Foreword

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No one will be able to read this book without wishing they were there for the journey that gave it birth. Rich outcomes are enabled by richness of process. This book succeeds in drawing us into the journey of its travellers. The authors gathered at the Greek island of Skopelos to engage with a Greek Symposium method. The Symposium ethos is to discover deep relationships through love for thinking and the beauty of the mind. As Theo Gavrielides explains in Chapter 1, restorative justice is also an ethos, ‘a way of living ... a new approach to life’. A unity of method and subject is evocative in this book, as is its contestation (as in the Maglione chapter). How can we but be drawn to a process that takes the participants from one location to another looking out on the Aegean Sea and the unspoilt natural beauty of Skopelos, from monastery to monastery, to the patio of a Minoan villa, complete with serene Orphic Hymn?

There are many dimensions to Howard Zehr’s greatness as an inspiration for a restorative ethos. One of them is the way he urges us to understand our own biographies, how the way we think is shaped by our own culture, by the ways the natural beauty of our own country touches our souls and gifts us a love of place and meaning through belongingness. Brenda Morrison’s chapter is about Zehr’s idea of a journey of belonging. It is also true that we all become jaded by the daily struggles in our own land. And so we can be renewed by openness to be touched by the beauty of another, by the ideas of another culture, by wisdom preserved from their ancients. The journey of these pages may be no substitute for the relational engagement of being at Skopelos. Yet it is an inviting book that embraces those who imaginatively embark on the beautiful journey of the authors. Good writing also teaches us the art of love, the art of beauty. This is by welcoming us to experience wholeness through transformatively different eyes from our own.

The journey of the book traverses a great deal in an intellectually exciting way: Aristotle (with Artinopoulou and Gavrielides, Oudshoorn), Foucault (Maglione), legal pluralism and conflict of laws (Oudshoorn), paradoxes of power (Schiff), the philosophy of rights (Mackay, Sharpe, Morrison), of universal peace (Hadjipavlou), of co-opting the co-opters from below (Schiff), peacemaking circles (Zellerer), relationality and repair (Sharpe, Morrison), moral and spiritual injury (Mackay), social identity and interaction ritual theory (Hadjipavlou, Morrison), conflict resolution theory with Aboriginal peoples and beyond (Oudshoorn, Zellerer, Hadjipavlou, Morrison), teachings on how to live (Johnstone), restorative pain (Gavrielides), wholeness (Zellerer), among other themes. Prepare for a lot
Storytelling becomes more fundamental to character formation than laws under the philosophy of **ubuntu**. Most Westerners would say there is no useful translation of this to urban western criminal justice. Yet perhaps my favourite insight of Western criminology is that you cannot change police culture by changing police rulebooks which police do not read (any more than we academics read university rulebooks). Police culture is a storybook, not a rulebook. To change police culture, you must change the stories police share in the lunch room and out in the patrol car. South African criminologist Clifford Shearing is one of the authors of this insight, with Canadian Richard Ericson. There is nothing so practical for a western criminologist as a good African philosophy.

It shocks me that it is so recent that I have learnt that **ubuntu** is, and has become, a formidably pan-African philosophical tradition, rather than just a Zulu and Xhosa tradition, as I had understood it in the past. More dominant in Western high theory is the Durkheimian argument that formal hard treatment creates more social solidarity than division. Yet, as Brenda Morrison’s chapter points out, **ubuntu** has had an influence on the healing edge holistic restorative justice of Nova Scotia. This has been mediated for example through the relational theory of justice of Nova Scotian Jennifer Llewellyn.

Just as many African societies have in **ubuntu** a richer philosophical foundation for thinking about social solidarity, so many Asian societies have more philosophically nuanced traditions for thinking about the role of shame in holistic criminal justice than we see in Western teachings. The West should be more open than it is to allowing itself to be enriched by those philosophical traditions, even more ancient than the rich ancient Greek thinking on shame (as in Plato).

This fine collection helps us renew and reconstruct the core of restorative justice teachings at their holistic philosophical foundations where we also help us to look at them with wider historical and cultural lenses. As the Epilogue reminds us, restorative justice lives and evolves in the hands of this generation of travellers on our planet. Our obligation, the Epilogue sums up, is not to be the kind of philosophers whose aim is to define restorative justice more carefully, because if we ‘define water too narrowly’, we prevent people from seeing its other properties. The practical journey for our generation is therefore to explore the character of restorative justice, through understanding its values and practices (and its internal tensions, as in Maglioc). We serve the future better, our editors conclude, by being more interested in ‘What happened?’ than in ‘What works?’.

Congratulations to all the authors for sharing the journey back to Greece through their eyes. In each case we get an enriching reflection on the interdisciplinary character of restorative justice. Particular praise must go to Theo Gavrielides and Vasso Artinopoulou for their vision and entrepreneurship in assembling these wise travellers and pointing their compass for the journey.

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