

Call for Papers

Limits of Narrative

8th Conference of the European Narratology Network (ENN) Wuppertal (Germany), September 29 to October 2, 2025

Since Roland Barthes' formula "international, transhistorical, transcultural, narration is there, like life itself" (*Introduction à l'analyse structurale des récits*, 1966), quoted again and again, the conviction that narrative is a universal category of cognition and representation that is indispensable for recognizing and dealing with reality has become increasingly prevalent. Recently, Yuval Noah Harari writes: "Narratives enable the construction of large human networks by using false memories, creating fictitious relationships or generating intersubjective realities. [...] The networks based on narratives made Homo sapiens the most powerful of all animals and gave him a decisive advantage over lions and mammoths, but also over other human species such as Neanderthals" (Y. N. Harari: *Nexus. A Brief History of Information Networks from the Stone Age to AI*, 2024). Nowadays, the terms 'narrative' and 'story' appear everywhere in public discourse - from the search for "A New Narrative for Europe" to the "stories" on the homepages of companies such as Siemens or Johnson&Johnson to the "patient narratives" examined by Narrative Medicine.

In view of the rampant use of the term 'narrative', which often enough lacks a precise meaning, it is time to take a critical look at its limits. Is it perhaps true that we are currently experiencing a "mindless valorization of storytelling" (Peter Brooks: *Seduced by Story. The Use and Abuse of Narrative*, 2022)? The 8th ENN conference in Wuppertal (Germany) is dedicated to this reflection on the concept of narrative in order to sharpen it by defining its boundaries: Which phenomena cannot be appropriately labeled as 'narrative'? What are the boundaries and transitions between narrative and non-narrative formats? What are legitimate and illegitimate uses of narrative?

You can find the preliminary schedule here: <https://enn8.uni-wuppertal.de/en/program/>

Keynote Lectures will be held by **Monika Fludernik** (Univ. Freiburg i.Br., GER) and **Françoise Lavocat** (Univ. Paris III, FR).

Panels:

The conference includes 8 panels. These are the topics and the organizers:

Panel 1

Prof. Dr. Bohumil Fořt (Institute for Czech Literature, Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic, Brno, CZ),

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Ondřej Sládek (Institute for Czech Literature, Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic, Brno, CZ):

Inner Limits of Narratives: Narratives and Their Gaps

Panel 2

Dr. Matthias Grüne (Dept of German, Univ. des Saarlandes, Saarbrücken, GER),

Dr. Antonius Weixler (Dept of German, Bergische Univ. Wuppertal, GER):

Beyond Tellability. The Limits of Narrative in the Representation of Everyday Life

Panel 3

Prof. Dr. Stefan Iversen (School of Communication and Culture, Univ. Aarhus, DK):
Narrative and Generative AI: Theories, Methodologies, Practices

Panel 4

Dr. Maria Mäkelä (Dept of Comparative Literature, Univ. Tampere, FI):
Authors Against the Story Economy

Panel 5

Dr. Larissa Muravieva (Bard College Berlin, GER):
Limits of Self-Narratives

Panel 6

PD Dr. Coralie Rippl-Uhlenhut (Dept of German, Univ. Zürich, SUI),
Prof. Dr. Rabea Kohnen (Dept of German, Univ. Wien, AUT):
Limits of Narrative - Medieval Perspectives

Panel 7

Dr. Erzsébet Szabó (Dept of German, Univ. Szeged, HUN):
Causal and Emotional Understanding of Narratives

Panel 8

Prof. Dr. Tomasz Waszak (Dept of German, Univ. Torun, PL):
Cross-Genre and Cross-Media Transferability of Narrative Categories: Possibilities and Limits

You can find the full panel descriptions [here](#)

If you would like to participate in a panel with a paper, please fill out a form that can be downloaded [here](#)

Please send the completed form to the following email address:
enn2025@uni-wuppertal.de

Deadline for the submission of proposals: March 10, 2025

Acceptances will be sent out on: March 25, 2025

Please note that ENN8 is not a hybrid conference. The two keynotes, however, will be streamed.

Selected papers will be published after the conference.

Participatory Round Table: “The Future of Narrative Research in Europe”

Chair & Organizer:

[Dr. Carolin Gebauer](#) (University of Wuppertal, Germany)

Invited speakers:

[Dr. Aigars Ceplītis](#) (RISEBA University of Applied Science, Latvia)

[Prof. Alexandra Georgakopoulou](#) (King’s College London, UK)

[Dr. Maria Mäkelä](#) (University of Tampere, Finland)

[Prof. Stefania Sini](#) (University of Eastern Piedmont Vercelli, Italy)

[Prof. Roy Sommer](#) (University of Wuppertal, Germany)

[Prof. Ondřej Sládek](#) (Masaryk University, Brno, Czech Republic)

Since the ENN started with its opening conference in Hamburg in 2009, narrative research has changed significantly. New challenges, from policy narratives on climate change and sustainability to post-truth discourses and narrative propaganda accompanying the war against Ukraine, have prompted new theories of narrative com. The role of narratives, and narrative framing, has come under scrutiny, too, and storytelling practices on digital media raise ethical concerns. Finally, AI looms large over our text-oriented disciplines, changing the nature of writing and reading.

How should narrative research respond to these challenges, and what is the future role of networks like ENN? How can the onboarding of younger generations of researchers be facilitated, and how could the ENN be developed further? Finally, how will the changes in publishing, accelerated by AI, affect established formats like books and journals, and what does that mean for the future of time-consuming projects like dissertation theses?

The discussion of these questions will be kick-started by a round table discussion between the invited speakers, followed by a Q&A session involving the entire audience.

Doctoral Seminar:

The 8th International Conference of the European Narratology Network includes a pre-conference doctoral seminar on narratives, narrative methods, and narrative theory, organized by Julian Hanebeck (University of Wuppertal), Janine Hauthal (Vrije Universiteit Brussel) and Roy Sommer (University of Wuppertal).

This cross-disciplinary workshop supports the next generation of scholars and scientists doing narrative research. You will get an overview of the state of the art in narrative studies across disciplines, have an opportunity to present your own work, and meet others engaged in similar research. Applications from all disciplines are welcome, including (but not restricted to) literary studies, linguistics, history, law, economics, sociology, or political science. This is your chance to join a vibrant international research community!

Successful applicants should be doctoral students doing research on narratives (narrative fiction, policy narratives, narrative myths, narrative inquiry, conversational storytelling etc.). If you use or develop narratological concepts, work with narrative

methodologies, or seek to make a contribution to narrative theory, the seminar offers an ideal opportunity to discuss your work with peers, and to form and expand your network.

The seminar starts with an introductory lecture on recent trends in narrative studies and science communication, followed by thematic sessions and a concluding meeting. Participants will have an opportunity to present their topics (10–15 min), and there will be sufficient time for feedback, discussions, and collective brainstorming – join us for a glimpse at the future of storytelling and storysharing!

If you're interested, please submit a short description (500 words) of your PhD project, including institutional affiliation, to enn2025@uni-wuppertal.de. Kindly use this [form](#) for submission.

Participation in the doctoral seminar is free of charge for those who have been accepted. Once you are registered for the doctoral seminar via the registration page of the ENN8-website, you are also entitled to attend the conference free of charge. (However, if you wish to participate in the doctoral seminar and a panel, you are obliged to pay a conference fee.)

The deadline for submissions: March 10, 2025.

Acceptance notification: March 25, 2025.

The seminar will take place on September 29, 2025

Conference Observer:

If you are not on the official program and would like to attend the panels, you may wish to register for € 40 as a conference observer. As an observer, you will be able to audit the entire academic program as well as the social program.

Supporting Program:

The supporting program includes a Welcome Reception, Conference Dinner, local guided tours and a concert. The preliminary schedule can be found here:

<https://enn8.uni-wuppertal.de/en/program/>

Daycare for Children:

ENN aims to make the conference accessible to all interested parties. As part of this effort, we are offering childcare for children ages 3-15 during the panel discussions for parents attending the conference. Students who are fluent in German and English will look after your children in a separate room near the conference rooms to ensure their safety, entertainment and enjoyment. Activities are tailored to the interests and curiosity of the children present and include creative projects and crafts as well as games, toys and books for all ages. The daycare is free of charge. However, your child's normal insurance must

cover the attendance. You can reserve daycare for your child as an additional booking option by sending us a separate email at the same time as your registration. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Fees:

The registration fee entitles you to participate in the scientific program and the social program (except cafeteria vouchers and conference dinner).

By completing the payment you will be automatically registered. Payments are possible from March 25, 2025 here: <https://enn8.uni-wuppertal.de/en/registration/>

Regular Fees:

Regular Fee: € 200

Regular Fee - Early Bird (until June 1, 2025): € 160

Discounted Fees:

Discounted Fee: € 140

Discounted Fee - Early Bird (until June 1, 2025): € 100

Observer Fee: € 40

Regular fees are for professors, researchers, and members of institutes.

Discounted fees are for students, retirees, and others without regular income.

Observer fee is for conference visitors who are not on the program.

Lunch:

Vouchers for lunch in the university canteen are issued on site.

Conference Dinner:

A separate fee of € 50 will be charged for participation in the conference dinner. You can register and pay for the dinner via the conference registration page:

<https://enn8.uni-wuppertal.de/en/registration/>

Accommodation:

For information on accommodation please follow this link:

<https://enn8.uni-wuppertal.de/en/general-information/accommodation/>

Rooms with discounted rates in the listed hotels have been pre-booked with the keyword "ENN8". Please indicate this when making inquiries and reservations. Please refer to the website above for full details.

