Tommy Sandberg (b. 1986), who has degrees in history, psychology, and comparative literature, takes interest in a range of philosophical, social, and theoretical issues. His doctoral thesis in comparative literature contributes to the study of storytelling, narratology.

The thesis analyzes a recurring critique of the common approach to works like novels and short stories — narrative fiction — in narratology. Sandberg suggests that there is a common radical denominator in the critique that would affect narratology if accepted.

The “difference approach” is Sandberg’s label for the approach promoted by the most radical among the critics of narratology. These critics hold that narrative fiction should be viewed as a unique practice characterized by a use of language different from the use assumed in general notions of “narrative,” as these have been presented by narratologists.

The five articles included in the thesis contain metadiscussions of the critique and analyses of Angela Carter’s short story “The Loves of Lady Purple” and Sara Stridsberg’s novel Drömfakulteten. The thesis may be of value for scholars interested in narratology’s pertinence for the study of narrative fiction. It may also be of value for readers interested in the broader issue of how to talk about novels and short stories in serious ways.