

# Narratives and the Role of Philosophy in Cross- Disciplinary Studies:

## Emerging Research and Opportunities

Ana-Maria Pascal  
*Regent's University London, UK*

A volume in the Advances in Human  
and Social Aspects of Technology  
(AHSAT) Book Series



# Table of Contents

<b>Foreword</b> .....	vii
<b>Preface</b> .....	xiii
<b>Acknowledgment</b> .....	xxvi
<b>Introduction</b> .....	xxvii

## **Section 1**

### **The Story of a Stroke, or Frankenstein’s Dilemma: Consciousness and the Self Across Disciplines**

<b>Chapter 1</b>	
The Story and the Dilemma .....	1
<b>Chapter 2</b>	
The Patient .....	19
<b>Chapter 3</b>	
The Neighbour .....	38
<b>Chapter 4</b>	
The Mother.....	55

## **Section 2**

### **The Role of Philosophy in Cross-Disciplinary Studies**

<b>Chapter 5</b>	
Practicing Philosophy, From Plato to Gadamer .....	91
<b>Chapter 6</b>	
Two Other Stories .....	101

<b>Chapter 7</b>	
Conclusion .....	165
<b>Related Readings</b> .....	179
<b>About the Author</b> .....	196
<b>Index</b> .....	197

## Preface

*I have no way of knowing whether the events that I am about to narrate are effects or causes. — Jorge Luis Borges, Collected Fictions*

The same event will be a cause to some, and an effect to others; this is what is meant by multiple interpretations in literature and hermeneutics, perspectivism in philosophy, or the ‘beauty in the eye of the beholder’ principle in aesthetics. But what matters more than idiosyncrasy – in all these fields – is the event itself. The multitude of events, the richness of life, which is the greatest gift we have been given, and the best source of education there is.

### **LIFE AS EDUCATION**

What we mean by ‘narratives’ in the context of this book is life experiences – the kind of true stories that mark a whole life. There may be one or a handful of these in every person’s life, which have the power to make or break a person – either physically, mentally, or spiritually (or both). This kind of events tend to display a certain self-sufficiency, a holistic, almost otherworldly quality, which, on the one hand, inspires an association with fate or other transcendental beliefs (and therefore a temptation to dismiss any special attention paid to them as superstition or the product of our imagination), whilst on the other hand, it brings them back to mind over and over again, like in a memory cycle. We cannot help being intrigued by what seems to defy linear thinking and temporality. If something occurs that is apparently unrelated to what precedes it, it keeps nagging at the back of our mind, until we either find a connection between it and the rest of our life, or we accept to classify it as ‘mysterious’, ‘uncanny’, ‘unearthly’, ‘mystical’, ‘supernatural’, or just ‘special’ enough to warrant a separate place in our life, quite distinct from all other events.

This kind of unique life experiences – with or without a transcendental quality attached to them – not only touch us deeply, but they also change our (outlook in) life to an extent that, if we look back to yesteryears, it is these very events – the unusual, the extra-ordinary – that define our life, rather than the perfectly understood, orderly ones. It is such ‘out-of-this-world’ events that hold the key to our existence. They encapsulate our life, in the way that the tiniest shard can reflect the slightest ray of light even in the darkest of places.

A stranger’s unexpected act of kindness can be such an event; a moment of sudden joy, in the midst of a cycle of despair; a chance encounter that turns to become our closest friend; a long-forgotten, rediscovered letter, which proves to hold the key to a never-quite-fully-understood disappearance; an unexpected guest, a sudden arrival, departure, or unexplained silence; a word or the absence of a word; an accident; anything, no matter how small and apparently insignificant, can become a life-changing event, the same way that big news – of some political or corporate scandal – can reach us with the force of a tsunami and turn our life around, or upside down.

It is because of this ability to encapsulate a life, that such events may be called exemplary – in the sense that, when called to define our life, we think of them; they are evocative (or reminiscent) of our whole life, just like the little shard reflects the light, regardless of how big or small, polished or not, it may be. Whether it is a stranger’s smile on a deserted road or a scientific breakthrough, an encounter with God or a corporate scandal, an army or a ghost, such events that change us are exemplary, and thereby worthy of attention. More worthwhile, in fact, than planned or systematic developments whether in science, religion, commerce or politics, may ever be. Because more consequential.

It is of such events that this book is about. Both the medical case we discuss in detail in Section 1 and the further two examples we mention in Section 2, as different as a stroke is from a corporate scandal, or a dream from a bank, are real-life events that I have experienced in my own life, which been immensely consequential at different levels – from my family life (in the case of the stroke and the artist’s revelation), to my adoptive country, with a corporate scandal leading to changes in corporate criminal law.

Each of these stories is exemplary, in its own way. The story of the mysterious union of body and mind, for example (which we explore in detail) and how it makes us unique, providing us with a sense of personal identity, through a combination of science, psychology, art, and spirituality, is in a sense the oldest narrative of all – about the mystery of creation and how body and mind work together. Likewise, the story of art as a way of living authentically and

## Preface

expressing oneself in a radically different way than before, as a result of a spiritual conversion, is also an emblematic story, which individuals from across cultures experience at some point in their lives. Incidentally, ‘art’ here can be understood in its wider sense, as to include fashion, media, literature and other means of communication. Finally, the story of a change in law can be seen as the millennia-old story of fighting for justice (whether for slaves, women, children, or homosexuals) and our existential need for it.

But why do we need to talk about such *narratives* – exemplary as they may be, in the context of higher education? And why should we do it like this, in a book about cross-disciplinary studies? Quite simply put, because it is events like this that make us who we are, both as individuals and as collectives, so it is only natural that we should be prepared for them. It is our deeply held conviction that cross-disciplinary studies provide the best context for debate on such events, which are by their very nature holistic, rather than discipline-based. Whilst narrow, discipline-based debates on legal, economic, sociologic, or aesthetic matters focus on one aspect alone, a cross-disciplinary, birds’ eye view, so to speak, allows enough width and freedom of perspective to enable us to understand these events better, as they are by nature multifaceted. To give but one example, a corporate scandal has legal, economic, social, political, regulatory, ethical and philosophical sides to it, and studying it from a single point of view (in the context of a ‘purely’ legal or commercial approach) would inevitably reduce its complexity and limit our understanding of it.

If the main purpose of our research here is to provide a more appropriate (for non-compartmentalized) context for debate on key, life-changing events (thereby a better preparation for life) than discipline-based education does, we also have a secondary aim. This is to explore at least one such event in detail, for the very reason that they are exemplary – and thus worth thinking and talking about. In this sense, our endeavour may be described as a phenomenological one, guided as much by Husserl’s prompt to go “back to the things themselves”, that is to the way they are given in experience (Husserl, 1900-1901/2001, p. 168) and his focus on *Lebenswelt* (the world of life), as by Heidegger’s belief that, by going *out there*, in search for something (whether we call it Being or Beyng), that something will come and meet us half way, showing itself to us at some point – in some ‘event’; because interpretation is hardly ever more than a reflexive process of understanding developing itself (Heidegger, 1927/2005, p. 188). The story discussed here is meant to evoke such special pursuits, where more than meets the eye may be at stake, revealing itself, either in its roots (where does a revelatory dream come from?) or its

implications for the self. A stroke is never just a stroke in the life of a person and their family; it can be the beginning of a new life, or the opportunity to become close to someone; it may trigger a spiritual experience, or lead to changes in personality, job, and outlook in life.

We could have chosen to talk about *journeys* instead, for journeys have the same capacity to reveal more than meets the eye. Suffice it to say that, when asked to describe the most important educational event in their life, the majority of a group of international students (undergraduates at Regent's University London, between 2016 and 2018) referred to their international experience, rather than an episode from their programme of education. To them, the journey itself – from their home country to London, sometimes crossing several cultures (as these are students with a particularly mixed background) was educational, in a way that is equally, if not more, significant than conventional education. Further details on this can be found in the Conclusion.

One more thing to reflect on, regarding such events, and the rich educational potential of debates surrounding them, is the role of exemplary figures in them – or *mentors*, for lack of a better word. In our main case from Section 1, the key figure is *the patient*, whilst in the two stories from Section 2, they are *the activist* (who aims to achieve justice for the victims of corporate greed), respectively *the artist* or *the saint*. In the Conclusion, we shall discuss the extent to which these human models are important from an educational – and more generally, from an epistemological – viewpoint.

## THE ROLE OF PHILOSOPHY

What about the role of philosophy alluded to, in the title of the book? Underlying the kind of liberal, cross- (or multi-) disciplinary education that this book advocates is what Carlos Frankel calls “a culture of debate” (Frankel, 2015, p. 142), and what both Plato and Hans-Georg Gadamer considered essential to any human pursuit; it is *dialogue*, rather than the unidirectional – objectivist – type of study, which we believe to be more appropriate for understanding real-life events like the ones we discuss. And it is dialogue, rather than unidirectional decision, that might prove more helpful than singular knowledge in situations of conflict, which many real-life stories entail. This is where philosophy comes in, both as a method and as an aim worth pursuing in itself, not only in the context of American liberal education, but also in British and Continental ones, where education is becoming

## Preface

increasingly cross-disciplinary. Again, the kind of philosophy we refer to is the practical one, which always entails a certain experience or method – be that the Socratic dialogue, Heidegger’s existential hermeneutics (Heidegger, 1927/2005), Gadamer’s dialogical philosophy (Gadamer, 1960/1996, p. 36), inspired by Plato’s ethics and Aristotle’s practical wisdom, *phronesis* (Aristotle, 349BC/1996, pp. 149-150), or neo-pragmatist ‘philosophical arts of living’ (Shusterman, 1997, p. 3). We discuss all these different methods (or pathways to wisdom) in chapter 5.

As such, the book entails at once *existential philosophy* – because it creates the context for a debate on issues that not only resemble reality, but are actually part of it, and *experiential learning* – through an invitation to immerse ourselves in the multifaceted reality of those events, and learn from what real patients, artists, victims and lay persons experience.

The cross-disciplinary aspect of each story (see below) leads us to the final point about the role we envisage for philosophy here. In order to study and reflect on such stories, one needs to have a bird’s eye view of things, a certain degree of non-discipline specific wisdom. This is the kind of wisdom that, for example, Plato’s famous “philosopher-king” would have, one that entails both depth of understanding (i.e. of the difference between illusion and truth, or the essence of things) and practical ability to debate aspects of reality in a holistic manner. Gadamer’s notion of *phronesis* is equally anchored in the realm of practice, which it aims to experience, rather than just reflect upon.

Indeed, one does not need a lot of arguments to appreciate that medicine is not only science; it is also, of course, psychology, ethics, religion, the power of the human spirit – and philosophy. Psychology and psychiatry without philosophy (indeed, even metaphysics) are but a guess game. Likewise, law is more than jurisprudence; it is ethics and politics, business, strategy and psychology, too. And art, of course, is always about everything else – life, nature, gods, faith and purpose. It is about who we are, where we come from, and where we are heading to. It is about our process of becoming. Gauguin’s reflective, testamentary painting *D’où Venons Nous / Que Sommes Nous / Où Allons Nous* (Where Are We Coming From? What Are We? Where Are We Going?) comes to mind.

It is especially this coincidence between art and knowledge, which ancient Greeks understood well. Plato, in particular, spoke about Ideas (that we call Forms) using the Greek verb *idein*, which means to see – both visually and mentally. Hence – the role of images and visual representations in philosophy and the process of understanding, as well as in politics (for a lot of Plato’s *Dialogues* are dedicated to exploring social issues like justice,

equity, governance, and the common good (Plato, 1997). The whole point, for example, of a long discussion in *The Republic* about various states of mind (from mere illusion, through opinion, to knowledge and finally to superior understanding) and how the good is more important than knowledge or any other ‘Form’ is to emphasize the social responsibility of intellectuals. (S)he who manages to free themselves from the chains of illusion and mere opinion to attain knowledge have yet to return to the cave and help the others free themselves up. Only then is knowledge worthy of its name, when it is used to achieve the good. The primary role of philosophy is this – to serve the good, to nurture the debate, which helps others (and society itself) become better.

I have recently learnt that one of my early mentors – a Socratic figure, who for many years showed me what it meant to think philosophically – had actually failed in assuming a social role, at a time in local history when it mattered most; it was just before the time when I met him and started learning from him. Not only, I hear, did he fail to return to the cave, but he actually helped fuel the illusion therein, by not taking a stance on it, and not engaging in actions that could have helped free others. Did this change anything in my mind, about him as a thinker and about the type of philosophy he was teaching us? Yes, it did. Philosophy is public and assumed – or it means very little at all.

This, Hans-Georg Gadamer knew well, and he proved it throughout his long life and career. (He died aged 102, never having joined the Nazi party, and continued his efforts to rehabilitate German philosophy until his death). His hermeneutical project, although initially influenced by Heidegger, became more focused on the power and limits of language, dialogue, and education, than on an abstract notion of Being. Gadamer rehabilitated philosophical historicism, which had been compromised during the war, emphasising the temporality of language, values and truth. He suggested that, once we acknowledge this historicity – for example, the ‘pre-judgements’ involved in all our knowledge and understanding, we can engage in hermeneutical projects that open new, genuine paths of wisdom to us. Such projects, which are typically based on dialogue and mediation, include literary hermeneutics, legal discourse, and artistic interpretive endeavours, where he believes the meaning of an artwork is better appreciated through a continuous conversation between artist and consumers. But Gadamer also addressed the topic of education, seen both in terms of personal development (a process that he calls *Bildung*) and in the context of institutional practices (Gadamer, 1989; 2004). About the latter, he says that one’s ability to teach others to think and judge freely, for themselves, represents an important (or “eminent”) political act;

## **Preface**

the former is also fundamentally influenced by interaction with others – with another mind. This is why Gadamer sees philosophy, above all, as a mission (Gadamer, 2004). All these topics that he was keen to address – from art and literature to the law, and from one’s personal development to educational activities – are practical, and they entail a cross-disciplinary approach. That is why Gadamer features so prominently in this book.

## **CROSS-DISCIPLINARY EDUCATION**

To clarify the intended meaning of the phrase ‘cross-disciplinary studies’ in this book, we should first explain how it differs from other, related terms, such as ‘multidisciplinary’, ‘interdisciplinary’, ‘transdisciplinary’ and ‘integrated’ (or ‘holistic’) research. It is important to understand how each of these relates to our case studies, and to ‘cross-disciplinarity’ as a whole.

### **The Meaning of the Word ‘Cross-Disciplinarity’**

The phrase is an umbrella term, which is meant to cover all types of *integrated* approaches – that is, a whole range of methods of combining and transgressing individual disciplines. As some of these methods are more integrative than others, they range from ‘multi-’, to ‘inter-’, and ultimately ‘trans-disciplinary’ studies. They are partially synonyms, but whilst ‘multi’ refers to a *combination* of data and methods from different disciplines (or their juxtaposition), and ‘inter-’ points towards the space *between* disciplines, ‘trans-’ suggests something new might arise once we venture *beyond* disciplinary areas altogether.

In this book, we are interested in facilitating debate both across and between disciplines (with the potential to exceed them altogether) and the term ‘*cross-disciplinary*’ seems best equipped to accommodate all the options. As the founder of transdisciplinary research, Basarab Nicolescu says, “knowledge is forever open” (Nicolescu, 2010, December), so we should always aim to transcend not only what we know, but also the way in which we organize what we know – into subjects and disciplines.

### **Three Variants of Integrated Research**

Each of the three stories that we discuss in this book is intrinsically multifaceted, so one should always approach them (at least) from a multidisciplinary point

of view. We should not debate them within the context (and constraints) of a single discipline; instead, we should try to look at each story from a multidisciplinary perspective *at once*. For example, the stroke and its impact on a person's mind, body, and personality, will be discussed within the context of neuroscience, psychology, and philosophy at once, with an input from arts and religion.

My notion of 'cross-disciplinary', therefore, presupposes *multi-disciplinarity*, in the sense that all cases discussed here integrate knowledge and methods from several disciplines; sometimes the debate sits between disciplines, such as in the case of the artist, and can therefore be described as *inter-disciplinary*; other times it cuts across disciplines (e.g. psychology, medicine, philosophy) and cultural expressions (art, cinema, theatre, spirituality), as the debate on self and consciousness, starting from the story of a stroke, in Section 1. The debate, in this case, is like a cross-road, where different paths meet and help us move forward, opening up new perspectives. The legal debate can also be seen as such an example of *trans-disciplinary* approach, for it cuts across law, business, ethics and philosophy, leading to something new in public policy.

At advanced levels in higher education (arguably, during the last year before graduation), we should stop doing "ethics", "psychology", "business" or "philosophy" separately; instead, we should aim to cross the bridge between a discipline-based and a more unitary type of education, where we try to approach topics mostly from a cross-disciplinary point of view (be that multi-, inter-, or trans-). The aim at this stage should be to go beyond single discipline boundaries, to reach a more unified understanding that would better equip students for life, where things are never separate, unidimensional, or quarantined in discipline-based silos. That is why I favour cross-disciplinarity, for it resembles life more than any other educational approach; and it is always at cross-roads, or in the space between and beyond disciplines, that new perspectives arise.

Given the wide scope of this book and its intended audience, we have decided to use language that is most comprehensive, allowing for all three versions of cross-disciplinarity. This way, we hope the book should appeal to people outside the academia, as well as to professional academics. The phrase 'cross-disciplinary' suggests the wide range of communication between and across disciplines, which researchers often call 'multiple disciplinary', 'integrated', 'holistic', and – sometimes – 'interactive' research. These are directly linked with our key aim here, which is to address real-world complex issues or events (see Choi & Pak, 2006, below).

## **Preface**

There have been three attempts to research and clarify the uses of terms such as multi-, inter-, and ‘trans-disciplinary’ research over the last decade. One study, by Julie Thompson Klein (2004), focuses on transdisciplinarity, arguing for its essential role in human sciences. Unlike the other two types of integrated research, she argues (in line with the tradition established by Basarab Nicolescu (2001), “transdisciplinarity is simultaneously an attitude and a form of action” (Klein, 2004, p. 521). We entirely subscribe to this view, which we link with the notion of practical wisdom from the Aristotelian-Gadamerian tradition, and as a consequence consider our first case study – the story of a stroke and what it tells us about the self and consciousness – as an example of a trans-disciplinary approach.

Another, most comprehensive, study, by two medical scholars (Choi & Pak, 2006), looks into aspects related to all types of integrated research, how they relate to each other, and to the wider group of ‘multiple disciplinary research’. They argue that “The objectives of multiple disciplinary approaches are to resolve real world or complex problems, to provide different perspectives on problems, to create comprehensive research questions, to develop consensus clinical definitions and guidelines, and to provide comprehensive health services” (Choi & Pak, 2006, p. 351). Having researched the meaning and the uses of terms such as multidisciplinary, interdisciplinary and transdisciplinarity – which, although increasingly used, are often “ambiguously defined and interchangeably used”, Choi and Pak conclude that all three terms belong to a wider umbrella type of phrase – like ‘multiple disciplinary’ or ‘multiple disciplinary teamwork’. This can be defined as follows. “The more general term ‘multiple disciplinary’ is suggested for when the nature of involvement of multiple disciplines is unknown or unspecified. While multiple disciplinary teamwork is appropriate for complex problems, it is not always necessary in every single project” (p. 351). Whilst all multiple disciplinary approaches are designed to help solve complex problems, by seeking a more holistic view of things than single disciplinary ones would otherwise do, it is again the trans-disciplinary type of approach that is most likely to lead to new ideas, solutions, or perspectives.

Finally, a study by Stock and Burton (2011) looks further into the details of each of the above mentioned types of integrated research – multi-, inter-, and trans-, and highlights another advantage the trans-disciplinary approach would typically bring, namely an inclusion of non-academics (managers, lawyers, the general public) in the debate. Therefore, what we get is a debate that “combines interdisciplinarity with participatory approaches” (Stock & Burton, 2011, p. 1098). And it is often the non-scientists, the practitioners,

who add most value to the debate (in the form of real-life data and experience) and help find practical solutions. A good illustration of this are the the work of lawyers and public policy makers, who helped move the *Herald* legal case debacle forward, to a process of law reform.

## THE HERMENEUTICAL POWER OF NARRATIVES

*In contrast to the amorous relation, which is based on how something looks, understanding is based on how it functions. And functioning takes place in time, and must be explained in time. Only that which narrates can make us understand. (Sontag, 1979, p. 23)*

Stories, myths, and metaphors are as powerful as images. That is why Plato, Hegel and other philosophers use them so much. As Critchley explains in his *Memory Theatre*, “Hegel’s pages are full of exaggerated and powerfully visual images, aides to recollection” (Critchley, 2014, pp. 30), because they have the power to stimulate the inner experience of understanding and spiritual discovery. Indeed, “the German *Erinnerung* denotes both recollection and the active experience of making inward” (p. 31), which perfectly suits Hegel’s intention in *The Phenomenology of Spirit*. Stories *make sense* by themselves, just like images, without any need for explanation or interpretation.

There is *live* hermeneutics already embedded in real-life stories or events. That is because, when we live through trying to understand them, we do so using a pre-understanding, which is half intuitive half reflective. This, in turn, can then be abstracted, generalized, interpreted and analyzed through a more elaborate reflection on the story (an authentic corner of life). This is the somewhat circular (and hermeneutical) type of philosophy-across-disciplines that I am talking about, which defies disciplinary borders and constraining norms. To understand something by living it – debate it whilst suffering its effects – means to reach the abstract level by starting from within the concrete. (Never the other way around).

I was made aware of this live process, where different aspects are deeply interwoven (from social and cultural ones to legal, economic and socio-political ones), just over a decade ago, when I became involved in the campaign for legal change on corporate accountability for health and safety in the UK; this ended with the introduction of a new law, the Corporate Manslaughter and Corporate Manslaughter Act 2007. Chapter 6 tells the story of that process, and how it arose from the pain of victims’ families, who woke up one day

## **Preface**

to realize they did not have any chance of ever seeing justice done for the death of their loved ones, because there were no legal levers in the UK to hold companies to account (in criminal courts) for their gross negligence towards their employees; and it tries to highlight how deeply interconnected the legal and moral aspects of that process were, as well as their philosophical underpinnings.

Later on in 2011, whilst on holiday in Bali, I had the chance to meet a local artist whose work was so imbued with a sense of spirituality, and his whole life was such a clear manifestation of his beliefs, that it reminded me of the artist-monks from the Orthodox Christian tradition. In both cases, life, art, and spirituality are deeply intertwined, to the extent that we cannot study one without the other. This is further discussed in Chapter 6.

Finally, the newly acquired understanding of my mother's enriched personality following her stroke in August 2015, comes partly from the revelation I had at that initial moment when I realized she could not talk to me anymore, and partly from the reflective process that both of us have undergone over the last few years. This is practical hermeneutics. And it is life, too.

This story of a stroke is not only the closest one to me, from an emotional point of view, but also the most intellectually challenging one, as it entails unsolved dilemmas in neuroscience, psychology, and philosophy. The issue of consciousness and the self – or Frankenstein's dilemma, as I call it – has deep ramifications, which cut across disciplines, cultures, and traditions. That is why Section 1 of the book, which addresses these issues, is the most extensive one.

## **A Note About the Title**

The “narratives” here are real stories, exemplary fragments of life; these are by nature multifaceted, so they lend themselves well to a cross-disciplinary approach.

The role of philosophy refers to the kind of all-encompassing debate, which resembles the Socratic approach – one that is more likely to take place in the Agora (amongst average people) than in an academic aula, a dialogue that is inherently cross-disciplinary and full of life.

The two – narrative and live philosophical debate – should go together. The ‘narrative’ is the case, which provides the occasion (a situation which becomes an opportunity for debate); ‘philosophy’ is the method, the way in which we approach it.

Finally, since the kind of ‘narratives’ that we refer to here are actual real-life events, they do not necessarily take the classical form (of Hollywood storytelling); instead, they might be interrupted, somewhat perplexing, and certainly open-ended. Both narrator and characters actively participate in each of them. Not only that, but viewers too, they add meaning to the story just like “we actively participate in making sense of the narrative film” (Bordwell & Thompson, 2010, p. 82). We live through them, and they are ‘live’ because of this mutual participation. The same can be said about the thinking process surrounding them; life and thought (thereby education) feed upon each other.

## REFERENCES

- Aristotle. (1996). *The Nicomachean Ethics* (H. Rackham, Trans.). London: Wordsworth Editions. (Original work published 349BC)
- Bordwell, D., & Thompson, K. (2010). *Film Art: An Introduction Paperback* (9th ed.). Boston: McGraw-Hill Education.
- Borges, J.-L. (1999). *Collected Fictions* (A. Hurley, Trans.). London: Penguin.
- Choi, B. C., & Pak, A. W. (2006, December). Multidisciplinarity, Interdisciplinarity and Transdisciplinarity in Health Research, Services, Education and Policy: 1. Definitions, Objectives, and Evidence of Effectiveness. *Clinical and Investigative Medicine. Medecine Clinique et Experimentale*, 29(6), 351–364. PMID:17330451
- Critchley, S. (2014). *Memory Theatre*. London: Fitzcarraldo Editions.
- Frankel, C. (2015). *Teaching Philosophy in Palestine*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. doi:10.1515/9781400865796
- Gadamer, H.-G. (1989). *Das Erbe Europas*. Frankfurt-am-Main, Germany: Suhrkamp Verlag.
- Gadamer, H.-G. (1996). *Vérité et Méthode: Les Grandes Lignes d'une Herméneutique Philosophique* (P. Fruchon, J. Grondin, & G. Merlio, Eds.). Paris: Editions du Seuil. (Original work published 1960)
- Gadamer, H.-G. (2004). *A Century of Philosophy: A Conversation with Riccardo Dottori* (R. Coltman & S. Koepke, Trans.). New York: Continuum. (Original work published 2000)

## **Preface**

Heidegger, M. (2005). *Being and Time* (J. Macquarrie & E. Robinson, Trans.). Malden, MA: Blackwell. (Original work published 1927)  
doi:10.1002/9780470755501.ch11

Husserl, E. (2001). *Logical Investigations* (D. Moran, Ed.; 2nd ed.; Vols. 1-2). London: Routledge. (original work published 1900-1901)

Klein, J. T. (2004). Prospects for Transdisciplinarity. *Futures*, 36(4), 515–526.  
doi:10.1016/j.futures.2003.10.007

Niculescu, B. (2001). *Manifesto of Transdisciplinarity* (K.-C. Voss, Trans.). New York: State University of New York Press. (Original work published 1996)

Niculescu, B. (2010, December). Methodology of transdisciplinarity – levels of reality, logic of the included middle and complexity. *Transdisciplinary Journal of Engineering & Science*, 1(1), 19–38.

Plato. (1997). *Complete Works* (J. M. Cooper, Ed.). Cambridge, UK: Hackett Publishing.

Shusterman, R. (1997). *Practicing Philosophy: Pragmatism and the Philosophical Life*. New York, London: Routledge.

Sontag, S. (1979). *On Photography*. London: Penguin Books.

Stock, P., & Burton, R. J. (2011). Defining Terms for Integrated (Multi-Inter-Trans-Disciplinary) Sustainability Research. *Sustainability*, 3(8), 1090–1113.  
doi:10.3390u3081090

# Introduction

This is a study of how real-life events, which are intrinsically multi-faceted and therefore lend themselves well to cross-disciplinary approaches, can and should inform all higher education programmes, not only those in liberal studies. A corporate scandal, for instance, which led to decades of campaigning for better law enforcement and eventually to a change in UK law, must be addressed both from an ethical, legal, socio-political and commercial perspective *at the same time*, not dissected in separate disciplines. A stroke and the ensuing recovery process entail clinical, psychological, social and spiritual aspects, all of which need to be considered simultaneously, in order to gain a holistic understanding of the event and its impact on the sense of personal identity. Underlying such cases is something that I consider crucial in higher education — namely, a focus on what Carlos Frankel calls “a culture of debate”; and this is where the role of philosophy comes in, both as a method and as an aim in itself, not only in the context of (American) liberal education, but also in British and Continental settings, where education is becoming increasingly applied and cross-disciplinary. It is a tradition of philosophical practice that spreads from Plato and Aristotle to Martin Heidegger, Hans-Georg Gadamer, and the neo-pragmatists.