

CALL FOR PAPERS

PRO-SOCIAL PLAY!

International Conference on Storytelling and Well-being across Media Borders

17–19 October, 2019, University of Kent, U.K.
www.prosocial-narrative.org

Convenors:

Chiao-I Tseng
Dieter Declercq
Nicola Shaughnessy

Keynote speakers:

1. Charles Forceville, Media Studies, University of Amsterdam
2. Tobias Greitemeyer, Social Psychology, University of Innsbruck, Austria
3. Anja Laukötter, Max Planck Institute for Human Development, Berlin, Germany
4. Harry Yi-Jui Wu, Medical Ethics and Humanities, Hong Kong University

Roundtable discussion

with the award winning film director, Clio Barnard, following a screening of *Dark River* (2017)

Workshops

by artists affiliated with the arts charity *People United* on prosocial performances

This truly interdisciplinary and international conference brings together scholars of empirical and theoretical research as well as practitioners working on narrative arts for promoting pro-social behaviours and mental well-being across different media.

Recent empirical research indicates that beyond major personality traits, demographic variables, wealth and education, people's greater engagement with the arts predicts greater prosociality [4]. Narrative arts in particular, whether in the form of pictorial, written, film or digital media, provide powerful vehicle for promoting prosocial behaviours — empirical evidence has shown that storytelling in a variety of media forms promotes social bonding, perspective taking, pro-social responses and good mental health [1, 2].

The past several decades have seen the emergence of a plethora of graphic, audiovisual and interactive narratives and live performances that aim to promote mental health as well as to increase people's awareness of critical and timely social issues, such as the experience of trauma in war zones, social injustice, issues relating to health and illness. The social impact of these narratives builds on their powerful integration of narrative absorption and educational value. This conference focuses precisely on this unique integration.

To date, the pro-social narratives have often been studied with a focus on testing people's media exposure and pro-social effects. Nevertheless, as explicitly pointed out by most of these studies, we also need to investigate how the narrative factors are designed, structured and mobilised in a specific coherent way to effectively achieve the intended prosocial and mental health purposes [3]. Hence, it is crucial to advance the theoretical link between the *design choice* of narrative, media technological features for engaging people in difficult topics and their pro-social response. Establishing the link is precisely the main objective of this conference. This includes, but is not limited to, the following topics:

- Narrative factors for evoking people's empathy, achieving educational purposes
- Link between prosocial behaviour and mental health
- Storytelling, practical application and mental health
- Technology features of different media platforms that afford, strengthen or constrain the pro-social, persuasive functions of narratives
- Impact of social cultural conventions on different narrative designs
- Historical perspectives of pro-social storytelling
- Transmedia comparison of pro-social messages, for instance, across film, TV, comics, video games, games, literature, etc.
- Pro-social storytelling in social media
- Pro-social storytelling through live performances and live interaction
- Balance between emotional engagement and message credibilities
- Empirical evidence of pro-social, persuasive functions in storytelling across media
- Pro-social narrative designs for children and adolescents
- Narrative medicine

Key dates

Abstract submission deadline: 30.06.2019

Acceptance notification date: 31.07.2019

Submission

We invite two kinds of submissions

1. Research papers
2. Workshops by artists, designers, health professionals and other practitioners working on pro-sociality and storytelling.

Abstracts (max. 300 words) and bio notes (max. 100 words) must be submitted (as PDF or Word attachment) to mail@prosocial-narrative.org

Participants of workshops must specify what presentation formats are proposed.

Participants of accepted research papers will be given 20 minutes for oral presentations followed by 10 minutes Q/A. All submissions will be peer-reviewed by members of the programme committee.

Conference fees

Conference fees will be announced at a later date, and may be waived entirely depending on available funding, but they will not exceed £50 for postgraduate students (and ECRs on fixed contracts) and £80 for staff.

Bibliography

- [1] Bormann, Daniel and Greitemeyer, Tobias. 2015. Immersed in virtual worlds and minds: Effects of in-game storytelling on immersion, need satisfaction, and affective theory of mind. *Social Psychological and Personality Science* 6, 646–652.
- [2] Moyer-Guse, Emily, Jain, Parul and Chung, Adrienne H. 2012. Reinforcement or Reactance? Examining the Effect of an Explicit Persuasive Appeal Following an Entertainment-Education Narrative. *Journal of Communication* 62, 1010–1027.
- [3] Moyer-Guse, Emily and Nabi, Robin L. 2009. Explaining the Effects of Narrative in an Entertainment Television Program: Overcoming Resistance to Persuasion. *Human communication research* 36, 26–52.
- [4] van de Vyver, Julie and Abrams, Dominic. 2018. The arts as a catalyst for human prosociality and cooperation. *Social Psychological and Personality Science* 9, 664–674.