

## NARRATIVE, IDEOLOGY AND MYTH

### Second Tampere Conference On Narrative

University of Tampere

#### General Informations:

Organizers: Univ. of Tampere, Research Institute for Social Sciences, Dept. of Sociology and Social Psychology, Dept. of Women Studies; Finnish Network of Narrative Studies; Politics and the Arts Group (Standing Group of the European Consortium for Political Research).

Program committee: Kathy Davis (Utrecht), Olivia Guaraldo (Verona), Margaret Heller (Kings College, Halifax), Annabel Herzog (Haifa), Kia Lindroos (Jyväskylä), John S. Nelson (Iowa), Shelley Day Sclater (East London), Maureen Whitebrook (Sheffield), Matti Hyvärinen (Jyväskylä).  
Conference fee: 120/60 EUR (lower for research students).

Date: June 26-28, 2003.

Place: Tampere Hall.

Deadline for applying: March 1, 2003.

Contact: To apply, please send a 300-350 word abstract (as a message, not as an attached file) to Dr. Matti Hyvärinen (Program chair), Research Institute for Social Sciences (RISS), FIN-33014 Univ. of Tampere; Tel. + 358 / 3 / 215 6999, Fax + 358 / 3 / 215 6502; e-mail matti.hyvarinen@uta.fi and to Dr. Tarja Aaltonen (Conference Secretary), Department of Sociology and Social Psychology, FIN-33014 Univ. of Tampere, Tel. + 358 / 3 / 215 6561, Fax + 358 / 3 / 215 6080; e-mail tarja.aaltonen@uta.fi.

Over the last three decades, the concept of narrative has successfully traveled from the humanities to social, psychological and political studies – and to many other disciplines. The »narrative turn« raises questions about the relation between ideology and narrative. Recent critical literature considers narratives from the perspectives of power and persuasion; some emphasize the normative nature of narratives. Others, most notably empirical work in women's studies, health studies and sociology, typically assume an emancipatory potential for narratives; storytelling is seen as a form of emancipation, or »giving a voice« to otherwise silenced groups.

Different approaches work with different theories and definitions of narrative. The field is characterized and energized by diversity. This conference explores this diversity, and particularly focuses on non-normative ways of discussing narrative and narrativity. Papers will address the issue of social, cultural and political circulation of narratives, the different forms narrativity takes, and the significance it assumes, within social action.

We intend to address the »murky side« of narrative: the issues of myth and persuasive stories. »Myth« as a core narrative can constitute the seductive yet hidden structure of social or political theories, of news releases, and of personal life stories. But we would also question the opposition between the apparent clarity of the concept of narrative and the »darkness of the myth«. Is it possible for us to rethink our cultural and political belongings so that they take the form of a constantly re-narrated story, as a founding myth without an origin?

The core of narrative – and its social and political importance – lies in the fact that it remains bound to a partiality of perspective, and thus must reject any form of abstract universalism. At first, this seems to contrast ›theory‹, ›concept‹ and ›narrative‹, but we also insist on exploring the possibilities of narrative theorizing. How is it possible to denounce the false universalism without falling prey to ›community‹-determined identities? Can we feature storytelling as a weak form of universalism?

We will ask whether narrative can help us to understand subjectivity as a form of social and political agency always in relation with others, as agency that can exist outside the traditional boundaries of Politics. Perhaps we should re-think subjectivity as a ›story‹, which is as such always told (also) by someone else and is thus intrinsically relational. This would raise the following questions: What is the relationship between narrative and social, political, and cultural identities in times of global, de-territorialized times and spaces. What is the relationship between myth, storytelling and political identity in times of globalization?

We invite all kind of narrative work that addresses these (and other) faces of narrative. Papers that combine theoretical and empirical work on narrative, those that have a genuinely interdisciplinary approach, and papers that try to find narrative forms of theorizing will be particularly welcome.

Papers might address the following themes (although the list is not exhaustive):

- Narrative and social action
- Narrative and myth
- The persuasiveness of narrative
- Narrative, self and identity
- Narrative and memory politics
- Artistic, political and professional uses of narrative
- The significance of narrative for nation-building
- Narrating trauma – narration as witnessing
- Mythical and ideological bodies
- The emancipatory function of narrative

- Dangerous narratives – the (mis)use of myths
- The social, cultural and political circulation of narratives
- Narratives of belonging and dispossession
- Narratives as a new way of theorizing in social and political theory

**Guest speakers:**

Mark Freeman (Holy Cross, Worcester)

David S. Gutterman (Willamette, Oregon)

Liz Stanley (Manchester)

