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Editorial

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This editorial has three concerns. First, an editorial is positioned between the intention of the freshly released issue that it is supposed to (re)present, and the various (un)expected expectations of the readers of the journal. It opens up a new journal issue, but nevertheless, is subordinate to the very body of the text. It is in this sense that an editorial can only wish to be read. From experience, we learn that editorials can be routine fillers or declarations of commerce. However, this does not adequately describe the true nature of the editorial. Editorials frequently address a vital concern of the editor, and with this aim they are different from, and serve another end than the various purposes of the papers of the actual issue. An editorial may enhance, lift, nuance, question, or go beyond the papers it serves to introduce. It might unsettle the readers by asking provocative moral, political or existential questions relevant to the papers. It may pick up threads and themes in papers and weave them further. As a genre of writing, the editorial somehow is constantly under construction, or *sous rature* - in potentiality - or in the situation of being continually erased by the unforeseeable movement of the prospective publications of the journal. An editorial is a track back to recollection, a text of current actualization, and in proximity to the intentionality of the journal – itself being neither the history nor the content, nor the intention of the journal. For these reasons, I believe editorials should be read.

My second concern is to point to the fact that we, as phenomenologists, are incessantly intrigued by real life. We are passionate about the lived meaning of the phenomena of life. Van den Berg claims that we are "obsessed by the concrete" (1972, p. 76). As human beings and phenomenologists we are embedded in existence – we revel in it. The lived meaning of every phenomenon is beyond our reach as the very moment of the experience belongs to the past. Each person's experience is protected by the uniqueness of the experience, as well as by the immediacy of the moment, as we strive to "reach out on life beyond itself" (Gadamer, 1985, p. 62). Van den Berg (1972) notes that the connection between people, the basis of their relations, is the association between themselves and objects, duties, plans, interests, some thing that is out there, not in the relation between them. If we are to understand relations between persons, we must describe the concrete context in which the person acts.

Ettore Scola, in his well-known 1998 movie *La Cena* (The Dinner), invites the spectators into a little Italian restaurant to mingle with the restaurant guests through a two hour long dinner. It is an ordinary weekday evening. We witness people entering the restaurant, being escorted to their table, considering and discussing menus, being served their customary meal or searching advice from the waiter before selecting special dishes. The guests come alone, in pairs or in larger groups: lovers, single parents with grown daughters, parents and a child, a woman with lovers, a teenage birthday party. They are eating, silently or talking, arguing or disputing, disregarding each other's feelings, indifferent to the other, or caring for the other.

We move between the tables and encounter people in pain and in love, foreigners and kindred spirits, persons in competition and alliance, people enjoying their meal in good company and people wishing they were somewhere else. The restaurant at dinner time inhabits a variety of human relationships, and like real life, the situations constantly pose the challenging question, "How do humans care and experience being cared for?"

In *La Cena*, as in life, some relationships are reciprocal, and both parties anticipate, or hope for, the attentive care of the other. The give-and-take relationship, however, is not the only possibility. In the film, as in life, we may experience that the Other addresses me unexpectedly, and disrupts my circumstances by taking captive my attention by directing it away from my own domain to the sphere of the Other. Herein lies the third concern in this editorial. Lögstrup (1971) points to the unspoken demand in every human relationship; the demand that requests a responsible responsibility from me, *me* as Lingis (2004) emphasizes. This is original care – the felt care that disturbs and interrupts my life before I know that I am disturbed. Morality does not enter the scene as a result of action, but at the very beginning of every speaking and acting relational act. Lögstrup notes that this is the reverse order of what we, in our daily life, tend to understand more chronologically, as the cause and effect of the process and product of human relationships. He says: "because power is involved in every human relationship, we are always forced to decide in advance whether to use our power over the other person for serving him [or her] or for serving ourselves" (1971, p. 56). In an early editorial to *Phenomenology + Pedagogy* entitled "We are what we publish," Max van Manen suggests that "a journal is the place where our voices are gathered for the sake of that which we speak" (1985, p. i). The sake of that which we speak in the present issue of *Phenomenology & Practice* is a complex variety of experiences of lived care and caring. The Other is the newborn child, the anxious student of the flu-infected classroom, or the person wishing to belong in friendship or in a body-soul connection to another. This issue of *Phenomenology & Practice* focuses on care and caring in terms of the parental responsivity in the midst of the conditions of medical treatment of the newborn, premature or sick child. Readers are drawn into the experience of teachers concerned for students during a flu pandemic in Nova Scotia in 2009. One paper speaks of the attentive care for women who, after weight loss surgery, experience a new sense of relation to inner body and identity, and another article addresses elderly people in rural England and their seemingly paradoxical experience of belonging through the potential or actual traversing of rural space. The multidimensional experience of the relationship between kindred spirits and lovers is the focus of one of the essays in this issue, while another asks the question of where trust "resides" in the interludes between relational expressions. The final paper in this issue of *Phenomenology & Practice*, the reflective book review, is concerned with the challenges embedded in our taken-for-granted pedagogical practice and discusses with the author of the edited book how and why phenomenology might create a space for a better understanding of caring for the unfamiliar in the familiar in education.

To care for someone is to be apprehensive, to suffer, to feel concern for this person or this situation. Care is a certain directedness or attentive orientation toward the Other, to a life condition that is other than my own. The existential independence and interdependence of care is expressed relationally, but all the same care seems to come from the outside of relationality. Care, like the other sovereign expressions of life (Lögstrup, 2008), is a spontaneous voice speaking from and embedded in existence. Rather than being reduced to a characteristic human quality, a human ability or convention –a relational device in human possession, or inherited as a human social disposition, care and caring address us from the outside of the human realm and are speaking to the human possibility, or rather to the

possibility of being human. As a murmur of the world (Lingis, 1994), or the *il y a* or the *there is*, care and caring, I think, is "the beginning of communication" (p. 114). Care is more than a human quality residing inside us as a potentiality. Care is given to us as a spontaneous existential expression in concrete situations, as the sheer givenness of life. Lingis urges us to speak with our own voice rather than as a representative of the common rational discourse (p. 112) when encountering persons in liminal life conditions. Limit-situations, situations of existential potentiality, are numerous in human life. Common to these situations, as Lingis says, is that

> we appeal to the others to help us be at home in the alien elements into which we stray: in the drifting and nameless light and warmth of infancy, in the nocturnal depths of the erotic, and in the domain of dying where rational discourse has no longer anything to say. (1994, p. 122)

We need the mere givenness of care because none of us can produce and maintain an attention responsible enough to wait without haste and anxiety of emptiness (Blanchot 1969 in Bauman, 1993, p. 87). In situations where human care is needed we are left to pass on unconditionally what has been given to us. Lingis' poignant phrasing is sensitively speak of the non-purposive quality of care:

> What speaks is someone in his or her materiality as an earthling; one that breathes sighs, and vocalizes in the rumble of the city and the murmurs of nature; one whose blood is warm with the warmth of the sun and the ardors of the night. One whose flesh is made of earth – dust that shall return to dust – who stands facing another with the support of the earth rising up in him or her; one whose face is made of light and shadow and whose eyes are made of light and tears. (1994, p. 117)

This editorial might serve to prepare and perhaps disturb the reader, and invite him or her into a new issue of *Phenomenology & Practice* – an issue in which life experiences are revealed in ways that might stir our lives in real and meaningful ways.

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