

Audio Authors. Writing for Sound –and Streaming – in Denmark and Sweden.

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The audiobook's recent popularity has led to debates in Denmark and Sweden about how the development affects authors. The discussion focuses on the audiobook format but also the model of subscription-based streaming, which dominates the Nordic markets (Berglund and Linkis, 2022), fundamentally changing the way authors get paid for their work (Linkis and Mygind, 2025). I will discuss this development as a way to highlight how the rise of audiobooks contributes to transforming the conditions and status of authors in the digital age, hence also affecting their creative practices. The paper will be based on a large interview study with Danish and Swedish authors, conducted in autumn 2024. Drawing on perspectives from studies in the social role of authors (Bourdieu 1986, Bold 2018) and theoretical perspectives on streaming logics (Colbjørnsen 2021) and platform imaginaries (van Es and Poell, 2020), I examine how authors adjust their creative practices to what I call "audiobook imaginaries": established and developing ideas about the audiobook and its associated uses etc. I thus examine what authors do to produce books that "work well" in audio as well as on the streaming services and I discuss how this situation reflects the conditions of authors; that is, what it means to be an author in the age of audio. Thus, I ask: what does "writing for audio" imply for authors writing in different genres and from different market positions? And how does a (partial) transition to the audiobook format impact their roles as authors and relations to other actors, such as publishers and streaming services? Focusing on the Danish and Swedish markets will allow me to shed light on the way in which regional market conditions, including the dominance of streaming services on the Nordic markets, play into a larger discussion about the audiobooks' impact on contemporary book culture.

Bio:

Sara Tanderup Linkis, PhD, is an associate professor in Digital Cultures and Publishing Studies, at Lund University. Her research centers on audiobooks and audio fiction, sociology of literature and media-oriented approaches to literature. She has published widely in acclaimed journals such as *Narrative*, *Image & Narrative*, *Passage*, *Orbis Litterarum* and she is the author of two research monographs: *Memory, Intermediality and Literature* (Routledge 2019) and *Serialization in Literature across Media and Markets* (Routledge 2021). She is PI in the project: "Between Sound and Text: Production, Content and Experiences of Multimodal Audio Literature," funded by the Swedish Research Council (2024-2026).

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Sitzung Einordnung: Regional and National Perspectives