



SELMA

ANNUAL REPORT 2023



SELMA

**CENTRE FOR THE STUDY
OF STORYTELLING,
EXPERIENTIALITY
AND MEMORY**

SELMA

CENTRE FOR THE STUDY OF STORYTELLING, EXPERIENTIALITY AND MEMORY

SELMA is an international hub for interdisciplinary research on the interrelations between storytelling, experientiality and cultural memory. Our research foci include life-storying, trauma narratives, transcultural memory and digital storytelling. We explore the intersections of narrative, experience and memory from both theoretical and historical perspectives. SELMA organises research events on both theoretical and topical social issues and is committed to interdisciplinary dialogue. It aims at crossing the borders between arts and sciences, promoting social engagement and fostering international collaboration between scholars, artists and other people outside academia.

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EDITORIAL

In 2023, the SELMA community was glad to meet in person again and resume its on-site activities after the pandemic. We continued interdisciplinary discussion on key concepts that bring together scholars from different fields – for example, we organized research events on environmental narratives, life-writing, grief, and the ethics of life-storying.

Many of the projects that operate under the auspices of SELMA participated in organizing research events with us. These included the conference *Out of the USSR: Travelling Women, Travelling Memories*, the Narrative Matters Conference *Instrumental Narratives: Narrative Studies and the Storytelling Boom* and the INTERACT seminar *Studying Activism: Activism in Research and Reading*.

In 2023, we managed to secure funding for two new research projects. *Counter-Narratives of Cancer: Shaping Narrative Agency*, funded by the Research Council of Finland (former Academy of Finland) will be carried out in collaboration with SELMA, and it will involve empirical research on narrative agency-oriented reading and writing groups organized with the university hospitals in Turku and Helsinki for cancer patients and medical professionals. We also received funding for the project *A grove of stories – Sagalund: Home Museum, environment and life narrative time* (Tarinoiden lehto. Kotimuseo, ympäristö ja elämäkerronnallinen aika) from Svenska Kulturfonden. The project combines research and artistic work in order to study what remains from a life lived in the past, and focuses on the home museum Villa Sagalund on the island of Kemiö in the archipelago of South-West Finland.

We have also continued close collaboration with the strategic research area Cultural Memory and Social Change, which organizes webinars and a reading group. In 2023, our events that explicitly focused on issues of cultural memory included the above-mentioned conference on travelling memories and the symposium *Environmental Narratives: History, Memory, Trauma*.

We have also continued to have a strong focus on social engagement. In 2023, we co-organised, with Sibelius Museum and the project *Counter-Narratives of Cancer*, an event that brought together arts and research. It was an exploration of grief in a participatory mode, and it was open to the general public.

Many of SELMA's activities also involve an educational or pedagogical aspect. In spring 2023, our Erasmus intern, Ksenia Fiaduta, held a workshop in which we learned about the Pre-Text method, which is a pedagogical tool and which UNESCO recognizes as "Education for Peace". Ksenia helped us in coordinating SELMA's activities, and since March 2023 Liisa Merivuori has worked as the coordinator of the centre.

Please spread the word about SELMA and encourage anyone interested – including students and junior scholars – to become affiliated with the centre and join our activities. Thank you to all members and friends of SELMA for joining our activities in 2023, and we look forward to further collaboration with you in the years to come.

With warmest wishes,

Hanna Meretoja, Director

Professor of Comparative Literature

Maarit Leskelä-Kärki, Vice Director

University Lecturer, Adjunct Professor of Cultural History



SEMINARS

CULTURAL MEMORY AND SOCIAL CHANGE

Remembering is interaction between individuals, and memories are socially shaped and negotiated. Media, popular culture, art as well as educational institutions create and disseminate cultural memory. They shape narratives through which experiences are shared within communities and across generations. Cultural memory refers to the collective practices that societies use to build and uphold their relationship to the past, living in the present, and preparing for the future. The thematic collaboration in cultural memory and social change supports extensive, critical and multidisciplinary research on memory and its social connections. As a part of this interdisciplinary collaboration, SELMA has co-hosted the following webinars, seminars, and reading groups:

Monday 6th March, Webinar

Raha Sabet Sarvestany, Postdoctoral Researcher, Turku Institute for Advanced Studies (TIAS)

Riikka Taavetti, University Lecturer, Gender Studies, University of Turku

Wednesday 8th March, Seminar

Thematics Talk Together Seminar series: Culture, Sustainability and Social Change

Keynote lecture: *Cultural Thinking in a Sustainability Transformation*

Dr. Paavo Järvensivu, BIOS Research Unit

Panel discussion

Dr. Pauliina Latvala-Harvilahti, The Mire Trend Research Project, University of Eastern Finland

Dr. Karoliina Lummaa, Finnish Literature, University of Turku

Dr. Paavo Järvensivu, BIOS Research Unit

Moderator: **Dr. Johanna Raitis**, Turku Institute for Advanced Studies (TIAS)

Monday 3rd April, Reading Group

Laura S. Brown, **Not Outside the Range: One Feminist Perspective on Psychic Trauma** (*American Imago* 48:1, 119–133)

Chaired by **Liisa Merivuori**, Doctoral Researcher, University of Turku

Monday 8th May, Webinar

Teija Rantala, Postdoctoral Researcher, Turku Institute for Advanced Studies (TIAS)

Olga Simonova, Collegium Researcher, Turku Institute for Advanced Studies (TIAS)

Monday 5th June, Reading Group

Mihai, Mihaela 2022. **“Tracing the Double Erasure.”** In *Political Memory and the Aesthetics of Care: The Art of Complicity and Resistance*, 22–45.

Chaired by **Ksenia Fiaduta**, Doctoral Researcher, Autonomous University of Barcelona

Monday 4th September, Webinar

Intersectional cultural memory

Kaisa Ilmonen, University Lecturer, Comparative Literature, University of Turku

Bald women in Finnish culture and society

Johanna Latva, Doctoral Researcher, European Ethnology, University of Turku

Monday 2nd October, Reading Group

Matt Howard 2023: **Law’s Memories**. Palgrave Macmillan, 15–44.

Chaired by **Hanna Malik**, Postdoctoral Researcher, Laws, University of Turku.

Monday 6th November, Webinar

Aesthetics and politics of remembering in contemporary Nordic documentary film

Niina Oisalo, Doctoral Researcher, University of Turku

Chernobyl visual lexicon: exploring the visual framing of toxic heritage from the point of view of participatory culture

Veera Ojala, Doctoral Researcher, University of Turku

Thursday 30th November, Seminar

Women’s agency during wars and social conflicts Seminar series: New sources and a fresh look at Eurasian history

Freedom for the Philosopher: Lina Tumanova’s Scholarship and Human Rights Activism in the Late USSR

Dr Tatiana Levina, Associate Fellow at the Institute for Advanced Study in the Humanities (KWI), Essen, Germany

Monday 11th December, Seminar
Cultural Memory and Social Change
TeamUp

Trauma fiction and social change

Liisa Merivuori, Doctoral Researcher, Literary Studies and Creative Writing

Finding spirituality: interpretations from the personal archives of Kalevala women's association's founder Elsa Heponauta

Mila Santala, Doctoral Researcher, Study of Cultures

Functional differentiation of society, markets and stakeholders in value cocreation – Social systems theoretical insights for service-dominant logic

Otto Rosendahl, Doctoral Researcher, Marketing

Human diversity as a window into our past, present and future – cascading effects of human encounters into genetic and cultural legacies

Aïda Nitsch, Postdoctoral Researcher, Ecology and Evolutionary Biology & **Jenni Santaharju**, Postdoctoral Researcher, Finnish Language and Finno-Ugric Languages

ENVIRONMENTAL NARRATIVES: HISTORY, MEMORY, TRAUMA



Environmental Narratives: History, Memory, Trauma was a two-day symposium of presentations and discussions on experiencing, narrating, and remembering places in natural environments. The symposium's theme was closely related to the interdisciplinary research conducted in SELMA, which explores the interrelations between storytelling, experientiality, and cultural memory. The contributions examined traumatic histories of natural sites, people's ways of experiencing and narrating specific places in nature, memories of water, forests and other natural environments, water and forests as poetic spaces of mind and memory, and representations of nature and the environment in literature and other media, and of the environmental change in the age of the Anthropocene. The concepts explored ranged from Simon Schama's "landscape and memory" to Timothy Morton's "ecological trauma".

The symposium's keynote speaker was Professor Helena Duffy (University of Wrocław, Poland/University of Warwick, UK) and the title of her talk was "We Are Not out of the Woods Yet: The Forest as a Site of Polish Holocaust Memory in Pawel Pawlikowski's *Ida*".

Friday 21st April

Opening of the Symposium by **Markku Lehtimäki**, Professor of Comparative Literature, University of Turku

Keynote: **Helena Duffy** (University of Wrocław): *We Are Not out of the Woods Yet: The Forest as a Site of Polish Holocaust Memory in Pawel Pawlikowski's *Ida**



Session I

Hanna Meretoja (University of Turku): Narrative and Water in Jeanette Winterson's *Lighthousekeeping*

Beata Nessel-Lukasik (The Maria Grzegorzewska University): Parallel Stories

Faeze Rezaei (University of Turku): Lifeless Spaces and the Ecological Trauma in "The Martian Way"

Session II

Niina Hanhinen (University of Turku): Representation and Presence of Landscape in Krug's *Heimat* and Moisseinen's *The Isthmus*

Inna Sukhenko (University of Helsinki): Narrating Tierratrauma in Nuclear Fictional Writings: From Eco-trauma to Permaculture Ethics

Per Mendoza (The University of Iceland): Or(d) er død(e): Apocalypse, Decreation, and Poiesis in Rakel Haslund-Gjerrild's *Alle himlens fugle*

Saturday 22nd April

Session III

Joseph Ngoaketsi (University of South Africa): *Dlomo dam-leeuwkuilpan*: A Revered Site of the 21 March 1960 Sharpeville Massacre

Ananya Roy (University of Delhi): Hell on the Hills: An Anatomical Study of the All-pervasive Wound of Kashmiri Women

Kanchan Panday (Jawaharlal Nehru University): Social Media and Collective Trauma: Conceptualising the Role of Twitter in the #MeToo Movement



Session IV

Lotta Luhtala (University of Turku): Non-human Trauma and the Anthropocene

Mateusz Kucab (Jagiellonian University): More Than Human? Biomemory and Biofantasy in Polish and American Female Poetry

Sara Helin-Long (University College Cork): The Water Body: A Layered Reading of *The Pearl Button*

Session V

Eeva Kuikka (Tampere University): Narrating the Nexus of Non-human Environment and Collective Memory in Yere mei Aipin's *Khanty, or the Star of the Dawn*

Tsira Kilanava (Ilia State University) & **Irakli Khvedelidze** (Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University): Representation of the Black Sea and Displacement in Post-Soviet Georgian Literature (Based on Texts Depicted the War of Abkhazia)

Gustavo Gutierrez Hernandez (Katholische Universität Eichstätt-Ingolstadt): Back and Forth with the Tides: The Sea in *La Mucama Ominculé*

PRE-TEXTS

Thursday 11th May

Guest Lecture *Pre-Texts: The Arts Teach (Everything)* by **Professor Doris Sommer** (Harvard University)

Doris Sommer is Ira and Jewell Williams Professor of Romance Languages and Literatures and of African and African American Studies at Harvard University. She is founder of “Cultural Agents”, a platform and an NGO that brings together academics, artists, community leaders and active citizens to revive the civic mission of the Humanities. Her academic and outreach work promotes human and social development through arts and humanities, specifically through “Pre-Texts”, a pedagogical method that stimulates literacy, close reading, critical thinking, creativity, and civic development. Among her books are *Foundational Fictions: The National Romances of Latin America* (1991), *Proceed with Caution when Engaged by Minority Literature* (1999), *Bilingual Aesthetics: A New Sentimental Education* (2004) and *The Work of Art in the World: Civic Agency and Public Humanities* (2014). Join us on May 11 for Prof. Doris Sommer lecture “Pre-Texts: The Arts Teach (Everything)”.

Friday 19th May

Pre-Texts Workshop: Stories for the Future
Facilitated by **Ksenia Fiaduta**, Doctoral Researcher, Autonomous University of Barcelona

What words, stories, images and concepts do we need for the future? Should we recover them from the past or should we reimagine the world anew? How can literature and the arts help us imagine what doesn't have a name yet? In this workshop we creatively explored these questions through the Pre-Texts method, developed by Harvard professor and literary scholar Doris Sommer. Pre-Texts is a pedagogical tool that fosters creative reading, critical thinking, civic development, creativity and collective imagination. By using literary texts as vehicles for art-making and collective collaboration, in this workshop we engaged creatively with literature to activate our capacity to imagine new stories of a liveable future and more hospitable world. UNESCO recognizes Pre-Texts method as “Education for Peace”.

PRE-TEXTS: THE ARTS TEACH (EVERYTHING)

GUEST LECTURE BY PROF. DORIS SOMMER (HARVARD UNIVERSITY)

THURSDAY MAY 11
16:00 - 17:00 EEST / Via Zoom
Zoom Link: <https://utu.zoom.us/j/61407848737>

PRE-TEXTS WORKSHOP: STORIES FOR THE FUTURE

FRIDAY MAY 19
15-18 EEST / Via Zoom

Organised by SELMA: The Centre for the Study of Storytelling, Experientiality and Memory

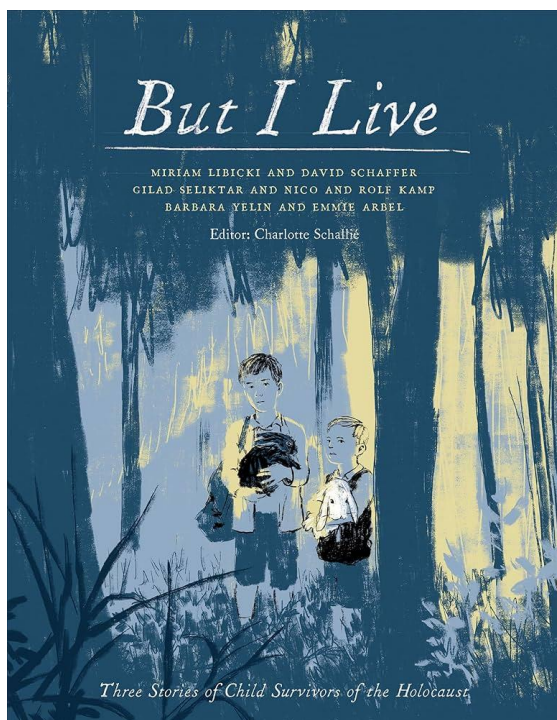
SELMA

GUEST LECTURE BY BRETT E. STERLING

Friday 24th November

Holocaust Testimony in Word and Image: The Comics Anthology *But I Live* (2022)

In the 2022 anthology *But I Live*, an international team of scholars paired artists from Canada, Germany, and Israel with four child survivors of the Holocaust to create comics based on the survivors' lived experiences. Rather than merely illustrating these experiences, the artists collaborated directly with survivors to co-create their history in works that navigate memory, witnessing, and commemoration. Through a comparative analysis of each comic, this talk explored how the co-creation of these narratives between artist and survivor constitutes a form of collaborative testimony, while asking how the artists' formal interventions attempt to create something new and distinct from verbal or textual testimony.



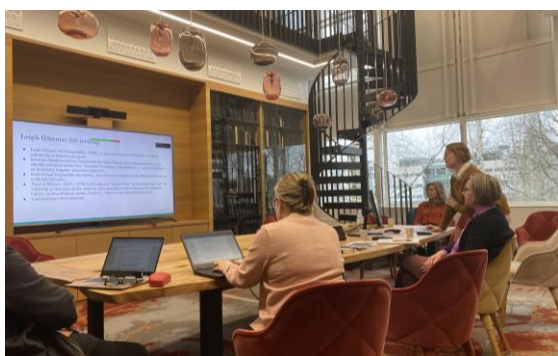
About the lecturer: **Brett E. Sterling** is Associate Professor of German at the University of Arkansas. His research and teaching interests include the intersection of literature and political engagement, diversity and multiculturalism in German-speaking Europe, German-language comics, and the works of Austrian exile author Hermann Broch. He has published and presented widely on German-language comics, including the work of Jens Harder, Nicolas Mahler, Barbara Yelin, Ulli Lust, and Birgit Weyhe. With international colleagues, he founded and served as co-organizer of the Comics Studies Network in the German Studies Association. His first book, *Hermann Broch and Mass Hysteria: Theory and Representation in the Age of Extremes* (Camden House, 2022), was awarded the 2023 Radomír Luža Prize for Best Manuscript in Austrian/Czechoslovak Studies in the World War II era by the American Friends of the Documentation Center of Austrian Resistance and the German Studies Association. His current book project, *Contemporary German-language Comics: A History*, is under contract with The Ohio State University Press.

SELMA EVENTS IN FINNISH

LIFE-WRITING -KÄSITETYÖPAJA

Tuesday 14th March
Tiistai 14. maaliskuuta

Käsitetöypajassa pohdittiin käsitteen life-writing käyttöä eri tieteenalojen näkökulmista ja osana suomalaista tutkimuskenttää. Pohdimme yhdessä erilaisia tapoja suomentaa käsite sekä sen erilaisia määrittely- ja käyttötapoja.



Ohjelma:

- 15.15 **Hanna Meretoja**: Avaussanat ja kertomuksen tutkijan pohdintoja elämäkirjoittamisesta
- 15.25 **Astrid Joutseno**: Life Writing: Elämäkirjoitus ja käsitteen sukupuolentutkimuksellinen tulkinta
- 15.40 **Päivi Kosonen**: Elämäkerronta (Life Writing) omaelämäkerran lajihistorioitsijan näkökulmasta
- 15.55 **Maarit Leskelä-Kärki**: Kulttuurihistorioitsija elämäkerronnan äärellä
- 16.10-17 Keskustelua

TAIVAAN ILMIÖT 1800-LUVUN IHMISTEN KIRJEISSÄ

Saturday 25th March
Lauantai 25. maaliskuuta

Miten taivaan ilmiöitä on kuvailtu vanhoissa kirjeissä? Millaisia astronomisia havaintoja teki 1800-luvulla syntynyt taidemaalari tai työmies? Ja mitä syntyy, kun kirjeisiin yhdistetään viulu ja ripaus kulttuurihistoriaa?

Tapahtuma alkoi kirjeiden luvulla vanhan havaintosalin hämärässä. Tämän jälkeen seurasi esitelmä, jossa tähtitiedettä tarkasteltiin kulttuurihistorian näkökulmasta. Välissä kuultiin fragmentteja **Toivo Kuulan**, **Agnes Tschetschulinin**, **Erik Tulinbergin** ja **Ida Mobergin** sävellyksistä. Tapahtuman esiintyjä olivat viulisti **Mirka Malmi**, kulttuurihistorioitsija **Hannu Salmi**, kuvataiteilija **Elina Saloranta**, taidehistorioitsija **Hanna-Reetta Schreck** ja koreografi **Jaakko Simola**.

Tapahtuma järjestettiin Helsingin observatoriossa. Järjestäjiin kuuluivat SELMAN lisäksi Taideyliopiston Tutkimusinstituutti.

ELÄMÄSTÄ KERTOMINEN JA ETIIKKA

Tuesday 29th August
Tiistai 29. elokuuta

SELMA-tutkimuskeskus ja Tarinoiden lehto -hanke järjestivät elokuun lopussa Turussa Mannilan Vanhalla Viinatehtaalla tapahtuman, jossa pohdittiin menneistä elämästä kertomista tieteen ja taiteen keinoin. Tapahtumassa pääsimme kuulemaan tutkijoiden ja taiteilijoiden puheenvuoroja sekä näkemään L. Onervasta kertovan Sekasointuja-musiikkimonologin. Tapahtuman päätteeksi järjestimme tilassa vielä runoillan, jossa kuulumme tilaisuuden aiheeseen liittyviä esityksiä.

Ohjelma:

- 16.00 **Karoliina Sjö**, tutkijatohtori: Tilaisuuden avaus
16.20 **Pirkko Soininen**, kirjailija ja näytelmäkirjailija
16.40 **Seppo Parkkinen**, näytelmäkirjailija ja dramaturgi
17.00 Teatteri Saaga: *Sekasointuja*
18.15. Keskustelua
19.00 Runoilta



”MINULLE TULI TYHJÄSTÄ OUTO AJATUS” – TUTKIMUSMATKA SURUUN

Tiistai 21st November
Tiistai 21. marraskuuta

Tutkimusmatka suruun -tilaisuudessa taiteilijat Warda Ahmed, Krista Launonen, Hanna Meretoja ja Astrid Swan esittivät suruun ja suremiseen liittyviä otteita kirjallisesta ja musiikillisesta tuotannostaan. Illassa luettiin myös katkelmia Susanna Lehmuskoskelta teoksesta Kesken kaiken (otsikon lainaus: Susanna Lehmuskoski). Tilaisuudessa hyödynnettiin taiteen mahdollisuuksia sekä kirjallisuus- ja taideterapeuttisia välineitä. Ilta jakautui neljään teemattiseen jaksoon Alma Meretojan soittamien pianokappaleiden kautta.

Ilta oli osallistava kokemustapahtuma, jossa hyödynnettiin Ars Moriendi -työryhmän kehittämää kellunta-menetelmää, joka luo tilan yhteiselle assosioinnille. Tapahtuman osallistujat saivat ilmaista tilassa koetun – ääneen luettujen tekstien, musiikin, ympäröivän museotilan – itsessä herättämiä tunteita ja ajatuksia, mutta kaikki osallistuminen oli vapaaehtoista. Tilassa sai myös vain olla, puhumatta mitään.

Tilaisuuden ohjasivat Lauri Jäntti, Helena Krohn & Päivi Kosonen.



OTHER EVENTS

OUT OF THE USSR: TRAVELLING WOMEN, TRAVELLING MEMORIES

Thursday 2nd & Friday 3rd February

Travelling has always been connected with fundamental social and political changes taking place in societies. Throughout history, one of the countries that people have chosen to leave, move away or have been expelled from, but also a country which they have been going back to, is Russia/the Soviet Union. There is an obvious link between the large transformations that have taken place in Russia since the time of perestroika in the 1990s until the ongoing war in Ukraine and the restrictions of civil rights such as freedom of speech, and the increased mobility out of Russia.

The conference took these transformations as starting points in examining how individuals reflect on and recall the Soviet/Russian home country in literary presentations, addressing the history of mobility, emigration, family, gender, ethnic or religious background in face of their collective memory in their new place of residence. The meeting points for the papers were the concepts of travelling/mobility/exile and (post-, trans-/cross-cultural) memory. The focus was on women's fictional texts and memories from the 1980s until today that allow the presentations to address and to acknowledge [e]migrating women writers as mediators of ideas and memories in trans-/cross-cultural contexts. The aim of the conference was to focus on gender in the process of the transformation of cultures through ideas that travel, and to pay special attention to women's contribution to the cultural transfer and mobility of ideas and memories which have not been sufficiently studied and documented.

The conference was organised by the project **Texts on the Move: Reception of Women's Writing in Finland and Russia 1840–2020** (Emil Aaltonen Foundation), University of Turku, and Tampere University.

CREATING TIME IN NARRATIVE NONFICTION

Friday 5th May

The one-day symposium sought to account for the recent popularity of narrative nonfiction, from fact-based/true crime podcasts to the deceptively real *cinéma vérité* (including “docudramas”). The organizers were interested in how certain aspects of our immediate reality – for instance familiar places and events – are portrayed in stories advertised as “real”: the emphasis on authenticity appeals to the bias that “real stories” have more intrinsic worth than fiction, particularly when the latter term is associated with “fake news.” But such clear-cut distinctions between fiction and fact are not always logically deduced; the perceived value of “real stories” may be derived, instead, from popular preconceptions relating to certain familiar spatial and temporal experiences.

In narrative nonfiction, though, familiar and unfamiliar (i.e. marginalized) social experiences stand one next to another, such that narrative time becomes rather more inclusive. The symposium examined how veracity – a new kind of literariness comparable to but different from realism – is usually established in contemporary literature; but it focused on non-fictional documentations of time as relating to cultures, nation(-alism)s and, correspondingly, spaces, especially where conflicts and contradictions arise. The event was funded by the Åbo Akademi University Foundation.

Programme:

9.00–9.15 Welcome and introduction

Ann Tso, Jason Finch

9.15–10.15 Keynote address: *Temporalities of Afro-European Mobility in Non-fictional and Fictionalized Narratives*

Anna-Leena Toivanen (University of Eastern Finland)

10.15–10.30 Break

10.30–12.00 Panel 1: “Time, Memoir, and the City”

Adam Borch (ÅA): *Trams, Time and Narrative: Peter Dürrfeld’s Linie 4 og andre historier (1984) and Mine sporvogne – alle 18 linier! (2022)*

Jason Finch (ÅA): *Central Corridor, Marginal Housing: St Louis in Black Autobiography*

Ann Tso (ÅA): *Commemorating the Time after the End: Karen Cheung’s The Impossible City: A Hong Kong Memoir (2022)*

12.00–13.00 Lunch Reserved seating at Café Arken

13.00–14.00 Keynote address: *The Mundanity of Heartbreak: Time in Sophie Calle’s Exquisite Pain and Annie Ernaux’s Simple Passion*

Karen Cheung (Royal Holloway)

14.00–15.00 *Getting Brexit Done: Fabricating the Narrative of National Authenticity*

Martin Gill (ÅA)

15.00–15.30 Coffee

16.30–16.30 Keynote: *Temporalities of Advocacy Writing: Between Autobiography of the Past and Activism in the Present*

Lena Englund (University of Eastern Finland)

16.30–17.00 Closing discussion

Ann Tso, Jason Finch

KIRJALLISUUDENTUTKIMUKSEN PÄIVÄT 2023: KOKEMUS/ERFAHR-ENHET/EXPERIENCE

Thursday 4th & Friday 5th May

The 2023 annual conference of the Finnish Literary Research Society was organized 4–5 May in Turku. The conference was a hybrid event. A dissertation workshop for doctoral students was held on May 3rd. The theme of the conference was EXPERIENCE.

The Finnish Literary Research Society’s annual conference was organized by the literary studies programmes at the University of Turku & the Comparative Literature Department at Åbo Akademi in collaboration with The Finnish Literary Research Society (KTS).

Keynotes: **Colin Davis** is Emeritus Professor of French and Comparative Literature at Royal Holloway, University of London, UK, having previously held posts in Cambridge, Oxford and Warwick. He has also been Visiting Professor at the Ecole Normale Supérieure – Lettres et Sciences Humaines, Lyon, France, the University of Indiana, Bloomington, USA, and the University of Turku. In 2021 he was appointed as Chevalier dans l’Ordre des Palmes académiques by the French government.

His research focuses mainly on connections between literature, film and philosophy, with particular interests in the modern French novel, ethics, ethical criticism, philosophical approaches to literature and film, hermeneutics, literary theory, cultural memory, trauma studies and Holocaust literature.

Viola Parente-Čapková is Professor at the Department of Finnish Literature at the University of Turku, Finland, and she is also Associate Professor of Theory of Literature at Charles University, Prague, Czech Republic. She is the leader of the research projects “Texts on the Move: Reception of Women’s Writing in Finland and Russia 1840–2020” and “Struck by the Unknown: Fiction as a promoter of the Finnish language among adults with im/migrant background”.

Her research interests include the theory of literary history, feminist literary theory, fin de siècle literature, transnational literary studies, digital humanities, and cultural language learning.

Lovisa Andén is Associate Professor of Philosophy at the University of Tromsø, the Arctic University of Norway. Her research examines questions of representation, truth, and experience in testimonial literature. She is currently conducting the research project, *Muted Memoirs and Silenced Stories: Memoirs by Women of the Gulag Archipelago*, at Åbo Academy University. She has previously worked on the relation between literature, experience and meaning in the phenomenology of Maurice Merleau-Ponty.

INTERACT SEMINAR: STUDYING ACTIVISM. ACTIVISM IN RESEARCH AND READING

Monday 5th June

Originating from the long tradition of Black feminist social movements and literature, intersectionality today is a research tool that conceptualizes multiple, relational and complex workings of power connected to factors that are relevant to our socio-cultural experience. According to Patricia Hill Collins (2016), intersectionality is both a critical inquiry and a critical practice.

In this seminar we focused on intersectional practices, activism and the dialogue between academy and activism. Our project tackled the challenge of inequality by concentrating on intersectional forms of activism and their potential in increasing social justice and educational democracy.

PROGRAMME:

13.15 Opening of the seminar
Marta-Laura Cenedese, Senior researcher (INTERACT)

13.20 Why affective activism?
Tuula Juvonen, University of Tampere

13.50 Creating queer and multispecies Eastern European subjects: Queer-feminist literary and activist practices in Romania
Nóra Ugron, University of Turku

14.20 People of Colour in the Finnish Field of Literature

Téři Zambrano, POC -reading circle, Helsinki

14.50–15.15 COFFEE BREAK

15.15 Readers of the World, Unite: Internationalist Imaginaries in Yara Rodrigues Fowler's *There are more things*' (online)

Leila Essa, Utrecht University

15.45 A Glance at the Shift in Iranian Women's Agency and Movement Post-Revolution

Raha Sabet Sarvestany, University of Turku, TIAS

16.15 Reflection of Hope and Joy in Digital Platforms: A Rethinking of Disappointment in the "Woman Life Freedom" -uprising

Golnar Gishnizjani, University of Turku

16.45 DISCUSSION

NARRATIVE MATTERS CONFERENCE 2023. INSTRUMENTAL NARRATIVES: NARRATIVE STUDIES AND THE STORYTELLING BOOM

Thursday 15th – Saturday 17th June

The conference positioned narrative scholars in the midst of the storytelling boom. Everyone is urged to share their story today, from consumers to multinational corporations, from private citizens to nation states. Storytelling consultants are thriving in today's storytelling economy, but where are narrative scholars? Do the professional analysers and theorizers of narrative have a say in the current storytelling boom? How to engage in a societal dialogue and debate as a narrative scholar?



Keynotes:

WHAT MAKES AN IMAGINED FUTURE CREDIBLE?

Jens Beckert, Director at the Max Planck Institute for the Study of Societies (MPIfG)

Narratives of the future are crucial elements of decision making in the economy and beyond. Indeed, they are a crucial source of the dynamics of capitalism. Since there are no future facts, assessments of the future necessarily need to rely on narratives that cannot be limited to the presentation of facts. This means they cannot be true or false, but they can be credible or non-credible. To trigger decisions, the narrative must convince actors that it is at least sufficiently probable that events will indeed play out as portrayed. But where does this credibility come from? This is the question I want to discuss in my presentation.

I will propose a simple model which consists of three elements. I distinguish first the story-maker or persuader, the person (or institution) that creates specific imagined futures and often wants to convince somebody else (or a group of actors) of the accuracy of the narrative. Second, the story-taker or agent who ultimately makes the decisions through which resources are put at risk and who needs to become convinced of the credibility of the imagined future. The third element in the model is social context, the features of the social and material environment that position the agent

in a network and influence assessments of credibility.

TRAUMA PORN OR WITNESSING? NARRATING DOMESTIC WORKER EXPERIENCES

Sujatha Fernandes, Professor of Sociology, University of Sydney

Recent years have seen a massive rise in the numbers of women migrating internally and internationally for domestic work. This unregulated industry has been the site of cruel exploitation, documented in news media, academic work, and told by domestic workers in legislative campaigns. But rather than challenging the terms of domestic worker abuse, these narratives may produce a “trauma porn” that invites voyeurism and spectacle, highlighting bad employers rather than systems. In this talk, I look to alternative ways we might study domestic worker experiences by evoking the multiple and everyday spheres that constitute their lives: from the shantytowns where they live, to the forces of extractive capitalism, dispossession, and debt that compel their choices. I examine the role of ethnography and fiction in providing tools and frameworks for studying domestic worker experiences. What different forms of witnessing might they make available?

THE SAME OLD STORY: REFLECTIONS ON THE IDENTITY OF NARRATIVES

Peter Lamarque, Professor of Philosophy, University of York

It has been argued that there are just seven basic plots in storytelling (Booker 2004), and other numbers have been proposed (Polti 1921; Reagan, et al 2016). But how do we count narrative types? In virtue of what is this story the same as that? Do we need criteria for narrative identity? In literary criticism narrative typology has had mixed results but it has proved useful in comparative studies, in judgments of originality and literary value, and even in uncovering deeper psychological and

cultural principles. The paper will argue, following similar suggestions in the context of character identity (Lamarque 2003) and content identity (Lamarque 2009), that there is no absolute answer to the question whether this narrative is the same as that. Rather, the answer is always relative to the interests of the questioner and the context of the enquiry. The topic will be broadened to include narrative identity in other (non-literary) spheres: for example, concerning climate change, foreign aid, economic policy, prison reform, etc where it is not uncommon to find narratives at the centre of arguments. But in such cases, it is not always clear that the narratives on opposing sides are in fact distinct. And do supposedly different narratives in fact just repeat or give versions of “the same old story”?

INTERSECTIONALITY AND HAUNTOLOGY IN EVERYDAY NARRATIVES OF DISJUNCTION

Ann Phoenix, Professor of Psychosocial Studies, University College London

The beginning of the 2020s made it clear that everyday narratives can suddenly shift in response to major events. It has become commonplace to view Covid-19 as an unexpected period of disjunction, with intensifying inequalities and short and long-term transformations. In addition, the murder of George Floyd and the resurgence of Black Lives Matter, broader acceptance that climate change is already happening, and the Russian invasion of Ukraine have all shifted people’s understanding of the world, themselves in it and, consequently, their narratives. This talk will consider some of these changes, considering the disjunctions, continuities, and contradictions in the ways in which people account for themselves and others. It draws on a variety of sources to explore the ways in which we have to recognise narratives as intersectional and as haunted by histories that can erupt at times of disruption, producing contradictions and possibilities for social change.



NARRATIVES OF ILLNESS AND RECOVERY

Thursday 12th October

Seminar series **Current Intersections of Culture, Language and Wellbeing**

In this seminar, we asked from a multidisciplinary perspective how people talk about different, sometimes contested, illnesses. How do we construct and share narratives related to illness and recovery? What do these narratives do and what is their role in different fields of interaction and communication?

In the seminar, two scholars explored illness and recovery narratives from various perspectives. We heard about and discussed recovery narratives as well as the experience of endometriosis and how it is shared in social media.

The seminar series *Current Intersections of Culture, Language and Wellbeing* is a multidisciplinary online seminar organized by three networks from the University of Turku, Finland: the Cultural Interaction Researcher Network KULTIVA, the Centre of Language and Wellbeing (LaWe), and the Research Center for Culture and Health (KIT). The aim of the seminar is to foster international networking and research collaboration between social sciences, humanities, and linguistics, focusing on topics related to health and wellbeing.

Presentations:

Avril Tynan (University of Turku, Finland):
Recovery Narratives: From Illness to Health?

Since trauma studies cemented the role of narrative as medicine and cure in the process of recovery from both psychic and physical illness, narrative has framed recovery as an objective event marked by the absence of symptoms or pathologies. This project aims to chal-

lenge how narrative is instrumentalized, commodified, and operationalized as evidence of recovery. One fundamental aspect of this work is to examine more closely how recovery itself does not relate a direct journey from illness to health (often framed as a story of “tragedy to triumph”) but problematizes understandings of illness and health in themselves.

Ida Melander (Örebro University, Sweden):
Patient narratives on Instagram: sharing the experience of endometriosis

Traditionally, illness narratives have been approached through patient records or in researcher-elicited interviews. Recent changes in how we communicate about health and illness have, however, made experiences of being ill available to wider audiences. In this way, illness has become an increasingly public topic, discussed and shared in a multitude of settings. This presentation focused on health communication in the form of illness narratives on a shared, activist Instagram account, where five women suffering from endometriosis narrate their illness. The presentation discussed these illness narratives in relation to both the multimodal affordances of the social media format, and the account’s organization as a shared space.

MOBILITIES

JANUARY

Hanna Meretoja was a Visiting Fellow at Exeter College, University of Oxford, for the Spring term 2023. She made three research visits to Oxford, in January, March and May, engaging in research collaboration with colleagues at Oxford.

Marta-Laura Cenedese organized (with Clio Nicastro) the publication workshop for the edited volume *Violence, Care, Cure: Self/perceptions within the Medical Encounter* (forthcoming with Routledge) at the Centre Marc Bloch, Berlin (Germany)

FEBRUARY

Maarit Leskelä-Kärki was an invited speaker with the paper "Elämäkertakirjailija ja totuudellisuuden vaade" at the seminar *Muuttuva lukijuus 3.2.2023* (Todellisuuden kosketus – lajit, tekijät ja lukijat). Helsingin yliopisto.

Marta-Laura Cenedese presented the paper 'Temporalities and Materialities of a (Queer) Death' at the ARE research group seminars (online, January 7)

Hanna Meretoja, Päivi Kosonen & Eevastiina Kinnunen organized the workshop 'Kerptomusten voima elämänkriiseissä' at the Runo-Kaarina Festival (Kaarina, Finland, February 27, 2023).

MARCH

Between 1 March and 31 May 2023, **Marta-Laura Cenedese** was a Visiting Researcher at Centre d'Histoire de Sciences-Po Paris.

Tiina Mahlamäki presented the paper "Esoteeria ja uushenkisyyden lumo" at the webinar organised by Oulun seurakunta 29.3.2023.

APRIL

Anne Heimo organized the panels of the Oral history and life stories network at the European Social Science History Conference (ESSHC) at the University of Gothenburg Apr 12-15th, 2023.

Tiina Mahlamäki presented the paper "Antroposofian oppiminen ja opettaminen kirjeissä" at the seminar *Löytöretkiä Kersti Bergrothin maailmaan*, Turun yliopisto 14.4.2023.

Tiina Mahlamäki presented the paper "(Uus)henkisyiden historiaa Suomessa" at the webinar organised by Uskonnonopetus.fi 18.4.2023.

Marta-Laura Cenedese presented the paper 'What does a Collective Illness Narrative Look Like? Some Initial Reflections' at Critical, the Northern Network for Medical Humanities Research Congress (online, 19–21 April)

Markku Lehtimäki organized the symposium 'Environmental Narratives: History, Memory, Trauma' at the University of Turku, Finland.

MAY

Eevastiina Kinnunen co-organized the panel 'Miten tutkia lukukokemuksia? Paneelikeskustelu lukemistutkimuksen nyky suunnista / How to Study Reading Experiences? A Panel Discussion on the New Approaches to the Research of Reading', at The Finnish Literary Research Society's Annual Conference (University of Turku & Åbo Akademi University, Finland, May 4-5, 2023).

Markku Lehtimäki presented the paper 'Mi-meettinen ja didaktinen kertomus: Romaani esteettisenä ja tiedollisena projektina' at the conference 'Kirjallisuudentutkimuksen päivät 2023: Kokemus' (Turku, Finland, 4.5.2023)

Tiina Mahlamäki presented the paper "Learning to knit" at the conference Religion and Spirituality as Sites of Learning -conference, Turku 15.5.2023.

Hanna Meretoja gave a keynote talk, "Master and Counter Narratives in Times of Global Crises" at the conference *Negotiating Peripeties: Change and Its Narratives in Greifswald* (Alfried Krupp Institute for Advanced Study), Germany.

JUNE

Eevastiina Kinnunen, Päivi Kosonen & Hanna Meretoja organized the workshop 'Workshop on narrative agency and the critical potential of reading groups' at the conference Narrative Matters 2023 (University of Tampere, Finland, June 15-17, 2023).

Markku Lehtimäki presented the paper 'Daily Life and Global Crisis Storying Climate Change in Jenny Offill's Weather' at the conference 'Narrative Matters' (Tampere, Finland, 15.6.2023)

Eevastiina Kinnunen presented the paper 'Exploring the Concept of Narrative Well-Being', at the conference PsyArt: 39th International Conference on Psychology and the Arts (Florence, Italy, June 21-24, 2023).

Tiina Mahlamäki presented the paper "When paranormal was normal – Material, popular and visible cultic milieu in 1970–1980s Finland" at the conference ESSWE9: Western Esotericism and Practice. 9th Biennial Conference of the European Society for the Study of Western Esotericism, Malmö University 28.6.2023, Sweden.

Hanna Meretoja gave a keynote talk, "Illness Trauma and Life-Writing", at the conference Trauma and Healing: Storying Lives, Literary Engagements, Entangled Memories at the University of Tartu, Estonia.

JULY

Maarit Leskelä-Kärki presented the paper "The Darkness within the family: memory and identity in the autobiographical novels of Alex Schulman" at the conference The Darkness Within, EUPOP 2023, Univ. of Stirling, 3.-5.7.2023.

AUGUST

Hanna Meretoja gave an invited talk, "Arendt's Non-Subsumptive Conception of Storytelling", at the conference Interdisciplinary Arendt: Pluralism, Promise, Problems, at the University of Aberdeen, UK.

SEPTEMBER

Tiina Mahlamäki presented the paper "Writing narrative non-fiction on knitting as a spiritual

practice" at the conference EASR2023: Religions and Technologies. Vilna, Liettua 4.–8.9.2023.

Eevastiina Kinnunen attended (online, not presenting a paper) the IGEL conference (Monopoli, Italy, September 28-30, 2023).

Hanna Meretoja gave an invited talk, "Memory, Distance, Imagination: Annie Ernaux and the Interplay between the Intimate and the Distant", at the Memory Moves Workshop at the University of Ghent, Belgium.

OCTOBER

Tiina Mahlamäki presented the paper "Yliluonnollisia kokemuksia tutkimassa" at the Studia Generalia lecture serie by Folkloristics and Study of Religion. Turun kaupunginkirjasto 5.10.2023.

Anne Heimo organized the NOS-HS Nordic Voices symposium Oral histories, life stories and analysing significance in museums at the University of Turku Oct 5-7th, 2023.

Anne Heimo presented the paper "Vernacular/everyday history and memory making practices (in the digital age)" at the workshop Digital Memory & History Culture at the University of Copenhagen Oct 12-13th, 2023.

NOVEMBER

Markku Lehtimäki presented the paper 'Narrative Design and Rhetorical Reading' at the conference 'Narrare: Interdisciplinary Autumn Seminar' (Tampere, Finland, 17.11.2023)

DECEMBER

Tiina Mahlamäki presented the paper "Finnish literature from the perspective of esotericism" at the conference ESOLIT – Esotericism and Literature Network of ESSWE. Founding meeting. Online. 8.12.2023.

Hanna Meretoja presented the project "Counter-Narratives of Cancer: Shaping Narrative Agency" at the French-Finnish Workshop on Counter-Narratives at the University Paris Cité, France.

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS

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- Jens Brockmeier, Professor of Psychology, The American University of Paris
- Colin Davis, Professor of French and Comparative Literature, Holocaust Research Institute, Royal Holloway, University of London
- Mark Freeman, Distinguished Professor of Ethics and Society, College of the Holy Cross

- Liesbeth Korthals Altes, Professor of General Literature, University of Groningen
- Leena Kurvet-Käosaar, Associate Professor of Literary Theory, University of Tartu / Eesti kirjandusmuuseum, Estonian literary archives
- Eneken Laanes, Associate Professor of Comparative Literature, Tallinn University
- Maria Mäkelä, Comparative Literature, University of Tampere
- Birgitte Possing, Professor, National Archives, Denmark
- Anna Reading, Professor of Culture and Creative Industries, King's College London
- Ann Rigney, Professor of Comparative Literature, University of Utrecht
- Michael Rothberg, Professor of English and Comparative Literature, University of California, Los Angeles
- Brian Schiff, Professor of Psychology and Director of the George and Irina Schaffer Center for the Study of Genocide, Human Rights, and Conflict Prevention at the American University of Paris
- Maria Tamboukou, Professor of Feminist Studies, Centre for Narrative Research, University of East London

NETWORKS

SELMA co-operates with many other research centres in Europe and elsewhere working in the field of autobiography, life-writing, narrative studies and memory studies. We are interested in new initiatives in the field of research, teaching and social engagement activities.

- The Aachen Center for Cognitive and Empirical Literary Studies (ACCELS)
- Centre for Life-Writing Research, King's College, London
- Centre for Narrative Research, University of East London
- The Holocaust Research Institute, Royal Holloway, University of London
- IABA-Europe and *European Journal for Life-Writing*
- IIPC – The International Institute for Popular Culture, University of Turku
- Memory Studies Association
- Narrare: Centre for Interdisciplinary Narrative Studies, University of Tampere
- Narrative and Memory: Ethics, Aesthetics, Politics (Nordic-Baltic research network coordinated by Hanna Meretoja and Eneken Laanes)
- Narrative and Violence (Nordic Summer University Study Circle coordinated by Marta-Laura Cenedese and Helena Duffy)
- Oxford Centre for Life-Writing, University of Oxford
- Paris Centre for Narrative Matters, Université de Paris
- PUTSPACE: Public Transport as Public Space in European Cities: Narrating, Experiencing, Contesting (HERA-funded project, PI for Finland Jason Finch)
- The Possibility Studies Network (PSN)