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Filip Gołaszewski

Editor

<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6698-0177>

philipgolaszewski@gmail.com

Jan Molina

Managing Editor

<https://orcid.org/0009-0003-6534-2749>

janmolina@outlook.com

Dreams, Myth, and the Phenomenology of Entanglement

We are pleased to introduce the second of the two consecutive issues of *Eidos. A Journal for Philosophy of Culture* entitled *Phenomenology and Narrative* (respectively *Part 1* and *Part 2*). This issue continues the investigations into the intersections signaled in its title, being on the one hand slightly more closely focused on classical phenomenology, and on the other introducing some entirely new ideas into the debate. Therefore, *Phenomenology and Narrative Part 2* is rich in content that, we believe, should be of interest to the vast majority of scholars concerned not only with the problems of narrative, but also with the history of phenomenology and its contemporary scope and aims – a scope which is, to some extent, expanded by this issue’s contributors. At the same time, the Thematic Section keeps a noticeable coherence, since its articles

oscillate around similar problems of narrativity and often refer to classical figures such as Wilhelm Schapp or Edmund Husserl.

The topics highlighted in the title of this introduction can be treated as a compass guiding the problems tackled by the authors of this volume. The general topic of the narrative approach to life was described by Wilhelm Schapp as entanglement, the state of always being involved in a story, of both telling it and being told by it. Entanglement can thus be understood as a basic condition of the human being when it comes to the narrative dimension of experience. The articles presented in this issue can be read as so many different standpoints on these fundamental phenomenological insights. One could even claim that they cover the full spectrum of entanglement: starting with myth as the core example of being – unconsciously told by a trans-historical story that has an impact on philosophical thinking; going through a range of examples that show the role of entanglement in creating the sense of self in the context of the spiritual world and aesthetic experience; and concluding with limiting cases – such as dreams, symbols, and the atemporal form of the present tense in storytelling – that, to some extent, all expose the boundaries of entanglement and could encourage contemporary philosophers of a phenomenological and hermeneutic orientation to rethink this category.

The problems of biography, style, and the phenomenology of self-writing that were present in the first part of *Phenomenology and Narrative* are thus continued in the second part of the issue. The articles touch on some of the issues signaled in the previous introduction, such as the closeness of literature and the phenomenology of narrative, the understanding of the self through narratives and the interpretation of one's own experience through different styles, or the narrative modes of being that have an impact on what is claimed to be the individual or collective self. The forum section once again expands the scope of the discussion toward different fields of inquiry, this time the social philosophy of religion and the urgent topic of the image of refugees in contemporary social life. While the authors of these articles do not refer directly to the problem of narrative, this very silence can itself be read as a form of entanglement, the condition of being caught up in and told by a story that one does not thematize as such. We therefore have no doubt that the topics themselves should be considered urgent examples of entanglement in our shared and common story of social life.

Playing the cards we dealt in the introduction to the first part of *Phenomenology and Narrative*, we are especially proud that this issue concludes with an interview with one of the most influential scholars in the field of narrative phenomenology: David Carr, an author who needs no introduction to those familiar with the phenomenological tradition. For those readers of *Eidos* who are not strictly phenomenologically oriented, however, it is worth mentioning that Carr is – among others – the author of at least two brilliant books on narrative and phenomenology that have already become classics in this field: *Time, Narrative, and History*¹ and *Experience and History: Phenomenological Perspectives on the Historical World*.² In the short interview included at the end of this volume, conducted by Filip Gołaszewski, Carr briefly recapitulates his academic career and explains the sources of his interest in narrative and narrativity, while also touching on the historical role of Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel in the phenomenological movement, Husserl's relationship to Hegel's phenomenology, and Paul Ricoeur's approach to narrativity. We regard both issues devoted to *Phenomenology and Narrative* – particularly thanks to the rich spectrum of topics addressed by their contributors – as a fascinating and, at times, perhaps even surprising journey through the central themes of the research areas mentioned in the title. And we believe that an interview – which, for obvious reasons, is a more personal form of expression – with such a distinguished scholar provides a satisfying conclusion to this two-issue journey, and simultaneously, a good starting point for further reflection. We wish to express our deep gratitude to Professor Carr for the opportunity to conduct and publish this interview in the pages of our journal.

While Carr, now an emeritus scholar, may be considered a patron of phenomenological investigations into narrativity, many of the authors contributing to this issue refer to his work – some continuing his insights, others engaging with him in a polemical manner. Thus, his influence is strongly present among many contributions included in this volume, but let us leave the discovery of the details to the readers themselves.

1) David Carr, *Time, Narrative, and History* (Indiana University Press, 1986).

2) David Carr, *Experience and History: Phenomenological Perspectives on the Historical World* (Oxford University Press, 2014).

This issue's Thematic Section opens with an inspiring and engaging – both for its style and its content – piece “Are We Such Stuff as Dreams Are Made On? Narrative and the Oneiric Imagination” by Nicolas de Warren, one of the most active and influential contemporary phenomenologists, the author of books such as *Husserl and the Promise of Time*; *A Momentary Breathlessness in the Sadness of Time: On Krzysztof Michalski's Nietzsche*; *Original Forgiveness*; and *German Philosophy and the First World War*.³

It is worth highlighting that in this paper de Warren for the first time has made narrativity itself the direct subject of his analysis – a fact that deserves comment. While he has previously examined the phenomenology of dreaming, most notably in his essay on Sartre,⁴ narrative as such has never before stood at the center of his inquiry. In his major works, de Warren oscillates between academic idiom and a novelistic style of writing, drawing out the philosophical best of both. Thanks to this literary style, his books and articles are intriguing to read while their arguments never lose conceptual precision. He uses language not as formal ornament but as an expression of the thought itself, continuing the phenomenological tradition of figures such as Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty, and Sartre. In de Warren's hands, philosophical concepts such as time and forgiveness gain the weight and layeredness of novelistic characters: entangled in stories, they are forced to confront the peripeties determined by their nature. Similarly, the philosophers he writes about are never detached from their personal biographies – their life-narratives remain constantly present among the meanders of their thinking, within the historical and cultural conditions they inhabit. Given all this, it may come as a surprise that narrative itself has had to wait so long for his direct attention. The article presented in this issue may signal a change to come.

De Warren's article – its title echoing Prospero's famous words from *The Tempest*⁵ – is concerned with the limits of narrativity. It presents dreams as phenomenologically

3) Nicolas de Warren, *Husserl and the Promise of Time: Subjectivity in Transcendental Phenomenology* (Cambridge University Press, 2009); *A Momentary Breathlessness in the Sadness of Time: On Krzysztof Michalski's Nietzsche* (Jonas ir Jakubas, 2018); *Original Forgiveness* (Northwestern University Press, 2020); *German Philosophy and the First World War* (Cambridge University Press, 2023).

4) Nicolas de Warren, “Eyes Wide Shut: Sartre's Phenomenology of Dreaming,” in *Philosophy of Mind and Phenomenology: Conceptual and Empirical Approaches*, eds. Daniel O. Dahlstrom, Andreas Elpidorou, and Walter Hopp (Routledge, 2015), 224–43.

5) William Shakespeare, *The Tempest*, act 4, scene 1.

transgressive experiences that unsettle both sides of the contemporary debate on the self: neither classical conceptions of narrative identity, nor Galen Strawson's account of the episodic self, nor Dan Zahavi's conception of the minimal self can be straightforwardly applied to them. On de Warren's account, dreams are always narrated, and yet at the same time they deconstruct the classical understanding of narrative, with its appetite for teleological orientation, a distinct narrative voice, and plot structure. None of these categories can be discovered in the direct experience of dreaming; they are always imposed upon it by the waking subject who retells the former experience to herself or himself. Dreams thus turn out to be episodic and narratively formed at once – giving the lie to the presumed alternative between the episodic and the narrative views of the self. In his analyses, de Warren engages extensively with Jean-Paul Sartre's theory of the imagination and with the account of dreaming developed in the closing pages of *The Imaginary*.⁶ This yields a highly original reading of Sartre, moving his theory of the image into a field left largely unexplored even by Sartre himself. Furthermore, de Warren revisits – largely through the lens of Sartre's critique of the unconscious – Sigmund Freud's theory of dreams.⁷ Unlike the Freudian account, in which the dream is authored by a hidden censor and becomes a narrative only retrospectively, in analysis and interpretation, the dream as described by de Warren knows no hidden author: it has a reader, yet no author – it remains, as he beautifully puts it, a story in search of a plot, an experience that cannot be grasped from within the subjective flow of consciousness by any theory that splits the psyche in two.

De Warren also draws on a wealth of examples from world literature, both Western and Eastern: from the omen dreams of the *Epic of Gilgamesh* and Dostoevsky's "The Dream of a Ridiculous Man," from which the article takes its epigraph, through Proust, Raymond Queneau, and Arthur Schnitzler's *Traumnovelle*,⁸ to Zhuangzi's celebrated Butterfly Dream⁹ and Pu Songling's *Strange Tales from a Chinese Studio*.¹⁰ These examples show the perennial importance of the topic of dreams – a topic that has largely remained outside the scope of philosophical debate. Philosophers have

6) Jean-Paul Sartre, *The Imaginary: A Phenomenological Psychology of the Imagination*, trans. Jonathan Webber (Routledge, 2010).

7) Sigmund Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams*, trans. Joyce Crick (Oxford University Press, 2008).

8) Arthur Schnitzler, *Traumnovelle* (S. Fischer, 1926).

9) Zhuangzi, *The Complete Works of Zhuangzi*, trans. Burton Watson (Columbia University Press, 2013).

10) Pu Songling, *Strange Tales from a Chinese Studio*, trans. John Minford (Penguin Books, 2006).

rarely treated dreaming with full seriousness, even though the impact of dreams on philosophical thought seems far more formative than its popular association with mythical thinking would suggest. It is well known, after all, that Descartes resolved to pursue his philosophical project after a series of visionary dreams; a similar story of nocturnal illumination appears in Pascal's biography and echoes in his *Pensées*,¹¹ and in the twentieth century Walter Benjamin left us *Dreams*,¹² one of the rare examples of direct Western philosophical interest in dreaming. De Warren's paper fills this historical gap, taking up the fundamental problem of the dream experience – what might be called its narrative *re-tangement*, in contrast to Schapp's *entanglement* in stories understood as the basic modus of human experience.¹³ Dreams are experiences that transform our understanding of the self, and in doing so they may also bring to our awareness the fact that the narrative structure of life is built from transgressive material – material that is neither fully narrative nor fully chaotic and rhapsodic. Thus, de Warren's account of dreaming as a limit-experience reveals a state in-between telling and being told, a state that seems to expose the condition of life as such.

The following paper, "Against Mimesis: On the Loss of Narrativity in Present Tense Narration" by Yanna Popova is similar to de Warren's piece in that it also skillfully links phenomenological insights with direct references to literature, but obviously Popova's article raises its own, distinctive, but equally inspiring and original point. Drawing, among other things, on the notion – derived largely from the works of David Carr – of "natural continuity between narrative unfolding and the structuring of human experience as lived," and also on William James's and Wallace Chafe's analysis of the role of memory, the flow of thought, and its connection to the modulation of pace, Popova points to "the significance of specific grammatical markers such as tense" for a structure of literary narratives. Following Michael Basseler and Dorothee Birke (and partly Suzanne Fleischman's narrative norm) those narratives are understood as "constituting 'mimesis of remembering'" or "mimetic of memory." Popova then contrasts this understanding with the growing trend – much discussed in literary criticism over the past

11) Blaise Pascal, *Pensées*, trans. Alban J. Krailsheimer (Penguin Books, 1966).

12) Walter Benjamin, *Träume*, ed. Burkhardt Lindner (Suhrkamp, 2008).

13) Wilhelm Schapp, *In Geschichten verstrickt. Zum Sein von Mensch und Ding* (Vittorio Klostermann, 2012 [1953]).

decade – toward constructing literary fiction using mainly the present tense. Popova considers this problematic because as she convincingly shows it creates an “alien and monotonous temporal landscape” and undermines the novel’s aforementioned mimetic role. A significant part of the article consists of compelling references to and examples from different novels, including Scott Fitzgerald’s *The Great Gatsby*, Michael Ondaatje’s *The English Patient*, Hilary Mantel’s *Wolf Hall Trilogy*, and others.

The next article is written by Daniele Nuccilli, one of the foremost contemporary scholars of Wilhelm Schapp’s philosophy. His expertise is reflected, among other things, in the volume *The Philosophy of Wilhelm Schapp: From Phenomenology to Jurisprudence and the Hermeneutics of Stories*, co-edited with Daniele De Santis.¹⁴ However, in “Knowledge and Narrative: An Aesthetic-Phenomenological Account,” published in this issue, Nuccilli moves beyond a direct interpretation of Schapp’s philosophy of narrativity. While Schapp’s conception of *hi/stories* provides the point of departure for the discussion, the article is primarily devoted to reconstructing Ferdinand Fellmann’s understanding of the relationship between knowledge and narrative within his broader conception of phenomenology as an aesthetic theory. According to Nuccilli, Fellmann’s approach “may be understood as a significant transformation of the phenomenological project itself,” as it reinterprets Schapp’s concept of *hi/stories* as forms of knowledge that mediate the relation between subjectivity, the lifeworld, and meaning. As such, *hi/stories* constitute transcendental conditions of appearance and provide a mode of access to the lifeworld without abandoning its historical and experiential character. Consequently, Fellmann’s proposal entails a substantial reformulation of Husserlian phenomenology, since, as Nuccilli argues, “reduction must be understood not as a methodological principle of phenomenology, but rather as a natural continuation of the human process of representing reality through the original medium of *hi/stories*.” In this way, narrative fiction becomes the transcendental medium through which phenomenology reconciles the investigation of universal structures with the irreducibility of lived experience.

Following article by Francesca Maffettone titled “From the ‘*geistige Ich*’ to the ‘*Ich mit-verstrickt*’ and Back: Husserl and Shapp on the Narrative Constitution of the

14) Daniele De Santis and Daniele Nuccilli, eds., *The Philosophy of Wilhelm Schapp: From Phenomenology to Jurisprudence and the Hermeneutics of Stories* (Bloomsbury Academic, 2025).

Self” sets itself the ambitious goal of challenging the conventional interpretation of the difference between Husserl’s phenomenology and Wilhelm Schapp’s philosophy of stories as a rupture resulting from a gradual process of detachment based on Schapp’s rejection of Husserl’s transcendental idealism. The author seeks to present a more complex analysis of this relationship, one that aims for a possibility of a “genuine dialogue” between the two aforementioned philosophies. Maffettone attempts to move beyond Schapp’s noticeable need to distinguish himself from Husserl and points to Husserl’s concepts of the “spiritual world,” whose significance, according to the author, was underestimated by Schapp. Maffettone highlights that the “spiritual world” is an “intersubjective world of shared meanings in which human beings are always already co-entangled, and which comes forward through the spiritual gaze.” As a result, Husserl’s “spiritual ego” and Schapp’s “co-entangled ego” may constitute, according to Maffettone, “two poles that together bridge the apparent gap between phenomenology and the philosophy of narrative.” Besides that structural similarity, which may provide a possibility of dialogue between the two philosophies, Maffettone gives her own proposal for a distinctive conceptualization of the difference between the two theories. Finally, based on the arguments presented in the paper, Maffettone clearly states that, in her reading, Husserl “does not in any way deny the narrative constitution of man as a subject, understood as a person of his own spiritual world.”

Boda Liu, in his article “Husserl’s Understanding of Myth and His Universalism(s),” approaches the problem of narrative in the context of the founder of the phenomenological movement himself. Whereas Paul Ricoeur’s *Time and Narrative* and David Carr’s *Time, Narrative, and History* develop Husserl’s analyses of internal time-consciousness into comprehensive theories of narrative, Liu turns instead to Husserl’s reflections on myth, focusing on the role it plays in his teleological conception of reason developed in *The Crisis of European Sciences*. Although Liu’s discussion touches upon issues that recall Derrida’s critique of the Eurocentric ambitions of Husserlian phenomenology,¹⁵ his aim is not to deconstruct Husserl’s project but to reconstruct its internal complexity. Rather than treating myth simply as the opposite of rationality, Liu argues that Husserl also understands it as the cultural matrix from which reason and the pursuit of universality emerge. On this basis, he reconstructs three distinct conceptions of universalism present in Husserl’s writings and

15) Jacques Derrida, *Of Spirit: Heidegger and the Question* (University of Chicago Press, 1989), 120–121.

argues that only a dialogical and self-critical conception remains fully consistent with Husserl's broader phenomenological project. Consequently, instead of merely criticizing Husserl's Eurocentric aspirations, Liu offers a more nuanced interpretation, showing that Husserl's conception of universalism ultimately rests on the recognition of cultural plurality and the possibility of intercultural dialogue, rather than on the exclusive normative privilege of European rationality.

The thematic section concludes with Marcus van Binsbergen's article "Narrative Symbolic Form and the Phenomenology of Revolutionary Time." Drawing on Reinhart Koselleck, David Carr, and Carlo Severi, the author reconstructs the emergence of modern political temporality after the French Revolution and argues that the constitution of collective identity cannot be explained through narrative alone. While Carr convincingly demonstrates how narrative gives rise to a phenomenological "we," van Binsbergen argues that such an account remains implicitly logocentric, since it leaves underdetermined the constitutive role of symbols, rituals, and images. By incorporating Severi's theory of chimeric symbolic forms, he shows that revolutionary time is stabilized not only through narrative reflection but also through symbolic practices that make collective identity sensuously present. Van Binsbergen's proposal is both original and thought-provoking, offering a fresh perspective on the phenomenology of narrative by demonstrating that symbolic forms are not merely expressive but constitutive of collective temporal experience.

The Forum section opens with an essay by Manfred Svensson titled "Religion, Free Speech, and Intellectual Freedom. John Stuart Mill, Abraham Kuyper, and the Perils of a Plural Society" in which the author compares the defense of freedom of speech and discussion in the writings of John Stuart Mill and that of his contemporary, a Dutch thinker, theologian, and politician Abraham Kuyper. In analyzing Mill's position, the author emphasizes the importance of looking beyond the famous Chapter 2 of *On Liberty* and placing Mill's position in a broader context, including in light of his other writings, such as *The Spirit of the Age*. Svensson emphasizes, as one can notice when analyzing Mill from this perspective, the importance of Mill's view of religion and his belief in the need to provide a "positive program of moral regeneration." According to Svensson, Mill "did indeed see man as a 'progressive being,' but this led him to a progressive form of religiosity rather than expecting it to wither away." Consequently, at least in some cases, Mill partially replaced the classical concept of tolerance with a celebration of diversity. In contrast, Kuyper, who was a defender of the

freedom of speech, but whose thinking was directly rooted in the Christian tradition, took a distinct position. As a thinker and also a politician, he argued – according to Svensson – that the state “is engaged in a specific form of toleration: not in the personal act of toleration, but in the arbitration” in order to – as formulated by Kuyper himself – “keep the arena open and free for the spiritual struggle.” Svensson points out that, in light of contemporary challenges – including, above all, debates about freedom of speech at Universities – the distinction between the two positions outlined in the paper has taken on new relevance, given that adopting either of them, even though both aim to defend freedom of speech, will lead to implementation of different solutions.

The second paper in the Forum section is a piece titled *Who Deserves Deliverance? The Ideal Refugee and Proximate Humanitarianism: Comparing Syrian and Ukrainian Refugee Reception in Poland* by Nicole M. Butkovich Kraus, in which the author aims to trace disciplinary mechanisms hidden in the liberal humanitarian approach using the example of the reception of Syrian and Ukrainian refugees in Poland in the 2020s. Drawing on Max Weber’s concept of ideal types and on contemporary critical citizenship studies, Butkovich Kraus introduces the concept of the “ideal refugee,” which she characterizes as “a disciplinary construction” and examines in relation to four dimensions: managed passivity, performed gratitude, cultural legibility, and productive futurity. The author then supplements this concept with the notion of “proximate humanitarianism,” which “does not require the extension of moral imagination across lines of radical difference” and “supports an abstract, collective moral economy beneficial to the provider.” Based on the aforementioned tools and referencing empirical data – supplemented by critical and comparative analyses – of the difference in the reception of Ukrainians and Syrians in Poland, the author points to the “specification of the racial and civilizational content of the liberal humanitarian subject” and attempts to “trace the mechanisms through which this figure [the ideal refugee] is produced and the ways in which it is contested by those it seeks to discipline.”



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