

Plurality University Network

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“Narratopias”

Narrating the Worlds We Want, Together

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“If we want to transform society, we must learn to tell – and listen to – a new set of stories about the world we want to create.”

Ashoka

“We urgently need new narratives to imagine the impossible.”

Green Economy Coalition

“We need new narratives to bring people together to achieve a more inclusive and sustainable world at a time when, as Greta Thunberg said, ‘our house is on fire’.”

Forum Économique Mondial

“If, as the saying goes, ‘politics is the art of the possible’, it follows that we need the arts in order to multiply these possibilities.”

Bruno Latour

“Climate change is a failure of the imagination.”

Naomi Klein

...

... From all sides, the same call emerges: «We need new narratives», to make imaginable, and therefore possible the – social, ecological – transitions that we need in order to live together on this planet.

We take this call seriously and intend to organize, on a global scale, a collective response to it: Narratopias.

Narratopias is an invitation to embark on a collective search for narratives of desirable futures, and turn them into the seeds of concrete changes. By “desirable”, we mean: sustainable (favorable to human and nonhuman life), welcoming (to the diversity of ways to be), liberating (of all forms of domination), and open (including to the discussion of what each of us finds “desirable”).

This project is based on three beliefs: We don’t need one single narrative, rather a multitude of narratives of the “worlds of tomorrow”; many of these narratives exist all over the world - we should begin by recognizing them everywhere in the world; the call for «new narratives» will only be only productive if it brings forth, in each of us, the capacity to imagine and the desire to act.

NARRATIVES, WHAT FOR?

... To trace the path for collective responses to our contemporary “dead ends” (ecological, social, economic...);

... To set ourselves free from fatalism, collapseism, presentism, «No Futures», and more generally, the feeling that we can only endure the future with more or less grace;

... To make «shifts» on the scale of societies conceivable, and to transform what today appears as losses (“less” consumption, travel...) into ferments (“more” connection, involvement, creation...);

... To solicit our senses and emotions, as much as our reason, allowing everyone to project themselves personally into alternative futures within which they may find meaning, desire and energy;

... To help a plurality of collective horizons emerge, that can either bring people together towards action or produce fruitful disagreements, and in both cases, refocus energies around projects rather than problems.

WHERE TO START?

1. Narratopias is a collective, open, international and multicultural project. It belongs to all those who contribute to it with their abilities, their networks and their passion.
 - > At the end of 2020, we wish to create an initial group of equal partners, spread around the globe and bringing in a variety of practices and abilities: networks of artists, social innovators or activists; researchers and students; futures thinkers; etc.
2. The first step will consist in gathering existing narratives of desirable worlds, from everywhere on the Planet: in literature, theater, cinema, video games, visual arts, music, design, comics ... but also in utopias and social experiments. Let’s learn to recognize them, let’s collect them onto a shared platform, and translate them, discuss them, draw inspirations from them!
 - > At the beginning of 2021, we will launch an international “invitation” for narratives of alternative and desirable futures: Texts, images and other sensitive representations whatever their form or media; existing or produced for the occasion; completely imagined or based on lived experiences. This invitation will remain open all along.

3. Collecting these narratives is not a goal in itself. They must live in us, connect each other, and positively confront or pursue one another. We need them to help develop our (individual and collective) capacity to imagine other worlds and try to make them happen.
 - > Mid-2021, once a first set of narratives has been gathered, we will engage on a collective discovery, analysis and discussion around them: In which students, researchers of all disciplines, corporate executives and non-executives, entrepreneurs, activists, elected officials, citizens and non-citizens, etc. discover, link, analyze, discuss, extend these narratives, and gradually, bring out paths, new ideas, maps, perspectives, fruitful tensions.
 - > At the same time, we will trigger a collective effort to identify ways of (re) developing the imaginary capacities of each and everyone: develop in classrooms, universities, boardrooms, community centers, scientific labs and business innovation labs, etc., the ability to produce narratives for and of the future, discuss them and turn them into the basis of transformative actions.
4. This work should then help generate projects and inspirations for concrete action.
 - > Beginning Q3, 2021, we will promote an initial series of actions and experimentations, borne and supported by all who wish to take part. Non-exhaustive list of possible directions: «Prototypes» of alternative futures; Projects linked to territories, organizations or collectives: why not «citizens’ assemblies of the future», collective stories for the future of specific territories, educational programs...; Research and innovation programs defined around desirable imaginaries; An intrusion of narratives in the most serious forums: transforming political programs into fiction, «hacking» corporate CSR, scientific congresses, or NGO projects in the name of the future...

Come build Narratopias with us!
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