

TEXTURES OF CHANGE: Social Imaginaries, Narratives, and the Possibility of Politics

It has become common for political theorists and philosophers to insist on the necessity of new imaginaries and narratives. Crises of authority, financial meltdowns, and environmental disasters compel us to look for alternative frameworks and practices. While the urgency of this claim is undeniable, the conceptual ground for the creation of new imaginaries and narratives is still unclear. How do we define imaginaries and narratives in relation to our political and social life? How can they become normative and generate conceptual and practical shifts? And who is in a position to shape, direct, and take ownership of these emergent conceptions?

This conference focuses on the current debate on political imaginaries and narratives to investigate some of these questions. As a starting point, we propose to challenge standard Marxist or epistemological approaches to the topic that either interpret imaginaries and narratives as ideological projections (a product of false consciousness) or merely as individual, cognitive faculties. Rather, we suggest thinking about imaginaries and narratives as larger sensuous and embodied practices that re-orient material structures of domination and allow for a reflective rearticulation of collective demands. In particular, we set out to clarify: the meaning of “imaginaries” and/or “narratives” as forms of sense-making; their ability to shift existing discourses and power relations; the way in which they foster different ways of feeling, seeing, acting-in, and experiencing the world in a time of crisis; the way in which they are embedded in artistic and literary practices; and the way in which they address—or fail to address—marginalized subjects.

We invite papers that focus on the concepts of “social imaginary” and “narrative,” as well as on the connection between the two, and on their political and ethical implications. It is our conviction that a critical understanding of these concepts can only emerge from attending to how they are practically embodied and situated in our practices. In this spirit, we welcome, in addition to papers aimed at conceptual clarification, papers that provide specific accounts of alternative forms of praxis, including (but not limited to) leftist, feminist, anti-racist, decolonial, abolitionist, indigenous, environmentalist, and utopian imaginaries and narratives.

APRIL 13-15 2023

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS:

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CALL FOR PAPERS POTENTIAL TOPICS

- Imaginaries & Materiality
- Theories of Narrative (Emplotment/Narrative Imagination/Narrative Identities/First Person and Third Person)
- Theories of Social/Practical Imagination
- Collective and Individual Autonomy
- Embodiment
- Theories of Affects
- Utopian Imagination and/or Utopian Narratives
- Feminist Imaginaries and/or Narratives
- Racial Imaginaries and/or Narratives
- Decolonial Narratives and/or Imaginaries
- Indigenous Narratives and/or Imaginaries
- Abolitionist Imaginaries and/or Narratives
- Environmentalist Imaginaries and/or Narratives
- Film Theory and Visual Culture
- Politics & Aesthetic Practices
- Politics and Genre
- Archival Gaps and Genealogy

FORMAT:

MAXIMUM 4,000 WORDS

INCLUDE BRIEF ACADEMIC BIOGRAPHY

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