The European Narratology Network (ENN) has established a forum for research on narrative across multiple national traditions and languages, across disciplines and across media, with its biennial conference. The papers presented at previous ENN conferences have been published in the *Narratologia* series in carefully edited book volumes that show narratology’s emergent vectors in great depth (see Hansen, Pier, Roussin, Schmid 2017). Starting with ENN5 in Prague, the European Narratology Network has entered a partnership with the journal *Frontiers of Narrative Studies*, and the first project in this partnership is the present special issue. In addition to the conference publication in the *Narratologia* series, we showcase the latest research presented at ENN5 with a series of selected articles, published here within a year of the conference taking place.

While the *Narratologia* volume gives the full range of research in ENN, this journal special issue highlights new connections and approaches, representing the cutting-edge of work from ENN scholars. The articles assembled in this volume venture into narratives in digital environments, address fundamental issues of whether images can be narratives and how to approach drama and lyrics from a narratological perspective, and they link current issues in narrative with theories and practices from non-Western and Western traditions, linguistics and philosophy. The ENN5 special issue is a showcase of the many directions into which narratology is moving at the moment, revisiting old territories, finding new paths and giving a glimpse of the kind of work of which we might see much more in the coming years.

Does Hamlet look like Benedict Cumberbatch? Is the David Bowie t-shirt that the actor wears in a performance of the play fictional? Jan Horstmann demonstrates the relevance of studying performative arts for larger issues in narratology, when he connects these questions to recent debates on fictionality and discus-
sions around the different degrees to which drama and film can be considered “narrative”. His article “Narrative representation and fictionality in performative media” presents a model for a system of narrative representation that works across multiple channels of perception (visual, auditory, etc.) that promises to open new avenues of exploration for the project of transmedial narratology.

Targeting what has been called cinematic writing – written narrative fiction that imitates the medium of film – Marco Bellardi’s article argues that what distinguishes a cinematic mode of writing is first and foremost how it handles foreground and background narrative style. As a heuristic device to explain how narrative discourse can become para-cinematic, the article brings in Weinrich's concept of “narrative relief”. Drawing on Bolter and Grusin’s notion of “retrograde remediation” and Wolf’s and Rajewsky’s ideas on “intermedial reference”, the article moves towards a clearer understanding of how certain types of written narration may, on the discourse level, imitate the medium of film by using specific verbal tenses that convey sensations similar to those produced by the film medium’s monstrative quality.

The rise of digital media continues to transform how stories are told and for what purposes, challenging existing theories and concepts on what narratives are and how they function. In “A communication model for non-fiction interactive digital narratives: A study of cultural heritage websites”, Nicole Basaraba investigates three cultural heritage websites: Open Monuments, Belgian Refugees of 1914–1919, and Storymap that to varying degrees employ interactive storytelling as part of their rhetoric. Setting out to better understand the impact of interactivity on how these sites use stories – and more broadly to provide a template for approaching narratives with a high degree of user interaction, the article proposes a revised communication model, focusing on the active, participatory role filled by the user in such narrative encounters.

Klaus Speidel takes a first step towards “descriptive narratology” in his article “What narrative is. Reconsidering the role of definitions based on experiments with pictorial narrative. An Essay in Descriptive Narratology”. Speidel takes the well-known theoretical discussion about whether an individual image can be considered a narrative and puts it to an empirical test. He argues for the value of the intuitions of everyday picture viewers over the definitions derived from theoretical systems that might be biased towards the verbal model. Speidel brings into dialogue the discussions of narratology, that unfold around very specific and refined terminologies, and the everyday sense in which picture viewers might say “this really tells a story”, presenting a new possible model for doing narrative studies empirically.

When confronted with non-narrative elements in narrative prose, narratological analyses often ignore their significance. In her contribution, Nele Janssens
aims to acknowledge the importance of non-narrative utterances in narrative texts in order to make sense of the rhythmic repetition, the unconventional narrative progression and the linguistic deviation in C.C. Krijgelmans’s experimental short story *Homunculi*. Taking her cue from genre theory, Janssens defines lyricality as a mode of the same order as narrativity, namely as a dynamic set of traits that can occur in different genres and can be realized in different ways. This allows her to study a process termed “lyricization” (Bernaerts 2013), defined as an intensification of lyrical traits like “monologicity” (the focus on the perspective of the speaker) or deviation from conventional language (often to support characterization). While several scholars have studied narrative elements in lyrical poetry, Janssens aims to pave the way for a more systematic study of lyrical traits in narrative texts.

Inspired by cognitive approaches to narrative that conceive of narrative as less about representing actions and more about expressing and evoking embodied experiences and interactions with the world – Daria Baryshnikova investigates cut-up technique, (re)invented and used by British-born artist Brion Gysin during the 1950s and 1960s. Historicizing the artist and his methods, “Brion Gysin, cut-ups, and contemporary painting: Narrating experience” seeks to demonstrate how the cut-up method can be said to contain or perform its own form of cognitive realism. Following ideas from radical enactivism, the article suggests reading cut-ups – with their transformations and subversions of standardized syntax and semantics – as “representations of the ways the human mind may operate”, rather than as representations of characters and their actions or as projections of the mental functioning of a narrator.

In his contribution, Mrugalski argues that it is worthwhile to reconsider the phenomenologically oriented literary theory of Roman Ingarden in view of certain methodological developments in narratology. Recently, the field of narrative theory has witnessed the turn towards second-generation cognitive theory of embodied cognition and its proximity to neurophenomenology and direct realism. Mrugalski delves into the entangled history of East and Central European structuralism and Ingarden’s phenomenology, and their reception in literary theory. He argues that a less distorted view of Ingarden’s approach may help to develop a receiver-oriented and temporal perspective on the literary work of art, which gives an account on both representationalist and enactive (non-representationalist) components of the aesthetic object.

Narrative, in its most basic definitions about characters acting, feeling and thinking, takes a clearly anthropocentric perspective. Marco Caracciolo proposes to reconsider such a bias for the human with current approaches in posthumanism and eco-criticism in his article ‘Notes for an econarratological theory of character’. Caracciolo draws in particular on work in linguistics that foregrounds
language structures that provide alternatives to the transitive, i.e., that do not depend on the distinction between (human) subjects and their actions on (non-human) objects. The article test-drives these analytical tools with examples from the field of posthuman literature, including Colson Whitehead and Jeanette Winterson, and argues that this approach goes beyond the abstracted anthropocentrism of Greimas’ actants, bringing narratology into dialogue with a central area of current literary studies.

In “On the politics of discordant, estranging and bonding reliability: Contextualist narratology at work”, Marta Puxan-Olivia ventures into an investigation of the nexus of ideology and form by looking at reliability in Camus’ *L’étranger*. Picking up and elaborating on ideas on contextualist narratology, with an interest in how politics condition narrative structures as well as in how narrative structures may imbue certain politics, the article suggests that more adequate explanations of what Phelan has termed "estranging narration" and what Cohn has called “discordant narration” can be achieved by more carefully paying attention to the interplay of political ideology and narrative poetics.

In his contribution, Hansen aims to bring to bridge the gap between narratology and health communication studies by looking at what metaphors and narratives are used by patients, doctors, public and politicians use in order to frame the discourse of serious illness. More in particular, he dissects the role of a specific metaphor in the discourse on cancer, namely "the war against cancer". Drawing on both rhetoric and conceptual metaphor theory on the one hand, and the concepts of counter-story and master- and counter-narrative on the other hand, Hansen shows how the war metaphor generatively can be turned against itself and function as the basis for counter-narratives of being ill. Examples are picked from published interviews and articles on cancer discourse, and the Danish author Maria Gerhardt’s novel *Transfervindue* (2017).

From this short overview, it can be gathered that the contributions to this issue indeed cover a wide range of topics, fields, methods and objects. As such, they show that narratology is not limited to the study of fictional narrative, but that it is able to tackle many media and also provides the means to bridge the gap between research geared towards theory and empirical investigations. For us guest editors, this special issue also marks our joining the editorial board of the journal; we thank Shang Biwu for his invitation and we look forward to the continuing cooperation between ENN and *Frontiers of Narrative Studies*. We wish to thank the anonymous reviewers for the helpful feedback and input they provided during the double-blind review procedure. Finally, we wish to thank the authors for their smooth cooperation and their diligence in sticking to a rather tight timeline.