

ENN Newsletter – Issue XIX – May 2021

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May 10, 2021

Dear friends,

After a longer pause caused by the spreading of the new coronavirus and the worldwide outbreak of Covid-19, which is still not overcome, we are sending you a new *Newsletter* issue that keeps you informed about the latest activities of the European Narratology Network.

This issue of the *Newsletter* is entirely devoted to the 6th conference of the European Narratology Network, which will be online and will be held on September 15–16, 2021, in Riga (together with Preconference Doctoral Seminar, September 14, 2021). The conference is organized by the RISEBA University of Business, Arts, and Technology, Riga, Latvia, in cooperation with the ENN.

As you probably know, the conference was supposed to take place last year. However, the global covid-19 pandemic has fundamentally affected our lives and planned events. Not just universities, but entire cities, regions, and states have been in lockdown, and most of them are still closed.

Although this very unpleasant situation also influenced many activities of the ENN, we believe that we will overcome it. The ENN6 conference in Riga, which will be online this September, is one of the best solutions for continuing our work and narrative study.

In June, we will publish another issue of the *Newsletter*, in which we will inform you about new conferences, published books, and proceedings from previous ENN conferences.

The Steering Committee has been extended with 4 co-opted ENN members. The current composition of the ENN Steering Committee is as follows:

The ENN Steering Committee:

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Larissa Muravieva (St. Petersburg University), larissa.muravieva@gmail.com

Best wishes and we look forward to meeting again soon!

Your Steering Committee

I: The 6th conference of the European Narratology Network in Riga

'Gaslight' Narratives in Virtual Landscapes: Narratological Implications of Technologically Mediated and Immersive Media (Online)

ENN6 is organized by the RISEBA University of Business, Arts, and Technology, Riga Latvia, in cooperation with the European Narratology Network (ENN, www.narratology.net)

ENN6, European Narratology Network International Conference
September 15–16, 2021 Riga, Latvia
www.riseba.lv

Preconference Doctoral Seminar, September 14, 2021, Riga, Latvia

<https://www.riseba.lv/index.php/en/gaslight-narratives-virtual-landscapes-narratological-implications-technologically-mediated-and>

E-mail: aigars.ceplitis@riseba.lv

I.1: Preconference Doctoral Seminal (Call for papers)

Riga, September 14, 2021, online

In conjunction with the 6th International Conference of the European Narratology Network, a preconference doctoral seminar on virtual vectors of narratology will be held.

Applicants for the seminar must be doctoral students during the 2021-2022 academic year. At the end of the course, the participants will receive a diploma.

Prospective participants are asked to send a 500-word description of their doctoral research together with their resumes and institutional affiliation via the registration form <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSf6sxlG5Pe9gNIIq1Nvgq310st2J2DWTX6UblMcozPGFR-WjA/viewform>.

The deadline for submissions is **June 15, 2021**.

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The seminar will consist of an introductory lecture, delivered by the leader of the seminar, and of four working sections to which the participants will be distributed according to their particular topics.

The doctoral seminar will be conducted by supervisors, who are experts on particular topics. Each student will present their topic (10-15 min), after which the supervisor's comment on the topics, and a discussion, will follow.

I.2: The 6th ENN Conference (Call for papers)

'Gaslight' Narratives in Virtual Landscapes: Narratological Implications of Technologically Mediated and Immersive Media

Riga, September 15-16, 2021, online

The ENN6 conference addresses the fusion of new technologies with unreliable, paradoxical, or disturbing narratives, which draw readers and viewers into a story, geospatially and cognitively, by means of blurring the boundaries between real and virtual spaces or alternative ones. At the vortex of the discourse are *'Gaslight' structures* that undermine or destroy impartiality in narrative perception, since the very 'modus operandi' of progressive virtual technologies, under the guise of various 'immersive' scenarios, significantly alters all storytelling devices. It is not only within Cinematic Virtual Reality (VR), Extended Reality (XR) or Mixed Reality (MR) but also within any narrative format blending traditional and new mediums that *Gaslight Narratives* occur as a set of narrative strategies that seek to destabilize the critical faculties of its audience or readers through misdirection, contradiction, and cognitive manipulation both in content and form.

ENN6 will discuss the narrative and technological devices and strategies that undermine logic and reason with the effects of surprise, confusion, self-doubt or disappointment emerging subconsciously out of such transmedial and perturbatory narratives. ENN6 will aim at a set of suggestions for future exploration in the emerging vectors of narratology warning against the unchecked dominance of 'gaslight' narratives in all forms of media shaping the global political and social climate so as to corrupt the world as we know it, with or without the aid of a virtual apparatus.

The ultimate aim of the conference is to extend the boundaries of narratological discourse, both in its classical and post-classical conceptions, within the framework of the technological diversification of Virtual Reality. The topics listed below are meant as a guideline for possible contributions. Contributions are to be strictly limited to 15 minutes.

Possible topics:

1. Theory and methodology of transmedial narratology in the frame of Cinematic VR

Transmedial narratology, in the sense of a coherent narrative delivered over multiple media types, be it films, text, computer-games, hypertext, or media installations, has served both as a discipline and a method to track migration, metamorphosis, and expression of meaning within and between different mediums. However, transmedial strategies within the discourse of virtual reality technologies deserve further attention, especially with respect to those story structures that have arisen along with the advent of Cinematic VR, initially pertinent to the latter format only. The focus may be on the visual-narrative model that emerges less from the VR technology itself than from a narrative matrix peculiar to cinematic VR that deliberately aims at immersion and emotional engagement.

2. Archaeology of immersive narrative systems

Investigation of the “media apparatus”, as applied to a number of historical (media archaeological) case studies, and the archaeology of immersive media, may frame the relationship between virtual reality, its software engine, and the creative works produced on those platforms. On one hand, at the center of the investigation, there is an immersive presence, both multimodal and sensory in nature as well as narrative driven, which foregrounds the possibility of historical presence, at least on a metalevel. On the other hand, the peculiar aspect of media archaeology is its heterogeneity that resists the procedures and techniques characteristic of a particular way of constructing narratives in Cinematic VR resulting in a narrative that is not straightforward and where direct immersion is augmented by allegories and metaphors of narrative spatial frames separated in time and form. Papers will be welcomed that interrogate these issues by examining historical instances of immersive systems through the lens of contemporary narratological theories.

3. Cognitive narratology in neurocinematics

Neurocinematics examines the mechanisms by which the audience, as receivers of visual information, reacts to a particular narrative sequence of scenes in a film, and how they affect our conscious and/or our subconscious reading of the data presented. While neurocinematic research may demonstrate that some films exert considerable control over our brain activity, it does not necessarily distinguish between the responses that are within the domain of cognitive neuroscience and that within the exclusive framework of narratology, which may open the way to the new interdisciplinary field of *neurocinematic narratology*.

4. Expanding Vectors of Narratology

Immersive audiovisual and auditory experience, both on large screens and on portable devices, is now within the reach of common end users. The aspiration of this technique is to establish a new type of narrative regime that goes beyond the classic stance of detached spectatorship aiming at *as-if-being-there psychosomatic experientiality*. At the same time, structuralists might argue that these new virtual narrative structures merely imitate the editorial and aesthetic schemata of classic narratives, and that in doing so they often oppose the very type of an experience they attempt to install. Instead of merely tracing traditional structures within the field of virtual-reality technologies, modern narratology should aim at establishing new vectors in the discipline that could account for the narrative structures that some virtual technologies may produce.

5. Gaslighting in Virtual Reality

Traditionally 'gaslighting', (that is various forms of psychological manipulation in which a targeted individual (or group) is forced to question their own perception, and sanity through misdirection, contradiction, and deception), has primarily been discussed as a psychological phenomenon as it occurs in the context of popular culture, films, literary texts, and politics. Yet gaslighting is also a narrative device within virtual reality, where the boundaries between reality and fiction are more easily created as well as enhanced by shifting fields of perception, and as such proposes to be a particular pursuit for future narratologists, since it can occur in various forms of text and media and is not limited to Cinematic VR.

6. In addition, the conference is open for **papers on all topics connected with the study of narrative** either in texts or in the media as well as with questions of narratological methodology.

Conference Proceedings: the best papers will be published in the Special Edition of double-blind peer-reviewed academic scientific journal **ADAMarts**, dedicated to architecture, design and audiovisual media arts from the Baltic Sea region, published once a year by RISEBA University's creative faculties – Communications and Media, Architecture and Design.

I.3: Further information

Proposal submission procedure

Abstracts should contain title, author's name and affiliation

Panels should contain abstracts of all panel participants, title and summary of the panel, name of panel chair

Poster proposals should contain title, author's name and short abstract

Send submissions via the registration form at www.riseba.lv

The deadline for submissions is June 15, 2021.

Registration fee: conference: 85€; PhD students: 65€
(PhD students participating in both, the seminar and also in the conference, will pay 65€ only)

Registration fee for the members of European Narratology Network may use 50 % (discount code). Entering this code on the registration form (**Code: xR917ENN6**).

I.4: Important dates

Panel proposal submission deadline: June 15, 2021

Abstract submission deadline June 15, 2021

Acceptances will be sent out on June 31, 2021

ENN6 conference website:

<https://www.riseba.lv/index.php/en/gaslight-narratives-virtual-landscapes-narratological-implications-technologically-mediated-and>

Registration:

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSf6sxIG5Pe9gNllq1Nvgq310st2J2DWTX6UbIMcozPGFR-WjA/viewform>

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I.5: The subsequent ENN conferences

ENN6 is organized by the RISEBA University of Business, Arts, and Technology, Riga Latvia, in cooperation with the European Narratology Network (ENN, www.narratology.net)

The subsequent ENN conference, ENN7, will take place in St. Petersburg, Russia, in 2023, organized by Prof. Larissa Muravieva, Smolny State University of Liberal Arts and Sciences in St Petersburg.

The subsequent conference ENN8 will be in 2025, organized by Prof. Stefania Sini in Italy.