Colleagues:

You are invited to submit a full article for possible inclusion in a special issue of Storyworlds: A Journal of Narrative Studies. The issue theme is “Theorizing Short Story Practice in the 21st Century.”

It has been thirty years since Charles E. May edited the influential The New Short Story Theories (1994). In those thirty years, Creative Writing programs from undergraduate to PhD levels have grown from a few specific sites to become a pan-global provision. This proliferation has been further increased by the Covid-19 pandemic, with online MA programs now offered alongside traditional face-to-face programs.

While some critics argue that this widening of the curriculum leads to a production line of writers, there is clear evidence that Creative Writing is one of the last crafts to become widely offered in universities (Cowan, 2022). Far from producing uniform writers, it has instead precipitated the emergence of contemporary fiction with a range of voices that are reimagining the short story across genres.

Furthermore, this widening of participation has led to a growth of experimental writing by marginalized people. It is the emerging strategies of these writers, and the new forms and stylistics of their writing, that require a re-evaluation of short story practice and theory.

The guest editor is interested in short story practice and stylistics, and how narrators can be used for what Brian Richardson (2015) terms as “unnatural narratives,” specifically what he calls “oppositional literature” by minority or oppressed groups, such as working-class writers, people of color, LGBTQ+ and other marginalized writers. The editor is especially interested in work where these marginalized positions intersect. How can narrative strategies be employed by writers to build storyworlds that communicate the lived experience of characters? How might these contemporary stories implicate readers in the events of the narrative?

Submissions of 6,000-8,000 words should be sent to guest editor Andrew McDonnell (andrew.mcdonnell@ieg.ac.uk) and to Storyworlds’ editors Avril Tynan (avril.tynan@utu.fi) and Benjamin Williams (benjamiw@andrew.cmu.edu) by July 31, 2024. Submissions should follow the journal’s submission guidelines.