

# Participatory Roundtable Discussion

## at the 8th Conference of the European Narratology Network

Tuesday, September 30, 2025, 14 h | University of Wuppertal

**Chair:** Dr. Carolin Gebauer (University of Wuppertal, Germany)

### Invited speakers:

**Marco Caracciolo** is Associate Professor of English at Ghent University in Belgium. Drawing inspiration from cognitive science, the philosophy of mind, and the environmental humanities, his work explores the forms of experience afforded by narrative in literary fiction and other media (especially video games). He is the author of several books, including most recently *Contemporary Narrative and the Spectrum of Materiality* (De Gruyter, 2023) and *On Soulsring Worlds: Narrative Complexity, Digital Communities, and Interpretation in Dark Souls and Elden Ring* (Routledge, 2024). He currently serves as the Past President of the International Society for the Study of Narrative.

**Dr. Aigars Ceplitis** is the Dean of Media and Creative Technologies at RISEBA University of Applied Sciences, where he leads an interdisciplinary doctoral program specializing in immersive media and AI. An M.F.A. graduate from the California Institute of the Arts and PhD holder from Riga Technical University, his scholarship focuses on deploying narratological methods in Cinematic VR and other virtual frameworks that transform how audiences experience spatial media. Additionally trained in theater directing at the John Goodman School of Drama, DePaul University, he serves as Artistic Director of the RISEBA Student Repertory Theater, presenting Anglo-Saxon dramatic works to European audiences.

**Alexandra Georgakopoulou** is Professor of Discourse Analysis and Sociolinguistics at King's College London. She has developed small stories research, a paradigm for the analysis of everyday life storytelling and identities, with a current focus on storytelling as curated communication on social media. She has (co)-authored and edited 17 books of which the latest is *Influencer Discourse: Affective Relations & Identities* (2024, co-edited with Pilar Blitvich, John Benjamins). She is currently completing a monograph with Anna De Fina entitled *Analyzing Narrative Online* (forthcoming, Routledge). She is the co-editor of the Routledge *Research in Narrative, Interaction and Discourse* series.

**Maria Mäkelä**, PhD, is Senior Lecturer in Comparative Literature at Tampere University, Finland. She is past president of the *International Society for the Study of Narrative* (ISSN, 2019) and former director of *Narrare: Centre for Interdisciplinary Narrative Studies* at Tampere (2016–2020). Mäkelä's publications deal with storification and the storytelling boom; social media storytelling; the neoliberal logic of narrative and fiction; the digital literary sphere; exemplarity; consciousness, voice, and realism across media; fictional minds and free indirect discourse; the literary tradition of adultery; authorial ethos; and cognitive and unnatural narratology. Her research corpus ranges from French seventeenth-century novels to contemporary fiction, and from reality television and social media to corporate storytelling. She has headed

several research projects focusing on the instrumentalization of storytelling: *Dangers of Narrative* (2017–2020), the *Instrumental Narratives* consortium (2018–2022) and *Storytelling in Information Systems Development* (2019–2022); currently she is consortium director of *Authors of the Story Economy: Narrative and Digital Capital in the 21<sup>st</sup>-Century Literary Field* (Research Council of Finland 2024–2028). Her recent publications include *The Routledge Companion to Narrative Theory* (2022), co-edited with Paul Dawson and the *Poetics Today* special issue “Critical Approaches to the Storytelling Boom” (2022), co-edited with Hanna Meretoja.

**Stefania Sini** (Milan) is Professor of Comparative Literature at the Università del Piemonte Orientale (UPO), Vercelli. Her scientific works focus on theory of literature, rhetoric, morphology, with particular attention to Giambattista Vico, Mikhail Bakhtin and Russian Formalism. In the years 2001–2002 she collaborated with *Parlement international des écrivains* in Paris. Since 2004 she teaches metrics, rhetorics, and narratology at the School of Dramatic Arts “Paolo Grassi” in Milan. She is Editor in Chief of *Enthymema: International Journal of Literary Criticism, Literary Theory, and Philosophy of Literature* and Coordinator of the Steering Committee of FLECIR (Interuniversity Research Center “Philosophy and Literature”).

**Roy Sommer** is Professor of English and the director of the interdisciplinary Center for Narrative Research at the University of Wuppertal (BUW). He also leads BUW’s Center for Graduate Studies, a cross-departmental institution which supports doctoral students in all career stages. Roy Sommer is a founding editor of *DIEGESIS*, a bilingual open access journal dedicated to interdisciplinary narrative research, and the scientific coordinator of “Crises as OPPORTUNITIES: Towards a Level Telling Field on Migration and a New Narrative of Successful Integration” (2021–2025), a project which has received funding from the EU’s Horizon 2020 program. His research interests include narrative theory, narrative dynamics in open and authoritarian societies, as well as slow approaches to literature.

**Ondřej Sládek** is a senior researcher at the Institute of Czech Literature of the Czech Academy of Sciences, and a senior lecturer at the Faculty of Education, Masaryk University, Brno. He researches mainly in literary theory, narratology, semiotics and literary structuralism. He was the chairman of the Steering Committee of the European Narratology Network (2017–2021). He has published two monographs: *The Metamorphoses of Prague School Structural Poetics* (2015) and *Jan Mukařovský. Život a dílo* ([Jan Mukařovský: Life and Works], 2015). He is also the editor and the co-editor of *Český strukturalismus po poststrukturalismu* ([Czech Structuralism after Poststructuralism], 2006); *Performance/performativita* ([Performance/performativity], 2010); *Four Studies of Narrative* (2010); *Český strukturalismus v diskusi* [Czech Structuralism in Discussion], 2014); etc. He is also the editor-in-chief of *Slovník literárnědného strukturalismu* ([A Dictionary of Structuralist Literary Theory and Criticism], 2018).