

Authors against the Story Economy

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The talk introduces Panel 5 by outlining the concept and theory of the story economy, and situates contemporary narrative and authorship studies in relation to it. The social media fueled story economy is currently penetrating the literary field, subsuming both authors and their work and imposing on them platform-based values such as relatability, shareability, representativeness, clear affective stance, and moral accountability. While many authors conform to the rules and logic of the story economy, their rejection may also accumulate narrative and digital capital for authors and translate into literary value. The talk examines various strategies with which contemporary authors challenge and transgress the imperative to “share their story;” these strategies will be located at the intersections between texts and paratexts, the literary and the non-literary, the fictional and the non-fictional, the narrative and the non-narrative, as well as between authors and audiences.

Maria Mäkelä, PhD, is Senior Lecturer in Comparative Literature at Tampere University, Finland. She is past president of the *International Society for the Study of Narrative* ISSN (2019) and former director of *Narrare: Centre for Interdisciplinary Narrative Studies* at Tampere (2016–2020). Mäkelä’s publications deal with storification and the storytelling boom; social media storytelling; the neoliberal logic of narrative and fiction; the digital literary sphere; exemplarity; consciousness, voice, and realism across media; fictional minds and free indirect discourse; the literary tradition of adultery; authorial ethos; and cognitive and unnatural narratology. Her research corpus ranges from French seventeenth-century novels to contemporary fiction, and from reality television and social media to corporate storytelling. She has headed several research projects focusing on the instrumentalization of storytelling: *Dangers of Narrative* (2017–20), the *Instrumental Narratives* consortium (2018–22) and *Storytelling in Information Systems Development* (2019–22); currently she is consortium director of *Authors of the Story Economy: Narrative and Digital Capital in the 21st-Century Literary Field* (Research Council of Finland 2024–28). Her recent publications include *The Routledge Companion to Narrative Theory* (2022) co-edited with Paul Dawson and the *Poetics Today* special issue “Critical Approaches to the Storytelling Boom” (2022) co-edited with Hanna Meretoja.