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Analyzing master and counter-narratives in the multilayered narrative communication of literary fiction

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Abstract: This article analyzes narrative contestation as presented in a novel's storyworld and narration by an implied author orchestrating meanings in the novel. The aim is to test master and counter-narratives as a methodological concept in the analysis of literary fiction with its specific, multilayered communicative structure. Particularly the fiction-specific concept of implied author as the nexus for interpretation is discussed as a potential key for transporting the theory on master and counter narratives to the fictional realm. The analysis of the Finnish novel *Röyhkeys* (*Arrogance*, 2017) by Ossi Nyman investigates how the theory of master and counter-narratives could be used to illuminate the values of the constructed implied author in literary fiction. The results contribute to the theoretical discussion on master and counter-narratives, particularly on the narrative means to indicate countering and to draw on master narratives. They also indicate the ways in which the communicative layers specific to fiction affect the analysis and interpretation of mastering and countering with narratives.

Keywords: master and counter narratives; narrative voice; positioning; implied author

1 Crossing the fictional border in narrative studies

Narratological concepts, such as voice or focalization, have been successfully applied also outside the realms of fictional literary narratives, which originally functioned as the empirical basis for coining those concepts (see, for example, Hatavara 2015, 2023). Narratology, on its part, has greatly gained from incorporating insights from societally relevant frameworks on gender, environment and other central topics. This has resulted in the rise of feminist narratology, econarratology and many more. But could a concept like counter-narrative, originating in the social sciences and geared towards the analysis of everyday narratives, become operationalized as a

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narratological concept and be applied to fictional literary narratives? Besides a few examples of analytical application to fiction (see, for example, Herman 1991: 79; Maagaard 2020; Mausen and Eckenhoff 2020), the question remains mainly unanswered.

This article explores the idea that in order to make counter-narrative – and its necessary counterpart master narrative – function as a narratological concept for the analysis of fiction, the application needs to take into consideration the distinctive communicative structure of fiction. With this I mean fiction as a system of quotations, where embedded voices and points of view converge (see Yacobi 2000: 711–714). The unique feature of this system is the assumption of an implied author as a readerly construction of what a literary work as a whole communicates in regard to values and meanings. An implied author does not have a voice, but the meanings are communicated through narrator(s) and characters, whose reliability is tested against the values and ideologies held by the implied author (Booth 1961: 73–75; Chatman 1980: 81–88, 148). The reader's interpretation on the norms and values of a literary work of art depends on the implied author as constructed by the same reader based on all textual cues.

The original definition of the implied author as the evaluative standard of a fictional work actually seems to require an understanding of narrative contestation, since the interpretation of an implied author is based on comparing different points of view characters and narrators take in a novel and determining which, if any, corresponds with what the implied author holds true. The analysis of a single fictional novel in this article will test if master and counter-narratives as situational and positional categories can help to unravel the narrative contestation in literary fiction on the levels of story, narration, and the text as an artistic whole.

This article will use a Finnish novel *Röyhkeys* (*Arrogance*, 2017) by Ossi Nyman as a test case on how to combine the analysis of fictional communication – narrative layers and voices – with the analysis of master and counter-narratives. Nyman's autobiographical debut novel proclaims its countering attitude by the very name "arrogance": the protagonist is deliberately unemployed and dares to live on unemployment benefits without shame. The novel, together with some interviews of the author and other media texts, caused a stir in Finland. The novel and its paratexts have been studied as a nexus of competing narratives about work and unemployment, but without narratological emphasis. The most prominent master narrative has been concluded to be about a deserving unemployed, who does everything in their power and beyond to find a job. This is countered in the novel, as the narrator-protagonist repeatedly tells about his efforts to avoid getting employed at the same time he applies for and receives unemployment benefits (Laakso 2018). This makes the novel a suitable test case for a narratological analysis of master and counter-narratives presented in a novel.

This article sets out to analyze the communicative structure of the novel and how master and counter-narratives function as part of it. The novel uses both first- and third-person narration – presumably by the same person – and both narrative modes include several embedded, attributed minds and voices of others, as well. The narrators imagine and represent scenarios where they themselves and others take on roles and test more or less appropriate and expected courses of action. The varied positionings together with the use of several voices and points of view result in the novel showcasing narrative contestation across communicative layers as well as ideological stances.

Before the analysis of Nyman's novel, I will discuss the narrative nature of master and counter-narratives as well as the narratological methodology of discerning contesting views in a novel. First, I look at the different narrative aspects of master and counter narratives outside and within fiction, second, present the narrative layers in the communicative structure of fiction and third, detail the analytical model for identifying the narrative layers and the stances they carry.

2 The narrativity of master and counter-narratives outside and within fiction

Master and counter-narratives interact with each other: countering takes place against the backdrop of some prevailing claim, which it thus also discloses. Still, master and counter-narratives are an asymmetric pair both in their relation to prevailing norms and power structures and also in their narrative form: whereas counter-narratives are articulated and have the qualities narratives are expected to have – situatedness of the telling, a structured time-course within the storyworld involving disruption and its resolution, as well as portrayal of experientiality (see Herman 2009: 14) – master narratives tend to remain mostly unarticulated and appear in metonymic or crystallized forms (Hyvärinen et al. 2021). Nevertheless, master and counter-narratives should not be understood as binary oppositions to each other; rather, they are participants in a communicative situation. Speakers and narrators use counter-narratives to argue a point and draw from master narratives as culturally available resources (Hyvärinen 2020: 22).

With literary analysis, it is important to remember that the expected in a fictional work is generated within that work. Even though narrative modes and story models travel between the fictional and non-fictional, everyday storytelling contexts, the ontological status of these genres is different from each other (Hatavara et al. 2023: 137–138, 145–146). The use of prior world knowledge in interpreting literary fiction operates within the principle of minimal departure (Ryan 1980): unless the

work otherwise communicates, the world portrayed follows the principles of our everyday experience of the real world. At the same time, the fictional world does not need to coincide with anything outside the novel even though it may freely do so (see Cohn 1999: 13–15, 115–116). For this reason, the reader must adjust their expectations of prevailing circumstance and chains of events when reading a fictional work to fit what is expected within that fictional realm. Therefore, the interplay between the prevailing and the countering takes place within the porous boundaries of a fictional world, where the reader brings in their world knowledge as long as it is not stated unsuitable for the storyworld.

In everyday narratives, master narratives rarely are articulated because they follow expectations and do not constitute a breach (Bruner 1990: 35, 39) or disruption (Herman 2009) of the ordinary to propel tellability. This is the very essence of master narratives as defined by Molly Andrews (2004: 1): "One of the key functions of master narratives is that they offer people a way of identifying what is assumed to be a normative experience". As resources for identifying the normative, master narratives are important for positioning oneself in regard to notions of selves and identity (cf. Bamberg 2004: 137). Since the fictional circumstances and events may depart from or follow the reader's expectations of the world, the tellability of something mundane is not questioned in a novel. For this reason, master narratives may in fiction be tellable and become articulated.

Michael Bamberg and Zachary Wipff (2020: 76–77) have discussed master narratives as dependent on that which is known and expected in our way of being, in cultural contexts and in the interlocutor's bodily engagement with the local setting and the positions offered there. They (Bamberg and Wipff 2020: 79–80) suggest the narrative practice approach to narrative contestation, which emphasizes the situational use of stories as master and counter. Bamberg and Wipff oppose to regarding the content of any story as the determining feature of whether the story is mastering or countering. I also want to emphasize the act of countering – or upholding the dominant – in analyzing situational use of stories. Besides the emphasis on the situational use, I argue that the specific narrative means used to narrate are also important in the analysis of master and counter-narratives. It should also be noted that the emphasis Bamberg and Wipff (2020: 78) place on the illocutionary intent in the analysis of narrative contestation becomes an interpretative task of understanding the implied author based on textual features. Therefore, the textual features employed on different narrative levels of a novel to counter or support the expected are particularly central for the analysis. The specificity of fictional communication and its several layers together with the freedom from the expectations of our reality makes the interpretation of master and counter narratives and their use distinct in literary fiction.

3 The implied author in narrative communication

The concept of implied author was coined by Wayne C. Booth (1961: 71–75), and it is mainly used to help analyze unreliable narrators in fiction (cf. Phelan 2005: 42). For Booth, the implied author comes close to the real author and can be used to interpret their attitudes. Seymor Chatman (1980: 81–88, 148) later developed the theory by stripping the concept of implied author from anthropomorphic qualities. For Chatman, the implied author is a quality of the literary work as a whole: it does not have a discursive voice of its own but orchestrates all voices and textual features. I am also using the concept of implied author in this sense, as the result of the reader's interpretation of the work as a meaningful whole.

Many narratologists who discuss the distinction of fiction from other genres discard the concept of implied author. Gerard Genette (1988: 137–154) does not want to add communicative agents between the author and the narrator. At the same time, he (141) resorts to talking about readerly competence in the interpretation. In the communicative model based on Booth's and Chatman's theories, implied reader, the counterpart for implied author, comes very close to how Genette refers to a competent reader. Dorrit Cohn (1999: 124) agrees with Genette, and rather refers to the author as responsible for textual and stylistic choices in the text. At the same time, she refers to a "second author" in a case, where the reader's interpretation based solely on the narrator and the author as communicative agents fails (132–133). This second author to my mind comes close to the understanding of implied author as responsible for all meanings of an artistic whole.

Without the use of the concept implied author, Gerard Genette (1993: 69–78) concluded that the main difference between fiction and what is not fictional is that the author of the text outside of the fictional is the same as the narrator whose voice is present in the text, whereas in fiction the author and narrator differ from each other. Even though Genette didn't use the concept of the implied author, it is useful to assume one on the textual level in fictional works, since the narrator is detached from conveying the meaning of the whole text in fiction.

An idea of the textual whole has been suggested to replace the concept of implied author. Ansgar Nünning (1999: 54–56) claims that the implied author is counterproductive to assume, since readers often have difficulties in interpreting the implied author and the values it upholds. Nünning (66–68) would rather talk about a textual whole and the interpretative process of a reader. For him, the incongruity in meaning and values is not located between the narrator and implied author, but the narrator and a real reader. This idea has been criticized for example by Greta Olson (2003: 98–99, 104–105), who argues for an understanding of the reader as an integral part of interpretation rather than a single person; with the interpretation of

unreliability or irony, the reader needs to assume another agent besides the narrator – the implied author – who conveys another message than the narrator.

Many of the disputes over the concept of the implied author are linked to the concept having been seen as a solution for how to interpret the values and ideologies of narrators and literary works (Bal 1981: 42). In this sense, bringing together the study of implied author and master and counter-narratives may prove mutually beneficial. While implied author helps the reader to interpret narrative contestation between the narrator and the literary work as a whole, the theory on master and counter-narratives enables identifying the parties involved in that contestation.

4 Analyzing narratives in contest

This article utilizes methods from narratological analysis of voices and narrative positioning analysis. Narrative minds are presented in a text as voices, where linguistic markers can be used to identify who is speaking and what the stylistic choices that guide interpretation of subjectivity are (Aczel 1998: 467–471). The basic model for distinguishing narrative voices recognizes direct discourse, that is the character's speech or thought (as if) verbatim; indirect discourse, that is the narrator rendering the character's speech or thought in the narrator's words; and free indirect discourse, where narrator's and character's discursive choices are mixed. There have been some conceptual differences in portraying these three basic types of narrative voice, but the speech act category model used in this article has become the established one and with the aforementioned names for the categories (Cohn 1978: 11–12, 29–32, 59–60, 162).

Since narrative voice and the interpretation of subjectivity intersect, it is necessary to distinguish different aspects of voice. Richard Walsh's (2010: 36) semiotic model of the voice differentiates between voice as instance, idiom and interpellation. Instance is defined as the act of narrative representation (47). Voice as an instance coincides with the speech act category model of discursive voices, since it designates who speaks in a text – is it the narrator or one of the characters who verbalizes – even though Walsh intends his model to be semiotic, not discursive in nature. Voice as an idiom designates the stylistic choices of a character or a narrator that build subjectivity and identity. It designates voice in which the discursive subject is an object of representation, such as in characterization (55).

Voice understood as interpellation focuses on the ideological implications the voice carries, and interpellation denotes the representational subject position. Linguistically, voice as an interpellation is clearest in the case of free indirect discourse, which carries markers of both the narrator's and the character's voice. Free indirect discourse represents the objectified voice of another, an idiom, but

formally preserves parts of the voice as an instance since it mixes the linguistic choices of both the narrator and the character (52). Just as free indirect discourse, also voice as interpellation is an interpretative category with no necessary linguistic signs of the presence of the two voices or ideologies.

Whereas narrative voice uncovers whose speech, style and representational position are presented in a text, positioning analysis is originally created to analyze live interaction. Positioning analysis uncovers how the teller positions themselves and others, and how they are positioned in the projected storyworld and in the situation of the telling. It attends to three levels of positioning in storytelling situations – pertaining to the story that is told, the interactional situation of telling, and the general cultural or normative level of expectations as the background for communication (Bamberg and Georgakopoulou 2008: 385). The third level, arrived at through the analysis of the levels one and two, is where master and counter-narratives compete. In fictional texts the levels of telling may multiply, and in any case there is at least two communicative levels present: that between the narrator and the narratee and that between implied author and reader.

Ossi Nyman's *Röyhkeys* uses both first- and third-person narration. The speech act category model for voices is designed for third-person narration but can and has been applied also in the analysis of first-person narratives. The experiencing I and the narrating I can be in different relations to each other, coming close to the variation between the narrator's and the character's positions. Besides the two instances of experiencing and narrating I, a difference has been established between a consonant first-person narrator, upholding the same values as the narrated self, and a dissonant first-person narrator, expressing distance from the narrated self in values and ways of thinking. The epistemological stance of a narrating I surely differs from the previous, narrated I, but in the case of dissonant first-person narration, there is difference in ideological views, as well (Cohn 1978: 26, 76). In this sense, this model of first-person narration brings together positioning (consonance or dissonance) and voice (who speaks, the narrating I or the experiencing I).

In the analysis of Ossi Nyman's novel, I will start with locating different discursive and semiotic voices in the text and move on to the positioning analysis. Both voices and positionings can cut across the narrative levels of story, narration and the text, and the analysis pays attention to how the implied author can be interpreted to organize the meaning of the novel via narrative competition. The analysis is divided into two thematic sections, the first one addressing the importance of working on a general level and the second zooming into the image of a working man.

5 The significance of working and not working

The novel is composed of three parts, each with a point of view about working. The first part is about a day the unnamed protagonist spends in the city of Turku and attends the second in a row concert by Bruce Springsteen. His adoration of Bruce Springsteen is itself ironic, since the singer often thematizes the life of an ordinary working man, completely unfamiliar to himself. This is addressed in the novel, as the protagonist fantasizes a discussion with Bruce Springsteen where he asks if the artist feels guilty for not doing real work but only creating music, and music about those who work. In the protagonist's fantasy the singer-songwriter replies saying that there is a conflict, indeed (Nyman 2017: 32). The novel does not elaborate on that more, but the intertextual link to Springsteen's lyrics together with this imagined discussion thematizes the question on story ownership: who has the right to tell about the experience of working, is it only those who have done manual or other type of traditional work, which excludes creative industry such as music or literature.

The second part portrays the protagonist participating in a mandatory course for the unemployed. He is not interested in the course but tries to remain just active enough to avoid any penalties or being denied the unemployment benefits. The others in the course don't seem to benefit from it either, so this effort to help the unemployed to find work is represented quite unsuccessful. The third part portrays the protagonist participating in courses to become an author, and he is finishing a novel which seems to depict the happenings of the first two parts. This third part, narrated in third person, portrays the protagonist finally kind of working, since he tries to finish his novel and to get it published.

The first text extract is from the first part of the novel. Before leaving for the second concert the narrator participates in raking the yard of the family friend whose house he stays at, and this brings to his mind a previous experience of gardening.

> Olin tehnyt puutarhatöitä viljelijäyhdistykselle kolmen kesän ajan. Työvoimatoimisto oli minut sellaiseen työhön määrännyt, kun olin ollut monta vuotta työttömänä, mutta kolmen kesän jälkeen he senkin työn minulta kielsivät. Olin kääntänyt lapiolla ja koneella eläkeläisten ja muidenkin viljelypalstoja, ja he olivat siitä maksaneet ja viljelijäyhdistys oli käyttänyt rahan ryytimaiden keskellä olevan talonsa kunnossapitoon. Minä olin saanut työttömyyskorvausta, ja palkaksi yhdeksän euroa päivärahaa. Silloin kun en ollut lapiohommissa minä keitin heille kahvia ja juttelin heidän kanssaan. Olin ollut vanhuksille avuksi ja he olivat minua kehuneet ja yhdistys oli valinnut minut vuoden työntekijäksi. Se oli kuitenkin virallisesti ollut työharjoittelua ja siinä mielessä turhaa ja haitallista työtä, ettei se tuottanut voittoja eikä verovaroja, ja siksi työvoimatoimisto ei ollut antanut minun tehdä sitä pidempään. (13–14)

> [I had done gardening work for the field farmers' association for three summers. The unemployment office had ordered me to such work, since I had been unemployed for many years, but after three summers they denied also that work from me. I had plowed with a shovel and with a machine the lots of pensioners and others, too, and they had paid for it and the field farmers' association had used the money for the maintenance of their house in the middle of the garden lots. I had received unemployment benefits, and for salary a daily allowance of nine euros. When I was not shoveling I made coffee for them and talked with them. I had been of help to the elderly and they had praised me and the association had chosen me for the employee of the year. It had in any case officially been practical training and in that sense futile and harmful work since it did not create profit or tax revenue, and for this reason the unemployment office did not allow me to do that for longer.]

This first-person narration is consonant with the narrated self, whose actions are related. The narrating I tells about the actions of the experiencing I quite neutrally or in a positive manner: he had been "of help" and been praised by his work performance. Still, interpellation of another point of view can be noticed in the last sentence. After the narrator has told about all things useful he had performed as part of the gardening work, he deems the same work "futile and harmful" from the point of view of capitalism (which is about creating profit as the fundamental objective) and from the point of view of the welfare state (which is about creating tax revenue to uphold the system), and this evaluation penetrates the almost idyllic portrayal of the work. This interpellation of another ideological point is one of the key indicators of narrative contestation in this extract. Linguistically, another one is the use of the word "also" in the second sentence, implying that the employment office habitually denies work from the unemployed.

Positioning analysis discloses more about the narrative contestation within this extract. The second sentence creates a tension between the two acts by the unemployment office: first they had ordered the protagonist to a work and then, after three years, denied it. This signals inconsistency from the agency's part and makes them a suspectable actor on the level of the story (1). On the level of telling (2), the narrator's choice to call gardening "such work" in the second sentence implies that the type of the work the protagonist was ordered to do was surprising. He had no prior experience of the type of work, or schooling for it. This further emphasizes the arbitrariness of the agency's action, which suggests that the unemployment agency may not really serve its function of helping the unemployed but rather making their lives difficult; a suggestion on the normative level (3) of positioning.

Against the backdrop of the work having been ordered for the protagonist and the unfamiliar nature of the work for him, it becomes highlighted how successful he is in doing it. This is portrayed in many ways. He accumulates money for the association, and besides the gardening job itself he is socially helpful in making coffee and discussing with the elderly. The pensioners and the elderly being mentioned as the

ones helped further emphasizes the importance of the protagonist's action, since he helps people considered as vulnerable. This positions him as a socially responsible and a good person in the story (positioning level 1).

Besides the narrator telling that he had been of help, he also tells how he had been praised and chosen for the employee of the year. In this portrayal, the story level (1) positioning about the protagonist's actions and the narrative design (on level 2) bringing together several points of view to introduce his usefulness reinforce each other to portray the protagonist as a diligent and successful employee (on level 3), when given the opportunity for meaningful work. As this work is at the same time denounced as "in that sense futile and harmful", a conflict is created about the two views on the importance of the work: helping the elderly versus creating profit as the standard for work. The interpellation of another voice is linguistically detectable in the expression "in that sense", which begs the question, what is "that sense" deeming the protagonist's work futile and harmful.

When tracing the meaning by the implied author through the extract, the reader may first suspect that the implied author has an ironical stance towards the superb performance of the narrator in his past work. This is because of the excessive, cumulating evidence of how helpful and appreciated, even rewarded, he was in the job. The selection for the employee of the year tops it all off, since the reader may well assume that the protagonist was the only employee the association had at all.

A twist can be anticipated based on the end of the second sentence, when the unemployment office is portrayed having denied "also" that work from the protagonist. This is further elaborated in the last sentence as the unemployment office, that had ordered the protagonist to do the work, later reasons that it is not worth doing since there was no profit or taxes created. The verbs used by the protagonist are very strong: the agency "denied" and "did not allow" him to work anymore. The protagonist portrays himself having oscillated between two extremes: being ordered to do or denied work and working very successfully despite the work being unfamiliar to him. The action by the unemployment office, implied as being inconsistent, suggests that it is the institution that is the wrongdoer in this situation, and the protagonist's success in the work becomes highlighted even more but without ironical stance.

Several contesting narratives can be detected at play in the extract. There is a master narrative about a government agency not making much sense and not actually helping an individual, a common complaint against the Scandinavian welfare society. Another culturally prevailing master narrative invoked is that of success through hard work, which the protagonist achieves. The latter is seemingly questioned by the third master narrative introduced in the end of the extract: any work is valuable only in terms of profit or tax revenue for the society. The reader can interpret, though, that being of great help to those vulnerable in the society as the elderly in the field farmers' association, is actually beneficial and sustainable.

Therefore, the third master narrative of capitalist profit making is countered by indicating the importance of helping others, and the protagonist's success through hard work gains support again. The significance and value of work is suggested to be more about social responsibility and helping those in need than about pure financial profit. Furthermore, the inadequacy of the unemployment office ridicules the system built on targeting the financial gain. The value of the welfare system upheld by tax revenue is questioned, as well, since the unemployment office fails the basic task of the welfare state to help individuals in need.

6 The working man

The second extract portrays the protagonist taking a bus to the arena where the concert is held. He spots the arena through the bus window and considers it to be quite pretty for a hall.

> Hallin olivat oranssiliiviset miehet rakentaneet ja näin mielessäni, kuinka he ajoivat työpäivän jälkeen avolava-autoillaan kaupungin läpi baariin, jossa he joivat olutta ja pelasivat biljardia. Heitä väsytti ja he olivat nälkäisiä, mutta he olivat myös tyytyväisiä itseensä tehtyään työtä koko päivän, ja he nauroivat kertoessaan roiseja vitsejä ja läpsiessään toisiaan selkään. Heillä oli hyvin tiivis kaveriporukka ja viikonloppuisin he kävivät yhdessä metsästämässä kauriita. He maksoivat palkastaan veroa, ja siitä verosta maksettiin minulle työttömyyskorvausta, vaikken minä ansainnut sitä rahaa millään tavalla. Pyysin silti joka kuukausi Kelalta rahaa ja ostin sillä levyjä ja kirjoja ja kävin elokuvissa ja konserteissa, ja käytin sitä muutenkin niin kuin se olisi minun omaa rahaani. (Nyman 2017: 30)

> [The hall had been built by men in orange vests and I saw in my mind how they drove after the workday in their pickups through the town to a bar, where they drank beer and played pool. They felt tired and they were hungry, but they were also satisfied with themselves after having worked all day, and they laughed as they told dirty jokes and patted each other on the back. They had a very tight group of friends and during weekends they hunted deer together. They paid taxes from their salaries, and these taxes paid for my unemployment benefit, even though I did not earn that money in any way. I still asked the social security office for money every month and bought records and books with it and went to movies and concerts, and I used the money overall as if it were my own money.]

Seeing the hall inspires the protagonist to hypothesize about the builders of the hall in the form of a mental image. This image is stereotypical of working men – only men, no women in this image of a construction site builders – who are depicted with many details to enhance the feeling of realism: the orange vests, pickup trucks, beer, pool and deer hunting.

The minds of the imagined builders are portrayed using indirect discourse about their feelings (tired, hungry, satisfied). This is in the form Dorrit Cohn (1978: 11–12, 29;

see also Palmer 2005) labeled as psychonarration, where typically the third-person narrator can portray the inner feelings of the characters, sometimes even those unconscious to the character themselves. These portrayals of other minds can also summarize mental functioning over longer period of time or on an abstract level. The first-person narrator in *Röyhkeys* assumes in the extract above some of the abilities of a third-person omniscient narrator as he portrays how the other men feel.

What is more, it can be interpreted that the narrator voices the self-image of the group in the third sentence about the tightness of this group of friends. It is possible to interpret this sentence as interpellation in the form of free indirect discourse. If the narrator is not only relating the contents of the working men's mind, but also discursively appropriating their thoughts, the reader could derive the appropriated thought to have been: *We have a very tight group of friends and during weekends we hunt deer together.* In the manner typical of free indirect discourse, the verb tenses and personal pronouns in the text follow the narrator's discourse, but otherwise the phrase can be understood to follow what the narrator appropriates a member of this group of characters themselves think or might say to someone when explaining the nature of the group.

Interpellation occurs also in two other ways in this extract: First, the narrator appropriates the point of view of the builders and summarizes it in indirect discourse as he in the form of psychonarration speaks for them and portrays how they feel. Second, the narrator's discourse is penetrated by another point of view as he at the end of the second last sentence and in the last sentence declares he didn't earn his benefits in any way, but still applies for them. This creates ideological tension between not earning the benefits and still applying for and getting them. This tension is on the content level only and within one instance of a voice. It is possible, though, to think that idiomatically another ideological stance is present in the choice of the words "did not earn that money in any way". It is impossible to say, though, whether this opinion is only external to the protagonist or if he also himself believes it to be true.

On the story level positioning, this extract is abundant what comes to defining the builders. The details in the protagonist's image of them are actually so many and so stereotypical that there is again excess in the portrayal. This makes obvious the manner in fiction, that any vivid portrayal of someone or something actually tells more about the teller than the object being described (see Yacobi 2000: 712–713, 720). Following that argumentation, the narrator, who positions the builders on the level of the story (1) is positioned by the very same act both on the level of the story (1) – as someone with a stereotypical image of men who work as builders – and on the level of the narrative (2) – as someone who is fascinated by those men. There is a feeling of jealousy for male bonding in this portrayal, as the men are described as "a very tight group" and being satisfied after the workday. At the same time, many of the details

the narrator imagines for the workers signal toxic masculinity; particularly the dirty jokes, somewhat the deer hunting, too. The patting of the back functions in both positionings: it symbolizes both male bonding and male arrogance coupled with the telling of the dirty jokes.

The protagonist juxtaposes himself with the group of working men. They pay taxes from the well-earned salary they get, and these taxes pay for the undeserved benefits the protagonist receives. At the same time, culturally the protagonist is superior to the men as he uses the money to go to various cultural attractions and buying cultural artefacts, whereas the working men have lower class hobbies, particularly frequenting at the bar drinking beer and shooting pool. On the normative level of positioning (level 3), the protagonist identifies himself as more sophisticated. It is almost as if the protagonist was part of the old-fashioned aristocracy with their status and taste distinguishing them from the working and middle class.

Tracing the meaning of the implied author is somewhat complicated here as in the previous extract. The master narrative about the importance of men who do honest, physical work as well as the master narrative about the bonding of the average joe type of men are contradicted by the portrayal of the master narrative about toxic masculinity excluding and oppressing women. Furthermore, another positive master narrative besides the male bonding and hard-working average joe is introduced: the culturally enlightened, civilized man with good taste. Based on these conflicting narratives it might feel tempting to conclude that the implied author stands for the enlightened man. But again, in the imagined words by Spruce Springsteen: there's a conflict. This is due to the enlightened man getting their livelihood from the working men. In cultural standards, the enlightened man is superior, but he fails to provide for his own living and is therefore financially dependent on the working man.

The third example is from the third part of the novel written in third person. It takes place two years later than the first two parts written in first person. The protagonist Lahdenmäki resembles the first-person narrator in the previous two parts of the novel and he is working on a novel manuscript portraying the events of the first two parts. He goes to a creative writing institute and has a girlfriend named Kaisa.

> Kaisa kysyi koulupäivästä, ja että oliko Lahdenmäkeä taas kehuttu. Lahdenmäki oli sijoitus jota oli viimein alkanut kasvaa korkoa. (Nyman 2017: 168)
>
> [Kaisa asked about the school day, and if Lahdenmäki had been praised again. Lahdenmäki was an investment that had finally started to generate return.]

The narration in this third part of the novel mostly uses inner focalization of Lahdesmäki, whose observations and thoughts are related. In this extract, Lahdesmäki sits with Kaisa on a bench after coming from the institute. In the first sentence, Kaisa's question about Lahdenmäki's school day is related in indirect discourse. The second sentence is an appropriation of Kaisa's thoughts in the form of free indirect discourse. It suggests that Kaisa thinks *Lahdenmäki is an investment that has finally started to generate return, * which can be seen as a schematized (Fludernik 1993: 391) version of what Lahdenmäki as the narrator assumes Kaisa to think about their relationship.

The free indirect discourse contains interpellation in several ways: the idiom appropriated brings capitalist thinking into romantic relationship as Lahdenmäki is named an investment for Kaisa, therefore colliding the frames of romantic relationship and financial thinking. It becomes unclear who the source of such thinking is: has Kaisa herself expressed something similar before, does Lahdenmäki hold a cynical view of their relationship or is this just an indication of how capitalist ideology penetrates all areas of social life?

It is also unclear how Lahdenmäki feels about this thinking attributed to Kaisa: whether he is proud finally to generate return in their relationship or if he feels used and unappreciated in other than financial terms. The reader of the novel only has Lahdenmäki's narrated account of all this, so in that sense the text suggests that this interpellated thinking of relationship as capitalist investment stems from his point of view; this would follow the basic principles of schematized language use and also of the indirect quotation revealing more about the quoter that about the quoted (cf. Fludernik 1993: 406–407; Yacobi 2000: 720). In this interpretation, the protagonist – assuming Lahdenmäki is the same person narrating the first two parts of the novel, which I find warranted – again highlights his superb performance as he did when working for the field farmers' association.

The assumption that the third-person narrator is the same person as the first-person narrator in the previous parts of the text make the third-person narrator more susceptible of being unreliable than it would be the case if the third-person narrator didn't participate in the storyworld. Lahdenmäki's narration about his partner Kaisa being interpellated with capitalist ideology is the implied author's way to question the protagonist's declaration of not wanting to work or to participate in the master narrative about male providers. At the same time, the emphasis on being praised as an author follows the protagonist's attitude of having better cultural taste than the average joe. The title of the book is "Arrogance", which as paratext communicatively belongs to the implied author's textual level, suggests the protagonist's continued praise for his success in work and his better cultural taste testify to his arrogance. The novel's take on the financial situation is more complicated, though, since even though the protagonist can be understood to be arrogant in

applying for unemployment benefits without any intent to find a job and with full awareness of others' work paying for his livelihood, he in the end does work as an author and pursues a publication agreement for monetary gain.

7 Conclusions

This article set out to explore if interpreting master and counter narratives in fiction would benefit from attention to the unique communicative structure of fiction with the implied author responsible for the full meaning of a literary work. I have traced discursive and semiotic voices as well as positionings in Ossi Nyman's novel. Several master and counter narratives can be identified to operate in the novel. These contesting narratives emerge from both first- and third-person narrator portraying, imagining and appropriating feelings and intentions of himself but more prominently of others. The appropriated points of view and voices of others function as key means to bring forth both master and counter narratives and also to question their clear status as either one. The layers of narrative voices and positionings convey conflicting narratives, often related to a recognizable master narrative, but always wavering between being supported by the protagonist or other characters.

The concept of implied author helps in navigating between the contesting narratives. It does not, however, lead to a single, certain interpretation on, for example, how the novel relates to questions of the value of the work or the capitalist logic of earning and accumulating revenue. In fiction, it is also important to remember its inherent two-mindedness. Fiction often teeters between two or more interpretations, which the work leaves open as possible solutions (Cohn 2000: 309). Therefore, fiction can be seen as an ultimate example of ongoing narrative contestation. It can also happen that the unresolved narrative contest is a form of counter-narrative in the fictional realm: rather than countering an idea, fiction can also counter the need to deliver a unified message. At this point, this suggestion is based on the analysis of one novel only, so more work is needed to determine the extent to which master and counter-narratives can be applied in the study of fiction.

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