

CALL FOR PAPERS

6th INTERNATIONAL ONLINE CONFERENCE

Media in America, America in Media

18-19 March 2027

Rhetoric of Herstories

We invite the submission of abstracts for the 6th edition of the *Media in America, America in Media* international interdisciplinary conference, to be held online on March 18-19, 2027. The conference is organized jointly by the Department of Media Communication, Institute of Social Communication and Media Sciences, Maria Curie-Skłodowska University in Lublin, Poland, and the Department of American Literature and Culture, Institute of Literary Studies, John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin, Poland. The conference is being held under the patronage of the Polish Rhetoric Society.

HERSTORIES

Who gets to tell the story? Who gets to become history?

History has long presented itself as a record of what happened. Yet every history is also a story: selected, narrated, framed, transmitted, archived, performed, and remembered. *Herstory* emerged as a feminist intervention into this apparently neutral narrative — an attempt to expose the exclusions concealed within supposedly universal histories and to recover women whose lives, voices, and experiences had been rendered marginal, invisible, or inaudible.

Yet the very term *herstory* invites further interrogation. Is it enough to place women into an existing historical narrative? Does *herstory* produce a necessary counter-history, or does the opposition between *his* and *her* histories inadvertently reproduce the binary it seeks to unsettle? What happens when we move beyond the question of **whose** history we are telling

towards questions of **how histories are authored, mediated, circulated, embodied, and made authoritative**?

These questions are hardly new. Long before the vocabulary of feminist historiography, women inhabited stories whose afterlives have outlasted the cultures that produced them. Antigone, preserved through Sophoclean drama and countless subsequent performances and adaptations, has repeatedly been transformed from tragic daughter and sister into an emblem of political resistance. Scheherazade, whose narrative ingenuity becomes an instrument of survival, has travelled through oral traditions, manuscripts, translations, literature, theatre, film, and popular culture, acquiring new meanings with every act of transmission. Such figures remind us that cultural memory does not simply preserve stories: it continually rewrites them.

The *herstory* of a woman may therefore be a biography, a myth, a testimony, a newspaper article, a novel, a photograph, a speech, a play, a performance, a film, a social-media post, an archive — or a story told by someone else.

Herstories invites us to consider what happens when women's lives, voices, bodies, memories, and experiences become stories — and when those stories move between oral tradition and text, literature and history, archive and performance, journalism and popular culture, cinema and television, theatre and digital media.

The conference asks: **Who has the authority to tell a woman's story? Who is entitled to speak for her? What is gained, lost, translated, appropriated, or invented in the process? And what changes when women claim the narrative authority to tell their own stories?**

We welcome contributions that interrogate *herstories* as **cultural, rhetorical, literary, medial, and political constructions**, with particular attention to the following interrelated questions:

Storytelling, Authorship, and Agency

How have women negotiated the conditions of being represented, narrated, remembered, or silenced? What rhetorical and narrative strategies enable women to move from **objects of representation to subjects of narration**? How do autobiography, testimony, memoir, life writing, journalism, and other forms of self-fashioning complicate the distinction between experience and representation?

Rewriting the Archive

What does it mean to recover a woman from an archive that was not created to preserve her voice? How are **forgotten, marginalized, or deliberately erased lives reconstructed** through literature, historiography, documentary, biography, digital archives, museums, monuments, and public memory? Can rewriting itself become a form of rhetorical intervention?

The Afterlives of Herstories

What happens to women's stories as they are repeatedly adapted across historical periods and media? How do ancient figures, historical women, literary characters, political actors, and cultural icons acquire new meanings through **translation, adaptation, remediation, and**

appropriation? When does reinterpretation become recovery, and when does it become reinvention?

Herstories on Stage and Screen

How do theatre, performance, film, television, and other audiovisual forms negotiate the relationship between women's lived experience and its representation? What happens when **private testimony becomes public performance, when an archive becomes embodied, or when a historical woman is transformed into a dramatic or cinematic character**? How might performance function as an alternative archive or counter-memory?

Transnational and Cross-Cultural Herstories

Who speaks when one culture tells the story of women from another? We invite reflection on the politics of **cultural translation, appropriation, exoticization, identification, and representation**, including American narratives about women elsewhere and transnational stories shaped by migration, diaspora, colonial histories, and global media circulation.

Networked and Emerging Herstories

How have digital environments transformed the production and circulation of women's stories? Social media, podcasts, participatory archives, hashtags, video platforms, and other networked forms have radically altered the relationship between storyteller, subject, audience, and archive. What happens to *herstory* when stories become **collective, algorithmically mediated, endlessly reproducible, and potentially generated or transformed by AI**?

Across these perspectives, we are particularly interested in the **rhetorical dimensions of herstories**: the strategies through which women become credible or incredible, visible or invisible, heroic or problematic, victimized or empowered; the ways gender intersects with race, ethnicity, class, age, disability, sexuality, nationality, and migration; and the ideological assumptions embedded in seemingly familiar narratives.

The **6th edition of *Media in America, America in Media*** invites scholars to explore *Herstories* not simply as stories **about women**, but as a critical category through which to examine the relationship between **narrative and power, representation and agency, memory and mediation, voice and authority**.

We are interested in the processes by which women become narratable, visible, memorable, credible, spectacular, exemplary, controversial, forgotten, or legendary — and in the media infrastructures that enable these transformations.

Abstracts (150-250 words) in English + a short bio should be sent by **January 31, 2027** through an online form (**here**). There is no registration fee. The details can be found on the conference website.

For the 2027 edition of *Media in America, America in Media* conference publication we are pleased to announce the cooperation with three peer-reviewed open access academic journals: **Res Rhetorica**, **New Horizons in English Studies** and **Mediatization Studies**.

Full article submission deadline is March 31, 2027.

Due to the interdisciplinary character of the conference, the invitation is addressed to representatives of all scientific disciplines dealing with the topic of media.

We look forward to seeing you at our online event,

The Organizing Committee

Anna Bendrat, Ph.D.
Elżbieta Pawlak-Hejno, Ph.D.

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