



## Editorial

by Christopher R. Stones  
Editor-in-Chief

The *Indo-Pacific Journal of Phenomenology* has, for several years, received generous sponsorship from Rhodes University and, more recently, the University of Johannesburg, as well as being the recipient of ongoing support from Edith Cowan University in Australia. However, this has always been on the understanding that the journal would work towards becoming self-supporting in order to ensure long-term sustainability. Consequently, after several months of deliberation, consultation and discussion across a broad spectrum of the publishing and academic arena, it was finally agreed that 2010 would usher in a new era for the journal through the introduction of an author-based processing fee for submissions accepted for publication. Not only would this serve to cover the costs that are necessarily involved in any publishing endeavour, but it would enable the *IPJP* to remain true to the open-access model, with the journal's readers thus continuing to be able to freely download full-text articles. Under this new model, I am pleased to report, the journal is already seeing a smooth flow of high-quality submissions from both hemispheres.

As part of its new publishing model, the *IPJP*, in conjunction with the *National Inquiry Services Centre (NISC)*, has also embarked upon a "print-on-demand" release of suitably bound copies of the regular online editions as well as consolidated bound copies of the Special Editions released from time to time.

This first edition of 2010 comprises seven papers and a book review. Appropriately, the tenth year of the journal's existence is ushered in with a reflection by Lester Embree, a doyen in the field of philosophical phenomenology, on the current status of philosophical

phenomenology, as well as the currency of current definitions of phenomenology in general, in relation to the increasing multidisciplinarity of the phenomenological tradition. Citing more than three dozen disciplines into which phenomenology has been incorporated as part of their respective disciplinary traditions, Embree identifies multidisciplinarity as "the distinctive feature" of phenomenology in North America, with the move towards increasing multidisciplinarity a notable aspect of phenomenology's development over the past century. Given the disciplinary imbalance implied by multidisciplinarity, however, with philosophical phenomenology gaining little in return from other disciplines' adoption of its perspective and approach, Embree's paper challenges phenomenology to move towards becoming interdisciplinary. Pointing to the possible benefits to philosophical phenomenology, as well as to the relationship between phenomenology and philosophy itself, of engagement with, and enablement through, phenomenology in non-philosophical disciplines, Embree nevertheless points out that opening the discipline to the benefits of interdisciplinarity would, as a first step, require a move on the part of philosophical phenomenologists from a stance of "disciplinary arrogance", and thus beyond "discipline-centric ... superiority complexes", to what he terms "disciplinary tolerance".

The six papers that follow demonstrate the multidisciplinarity of phenomenology and its symbiotic relationship with the many human and social (or, as Embree suggests, cultural) sciences, covering the fields of education, anthropology, anthroposophical nursing and psychology, as well as

implicating other fields in their foci on phenomena as diverse as communication technologies, professional development, sexual story-telling in relation to feminist critique of Merleau-Ponty's lived body, a medical treatment modality, the aftermath of murder, and the link between ancestor worship and health. A common theme that emerged in three of the papers in this edition is "tolerance" – in addition to Lester Embree's advocating of "disciplinary tolerance", Ruyu Hung's emphasis on "tolerance of difference" and David Bogopa's on "cultural tolerance".

In her thought-provoking paper titled "Teachers Building Dwelling Thinking with Slideware", Catherine Adams reflects on both research and teaching methodology, on the poetic process of phenomenological writing and the acronymic technique of composing PowerPoint presentations, on the effect of "fitting the hand to the tool" on teacher tact and intentionality as much as on the act of teaching, and the insidious influence on the lifeworld of the classroom of "the silent languages technologies speak to us". Focusing in particular on the use of PowerPoint presentations as a medium of content delivery in the post-secondary classroom, Adams uses a Heideggerian framework in an interview-based hermeneutic phenomenological investigation of the lived impact on the educational environment, teaching practice and the teacher-student relationship, as well as on teacher experience and student expectations, of the increasingly wide-spread implementation of information and communication technologies in educational settings. Concluding that "educational technologies must no longer be viewed as neutral artefacts that may be added without significant hermeneutical and existential consequences to the lifeworld of the classroom," Adams cautions that technological teaching aids need to be critically evaluated and circumspectly used, heedful of the import of their "silent languages".

Remaining within the educational domain, the focus of Thomas Friedrich's paper, "Becoming 'Member Enough'", is on the development of a confident professional identity, and, more specifically, the lived experience of competence and incompetence in the pre-service process of moving from doctoral studies and a teaching assistantship towards becoming a university professor. What this means, and the nuances of how this developmental journey – familiar to many of our readers – is experienced, is captured through a hermeneutic phenomenological interview-based case study of the experience of a female doctoral candidate headed for an academic career. Friedrich identifies three sequential stages in what is shown to be an often demoralising process, moving from marginalisation and isolation towards becoming,

first, recognised as "authoritative enough", and eventually accepted as "member enough" by established members of the profession – as well as perceiving oneself as such. The findings of the study further point to competence as lived in context and a product of social interaction rather than of innate ability per se.

Ruyu Hung's paper, too, has educational implications, which she explores in the course of her reflection on the feminist critique of Merleau-Ponty's notion of the 'lived body' and its implication of anonymity. Conceptualising Merleau-Ponty's notion of body as self-authoring, and as such as incorporating the capacity to resist anonymity by being both the author and the narrator of its own life story, she closely examines the role of the body in the construction of self in relation to, firstly, Merleau-Ponty's central concept of the world and the self as reciprocally constructed, and, secondly, Ken Plummer's elucidation of the interplay between the private and public worlds in terms of his notions of sexual story telling and intimate citizenship. In the process, Hung points to the paradox of coexistence as crucial to self-construction – and yet conducive to complacent immersion in anonymous existence unless the latter is resisted. Insofar as resisting anonymity implies sustaining particularity and difference and relies on the ongoing process of self-authoring, the emphasis of education oriented towards resisting anonymity would therefore, very broadly, be on promoting tolerance of difference and the assertion of particularity through self-expression through a variety of modes, with due regard for the need for the boundary between the private and the public, within which boundary self-construction occurs, to be challenged when it sets a limit on what and how one thinks, lives and acts.

The focus of Tessa Therkleson's presentation of an applied descriptive phenomenological study of the effect of ginger compress therapy in the treatment of osteoarthritis is two-fold – on assessing the effectiveness of the research method in relation to the purpose for which it was employed, and on assessing the effectiveness of a particular treatment modality in the management of osteoarthritis. Exploring the experience of 10 people with osteoarthritis while receiving ginger compress applications over a period of seven consecutive days, the study, conducted in Australia and New Zealand, demonstrates the systematic application of an applied descriptive phenomenological method in the medical domain. Therkleson points to a rigorous process of reduction and imaginative variation as the key to discovering the essential characteristics of phenomena and, in this instance, enabling an indication of the potential benefits of the treatment modality investigated. She

concludes that the methodology presented has the potential, if creatively applied, to prove useful in other scientific research.

Three South African psychologists – Gertie Pretorius, Julia Halstead-Cleak and Brandon Morgan – explore the bereavement experience of young adults in the aftermath of the murder of a sibling. As the authors point out, the study of homicide survivor bereavement is a relatively recent area of interest in the research community, with most studies in the field having been conducted in the last 15 years only, so that theoretical models and nomenclature conceptualising homicide grief are thus still underdeveloped and unspecific. Overall, the findings of the study reflect mixed support for the existing bereavement literature on sibling loss and homicide grief. Given the dearth of research on, in particular, sibling homicide grief in young adults, however, the study makes a significant contribution in opening up the field for further study with its sensitive and comprehensive account of the stages lived through by the young adults interviewed in dealing with both the violent nature of the death and the unnatural nature of the death of a sibling. It further points to the need to be cognisant of different cultural practices in relation to mourning and bereavement and of how these practices influence the experience of loss through homicide.

The final paper in this edition, David Bogopa's "Health and Ancestors", derives from the field of anthropology and deals with the reality, cosmological centrality, and prevalence of ancestor belief in the South African context, highlighting the experiential reality pointed to by the cases presented of the cultural belief that issues of health are attributable to

the influence of the ancestors over the fortunes of the living. The performance of ritual ceremonies to appease the ancestors and ensure their protection could thus, in relation to health, be regarded as, in medical terminology, a prerequisite preventative measure. Within multicultural communities and institutions, however, and particularly given the high levels of ethnocentrism in South Africa, compliance with cultural traditions is often cause for intercultural conflict. Promoting the health of a large sector of the South African population by facilitating the performance of 'preventative' rituals thus, Bogopa argues, relies to a large extent on education oriented towards promoting cultural tolerance, and hence both intra- and inter-cultural understanding of and respect for culture-specific traditions and beliefs, among all sectors of the society.

As has tended to become the pattern in recent editions of the *IPJP*, this edition draws to a close with a book review. Tharina Guse, a counselling psychologist involved in professional training and particularly interested in integrative therapeutic approaches, reviews Ian Rory Owen's most recent book, "Talk, Action, Belief" (2009), in which he introduces his model of intentionality in integrative psychotherapy and explores its potential to facilitate a rapprochement of attachment-oriented psychodynamic therapy and cognitive behavioural therapy.

On behalf of the Editorial Board, I conclude with the hope that the contents of this edition of the *IPJP* provide an interesting and inspirational body of multidisciplinary philosophical and methodological insights that will prove fruitful in your own research endeavours – or simply make you wonder and ponder.

## 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.