

EDITORIAL

Phenomenology is about the relationship between the objective world and our subjective world. But it is not just a formal research method, it is a way of life. The key to finding out about this relationship is our reflexivity, and it is this which contextualises us and which illuminates our being-in-the-world.

Although it may seem obvious, everything that is written has a writer. And when reading something the question is always, where is the writer? Phenomenologically, the writer has to position themselves not at the front of the work and dominating the field of vision, nor at the back of the work and invisible, but within, and this is the paradox; they have to make themselves not only clearly present but also transparent. In this way, their findings can have some universality as well as some particularity. This is why phenomenology is so difficult, because we have to steer a course between spurious objectivity on the one hand, and solipsistic introspectionism on the other.

We are, then, delighted to welcome readers to this, the first edition of the thirty-third volume of *Existential Analysis*. We include in this issue a number of papers, many from the 2021 Society for Existential Analysis Conference, the title of which was ‘We All Experience The World Differently’, which foreground the author’s subjectivity. This method, formally called autoethnography, relies more heavily than most on reflexivity for providing some transferability to the findings. Each author tackles the issue in their own way. The first paper by Chris Goto-Jones, which was the opening paper of the Conference, presents the case of a client’s “surprisingly intense grief” at the death of a tree in her garden, and opens out into an exploration of what “our relationship with the other-than-human world around us can reveal”. Juliana Jolly’s paper follows. Based on her Conference presentation, this explores the evolving phenomenology of borderline personality disorder in relation to existential isolation.

Next, Marc Boaz critiques the concept of ‘specialisation’ in psychology and psychotherapy, and Paola Pomponi and Serena Fianco, in a joint paper, consider “the volatile nature of identity”, drawing on their own bilingual and binational perspectives. Manu Bazzano continues with the theme of ‘Difference’ with “an auto-fictional exploration and theoretical discussion of the intrinsic difference, multiplicity, and otherness of the self”. Stella Duffy and Chris Cleave then reflect on an innovative creative writing and existential therapy workshop which they created for the SEA Conference. Their paper provides a vivid sense of the process in which they and their workshop participants engaged. Our final Conference contribution, by Diana Mitchell and Jyoti Nanda, takes the form of a dialogue – reflecting the spontaneous nature of their presentation – which explores “how difference

can enhance without being an obstacle in the therapeutic relationship”.

These Conference-related papers are followed by a further seven papers which each address different aspects of existential and phenomenological analysis and its application to therapeutic practice and everyday life.

This edition closes, as usual, with a number of stimulating and scholarly book reviews. Our thanks to Ondine Smulders for editing this section. We would like to encourage readers to contact her if they would like to review any titles from our list of publications received for review.

Regular readers may realise that we have continued with the white cover design that we adopted for Volume 32 of the *Journal*. We said then that our white cover represented the possibility of a tabula rasa, from which the world could perhaps choose a new direction with regard to the many global crises which beset us. While there are some reasons to hope that we are moving beyond COVID in the UK, the pandemic continues to be just that – a *pandemic*, which will require international cooperation. Similarly other major concerns, including in relation to difference and inequality, climate change and political instability continue to pose an existential threat which makes a tabula rasa as relevant as ever.

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