

On-and-offline authors of story economy: Using one's platform while staying off social media

Samuli Björninen
University of Turku, Finland

In the paper I analyze how contemporary authors, who cannot help but be part of the story economy (Mäkelä et al. 2021; Meretoja & Mäkelä 2022), can however opt out of some forms of publicity that the digital media culture seemingly imposes on them. I ask in my paper how choices made in their works and public performances help them navigate the affordances and expectations arising in the attention economy dominated by the social media, and what kinds of effects this produces as regards authorial ethos effects and authorial posture (Korthals Altes 2014). The authors I focus on especially approach social media very cautiously, which seems to give them a degree of control over a) how the connections (or distinctions) between the societal issues in their works and other aspects of their public persona are made; and, b) how their own life stories are instrumentalized in the story economy.

The topic arises in the context of the project AUTOSTORY: Authors of the Story Economy (Finnish Research Council 2024–2028, PIs Maria Mäkelä, Markku Lehtimäki & Kristina Malmio), that sets off with a hypothesis that the contemporary story economy rewards authors for building a consistent authorial ethos across platforms, from literary works to interviews and social media. The authors I focus are aware of the expectations facing the contemporary literary field but have developed strategies that help them negotiate the pressures of the story economy. I use examples from three authors representing the AUTOSTORY corpus: Olga Tocarczuk (Poland), Antti Hurskainen (Finland), and Christina Hagen (Denmark).

References:

Korthals Altes, Liesbeth. 2014. *Ethos and Narrative Interpretation: The Negotiation of Values in Fiction*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.

Mäkelä, Maria, Samuli Björninen, Laura Karttunen, Matias Nurminen, Juha Raipola, and Tytti Rantanen. 2021. Dangers of Narrative: A Critical Approach to Narratives of Personal Experience in Contemporary Story Economy. *Narrative* 29 (2): 139–59.

Mäkelä, Maria, and Hanna Meretoja. 2022. Critical Approaches to the Storytelling Boom. *Poetics Today* 43 (2): 191–218.