

Call for Papers: Situated Narratives. Textual Techniques, Aesthetic Strategies, Knowledge Practices

23–25 April 2026 | University of Zürich

Organisers: Patrizia Huber, University of Zürich; Eliane Jaberg, University of Zürich; Hanna Rinderle, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin

In Edith Hammar's graphic novel *Homo Line*, the ferry between Helsinki and Stockholm symbolises the protagonist's state of permanent displacement. The text speaks of a "Hemlängtan som ett kroniskt tillstånd" – homesickness as a chronic condition (Hammar 2020, 25). Trapped in the limbo of perpetual transit, the character realises that, as a queer Finland-Swedish artist, they can find no home in either place and are multiply marginalised. Comfort arises from Finland's queer past, expressed through both story and style: the protagonist turns to the hidden spaces of homosexual history, while the visual language invokes the homoerotic aesthetics of Tom of Finland. In *Homo Line*, intersectional marginalisation and art-historical reference are woven together as movements through space, linking the search for social belonging with a sense of affiliation to an artistic tradition. In short, *Homo Line* exemplifies a situated narrative.

By *situated narrative* we mean a narrative practice that is aware of, and reflects on, the conditions of its own emergence. It recognises the diversity and contradictions of its origins, as well as the networks of relations in which it is embedded. Situated narratives seek to represent and critically examine intersectional complexity – of sex, gender, race, class, sexuality, disability and age. They are conscious of their limited perspectives, their genealogies, and their roles within the intertextual web. They rely on sympoetic collaboration and collective creation (Gramlich, 2021), while also recognising their predecessors and precursors. Situated narratives may reject the detached posture of genius aesthetics, take the form of co-authorship, or engage in dialogue with other voices in other ways to create collaborative modes of storytelling.

Our use of the term builds on Donna Haraway's (1988) influential concept of *situated knowledges*. Haraway laid the foundation for a feminist objectivity that rejects the disembodied, 'god-like' viewpoint. Instead, feminist objectivity rests on partial perspectives, collaboration, and mutual responsibility. Only those who are aware of their own position within a specific context can engage in the polyphonic dialogue of the "webs of connections" (584). *Situated knowledge* also highlights the power of visualisation technologies that provide metaphors for understanding the world (589). This insight into the power of the epistemological practices bears ontological consequences and ethical-political implications for the situated knowledges.

Narrative can be seen as one such technology. It not only voices partial perspectives but also makes them tangible through aesthetic form. For Haraway, language and material

reality are tightly interwoven: linguistic representation produces meaning, draws boundaries, and can reinforce or challenge power relations. At the same time, it creates openings for ambiguity, translation, and interpretation – moments that allow for semantic shifts, polyphony, and multiplicity. Literary texts, in turn, establish poetically coded frameworks for making sense of the world that demand critical interpretation.

Since its introduction, Haraway's *situated knowledges* has resonated widely across disciplines. In sociology and ethnography, for instance, the notion of *culturally situated narratives* has been used to describe how identity is formed within cultural discourses (e.g. Törnégren 2023; Pritzker & Perrino 2021; Alsudis & Pillay 2017), or as a tool for environmental pedagogy (Wirth & Gamon 1999).

In literary studies, comparable epistemological concepts have long been present, not least since Susan S. Lanser's seminal essay *Toward a Feminist Narratology* (1986). More recently, Lanser and Rimmon-Kenan have drawn explicit parallels to debates in other disciplines, coining the term *Situated Narratologies*: "a situated narratology recognizes that contexts, identities, and locations are critical to our understanding not only of narrative but of narrative form" (Lanser & Rimmon-Kenan 2019, 265).

Situated Narratologies therefore take into account the contextual construction of both primary and secondary texts. In this vein, Kißling and Seidel (2024, 205) refer to 'situated narrative' in the classification of migrant and non-migrant literature within national philologies. Yet the concept could also be extended to other intersectional perspectives and collaborative practices of narration. From this angle, new perspectives on lesser-known works, fresh readings of canonical texts, and explorations of contemporary Scandinavian literature all become possible. This workshop aims to begin a collective exploration of situated narratives and to lay the groundwork for further theoretical reflection. We invite contributions that engage closely with primary material from the Scandinavian context and address questions such as:

- What textual, generic, and media strategies shape situated narratives? What forms of collaboration do they employ?
- How do situated narratives reflect their embeddedness in geographical, social, discursive, and aesthetic networks? How do they respond to the institutional dynamics of the literary field?
- What kind of politics do situated narratives articulate? What ethical or socio-political claims do they make?
- What forms of knowledge do situated narratives produce? What metaphors and frameworks of understanding do they develop?

We invite proposals of no more than 400 words, accompanied by a short biographical note, to be submitted by **31 October 2025** to patrizia.huber@ds.uzh.ch.

Languages of the workshop are English, Danish, Swedish, and Norwegian. Presentations should be approx. 20 minutes in length.

Bibliography

- Alsudis, Mona Saleh/Pillay, Venitha (2017). „Culturally Situated Narratives. Expanding Insights and Accountabilities“. In: Lehtomäki, Elina/Janhonen-Abruquah, Hille/Kahangwa, George L. (Eds.). *Culturally Responsive Education. Reflections from the Global South and North*. Abingdon, New York: Routledge, pp. 114–128.
- Gramlich, Naomie (2021). „Situierendes Wissen“. 22.06.2021. <[urn:nbn:de:bsz:15-qucosa2-794173](https://nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:de:bsz:15-qucosa2-794173)> (accessed on 16.7.2025).
- Haraway, Donna (1988). „Situated Knowledges. The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective“. In: *Feminist Studies* 14/3, pp. 575–599.
- KiBling, Magdalena/Seidel, Nadine (2024). „Vexierbilder als gegenhegemoniales Moment. Strategien postmigrantischen Erzählens bei Andrea Karimé“. In: Hodaie, Nazli/Hofmann, Michael (Eds.). *Postmigrantische Literatur: Grundlagen, Analysen, Positionen*. Berlin, Heidelberg: Springer, pp. 201–220.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-662-69953-9_12> (accessed on 16.7.2025).
- Lanser, Susan S. (1986). „Toward a Feminist Narratology“. In: *Style* 20/3, pp. 341–363.
- Lanser, Susan S./Rimmon-Kenan, Shlomith (2019). „Narratology at the Checkpoint. The Politics and Poetics of Entanglement“. In: *Narrative* 27/3 (2019), pp. 245–269.
- Pritzker, Sonya E./Perrino, Sabina (2021). „Culture inside: Scale, intimacy, and chronotopic stance in situated narratives“. In: *Language in Society* 50/3 (2021), pp. 365–387.
- Törnégren, Gull (2023). „Vem är du, vem är jag och hur kan jag värdera när våra världar möts? Om religionskunskapsämnets potential att bidra till utvecklingen av elevers omdömesbildning“. In: *Acta Didactica Norden* 17/2, Art. 7.
- Wirth, Danielle M./Gamon, Julia A. (1999). „The Art of Situated Narrative: A Tool to Teach Environmental Ethics“. In: *Journal of Vocational Education Research* 24/1, pp. 45–61.