Call for Papers

The Ideological Force of Narrative
Tampere September 29th to 30th, 2016

Keynote speakers:

Jan Alber: "Narrative Techniques and Ideology: Resilience and Humor in Contemporary Aboriginal Narratives"

Dorothee Birke: “Home as a Contested Narrative in Contemporary British Drama”

The so-called ethical turn and the rise of postclassical narratology in the last two decades have promoted an interest in the relationship between narrative and ideologies. If ideology, as Jeremy Tambling has put it, is made up of oppositions that “are part of a cultural way of thinking that is so automatic […] that they are passed off as natural and spontaneous ways of thinking” (1991: 25), narrative can serve to stabilize such dominant thought patterns, but also to explode them. This symposium brings together current projects examining the ideological investment of narrative in fictional as well as nonfictional texts.

For one thing, we invite papers that deal with the ideological ramifications of the strategies deployed by specific narratives. Of course these are not stable or static; narrative techniques serve a wide variety of different purposes. One can in fact use the same strategy to make a different point or a different device to make exactly the same point. At the same time, however, the link is not purely accidental: the rhetorical effects of narrative can be tracked down to the use of specific techniques. It is therefore important to deal with the question of why a given narrative uses the particular strategies it uses.

We also invite speakers to investigate the larger role narrative plays in cementing or questioning particular cultural norms and values. Feminist and postcolonial studies, in particular, have a long tradition in analyzing such functions. We welcome fresh engagements with these approaches to narrative as well as papers that examine the ideological force of narrative by importing concepts from other theoretical fields (e.g. queer studies, biopolitics or disability studies) and disciplines such as history, philosophy, economics, political sciences, sociology, and management.
The symposium consists of the two keynote talks, presentations, and a workshop for PhD and advanced MA students. The first day of the conference will be dedicated to the keynotes and other presentations. It is open for audience and followed by an informal reception. The workshop will take place on the second day: the keynotes, representatives of the organizers and workshop participants will discuss the students’ papers, as well as two articles by the keynote speakers. All materials will be distributed to the workshop participants well in advance.

We call for proposals for:

- Oral presentations addressing the symposium theme. A proposal should include a maximum of 200 words description of the talk, a maximum of 100 words bio statement of the presenter, and contact details (email address).
- Written papers to be discussed in the workshop. A proposal should include a maximum of 200 words description of the student’s research project and its relation to the conference topic, and contact details (email address).

The deadline for both proposals is June 24th. The full papers (5 to 10 pages) by those accepted to the workshop need to be delivered by September 19th at noon. Please send proposals to Mari Hatavara (mari.hatavara[at]uta.fi), and be sure to give the title, author(s), affiliation(s), and e-mail address in the same document and indicate clearly whether the proposal is for an oral presentation on Thursday or for the workshop on Friday.

Organizers:

*Narrare: Centre for Interdisciplinary Narrative Studies* (Director Maria Mäkelä, Senior Lecturer in Comparative Literature)

The Academy of Finland project “The Literary in Life: Exploring the Boundaries between Literature and the Everyday” (PI Mari Hatavara, Professor of Finnish Literature)

The research program “Making Sense in Literature and Social Life” (Head Saija Isomaa, Professor of Finnish Literature)