



New Fictional Formats & Age-Old Narratives: Understanding Creative Modes of Popular Culture in the Digital Age

Constant transformation has been the norm in the new digital media environment since its inception. During the 2020 health crisis, the impact of this ever-changing digital world in our daily lives has been especially notable. Due to quarantine measures, the only opportunity to interact with friends and to consume culture was to rely on social networks, streaming services and video conferencing softwares. Web-based cultural activities have affected people's relationships with cyberspace: many have visited museums, seen award ceremonies, and even been to concerts online. In other words, we are never disconnected from the Internet (DeNardis 2020).

Our continuous virtual presence has had a radical aesthetic influence in our lives. Fictional narratives have been evolving hand in hand with the continuous change in digital media—from vaporwave and memes to changes in the way we write and express ourselves. These new ideas and symbols have developed thanks to online trends, both in terms of rhetoric and via the emergence of new words. Renowned writers such as Jennifer Egan and Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie have not overlooked this transforming environment and have published their works on social media platforms in a serialized format (what is now known as *Twitterature*). Their cases are notable examples of how the possibilities to share content and combine mediums in order to create fictional narratives have grown exponentially. While the content of those stories has not been significantly altered by the format, we can look at this phenomenon from the perspective of media scholar Marshall McLuhan: the medium is the message.

In this context, boundaries between cultural and leisure industries continue to blur. The cultural field—which had already accepted video games, comics and fanfiction into the realm of the mainstream—has continued to expand thanks to social media and the increasing gamification in video on demand platforms. Prosumers (a portmanteau of producer and consumer coined by Alvin Toffler in 1980) and textual poachers (Jenkins 1992) are now ubiquitous in the creation of fictional narratives on the Internet along with hybridization. For instance, radionovelas have turned into podcasts with their own webpages where both fans and creators share commentary, photos, and sources that become part of the fictional narrative. These changes have led to an epistemological transformation in artistic practices that highlights the intermedial nature of contemporary forms of fiction.

This Call for Papers thus searches for fresh new research that explores contemporary fictional narratives and creations native to the digital environment. Contributors are welcome to examine genres, structures, mediums, and strategies of new forms of fiction, and to provide philosophical research on issues concerning popular culture in the context of new media. The analyses can focus on (a) specific case studies of digitally born narrative



formats; (b) comparative analyses between contemporary and old fictional narratives, discourse and rhetoric; and (c) theoretical explorations of new emerging formats considering the political and social implications of technology. We welcome approaches that explore the complexities and contradictions of our technocultural age, while at the same time acknowledging instances of how aesthetic sensibilities and fictional creations have changed, developed, and influenced popular culture.

Suggested fields of analysis include but are not limited to:

- Social media platforms as mediums for fiction
- Fictional narratives and posthumanism
- Non-literary forms of fiction
- Collaborative online creations
- Theory-fiction, ficto-criticism and lyric-essays
- AI creations and algorithms as artistic methodology
- Interactive fiction on streaming and digital formats
- Gamification, virtual reality and digital storytelling
- Intermedial narratives: multimediality, remediation and transmediality
- New media influence on aesthetics

PopMeC accepts submissions of **full papers** (3000 words max. references excluded) about any aspect related with the call. The papers will be **peer-reviewed** on a rolling basis by our editorial team and external collaborators, who will get back to you as soon as possible. Accepted languages will be **English and Spanish**, although we recommend the election of the latter only if coherent with the content of the article.

The works accepted will be published on our platform (<https://popmec.hypotheses.org> ISSN: 2660-8839) as part of a special section dedicated to the subject. According to the feedback and participation the call raises, we will consider proposing the publication of an edited volume collecting selected contributions.

The deadline for submission of full papers is February 14, 2021.

Send your proposal to popmec.call@gmail.com attaching your text, inclusive of a short bio (100-120 words), name, affiliation, and email contact in a single file (.doc, .docx, .odt). The editor in charge of this call is Laura Álvarez Trigo, so feel welcome to contact her directly with any inquiry regarding the call, at laura.alvarezt@edu.uah.es. Authors are welcome to consult their idea with the editor (possibly by means of a max. 350 words abstract) and receive some feedback in order to develop the longer text.

Please, check our [author guidelines page](#) and don't hesitate to drop us a line with any doubt or inquiry you might have in this respect at popmec.research@gmail.com.



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