

The NECS 2019 Conference

Structures and Voices: Storytelling in Post-Digital Times

13–15 June 2019

Hosted by the University of Gdańsk

CALL FOR PARTICIPATION

Deadline for submissions: 31st January 2019

For ages, storytelling has been a source of pleasure and consolation. Telling stories brought people together, allowed them to share experiences and transfer knowledge. Narrative was the most efficient device for storing, ordering and disseminating information. Yet, the times, they are a-changing. New communication technologies appear, which bring about the crucial question: What is the place of storytelling nowadays? Born in times when verbal language and talking were the main means of communication, it seems to have inherited their basic traits: linearity, a sequential nature and logical structure, all of which have imbued reality with sense. The theatrical feature film, which dominated the media landscape throughout most of the twentieth century, enhanced basic traits of narrative, supplementing it with a visible human agent who occupied a central part of almost every frame, and was the principal force controlling the flow of events. Narrative—pleasurable, effective, inextricably close to common human experience—appears to be seriously challenged. According to Thomas Elsaesser, we are experiencing an epochal shift, passing from two symbolic systems of representation (visual-mimetic, embodied by easel painting, and verbal-symbolic, embodied by books) which have dominated since Renaissance, to a communication built around computers, wireless telephony and digitisation: “The consequence is that narrative (as the traditionally most efficient organising principle of connecting disparate information to a user) has to contend and rival with the archive and the database and their forms of organisation and user-contact.”

At this point the question arises: to what extent is narrative historically specific and technology- and medium-dependent? Can it still hold its role as a basic ordering device in times when information achieves the speed of light, when the logic of sequence is supplanted by the logic of immediacy and simultaneity, when simple causal relations are replaced by complex systems of multifaceted influences, where the effects are unpredictable and incommensurable with the causes, and where the agent who stands behind the events is not just difficult to detect, but very often simply undetectable?

The questions about the relationship between structures and technologies also apply to genres and media. How have classical narrative forms changed, such as novels, feature films, television series, and to what extent is this newness a result of a technological shift? What happens to a story when it changes its medium, moving between films, comic strips, graphic novels, photo-romances, computer games, animations, and many more? What role does storytelling play in genres which are not necessarily narrative, like many television genres,

and also “internet genres”, like YouTube videos, web series, interactive video games, vines? And what about “new media”, and “new new media art”, like net art, bio art, location media art, software art? Do they tell stories? Do they use narrative formats? And if they do, what peculiarities ensue from this encounter of old structure with new materialities? One should also not overlook the phenomenon of hybridity in traditional cultural forms, like museums and art galleries. What we can witness there is a process of narrativisation of museum spaces and exhibitions, and also, of spatialisation of stories in art galleries, for example in installations.

The shift in storytelling also affects methodologies of media studies. Old “big master” narratives and teleology of progress, although still in use, have lost their appeal. New orientations and research perspectives have appeared, like big data, critical infrastructure studies, object-oriented ontology, media geology and geography, open science. They seem more “spatial” than temporal, more synchronic than diachronic, and in that they seem to be better suited to the post-digital era. Academics, scholars and critics have started to use new film forms. On the one hand, popular film critics upload their video reviews and video essays on YouTube, without using the written word, while on the other hand, critical consensus about certain films is presented as a mere number on aggregation websites, such as Rotten Tomatoes or Metacritic.

The NECS 2019 conference will focus on narrative structures and voices in post- digital times. Submissions may include, but are not limited to, the following topics:

- classic and new approaches to storytelling
- forms of organisation of the narrative
- narrative structures and new technologies
- beyond narration – new approaches, constructs and ideas
- between reality and fiction
- genres, currents and their hybrids
- speech genres in post-digital times
- puzzle films and slow cinema
- narrative techniques and complexity in TV genres
- operational aesthetics
- transmedia storytelling
- diversity in storytelling: beyond (gendered, racialised or other) stereotypes
- experimental and avant-garde cinema and their narrative techniques
- new media art storytelling
- human-less media! video platforms, home movies, smartphone films
- storytelling in 5D, VR and expanded cinematic experience
- the future of cinematic experience
- storytelling in games and interactive environments
- storytelling techniques in web genres: video essays, YouTube videos, vines and more
- aural media and storytelling
- narrativisation of museum spaces
- new forms of media criticism
- local and glocal narratives
- subaltern narratives
- small cinematographies and the politics of identity
- local cultures and minorities in cinema
- between national and transnational

- censorship and disrupted narratives
- marketing, PR, distribution techniques and their influence on narrative patterns
- advertising, marketing and storytelling
- teaching, designing programmes, and storytelling
- media historiography and storytelling patterns

Scholars from all areas of cinema and media studies, whether previously affiliated with NECS or new to the network, are invited to submit proposals, but NECS membership is a requirement.

FORMATS

When preparing a submission for NECS 2019 please keep in mind the following restrictions. Individuals may submit only one paper proposal, either as individual presenters or as part of a pre-constituted panel or workshop. Conference participants may only serve in a MAXIMUM of two capacities. These might be:

- delivering a paper and serving as a chair of either a panel or a workshop
- delivering a paper and participating in a workshop
- delivering a paper and serving as a respondent on another panel
- chairing a workshop and serving as a respondent on a panel
- chairing a panel and participating in a workshop

INDIVIDUAL PAPERS

Individual presenters wishing to submit a proposal for a paper presentation of max. 20 minutes are required to provide their name, email address, the title of the paper, an abstract (max. 300 words), key biographical references (max. 200 words), and a short bio of the speaker (max. 150 words).

PRE-CONSTITUTED PANELS

We support the submission of proposals for pre-constituted panels with 3 or 4 papers (3 papers only if there is a respondent) in order to strengthen the thematic coherence of panels. Furthermore, several thematically related panels may form larger clusters. We would like to strongly encourage members of the NECS workgroups to put together pre-constituted panels, but we also welcome submissions from academic research project teams, museums, archives, and other institutions. We highly recommend no more than two speakers from the same institution with a maximum of 20 minutes speaking time per paper. Panel organisers are asked to submit panel proposals that include a panel title, a short description of the panel (max. 300 words) and information on all of the individual papers of the panel, as described above.

WORKSHOPS

Events such as workshops, roundtables or seminars – both pre-conference and conference – concentrating on more practical aspects of our field, e.g. teaching, research methods, publishing, or networking with the media industry are also welcome. Speaking time should be limited to 10 minutes per participant. Organisers are asked to submit workshop proposals that include a title and a short description (max. 300 words) with a list of participants.

WORKGROUPS

There will be an opportunity for NECS workgroups to meet during the conference. Please notify the conference organisers if you wish to hold a workgroup meeting: necs2019gdansk@gmail.com

Please submit all proposals before 31st January 2019 using the submission form available at: <https://necs.org/conference/proposal-submission-form/>

The submission form is only open to registered NECS members who have paid the membership fee. For instructions on how to become a member of NECS and how to pay the membership fee please consult our website: <http://necs.org/faq>

Participants will have to cover their own travel and accommodation expenses. Travel information, a list of local hotels and information on further events will be posted on the NECS conference website in Spring 2019.

See also: <https://necs.org/faq>.

Please email all inquiries that cannot be answered by the FAQ to: necs2019gdansk@gmail.com

IMPORTANT: To participate the conference, you need to be (or become) an active member of NECS! The membership fee is 50€ per calendar year. Reduced fees: students pay only 20€, post-docs pay only 35€. You can register at: <https://necs.org/user/register>

ACCOMPANYING EVENTS

THE 17TH NECS GRADUATE WORKSHOP

The NECS Graduate Workshop has been designed to give scholars at the beginning of their career a platform for networking with established European film and media scholars. The 17th NECS Graduate Workshop in Gdańsk (12 June 2019) is dedicated to the topic of Skill, Deskill, Reskill. Media Uses as Labour Protocols.

You will find the CFP online at: <https://necs.org/conference/cfp-2019/cfp-workshop>

Please send your submission with an abstract (max. 200 words) and a short bio (max. 150 words) to: graduates@necs.org

ORGANISING COMMITTEE: Paweł Biliński (University of Gdańsk), Patrycja Chuszcz (University of Łódź), Adam Cybulski (University of Łódź), Marta Maciejewska (University of Gdańsk), Paulina Pohl (University of Gdańsk), Łukasz Tokarczyk (University of Łódź).

NECS 2019 CONFERENCE ORGANISERS

NECS STEERING COMMITTEE: Judith Keilbach, Bregt Lameris, Skadi Loist, Michał Pabiś-Orzeszyna, Francesco Pitassio, Antonio Somaini, Alena Strohmaier.

NECS CONFERENCE COMMITTEE: Marie Aude Baronian, Luca Barra, Laura Copier, Sudeep Dasgupta, James Harvey-Davitt, Rahma Khazam, Daniel Kulle, Marta Maciejewska, Raphaelle Moine, Michał Pabiś-Orzeszyna, Paulina Pohl, Mirosław Przyłipiak, Antonio Somaini, Jan Teurlings.

LOCAL ORGANISING TEAM: Paweł Biliński, Kamil Bryl, Grzegorz Fortuna, Joanna Kiedrowska, Marta Maciejewska, Paulina Pohl, Mirosław Przyłipiak, Piotr Wajda, Krystyna Weiher-Sitkiewicz.