



Editorial

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

In the process of preparing the papers included in the current edition for publication, an interlinking thread became apparent – that of the theme of narrativity, or the nature and role of narratives, in the fields of both phenomenology and psychotherapy. While directly addressed by the first paper, and both demonstrated and commented on by the second and third, narrativity is alluded to in the fourth as the link between the psychoanalytic process and hermeneutic phenomenology. The approach of the authors of both the book reviews submitted for this edition also happens to be such that their reviews are each as much a story about the reviewer and his experience of reading the book as about the book itself.

In this edition of the *IPJP*, narratives thus unfold as not only told but lived; as the inherent structure of human experience; as “part and parcel of the healer’s art”; as the nature of interview data; as the character of the psychoanalytic process; as the link, through Ricoeur, between not only Husserl and Heidegger, but between phenomenology and Freud; and, within the framework of phenomenological research, as interpretatively mediated, as selective and self-edited, as paradoxical, as “ineluctably relational”.

In the first paper, “Intentionality and Narrativity in Phenomenological Research: Reflections on Husserl and Ricoeur”, Marc Applebaum, drawing on Ricoeur’s theory of narrativity and narrative identity, addresses the implications for phenomenological research of the narrative structure of lived experience, proceeding from Ricoeur’s premise that “all experience forms and presents itself in awareness as narrative” and that human experiences are thus “lived as already stories *in potentia*”: “in the life narrative,

the self is the narrator of its own story” (cf. Polkinghorne, 1988). As Applebaum points out, however, narrating one’s story to another is nevertheless not equivalent to the living of the experience, but a lived experience in itself. The implications of this for both description and interpretation in phenomenological research are explored within the broader framework of Husserl’s model of passive and active intentionality and his notions of *Auffassung* (“interpretative determination”) and *Rückfragen* (“questioning back”). Given that, within this framework, it is clear that any account of one’s own lived experience, having active intentionality, is “inherently self-interpretative”, the paper raises seminal questions not only about the extent to which interview data can ever reflect the Husserlian ideal of being purely descriptive of “the natural attitude” – but also as to whether that necessarily detracts from its phenomenological integrity. Ultimately, the question with which we are left is thus whether, in respect of phenomenological description, a hermeneutic dimension needs to be recognized as naturally part of the natural attitude, and hence whether description and interpretation are to be seen as integrated, rather than just complementary, both in the substance and the process of phenomenological research.

The next two papers, psychological in nature but incorporating fundamental anthropological themes, together present an in-depth case study of the process of becoming a traditional healer in the South African context. The first part of this dyad (“Becoming a Xhosa Healer: Nomzi’s Story” by Beauty Booie and David Edwards) presents the life story of a Xhosa healer in the rural Eastern Cape Province of South

Africa, as told in the course of a series of semi-structured interviews. Detailing her experience of the process of becoming a healer in response to experiencing what progressively came to be understood as an irrefutable call from the tribal ancestors, her account, spanning half a century, reveals her own understanding of her responses to the ancestral messages and symbols that appear to her in dreams. This graphically detailed description is followed by its sequel (“Interpretative Reflections on Nomzi’s Story”), in which Edwards and Booi are joined by Manton Hirst, an anthropologist, in understanding the account given from alternative perspectives. Central to the authors’ reflections on the themes of the story narrated by the traditional healer is the acknowledgement that “To have a story to tell, to be able to articulate experiences in words, is part and parcel of the healer’s art, the ongoing therapy associated with becoming a Southern Nguni healer and practising as one. ... The healer’s narrative in the Southern Nguni genre, which Nomzi’s story exemplifies, directs the attention of listeners to the various insights it has to reveal.” The paradoxes inherent in the story are examined within each of three hermeneutic frames: Xhosa tradition and cosmology, and hence the cultural understanding of an initiatory illness as a call from the ancestors to become a healer, and, as such, an integral part of the transformation process; the focus of clinical psychology on cognitive, emotional and behavioural disturbance; and, finally, the perspective of transpersonal psychology on shamanism, spiritual emergence, and, in particular, the quality of clairvoyance and the development of “healing gifts”.

The fourth paper, by Archana Barua and Minakshi Das (“Phenomenology, Psychotherapy and the Quest for Intersubjectivity”), explores the possibilities, in the quest for intersubjectivity, for meaningful dialogue – an interconnected story if you will – between psychoanalysis and phenomenology. Historically, however – and, possibly, metablytically – psychoanalysis and phenomenology are already interconnected, both now being in their second century of development, with the first major works in both fields published within a year of each other (Freud’s *Interpretation of Dreams* in 1900 and Husserl’s *Logical Investigations* in 1900-1901). Karlsson (2010, p. 2) also identifies intriguing similarities in the life histories of the founders of psychoanalysis and phenomenology respectively. Both Sigmund Freud (1856-1939) and Edmund Husserl (1859-1938) were born, just three years apart, within the same half-decade of the 19th century in the same area of Moravia (then part of the Austro-Hungarian Habsburg Empire, but now in the Czech Republic), both were Jewish (although Husserl converted to Protestantism in mid-life), and both studied under Franz Brentano in Vienna – with the

stories of both in part thus a triumphant part of Brentano’s life story. This paper also points to the link in the narrative and interpretative flow of the process of psychotherapy between “the art of relating” and “the science of understanding”, the intersubjective and the theoretical, and the urge of contemporary psychoanalysis towards congruence in these regards. The paper concludes with Karlsson’s view that phenomenology can contribute to “building a firmer bridge between psychoanalytic theory and clinical practice” and thus enable it “to be grounded in one adequate (for its purposes and conditions) epistemology” (2010, pp. 19-20).

While reading the above paper, I was suddenly struck by the significance of the dual meaning of the word “relating” as referring to both “connecting” (whether conceptually or intersubjectively) and “narrating”. Is the essence of intersubjectivity perhaps the sharing of a story – whether as a participant in the lived experience of it, or, in the telling of it, as either the narrator or a listener? Is the essence of story-telling the connecting – whether experientially or relationally – of the Other and the I? As expressed in the paper by Edwards, Hirst and Booi, “Being embedded in the interactional setting that arises between narrator and listener in the dilated moment in which the tale unfolds, the narrative constitutes a social relationship in which the medium is the message” (p. 4). Applebaum, too, in referring to interview data as “embedded in relationality”, infers much the same about the interrelatedness of the narrative data’s meaningfulness and its situatedness in a relational context (p. 14).

And yet stories also connect one with oneself. Nietzsche, in the 1870s, pointed to the relationship between stories and identity, arguing that it is through stories that human beings define themselves, their boundaries, and their sense of their world, as well as the possibilities for themselves within its horizons. Without stories, asserted Nietzsche, man has no direction and becomes lost. Cultures, too, are embedded in the narratives that define them, and through which their unique identity has been shaped, transmitted and preserved, with the telling of communal stories connecting the individual with his or her cultural traditions and history. That story-telling has the power also to redefine lived reality was demonstrated in South Africa in the mid-1990s when the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) was established with the mandate, as phrased in the country’s Interim Constitution of 1993, to provide “a historic bridge” between “the past of a deeply divided society ... and a future ... [of] peaceful coexistence” (Omar, 1996, pp. 24-25). By enabling victims, as well as perpetrators, of gross human rights violations to tell their stories and have what they had experienced heard and responded to in a public forum, the culture

of silence which had kept the truths of separately lived realities hidden for decades was broken, the history of the apartheid past was rewritten, and a healing process of reconciliation – with the past, between people, and across not only the racial but the experiential divides – was facilitated in ways that might otherwise not have been possible, enabling the process of transformation to an integrated society to proceed peacefully. In this regard, Cone's (1975) understanding of "truth as story" is pertinent:

I am not imprisoned within my story. Indeed, when I understand truth as story, I am more likely to be open to other people's truth stories. As I listen to other stories, I am invited to move out of the subjectivity of my own story into another realm of thinking and acting. The same is true for others when I tell my story Indeed it is only when we refuse to listen to another story that our own story becomes ideological, that is, a closed system, incapable of hearing the truth. (pp. 102-104)

The current edition concludes with two book reviews. In the first, Bruce Bradfield relates his range of reactions to his reading of a text to which he found

himself unable to relate, *Darkening Scandinavia: Four Postmodern Pagan Essays* by Francisc-Norbert Örmény. While the author of this erudite work was given the opportunity to write a rebuttal, he instead proffered his "infinite thanks for this great and unusually-interesting and warmly-personal review", the "extremely sincere" thrust of which he found commendable: "I am more interested in reviews that describe the impact of the book on its reader (the way it collides with his horizon of expectation), than in those that dissect critically the conceptual apparatus that I put to work in the pages of my book".

The second review, by Rafael Winkler, is of *The Weiriness of Being: Heidegger's Unheard Answer to the Seinsfrage* by Ivo de Gennaro, who in this text explores the etymology of some key Heideggerian terms and the difficulties inherent in translations from, in particular, the archaic German forms: somewhere in which lies the clue to what the intriguing title of the book signifies.

On behalf of the editorial board of the *IPJP*, I conclude with the hope that, while relatively slender, this edition will nevertheless provide ample food for thought and stimulation of the imagination.

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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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