - in the process, by citing evidence indicative of the contrary, challenging the “bold claims” of, for instance, Paul Ricoeur and Dan Zahavi that an irreconcilable difference between the monadic metaphysics of Leibniz and Husserl’s monadic philosophy inheres in their respective perspectives on

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the necessity of God as a world-constituting divine agent as opposed to merely “a limit concept”.

Carlos Sanchez, too, focuses on Husserl in his critical consideration of “The Nature of Belief and the Method of its Justification in Husserl’s Philosophy”, exploring both the phenomenological perspective on belief and its methodological implications. Sanchez emphasizes that the phenomenological method is not a static method but rather a living one that is highly responsive to the lifeworld dynamics. He further puts forward the view that, just as the phenomenological method can be used to validate scientific hypotheses, it can also be used in our everyday existence to justify our commonsense beliefs, and as such can enhance our capacity for more responsible conduct towards ourselves and hence our authentic being.

Concepts that are central to Martin Heidegger’s phenomenology of Dasein inform the therapeutic approach proposed by Gabriel Rossouw as an existentially more congruent, and hence potentially more effective, alternative to the currently preferred approaches to dealing with the prominent feature of suicidality in persons with borderline personality disorder. In his paper entitled “The Limitations of Dialectical Behaviour Therapy and Psychodynamic Therapies of Suicidality from an Existential-Phenomenological Perspective”, he evaluates the relative efficacy of the two therapeutic approaches, concluding, in passing, from the conflicting views of patients and therapists expressed in a study by Perseus et al. (2003), that the success of dialectical behaviour therapy is not attributable to what therapists consciously do, but would seem instead to be the result of what they think they deliberately do not do! More essentially, following Heidegger’s assertion that understanding precedes interpretation and that doing understands, Rossouw argues that the problem with both dialectical behaviour therapy and the various forms of psychodynamic therapy is that there is a disjunction between understanding and doing, and that this disjunction is the result of “incompatible conceptual horizons” of understanding. He thus proceeds to elucidate the capacity of existential-phenomenological therapy to overcome this disjunction and to penetrate beyond the ontic level of meaning to the ontological basis of the suicidal person’s experience of Being-in-the-world. Rossouw suggests, in essence, that, by enabling insight into the nature of being human, existential-phenomenological therapy has the potential to enable understanding of not only how one has chosen to respond to the existential ‘givens’ of life, but of how one has come to misunderstand who one essentially is and the possibilities this may hold, and hence to move

beyond the “limit situation” in which Kierkegaard assessed that “the greatest danger is suicide”.

Moving away from the terrain of philosophers and the theoretical underpinnings of phenomenological praxis is the contribution by Simone Dennis and Megan Warin, both anthropologists, who have worked in inter alia the areas of cultural heritage and public memory. Having worked closely with Persian migrant women in Australia since 2004, observing their engagement with culturally patterned narrative activities and domestic objects, their paper entitled “Domestic Temporalities: Sensual Patterning in Persian Migratory Landscapes” explicates the significance of material memories in interweaving the landscape of the past with that of the present. The authors’ poetic phrasing of their perceptions and insights makes this a particularly moving piece of work, with powerful impact.

Uniquely illuminating, too, of the varied nature and many-layered meaning of a not previously directly explored aspect of contemporary lived experience, is the paper by Michael Miller, Noah Franken and Kit Kiefer, “Exploring Touch Communication between Coaches and Athletes”. Proceeding from a thorough review of the surprisingly extensive literature on coach-athlete relationships and touch communication, the paper reports on research conducted by the authors into the meaning, as experienced by coaches and athletes respectively, of touch between them, drawing on Maurice Merleau-Ponty’s explication of bodily communication to frame the findings of the study.

The current issue concludes with a review by Sally Borbasi of a recently published book by Les Todres, *Embodied Enquiry: Phenomenological Touchstones for Research, Psychotherapy and Spirituality*. Les Todres - who has had a number of papers published in this journal, edited the Special Edition on Methodology, and serves on the Editorial Board of the *IPJP* - has established a sound reputation in the field of phenomenology, and in his book he both reflects on the influence of the phenomenological tradition on his academic and professional thinking and practice, and presents a compilation of his own extensive contributions to contemporary scholarship and training in the field.

On behalf of the *IPJP* management and editorial team I wish you, our readers, every success in your research endeavours, and would welcome comment regarding your experiences of the journal and especially the type of content that you yourselves would like to see in future editions of the *IPJP*.

About the Author



Professor Christopher Stones has enjoyed a lengthy academic and research career, predominantly based at Rhodes University in Grahamstown, South Africa, 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.

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