

EILA RANTONEN

Europe's White Spots

Postcolonial Readings of Eurocentrism and
Nordic Minority Literatures

Tampere University Dissertations 419

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Postcolonial Readings of Eurocentrism and Nordic Minority
Literatures

ACADEMIC DISSERTATION

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Creative ideas are migrants searching for new places to live. I have always enjoyed meeting people from around the world; they have changed the ways I see the world and everyday life. This study dates back to the 1990s, when I became interested in the radical questioning of Western norms of art and literature. At that time, I found an impressive pamphlet, *The Black Aesthetic* (1971), written by African-American writers. The idea of alternative aesthetics opened up for me a whole new world to make artistic discoveries. Gradually, I pushed aside my former plans for a dissertation dealing with religious rhetoric. In doing this, I must thank Professor Pirjo Ahokas, whose research on American ethnic minorities had a stimulating effect on my research. I began to write articles on African-American feminist aesthetics and to analyse gendered forms of racism in fiction and films. My next step was to deepen my knowledge of postcolonial theory. An important colleague at this stage was Docent Matti Savolainen, who had a wide knowledge of postcolonial issues.

Comparative literature has meant for me an open-minded and spacious discipline where I have been able to learn about people from different cultures. It has provided me a flexible interdisciplinary laboratory in which I have been able to combine my passionate interest for different art forms, history, philosophy, and politics. Already in my matriculation examination, I wrote an essay 'What makes a Superpower?' My devotion to postcolonial issues, non-Western perspectives, and Nordic minorities also originates from my personal history. I grew up in Kemi, northern Finland, with my Japanese stepmother Utako Miyauchi. This resulted in me speaking English with a Japanese accent! At school, we were not taught the history of the neighbouring regions, such as Sápmi or Tornedalen.

Hence, various personal contacts have spurred me to be engaged with non-Western cultures, migration literature, and Nordic ethnic minorities. I also have to thank the Ghanaian Margaret Agyemang and Nigerian Linus Okorie for insightful discussions on colonialism and African societies while I was studying at Trinity College, Dublin. This study has led me to many unexpected places, such as Rinkeby library in Stockholm, where I found important information on Afro-Nordic writers. I thank the personnel in Aine

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Tampere, April 2021

Eila Rantonen

ABSTRACT

This study provincialises Europe by investigating how European and Nordic ethnic minority identities and migrant communities are written into and against the old national and Eurocentric narratives. The case studies examine cultural specificity and hybridity, generic renewals, and postcolonial resistance, demonstrating the connections between postcolonial literature and new modes of writing.

Europe's White Spots. Postcolonial Readings of Eurocentrism and Nordic Minority Literatures explores the unmapped white spots of postcolonial studies and Nordic literary studies by investigating less studied Nordic minority literatures and Black European literature. It examines representational and self-representational practices in the context of postcolonial resistance writing. The study also seeks to show the challenges of postcolonial poetics in the application of culture-specific textual analysis. Postcolonial close readings investigate such literary genres as travel book, (auto)biographic writing, the epistolary genre, and the migrant novel. Moreover, the articles probe bilingual and multilingual elements in the Nordic literatures. Two case studies examine Black Europe, racism, and internal colonialism.

This article-based study is composed of a summary and five articles published in peer-reviewed studies. Postcolonial theory constitutes the theoretical frame of this study. In the postcolonial close readings, postcolonial theory is combined methodologically with textual analysis, contextual analysis, and contrapuntal reading. Moreover, the study discusses the present-day challenges of postcolonial studies and comparative literature in relation to world literature and cross-cultural approaches. The five case studies are organised thematically so that the first chapter starts with a presentation of postcolonial Europe, whereas the following chapters shift the postcolonial approaches to Nordic literatures.

The first chapter demonstrates how Caryl Phillips's counter-travelogue *The European Tribe* provincialises Europe by presenting multiculturalism, racism, and internal colonialism in European countries. It highlights how the generic collage of *The European Tribe* operates as an innovative strategy of postcolonial writing. The second article is the

first appropriation of postcolonial studies in the large field of Nordic literature. It traces the distinctive cultural, linguistic, and regional features in Nordic indigenous and ethnic minority literatures, which are presented in the context of postcolonial resistance writing. The third article investigates cultural hybridity in Jonas Hassen Khemiri's *Montecore. En unik Tiger*. It focuses on the humorous play with languages in migrant communities. The fourth article highlights *Montecore's* renewal of epistolary and (auto)biographic genres as transmitters of cultural differences and encounters. The fifth article is the first cartography of Finnish and Swedish writers of African descent in the Nordic countries. These writers are placed in Black European writing and postcolonial resistance literature.

Europe's White Spots. Postcolonial Readings of Eurocentrism and Nordic Minority Literatures brings a Nordic scope to postcolonial studies, migration studies, and European studies. It also provides new approaches to postcolonial poetics.

TIIVISTELMÄ

Euroopan valkoiset läiskät. Eurosentrismi, pohjoismaiset vähemmistökirjallisuudet ja jälkikoloniaalinen luenta

Väitöskirja tutkii Euroopan kirjallisia reunamia, postkoloniaalisen ja pohjoismaisen kirjallisuudentutkimuksen vähän kartoitettuja alueita. Euroopan sisäisen kolonialismin tutkimuksen kohteena ovat etnisten ja kansallisten vähemmistöjen sekä maahanmuuton esitystavat. Niitä tarkastellaan erityisesti Pohjoismaiden ja ”mustan Euroopan” näkökulmasta.

Eurooppaa provinsialisoiva tutkimus koostuu yhteenvedosta ja viidestä kansainvälisestä referee-artikkelista. Postkoloniaaliset luennat keskittyvät kulttuuristen erityispiirteiden, kulttuurienvälisyyden, postkoloniaalisen vastarinnan ja kielellisen hybriditeetin analyysiin. Ne osoittavat postkoloniaalisen kertomusmuotojen tapoja uudistaa kerrontakeinoja ja kirjallisuudenlajeja. Lajeista käsiteltävinä ovat matkakirjan, maahanmuuttoromaanin, kirjeromaanin, journalistisen esseen ja oma(elämäkerrallisen) tekstin muunnokset. Tutkimus tarkastelee myös maahanmuuttajayhteisöjen monikielisyyttä ja etnisten vähemmistöjen kielellisen vastarinnan strategioita. Tekstien tutkimusmetodeina ovat postkoloniaalinen teksti- ja kontekstianalyysi sekä kontrapunktinen lukutapa.

Tutkimus soveltaa postkoloniaalista kritiikkiä laajaan pohjoismaisen kirjallisuuden kenttään (alkuperäiskansat, kansalliset ja etniset vähemmistöt sekä maahanmuuttajayhteisöt). Se sisältää myös kartoituksen Suomen ja Ruotsin afrikkalaistaustaisesta kirjallisuudesta. Postkoloniaalisen lähiluennan kohteena on brittiläisen Caryl Phillipsin matkakirja *The European Tribe*, jonka antropologisena tutkimuskohteena on Euroopan heimo, rasismi ja kolonialismin jäljet. Analyysi painottaa teoksen kerrontastrategioita, joissa yhdistellään eri kirjallisuuden lajeja, faktaa ja fiktiota. Jonas Hassen Khemirin *Montecore. Uniikki tiikeri* -romaanin luenta tähdentää kirjeromaanin ja (oma)elämäkerrallisen kirjoituksen kerrontaratkaisuja, joiden moniäänisyys tavoittaa monikulttuurisia lukijayleisöjä. Tutkimus selventää myös romaanin tapoja käsitellä Ruotsin maahanmuuttajien kulttuurista hybriditeettiä ja lähiökieltä, ”kreoliruotsia”. Yhteenveto käsittää postkoloniaalisen teoriakehyksen, nostaa esiin opinalan rajallisen käsityksen maailmankirjallisuudesta ja pohtii

postkoloniaalisen kirjallisuudentutkimuksen nykyaasteita. Työ tuo pohjoismaisen ulottuvuuden postkoloniaaliseen kirjallisuudentutkimukseen, maahanmuuton tutkimukseen sekä Eurooppa-tutkimukseen. Se tarjoaa myös uusia näkökulmia postkoloniaalin poetiikkaan.

ORIGINAL PUBLICATIONS

- Publication I Rantonen, Eila: 'Reporting White and Black Spots of Europe: A Postcolonial Reading of Caryl Phillips's *The European Tribe*'. In *Real Stories, Imagined Realities: Fictionality of Non-fictionality in Literary Constructs and Historical Contexts*. Edited by Markku Lehtimäki, Simo Leisti, and Marja Rytönen. Tampere Studies in Language, Translation and Culture, Series A. Vol 3. Tampere: Tampere University Press, 2007. 69–95.
- Publication II Rantonen, Eila & Savolainen, Matti: 'Postcolonial and Ethnic Studies in the Context of Nordic Minority Literatures'. In *Litteraturens gränsland. Invandrar- och minoritets litteratur i nordiskt perspektiv*. Edited by Satu Gröndahl. Uppsala Multiethnic Papers 45. Institut för Multietnisk forskning. Uppsala: Uppsala Universitet, 2002. 71–94.
- Publication III Rantonen, Eila: 'Cultural Hybridity and Humour in Jonas Hassen Khemiri's *Montecore*'. In *Le roman migrant au Québec et en Scandinavie. The Migrant Novel in Quebec and Scandinavia. Performativité, conflits signifiants et créolisation. Performativity, Meaningful Conflicts and Creolization*. Edited by Svante Lindberg. Frankfurt am Main et al.: Peter Lang, 2013. 142–160.
- Publication IV Rantonen, Eila: 'Writing Biography by E-mail: Postcolonial and Postmodern Rewriting of Biographical and Epistolary Modes in Jonas Khemiri's *Montecore*'. In *Migrants and Literature in Finland and Sweden*. Edited by Satu Gröndahl and Eila Rantonen. *Studia Fennica Litteraria* 11. Helsinki: Finnish Literary Society, 2018. 204–224. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.21435/sflit.11>
- Publication V Rantonen, Eila: 'African Voices in Finland and Sweden'. In *Transcultural Modernities. Narrating Africa in Europe*. Edited by Elisabeth Bekers, Sissy Helff, and Daniella Merolla. *Matatu 36. Journal for African Culture and Society*. Amsterdam & New York: Rodopi, 2009. 71–83.

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1 INTRODUCTION

Unfortunately, the so-called white nation never considers that there exist thought models and measures other than squares. If you are born in such a world where the circle is the symbol of beauty, it is difficult to understand a culture where a square or a triangle is the symbol of beauty.¹ (Nils-Aslak Valkeapää)

This study focuses on the literary depictions of ethnic minorities in Europe and especially in the Nordic countries. Today, the presence of migrants and their descendants in Europe from former colonies, as well as many European national minorities, is a visible reminder of the colonial past of Europe and the shaping of contemporary postcolonial Europe. Still, many European cultural minorities – such as Black Europeans and Nordic indigenous cultures – have been for a long time either non-represented or misrepresented in European literary studies. Due to the challenges of multicultural and postcolonial societies, literary studies cannot be conducted merely on a mainstream national basis.

Accordingly, one of the central intentions of my work is to present perspectives of how postcolonial theories can be applied to the analysis of less researched areas of Europe and Nordic literatures, and thus provincialise and de-centre the dominant ethnocentric perspectives in mainstream European literary studies, Nordic studies, and mainstream postcolonial studies. Hence, this account of Nordic and Black European perspectives challenges the dominance of the Anglo-Saxon and Anglo-American paradigm within postcolonial studies, which has concentrated on studying literatures by the largest European countries or their former colonies.

In his book *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (2000), Dipesh Chakrabarty claims that the concept of Europe should be provincialised. It should be viewed in relation to other countries and continents rather than as a self-sufficient and confined region. Moreover, Europe has represented a cultural trans-space that has been provincialised by its migrants and long-established minority cultures (Arndt 2009, 110). Provincialising Europe means in this study that I pay attention to such European

¹ Translation mine.

minorities and regions that have been invisible in the mainstream of postcolonial studies and particularly in literary studies.

Thus, in the current study, I concentrate on tracing internal colonialism and the white spots in European literary studies. These unknown spots are connected to the question of who has ruled and made the cartographies of literature. In its analysis of European and particularly Nordic ethnocentric discourses, my study takes its fuel mainly from postcolonial theory, which has dismantled Western power structures in literary theories and institutions. Moreover, postcolonial studies has offered new and cross-cultural approaches for the analysis of literatures on a global scale and presented important challenges to the Western-centric and Eurocentric self-image of literary studies. This has signified a subversive change in literary studies, since the assumptions about the *universal* features of aesthetics, style, fictional modes, languages, epistemologies, and value systems have all been radically questioned in postcolonial theories.

Europe's White Spots. Postcolonial Readings of Eurocentrism and Nordic Minority Literatures analyses contemporary literary texts that deal with marginalised ethnic minorities in Europe. The selected texts reflect the *postcolonial*, *minoritarian*, and *diasporic condition*² in contemporary Europe. Homi K. Bhabha (1998) describes a *minoritarian condition* as a kind of global citizenship, since more people live across or between national borders than before. By this, Bhabha refers to labour-migration, refugees, internally displaced people, and diasporic communities. These groups have often been perceived of as a threat to national unity (Bhabha 1998; Heith, Gröndahl, & Rantonen 2018, 19). Indeed, in recent decades, large numbers of immigrants from the various parts of the world have sought safety and economic opportunities in European countries. They are a prime example of Europe being lived transnationally (Arndt 2009, 109). Moreover, many ethnic and national minorities have suffered from internal colonialism because of their cultural and political minority position in dominant European cultures. For a long time, they have formed the invisible Europe in literary studies.

Our era has been called the age of *globalisation* and *postcolonialism* as well as a *transnational moment*.³ These terms describe the multicultural societies and global connections of peoples. They depict the travel of ideas, markets, and people across state borders as well as global power structures. Consequently, a wide variety of cultures and languages interact with each other daily in Europe. Since the end of the 1980s, postcolonial researchers have begun to pay special attention to multicultural elements shaping Western cultures. Metropolitan multiculturalism has been conceived of as the latter stage of postcolonialism (e.g. Spivak 2003, 82).

² *Diaspora* usually signifies ethnic minority groups residing in host countries but maintaining psychological or material links to their original home countries (e.g. Sheffer 1986, 3; Mishra 2006, 24-25). For contemporary definitions of diaspora, see Brah 1996 and Mishra 2006.

³ Tölölyan 1991, 5. He perceives that diasporic communities especially represent this transnational moment. See also Paul Jay's study *Global Matters: The Transnational Turn in Literary studies* (2010).

Diasporic communities unsettle the usual categories of nation in a political, territorial, cultural, and psychological sense (Tölölyan 1991, 6). Migrants have to adjust to foreign cultures, languages, habits, and values. Correspondingly, they change their host countries by bringing with them their cultural baggage. Hence, living in multicultural surroundings leads to complex processes of identity building, cultural blending, and cultural and political negotiations conducted at the local, national, and transnational levels (e.g. Bromley 2000, 10). This affects and impinges on both the majority and minority cultures in Europe.

Years ago, when I was planning this study, I initially titled it 'The Postcolonial Reading of Europe' in order to study the postcolonial matrix in the European context, which was a less examined area in postcolonial studies. Later, Sandra Ponzanesi and Bolette Blaagaard's study *Deconstructing Europe* came out in 2012, in which they happen to crystallise the task of my book:

To read Europe as a postcolonial place does not imply that Europe's imperial past is over, but on the contrary that Europe's idea of self, and of its polity, is struggling with the continuing hold of colonialist and imperialist attitudes. [-] In postcolonial Europe, we need to take into account the many forms of internal colonialism (such as indigenous groups, Roma people or endangered ethnic minorities) along with the more frequently debated consequences of fluxes resulting from former colonialism and new global dynamics (migrants, refugees and asylum seekers). (Ponzanesi & Blaagaard 2012, 4.)

Furthermore, they stress the absence of Europe within postcolonial studies. Surprisingly, the concepts of postcolonial theory have rarely been used to explore the postcolonial reality of Europe. Indeed, 'postcolonial' was for a long time mainly defined in the context of the *Third World*.⁴ This resulted in Europe becoming a blind spot in postcolonial studies, although it was the birthplace of colonialism (Ponzanesi & Blaagaard 2012, 4). Frank Schülze-Engler (2016, 670, 681) also stresses that Europe has been written out of the idea of a postcolonial world. This has resulted in an uneasy relationship between 'Europe' and postcolonial studies, which was for a long time reluctant to face the intricacies of postcolonial Europe. This has produced the structural invisibility of Europe in much of postcolonial studies.⁵

Some early postcolonial critics have claimed that there no longer exists a unified Third World bloc because the large presence of the non-Western people within the West has shaken the identities of Western countries as unified cultures (Minh-ha 1989, 98-99). Moreover, Europe's present circumstances and history are strongly intertwined with the history of colonialism. Similarly, Robert Young (1990, 119) claims that European thought would be unthinkable without the impact of colonialism, and the history of the world is intertwined with European colonialism and imperialism. For example, fascism is often

4 During the Cold War, First World referred to the countries connected with NATO and capitalism, whereas Second World referred to communist and socialist countries. Third World signified those countries that could not be placed in the First World or the Second World.

5 Frank Schülze-Engler (2016, 683) sees that the stranglehold of Anglo-American perspectives over the field is one reason for the invisibility of Europe in postcolonial studies.

described as if it was a unique effect of German culture. Rather, fascism can be conceived of as colonialism brought home to Europe, as Frantz Fanon (1967, 71, 80) has asserted (see Young 1990, 125). Notably, after World War II, the attempts to unify a new Europe aimed at breaking with a legacy of fascism and war, but not with the legacy of colonialism, because many European countries were still colonial empires (Schülze-Engler 2016, 671). Thus, the aftermath of colonialism still affects the shaping of contemporary Europe, which should be viewed in the larger context of World histories.

Furthermore, postcolonialism has been linked with the debates on neo-colonialism, globalisation, and new imperialisms. For instance, China, the United States, and the European Union have been perceived of as new political and economic empires. The European Union has often been accused of not taking responsibility for the consequences of colonialism that have caused the large migrations towards Europe (Ponzanesi & Blaagaard 2012, 2). In colonial times, there was a popular expression – ‘white man’s burden’ – which referred to the leading role of the European colonial powers in the colonies.⁶ However, especially non-Western migrants who have their new homes in Europe have to carry today ‘non-white’ men’s and women’s colonial burdens. They face racism, ethnic prejudice, and marginalising practices that have their origins in the colonialist mindset.

Consequently, postcolonial and multicultural studies have emphasised the need to contest, relativise, and deconstruct the homogenous notion of Europe, which has wiped out the cultural diversity of Europe (Shohat & Stam 1994, 4). Thus, we must keep in mind that Europe has been multicultural and multilingual throughout its history. For example, the Roman Empire already brought people from Africa to Britain before the Anglo-Saxon settlements. In this light, the idea of a coherent European identity calls for re-examination. In fact, the presence of millions of people of non-European origin often extends over several generations (Schülze-Engler 2016, 676).

When Europeans call themselves ‘Europeans’, they seem to reinforce the idea that there exists a transcendental core of Europe. However, the term ‘Europe’ was invented, according to historians, to make the large region and diversity of nations look more homogenous than it actually is.⁷ Postcolonial studies holds that the European identity was formed contrastively from the idea of the primitive and barbaric, non-Christian ‘non-Europe’ (Sollors 1995, 219-220).⁸ According to Étienne Balibar (2004, 7), this old notion of Europe connected to Christianity⁹ still at times signifies a democratic and cosmopolitan ideal,

6 Originally Rudyard Kipling’s poem ‘The White Man’s Burden: The United States and the Philippine Islands’ (1899).

7 The definitions of Europe have varied from a part of Greece to a whole continent. In ancient times, ‘Europe’ referred to numerous mythological and a geographical contexts, and it was interweaved with the definitions of different continents (Mikkeli 1994, 3-6).

8 Also Werner Sollors, *Beyond Ethnicity: Consent and Descent in American Culture*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1986, 25.

9 The word ‘European’ was used in an eighth-century reference to the Frankish victory over the Islamic forces at Tours (e.g. Hall 1992, 289). Europeans also formed a unity with the Treaty of Westphalia (1648)

and at other times the surveillance of cultural minorities and migration (see Gebauer & Schwarts Lausten 2010, 1). Consequently, people of non-European descent in contemporary Europe are often racialised, whereas white Europeans especially remain usually unmarked by race, ethnicity, and religion. In this kind of mindset, 'whiteness' appears as an unnoticed and invisible norm and centre, whereas a darker skin colour, 'blackness', signifies a visible difference and exception (Dyer 1988, 44-45).

Europe has been conventionally thought of as emblemising such distinct and respected values as 'rationality', 'the freedom of individuals', 'democracy', 'pluralism', 'humanism', and modernity. Correspondingly, if these positive attributes are associated only with Europe, it implicitly means that they are not regarded as characterising non-Europeans, who hence represent the negativity of Europe. However, in its history, Europe has absorbed and appropriated values, knowledge, inventions, and properties from other cultures. Moreover, the emphasis on a historically old and unified European identity fails to understand the past and present internal diversity of Europe (e.g. Mikkeli 1994, 161; Pratt 1992, 138; Schülze-Engler 2016, 674).¹⁰

Moreover, tolerance and respect for minorities have been suggested to be common European values (e.g. Liikanen 2004, 99). In contrast to these idealistic views, we can point out the political discrimination of many European minorities. This list is long. For example, Kosovo's independence is still today only partially-recognised, the Catalan independence movement was recently crudely suffocated by the Spanish government, and the political organisations of the Crimean Tatars have been banned since the 2014 Russian occupation. Furthermore, internal colonialism is represented by the Roma, who are left as outsiders in European countries, and by the indigenous Inuits and Sámi people, who are struggling for their land rights and fighting against the exploitation of natural resources in the Nordic regions.

Meanwhile, many critics have considered that European values can hardly be described as a fixed set of ethical values. The European Union has not been very successful in its attempts to create a common European identity, mythology, and symbols that might unite Europe as a community of values (Liikanen 2004, 99). Philomena Essed has recognised a shift from Eurocentrism to *Europism*. Whereas Eurocentrism refers to the old colonial and imperialist ideas of Europe's superiority over non-Western countries, Europism, by contrast, signifies the defensive discourse of creating a pure Europe cleansed of foreign elements. Thus, it signifies a homogenising process from the inside. As a form of Europism, *Fortress Europe* can operate as a barricade which creates legal, economic, and political boundaries to protect Europe and expel the 'foreign'. Consequently, Europe consists of invisible and internal borders based on linguistic, racial, ethnic, and religious divisions that

against the 'Turkish menace'. Moreover, the term 'Europe' replaced *Christendom* in diplomatic languages (Balibar 2004, 6).

¹⁰ Postcolonial scholars have criticised the notion of individualism merely as a European-born quality. This idea includes the stereotyped conception that the West is individualist whereas others belong to 'collectives' (Spivak 2003, 51).

are reminiscent of internal colonialism. (Essed 1995, 54; see Ponzanesi & Blaagaard 2012, 3). It has been claimed that in ‘Fortress Europe’, migrants especially represent the borders that European countries still have (Smith & Brinker-Gabler 1997, 7). Moreover, Étienne Balibar (2004, 9, 65) even calls the desperate situation of many immigrants, refugees, asylum seekers, and paperless ‘aliens’ in Europe *European apartheid*.

Importantly, the process of decolonisation has been conceived of as a metaphoric and cartographic undertaking (e.g. Boehmer 2005, 46; Shohat & Stam 1994; Huggan 1991). In a similar vein, postcolonial writers have dismantled, deterritorialised, and displaced the dominant cartographies of Europe. In the current study, I will demonstrate how in his travel book *The European Tribe* (1987), Caryl Phillips (b. 1958) subverts the biased discourses of Europe in his ‘othering’ of the continent. Conventionally, the term ‘tribe’ has been applied to non-European ethnic and national groups. However, in *The European Tribe*, the process of anthropological investigation is subverted in the treatment of ‘Europeans’ as a ‘tribe’, a diminutive definition formerly applied to non-European peoples and nations. This rhetorical manoeuvre, where the concept of ‘tribe’ is appropriated for the European context, opposes the Eurocentric rhetoric that has organised language into binary hierarchies implicitly flattering to Europe. For instance, Europe has ‘nations’ while non-European countries have ‘tribes’ (Shohat & Stam 1994, 2).

In the following study, I engage the perspectives of ethnic minorities, such as black Europeans and Nordic indigenous and ethnic minorities, in my exploration of the blind spots in European and Nordic literature and their study. Interestingly, migrants (immigrants and refugees) with their global and international roots and routes, have highly complex and intriguing national, ethnic, and linguistic backgrounds. According to Ponzanesi and Blaagaard (2003, 5; 2012, 2), *migrant* has even become iconic for the changing definitions of Europe. The migrant’s hybrid identity troubles and unsettles the fixed ideas of nation, cultures, and languages. Hence, this figure is an important character in European history and reality representing the Stranger, which interlinks past colonial histories and current multicultural frictions.

Migration literature and diasporic writing has increasingly been regarded as representative of postcolonial writing (Boehmer 2005, 215). It has even been proposed that the main protagonist of the twentieth century turned out to be the migrant (Frank 2010, 41). Furthermore, it has been stated that in our contemporary age *all literature* – written by migrants as well as non-migrants – is influenced by the global movements of people (Frank 2010, 52). Indeed, the global movements can cause swift effects and changes in literary fields. As an example, we can consider the unexpected increase in the number of asylum seekers from the Middle East in Finland in 2015, which resulted in Arabic becoming the third largest foreign language spoken in Finland (Gröndahl & Rantonen 2018, 7). Moreover, the collapse of the Soviet Union caused a large migration to Finland. Due to this upheaval, the largest and most organised immigrant literary community in contemporary Finland consists of Russian speakers (Sorvari 2018).

Although the postcolonial readings of this study focus on new European migration literature, the Nordic indigenous cultures and selected old national minority literatures are also highlighted. Hence the study follows Gayatri Spivak (2003, 84), who argues that comparative literature should stress the significance of 'old' ethnic minorities and indigenous cultures. According to Spivak (2003, 84), the longstanding ethnic minorities and new immigrant groups should be studied together. Although I acknowledge that bunching different national and ethnic minorities together can produce generalisations, this kind of approach is relevant when exploring postcolonial Europe and postcolonial Nordic countries.

A central aim of my inquiry is to highlight the creative energy presented in contemporary postcolonial and multicultural literature that describes alternative depictions of identity. In their seminal study of postcolonial literature, *The Empire Writes Back* (1989), Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin (1989, 83) have asserted that creative writers have offered the most perceptive descriptions of the postcolonial condition. Indeed, much of the theorising of the postcolonial field derives from the epistemological and aesthetic challenges that have been presented in fiction. Contemporary writers have re-written national identities and the everyday life of multicultural communities in Europe. Their depictions frequently discuss postcolonial themes, alternative histories, and world politics. Global contexts and political upheavals are mirrored, for example, in recent Nordic migration literatures. Significantly, this creates international and cosmopolitan perspectives to Nordic literatures (Kongslien 2013, 131; Nissilä & Rantonen 2013). Nevertheless, these emergent literatures in European countries, which transform national literatures and describe alternative and new identities, have not been much studied in mainstream literary studies.

The contribution of the current study is to explore less examined literary depictions of ethnic minorities that are placed in the European and Nordic contexts. I explore how postcolonial theory can be applied to Nordic ethnic minority literatures and more specifically to Afro-Nordic writing. My postcolonial close readings examine the travel book *The European Tribe* (1987) by the British-Caribbean Caryl Phillips (b. 1958) and the novel *Montecore. En unik Tiger* (2006, transl. *Montecore. The Silence of the Tiger*, 2011) by the Swede Jonas Hassen Khemiri (b. 1978). These texts depict the daily life of ethnic minority communities. They also present migration and internal colonialism in contemporary Europe. The migrant stories convey the dark side of migration, such as the everyday racism that migrants and diasporic people have to face in contemporary Europe.

To help navigate through this work, I present here an outline of this summary. Above in Chapter 1, I have described the general frame of postcolonial Europe and its relation to my studies. I have also demonstrated the need to contest the homogenous notion of Europe, which has wiped out the cultural diversity of Europe. In Chapter 2, I focus on the main questions tackled in my articles. They are related to the representational and self-representational practices of national and ethnic minorities. Central questions also

deal with the postcolonial renewals of poetics. Moreover, I introduce methodological approaches in postcolonial analysis.

Chapter 3 sets up the discussion of how literary studies have dismantled Eurocentrism. I introduce my central aim of this project, which is to provincialise Europe both in postcolonial studies and literary studies. As a particular case, I describe how Nordic postcolonial literature has challenged Eurocentrism and ethnocentrism. This is demonstrated by the early and recent scholarship of Nordic ethnic minority literatures. In Chapter 4, I introduce the central terms employed in my articles, such as resistance, hybridity, and migration literature, discussing their connections to postcolonial theoretical branches such as poetics. Chapter 5 assembles the results and main inventions presented in my articles, which deal with Black Europe, Afrodiasporic writers in the Nordic countries, and Nordic ethnic minority literatures. Here, I sum up the observations and results of my postcolonial close readings of the works by Caryl Phillips and Jonas Hassen Khemiri. They highlight especially generic and linguistic hybridisation in the context of postcolonial poetics.

In Chapter 6, I sum up my project of provincialising Europe in postcolonial literary studies and lay out the implications and results of my readings and cartographies. Moreover, I place my articles in the context of the later studies on the same topics. Finally, I conclude the discussion by moving on to a presentation of the current challenges of postcolonial studies.

2 MAIN QUESTIONS, THE WORKS STUDIED, AND METHODOLOGY

In the current study, I probe postcolonial issues in the European and particularly in the Nordic context. Specifically, I engage with the issues of internal colonialism in Europe and Eurocentrism alongside multiculturalism and transnationalism in literary texts and literary theory. Theoretically, all these ‘isms’ are closely connected and intertwined. Hence, they form the complex theoretical context and background of my work, although the main theoretical toolbox of my study derives from postcolonial studies. Moreover, my readings are influenced by Black studies and Whiteness studies. These theoretical branches are historically intertwined with postcolonial studies. My aim is to analyse how the selected texts vividly embody new postcolonial forgings of cultural identities, narrative techniques, and literary genres.

In this chapter, I chart some of the key questions and issues that have motivated my exploration. I investigate mainly the following questions in my close readings of postcolonial literature:

- Question 1. *How are European and Nordic ethnic minority identities written into and against the old national narratives?*
- Question 2. *How have the selected texts renewed and participated in postcolonial poetics?*

The selected works are placed in Nordic ethnic minority literatures and Black/African European writing. Thus, this study re-situates postcolonial studies within the larger frame of European and Nordic literature. It includes specific postcolonial readings where the textual analysis of literary devices is combined with contextual analysis. *Europe’s White Spots. Postcolonial Readings of Eurocentrism and Nordic Minority Literatures* expands my earlier investigations of postcolonial Europe, where I concentrated on literary, visual, and filmic representations of race, gender, and nation in the postcolonial context (e.g. Rantonen 2002; Rantonen 2003a; Rantonen 1999b; Rantonen 1999c). In the current study, my focus

is on the textual analysis of literary works which deconstruct the idea of a homogenous Europe. Moreover, I interrogate the ethnocentrism in postcolonial literary research which has ignored European, Afro-European, and Nordic dimensions.

2.1 Re-reading National and Ethnic Minority Literatures

Article I, 'Reporting White and Black Spots of Europe: A Postcolonial Reading of Caryl Phillips's *The European Tribe*', starts the discussion on internal colonialism in Europe. It leads us to contemporary and historically multicultural Europe. This travel book and cultural autobiography recounts the history of Europe's black and Jewish communities and contemporary migration in a postcolonial frame. I examine how *The European Tribe* (1987) provincialises the idea of Europe by its presentation of multiculturalism and traces of colonialism and racism in contemporary Europe. It represents a key text in this dissertation project, because it overturns the former ideas of white Europe and problematises Black Europe. I classify it as one of the pioneering texts of consciously postcolonial writing in the 1980s.

A large part of my inquiry concentrates on Nordic literature, which forms an unknown terrain of postcolonial studies. *Article II*, 'Postcolonial and Ethnic Studies in the Context of Nordic Minority Literatures' explores with a wide scope how postcolonial literary theory and ethnic minority studies can be applied to Finnish, Swedish, Danish, and Norwegian literatures. In the article, I scrutinise how the aspects of regionality, locality, cultural specificity, and hybridity can be appropriated in the studies of Nordic literatures. The task of *Article II* is to function in the current study as a general introduction to postcolonial literature and postcolonial approaches in the Nordic countries.

Firstly, the literary examples in *Article II* derive from indigenous literatures that have undergone colonial oppression, such as Inuit literature in Greenland and Sámi literature in the northern parts of Finland, Sweden, and Norway. Secondly, the article investigates other Nordic national minorities whose political and cultural position has been likened to colonisation, such as Tornedalian literature in Sweden, Kven literature in Norway, and the literature of the Faroe Islands in Denmark. The article searches for the modes of *resistant writing*, marginalised literary histories, and the culture-specific aesthetics and genres that differ from the mainstream Nordic literatures. Its main focus is on national and ethnic minorities and indigenous literatures, although some consideration is paid to the literature of migrant communities, such as Sweden-Finnish literature.

In fact, representations of migrants are not yet very common in the mainstream of Nordic fiction. Therefore, I've selected Jonas Hassen Khemiri's novel *Montecore. En unik Tiger* (2006) as an object of study because of its vivid depiction of the migrant suburbs in Sweden. *Article III*, 'Cultural Hybridity and Humour in Jonas Hassen Khemiri's *Montecore*'

scrutinises how Khemiri uses multilingual and heteroglossic¹¹ narration in his depiction of migrant identities and communities. By these literary devices, the novel can be typified as a migrant novel. In *Article IV*, 'Writing Biography by E-mail: Postcolonial and Postmodern Rewriting of Biographical and Epistolary Modes in Jonas Khemiri's *Montecore*', I examine how Khemiri employs many narrators in order to voice and mediate the life story and traumatic experiences of Tunisian migrants and their children in Sweden.

Both Caryl Phillips and Jonas Hassen Khemiri are writers who represent the so-called second-generation of migrants. This study does not deal with how mainstream writers have depicted migration, although the conceptualisation of *migration writing* (see Chapter 4.1.) covers all writers who write about migration and multicultural issues. These selected texts have been chosen because of their postcolonial themes. Those writers with migrant descent or who belong to national and ethnic minorities, in fact, often happen to depict more intensively postcolonial issues compared to the mainstream writers, although the writer's ethnic background has not been a central criteria of the selection of the texts chosen for closer examination.

The postcolonial readings presented in *Articles I, III, and IV* illuminate in vibrant ways the postcolonial era, as well as the position of minorities within Europe and in the Nordic countries. Moreover, they all handle the African diaspora in Europe. While *The European Tribe* deals with multiculturalism and particularly the long presence of Africans in Europe who are still considered strangers, *Montecore* deals with recent North African migration within Sweden.

Thus, these postcolonial readings of *The European Tribe* and *Montecore* develop my exploration of Black Europe. The selected works were published between the end of the 1980s and the mid-2000s. The choice of texts addressed is based on my interest in the depictions of Black and multicultural Europe and the Nordic countries. While reading these selected texts, I observed that thematically they could be placed in the framework of postcolonial literature in Europe. Another motivation is my interest in postcolonial poetics and especially generic innovations, which I perceive as developing fields of study in postcolonial literary studies. I am interested in investigating and opening up postcolonial textual strategies – a less examined area in postcolonial literary studies. I noticed that these texts particularly employ intriguing literary devices and generic hybridisation. This has spurred me to test the combination of literary and postcolonial theoretical tools in these cases.

Article V, 'African Voices in Finland and Sweden' expands my probing of migration writing in Nordic literature generated in *Article II*, 'Postcolonial and Ethnic Studies in the Context of Nordic Minority Literatures'. The focus of the article is on Black European and Afro-Swedish and Afro-Finnish literature. It continues the discussion of Afro-Europe presented in *Articles I, III, and IV*. In fact, it is the first cartography of writers of African

¹¹ Originally Mikhail Bakhtin's term that depicts the coexistence of distinct varieties within a single language.

descent in Finland and Sweden. In the article, I will explore how this diasporic literature depicts multicultural communities and accounts for the experiences of African migrants who have moved to the Nordic countries. Therefore, from a postcolonial perspective, it examines how the different kinds of African identities and themes are presented by writers of African descent in Finland and Sweden. Its aim is to highlight specific poetic elements and typical genres in this literature, which can be placed in the context of Afrodiasporic writing in Europe.

2.2 Representational and Self-Representational Practices

Postcolonial writers have renewed the modes of self-representation and the autobiographical genre by interweaving life narrative with ethnography, psychobiography, or testimony, creating hybrid generic forms (Kaplan 1992). It has been perceived that ethnic minorities especially often write about collective identity, such as black identity, in their autobiographical writings (Stover 2003, 29-30). The studied writers tackle everyday racism in Europe frequently in the form of cultural autobiography that discusses national, ethnic, and cultural identities. These kinds of self-scrutinies and studies on the effects of racism can be considered postcolonial reworkings of *autoethnographic* writing, where the formerly marginalised and racialised subjects represent themselves in ways that engage with and remould dominant representations. In the postcolonial frame, the autoethnographic texts are constructed in response, resistance to, or in dialogue with colonial/imperial representations. Importantly, autoethnographies appropriate and transform the idioms of European genres, such as travel writing, and merge them with minority perspectives and modes of writing (see Pratt 1992, 7).¹²

Hence, I will explore how the writers present the relationship between personal and collective identities. My particular aim is to trace the culturally specific expressions, resistance strategies, and renewal of literary devices in these self-representations. I am especially interested in the ways writers deal with the representational and self-representational practices in a multicultural situation. Therefore, I analyse cultural autobiographies as a generic form where self-representational practices can be detected.

In *Articles I, III, IV, and V*, I explore how the writers have presented self-representational issues in (auto)biographic modes connected to national, ethnic, and multicultural identities. In postcolonial studies, it is important to conceive of self-representations as located, historical, subjective, political, and embodied (Smith & Watson 2005, 357).

12 As a method in social and cultural theories, autoethnography combines autographic and ethnographic modes of research. It seeks to analyse personal experience in order to understand larger cultural experiences and phenomena. In ethnographies, researchers examine a culture's practices, common values and beliefs, and shared experiences. Ethnographers become participant observers in the culture by taking field notes of the culture and observing others' engagement with the cultural happenings. E.g. Ellis, Adams, & Bochner 2011.

Black autobiographic writing represented by the British-Caribbean Phillips and writers of African descent in Europe – such as the Swedish Johannes Anyuru or the Finnish-Kenyan Wilson Kirwa – stresses cultural roots and the rootedness of community. Black autobiographies often deal with cultural memory and resist oppression by mainstream societies (Stover 2003, 4). On the other hand, an ‘individualising tendency’ has been recognised in ethnic minority writings. Indeed, many ethnic minority writers emphasise in their autobiographical writings the subjectivity that has been invisible and unheard in dominant national discourses and representations. This kind of forefront subjectivity and heightened self-representational practice in ethnic and postcolonial writing often expresses resistance and criticism to mainstream histories and journalism (Stover 2003, 29-30; Hartsock 2000, 52).

Nevertheless, the analysis of ‘race’ and ethnicity especially in *The European Tribe* illustrates the specific and complex position of ‘Black Europeans’ and Africans in Europe, as well as in the autobiographic works presented in *Article V*, ‘African Voices in Finland and Sweden’. *Montecore* also vigorously deals with the racialisation of North-African migrants in Sweden.

The transcultural and international formation of the Black diaspora, which Paul Gilroy has called the *Black Atlantic*, signifies a blended and hybridised product of complex connections and transmissions between black communities occurring across Africa, America, Europe, and the Caribbean (e.g. African-Americans, Black British, and Black Caribbean communities, see Gilroy 1993; Mishra 2006, 57).¹³ These networks, as well as the history and presence of the Black diaspora, ‘Black Europe’, I concentrate on in my analysis of Phillips’s travel essay. *Article V*, ‘African Voices in Finland and Sweden’, also deals with the African diaspora in Europe and the Nordic countries. Furthermore, it is important to remark that all the selected texts include intercultural and intercontinental perspectives, since their myriad international contexts extend to other continents, such as the African, Middle-Eastern, Caribbean, and American historical, cultural, and political contexts.

Furthermore, I examine how these texts resist ethnocentric representations in their tracking of colonial traces and racism in Europe. In postcolonial studies, it has been important to discern various kinds of counter-discourses and counter-representations that have been created as alternatives to ethnocentric approaches and colonial discourses. Thus, the analysis of *The European Tribe* and *Montecore* concentrates on representational issues in the postcolonial context. Edward Saïd (1979, 325) argued that the analysis of Western ethnocentrism has to start with the question of representation – how cultures are represented. It is important to study the relation of representations to various power systems. In fact, the political connotations cannot be avoided in the cultural analysis if one agrees with the definitions of ‘nation’ and ‘race’ as politically, socially, and culturally constructed categories.

¹³ In the British context, ‘black’ has been used to refer to ‘people of colour’, e.g. people with an African, African Caribbean, or South Asian background. This term has also been contested as too generalising by South Asian writers (see Stein 2003, 8, 12-13).

While investigating in my postcolonial close readings how European ethnic minorities are presented in literary discourse, I also examine the ethical dimensions that are related to the telling and creating of a character and the voicing of the characters (Phelan 2005, 22). Thus, my aim is to explore the ethical issue of how marginalised and racialised people are voiced in literary discourse (e.g. Spivak 1988, 135). For instance, *The European Tribe* gives an account of various silenced and invisible cultural minorities, such as blacks and Jews in Europe, while *Montecore* tells about the attempts to write down a 'voiceless' Tunisian migrant's life story.

Importantly, the contemporary novel has begun to extend its narratives to various kinds of ethnic and national minorities in Europe, such as African diasporic writing in Europe. This generates changes in representational systems and literary spaces. It has been claimed that the transformative power of fiction lies in its capacity to rewrite histories of groups and communities that have formerly been neglected. This is further connected to the idea of who actually possesses the novelistic space (Schehr 2003, 14, 17). Conversely, writers who are conscious of this representational distortion have interrogated the stereotypes that reflect ethnocentric and colonialist thinking, and given increasing space and voice in their works to various excluded ethnic and national minorities and migrants, who now tell about their life from their own perspective and in their own words (Bromley 2000, 4-5).

Furthermore, it has been pointed out that postcolonial writers often efface distinctions between the autobiographical and the fictive, which has been perceived as an 'out-law' rhetorical move (Smith & Watson 2005, 358). Thus, postcolonial writers have troubled the fiction/non-fiction boundaries by both calling on readers to read their narratives against autobiography and asserting themselves, on the other hand, as an authoritative witness to subjective truth (Smith & Watson 2005, 362).

Both Caryl Phillips's *The European Tribe* and Jonas Hassen Khemiri's *Montecore* tackle these issues by problematising the writing of (auto)biography and self-representation. In *Article IV*, 'Writing Biography by E-mail: Postcolonial and Postmodern Rewriting of Biographical and Epistolary Modes in Jonas Khemiri's *Montecore*', I will illuminate what kinds of perspectival devices in *Montecore* are interweaved with the renewal of the generic norms of the (auto)biographic mode. The novel presents a kind of witness biography that is interestingly composed by different informants and narrators shaping a Tunisian migrant's life-story from different angles.

2.3 Examining Postcolonial Poetic and Generic Renewals

Another central interest in this study is research on the applications of *postcolonial poetics*, which involves examining culturally specific styles and art forms. Moreover, postcolonial poetics involve the analysis of hybridity in literary forms and various kinds of rhetorical and structural procedures. Noticeably, by the end of 2010s, postcolonial studies had enlarged its scope and orientation towards a closer textual analysis and poetics. In her study *Postcolonial*

Poetics, Elleke Boehmer (2018, viii, 2) argues this focus on postcolonial poetics and reading practices signifies a radical departure for a postcolonial field in which literature has mainly been read in relation to social, political, and ethical issues. Therefore Boehmer (2018, 2-4) considers it important to construct a postcolonial reading that can be both border-crossing and yet culturally specific. In my text analyses, I try to bridge the poetic, political, and cultural dimensions of these selected texts.

Postcolonial studies has emphasised that the critical and conceptual tools borrowed from the West are not necessarily appropriate for the study of all literatures (e.g. Bassnett 1993, 38). This concerns aesthetics, stylistic innovations, and genres. I believe that the investigation of the modifications of literary genres and narrative modes is a fruitful field of postcolonial poetics. For example, indigenous artistic forms and literary genres may differ from Western art forms or fictional genres. I will examine these alternative approaches to poetics especially in the close readings of *The European Tribe* and *Montecore*. Form can be a significant issue, because postcolonial texts often work against authorised paradigms (Bromley 2000, 4).

A central focus of my research is to practise a postcolonial reading of literary genres. I will investigate generic innovations, a less studied area in postcolonial literary studies, although postcolonial writers have transformed the way of thinking about Western literary genres. For example, travel and exploration literature depicted the European subject as a self-sufficient source of knowledge. This ensured that interactional and oppositional history has turned up only as traces (Pratt 1992, 136, 205). On the other hand, postcolonial literature has renewed genres by writing them from the perspectives of colonised and marginalised cultures. This generic 'intrusion' or subversion has especially affected travel narratives and adventure stories, which have been perceived of as typical forms of colonial discourse (Boehmer 2005, 113). Postcolonial writers have also re-written Western classics and historical novels so that the protagonist tells the historical events from new and formerly untold perspectives, from non-Western eyes. Moreover, recent postcolonial studies expand the former conceptualisation of refugee writing as a genre (Nyman 2017, 12).¹⁴ However, such genres as the epistolary novels and auto(biographic) writing studied in this volume are less theorised in postcolonial studies.

In fact, it is acknowledged that the field of postcolonial studies has largely neglected poetic and aesthetic issues. Elleke Boehmer (2018, 22) has claimed that words like 'poetic' and 'aesthetic' have been avoided or considered only side-issues of mainstream postcolonial studies. Furthermore, Bill Ashcroft (2015, 410) asserts that postcolonial theory has avoided the theory of aesthetics, perhaps due to the fear that it might shake the political integrity of the field. Although I find this fear exaggerated, I consider it important for the field to understand aesthetic engagement in hybrid, cross-cultural, and multipolitical postcolonial literature. More likely, this lack of aesthetic matters might be due to postcolonial studies'

¹⁴ Nyman (2017, 12) notes that the shared concerns of these texts – journeying and the problematisation of home, trauma, recuperation, limited subjectivity, and a lack of agency – characterise refugee writing as a genre.

intensive engagement with political and historical questions, as Delphine Munos and Bénédicte Ledent (2018, 1, 3) have suggested. They encourage postcolonial scholars to shift the terrain of analysis to less studied literary genres and generic hybridisations and boundaries. This shift has also been my goal in my considerations of postcolonial poetics.

When scrutinising the employment of generic forms and literary devices in *The European Tribe* and *Montecore*, I try to detect if the selected texts contain typical features shared by postcolonial or migration literature. Both texts constitute an interesting installation and blending of different literary genres. I investigate how, in *The European Tribe*, Phillips merges cultural autobiography, testimony, historical and journalistic discourse, and European fictional presentations of blacks and Jews in his deconstruction, ‘foreignising’ or ‘othering’ the idea of ‘white’ Europe. I also highlight Khemiri’s innovative use of the epistolary novel and (auto)biographic modes in *Article IV*. I analyse the use of these genres as a specific postcolonial strategy in the presentation of cultural differences and resistance. I will investigate how the (auto)biographic mode and letter genre are inserted into the novelistic discourse. Furthermore, I relate my generic investigation of epistolary and (auto)biographic modes to *Montecore*’s complex voicing strategy, which uses many narrators – ‘informants’ – in the assemblage of the life-story of the main character.

When exploring Nordic ethnic minority literatures in *Article II*, ‘Postcolonial and Ethnic Studies in the Context of Nordic Minority Literatures’, attention is paid to the culture-specific ways of writing literary genres. Sámi literature, for example, blends uniquely different art forms and genres. The article presents some Nordic examples of distinguished literary genres of their own, such as the Sámi writing of *collective autobiography* or *reminiscence literature*, which differs from conventional Western autobiographies and memoirs. It may include mythological and historical elements, oral tradition, communal beliefs, and tales, which are combined with autobiographical experiences (Rantonen & Savolainen 2002, 87). The modifications and renewals of literary genres I place in the context of *postcolonial resistant writing*.

In the close readings, I examine postcolonial appropriations of such literary genres as travel writing, autobiographic writing, biographic writing, journalism, and the epistolary novel. The epistolary novel in particular has not been much theorised in postcolonial research, though it often deals with cross-cultural thematics. In fact, Walter Goebel and Saskia Schabio (2013, 1) argue that in the field of postcolonial narrative aesthetics, questions of *subversion*, *parody*, and *mimesis* have predominated over other aspects of aesthetic forms. They claim that it is high time to explore the wider dimensions of postcolonial aesthetics, such as the specificities of generic evolution. However, I find Goebel and Schabio’s concerns exaggerated, since even such basic generic modifications as postcolonial parody¹⁵ have not yet been widely or thoroughly studied in postcolonial contexts.

Moreover, the generic approach evokes the question of the relationship between postcolonialism and postmodern literature. Notably, postcolonialism, poststructuralism,

15 John Clement Ball, for example, has analysed satiric elements of postcolonial fiction. See Ball 2015.

and postmodernism emerged as related theoretical movements during the 1980s and 1990s. A generic hybrid area has been discerned in postcolonial literature that blends the features of postmodernism and postcolonialism (e.g. Boehmer 2005, 237-243). Moreover, *postmodern* elements are often noted in postcolonial studies and postcolonial literature. For example, the break-up of language, the collapse of narrative, and the elusiveness of overall meaning have been listed as postmodern traits. This can affect reading modes: whereas *postmodern reading* can emphasise textual plays, deferrals, and metafictional elements, *postcolonial reading* can locate the meanings of the culture-specific elements of the text (Mishra & Hodge 1991, 406) as well as resistant discourses. In it, central features of postmodernism such as pastiche, parody, and history as an unstable discourse can be juxtaposed alongside culture-specific knowledges, the critique of dominant discourses, and stylistic nuances that testify to the text's postcoloniality (Mishra & Hodge 1991, 407).

Research has recently stressed the distinctive aesthetic features of migration literature. An interesting example is the emergence of the *migrant novel*. It has been defined as a specific genre that has its own formal criteria, such as a double-perspective, bi-linguality, or multilinguality. Thematically, it features the post-migration situation and re-location (Kongslie 2013, 125-139). Søren Frank (2010, 47-48) emphasises that the migrant novel depicts the experiences of cultural and social relations and globalisation. Moreover, Elleke Boehmer (2005, 237) claims that the multi-voiced *migrant novel* has given expressions to the theories of 'open', indeterminate texts, or of transgressive, non-authoritative readings.¹⁶ In postmodern postcolonial narration, various literary genres and modes of narration, such as fiction, self-reflective, and autobiographical narration, are blended. The postmodern postcolonial collages may consist of different literary and cultural hybrids and the intermixing of literary genres (King 1998, 9).

In my analysis of the migrant novel in *Articles III and IV*, I probe in particular the ways *Montecore* combines both postcolonial and postmodern novelistic discourse. The novel appropriates the postmodern techniques of self-referentiality, metafictional strategies, and playing with truth claims. Hence, I investigate how the postmodern distancing techniques in *Montecore* are blended with the postcolonial voicing of experiences that have been silenced in dominant discourses. Hence, I examine how the voicing of migrant characters is conducted in *Montecore* by the combination of postcolonial resistance writing and postmodern distancing techniques. Significantly, Søren Frank (2010, 51) observes that because migration literature often includes a 'double consciousness' in terms of language, place, culture, and/or religion, it intensifies the linguistic, narrative, and semantic complexity of the (post)modernist novel. These generic transformations and intensifications are, in fact, an area that has not yet been much explored in postcolonial literary theory. Thus, my aim was to investigate in these selected texts how the postcolonial, transnational, and multicultural themes and contexts have transformed and intensified literary forms

¹⁶ Also Homi K. Bhabha has discussed the relationship between the postcolonial and the postmodern (e.g. Bhabha 1994, 171-198).

and genres. In other words, I trace what kinds of literary devices and linguistic forms are employed and transformed in the presentation of multicultural societies. Consequently, in my explorations, I will observe if the studied writers employ postcolonial literary strategies or if their works have features of a multi-voiced migrant novel or migration literature.

Indeed, contemporary postcolonial and migration writing seems to convey a search for new narrative modes and a renewal of literary genres. According to Frank (2010, 52), on a formal level, *migration literature* is manifested in linguistic impurity and heteroglossia, in vagabonding perspectives and the foreignness of voices, and in inconclusive and multidimensional narrative forms. Thus, in my readings, I try to observe multilingual intricacies and peculiar narrative modes, such as the uses of person, time, and space, and the voicing of characters which might signify postcolonial writing strategies.

In the case of migrant depictions, I pay special attention to the linguistic forms used in postcolonial and migration literature. In particular, I explore how postcolonial literature presents everyday cultural and linguistic hybridity in migrant communities in the Nordic countries. This I test especially in my investigation of the multilingual use of languages as a poetic device in *Article III*, 'Cultural Hybridity and Humour in Jonas Hassen Khemiri's *Montecore*', which transports the reader to the lively migrant neighbourhoods of Sweden. The language of *Montecore* is interestingly composed of hybridised Swedish that includes French and Arabic words and expressions. I track how the hybrid elements in the characterisation and language are presented. I analyse how the novel demonstrates linguistic and cultural hybridity and the humorous play with languages in contact in multicultural and multilingual communities.

2.4 On Methodology

This study belongs to the discipline of comparative literature¹⁷, where the issue of comparing literary cultures has been central. Postcolonial critics have asked whether it is possible to use comparative methods to decentre and 'provincialise Europe', since comparison as a perspective and a method has historically served to support Eurocentric ideologies and practices. On the other hand, the method of comparison has been considered useful because of its capability to establish connections across seemingly disparate contexts and thus challenge provincialism (Loomba 2009, 501). In order to broaden the global horizons within literary studies, comparative approaches and methods need to be combined with postcolonial, transnational, and multicultural theories and methods of studying literature.

What kinds of methods can then be used in the practice of postcolonial close reading that analyses different sorts of power structures and ideologies connected to colonialism,

17 In the history of the discipline, the rivals of comparative literature were *universal literature*, *international literature*, *general literature*, and *world literature*. General literature has usually meant a concentration on literary theory and poetics, whereas comparative research has signified a comparison across different national literatures (Bassnett 1993, 1, 12-29, 36).

new colonialism, nationalism, and the marginalisation of diasporic communities and ethnic minorities? Postcolonial criticism has been conceived of as a broad critical method and reading practices that examine forms of domination and marginalisation. The study method in this work resembles Edward Saïd's concept of *contrapuntal reading*, David Damrosch's idea of world literature as a *reading mode*, and Franco Moretti's term *distant reading*.

A useful method is Edward Saïd's (1993, 37, 59, 78-79) notion of *contrapuntal reading* or *contrapuntal perspective*. It embodies a significant strategy of postcolonial reading. In contrapuntal reading, the reader juxtaposes contradictory and opposing experiences, knowledges, and ideologies, and attempts to relate them to each other. At the same time, the reader remains aware of both the narratives produced by the dominant centres of power as well as the resistant narratives that challenge the hegemonic histories. Accordingly, we can discern a multiplicity of voices: dominant and dominated, and, for example, various sorts of collectives and opposing communities of 'us' and 'them'. It signifies, for instance, a kind of organised interplay embedded in the literary works that derive from the conflicting themes (Saïd 1993, 36-37). I argue that with it, one can probe the same texts, for example, racist and anti-racist discourse, nationalist and anti-nationalist discourse, as well as colonialist and anti-colonialist discourses. It is significant to highlight the political rhetoric and political unconscious¹⁸ in literature as well as in literary studies. Thus, Saïd's notion of *contrapuntal reading* may be useful in analysing various ideologies, discrepancies, and conflicting themes in literary works and their studies.

Moreover, a contrapuntal reading helps to understand the relational aspects of hybridity because it stresses the formative role of exchanges between the different ideologies that people present (Kraidy 2005, 13). Hence, I try to follow this guiding principle both in my reading and in my selection of texts, representations, and literary forms that I put under close scrutiny. The *contrapuntal* method is represented in the readings of the ethnocentric ideologies of the selected literature, literary studies, and explorations of postcolonial resistance writing.

Another important and complex issue is how to read cultural differences and how to deal with *world literature*. David Damrosch (2003, 298-299) asserts that world literature does not signify an indefinite body of texts that must be mastered. Instead, his solution is that it can be employed as a *mode of reading* that can be practiced as intensively and extensively with a few works as it can with a large number of texts. With his concept of world literature as a mode of reading, Damrosch can overcome the challenge posed by its immense scope. (See Ferris 2006, 86.)

Postcolonial *methodology* is connected to the larger frame of the methodology of comparative literature exploring cultural differences, ethnicities, and nationalities. For example, in his article 'Conjectures on World Literature' (2000), Franco Moretti attempts to figure out the disciplinary methodology of comparative literature. Firstly, he delineates

18 The term is defined and discussed by Fredric Jameson in his book *The Political Unconscious* (1981).

the rise of comparative literature to Goethe's idea of *weltliteratur* (1827), where Goethe wanted to decrease the significance of national literatures and instead stress the idea of *world literature*, which arises from different national, regional, and local literatures. However, Moretti emphasises that world literature is not merely an object of study but a disciplinary problem that requires a new critical method. According to Moretti (2000), merely increasing the cultural variety of the texts and expanding the literary canons is not be sufficient for the cross-cultural analysis of literature: 'No one has ever found a method by just reading more texts. That's not how theories come into being: they need a leap, a wager – a hypothesis, to get started' (Moretti 2000).

For his alternative analysis of world literature, Moretti suggests the method of *distant reading*, which stresses the relationship between analysis and synthesis. Literary history becomes 'second hand', a patchwork constructed by different researchers and studies. This leads to a distance from the text, which problematises the significance of close reading, practised, for instance, in new criticism and deconstruction. In distant reading, distance allows one to focus on units which are much smaller or larger than the text, e.g. devices, themes, tropes, genres, and systems (Moretti 2000; also Eilittä 2019, 313-314). Although I agree with Moretti's notions of the importance of exploring cross-cultural influences and local transformations, I do not perceive *distant reading* to be a ground-breaking methodological change in comparative literature, although I also rely on the above-mentioned second-hand patchwork of different people's work, especially in the article 'Postcolonial and Ethnic Studies in the Context of Nordic Minority Literatures'. Emily Apter (2006, 43) also regards Moretti's formulation of 'distance reading' as rather similar to the conventional study of literary concepts, such as tropes, themes, narrators, voices, characters, and genres in earlier literary studies.¹⁹ In my postcolonial readings, I combine postcolonial theory with textual analysis, which investigates literary concepts and devices employed in the selected postcolonial texts.

Moreover, postcolonial studies includes discussions about the position of the researcher among different cultures. For example, Charles Bernheimer has discussed the ethics of studying different cultures than one's own and warned that a comparatist practice can easily be accused of blind universalism:

The more literatures you try to compare, the more like a colonizing imperialist you may seem. If you stress what these literatures have in common – thematically, morally, politically – you may be accused of imposing a universalist model that suppresses particular differences. (Bernheimer 1995b, 9.)

Indeed, in this kind of practice, non-Western literatures might serve as a 'raw material' in Western literary studies, utilised by Western scholarly 'colonisers'. However, I believe a greater loss and damage would occur if world and ethnic minority literatures remained untouchable, unknown, or on the margins of comparative literature.

¹⁹ According to Apter (2006, 43), Moretti ignores the fact that 'High Theory' has already operated as a form of distant reading, and it prefers narrative over linguistic studies.

Furthermore, postcolonial literature has been perceived of as a gateway to experiencing how it feels to be a person from another culture. Thus, cultural differences and specificities invite one to think about the text from a new perspective and through a mindset which may be different from one's own (Boehmer 2006, 258). Cross-cultural analysis requires the ability to engage in interpretation that exceeds one's own cultural standpoints. Consequently, it means being ready to transgress the traditional techniques of literary readings. Nevertheless, reading cultures certainly means a lot of 'homework' and self-positioning, as Gayatri Spivak (1990, 62-63) has asserted. Spivak has stressed that critics must be aware of the specifics of their own position and recognise the political, cultural, and institutional contexts in which they work. Spivak (2003, 52) advocates further that it is not enough to learn about cultures; one has to imagine oneself by and in another culture. She therefore recommends a kind of 'going native', like Joseph Conrad (Korzeniowski), who did not write in his mother tongue – Polish – but in English.²⁰

Minority studies since the 1960s have stressed the minorities' right to narrate and make their experience and history audible and visible in dominant cultures. Similarly, postcolonial studies has problematised the ethics and politics of writing and representation²¹. An important issue concerns from whose perspective the different ethnic groups are presented and narrated. Within *postcolonial feminism*, the ethical issue of who can 'speak for' ethnic groups has been debated in particular from the beginning (e.g. Spivak 1988).²² In the close analysis of the texts, I have chosen to explore perspectives where the members of ethnic minorities have voices and act as narrators of the texts.

Certainly, postcolonial researchers could strive for the position of 'going native', although cultural homework would be easier and quicker to put into academic practice! However, I do not regard that the announcement of the cultural position of the researcher is obligatory in postcolonial studies. The selected approaches and the use of knowledge and literary sources will disclose the cultural or political position of the researcher. However, studying different cultures signifies a constant process of translation and comparison, where the researcher has to transgress the boundaries of his or her own cultural knowledge.

In a postcolonial light, I highly regard Edward Saïd's notion from his essay 'Representing the Colonized: Anthropology's interlocutors' (1989)²³ that there exists no epistemologically privileged position where one can estimate other cultures; instead evaluations happen in intercultural relations (see Ball 2015, 28). Nevertheless, the deconstruction and dismantling of Western ethnocentric viewpoints has been regarded as a significant starting-point in postcolonial studies.

20 This kind of language use has been called *translingualism*. See Kellman (2000).

21 Eg. Hall 1997.

22 Gayatri Spivak (1988, 150) has asserted that Western women should ask: how am I naming the other woman? How does she name me? Can we speak for the other woman? (See Ahokas & Rantonen 1996, 73-77.)

23 Originally in *Critical Inquiry* 15 (1989), 205-225.

3 POSTCOLONIAL LITERARY STUDIES DISMANTLING EUROCENTRISM AND NATIONALISM

We can detect a *postcolonial turn* in literary studies since the 1990s, when postcolonial critics started to investigate the colonial discourses embedded in Western literature extensively.²⁴ This canonical revision of literary studies by postcolonial theory has been perceived of as a new movement in comparative literature (e.g. ACLA report 2014–2015; Bernheimer 1995a, 42). The postcolonial turn has signified three projects that have motivated postcolonial studies: *firstly*, the forceful critique of ethnocentrism and colonialist ideologies in literary institutions, and *secondly*, the enlargement of the scope of literary studies to properly cover World literature in mainstream literary studies. *Thirdly*, from the beginning, postcolonial researchers have theorised cultural specificities, the blending of cultures, linguistic hybridity, and regional models for postcolonial literature around the world (e.g. Ashcroft, Griffiths, & Tiffin 1989). Another central aspect is that postcolonial studies started to investigate modes of *postcolonial resistance* to the colonial discourses mirrored in postcolonial literature.

Postcolonial studies has strongly criticised and deconstructed the Eurocentric discourses implicit in the notions of nation, nationality, and ethnicity in comparative literature. It advocates intercultural, transnational, and cosmopolitan paradigms that provide alternatives to the former ethnocentric models of literary studies. Postcolonial theory has deconstructed the nationalistic and geopolitical power structures in literary theories and institutions, and postcolonial feminism has analysed the gendered forms of colonial and nationalistic stories (e.g. Ahokas & Rantonen 1996; Rantonen 1999b; Vuorela

²⁴ In fact, many main advocates of postcolonial theory – such as Edward Saïd, Homi K. Bhabha, and Gayatri Spivak – have their disciplinary background in literary studies, particularly in comparative literature.

1999).²⁵ The result has been that the basic theories of literary studies, such as the birth of the novel, literary genres, and the development of literary history have been evaluated from a new and international perspective.

A central focus of postcolonial studies has been the investigation of the links between knowledge and power. In fact, colonial violence has included an 'epistemic' aspect. Consequently, this has signified an attack on the cultures, knowledges, and value systems of the colonised peoples, which has left its effects and traces on contemporary postcolonial cultures worldwide (Loomba 1998, 54).²⁶ For instance, racial hierarchies were used to justify the 'white' people's right to govern the 'inferior races' in the colonies.

Another central question posed by postcolonial critics is how national and geopolitical interests have left their impact on Western literary institutions. Especially Edward Saïd's ground-breaking work *Orientalism* (1978) has been crucial for both poststructuralist and postcolonial theories. In his study, Saïd examines the idea of European identity presented in Western writings as a superior in comparison to those of non-European peoples and cultures. *Orientalism* has inspired later postcolonial studies, ethnic minority studies, indigenous studies, and gender studies that deal with the relationships between dominant and marginalised discourses and deconstruct stereotypical and ethnocentric representations.

The pervasive effects of the epistemic violations are still visible in the contemporary racist and ethnocentric attitudes towards non-Western migrants and diverse old ethnic minorities in Europe.

Historically, the colonised people's knowledges were subordinated to Western redefinitions, and cultural achievements by native cultures in the colonies were disparaged. On the other hand, some native texts – such as *Arabian Nights*, the *Koran*, and the *Vedas* – were utilised by colonial powers in order to more efficiently govern the colonies (Acheraiou 2008, 39). These kinds of epistemic violations have left their traces in literary institutions and politicised literary studies. Consequently, postcolonial approaches have led to a radical examination of the ideology of the literary field. In the current study, especially in *Article II* dealing with postcolonial approaches to Nordic ethnic minorities and indigenous writing, I tackle the epistemic violence and the corrections of mainstream canonisation. Moreover, the article highlights the specific cultural and indigenous forms that have been neglected in mainstream Nordic literary studies.

²⁵ Prominent literary scholars of this area are, for instance, Gayatri Spivak, Elleke Boehmer, Trinh T. Minh-ha, Sara Mills, and Ann McClintock.

²⁶ The terms 'epistemic violence' and 'epistemic violation' were introduced to postcolonial studies by Gayatri Spivak (Spivak 1988, 154-155; 171-172; Spivak 1990, 102, 126, 151).

3.1 Ethnocentrism and Literary Studies

Postcolonial literary studies started in the middle of the 1980s with the criticism of the universality of Western theories that were founded on Eurocentric and Western-centric views. Postcolonial theory has challenged in many forms the universalism that I call the *ethnocentric universalism* of literary studies. This has involved the demonstration of the ethnocentric²⁷ structures inscribed both in Western literature and in its study.²⁸ In the 1960s, Werner Friedrich, for example, sarcastically criticised the use of *world literature* due to its narrow geographical area: ‘Sometimes, in flippant moments, I think we should call our programs NATO Literatures – yet even that would be extravagant, for we do not usually deal with more than one fourth of the 15 NATO-Nations’ (Friedrich 1960, 14-15).

If we highlight Western national minority literatures and non-Western influences, the canonical conceptions of the literary movements and literary history will be perceived in a more international light. Edward Saïd (1993, 82) has claimed that ‘Without Empire, [- -] there is no European novel as we know it’. In the study *Culture and Imperialism* (1993), Saïd presents oppositional approaches to colonialism and imperialism, which he detects in both old and contemporary Western and non-Western writings. The birth of the novel, for example, looks different from postcolonial perspectives. In fact, it coincided with European colonialism and the construction of a universal European subject (e.g. Azim 1993, 7, 30).²⁹

In a postcolonial light, the aesthetic decolonisation and provincialisation of literary history has resulted in a reconsideration of literary forms and genres in the larger context of world literatures. How non-Western literary forms have influenced Western literature has been less examined. For example, Haris Trivedi (2013) argues that Western histories of the novel have neglected the novel’s non-Western roots, for example, in Bangladesh and Palestine. Walter Goebel and Saskia Schabio (2013, 3, 5) emphasise the precolonial history of narrative in the investigation of the emergence of literary forms. It could include, for example, *Sheherazade* or the autobiographies in China and Arabia that predate European autobiographies.³⁰

27 The sociologist William G. Sumner (1906, 13) defines the concept of *ethnocentrism* as the view in which one’s own group becomes the centre of everything, and all others are rated with reference to it. (See Hirvonen 2008, 35.)

28 Postcolonial theoreticians have emphasised that the dominant paradigms in literary theory such as New Criticism, Structuralism, Marxist literary theory, Post-Structuralism, Narratology, Feminism, and New Historicism have based their analysis on a limited Western canon (e.g. Gates 1992, 76; Saïd 1993, 54; Bassnett 1993, 4, 86).

29 According to Firdous Azim (1993, 7, 30), the novel is an imperial genre in its construction of the narrative voice. Thus the ‘supposed’ first novels, such as those by Daniel Defoe, should be read in a resisting way against this background.

30 Interestingly, the early Chinese novel was as an open form that consisted of historical writing, street talk, storytelling, poetry, dramatic songs, fantastic elements, and metafictional commentaries (Gu 2006, 313-314, 335).

On the other hand, Western culture has extended its influence from the beginning of colonialism and imperialism to all over the world. Literary works by the colonial powers were correspondingly exported to the colonies and highlighted as a universal model. This expansion has signified the *internationalisation* of Western literary concepts. Consequently, Western textual forms, thematic elements, genres, and stylistic techniques have become international because of the global spread of Western literature (Dharwadker 1998, 66). On the other hand, outside Western countries, Western forms have blended with non-Western and local forms.

Thus postcolonial studies has signified an expanded and renewed interest in world literatures and the re-estimation of national literatures. An important phase has been the critique of ethnocentrism in literary studies connected to national ideologies. Significantly, cultural texts may shape nationalistic politics and can be used by it. Literary studies have also been intertwined with nationalistic ideas of literature. This has resulted in the severing of European ethnic and national minorities and diasporic nationalities from European nationalistic literary histories. Hence, these ethnic minority literatures were often invisible or viewed as serving a lesser importance. This tendency has stretched from earlier to present-day literary studies.

Indeed, the Eurocentric premises of literary studies have been strongly criticised by postcolonial critics, who have demonstrated that the idea of world literature in them was hierarchically organised. Consequently, Western literature and a Eurocentric paradigm had become the non-disputable and implicit centre of comparative literature (e.g. Saïd 1993, 52; Rantonen 2002; Rantonen 2003b, 545-546). Gayatri Spivak (2003, 3, 6, 8, 12-13) highlights that the general model in comparative literature still today seems to be based on European literature. Therefore, she emphasises the importance of expanding its scope outside West and European cultures.

However, I consider it misleading to envisage postcolonial studies simply as a new and radical paradigm of literary studies based on the assumption that postcolonial studies has extended the scope of literary studies to a global level. In fact, the transnational practices by many comparatists can be incorporated into the legacy of postcolonial literary studies. For example, in the late nineteenth century, Hutcheon Macaulay Posnett derived cross-cultural examples from Hebrew, Arab, Indian, Japanese, and Chinese literatures. In a postcolonial vein, Posnett (1886, 6, 12, 42, 78, 439) stressed the diversity of non-Western forms that do not fit European literary standards. These statements can be regarded as anti-ethnocentric, anti-nationalistic, and postcolonial gestures.³¹

Nevertheless, later postcolonial studies has disparaged the history of the discipline, although some comparatists have frequently transgressed narrow nationalisms. It is equally true, however, that comparatists mainly concentrated on European and Western

31 In the early 1900s, Charles Mills Gayley delineated types of literature in Turkish, Afghan, Syrian, Armenian, Arabic, Persian, Indian, Chinese, Japanese, and Egyptian poetry and mentioned literatures by 'Lapps', Finns, and Scandinavians (see Melas 2007, 13, 15).

literature³² and often evaluated non-Western cultures as ‘underdeveloped countries’.³³ In this system, European majority literatures naturally presented the highest development of literature. In fact, since the 1990s, when postcolonial studies started to break ground and caused the ‘*de-Europeanisation*’³⁴ of comparative literature, the Western literary canon has not expanded much. Unfortunately, this can be seen in various literary institutions, in the marketing of books as well as in the academic institutions (e.g. Damrosch 2006, 44-50).³⁵

What is more, exclusion and the ‘severing out’ extends to postcolonial studies, which has had its own blind ethnocentric spots and internal exclusions. For example, Elleke Boehmer (2005, 233)³⁶ has claimed in her book *Colonial and Postcolonial Literature: Migrant Metaphors* (1995) that postcolonial studies has become biased because of the large publicity of those postcolonial scholars and writers who have migrated to Western metropolises. The result has been that the writers and scholars who live outside Western countries and whose writing represent more a national focus do not rank as highly in the West as their migrated fellows. Despite this, in her afterword in the second edition of *Colonial & Postcolonial Literature*, Boehmer made a turnaround. According to Boehmer (2005, 250-251, 256), the descendants of migrants, who represent post-migratory³⁷ and post-postcolonial approaches to the migrant condition, break the constraints of ethnicity and nationalism, and highlight forgotten cultural archives. Indeed, it is my perception that postcolonial scholars and writers who have moved to Western countries vigorously depict the histories and political issues of postcolonial countries.

On a global level, I find interesting Boehmer’s (2005, 251) notion that African writers have in the 2000s turned towards local audiences and narrative traditions, away from the implied European reader and Western models. These gestures disclose the significance of the postcolonial turn and resistance in literature worldwide, which has some implications also in Nordic literatures and Afro-European writing. In fact, Nordic countries and literature were for a long time invisible or marginal in the mainstream of postcolonial studies. Even today, the Nordic countries are seldom included in general postcolonial studies or European postcolonial studies.

32 For example, Ernst Robert Curtius, Karl Vossler, Erich Auerbach, and Leo Spitzer.

33 In his *Introduction to the Methods and Materials of Literary Criticism* (1899), Gayley wanted to track the evolutionary forms of literature that divided literatures into *developed* and *underdeveloped* literatures.

34 Term used by Hans Bertens (2008, 34).

35 An illustrative example is the Nobel Prize in literature. In fact, 109 out of 117 Nobel laureates in literature originate from Europe and North America, the newest laureates, the Polish Olga Tokarzuk (2018), Austrian Peter Handke (2019), and American Louise Glück (2020) included.

36 2nd edition of Boehmer’s study.

37 Caryl Phillips uses the term in *Higher Ground* (Faber, 1989).

3.2 Nordic Postcolonial Literary Studies

As this study focuses on Nordic literature, I will briefly contextualise here Nordic postcolonial studies since the late 1990s, when the discipline started to gain ground in Nordic studies. In order to understand multicultural Nordic societies, we must consider the history and consequences of colonialism in the Nordic region. For example, the study *Whiteness and Postcolonialism in the Nordic Region: Exceptionalism, Migrant Others and National Identities* (Loftsdóttir & Jensen 2012) criticises the notion of Nordic *exceptionalism*, which markets the idea that the Nordic states are more democratic, egalitarian, and progressive than the rest of the world. Yet, in this kind of lobbying for Nordic egalitarianism, Nordic colonialism and its consequences are forgotten. For example, in its history, Sweden was the leading nation of *scientific racism*, where the Swedes represented the purest and noblest of all white nations (Hübinette & Lundström 2014, 426-428).³⁸

The recent literary depictions of the lives and cultures of ethnic and national minorities in the Nordic countries include a sharp critique of marginalisation and racialisation. These rewritings of dominant representations of ethnic minorities and their histories challenge still existing internal colonialism in the Nordic countries.

Postcolonial analysis is highly relevant in the case of *indigenous literatures*, such as Inuit literature in Greenland and Sámi literature in Finland, Sweden, and Norway, as is stressed in *Article II*, 'Postcolonial and Ethnic Studies in the Context of Nordic Minority Literatures'. Sámi people and Inuits have for a long time resisted political and cultural domination and colonialism by the Nordic majorities. Inuit and Sámi art forms are less known by the Nordic majority cultures, and their literatures have undergone colonial pressure.

Furthermore, postcolonial approaches can be employed in other Nordic national minority literatures – such as Kven literature in Norway, the literature of the Faroe Islands in Denmark, Tornedalian literature in Sweden, and Romani literature in the Nordic countries – as we discuss in *Article II*. In fact, the cultural and political position of Meän language speakers in the Swedish parts of the Torne valley, Kvens in Norway, and Faroese in Denmark has been likened to internal colonialism. For example, the use of the Meän, Sámi, Kven, and Faroese languages was marginalised or even forbidden still in the 1950s in the Nordic countries (Gröndahl 2002b, 47; Gröndahl, Hellberg, & Ojanen 2002, 142; Jama 1995; Rantonen & Savolainen 2002, 88). Formerly all these national minority literatures used to be almost invisible or presented with simplifying ethnic stereotypes in the realm of Nordic literary studies.

In the Nordic context, striking examples of provincialising Europe and the employment of postcolonial studies in particular are studies on Sámi literature, which remained for a long time absent in Finnish, Swedish, and Norwegian literary studies and historiographies. Importantly, Vuokko Hirvonen's ground-breaking cartography of Sámi women writers

³⁸ In fact, Uppsala University had one of the largest research centres on racial purity. Swedish scientific racism led to the definition of inferior races that were studied, for example, using craniology and phrenology. It even led to the sterilisation of people representing 'inferior' races.

since the beginning of the 20th century was published in 1998 in two languages, in Sámi as *Sámeeatnama jienat. Sáplemaš nissona bálggis girječallin* and in Finnish as *Saamenmaan ääniä. Saamelaisen naisen tie kirjailijaksi*. In fact, Hirvonen's study is the first doctoral thesis written in Sámi and directed to a Sámi-speaking audience. The intentional choice of the language by the author is a form of postcolonial resistance strategy through which she can dismantle Western political hegemony as represented by the Lappological tradition practised by researchers who did not have Sámi descent (Hirvonen 2008, 44; Rantonen & Savolainen 2002, 82). In her analysis of Sámi women writers' generations, Hirvonen (2008, 22, 36-37) applied ethnic and postcolonial feminism.

Another seminal literary study is Veli-Pekka Lehtola's *Rajamaan identiteetti* (1997, [Frontier Identity]) which explores colonial encounters and cultural contacts in fiction depicting Lapland in the 1920s and 1930s both by the Sámi writers and Finnish settlers in the Sámi region. The postcolonial study sharply points out the significant liminal position of the Finnish and Sámi authors. Importantly, *Settler literature* constitutes a 'border culture', as settler writers frequently acted as intermediaries between the dominant Finnish and Sámi culture (Lehtola 1997, 26-27, 41-49; Rantonen & Savolainen 2002, 77-78).

As stated previously, in studies of Nordic indigenous literatures, postcolonial theory has been of utter importance. Sámi researchers have pointed out that Saïd's conceptualisation of Eurocentric *Orientalism* is reminiscent of the *Lappological* research tradition (Hirvonen 2008, 30-31; Lehtola 1997, 47-49). *Eskimology* was established at the same time, which exerted authority over Greenland's indigenous Inuit culture (e.g. Rantonen & Savolainen 2002, 75). As a research area, Lappology and Eskimology possessed an ethnocentric and racist gaze (Hirvonen 2008, 31, 35).³⁹

Moreover, postcolonial analysis can be adopted in the analysis of migration depicted in Nordic literatures. From the 1970s onwards, large numbers of refugees from Africa, Latin America, and Asia fled to the Nordic countries. The contribution of these migrants can now be detected in the growing amount of writers of immigrant descent in the Nordic countries. Many of them depict traces of colonialism and the postcolonial condition as well as racism in Europe. In this study, I pay special attention to the writers of African descent in Finland and Sweden as a literary community.

In the 2000s and 2010s, depictions of migration increased in all the Nordic literatures (Heith, Gröndahl, & Rantonen 2018, 20-23; Kongslien 2013). Moreover, postcolonial approaches have lately been appropriated in the analysis of post-Soviet literatures, such as the newly emerged Finnish-Russian literature in Finland (Sorvari 2018; Pucherova & Gafrik 2015).

Postcolonial literary studies of the Nordic countries have grown since the 2000s. The postcolonial turn is illustrated in the pioneering anthology *Litteraturens gränsland. Invandrar- och minoritetslitteratur i nordiskt perspektiv* (2002, Satu Gröndahl (ed.)). It

39 They were connected to social Darwinism, which was used against indigenous peoples, who could be depicted, for example, as ignorant children or even as a species of animal.

includes *Article II*, 'Postcolonial and Ethnic Studies in the Context of Nordic Minority Literatures', where postcolonial theory is applied comparatively in the wide Nordic literary terrains. The volume contains other overviews of such literatures as Kurdish, Persian, and Somali literature in Sweden, Kven literature, Tornedalian literature, Romani literature, Sámi literature, and Inuit literature. After the publication of the article, the exploration of Nordic ethnic minority literatures has increased. Recent studies of Sámi literature combine postcolonial approaches and indigenous research, such as Kaisa Ahvenjärvi's and Lill Tove Fredriksen's studies. Ahvenjärvi's dissertation *Päivitettyä perinnettä. Saamelaisen nykyrunouden saamelaiskuvastoja* (2017) explores the images and multiple forms of Sáminess in contemporary Sámi poetry. Lill Tove Fredriksen focuses on Jovvna-Ande Vest's novel trilogy in her dissertation '*...mun boadán sin maŋis ja joatkkán guhkkelebbui...': Birgengoansttat Jovvna-Ánde Vesta románatrilogiijas Árbbolaččat* (2015). Recent approaches to Sámi and Kven literature are also presented in the literary journal *Avain* 3/2015 (Viola Parente-Čapková and Kati Launis (eds.); Viinikka-Kallinen 2015). According to Kirsten Thisted (2016), Greenlandic literature from 2000 onwards is concerned with, amongst other things, language politics and national pride. Whereas Greenlandic authors have, in the past, written primarily for a Greenlandic audience, recent Greenlandic literature has become more internationally oriented.

Among others, many migrated languages, such as the Kurdish and Somali language used as a literary medium in the Nordic countries, can be analysed as *de-territorialised* (see Chapter 4.6.) languages with new forms. Many diasporic groups, such as the Somali and Kurdish communities in the Nordic countries, have formed a literary community that is helping to shape the oral tradition into a written form. For diasporic Somali writers, it is important that they can preserve the Somali oral poems and songs, and develop the orthography of the Somali language in exile (Tiilikainen, Axmed, & Lilius 2001, 12-13).

Nordic national minority literatures and migrated literatures include syncretic and hybrid features, although they consist of distinguished linguistic, regional, and cultural specificities. Furthermore, these literatures transgress the Nordic state borders, which can be conceived of as a form of transnational crossing. Sámi literature, for example, extends from Finland, Sweden, and Norway to Russia, Inuit Literature is published in Greenland and Canada, and the Meän language is written on both sides of the Finnish and Swedish state borders. Some diasporic groups such as the Somali and Iranian literary communities in the Nordic countries collaborate internationally across borders.

One of the first studies containing the general postcolonial approaches of Swedish literature is *Sverige och de Andra. Postkoloniala perspektiv* (2001, McEachrane & Faye (eds.)). It discusses the less handled topics of Sweden's involvement in colonialism as well as new forms of racism. For example, Finns, Greeks, and Muslims have been racialised in Sweden, although they are not directly referred to as 'races' (McEachrane & Faye 2001, 12). The volume also examines images of Africa in Swedish literature. *Kolonialismen jäljet. Keskustat, periferiat ja Suomi* (Kuortti, Lehtonen, & Löytty 2007) concentrates on traces

of colonialism as well as resistance to it in the various areas of Finnish culture, such as comics and transnational women's writing. Moreover, my overview 'Postkolonialismi suomalaisessa kirjallisuudessa' [Postcolonialism and Finnish literature] appropriates postcolonial approaches in the pedagogy of the Finnish literary field, such as postcolonial re-readings of Finnish classic literature and contemporary migration literature (Rantonen 2011).

Since the 2010s, postcolonial and multicultural issues have been explored more extensively in various volumes in the Nordic countries. For example, *Literature, Language, and Multiculturalism in Scandinavia and the Low Countries* (Behschnitt et al. 2013) outlines the development of multicultural, multilingual, and migration literature in Denmark, Sweden, Flanders, and the Netherlands, concentrating on comparing the specific language situations of these countries. Comparative aspects of Nordic literatures have been embraced in *Le roman migrant au Québec et en Scandinavie. The Migrant Novel in Quebec and Scandinavia* (2013, Lindberg (ed.)), which focuses on migrant encounters, cosmopolitanism, multilinguality, and postcolonial issues, and problematises from different angles the concept of the 'migrant novel'. It includes *Article III*, 'Cultural Hybridity and Humour in Jonas Hassen Khemiri's *Montecore*', examining the play between languages and the usage of irony about the immigrant condition. *Rethinking National Literatures and the Literary Canon in Scandinavia* (Lönngren et al. 2015) interrogates the boundaries of Nordic national literatures in the context of postcolonialism and queer studies. The volume mainly uses transnational studies as its theoretical starting point in its criticism of literary canons and methodological nationalism in Nordic literary studies. It also introduces the concept of *entangled literature* to enlarge the terms '(im)migrant literature' and 'transnational literature' (Pollari et al. 2015, 13-20).

Article II on postcolonial appropriations in Nordic literature envisions migration literature as a new research area in the Nordic context. Subsequently, my following research phase in the mid-2000s was to explore migration literature in Finland as a newly emerged field in Finnish literary studies. For example, Hanna-Leena Nissilä and I have written cartographies of contemporary *migration literature* in Finland (Rantonen 2005; Rantonen 2010; Nissilä & Rantonen 2013), where we argue that migration literature has made Finnish literature more transnational and international. The volume *Vähemmistöt ja monikulttuurisuus kirjallisuudessa* [Minorities and Multiculturalism in Literature] (2010, Rantonen (ed.)) contains chapters on Nordic minority and migrant literatures and their typical literary devices. In *Suomen nykykirjallisuus II* (2013, [Contemporary Finnish Literature]), we explored the depiction of migrants in Finnish mainstream literature (Rantonen & Nissilä 2013). Moreover, *Suomen nykykirjallisuus I & II* include discussions on migration and multiculturalism in detective novels, children's literature, and science fiction. Importantly, Nissilä's dissertation '*Sanassa maahanmuuttaja on vähän kitkerä jälkimaku*'. *Kirjallisen elämän yllirajaistuminen 2000-luvun alun Suomessa* (2016) applies theories of nationalism, transnationalism, and postcolonialism to Finnish migration

literature and focuses especially on the reception of literature by women writers with an immigrant background.

The recent volume *Migrants and Literature in Finland and Sweden* (2018, Gröndahl & Rantonen (eds.)), which includes *Article IV* on generic hybridisation in Jonas Hassen Khemiri's *Montecore*, investigates the ways in which migration and transnational connections have affected Finnish and Swedish literature. Furthermore, it presents comparative aspects on the reception of migration literature in both countries. The volume also explores the intersectional perspectives of identities including class, gender, ethnicity, 'race', and disability. Furthermore, the study applies *whiteness studies* (see Chapter 4.3.) to the Finnish and Swedish context, demonstrating how migration literature portrays everyday racism in Finnish and Swedish societies (e.g. Ahokas 2018; Heith 2018). Moreover, the study maps the generational shifts of Nordic minority literatures, but also indicates the difficulties of classifying minority literatures according to nationalities. For example, the category of 'Russian' is very complex, since writers who have migrated from Russia or the former Soviet Union represent different nationalities, ethnicities, and languages. Consequently, the constitution of the Finnish-Russian literary community is very heterogeneous, since many of the writers are not Russian by nationality, although they have been or are citizens of the former Soviet Union or Russia (Sorvari 2018, 59). *Article IV*, 'Writing Biography by E-mail: Postcolonial and Postmodern Rewriting of Biographical and Epistolary Modes in Jonas Khemiri's *Montecore*', is included in part three of 'Writing Migrant Identities', which analyses representational and self-representational practices in the presentations of Nordic ethnic minorities and migrant identities.

Anne Heith's book *Experienced geographies and alternative realities: Representing Sápmi and Meänmaa* (2020) is a large comparative study on Sámi literature and Tornedalian literature that examines literary representations of Sápmi and Tornedalian cultural regions from the perspective of geo-critical and eco-critical studies. The study also provides postcolonial approaches in its criticism of the homogenising nation-building conducted in the Nordic countries.

Moreover, in postcolonial studies, the role of language has been perceived to be an important field of study. *Article III*, 'Cultural Hybridity and Humour in Jonas Hassen Khemiri's *Montecore*', can be placed in the growing field of interest in multilingualism in Nordic literary studies. In the 2010s, studies of multilingualism in the Nordic region emerged. An influential study was Yasemin Yildiz's study *Beyond the Mother Tongue: The Postmonolingual Condition* (2012), which deals with the emergence of the *monolingual paradigm* in the 19th century and its continuing impact in the Nordic countries (see Heith, Gröndahl, & Rantonen 2018, 26; Grönstrand & Malmio 2011). It signified that authors were supposed to create a homogenous national literature in which multilinguality and minority languages were not accepted. This literary nation-building, connected to Nordic nationalisms, has affected many ethnic minority literatures that are still striving for a place in national literary histories and rights to promote their mother tongue as we describe in

our investigation of Nordic minority literatures in *Article II*. For example, it was not until 1999 that the Sweden-Finnish and Tornedalian Meän languages were officially defined as national minority languages in Sweden (Heith, Gröndahl, & Rantonen 2018, 21).⁴⁰ A recent study on multilingual aspects and linguistic border-crossings applied to Northern European literature is *The Aesthetics and Politics of Linguistic Borders: Multilingualism in Northern European Literature* (2019, Grönstrand, Huss, & Kauranen (eds.)), which examines shifting language borders in Nordic and Baltic literatures and other art forms, such as graphic novels, poetry, comics, hip-hop, and translations. It explores how linguistic orders and borders are intertwined with issues of national, cultural, societal, and political orders, literary institutions, and aesthetics. The significant role of translations in drawing linguistic borders and crossing them are also highlighted in the study.

In the analysis of postcolonial and multicultural Nordic societies, theories of multilingualism are fruitful. Due to multilingualism, multicultural writing has produced specific publishing strategies and been directed at diverse cultural readerships. An illustrative example is the diasporic Somali women's poem anthology *Sagaal Dayrood. Nio höstregn. Yhdeksän syysadetta* (2000, edited by Marja Tiilikainen, Amran Axmed, and Muddle Lilius) which was published in three languages, Somali, Finnish, and Swedish. Clearly, the triple-audience of the anthology (Somali, Finnish, and Swedish readers) illuminates multilingual publishing practices and culturally divided readerships (Rantonen 2009, 75). In *Article III*, 'Cultural Hybridity and Humour in Jonas Hassen Khemiri's *Montecore*', I investigate multilinguality in Jonas Hassen Khemiri's *Montecore*, which portrays migrant communities in Sweden. I examine how the novel presents the linguistic repertoire employed by the bilingual, trilingual, or multilingual speakers among Tunisian migrants in Sweden, who speak Arabic, French, English, and Swedish. Apart from a closer scrutiny of *Montecore*'s linguistic devices, in *Article II* 'Postcolonial and Ethnic Studies in the Context of Nordic Minority Literatures', and *Article V*, 'African Voices in Finland and Sweden', I refer to other examples of multilingual Nordic writing.

⁴⁰ Sweden ratified the European Charter for Regional or Minority languages and the Framework Convention for the Protection on National Minorities in 1999.

4 ON POSTCOLONIAL TERMINOLOGY AND THEORETICAL BRANCHES

Next, I chart the terminology used in my appropriations and readings. Firstly, in postcolonial theories the prefix ‘post’⁴¹ does not signify only ‘after colonialism’; it is employed to refer to the effects, traces, continuities, discontinuities, resistance to, and contestation of colonial practices, legacies of colonialism, imperial processes, and neo-colonialism down to the present day (Ashcroft, Griffiths, & Tiffin 1989, 2; Ashcroft, Griffiths, & Tiffin 1998, 187; Loomba 1998, 7-14). Although the term *postcolonial* has some shared features around the world, it cannot be uprooted and disengaged from specific locations and histories.

Postcolonial studies signifies a rethinking of how national and ethnic identities are represented and imagined. Nations are approached as texts and narratives that corroborate and re-invent themselves through acts of narration. Since fiction, such as novels, poems, and films, are parts of the cultural construction of the nation, its analysis is significant for the understanding of national and ethnic identities (Nyman 2000, 14). Indeed, postcolonial studies has pointed out the colonial and nationalistic ideologies inscribed in Western fiction. Nations are shaped by political ideologies as well as literary languages. When we study nations and ethnicities as narratives, we have to draw attention to their languages, performances, ideologies, and rhetoric, as Homi K. Bhabha (1990, 1-3) has emphasised. Later on, Bhabha (1994) developed further his concepts of *in-between spaces*, *hybridity*, and *ambivalence* in the analysis of nation and ethnicities as narration. According to Bhabha (1994, 36-37, 45, 55), the colonialiser/colonialised relationship produces in-between spaces where language and culture are elaborated as hybrid forms that convey an ambivalent structuring of the linguistic space and discursive practices.

41 The term ‘postcolonial’ is used in this study without a hyphen (‘post-colonial’). The term ‘post-colonial’ denotes to a particular historical period, whereas ‘postcolonial’ is used to refer to disparate forms of representations, discourses, reading practices, and values that range across both the past and present (McLeod 2000, 5).

Furthermore, constructions of ethnic literary borders and national literary canonisation processes can be investigated in the context of *methodological nationalism*,⁴² which has built and corroborated the homogenising nationalistic paradigm that can be recognised in ‘nation-blind’ and ethnocentric literary studies. Consequently, dominant nationalist forms of inclusion and exclusion have operated as invisible norms and internal colonialism, as in the case of Nordic literary studies, where national and ethnic minorities and indigenous literatures have been marginalised. In the Nordic literatures, the postcolonial matrix has been mostly hidden by hegemonic nation-building and monolinguality, as claimed in *Article II*, ‘Postcolonial and Ethnic Studies in the Context of Nordic Minority Literatures’ (Rantonen & Savolainen 2002, 91).

In the articles, I discuss and employ the concepts defined in this chapter. In fact, many of the introduced concepts are central in the general definitions of postcolonial literary theory.

4.1 Postcolonial, transnational, multicultural, and migration literature

The studied texts in my articles can be placed in such literary conceptualisations as *postcolonial literature*, *transnational literature*, *diasporic literature*, *migrant literature*, *migration literature*, and *multicultural literature*. It is noteworthy that these conceptualisations are constantly debated and reconsidered in literary theory. In fact, there exists a terminological oscillation connected to these frequently overlapping concepts. Furthermore, I argue that all these conceptualisations can be examined either under the umbrella term ‘postcolonialism’ or in relation to it. Nevertheless, these terms also point out disparaged, differentiated, and specified research areas. Although migration studies, for example, can be conceived of as a theoretical branch of its own, it is still closely interweaved with postcolonial studies, since migration is connected to global power structures, and it can be placed in the larger frame of the postcolonial age and colonial histories.

Hence, these concepts are constantly being redefined and are a site of disciplinary and interpretative contestation. For example, *critical multiculturalism* has criticised the hierarchical, political, and idealistic constructions of multiculturalism (McLaren 1994, 46-57; Rantonen & Savolainen 2010, 18-19, 31). It has been called a new form of marginalisation and racism, since the dominant groups construct hierarchies of acceptable and unacceptable cultural difference (e.g. Ponzanesi & Blaagaard 2012, 5). Although I’m aware of the above criticism, in the current study I will use ‘multiculturalism’ in its general sense to describe the blending and interaction of cultures. My idea of it is similar to Ella Shohat and Robert Stam’s term *polycentric multiculturalism*, which stresses linkages and relations, and globalises the former Western-centric definitions of multiculturalism. In

42 See Pollari et al. 2015, 5-8 and Nissilä 2016, 59. It signifies an implicit homogenous conception of nation, which is considered an unproblematic and natural social and political formation and defines the borders of the nation (Wimmer & Glick Schiller 2002, 301; Epple 2012).

polycentric multiculturalism, the world has many dynamic cultural locations (Shohat & Stam 1994, 48-49).

When we define Europe as a postcolonial space, we have to pay attention to diasporic identities and communities. Diaspora was initially defined as *dual territoriality*, which seeks to describe diasporic identities as the subjective split between hostland and homeland (Mishra 2006, 16). More lately, this dual territoriality has been replaced with ideas of multitopicality, multipolarity, and multiculturalism, since the histories and the present-day of ethnic and diasporic communities can be culturally very complex. People may indeed belong simultaneously to several homes, languages, regions, and homelands (Mishra 2006, 35). Furthermore, multicultural societies have produced *postnational*, *post-ethnic*, or *non-national* identities where national and ethnic identities have lost their importance. A conception of postnational covers hybridity and multi-locational attachments as postnational models of belonging (e.g. Bromley 2000, 9). However, attachment to citizenship and national identities are still considered important by many dominant and minority groups.

On the other hand, *postcolonial literature* and *diasporic literature* have been regarded as deficient terms when referring to multicultural and cross-cultural literary writing (Ashcroft, Griffiths, & Tiffin 2009, 214; Heith, Gröndahl, & Rantonen 2018, 17-18). Other terms are, for example, *new literatures in Europe* (e.g. Fraser 2000, 2), or in the Nordic context, for example, literature by new Finns or new Swedes. However, the attribute 'new' merely seems to describe the contemporary position of these literatures as newly discovered, even though many of them have long histories of their own. Indeed, many recently 'recognised' ethnic minority literatures in Europe have old historical legacies. For example, the history of Sámi writing can be traced back to the 1600s (Hirvonen 2008, 50; Dana 2003, 86).⁴³ However, it is true that quite recent literary communities have emerged in the Nordic countries, such as Arabic and African diasporic writing, due to recent migration from various parts of the Middle East and Africa.

Since the 1990s, the preferred terms in literary studies have been *diasporic literature*, *immigrant literature*, or *migrant literature* instead. However, all these circulating rivalling terms are contested at the moment. In the Nordic countries especially, the term 'immigrant literature' has been criticised and replaced by *transnational literature* (e.g. Löytty 2013; Nissilä 2018). Whereas some researchers want to abolish the terms *migrant literature* and *migration literature* altogether, I prefer, among others, the broadened usage of these terms, which stresses less the writers' ethnic descent, and instead concentrates on the thematic and stylistic features of the genre. Moreover, I also agree with Caren Kaplan (1996, 140), who has wondered whether the now much-used *diasporic literature* is just a synonym for *exile*

43 For example, Olaus Sirma's yoik poems were published in Johan Schefferus's *Lapponia* (1673). Johan G. Herder translated them into German. (See Anttonen 2019; Dana 2003, 86; Hirvonen 1994, 102.)

literature, which has described the mental, political, and social process of migration and writing literature in exile (Heith, Gröndahl, & Rantonen 2018, 16-17).⁴⁴

Furthermore, the definitions of diasporic and migrant communities come close to the conceptualising of *transnational* communities. Azade Seyhan (2001, 9) has asserted that such terms as exilic, ethnic, migrant, and diasporic cannot cover the subtleties of writing between histories, geographies, and cultural practices. Furthermore, Seyhan (2010, 14) has criticised studies of diasporic writing for being too confined to studies of resistance, nostalgia, and national origins. These approaches can even represent a disguised form of nationalism. Therefore, Seyhan (2010, 13) has stressed that transnational writing takes place both inside and outside the nation. It presents literature as a travelling phenomenon that changes the cultures it enters and is itself changed by them in return. According to Seyhan (2010, 11-15), transnational literature includes aesthetic experimentation and tackles social and political issues. Seyhan's (2019, 13) argument is that it may free literature from national ideologies.

Although Seyhan's definition of *transnational literature* skilfully describes various border-crossings of nation and ethnicity, I still regard it as an inadequate term to describe migration or migration literature as a phenomenon, because it concentrates on the deconstruction of 'nation' in literary studies. In fact, many writers of diasporic literatures, such as Kurdish literature or Somali literature in the Nordic countries, do not denounce or transgress the concepts of specific cultures, nations, or nationalities, or make them relative. Instead, diasporic communities are often developing their literature in a specific ethnic or national frame. This is related to the fact that ethnic minority literatures often have the function of literary nation-building. Therefore, I want to emphasise that transnational literature and/or migration literature are not usually free of national concerns, but they handle, problematise, and sometimes even emphasise nation, ethnicity, and nationality. As a term, transnational literature, although criticising nationalism, carries the emphasis of the national category in its conceptualisation (e.g. Pollari et al. 2015, 24). Due to this bias, I believe that migration literature can operate as a broader category in the context of migrated and diasporic groups. Many diasporic literary communities cannot be perceived only as transnational enterprises. Instead, *diasporic writing* may be reminiscent of *long-distance nationalism*, which connects people in various geographic locations. It may bind immigrants and their descendants to their former home countries (Wimmer & Glick Schiller 2002, 324).

Therefore, I argue that the broad definition of *migration literature* or *multicultural literature* can, at the moment, cover and unify more flexibly the study of transcultural, transnational, and translingual aspects than the term 'transnational literature' (see Kongslien 2013, 126-127). Besides, the concepts of 'migrant literature' and the later term

44 Moreover, the term *postexilic writing*, which describes what has happened after migration (e.g. Lindberg 2013, 16), is reminiscent of the definitions of diasporic literatures.

'migration literature' have been presented for a long time in literature as a travelling phenomenon, which Seyhan considers only typical of transnational literature.

The abundance of terminological newcomers demonstrates how the concepts connected especially with (im)migration are socially and politically charged in literary studies (Heith, Gröndahl, & Rantonen 2018, 16). Nevertheless, I find it paradoxical that social and literary theories constantly invent brand new concepts that attempt to describe migration as a phenomenon but still want to avoid the concepts of *immigrant*, *migrant*, or *migration*. For example, I consider that it was not necessary to substitute *migrant literature* with the concept *migration literature*, which is only slightly different. Instead, migrant literature could have covered the research area if it was used as broadly as *migration literature* when defined by Søren Frank. In this summary, I mostly use the recent term *migration literature*, which has been employed in literary studies of the 2010s and seems to be gradually replacing the term *migrant literature*. Thus, I follow the recent definition of this generic term, which wants to define the area by *textual*, *thematic*, *linguistic*, and *stylistic* criteria (Gebauer & Schwartz Lausten 2010, 4; Frank 2010, 52). For example, on the level of style, migration literature can include a variety of perspectives, discourses, and language elements (e.g. Kongslien 2013, 129). Nonetheless, I also perceive that the earlier definitions of migrant literature and transnational writing can in many cases be useful in contemporary literary studies on migration.

In his article 'Four Theses on Migration and Literature' (2010, 39), Søren Frank emphasises that *migration literature* is written by migrants as well as non-migrants. Non-migrant authors create migration literature because they write in an age of migration and because they are influenced thematically and formally by authors who have a migrant background (Frank 2010, 41, 52). The engagement with migratory issues increased in Finland at the beginning of the 2010s, for example, when the mainstream Finnish writers started to publish novels that dealt with young Muslim women who have encountered violence both in their communities as well as in the majority culture (Rantonen & Nissilä 2013, 80-83).

Traditionally, literary historiography and canonisation has been organised in accordance with homogeneous national ideas of authorial belonging. On the contrary, migration literature means a rupture of this kind of classification of the literary field, since contemporary writers can have no belonging, a double belonging, or even multiple belongings (Frank 2010, 43-44). Subsequently, I find it important that the broad concept of *migration literature* avoids the overemphasis of the writer's ethnic and national descent, which the earlier terms *immigrant literature* and *migrant literature* stressed. Therefore, many so-called *second generation* immigrants have wanted to denounce the concept of 'immigrant author' as a form of marginalisation that immigrants have experienced in society in general.

For the same reason, Magnus Nilsson (2010) has wanted to abolish entirely the concept of *immigrant literature* (*invandrarlitteratur*),⁴⁵ because it has signified ghettoisation in particular in the Swedish literary field, where immigrant writers have been associated with the general lower status of immigrants in Swedish society. Presently, the concept ‘immigrant literature’ – especially in the Swedish context – seems to be a problematic concept in scholarly use because it may racialise writers of migrant descent (Nilsson 2010, 1; Löytty 2015, 71-73). Indeed, the signs of marginalisation and the narrow confines of the term can be detected especially in the earlier definitions of Swedish ‘immigrant literature,’ as Nilsson demonstrates. However, the internationally used English term, *migrant literature* – which replaced the term ‘immigrant literature’ in the 1990s and 2000s – connotes a more flexible conceptualisation of migrant identities than ‘immigrant literature’ in the Swedish context. Similarly, Ingeborg Kongslie (2013, 130) believes it more appropriate to discuss Nordic migration literature in the international context, which transgresses the narrow Swedish uses of the concept of immigrant literature (‘*invandrarlitteratur*’). Nevertheless, many authors still identify with migrant writing and migration literature. Furthermore, in such European countries as Britain, many writers with a migrant background have been celebrated in criticism and have gained a positive status and branding in book marketing.

Importantly, Frank’s concept of migration literature links aesthetics and sociology. Frank (2010, 45) claims that migration literature functions as a mimesis of the contemporary world (the sociological dimension) and as a formal feature (the aesthetic dimension). The sociological dimension takes into consideration the reception, such as global readers and book markets of migration literature, whereas the aesthetic dimension of migration literature indicates that it may contain specific stylistic and generic features. In this, Frank’s definition resembles the definitions of postcolonial literature with its own kind of poetics, politics, and uses of language. In fact, in many cases, *migration literature* and *postcolonial literature* operate as overlapping terms. Many of the chosen examples in this study represent the conceptualisations of both postcolonial literature and migration literature.

In problematising nation-building and diasporic writing, the concept of *entangled literature* has also been proposed to substitute and enlarge the terms ‘(im)migrant literature’ and ‘transnational literature’. It studies the entanglement between literature and globalisation, for example, by scrutinising how globalised markets are intertwined with literary markets. As a concept, it is suggested to transgress the binaries of nationalism and transnationalism. I consider it useful when exploring the circulation and networks of texts, translations, and reception; the plurality of audiences and book markets; and their entanglements with global markets (e.g. Pollari et al. 2015, 20-24). However, the concept of *entanglement* seems quite a vague concept to cover large areas of cultural analysis unless formulated more concretely. Besides, Frank’s concept of migration literature already encompasses the issues of reception and the entanglements with global book markets.

45 Olli Löytty (2015, 69-73) has also demonstrated the weaknesses of the term ‘immigrant literature’ in the case of Nordic literature.

Moreover, there have been discerned in postcolonial theories *transcultural narratives*, where the idea of the nation as the only reference point for writing dissolves and is replaced by more fluid and border-crossing ideas of ethnicity and nationality. Such narratives are often addressed to a larger readership than to a local audience (Fraser 2000, 9; see also Schülze-Engler 2009, 93).

Furthermore, Johanna Domokos (2018, 104-107) suggests a specific *écriture multiculturelle*⁴⁶ in the scrutinising of cultural interferences and cultural differences in language and literary texts. She argues that we can speak of multicultural literature only when the culturally specific features signify a relevant issue for the author or reader, although all literature includes multicultural aspects. Domokos's broad definition can be applied to texts that handle multicultural encounters in various levels of writing and reception (text, language, themes, audiences, and writers). When elaborated more carefully, *écriture multiculturelle*, 'multicultural writing', can be useful in the conceptualisations of postcolonial literature, transnational literature, and migration literature. It can be employed in textual analysis in order to locate culturally specified expressions, articulations of resistance, hybridity, and the examination of disparate audiences.

As discussed above, the multiple terms describing migration and diasporic identities as a phenomenon in literature are conceptually intertwined and constantly re-defined. The difficulty of defining the terminology, such as the term 'migration literature', may hence mirror the fact that these concepts are still disruptive intruders in the literary classification system and institutions that are traditionally based on national literatures (Löytty 2015, 53).

As a term, *postcolonial literature* covers a wide scope of definitions. This term is preferred in this study because it is not restricted to a certain region or language.⁴⁷ In postcolonial theories, for example, there have been discerned different models and types of development in postcolonial literatures. These shifts or phases may reflect postcolonial nationalism as a reaction to former colonial regimes. Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin (1989, 15) have distinguished four different types of postcolonial literary models: 1) *national or regional* models, which stress the specific traits of the particular national or regional culture; 2) *race-based* models, which identify certain shared characteristics across various national literatures, such as the 'racial' inheritance addressed by the *Black writing* model, which brings together writers in the African diaspora in various continents. Black writers explore, for example, their common African roots, contemporary black communities in various countries, as well as the consequences of racism (Ashcroft, Griffiths, & Tiffin 1989, 20-22).

46 The term is inspired by French theoretical works on *écriture féminine*, feminine writing.

47 Postcolonial literature has sometimes been characterised by the terms *new literatures written in English* or *Third-World literature*. Noticeably, both of these definitions seem to contain cultural generalisations. Moreover, the first privileges a dominant European language. Furthermore, the early concept *post-European literature* deriving from the early 1980s describes the position of literatures in the postcolonial age. It is used in Max Dorsinville's study *Les Payes Natal: Essais sur les littératures du Tiersmonde et du Québec* (1983). (Ashcroft, Griffiths, & Tiffin 1989, 23-24.)

Likewise, the previously introduced concept 'Black Atlantic' can be included in this model; 3) *comparative* models cover specific linguistic, historical, and cultural features across two or more postcolonial literatures; and 4) *more comprehensive comparative* models, which explore features, such as *hybridity* and *synchreticity* as significant elements of postcolonial literatures. Although the seminal study *The Empire Writes Back* by Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin has been criticised because of its Anglo-centric bias (Frank 2016, 682), it still today gives guidelines for analysing various levels of postcolonial texts, larger literary models, and stylistic innovations and cultural specificities, which are interlinked with postcolonial poetics.

Another example is Robert Fraser's study *Lifting the Sentence: A Poetics of Postcolonial Fiction*, which distinguishes six stages in the evolution of local literatures: 1) *precolonial narratives* that penetrate later stages, whether oral or written; 2) *colonial* or *imperial narratives* written under conditions of political subjugation and in complicity with them; 3) *narratives of resistance* to liberate the native culture from colonial or imperial restraint; 4) *nation-building narratives*, prominent especially in the immediate post-independence period; 5) *narratives of internal dissent* especially after independence; and 6) *transcultural narratives*, in which the idea of the nation dissolves, and which is addressed to a larger than local audience (Fraser 2000, 8-9).

These kinds of transitions, changes, and models can be discerned when studying generational shifts and the building of postcolonial national literatures, ethnic minority literatures, and indigenous literatures. Some corresponding shifts related to the above-mentioned literary nation-building are mirrored in Inuit, Sámi, Faroese, Kven, and Tornedalians literatures, which are discussed in *Article II*, 'Postcolonial and Ethnic Studies in the Context of Nordic Minority Literatures'. Although this study does not concentrate on larger postcolonial literary models or generational shifts, I refer to such conceptualisations and models as Black Atlantic (Gilroy 1993) and Black writing (e.g. Ashcroft, Griffiths, & Tiffin 1989, 20-22) in the case of Caryl Phillips's *The European Tribe* (*Article I*) and Nordic-African writing in Finland and Sweden (*Article V*).

Although I use the term *African diasporic literature*, it can be viewed in some cases as a generalisation. Indeed, it is problematic if Caribbean Black literature, African-American literature, African diasporic literature, and Black British literature are merely generalised as the literatures of the *black aesthetic diaspora*. I find it problematic to bunch together the literatures of whole continents on the grounds that the authors have a similar skin colour or common cultural identities hundreds of years back. However, in studies of cross-cultural influences and networks, this term is still relevant and fruitful, since cultural influences have travelled across oceans and have overlapping historical roots and routes.

4.2 'Race' and Whiteness Studies

In the current study, I explore racism in the analyses of *The European Tribe*, *Montecore*, and Nordic-African writing (*Articles I, III, IV, and V*). All these texts deal with Black Europe and Afro-Europe. Postcolonial writers often tackle issues of racism and white supremacy based on colonialist ideology. *The European Tribe* especially criticises the image and idea of 'white Europe' by demonstrating the legacy of colonialism and racist practices in various European countries.

The deconstruction of the concept of *race* has been significant in postcolonial studies. In fact, in colonial relationships the most common sign or marker of difference has been 'race'. Formerly in Western discourses, 'race' was considered an objective term of classification (e.g. Rantonen 1999a). However, due to its history and practices, 'race' has been regarded as a *dangerous trope*, as Henry Louis Gates (1986, 5) put it. It has described differences of language, belief systems, arts, as well as supposedly natural attributes. Thus, it has become a trope of ultimate difference between cultures, nationalities, and ethnic groups, which is often intertwined with economic interests (Gates 1986, 5). The concept of 'race' has usually been aimed at non-white people, whereas 'white' has represented 'non-race' and the unmarked hegemonic position and invisible centre (e.g. Hübinette & Lundström 2014, 426; Dyer 1988, 44-45).

Racial categories are constructs that can be analysed as relative, situational, historical, and narrative categories (Shohat & Stam 1994, 19). In literary studies, the investigation of ethnicity and 'race' has been linked especially since the 1990s with the rapidly growing postcolonial studies, Black studies, and critical whiteness studies, which all analyse racialising rhetoric in fiction. Moreover, postcolonial and intersectional feminism have focused on the gendered forms of racism.

However, I want to point out that basically 'race' is a racist concept that should be avoided because its definitions have been based on racist thinking. Therefore, it can be put in quotation marks. For example, in the cultural and aesthetic theories of the 19th century, European philosophers used the term 'race' to signify ethnocentric cultural hierarchies, where white Europeans were described as the superior race, while Asians and Black Africans presented inferior races. Later on, the differences between the races were legitimated pseudo-scientifically, which has been called *scientific racism* (Rantonen 1999a). However, 'black' and 'race' are strategically used by many African-Americans, Black British, and diasporic African communities to signify collective resistance to negative representations of black people. Therefore, these terms are still employed in Black studies and Whiteness studies (especially in the North-American and British context) in the analysis of the different practices of racism and anti-racism or black identities and communities.

Contemporary *critical whiteness and race studies* highlight the constructions of white supremacy and racism at various levels of society and culture. For example, forms of hegemonic whiteness have recently been investigated in the Nordic context. Noticeably,

Sweden was for a long time the leading international centre for scientific racism,⁴⁸ where Swedes were even perceived as the whitest of all white nations. On the other hand, Sweden paradoxically became a global pioneer of antiracist and anticolonial politics in the 1960s (Hübinette & Lundström 2014, 425-428). From then on, Sweden was constructed as a colour-blind country, where racism was not perceived as a Swedish issue. Thus in political and public discourses, Sweden was created as a kind of a non-racist utopia (Hübinette & Lundström 2014, 431). Consequently, this avoidance of the problems of racism, where Swedishness is associated with whiteness, does not allow non-whites to be Swedish. This issue has been tackled in contemporary Swedish literature and particularly in migration literature. The Nordic examples of this study derive from Jonas Hassen Khemiri's depictions of racism and white supremacy in the Swedish setting (*Articles III, IV*), and descriptions of racism and the effects of colonialism by such writers of African descent in Finland and Sweden as Johannes Anyuru, Wilson Kirwa, and Joseph Owindi (*Article V*).

4.3 Resistance and Hybridity

Resistance and hybridity are central concepts that are approached from different angles in all of the articles. They also compose key concepts in postcolonial theory and the practices of postcolonial readings. One important aspect in postcolonial writing is the choice of the language as a statement of cultural resistance. In a postcolonial vein, many writers have chosen to write in their mother tongue and native languages instead of officially used languages by former colonisers.⁴⁹ In fiction dominant nationalistic images have been questioned and resisted, and alternatives have been presented. This has produced exploration of the oppositional strategies employed by postcolonial writers. Postcolonial literature has been, for example, connected to the '*art of talking back*'⁵⁰ to the host culture (e.g. Gebauer & Schwartz Lausten 2010, 6), which represents a form of *resistant writing*.

As a genre, *resistance literature* has been presented, for example, by Barbara Harlow in her book *Resistance Literature* (1987) before closer conceptualisations of resistance in postcolonial theories. In her study, she investigates literature as an important part of national liberation struggles and resistance movements in Africa, Latin America, and the Middle East.⁵¹

48 The central representatives of scientific racism were Anders Retzius (1796-1860) and Gustaf Retzius (1842-1919). Gustaf Retzius considered the Nordic race as mankind's highest.

49 A well-known example is the Kenyan Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, who started to write in his native language, Gikuyu, instead of English. See Thiong'o's book *Decolonising the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature* (1986).

50 The African-American bell hooks uses the concept of 'talking back' in the context of racism and anti-racism in her book *Talking Back: Thinking Feminist, Thinking Black* (Boston MA: South End Press, 1989).

51 Furthermore, Fredric Jameson (1986) has raised the issue of resistance by stating that all Third-World literature can be interpreted in terms of national allegories. This was later rightly criticised as a reductive model. Aijaz Ahmad (2000, 96-98, 104-112) in particular has blamed Jameson's simplified idea of all Third-

Significantly, *resistance* in later postcolonial theories is not necessarily understood only as an oppositional act, but an effect of the ambivalence produced within dominating discourses. Homi K. Bhabha (1994, 70, 81-82) in particular has emphasised the hybrid, ambivalent, and negotiating elements in cultural and colonial encounters and resistance. Bhabha's ideas of colonial mimicry can be applied to the analysis of the resistance of cultural minorities to the dominant culture. Mimicry creates a tension between sameness and difference that Bhabha calls an 'ironic compromise': the mimicking appears to the colonialist as 'almost the same, but not quite,' and therefore it turns out at the same time to be both a resemblance and a menace. Thus it functions as a mode of appropriation and of resistance, 'a form of camouflage' that subverts colonialist authority (Bhabha 1994, 85-92, 126-127, 181). Moreover, Jopi Nyman and John A. Stotesbury (1999, 1) emphasise in the volume *Postcolonialism and Cultural Resistance* (1999) that resistance should not be analysed solely in the context of nationhood, because resistance is solved differently in different spaces.

Furthermore, Wendy Laura Belcher argues that in postcolonial studies, Europe's reconstitution of other places and peoples' resistance to that reconstitution has been stressed. However, there has not been a similar focus on the impact of those 'other' peoples in the formation of Europe. Belcher suggests that European texts can be perceived as experiencing *discursive possession* by 'the other', such as migrants and ethnic minorities. This model helps us to see, for instance, how African discourse animates British texts (Belcher 2014-2015). In fact, Belcher's idea is based on the idea of recognising the kind of non-intentional cultural hybridity used by European writers who have been influenced by a variety of cultural discourses. This idea of discursive possession seems to be a further development of Bhabha's ideas of hybridity, and it can be related to multicultural literature and transcultural writing.

Indeed, hybridity has affected linguistic structures and cultural practices remarkably. Literature written on different sides of the cultural divide often absorbs and appropriates aspects of the 'other' culture, creating new hybrid modes of writing and identities. For example, in Lapland a peculiar Sámi-Finnish hybrid literature emerged, which differed from both the dominant Finnish culture and Sámi culture (Lehtola 1997, 26-27, 41-49). Nevertheless, hybridity has been employed as a concept describing mixing in language and culture and cultural interaction.

Significantly, in literary texts, hybridity can be used as an artistic device. In their blending of languages, postcolonial texts can be compared to Mikhail Bakhtin's idea of *hybridity*. In *Article III*, 'Cultural Hybridity and Humour in Jonas Hassen Khemiri's *Montecore*', I adapt Bakhtin's notions of hybridity in the analysis of the migrant community in Sweden. Importantly, Bakhtin discerns *two* types of hybridity: unconscious 'organic hybridity' and

World writing solely representing resistance literature and national allegories. Instead, Ahmad prefers (2000, 95-100) the term *local* literatures. On the other hand, I consider his suggestion too inflationary, since every literature can be viewed from a local perspective, although the emphasis on 'locality' helps in focusing on the cultural specificities.

conscious ‘intentional hybridity’, which both can be applied to literary analysis. Firstly, *unintentional hybridity* signifies unreflective borrowings and the usual blending of various ‘languages’ that co-exist within the boundaries of a single dialect, a single national language, or a single group (Bakhtin 1981, 358; Rantonen 2013, 148). Belcher’s previously mentioned idea of *discursive possession* is reminiscent of unintentional hybridity, which can be detected in literature by dominant cultures.

Secondly, Bakhtin distinguishes *intentional* hybridisation, which describes the writer’s intentional unmasking of another’s speech through a language that is ‘double-accented’ and ‘double-styled’ (Bakhtin 1981, 20). The writer can dialogise hybridity by setting two points of view against each other in an oppositional structure (Bakhtin 1981, 360-361; Young 1995, 21-22; Rantonen 2013, 148). This signifies the undoing of authority in language through hybridisation, which I analyse especially in *Article III* on *Montecore* as a form of postcolonial resistance.

Homi. K. Bhabha (1994, 85-92) has applied the Bakhtinian subversion of authority through hybridisation to the dialogical situation of colonialism. As a process, hybridity deconstructs and mixes the cultural dichotomies of insider/outsider. Therefore, it has been described as the *third element* produced by the interaction of cultures, communities, or individuals. Bhabha’s notion of a *Third Space* signifies a transformation of national or ethnic cultures into a compounded mode which can subvert cultural and linguistic domination (Bhabha 1994, 36-39; 85-92; Rantonen 2013, 148-149). Thus, *the third space* or *in-between* spaces and zones dismantle and transgress colonial/postcolonial hierarchies and relations. Interestingly, new hybrid forms are created in the in-between spaces, expressions, and languages that require a specific reading concentrating on cultural interactions and appropriations.

Differently oriented accents with hybrid elements can be detected, for example, in the Nordic languages that have inter-mixed and migrated to neighbouring countries, as demonstrated in *Article II*, ‘Postcolonial and Ethnic Studies in the Context of Nordic Minority Literatures’. For instance, Finland Swedish contains elements of Swedish and Finnish. In an analogous way, the Tornedalian Meän language has been described both as a mixture of old Finnish and new Swedish and as a language of its own (Jama 1995; Gröndahl, Hellberg, & Ojanen 2002). Moreover, the Faroese language was used for a long time only in spoken forms or in songs, whereas Danish was the official language on the Faroe Islands until 1948 (Rantonen & Savolainen 2002, 88; Hylin 1985, 12-13). Regional and local literatures may therefore produce distinctive and oppositional forms of expression or even languages that have to be situated in cultural contexts.

Contemporary postcolonial studies has focused on culturally in-between areas, ambivalence, and hybridity. An important concept is the *contact zone*, which was originally developed by Mary Louise Pratt (1992, 4) in order to describe social and cultural spaces where ‘disparate cultures meet, clash and grapple with each other’. The concepts of the *contact zone* and *transculturata* describe how marginalised groups select and appropriate

the materials of a dominant culture (Pratt 1992, 4; Loomba 1998, 70-71). Moreover, the contact zone is reminiscent of Bhabha's discussions of in-between-spaces. Accordingly, it signifies the interaction, borrowings, and appropriations in both directions that transcend binary oppositions between the dominant and marginalised cultures. In addition to the linguistic hybridity depicted in *Article III on Montecore*, I engage with generic hybridity as a specific feature of postcolonial writing, especially in *Articles I and IV on The European Tribe and Montecore*, since generic blending is a less traced area in postcolonial literary theory.

4.4 Postcolonial Perspectives on Language and Minority Discourse

Postcolonial theory has stressed the importance of various speech communities and regarded the oral quality of the written text as a significant area of investigation. The investigation of hierarchies related to language is essential in exploring postcolonial literatures, since postcolonial writers have modified in manifold ways the language of dominant cultures.⁵² Subsequently, many postcolonial and ethnic minority writers problematise their painful relationship with the dominant language and their marginalised mother tongue. Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's concept of *minor literature* has influenced the theories of multicultural and postcolonial literature in particular. *Minor literature* is based on Franz Kafka's innovative use of the migrated German language in the Czech region with its local linguistic features. Moreover, the *detrterritorialised* Prague German⁵³ that Jews like Kafka used is intermixed with Czech and Yiddish. Thus Kafka's language is dislocated and detrterritorialised to several degrees (Deleuze & Guattari 1986, 17; JanMohamed & Lloyd 1990, 3-4, 9; Rantonen & Savolainen 2002, 83).⁵⁴ These kinds of detrterritorialised positions can be detected in multilingual and multicultural communities and various ethnic minority literatures.

Distinctive uses of linguistic elements can be detected on various levels of language and narrative strategies. Postcolonial writers may seize and remould in manifold ways the dominant language for their artistic use. For example, they may insert in the text linguistic forms deriving from their marginalised mother tongue (Ashcroft 2001, 76; Ashcroft, Griffiths, & Tiffin 1989, 42-44, 61-77; Zabus 1998, 30-38).

Importantly, postcolonial texts have developed specific means of both creating cultural distance and at the same time bridging it (e.g. Boehmer 2018, 177-187). Bill Ashcroft (2001,

52 See, for example, Zabus 1998, 29, 34-37. For instance, Nigerian Ogoni writer Ken Saro-Wiwa has blended his mother tongue, Kana, standard Nigerian English, and a local English dialect in his novel *Sozaboy: A Novel in Rotten English* (1985) (Zabus 1998, 41).

53 This *detrterritorialised* German language has been described even as a 'language in its poverty', which utilises, e.g. incorrect syntax and prepositions (Deleuze & Guattari 1986, 23).

54 Deleuze and Guattari's conception of *minor literature* has been criticised for its overemphasis on the political and collective aspects of minor literatures (e.g. Harrison 2003, 102-103).

75) talks about the *metonymic cultural gap*, a sense of distance produced by certain linguistic strategies. The text resists interpretation by constructing a ‘gap’ between the writer’s culture and the dominant culture. It is formed when the writer inserts words, phrases, passages, concepts, or allusions from the writer’s first language and local culture into the text that the reader may not recognise. Therefore, the technique of leaving untranslated words can be a political act and a sign of postcolonial resistance (Ashcroft, Griffiths, & Tiffin 1989, 64-66). The writer can then employ the dominant language and at the same time emphasise a distance from it. Hence, language variance operates as a metonymic of cultural difference. The installation of cultural difference in postcolonial texts occurs strategically in the use of *code-switching* between two or more codes of language (Ashcroft, Griffiths, & Tiffin 1989, 72, 75-76; Rantonen 2013, 150). Hybridity transgresses languages forced into mutual contact. As a creative medium, it refers to the constantly changing context of oral communication in which interlocutors influence each other (Lionnet 1989, 2-3).

As a challenging area of postcolonial inquiry, I consider the analysis of the *ethnography of speaking*, which pays attention to culturally divergent speech communities (Ashcroft 1989, 59; Zabus 1998, 31; Ashcroft, Griffiths, & Tiffin 1989, 46). Postcolonial linguistics has also highlighted the role of speech (*parole*) (Ashcroft 1989, 58-73; Adam 1991, 88).⁵⁵ Consequently, postcolonial writers can occupy the discursive space either with a language system (e.g. the dominant language) or through ‘parole’ (the local language or the local version of the dominant language). A case in point is Tornedalian literature in Sweden, which we discuss in *Article II*. When writer Mikael Niemi inserts words and phrases of Tornedalian Meän language and Finnish into his novels written in Swedish, his literary language represents a parole of the Swedish language. However, those Tornedalian writers who solely write in the Meän language regard it as a language of its own, a *langue*, not a parole or dialect of Finnish or Swedish (see Rantonen & Savolainen 2002, 83).

In postcolonial countries as well as in diasporic and migrant communities, different linguistic registers may struggle for space. Multicultural regions produce discrete dialect forms and overlapping ways of speaking. Thus writers may employ various strategies of code-switching and vernacular transcription that depict the performance of the speakers (Ashcroft, Griffiths, & Tiffin 1989, 45, 47; Rantonen 2013, 150). I demonstrate this kind of innovative use of a hybridised minority language and subversion of the dominant uses of language particularly in *Article III*, ‘Cultural Hybridity and Humour in Jonas Hassen Khemiri’s *Montecore*’, which deals with the colloquial language used in Swedish migrant communities. Moreover, *Article II*, ‘Postcolonial and Ethnic Studies in the Context of Nordic minority Literature’, explores the resistant strategies and specificities of ethnic minority languages in the Nordic countries.

55 When identifying resistance in language, *postcolonial linguistics* has employed Althusserian and Foucaultian views of counter-discourses. C.S. Peirce’s view of *thirdness* has been discussed in relation to Bhabha’s (1994, 36-37) concept of the *third space* (see Adam 1991, 80, 87).

4.5 Postcolonial Poetics and Narratology

In the evolution of postcolonial theory, I consider the sharper development of poetics and aesthetics and the identification of how postcolonial writing is related to alternative forms of writings to be important. In fact, poetics was almost avoided in earlier postcolonial studies. A recent study in this field is Elleke Boehmer's *Postcolonial Poetics* (2018, 4), where she encourages a closer turn to poetic issues in postcolonial studies because a literary text's political visions and values are entangled within its figures and structures. Therefore, she strives to bridge poetics and political visions in postcolonial reading and reception. Boehmer (2018, 11, 24, 28) raises an important question of how a text could be deductively identified as postcolonial according to its structural, generic, or metaphoric features. Although she sharply points out important gaps in postcolonial theory, her definitions remain rather suggestive. However, Boehmer (2018, 43, 53, 64, 177-178) notes such postcolonial literary devices such as juxtaposition, repetition, intertextuality, cross-cutting, and the distancing effects.

A stimulating early discussion on poetics is Robert Fraser's study *Lifting the Sentence: A Poetics of Postcolonial Fiction* (2000), where he analyses different aspects of style and narration, such as the uses of person, tense, voice, tone, and mood in postcolonial fiction. Moreover, Mieke Bal's (2007, 23) openly defined concept *migration aesthetics* can combine the aesthetic, social, and political dimensions of art and literature. It describes the interrelations between art and migration and various transcultural and cross-cultural artistic forms regardless of the artist's cultural background (Moslund, Petersen, & Shramm 2015, 11-12).

In the analysis of postcolonial poetics, we can examine different kinds of narrative modes and perspectival techniques,⁵⁶ which I demonstrate in *Articles III* and *IV* in relation to voicing strategies in the case of Khemiri's *Montecore*. These aspects have also been emphasised in *postcolonial narratology*. In this field, Gerald Prince's suggestions in particular have been useful in my applications of postcolonial poetics. Prince (2005, 377) has proposed that postcolonial narratology might focus on *immediate discourses*, where characters' utterances and thoughts are free of any narratorial intervention. Moreover, Monika Fludernik (1996, 336) mentions the use of unconventional narrative techniques as a fertile research area in postcolonial narratology. It could investigate, for example, the use of such 'odd' pronouns in 'you' or 'we' narratives. A narratorial 'we' might represent a homogeneous or a heterogeneous group or include only certain communities (also Prince 2005, 374).

Another important research area of postcolonial poetics and narratology is the analysis of narrative voice. Voicing strategies can be connected to the dialogic elements in the depiction of migrant and diasporic groups. For example, the use of *multiperson narration* that moves between different narrative positions (e.g. Richardson 2006, 62-68) has been

⁵⁶ For example, in adaptations of Western forms in non-Western countries, it has been noted that it is difficult for the narrator's voice to cross national and linguistic borders (Moretti 2000; Robbins 2009, 548).

adopted especially by writers who depict marginalised groups in order to make their experiences more audible. This literary device can serve as a perspective technique that can be linked to narrative ethics and the voicing of characters. Furthermore, in voicing a community, *a communal mode* can operate as a form of postcolonial resistant writing. It is a rare and non-conventional narrative mode that has been used in the depiction of ethnic minorities and diasporic and migrant groups (see Lanser 1992, 263; Richardson 2006, 49-56, 69-70). I investigate intricate voicing strategies and the shifting use of narrators especially in relation to the auto(biographic) and epistolary modes in *Article IV* on *Montecore*.

Furthermore, postcolonial writing has transformed the ways in which spatial issues have been presented in fiction. Prince (2005, 375) has proposed that postcolonial narratology could explore multitopicality as well as *heterotopicality*, the mixtures and inconsistencies, the gaps and cracks within or between spaces, and such axes as the familiar or strange, independent or colonised. In fact, multitopicality can function as a distinctive literary strategy of postcolonial and migration literature. I analyse the shift of places particularly in relation to the letter genre in *Article IV* on *Montecore*, since the analysed novel is set in Sweden and Tunisia.

Furthermore, time and memory are inspiring objects of study for postcolonial narratology. Prince calls on us to scrutinise the themes of the old and the new, nostalgia and hope, memory, amnesia, and anamnesis. Postcolonial writing may employ, for instance, datelessness, quasi- or pseudo-chronology, heterochronology, multichronology, simultaneities, continuities, and inconsistencies (Prince 2005, 375; Rantonen 2018, 16-17, 19). Besides, postcolonial novels that depict colonial histories often use chronological narration innovatively. These modifications may structurally renew the genre of the historical novel when the text can juxtapose parallel histories and chronologies. In *Article IV*, I scrutinise the use of blended and parallel chronologies in *Montecore*, which juxtaposes the histories of Tunisia and Sweden. I do the same in *Article I* on Phillips's *The European Tribe*, which maps the long history of the African and Jewish presence in Europe.

Moreover, de-centring Western aesthetics and poetics signifies exploring forms of orality, myths, tales, and forms of communal storytelling, since Western literary studies have often neglected the role of oral narratives.⁵⁷ For example, in the Nordic countries, the Faroese, Inuit, and Sámi have a vital oral tradition and culture-specific story telling forms that are immersed in the fictional forms, as presented in *Article II*, 'Postcolonial and Ethnic Studies in the Context of Nordic Minority Literatures'. Indeed, the story traditions and narrative techniques, which differ from Western narrative modes, generate a new approach to the problematics of narration. For instance, the texts may contain several narrators that tell the same story from different perspectives. This kind of deployment of narrators may mirror the significance of oral tradition and communal story-telling forms in a specific culture. Thus, the textual analysis can be shaped to be more culture-specific by taking into

57 For example, Goebel and Schabio (2013, 2) highlight the neglected Oriental roots of Western narratives.

consideration the communal modes, the various forms of oral and vernacular tradition, and the postcolonial re-shaping of narrative forms.

5 THE RESULTS OF THE ARTICLES

The articles of this study cover postcolonial readings of European and Nordic literatures. Nordic literatures are provincialised by highlighting indigenous writing (Sámi literature, Inuit literature) and Nordic ethnic minority literatures (Tornedalian literature, Kven literature, literature of the Faroe Islands, Sweden-Finnish literature), and newly emerged migration literatures, such as African diasporic writing in Finland and Sweden.

The close readings of Caryl Phillips's *The European Tribe* and Jonas Hassen Khemiri's *Montecore* investigate such literary genres as travelogue, auto(biographic) writing, and the epistolary genre from a postcolonial perspective. As demonstrated in the articles, postcolonial writers have reworked the genres associated with Western cultures and ethnocentrism. However, the innovative aspects and renewal of literary genres is a less studied research area in postcolonial literary studies. Moreover, the articles discuss bilingual and multilingual elements in Nordic literatures that depict ethnic minority communities.

The five articles that comprise this study are organised thematically so that the first chapter starts with a presentation of postcolonial Europe, and the second chapter shifts the postcolonial approaches to the Nordic context. It operates further as an introduction to postcolonial appropriations in the wider context of Nordic ethnic and national minority literatures. The first and second articles are followed by three chapters that focus on specific Nordic examples of postcolonial and multicultural texts and literary communities, such as Afro-Nordic/Afro-European writing.

Hence, *Article I*, 'Reporting White and Black Spots of Europe: A Postcolonial Reading of Caryl Phillips's *The European Tribe*', investigates the deconstruction of Europe and presents a close reading of a postcolonial re-envisioning of Western literary genres. *Article II*, 'Postcolonial and Ethnic Studies in the Context of Nordic Minority Literatures', appropriates postcolonial theory to the large matrix of Nordic literature. It is followed by two postcolonial close readings, *Article III*, 'Cultural Hybridity and Humour in Jonas Hassen Khemiri's *Montecore*', and *Article IV*, 'Writing Biography by E-mail: Postcolonial and Postmodern Rewriting of Biographical and Epistolary Modes in Jonas Khemiri's

Montecore'. They present examples of the postcolonial appropriation of multilinguality, as well as narrative modes and genres. *Article V*, 'African Voices in Finland and Sweden' focuses the discussion on Black Europe started in *Article I* and continued in *Articles III* and *IV* on Khemiri's *Montecore*. Moreover, it functions as a complementing example of postcolonial Nordic minority literature among other Nordic ethnic minority literatures investigated in the second article.

5.1 'Reporting White and Black Spots of Europe: A Postcolonial Reading of Caryl Phillips's *The European Tribe*'

Caryl Phillips is one of the first writers who used the term 'postcolonial' in his writings. In his travel book *The European Tribe*, Phillips traces Europe's colonial past and rewrites European history from the perspective of European ethnic and national minorities. In the article, I have explored how Phillips deals with issues of nationality, ethnicity, 'race', and the concept of 'European'.

Generically, *The European Tribe* is an inspiring piece of writing, as it embodies a crossroads of genres. Phillips has eschewed strict generic classifications by characterising the book as 'a narrative in the form of a notebook' and a book of 'essays'. In the chapter, I have analysed Phillips's book within the framework of various nonfictional genres. While *The European Tribe* mainly represents a form of 'counter-travel writing' scrutinising the ethnocentric history of the genre, it highlights the shifting boundaries of nonfictional genres in general, since it is a hybrid form of travel writing, autoethnography, cultural autobiography, literary journalism, documentary narrative, historical study, and essay writing. I demonstrate how this challenging generic collage of nonfictional modes illustrates the diverse strategies of postcolonial writing and subversive approaches to the boundaries of fact and fiction. The documentary testimonial of the book is inspiringly engendered by weaving a narrative web from interviews, official documents, and autobiographical sketches.

In this article, I investigate how Caryl Phillips deconstructs in a postcolonial vein the genre of the European travel book. The postcolonial generic intrusion has especially affected *travel narratives*, which have been regarded as typical genres of colonial discourse. Travelling especially provides a symbolic framework in many texts preoccupied with the postcolonial condition. It has been claimed that postcolonial writers have even hijacked the traveller's tale, the ethnocentric voyage into non-Western mystery (Boehmer 1995/2005, 113, 190-192). Similarly, I illuminate in this article how Phillips's *The European Tribe* joins in this postcolonial 'seizure' and *counter-travel writing*, where the narrator explores notions of Europe's colonial past and European present-day diasporas.

Cultural autobiography is another postcolonial genre that offers a medium for cultural resistance and counter-histories. In cultural autobiography, the writer places him/herself in the cultural context, which in Phillips's case is British-Caribbean and Black British

culture. Furthermore, Phillips is viewed in the context of the Black intellectual tradition across the Atlantic (e.g. in Britain, Europe, Latin America, the West Indies, and the US) that has decentred ways of understanding the constitution of Europe and the West in its exploration of racism and anti-fascism and their relationship to nationalisms. Moreover, Phillips compares the historical position of Jews to the position of Africans in Europe. The book also discusses signs of banal nationalism, as well as the outdated forms of colonial thinking and colonial mimicry still present in contemporary Europe.

The analysis of *The European Tribe* demonstrates various forms of postcolonial resistance and shows Phillips's interest in the gaps between 'facts', realities, and historical truths. When investigating truth claims, he thus manages to debate the factual adequacies of European discourses. However, Phillips does not altogether abandon factographic material. Instead, it is adopted in his discussion of the forms of racism and migration in Europe. For example, the use of statistical reports conveys the intensity of xenophobic attitudes in European countries and serves as corroborative evidence for the anti-racist statements of the book. In the article, I have examined how Phillips rewrites contemporary and historical Europe from the various sources and fragments. In this, he appropriates sociological facts, facts from newspapers, the evidence of his own eyes, and fictional imaginations of European minorities and their neglected histories.

Postcolonial theories have emphasised that history has been 'owned' by dominant facts and historiographies. In this article, I show how Phillips, who writes from the minority position, de-territorialises and displaces the power structures in historiography and points out the constructiveness in the contemporary delivery of 'facts' in various media. In this cognitive process, the article illuminates how the autobiographical mode and cultural autobiography can be employed as a postcolonial writing strategy.

Theoretically, the article combines postcolonial literary theory with theories of literary genres, nonfictional writing, and journalism. I have employed, in particular, Mary Louis Pratt's, Barbara Korte's, and David Spurr's analysis of postcolonial travel writing, and Graham Huggan's, Bénédicte Ledent's, and Marina De Chiara's studies on Phillips. Central studies also comprise John Hartsock's and John Hollowell's discussions of nonfiction and journalism, as well as Michael Billig's views of racist and nationalistic rhetoric.

5.2 'Postcolonial and Ethnic Studies in the Context of Nordic Minority Literatures'

Postcolonial studies offers new conceptualisations of Nordic writing. This article is an expedition to the northernmost parts of the Nordic countries, Greenland (Denmark), Faroe Islands (Denmark), the Kven region in Norway, and Sápmi (Finland, Sweden, Norway). In other words, it practises the 'provincialising' of Europe by its presentation of how postcolonial literary studies can be applied to Nordic national and ethnic minority

literatures and indigenous literatures. At the same time, it provincialises Nordic literature by taking us to such Nordic literary fields that have formed white spots in mainstream Nordic literary studies as well as mainstream postcolonial studies. In fact, only scant attention has been paid to Nordic literatures in mainstream postcolonial literary studies. Nordic literary studies has, in turn, formerly neglected national and ethnic minority literatures in the Nordic countries. The emphasis on these literatures is a relatively recent phenomenon in Nordic literary studies, and in the article it is intertwined with postcolonial studies.

The chapter maintains that in Nordic literary studies and institutions, the colonial and postcolonial matrix has been for a long time hidden and silenced by hegemonic nation-building, nationalistic monolinguality and other marginalising manoeuvres. The article advocates the idea that one way of understanding the challenge of Nordic multiculturalism is through taking account of the history and consequences of Western colonialism in the Nordic region and bringing forth the specific features of Nordic national minorities and diasporic literatures.

Traditionally, the Nordic countries have not been situated in the history of colonialism in mainstream Western historiography. However, we stress in the article that most Nordic national minorities have for long resisted colonisation by the dominant Nordic majorities. Thus, the article outlines and applies for the first time postcolonial and ethnic studies to the broad context of Nordic literature and settings. It scrutinises the conceptualisation of ethnicity, regionality, locality, and minority positions in the Nordic context. In the context of ethnic minority literatures, language and place provide a site for rewriting dominant representations and histories. The article traces the specific cultural, linguistic, local, and regional features especially in Nordic indigenous and national ethnic minority literatures. These Nordic literatures are presented in the context of postcolonial resistance writing.

The article mainly focuses on the indigenous literatures in Sweden, Finland, Norway, and Denmark (Sámi literature in the Nordic countries and Inuit literature in Greenland), and historically old national and ethnic minorities (Tornedalian literature in Sweden and Finland, literature of the Faroe Islands in Denmark, Kven literature in Norway, and Sweden-Finnish literature). However, some consideration is given to the recent immigrants and diasporic communities in the Nordic countries. For example, it is noted that the Kurdish and Farsi spoken and used as literary media in Sweden create de-territorialised languages with new forms. Moreover, Somali writers in the Nordic countries can be set in African diasporic or Black diasporic writing.

The literary production of national and ethnic minorities challenges the traditional notion of national literatures and literary canons based on dominant Nordic cultures. The gradual recognition of various ethnic minorities within the Nordic nation states and the growing number of migrants in the Nordic countries have disturbed the notions of linguistic, social, and cultural homogeneity in the Nordic countries. This situation has given birth to new identities and hybrid and resisting cultural formations. Postcolonial studies are especially appropriate when investigating Nordic indigenous literatures. Moreover, they

often represent postcolonial resistance writing. Greenland and Lapland have represented the non-West or even the East in the Nordic countries. Notably, the academic branches of 'Eskimology' and 'Lappology' were established at the same time as the ethnocentric 'Orientalism' deconstructed by Edward Saïd.

Moreover, the article provides examples of indigenous artistic forms that differ from Western aesthetics or artistic genres. For example, oral narratives are commonly employed in indigenous literatures. Distinct local features which differ from mainstream Nordic/Western literary genres and stylistic forms are, for example, the *kvaed* poems used as a form of resistance in Faroese literature, as well as the *yoik* poems, blending of art forms, and specific autobiographical genres in Sámi literature.

Many Sámi artists and writers are in fact 'multiaartists' or 'cross-artists' who combine different art forms in their works. Thus, the sphere of creativity is not categorised in a similar way as in mainstream culture. Consequently, the close connections between the visual arts, music, and poetry in Sámi art creates a challenge in the analysis of Sámi art forms. For instance, in his visual-verbal Sámi epos *Beaivi Áhcázan* (1988, [The Sun, My Father]), Nils-Aslak Valkeapää employs several artistic techniques and combines documentary and fictional narration. *Beaivi Áhcázan* has been called *mythography* and *photo essays*, where Sámi mythology, history, and poetry are intertwined with visual elements such as photography and drawings. Thus, the modes of poetic discourse and literary genres by indigenous cultures and ethnic minorities may offer new insights to the conventional idea of art and literary genres.

Theoretically, the article applies to its cartography Edward Saïd's, Ella Shohat's, and Robert Stam's critique of Western ethnocentrism; Homi K. Bhabha's views of hybridity; Abdul JanMohamed's, David Lloyd's, Gilles Deleuze's, and Félix Guattari's ideas of minor and minority literatures; and Bill Ashcroft's, Gareth Griffiths's, and Helen Tiffin's listings of the specific features of postcolonial literature. Earlier research of Nordic minority literatures are placed in the postcolonial context, such as Vuokko Hirvonen's and Veli-Pekka Lehtola's ground-breaking dissertations on Sámi literatures, which comprise important sources in the article.

5.3 'Cultural Hybridity and Humour in Jonas Hassen Khemiri's *Montecore*'

In this article, I investigate how Jonas Hassen Khemiri's *Montecore* depicts everyday cultural hybridity in multicultural Sweden. The close reading examines hybridity on the level of characterisation and language as well as an aesthetic device. This kind of use of language is perceived as a postcolonial device or postcolonial resistance writing that uses code-switching, vernacular transcription, and colloquial neologisms (Ashcroft, Griffiths, & Tiffin 1989, 72-73). Moreover, *Montecore* innovatively employs postmodern distancing literary techniques.

The novel evokes the linguistic repertoire available to bilingual or multilingual immigrant speakers in Swedish multicultural communities. The multilingual position is clearly audible in the unique language of *Montecore*. It is composed of a hybridised Swedish that contains French, English, and Arabic words and expressions used by the characters in their speech and letters. It exemplifies how bilingual or multilingual migrants and their children – the second generation – employ language in multicultural neighbourhoods and migrant communities. Multilingual word-play can be regarded as a typical mode of language among migrants tackling a multicultural reality. All the main characters in the novel in fact act as bilingual or multilingual narrators. Moreover, the main character's Swedish-born son speaks Swedish deliberately with an Arabic accent as a sign of resistance.

As demonstrated in the article, the depiction of cultural hybridity is presented with a humour that includes ironic edges. It demonstrates the humorous play with languages employed in migrant communities. The article notes that Khemiri's portrayal of multicultural Sweden combines postcolonial and postmodern irony, which characterises the rewriting of national and ethnic identities. Ethnic and cultural differences are ironised and made relative in the novel by its many postmodern literary distancing techniques and narrative intricacies. Due to its postmodernism, *Montecore* cannot straightforwardly be categorised as a realist or authentic depiction of migration. However, its depiction of the hybrid and creolised language that the immigrants use can be perceived as a narrative device that portrays migrants uniquely in contemporary Swedish literature.

Thus, the chapter illuminates how *Montecore* uses bilingual and multilingual codes that alternate in unique ways. I argue that the hybrid language presented by multicultural speakers in *Montecore* seems to be Khemiri's deliberate innovative literary device to illuminate multilingual word-play used in migrant communities in Sweden. Significantly, this study is one of the first discussions of hybridity and multilingual play in *Montecore*. Earlier studies have concentrated on multilingual aspects in Khemiri's debut novel *Ett öga rött* (2003) (e.g. Leonard 2005; Lacatus 2008; Behschnitt 2010; Willems & Behschnitt 2012) analysing how the protagonist navigates a varied linguistic landscape using different language varieties.

The introduction of the Tunisian characters' viewpoints in this Swedish novel creates an intercontinental perspective with interweaved, shifting Swedish and Tunisian contexts through which the novel's deterritorialised language testifies cultural hybridity. The novel thus creates a unique intercultural perspective that transcends cultural and linguistic boundaries and underlines the force of dialogue in cultural contacts.

In the article I have appropriated concepts of cultural and linguistic hybridity in particular from Mikhail Bakhtin, Homi K. Bhabha, Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, Helen Tiffin, and Laura Moss. The analysis employs Bakhtin's idea of ironic and intentional hybridity as well as double-voiced and double-accented language. Certain central notions concerning the blending of the languages in the novel are derived from Florence Cortés-Conde's and Diana Boxer's ideas of bilingual word-play in literary discourse.

5.4 'Writing Biography by E-mail: Postcolonial and Postmodern Rewriting of Biographical and Epistolary Modes in Jonas Khemiri's *Montecore*'

This article studies Jonas Hassen Khemiri's *Montecore* as a *postcolonial novel* with its depiction of racism in Sweden and colonial history of Tunisia. In fact, the novel contains direct references to colonial and postcolonial theoreticians such as Frantz Fanon. The close reading of the novel focuses on generic renewals demonstrating the interlink between postcolonial and migration literature and new modes of writing.

My article focuses on *Montecore*'s generic experimentation with the forms of the epistolary novel and fictional (auto)biography. It illuminates how the transnational communications between Sweden and Tunisia are flexibly presented in *Montecore* by the innovative use of literary genres. The use of the letter form creates a unique intercultural, transnational, and intercontinental perspective in the novelistic space.

Plural voicing of characters especially mirrors the innovative literary device used by postcolonial and ethnic minority writers in order to give voice to marginalised groups. Khemiri employs many narrators in order to voice and mediate the traumatic experiences of migrants and their children in Sweden. In its complex form, *Montecore* uses multiple modes of narration, as letters in the first-person are juxtaposed with second-person segments and first-person reminiscences. By taking three perspectives – those of Tunisians Kadir and Abbas and the Swedish Jonas – *Montecore* can be called a multiperson text. The article argues that the use of multiple disparate voices produces a greater degree of dialogism than more conventional literary techniques typically allow. This kind of use of many narrators is presented as a specific *postcolonial strategy*.

Hence, I illustrate in the article how *Montecore* enlarges the conventional epistolary and (auto)biographic form through its use of culturally divergent narrators. With its three talking subjects, it could be called a Bakhtinian *polyphonic* novel, which highlights the presence of dialogic discourse. Thus, I argue that it engages and increases, for example, the Swedish or European reader's identification with their otherwise culturally distant position. Thus, the article highlights the use of the epistolary novel as a transmitter of cultural differences and encounters, which is a less studied area of the epistolary novel.

I suggest that the epistolary form with its enunciation in the first person shapes a closer sympathetic identification with the Tunisian characters for the Swedish reader. It is important to note that the letter form can be used as a literary device that bridges cultural differences and distances. By its cross-cultural presentation of different cultural voices, the letter form may bring together multicultural readers and audiences. Conceived transnationally, the letter can present a unique third space that exists neither in the homeland nor in the host country, but in both places simultaneously. Therefore, I perceive that by its cross-cultural presentation of different cultural voices and audiences, the epistolary mode may bring together different readerships. It may employ an implied 'double audience' (minority or dominant cultures) or bi/multicultural readers and audiences.

Furthermore, postcolonial narrative devices are detected in the novel's multiplicity and the flexible shift of places (Tunisia and Sweden). They are adaptably produced in *Montecore* by the use of the epistolary form where the letters describe life and histories in different countries and continents. Thus, I claim in the article that the epistolary genre particularly suits the presentation of characters of a different cultural background who act as transnational subjects, shifting places and crossing between cultures.

Moreover, Khemiri's inventive use of genres is linked with postmodern literary devices. As shown in the article, the text plays with metafictional elements and truth claims as in postmodern novels. Thus, *Montecore* employs many kinds of narrative devices by which the author moulds and mocks the generic conventions and expectations of the reader. Metafictional play between the fictional protagonist Jonas Khemiri and the real author Jonas Khemiri, for example, represents the postmodern irony in the novel. *Montecore* uniquely represents both the *postmodern novel* and *postcolonial novel* with its postmodern play with language and resistant narrative forms. In a postmodern vein, the novel can be characterised as a self-consciously postcolonial text where the expectations of ethnic and postcolonial writing are parodied and ironised.

Furthermore, *Montecore* is explored as a postcolonial rewriting of biographic and autobiographic modes. Abbas's life story is depicted as a witness biography that recounts losses and survival in a racist society. In the article, I illustrate how the biography of Abbas is a hypothetical and relative construction composed of many different fragmentary sources and written from different angles, as both his Swedish-born son Jonas and Tunisian friend Kadir act as biographers. The construction of the life story of the main character is interestingly culturally divided, since the biographers of the main character come from Sweden and Tunisia. Moreover, this kind of witness biography, composed of different informants, is a unique literary device which is seldom employed in fiction. The multiple voicing of characters in *Montecore* presents an innovative literary strategy in the presentation of Tunisian migrants' lives, histories, and voices in contemporary Sweden.

The theoretical background of the analysis derives from postcolonial poetics. In my close reading, I have applied especially Janet Gurkin Altman's, Bruce Elliot's, David Gerber's, and Suzanne Sinke's views on the epistolary genre, Paul Eakin's studies on the auto(biographical) mode and fictional autobiographies, and Robert Fraser's and Gerald Prince's notions of postcolonial poetics and narratology.

5.5 'African Voices in Finland and Sweden'

The article is the first cartography of Finnish and Swedish writers of African descent in the Nordic countries. Nordic-African (or Afro-Nordic) writing is a little-known minority literature in the Nordic countries and considered as the youngest of all the Euro-African literatures (Bekers, Helff, & Merolla 2009, xvi).

The texts by Finnish and Swedish authors of African descent are placed in the frame of Black European or Euro-African writing. They are explored in the context of the growing interest in cross-cultural dialogue, postcolonial issues, and migration studies. The article shows how these poems, fictional autobiographies, autobiographies, and novels testify to the cultural specificity and cultural hybridity of what can be called Nordic ‘hyphenated writing’.

My article illuminates how Nordic writers of African descent deal with cultural differences, migration, African identities, African themes, and Black Europe. Interesting examples include the Kenyan-born Joseph Owindi and Wilson Kirwa, both of whom vividly recount their experiences in Finland. In this article, I have also introduced second-generation writers of immigrant descent, such as Johannes Anyuru, Jonas Hassen Khemiri, and Ranya Paasonen (formerly ElRamly), who have gained attention for their depiction of the migrant characters with one or both parents of African origin.

One popular and productive genre in Finnish and Swedish migrant writing is poetry. The article discusses Swedish Johannes Anyuru, who writes within the Black Atlantic tradition, since his models include the Caribbean Derek Walcott and African-American writers. In the article, I point out that Anyuru rewrites Western myths in a postcolonial vein. Using Homer’s *Iliad* as a poetic frame, he compares the realities of immigrants in contemporary Sweden to the Trojan Wars. The poems embody ‘ghetto’ writing, where some black American vernacular forms such as hip-hop are transformed into Swedish. In its critical depiction of the marginalisation of African migrants in Sweden, Anyuru’s poetry can be viewed as postcolonial resistance writing. Other Swedish poets, such as Cletus Nelson Nwadike and Kiluanji Kush, also use figures of blackness to represent their poetry’s bonds with African cultures.

Furthermore, it is noted that in Finland and Sweden, diasporic Somalis are shaping Somali oral poetry into a written form and elaborating its orthography. An important example is *Sagaal Dayrood – Nio höstregn – Yhdeksän syysadetta* (2000, [Nine Autumn Rains]) by Somali women writers in Finland. It contains such oral poetry as religious lamentations, work songs, trance poems, and wedding eulogies. Significantly, the volume is intended for diverse cultural audiences: its trilingual title indicates that it is directed at Somali, Swedish, and Finnish readers. Thus, it illustrates multilingual strategies in multicultural and postcolonial literature.

New tendencies in novels are also discussed. Second-generation writing especially articulates the ways in which ‘Africanness’ is reinterpreted by each generation. The Swedish Jonas Hassen Khemiri’s novels *Ett öga rött* (2003, [One Eye Red]) and *Montecore* depict Moroccan and Tunisian migrants and their children in migrant-dominated suburbs in Sweden. *Montecore*, for example, includes a bifocality of perspectives as the novel is set both in Tunisia and Sweden. Like *Montecore*, the Finnish Ranya Paasonen’s (née Ranya ElRamly) novel *Auringon asema* (2003, [The Position of the Sun]) explores the cultural differences in a bicultural family. The cultural perplexity is illuminated through everyday

habits such as food culture. The novel skilfully interweaves shifting Finnish, Egyptian, and Libyan contexts. Moreover, its decorative and metaphoric language of prose-poetry is blended by elements signifying cultural differences.

In the chapter, I also discuss cultural autobiographies that for diasporic and migrated writers often serve as filters for the different kinds of bonds between ethnic and national communities. For example, Joseph Owindi, Wilson Kirwa, and Louis Faye combine the autobiographical mode and postcolonial criticism when they tackle racism in Europe as well as colonialism and its effects in contemporary Africa. With their themes, they can be placed in Black European writing and postcolonial resistance writing.

Nordic-African literature opens up an inspiring area of cross-cultural dialogue, challenging Western literary forms by merging African, Finnish, and Swedish poetic and cultural traditions. In the article, I have illuminated how Nordic-African literature tackles colonial traces and racism and offers close perspectives of the joys and hardships of living in multicultural Finnish and Swedish societies. The theoretical background of the article is derived from postcolonial studies and Black European Studies (e.g. Paul Gilroy's notions of Black Atlantic).

6 CONCLUSION AND FURTHER DEVELOPMENTS

In this dissertation I have explored the white spots on the maps of world literature in the Nordic and European context. Europe is provincialised in de-centring, de-territorialising, and postcolonialising European literature and its literary studies. I have undertaken a closer examination of two European authors, Caryl Phillips and Jonas Hassen Khemiri, who have depicted postcolonialism, multiculturalism, and migration in Europe.

In the current study, I have focused on two main questions: 1) How are European and Nordic ethnic minority identities written into and against the old national narratives? 2) How have the selected texts renewed and participated in postcolonial poetics? Moreover, I have interrogated the biased literary studies and postcolonial literary research that have ignored European, Afro-European, and Nordic dimensions. Postcolonial theory functions as a broad theoretical framework linking together all the articles presented in this study. In sum, my excursion covers a journey from postcolonial theory and literature, via the deconstruction of Europe, to the less known literary fields in the Nordic countries.

How are European and Nordic ethnic minority identities written into and against the old national narratives? (Question 1) As I demonstrate in the articles, literary depictions of the lives and cultures of ethnic and national minorities include a sharp critique of marginalisation, racism, and colonialist attitudes that ethnic minorities have to face in their daily life. These rewritings of dominant representations of ethnic minorities and their histories challenge the still existing internal colonialism in Europe and the Nordic countries and highlight new European identities.

Article II traces the specific cultural, linguistic, local, and regional features especially in Nordic indigenous and national ethnic minority literatures (Sámi literature, Inuit literature, Faroese Literature, Kven literature, Finnish-Swedish literature), which are presented in the context of postcolonial resistance writing. Mother-tongue and resistant writing provide a site for rewriting old dominant representations of Nordic ethnic minority identities. Ethnic minority literatures in the Nordic countries have questioned the notions of linguistic, social, and cultural homogeneity in the Nordic countries. They have given

birth to the new depiction of identities from minority and migrant perspectives as well as hybrid and resisting cultural formations.

In the selected cases, I highlight the use of representational and self-representational practices as the tool for reshaping ethnic identities. The studied writers tackle everyday racism in Europe frequently in the form of cultural autobiography, which rewrites national, ethnic, and cultural identities. Case studies (*Articles I, IV, and V*) illuminate how the autobiographical mode can be employed as a postcolonial writing strategy when rewriting European national and ethnic identities. These kinds of self-scrutinies I typify as the postcolonial reshaping of autoethnographic writing, where the racialised subjects represent themselves in ways that oppose and remould the dominant representations. For example, Caryl Phillips and Nordic writers of African descent – such as Joseph Owindi, Wilson Kirwa, and Louis Faye – employ the form of *cultural autobiography* as a medium for cultural resistance, anti-racism, and counter-histories.

Article I demonstrates how Caryl Phillips, who writes from the ethnic minority position, de-territorialises and displaces the power structures in historiography and points out the constructiveness in the contemporary delivery of ‘facts’ about ethnic minorities in various media. When Phillips rewrites contemporary and historical European ethnic minority identities, he appropriates sociological facts, the evidence of his own eyes, and fictional imaginations of European minorities and their neglected histories.

Article III demonstrates the rewriting of migrant identities by the description of the hybrid linguistic repertoire available to bilingual or multilingual immigrant speakers in Swedish multicultural communities. Khemiri’s *Montecore* evokes multilingual word-play, which can be regarded as a typical mode of language among migrants tackling a multicultural reality. I also scrutinise the usage of irony and humour in *Montecore* as the medium for the creative portrayal of new ethnic identities and the immigrant condition.

Another important issue that I have explored in my postcolonial readings is: *How have the analysed texts renewed and participated in postcolonial poetics?* (Question 2) The case studies examine cultural specificity and hybridity, generic renewals, and postcolonial resistance, demonstrating the connections between postcolonial literature and new modes of writing. The above-mentioned representational and self-representational practices of ethnic minority identities are also intertwined with the use of literary devices.

Postcolonial literature has renewed genres by writing them from the perspectives of marginalised cultures. When analysing Caryl Phillips’s and Jonas Hassen Khemiri’s texts, I have highlighted a generic hybridisation, which I have typified as a postcolonial writing strategy. *Article I* demonstrates how Phillips’s *The European Tribe* represents a form of ‘counter-travel writing’ and deconstructs the ethnocentric history of the genre. Travelogue also is a unique hybrid form of autoethnography, cultural autobiography, literary journalism, documentary narrative, historical study, and essay writing. This challenging generic hybridisation and interplay illustrates a subversive strategy of postcolonial writing. The analysis of *The European Tribe* shows Phillips’s interest in the gaps between ‘facts’,

realities, and historical truths. By the help of generic hybridisation, Phillips manages to debate the factual adequacies of European discourses and histories.

In *Article III*, I place Khemiri's *Montecore* in the context of the *migrant novel* with its topics as well as its presentation of the hybridised language used in Stockholm's migrant communities. *Article IV* discusses how *Montecore* enlarges conventional epistolary and (auto)biographic forms by its use of culturally divergent narrators. It highlights the use of the epistolary novel as a transmitter of cultural differences and encounters, which is a less studied area of the epistolary novel. I demonstrate that the epistolary genre suits the presentation of characters of different cultural backgrounds who act as transnational subjects, shifting places and crossing between cultures.

Thus, these readings of Phillips's and Khemiri's texts contribute to postcolonial poetics. This is an under-examined area of postcolonial literary studies, which has been criticised for its general lack of examination of structure, style, technique, and genre (Boehmer 2018, 163). Moreover, *Article II* on Nordic ethnic minorities provides examples of indigenous artistic forms, which differ from Western aesthetics or genres. For example, indigenous literatures commonly employ oral narratives, which is a less studied area in postcolonial poetics. Certain distinct local features are noted, for example, the kvaed poems used as a form of resistance in Faroese literature, as well as yoik poems and the blending of art forms and specific autobiographical genres in Sámi literature.

In her study *Postcolonial Poetics* (2018), Elleke Boehmer laments that postcolonial poetics is far too invisible a field in postcolonial studies. According to Boehmer (2018, 3), postcolonial studies has relied too much on extra-literary studies, such as cultural studies, diaspora studies, and anthropology, which has marginalised literary analysis. In my articles, I have tried to combine both postcolonial poetics with interdisciplinary approaches.

Moreover, I have interrogated the biased postcolonial literary research that has ignored European, Afro-European, and Nordic dimensions. It has been claimed that Chakrabarty's idea of 'provincialising Europe' has not yet been heeded enough in postcolonial studies (Schülze-Engler 2016, 683). This study provincialises the notion of Europe by its investigations of Black Europe and the African diaspora in Europe and the Nordic countries. *Article II* applies the postcolonial matrix to the broad comparative area of Nordic ethnic minority literatures focusing on indigenous literatures and historically old national and ethnic minorities, though some consideration is given to literatures by recent migrant communities. These literatures challenge the traditional notion of national literatures based on dominant Nordic cultures.

The scholarly interest in issues of postcolonial and ethnic minority literatures in the Nordic countries increased in the 2010s, as I have described in Chapter 3.2. However, larger cross-over comparative investigations of diverse Nordic postcolonial literatures have not yet emerged since the publication of *Article II*, 'Postcolonial and Ethnic Studies in the Context of Nordic Minority Literatures'. The specific cartography of Afro-Nordic writing

(*Article V*) creates a continuum of the former appropriation of postcolonial theory in Nordic minority literatures (*Article II*).

Moreover, my readings of Caryl Phillips's and Jonas Hassen Khemiri's works (*Articles I, III, and IV*) and the cartography of authors of African descent in Finland and Sweden (*Article V*) can all be placed in the context of Black European and Afro-European literature. When I started this investigation on postcolonial Europe, Afro-Europe was quite a marginal research area. In fact, contemporary African-Nordic literature had hardly been researched when I started to map it out at the end of the 2000s. Therefore, the cartography of this almost unknown terrain required a lot of footwork, which meant disembarking to Stockholm's local libraries and bookshops. For example, the migrant suburb of Rinkeby has a library where I could obtain some rare African-Swedish books that are not easily available elsewhere.

The mass migration from Africa into Europe is an important contemporary phenomenon which is transforming the idea of Europe and the Nordic countries. In fact, most of the articles in the current study describe the African diaspora in Europe from different angles. The writers of African descent in Finland and Sweden depict their connections to various African countries, Caryl Phillips describes the historical and contemporary African diaspora in Europe, and Jonas Hassen Khemiri focuses on migration from Northern Africa to Sweden.

A key text of this study is Caryl Phillips's *The European Tribe*, which opposes the Eurocentric rhetoric and provincialises Europe. After *The European Tribe*, Phillips has published extensively on the history of Black Atlantic connections and Black Europe. However, *The European Tribe* is less studied than his later works. Janine Hauthal's article 'Writing back or writing off? Europe as "tribe" and "traumascape" in works by Caryl Phillips and Christos Tsiolkas' (2015) also points out Phillips's way of turning the ethnographic gaze towards Europe, but it does not explore the generic fusions embedded in this travel essay.

After my cartography of Afro-Nordic writers in Finland and Sweden, Jonas Hassen Khemiri and Johannes Anyuru were awarded the Swedish August prize for the best book of the year.⁵⁸ Recent studies on Johannes Anyuru have focused on his portrayal of African diasporic communities, the political dimensions of his texts, and the portrayal of black Swedish Muslim identities (e.g. Stenbeck 2017; Heath 2018). There has also emerged a growing interest in Khemiri's works, for example, from intersectional perspectives, as shown in Christian Gullette's comparative study, *Challenging Swedishness: Intersections of Neoliberalism, Race, and Queerness in the Works of Jonas Hassen Khemiri and Ruben Östlund* (2018).

Since the end of the 2010s, Afro-European Studies has increased. An important contribution to this field of study is Jopi Nyman's study *Displacement, Memory, and*

58 Khemiri was awarded the prize in 2015 for his novel *Allt jag inte minns* [Everything I don't Remember] and Anyuru in 2017 for his novel *De kommer att drunka i sina mödrars tårar* [They will Drown in their Mothers' Tears].

Travel in Contemporary Migrant Writing (2017), which explores migration and refugee movements from Africa to Europe. Nyman investigates how black British/European writers depict Europe's relations with its immigrants in the historical and contemporary context of postcolonialism, cultural hybridity, and transculturation. Moreover, Anna-Leena Toivanen's study *Mobilities and Cosmopolitanisms in African and Afrodiasporic Literatures* (2021) focuses on Franco- and Anglophone African and Afrodiasporic literature. These studies demonstrate how Black European and Afrodiasporic writing openly challenges the ethnocentric bias of European literature and expands the ideas of European identity. On the other hand, the exploration on Afrodiasporic literature in the Nordic countries that I have presented in this study has still remained quite a marginal research field apart from a growing interest in such second-generation writers as Johannes Anyuru.

My cartography of writers of African descent in Finland and Sweden (*Article V*) has been published in the volume *Transcultural Modernities: Narrating Africa in Europe*, which stresses the importance of moving beyond national literary paradigms to develop new comparative perspectives of Afro-European writing (Schülze-Engler 2016, 679). Indeed, the challenge of postcolonial reading is that it often requires moving between local, national, and global issues. For example, Elleke Boehmer (2018, 29) sees it as important to consider how postcolonial reading can reconcile the representativeness at a local level with a legibility at a national, transnational, or global level. In this study, I have tried to mobilise different levels in my discussions, moving from Stockholm's migrant communities (local), to Nordic minority literatures (national), and on to Afro-European literatures and their place in the Nordic countries and European literary fields (cross-national and transnational).

Thus, I have tried to place my project within the large field of postcolonial Nordic literature, Black/Afro-European, European literature, and World literature. In this, I follow Sandra Ponzanesi and Daniela Merolla's investigation of the importance of crossing the borders of national literatures: 'Within the European scenario it is high time to ask when an idea of European literature will supersede the national literatures, or when migrant literature will be an object of comparison without having to pass via the national canon' (2005, 4). Consequently, my aim has been to simultaneously provincialise and transnationalise my research on European and Nordic postcolonial literatures and their studies.

Future Developments

Postcolonial studies has tried to re-envision literary studies in a manner that is sensitive to cultural differences, migration, and geopolitical complexities. It has had an important role in contemporary literary studies in its discussions of cultural differences, national and ethnic identities, geopolitical aspects of fiction, racism, and ethnocentrism, as well as its demand for the enlargement of the scope of literary studies outside Western mainstream literatures.

As this study belongs to the field of comparative literature, I want to highlight the connections between postcolonial studies and comparative literature. In his *Comparaison n'est pa raison: La Crise de la littérature compare* (1963), René Étiemble declared that in the future, comparative literature would study Western influences during the Meiji era, the evolution of racist ideas in Europe, and the influence of bilingualism on literatures (see Apter 2006, 46). In fact, these topics do not seem to me very striking in the perspective of postcolonial literary studies.

When we look at the reports of the American Comparative Literature Association (ACLA) entitled *Comparative Literature in the Age of Multiculturalism* (1995) and *Comparative Literature in the Age of Globalisation* (2006) on the state of the discipline, we can notice that they discuss the broadening role of postcolonial theory and multiculturalism in literary studies. The later ACLA report for 2014–2015 discusses postcolonial and multicultural issues but with more specified research areas (<https://stateofthediscipline.acla.org/>).

However, my basic claim is that postcolonial studies and comparative literature have not performed their original task of conducting global research on world literature and cross-cultural analysis. Since these issues have not been thoroughly tackled within these research fields, many white spots have remained in literary studies, such as Nordic minority literatures and numerous other literatures in Europe and around the world. Postcolonial studies and world literary studies have even been perceived of as different subject areas and theoretical branches, even though they both share interests in cross-cultural analysis and greater than European literatures (Young 2011, 213; Boehmer 2018, 156). However, since 2000, more interest has emerged in postcolonial studies regarding world literary methodologies. Elleke Boehmer (2018, 162, 165) believes that the conjunction of world literature studies and postcolonial studies could dismantle the still-definitive Eurocentric paradigms of both fields:

[--] if the postcolonial could adapt aspects of world literature's reading for modularity, to track shared textual features across wide geographies [--] or if world literary studies were to take on board radical postcolonial energies, this could produce a more mobile, expansive, and genuinely horizontal conception of the world.

The contribution of this project is to link Nordic minority literatures and Black European and Afro-European literatures to postcolonial literature and world literature. Nordic ethnic minority and migration literatures are still rather unknown terrains on the European, Western, and global literary maps. Nevertheless, these literatures form international connections with other world literatures. For example, Nordic indigenous writers have built transnational networks linking indigenous literatures around the world.

What is more, postcolonial literary studies has been criticised for its lack of close analysis of cultural specificities in literature (e.g. Seyhan 2010, 12; Boehmer 2018, viii). The manifestations of cultural diversity in aesthetics and poetics is a challenging area for future postcolonial studies. Certainly, this requires a relational approach to literary studies

and multi-, inter-, and cross-disciplinary co-operation. Another debated issue is the over-politicisation of postcolonial studies (e.g. Bernheimer 1995b). However, I agree with Gayatri Spivak (2003, 4), who asserts that postcolonial studies *depoliticises* literary studies, which has formerly neglected the political currents underneath the discipline. Moreover, Charles Bernheimer (1995b, 8) has criticised literary studies that concentrate on the authenticity of cultures politically and mimetically. A similar kind of complaint has recently been levelled regarding studying migration literature solely as a peephole into migrant communities in order to find cultural authenticity (e.g. Behschnitt 2010). However, Elleke Boehmer (2018, 24) argues that postcolonial studies could exceed mimesis without disavowing it at the same time. In my readings of migration and the postcolonial condition, I have tried to examine both the formal and political interplay embedded in the texts.

Postcolonial literary studies has flourished since 2000, with new titles with global perspectives such as Fredric Jameson's and Masao Miyoshi's *global literature*, Bruce Robbins's and Timothy Brennan's *cosmopolitanism*, and Gayatri Spivak's *planetary literature*.⁵⁹ For example, Spivak's idea of new comparative literature, entitled 'planetary', does not give sufficient tools in the study of world literature. However, it can be useful in postcolonial eco-criticism,⁶⁰ which can deepen our understanding, for example, of the exploitation of Nordic indigenous lands, as tackled in the works of Sámi and Inuit writers. When writing about the appropriation of postcolonial studies in the Nordic countries, eco-critical issues were discussed in indigenous literature but not yet theorised in nuanced ways in literary theory.

Another step forward would be to investigate increasingly multicultural and culturally disparate readerships. In their study *Postcolonial Audiences* (2011) Bethan Benwell, James Procter, and Gemma Robinson claim that postcolonial studies has been inattentive to issues of audiences and reception. Elleke Boehmer (2018, 14) also suggests that the focus on the role of the reader might help postcolonial studies to mediate between the political and the formal. In my reading of Khemiri's *Montecore*, it was insightful for me to analyse the rhetoric of epistolary novels, which can reach disparate readerships. Hence, the examination of the disparate ethnic audiences of Khemiri's novels might highlight the readerly effects of this kind of multicultural text.

Apart from poetics, I consider the current challenges of postcolonial literary criticism to involve a more nuanced analysis of political structures embedded in cultural texts. In this, I rely on Edward Saïd's legacy from his *Culture and Imperialism* (1993), where he urges scholars to engage more with issues of world politics. Kaisa Ilmonen (2016, 358-359) suggests that the postcolonial methodological archive can provide the appropriate tools for the analysis of the rhetoric surrounding topics such as terrorism, counter-terrorism, and military actions. It can illuminate how colonialist narratives are recycled in contemporary

59 In Gayatri Spivak's (2003, 72) vision of New Comparative Literature, the *planet* substitutes the *globe*, since globalisation spreads the same system of exchange everywhere.

60 See Huggan & Tiffin 2010; Ilmonen 2016, 361.

conflicts and world politics (see also Morton & Boehmer 2009, 8). In fact, my project of postcolonialising Europe started in my analysis of the military conflict and terrorism in Northern Ireland (Rantonen 1999c).

Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o (2012) has a vision of *globalectics*, where world literatures meet through an interchange of language and literatures. Indeed, in a global literary village, stories of the world circulate and preserve collective cultural memories and histories, political accounts, and unique artistic expressions. Franco Moretti (2000) vigorously defends cross-cultural and transnational analysis as a permanent intellectual challenge to national literatures. I agree with his notion that it even *justifies* the existence of departments of comparative literature (Moretti 2000). Delving into the world's spectrum of poetics requires g/local and cross-cultural approaches and research of literatures that have a marginal role in Western Academies. Europe is a part of the global literary village, and its ethnocentrism, internal diversity, and global entanglements and networks have to be reconsidered.

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8 PUBLICATIONS

PUBLICATION

I

Reporting White and Black Spots of Europe: A Postcolonial Reading of Caryl Phillips's *The European Tribe*

Eila Rantonen

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Eila Rantonen

REPORTING WHITE AND BLACK SPOTS OF EUROPE A Postcolonial Reading of Caryl Phillips's *The European Tribe*

Abstract

The re-mapping of the idea of Europe and the reconstruction of the European identity is the starting point of Caryl Phillips's *The European Tribe* (1987). Ethnic and postcolonial studies have emphasised the significance of the excavation of forgotten histories. In his travel book Phillips traces Europe's colonial past and rewrites European history from the perspective of European ethnic and national minorities. In *The European Tribe* Phillips is in a dialogical relationship with different kinds of histories: the history of colonialism, the history of slavery as well as the history of migrants in Europe.

Generically, *The European Tribe* is an inspiring piece of writing as it embodies the crossroads of genres. Albeit it mainly represents a form of 'counter-travel writing' scrutinising the ethnocentric history of the genre, it also highlights the shifting boundaries of the nonfictional genres in general since it is a hybrid form of travel writing, autobiography, literary journalism, documentary narrative, historical study and essay writing. In the article I will explore how Phillips deals with issues of nationality, ethnicity, "race" and the concept of "European". These will be discussed within the framework of nonfictional genres. The challenging combination of nonfictional modes in the book illustrates the diverse strategies of postcolonial writing.

Firstly, I will take a closer look at the subversion of the anthropological gaze and discourse. Phillips's postcolonial account puts the historical genre of the European travel narrative and anthropological investigation into an ironical perspective. Here Europe becomes a source of explora-

tion as the protagonist as a discoverer traces the “white and black spots” of Europe. Secondly, I will illustrate some journalistic elements occurring in *The European Tribe*. The book often employs the “objective” non-personal journalistic discourse. However, the narration also shifts flexibly into the mode of literary journalism since the autobiographical protagonist’s opinions and reminiscences are often expressed by the first-person narrator. Thirdly, I will examine the book as the form of a cultural autobiography, which is a typical genre of minority writers. *The European Tribe* can be viewed in the context of the black autobiographical and essay writing that has been a prominent form in the Black American and Caribbean tradition. I will also take a glimpse at the positioning of the subjectivity in the narration. In postcolonial writing grammatical codes also entail politics and commitment to a particular group or viewpoint. For example, the final chapter indicates how the personal pronoun (“I”, “you”, “we”, etc.) may be used as a strategy of postcolonial “resistance”.

Phillips rewrites contemporary and historical Europe from the various sources and fragments. In this, he appropriates sociological facts, facts from the newspapers, the evidence of his own eyes, dialogues and events during his trip and also fictional imaginations of European minorities and nations. Thus Phillips brings together in his generic collage the devices of journalistic, autobiographic and essay writing. Phillips is interested in the narrative power of “facts” in his exploration of the gaps between facts, realities and historical truths. When investigating truth claims Phillips thus manages to debate the factual adequacies of European discourses. However, he does not abandon the factographic discourse as he also adopts factual material in his discussion of the forms of racism and migrancy in Europe. In the text the facts are also used for their rhetorical effects in order to represent the anti-racist and the anti-colonialist statements of the book.

Travelling provides plots and a symbolic framework in many postcolonial texts preoccupied in different ways with journeying, exile and migration. It has even been claimed that the postcolonial writers have hijacked one of the defining stories of imperial expansion: the traveller’s tale, the voyage into non-Western mystery. (Boehmer 2005: 190–192.) Similarly, Caryl Phillips’s *The European Tribe* (1987) joins in this postcolonial “seizure”. In his travel book Phillips traces Europe’s colonial past and rewrites European history from the perspective of European ethnic and national minorities.

In the following I will explore how Phillips deals with issues of nationality, ethnicity, "race" and the concept of "European". These will be discussed within the framework of such nonfictional genres as autoethnography, literary journalism, essay writing and cultural autobiography. This challenging combination of nonfictional modes in the book illustrates the diverse strategies of postcolonial writing.

The European Tribe is based on Phillips's personal journey across Europe in 1984. As such, it also serves as a contemporary account of postcolonial modern Europe, since it adheres to the actuality of the European countries in the mid 1980's. It is important to note that Phillips was one of the first Western writers in the 1980's to embark on the scrutiny of postcolonial issues. Significantly, in *The European Tribe* he even used the term "postcolonial" (*ET*: 120), while the concept was just being coined by theorists. Here it is claimed that Hong Kong, Gibraltar, Northern Ireland and the Falkland Islands are examples of the "post-colonial British legacy". Poland is also referred to as a "colonised" dominion of the Empire (*ET*: 99). Later in the 1990s, the former East European and Soviet countries have been viewed in the postcolonial frame. In the form of an eyewitness account, Phillips offers critical insights into the multiple cultural, national, political and economic borders inside the European regions. For example, the contemporary situation in such European cities as Paris, Venice, Amsterdam, Munich, East and West Berlin, Oslo, Belfast and Moscow are also viewed in an historical light. European history contains silences that the protagonist investigates. He also detects politically designed gaps and enlargements in historiography such as the representation of national history in the Museum for German History in East Berlin during the GDR era:

Germanic history from medieval times to 1945 was contained in a small lobby. Material dating from 1945 to the founding of the DDR in 1949 was lodged in two medium-sized rooms. East German history from 1949 to the present filled the rest of this huge and architecturally impressive museum. Only a country with a profound identity crisis could pervert history to such an extent. (*ET*: 89)

In *The European Tribe*, the inter-related histories of the European countries are linked in an engrossing way with the autobiographical traveller's experiences and knowledge of contemporary Europe. The protagonist claims that he

is pointing out Europe's lack of self-awareness, which he ascribes to a lack of a cogent sense of history (ET: 121). In *The European Tribe* Phillips is in a dialogical relationship with different kinds of histories: the history of colonialism, the history of slavery as well as the history of migrants in Europe. Ethnic and post-colonial studies have emphasised the significance of the excavation of forgotten histories. Thus, the construction of a counter-history is deemed essential for the ethnic and national minorities.

In its provincialising Europe¹, *The European Tribe*, inevitably, belongs to that postcolonial fiction which emphasises the ethnic mix of all cultures and criticises the nationalistic attitudes that overlook regional differences and the histories of cultural minorities. The protagonist discusses the multicultural history of the European regions such as the ethnic mix of Gibraltareans:

Theoretically the permanent population includes a specifically ethnic Gibraltarean who is a mixture of Jewish, Genoese, Maltese, Arab, British and Spanish, and speaks Yanito, a Hispanicized form of the English language. But the truth is that most people sound and look Western European, British, in fact. (ET: 23)

The significance of the Arabic influence in Spain is also pointed out:

Eight centuries of Moorish and Arab civilization distinguishes Spain's early history from the rest of Europe (...) Spanish Islam meant that at a time when most of Europe was backward by comparison, Córdoba had a population of half a million, who quoted poetry from a library of 400 000 books, strolled well-paved streets and worshipped in one of the 500 mosques in this 'Athens of the West'. Meanwhile, London was being besieged by Viking bandits and Paris was nothing more than an island fortress. (ET: 30)

Postcolonial writers have been engaged in "territorial disputes" and demonstrated the relativity of cultural perception (Huggan 1991: 131–134). Similarly, the re-mapping of the idea of Europe and the reconstruction of the European identity is the starting point of *The European Tribe*, where Phillips searches for

¹ Dipesh Chakrabarty's term in his *Provincializing Europe: Political Thought and Historical Difference* (2000).

the continent's "heart of darkness". He has subsequently claimed that his aim was to study the specific problems of tribalism, racism, the rise of nationalism and intolerance towards outsiders in Europe (*ET*: viii).

Phillips belongs to the diasporic generation of "hyphenated writers" or multicultural writers, whose ethnic and national identities are "somewhere-in-between" (Bromley 2000: 3). Apart from being a child of Caribbean immigrants in Britain, he also has some Jewish and Indian ancestry (*ANWO*: 130). His displaced identity has had a decisive impact on his writing exploring diasporic and marginalised identities. Since the very outset of his literary career he has emphasised the idea of "double-consciousness"² that signifies "the cultural confusions of being black and British" (*ET*: 2). Phillips (*ANWO*: 11) regards this double-consciousness as typical of migrant identity, too. Indeed, his identity as a black European and black British illustrates the culturally in-between position that Homi K. Bhabha (1994: 86–89) has characterised as "the same but not exactly the same" since "Englishness" and "European" are traditionally understood as racially "white". When writing his travelogue Phillips could claim an outsider's position because of his Caribbean background. Yet, as a British citizen he is also a member of the larger European tribe. Phillips's intellectual and literary inspirations are intercontinental as he is well-versed in Caribbean, Anglo-Saxon and African-American literatures. This wide cross-cultural knowledge is also reflected in the book.

Generically, *The European Tribe* is an inspiring piece of writing as it embodies the crossroads of genres. Albeit it mainly represents a form of 'counter-travel writing' scrutinising the ethnocentric history of the genre, it also highlights the shifting boundaries of the nonfictional genres in general since it is a hybrid form of travel writing, autobiography, literary journalism, documentary narrative, historical study and essay writing. In the preface the author eschews strict classification by characterising the work as "a narrative in the form of a notebook" (*ET*: xi) and as a book of "essays" (*ET*: viii).

Apart from the travel book, *cultural autobiography* is also a popular post-colonial genre that offers a medium for expressions of cultural resistance and counter-histories to Western dominant historical narratives. In cultural autobio-

² The concept was originally coined by the African-American William DuBois in his book *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903), where he discussed African-American identity.

graphies, the writer also places him/herself in cultural context, which in Phillips's case is British-Caribbean and black British culture. Specifically, *The European Tribe* serves as a personal account of a black European man being a target of racism. Such a focus is close to Frantz Fanon's autobiographical theorising of racism in his famous *Peau Noire, Masques Blancs* (1952). There Fanon also analysed and displayed his own experiences of being the object of the Western ethnocentric gaze.³

1 Mapping White Spots of Europe: Autoethnographical Mode

Domínique Ledent (2002: 96) has claimed that the postcolonial writer who is critical of his/her former homeland, is generally viewed with approval, as seen in the reception in Europe of V.S. Naipaul's works. Instead, the postcolonial writer who sharply criticises Western society, is often deemed shocking. The critical questioning of the European ethnocentric anthropological gaze in *The European Tribe* triggered impassioned reactions in the press at the time of its publication. It earned such adjectives as 'paranoid' or 'naïve' (see Ledent 2002: 137–138, 165).⁴ Next, I will take a closer look at this subversion of the anthropological gaze and discourse. Inevitably, Phillips engages in the postcolonial project of "decolonising knowledge" (e.g. Pratt 1993: 2) as he questions the dominant narratives of Europe.

When Europeans call themselves "Europeans" they seem to reinforce the idea that there exists a transcendental core of "Europe" and European values. On the other hand, the postcolonial critics have emphasised that the European identity was formed contrastively from the idea of the primitive and barbaric "non-Europe". Conventionally, "Europe" is considered to refer to such ideas as

³ When writing *The European Tribe*, Phillips was inspired by Fanon's *Black Skin, White Masks* and *The Wretched of the Earth* (*Les Damnés de la terre*, 1961). He has later called them his "Old Testament and New Testament" (ANWO: 129).

⁴ See, for example, John Walsh, "Songmaster of the Diaspora" (*Independent Weekend*, 2 February 1987), and Merle Rubin, "Racial Undertones in European Attitudes" (*The Christian Science Monitor*, 19 August 1987).

“rationality”, “democracy”, “the freedom of individuals”, “tolerance”, “pluralism”, “enlightenment” and “humanism”. If these ideas and values are associated only with Europe, the consequence is that they are not thought to characterise non-Europeans. (Vogt 2000; Mikkeli 2000: 161; Pratt 1992: 138.) According to historians, the term “Europe”⁵ was invented in order to describe the diversity of European regions and nations and to make the region appear more homogenous than it actually is (e.g. Virtanen 1994: 78). Nevertheless, “Europe” in its history has absorbed values and properties from other cultures. In this light, the idea of a distinct, definable and coherent European identity and consistent European values calls for re-examination. Moreover, the European imagination has too often severed contemporary European ethnic and national minorities and diasporic nationalities from their pasts (e.g. Pratt 1992: 134; Virtanen 1994: 78, 89–90). Other histories have been declared to be of lesser significance. This has encompassed from historical studies to present-day media images.

Decolonisation has been conceived of as a metaphoric and a cartographic undertaking (Boehmer 2005: 46). Similarly, Phillips subverts and displaces the dominant and biased discourses of Europe in his “othering” of the continent. Conventionally, the term “tribe” has been applied to non-European ethnic and national groups. Here, instead, the process of “anthropological investigation” is subverted in *The European Tribe* in the treatment of “Europe” as a “tribe”, a diminutive definition formerly applied to non-European peoples and nations. This rhetorical manoeuvre, where the concept of “tribe” is appropriated for the European context, opposes the Eurocentric rhetoric that has organised language into binary hierarchies implicitly flattering to Europe, for instance, Europe has “nations” but non-European countries have “tribes” (Shohat & Stam 1994: 2). Later Phillips has commented: “But if it’s a word that’s applicable to black people and red people and yellow people, it’s applicable to white people too. If you deal me that card, I deal it back to you” (Bell 1991: 589). This bold statement characterises the reversal gestures of “post-colonial resistance” and “talking and writing back” that operates as a postcolonial rhetorical strategy. Phillips points out that the Europeans avoid self-scrutiny. This was demonstrated in Western media that ridiculed the Emperor Bokassa’s mimicry of European royalism but

⁵ The word “European” seems to have been used for the first time in an eight-century reference to Charles Martel’s victory over Islamic forces at Tours (Hall 1992: 289).

was not willing to recognise in Bokassa's rule in the Central African Empire the reflection of European habits: "When Bokassa aped it, Europe mocked simply because she could not stand to look at herself" (*ET*: 121).

The conventions of travel and exploration writing constituted the European subject as a self-sufficient source of knowledge. This ensured that interactional history has turned up only as traces (Pratt 1992: 136, 205). Postcolonial writers have combined genres associated with colonialist cultures with the grittiness of their own cultural experiences. This generic intrusion has affected travel narratives and the adventure stories, which have been seen as typical forms of colonial discourse (Boehmer 2005: 113). Phillips's account puts the historical genre of the European travel narrative and anthropological investigation into an ironical perspective. Here Europe becomes a source of exploration as the protagonist as a discoverer traces the "white and black spots" of Europe. According to Marina De Chiara (1996: 232–233), the anthropological journey in *The European Tribe* exposes the greatest myth of the "European tribe": its history.

Europe and its history are portrayed in the text as a game of inclusions and exclusions, which still speaks of its colonial history. In fact, the fascination of post-colonial writers with the figure of the map has resulted in a wide range of literary revisions of geographical and metaphorical maps (Huggan 1991: 125). Postcolonial studies have identified rhetorical strategies and visual hierarchies implemented in the maps that gave preference to the Eurocentric view of the world. For instance, Europe was presented in maps larger as being than other continents (Shohat & Stam 1994: 145–148; Huggan 1991: 125, 127). The revision of the cartographic discourses is characteristic of postcolonial writing that has served as a palimpsest rewriting earlier spatial configurations.

With the ethnocentric "white gaze" the Western anthropologists were able to build a hierarchy between "superior" Westerner nations and "inferior" other "tribes". In *The European Tribe* the "white man's gaze" is deconstructed by the act of "looking back" since now the black man's gaze is directed at "white" Europe and its others. De Chiara (1996: 230) notes that the observation point in anthropological accounts is turned upside down so that "the observer" and "the observed" merge. In the same vein, when "camouflaged" by his black skin and being treated as non-European, the anthropological "I" of *The European Tribe* functions simultaneously as the observer and the observed, as well as an insider and outsider. Hence, the black European "explorer" passes as "non-European"

in his investigation and self-testing of racism by taking note of how he is treated as an object.

In its analytical cast on European peoples the text fits the category of autoethnography, that is, the defining of one's subjective ethnicity as mediated through language, history, and ethnographical analysis (e.g. Lionnet 1989: 99). Mary Louise Pratt employs the term *autoethnography* or *autoethnographic expression* to designate instances in which formerly colonised subjects undertake to represent themselves in ways that engage with the coloniser's own terms. By ethnographic texts Europeans have been said to represent to themselves their "others". In contrast, autoethnographic texts are those that "the others" construct in response to or in dialogue with former colonial representations. Pratt claims that autoethnographic texts involve partial appropriation of the forms and idioms of the coloniser. Often the idioms appropriated and transformed have been those of travel and exploration writing. (Pratt 1992: 7.)

The European Tribe takes the viewpoint of the outsider, the "stranger", in the representation of European countries and cultures. Although the ethnographic genre does not conventionally present the 'self' as its focal point – and concentrates instead on communities other than the observer's own – its formative moments have appealed to "participation" and "I-witnessing" as its dominant legitimising criterion (Turner 2000: 53). Traditionally ethnographies inscribe in their studies a standpoint for a self that understands and represents the cultural "other". The emphasis on objectivity meant the "oddity of constructing texts ostensibly scientific out of experiences broadly biographical" (Clifford 1988: 19; see Turner 2000: 54). However, in *The European Tribe*, the emphasis vacillates between subjective and objective observations. Thus it transcends the borders of the exploring subject and the studied object.

Pratt (1992: 204–205, 209) has defined the conventional narrative subject of travel books as "the monarch-of-all-I-survey", where the relation of mastery is predicated between the one who sees and the seen. The Western ethnocentric gaze is produced, for instance, in the possessive mastery of the foreign landscape, the broad panoramas anchored in the observer. In *The European Tribe*, the narrator ironically recognises this possessive gaze: "Looking out across the Straits of Gibraltar on a clear day, Africa appears to be a small symmetrical island rising in the centre to a high summit. Europeans could have imagined it as just that, an island" (*ET*: 24). In this autoethnography, the explorer is in a dialog-

ic relation to the people he encounters and employs different kinds of “native informants” during his discovery of Europe. He reports constant interaction and discussions between people representing different social classes extending from the street boys, taxi drivers, shopkeepers and hotel workers to writers. Some of his “native informants” belong to the public domain. For instance, he interviews the Archbishop in Ireland and the spokesman of North African Foreign Affairs in the French Ministry of Industry.

2 Reporting Europe: Journalistic Devices

In an interview, Phillips asserts that he enjoys experimenting with more than one medium of self-expression because not all the ideas he has are suitable for fiction (Ledent 2002: 13). In this he is among those novelists who have employed documentary forms, varieties of public testimony, essay writing and literary nonfiction in which the subjectivity of the writer is not hidden and where the novelist can become his own protagonist (Hollowell 1977: 15). The documentary mode has also prompted a kind of careful scripting of the near past, of one’s own lived reality for the postcolonial writers who have claimed agency in giving conceptual shape to their history, culture and society. (Boehmer 2000: 116)

As mentioned before, *The European Tribe* is composed of various textual genres such as personal essay, literary journalism, autobiography and travel book. They all have been classified as belonging to the genre of “nonfiction” or literary nonfiction (e.g. Lehtimäki 2005: 4–5, 28–96; Hartsock 2000: 1–13; Hollowell 1977: 58). These nonfictional subgenres have taken to be “literary” genres because of the self-awareness of their style and techniques reminiscent of the devices of fiction.

In fact, it is typical for documentary prose to include both the private material and the material pertaining to the public domain (see Toker 1997). *The European Tribe* contains many journalistic passages that lack the subjective and commenting narrator. Thus various compilations of factual materials pertaining to the public domain are occasionally referred to in the narration “objectively” without a personal narrator. For example, the contemporary knowledge

presented in newspapers and pieces of information received from academic studies (such as opinion polls, studies on attitudes towards immigration in European states, statistics, historical documents) are briefly summarised in many passages. This is done in order to shape a reliable contemporary view of the places the protagonist travels around.

Typically, the narration shifts occasionally to the impersonal mode of the journalistic account quoting accurate and meticulous statistical facts and historical dates:

Over 800 years of Anglo-Irish conflict has finally been reduced to a struggle for control of six of the eight counties of Ulster. The province is heavily dependent on mainland Britain, taking from the Treasury pounds 1.5 billion more than it sends back in taxes. (ET: 74)

In the similar vein, the statistics and studies of the attitudes of the Norwegians towards immigrants are listed:

The non-whites constitute only 0.35 per cent of population, yet a recent poll in the daily newspaper *Aftenposten* showed that 87 per cent of Norwegians did not want any more immigrant workers to enter into the country; 33 per cent preferred not to see immigrant workers in the streets, 52 per cent wanted them to abandon their cultural traditions and adjust to Norwegian life; and 94 % per cent of them said that they wouldn't welcome an immigrant to their homes. (ET: 102)

In a prose narrative, facts are used either as elements of composition or objects of comprehension (Zavarzadeh 1976: 58). By stating such numerical facts Phillips illustrates the xenophobic attitudes prevailing in the Nordic countries. In its demonstration of the hostility of Norwegians, the text underlines such adjectives, verbs and phrases that iteratively employ the "negative" rhetoric (e.g. the emphasis repeatedly on such negations as "did not want", "would not welcome"). Consequently, the ordering of the scientific material is didactic: the reader is "instructed" to be convinced of the hostile attitudes. Here, the mere reference to these "cold" facts, even if reduced to statistics, evokes and illustrates in compact form the coldness of Norwegians towards "strangers".

The presence of the African students in the coldness of the Moscow winter is also made as a statement without a first-person narrator: “They [Soviets] know that to give a man knowledge (especially in the Russian tongue) places that man in their debt for ever. (...) The provider may well have become the colonizer” (ET: 118). On the other hand, although *The European Tribe* often employs the “objective” non-personal journalistic discourse exemplified above, the narration also shifts flexibly into the mode of literary journalism since the autobiographical protagonist’s opinions and reminiscences are often expressed by the first-person narrator. Thus, as a hybrid form of *narrative literary journalism* (Hartsock 2000: 11), *The European Tribe* refers to immediate historical and contemporary actualities which are presented from the viewpoint of a subjective autobiographical narrator. According to David Spurr (1993: 8–10, 15, 93), with the presence of the writer as part of the narrative scene, claiming a “subjective and independent status” and deriving authority from the direct encounter with real events, literary journalism lacks implied distance between the author and the first-person narrator, and is avowedly autobiographical. In fact, subjective forms such as diary and autobiographical form are typically employed in literary journalism as a narrative device. Mainly, *The European Tribe* resembles participatory journalism in which the journalist’s openly acknowledged subjectivity is present in the foreground of the text (see Hartsock 2000: 17). The text includes many episodes where a subjective narrator stops to comment on his past experiences and present reactions.

For example, when visiting Amsterdam the author’s memories are immersed in a narration that otherwise employs the present-tense documentary formula:

I was about fifteen when Amsterdam first began to fascinate me. There was a programme on television, (...) which dealt with the Nazi occupation of Holland and the subsequent rounding up of the Jews – One thing I could not understand about the programme was why, when instructed to wear the yellow Star of David on their clothes, the Jews complied. They looked just like any other white people to me, so who would know that they were different? (ET: 66)

In literary journalism events and objective reporting are often transformed into a story or sketch by the use of narrative and rhetorical devices more often associated with fiction (Connery 1992: xiv; Hartsock 2000: 10–11). Similarly, *The*

European Tribe contains vivid dialogues, stories, reminiscences, anecdotes and some dramatic turning points that resemble the narrative techniques used in fiction. This is demonstrated specifically in the author's depictions of the racist incidents. These are portrayed as vivid sketches and structured around everyday dramas which the narrator encounters. Thus, the autobiographical protagonist depicts vividly and ironically his emotive reactions and responses.

For instance, he describes the racist reactions that his sheer presence causes such as in Munich, where the Germans gaped at the colour of his skin: "As though I had just committed an awful crime, or was about to cannibalize a small child. I began to stare back and conduct imaginary arguments. 'My skin was not burned in Europe,' I murmured silently" (*ET*: 83). The same chapter includes a description of a breakfast scene where the narrator is sitting in front of a German woman who stares at him but refuses to talk to him. The text captures the gestures and the facial expressions, and the texture of dialogues that designate the racism the protagonist encounters:

Having finished her breakfast, she pushed her plate noisily across the table and the waitress appeared. 'The Schwarze,' said the woman, making no attempt to lower her voice. 'Good morning,' she said, with the chilling deliberation of a spinster-murderer. She left the breakfast room. I left Munich. (*ET*: 83)

The meeting with the French Socialist Government expert on North African affairs is recorded ironically as an absurd rhetorical play of omissions and misconceptions:

I asked him if the route was a monopoly. He asked me if I was a student. For the second time I told him that I was a writer. As I asked if he spoke Arabic, the phone rang. (...) When he put the phone down he asked me which college I was attending. Seeing no way out of this conversational impasse, I returned to my earlier question and asked if he spoke Arabic. He leant back in his chair, knitted his fingers together, popped them into an arch and asked me if I was not aware that North Africans spoke French as well. I smiled. (*ET*: 59-60)

The protagonist is everywhere surrounded by racist comments and gestures. These intrusions are presented as short scenes or dramas.

In Dublin the protagonist meets the Archbishop, who explains that Flora Shaw who gave Nigeria its name, was born in the house that they have met. Afterwards, the word is ironically echoed in the streets of Dublin, where even the poorest of the poor are quick to point out his racial inferiority:

He [the Archbishop] paused, then rolled the words around his mouth, as though savouring a good wine. 'Niger'area. Nigeria'. (...) That evening I passed a gaunt young woman squatting up against a wall on O'Connell Street. 'Twenty pence for my child, mister.' Her voice was lyrical. I had no change so I walked on. She shouted after me, 'Hey mister, you're a nigger!' (ET: 82)

In his definition of a nonfiction novel Dan Wakefield emphasises “the fusion of the journalist’s eye for detail and the personal vision of the novelist.” In such reporting the author presents the sights, sounds and feelings surrounding “facts”, and connects them by comparison with other facts of history, society, and literature in an artistic manner that gives great depth and dimension to the facts. (Wakefield 1974: 41; see also Lehtimäki 2005: 123.) Similar vivifying and restorative tactics are also used in travel books and literary journalism. Tom Wolfe defines literary journalism to contain, for instance, dramatic scenes, recordings of dialogue and “status details” and uses of point of view in complex ways. According to Wolfe, the fictional devices that have been frequently employed in literary journalism have been internal monologue, or the presentation of what a character thinks and feels without the use of direct speech. Literary journalism also uses a composite characterisation and such literary techniques as flashbacks, foreshadowing and inverted chronology. (See Hollowell 1977: 26; Wolfe 1973; Zavarzadeh 1976: 86.) Some of these literary devices can also be detected in *The European Tribe*. For example, the book contains sketches of dramatic incidents and dialogues, flashbacks and inverted chronology and the presentation of the narrator’s emotional responses. Facts are also used in order to communicate the writer’s private reading of racist reality in Europe. Narrating the autobiographical experiences of racism makes the phenomenon more accessible to the reader.

Although Phillips principally examines “Europe” as a construct, he also examines non-Europeans as imagined Western constructs. The first chapter of *The European Tribe* deals with the author’s visit to Casablanca in Morocco, where

Phillips points at the issue of “media colonisation” (ET: 10). The protagonist views Casablanca as an example of the fictionalised city, object of the orientalist gaze and the power of Hollywood marketing. In the film *Casablanca* (1942), the middle-aged pianist Dooley Wilson was described dismissively with a racist rhetoric of slavery as a “boy” and Moroccan people are anonymous or invisible in the film. (ET: 16–17.) The narration also follows ironically the lyrics of the famous melody “As time goes by” in *Casablanca* to undermine Hollywood’s outdated images of nationalities and ‘race’ (ET: 17). After the comments on the fictional representation of Morocco, the narrative shifts again to an “objective” journalistic mode, when the protagonist compares Hollywood’s orientalist images to the statistical facts of present-day Morocco:

According to the World Bank, 12 million of Morocco’s 25 million people live below the poverty line (...) One in five is unemployed, and a large percentage of children between the ages of seven and twelve are exploited in small manufacturing establishments and mines, working ten-hour days for food and lodgings. (ET: 15)

Literary journalism is also a hermeneutic act as Thomas Connery has claimed. It does not just record and report, it also interprets. This is also done by subjectively putting details and impressions inappropriate for the standard newspaper article into a storytelling form (Connery 1990: 6; Hartsock 2000: 54). On the other hand, it should be borne in mind that the traditional means of gathering information and its analysis and synthesis are also available to essayists and anthropologists, or other scholars, as Hartsock (2000: 31) points out. This epistemological issue also makes the boundaries of various nonfiction writings flexible.

Above I have illustrated some journalistic elements occurring in *The European Tribe*. On the other hand, it has been seen problematic to make a clear distinction between literary journalism and travel narratives employing similar literary devices. In fact, etymologically ‘journalism’ suggests a hybrid position, as the term derives from the idea of “journey” and it also refers to the passage of the diurnal (Hartsock 2000: 12–13). A strict separation is not necessary in the case of *The European Tribe*, as here these genres are closely connected. Indeed, literary journalism as a mode is closely akin to the tradition of travel literature,

where the local colour sketches yield examples that rely on fictional techniques. Moreover, often these sketches also serve for novelists as warm-up exercises for short stories and novels (Hollowell 1977: 34). Phillips in his fiction has also re-worked the issues presented in *The European Tribe*.

3 Autobiographical Testing of Racism

Earlier I noted that the book is written in the form of a cultural autobiography, which is a typical genre of minority writers. *The European Tribe* can be viewed in the context of the black autobiographical and essay writing that has been a prominent form in the Black American and Caribbean tradition.⁶ The importance of ancestral connections and community rootedness characterises black autobiographies. They have been important devices for preserving cultural memory while at the same time challenging oppression by mainstream societies. (Stover 2003: 34.) According to Ledent (2002: 2), Phillips's belief in writing as a medium for individual and collective self-definition may explain his constant desire to reinterpret history in his writings.

It has been regarded as typical for ethnic minorities to give a sense of collective, rather than individualistic identity that has been claimed to be typical for Western autobiographies (Stover 2003: 29–30; Pratt 1992: 213). Yet, paradoxically, an “individualising” tendency is also discernible. For many ethnic minority writers it has also been important to accentuate the subjectivity that has been denied in the mainstream national discourses and media representations. This forefronting of subjectivity in ethnic and postcolonial writing is often linked to resistance of the objectified versions of history and journalism. In addition, it is also reminiscent of the technique of literary journalism that reverses the mainstream factual journalism which in its objectification was attempting to deny or neutralise subjectivity. (Hartsock 2000: 52.) In *The European Tribe*, this accentuating of subjectivity is actually visually reinforced by the dominating portrait of the writer on the cover of the book.

⁶ Phillips also retraces the wanderings of the Caribbean Claude McKay from Morocco to Moscow in his book *Long Way Home* (see Dash 1998: 57).

It has been claimed that the focus in black men's autobiographies is more on individual-centered celebrations of emancipation than in the black women's autobiographies, which demonstrate more closely the ties to family and community (Stover 2003: 28–29). Similarly, *The European Tribe* is mainly written from the “typically individualistic” male perspective: a lonely man travelling around and meeting trials that test his identity and masculinity. The emphasis of the narration is often on individualistic battles against racism. The protagonist scarcely mentions his family, although he refers to the Caribbean migrant community in Britain. On the other hand, the treatment of the racial issues also extends to the communal experience. This is signified in the narration, for example, as the rhetorical shifting from the use of the ‘I’ of the writer to the plural ‘we’ of a community to express acts of anti-racist resistance.

Like many black writers across the Atlantic, Phillips records his personal and painful history of experiencing racism since his childhood. The narrator, for example, recalls an English teacher making a joke of his mixed origin:

‘Phillips’, he mused, ‘you must be from Wales.’ The whole class laughed, while I stared back at him stony-faced, knowing full well that I was not from Wales. I had no idea where I was from as I had been told that I was born in the Caribbean but came from England. I could not participate in a joke which made my identity a source of humour. (*ET*: 2)

Europe is used as a laboratory, where the protagonist casts himself as the experimental object of racism. Phillips speaks from “inside” his material, as a participant with an intimate knowledge (see Toker 1997: 207). The protagonist decides, for example, to test the ultimate form of racism by travelling up to Norway, which has scarcely any immigrants. He goes there in order to test masochistically his “niggerness” to see how many of their ideas about black people he himself subconsciously believed:

But, I asked myself, what happens 300 miles inside the Arctic Circle in mid-December, with nothing but reindeers and Lapps for many miles in any direction? I knew they would stare, for it is unlikely that many of them would have ever seen a black person before. Only then would I find out how much power, if any, was stored away in the historical battery that feeds my own sense of identity. (*ET*: 102)

In Norway the protagonist confronts a woman in a petrol station who is scared to see a black man and even drops the petrol hose in shock (ET: 104). On the other hand, the protagonist has to question his “romantic” views of Nordic remoteness. As Phillips enters a nightclub in Tromssa he notes how his “experiment” went drastically wrong: the first person he met was a Trinidadian woman. Therefore, “he had underestimated Caribbean diaspora” (ET: 103).

4 Essayistic Mode

When constructing an alternative history and the dark side of Europe, Phillips critically reflects on the representations of nations and cities in media, popular culture, fiction and films, too. An ongoing essayistic dialogue with the fictional descriptions of Europe is discernible in the book. The European nations and ethnicities are explored as “imagined and fictional communities” in the spirit of postcolonial theories. In the Fanonian sense, the autobiographical “I” is aware that as a “black man” he is also a “construction” and “imagined being” in the Western racist imagination, collective unconsciousness. In the final chapter the narrator, for example, comments: “Ultimately, the one certainty for Europe is that she knows a ‘nigger’ when she sees one: she should – they were a figment of her imagination, a product of her creative mind” (ET: 121).

In postcolonial theories nations are approached as texts and narratives that legitimate and re-invent themselves through acts of narration. As novels, poems and films are parts of the cultural construction of nations their analysis is also significant for understanding of national identities (Nyman 2000: 14; Bhabha 1990: 3–4). Postcolonial studies have pointed out the colonial and nationalistic ideologies inscribed in Western fiction. On the other hand, fiction has also offered alternatives to the dominant images of nations and nationalities. In his search for alternatives to the dominant representations of European nations and minorities, Phillips also resorts to literary references. Interestingly, migration and the history of racial oppression in Europe are displayed by having a dialogue with such writing as *The Diary of Anne Frank* and Shakespeare’s plays. For example, the narrative shifts to the essay form as the writer makes his own liter-

ary interpretation of *Othello*. Othello's "exotic" figure is discussed as an example of the social and cultural alien as an ambivalent explorer of the European scene. Othello's fate also demonstrates the danger of a mixed marriage. The crossing over "racial" and "ethnic lines" triggers ethnocentrism. It is dangerous for Othello to forget his blackness: "Othello has married into the society, the commonest form of acceptance. It is now that the tragedy commences. But it can only do so because it is precisely at this moment of 'triumph' that Othello begins to forget that he is black" (*ET*: 48). According to Ledent (2002: 159–160), traditionally Othello has been regarded as a victim of masculine jealousy. By contrast, Phillips in his reading makes us see Othello's tragedy from the Moor's point of view, and in the context of the discrimination suffered by fifteenth-century Jews. In the next chapter the narrative shifts from the literary essay to a more autobiographical mode as the protagonist starts to make comparisons between Shakespeare's imagined Venice in *Othello* and in *The Merchant of Venice*, and Venice in the 1980's. The narrator regards the Jewish protagonist Shylock in *The Merchant of Venice* as a hero resisting marginalisation. These fictional protagonists serve to demonstrate the oppression of blacks and Jews in the sixteenth century. The author also reminds the reader that the Venetian ghetto that was created in 1516 has been the model for other ghettos and also that some Venetian Jews were taken to die in the concentration camps of the Holocaust (*ET*: 52).

Paul Gilroy (1996: 26) has claimed that an interactive approach to the blacks and Jews could provide exceptional heuristic tools for understanding the mechanisms of modern racism. In *The European Tribe*, as well as in his fiction, Phillips often explores discrimination against Jews and blacks in Europe.⁷ In the chapter dealing with Amsterdam in the light of *The Diary of Anne Frank*, the autobiographical narrator describes how he was appalled by the fate of the Jews in the Holocaust: "If white men could do that to white people, then what the hell would they do to me" (*ET*: 67). This chapter also criticises the Hollywoodisation of the Holocaust and its prominence in American tourists' comments as they

⁷ In his sympathy for Jews, Phillips concurs with the Caribbean thinking, where the analogy between the captivity of the Afro-Caribbean and Jewish peoples is a traditional one. For example, Rastafarian ideology sees the black man as a captive in white Babylon. Jewish characters are often portrayed in West Indian fiction and Jewish archetypal homelessness has been regarded as typical of West Indian identity, too. (Ledent 2002: 69)

visit Auschwitz: “Gee, they’re gonna die back home when they hear I’ve been to a real concentration camp” (ET: 98). In contrast, Phillips notes wryly that the American tourists were used to Hollywood’s appropriation of the Holocaust as source material for popular entertainment such as the actor Kirk Douglas’s joking in the film *Cast a Giant Shadow* (1966): “We’ve been knocking off a lot of guys who’ve been making soap out of my relatives” (ET: 98).

5 Postcolonial Rhetorical Devices: Us/Them

Next I will take a short glimpse at the positioning of the subjectivity in the narration and the intertwining of the personal, ethnic and national identities in *The European Tribe*. In postcolonial writing grammatical codes also entail politics and commitment to a particular group or viewpoint (Fraser 2000: 65). The final chapter especially indicates how the personal pronoun (“I”, “you”, “we”, etc.) may be used as a strategy of postcolonial “resistance”. The summary of the journey employs the accusatory mode and the rhetorical device of second person addressee to affect the listener: “The legitimate response to hostile European eyes is, ‘Well, you shouldn’t have gone there in the first place. And if you hadn’t caused so much misery and underdevelopment down there, I might not be here now’” (ET: 126). Here the play with personal pronouns, shifting from first-person to second-person narration is utilised as a rhetorically persuasive device. The rhetorical use of parallelism in the construction of the clauses each beginning with second-person plural heightens the accusation:

You justify your Empire, your actions, your thought with your ‘civilization’, forgetting that in this century, in the Congo, Belgians chopped off black hands and feet as legal punishment for under-production. (...) As I write, *your* cousins in South Africa, a distant European tribe, prepare to fight for their economic future by killing black women and children in cold blood. Your eyesight is defective. Europe is blinded by her past, and does not understand the high price of her churches, art galleries and architecture. (ET: 128)

The following episode illustrates the display of the autobiographical voice engaging dialogically with the presumed European audience that is reluctant to recognise everyday racism. It has been claimed that white speakers use the rhetorics of discursive avoidance in order to protect themselves from the unspoken accusation of 'prejudice' (Shotter & Billig 1998: 21). The text also quotes the statement by the French politician Jean-Marie le Pen (who is well-known for his neo-Nazi sympathies): "I'm not an anti-Semite. On the other hand I don't feel obliged to like Madame Veil, Chagall's paintings or Mahler's music" (*ET*: 60). This phrase represents an advance justification against the criticism of being prejudiced. This is often used in the racist rhetoric, too (Billig 1991: 129). A similar kind of white response is imagined in the text in the Bakhtinian form of "inner polemics" or "inner dialogue". The autobiographical narrator anticipates the objections that his critique of racism will cause in the British public. This is illustrated by the narrator who is debating with the self and the "imagined" white audience:

I can almost hear the objections as I write. 'You really can't be accusing intelligent, educated people of the ignorance you associate with blind bigotry?' However, the truth is that it is precisely these people that I am accusing above all. While I was still a student, somebody wrote 'Go home, nigger' on the college notice board next to my name. (*ET*: 125)

According to Pratt (1993: 7), the autoethnographic texts are addressed both to the metropolitan readers and to the speaker's own ethnic group. This double audience is especially obvious in the last chapter, where the narrator, who is European himself, now takes a clear distance from Europeans and identifies himself, instead, with the marginalised black people in Europe and/or with non-Europeans. The narration employs the didactic style of the sermon, aimed at producing an effect that will lead the hearers to contrition.

A characteristic feature of the sermonic mode is an acute awareness of the interlocutor, the audience to whom the speech is addressed. It is also a direct authorial discourse, which expresses the intention of the speaker. The repetitive mode signifies the accusatory message. Consequently, the effect of the audience-directed rhetoric is strong and emotive. The second-person narrative form used in speech is rarely employed in literary texts outside dialogue. Here the pronoun

“we” refers both to the speaker and the non-western people and “you” signifies the implied Western readers of the text. Phillips employs this accusatory mode only in the final chapter to highlight his message addressed to the European or Western reader.

According to Barbara Korte (2000: 161), the final sentence of *The European Tribe* alludes to imperialist travel, explicitly rejecting the nineteenth-century missionary pose. However, this rejection is conveyed by the use of the sermonic mode. In the final paragraph the identification with black Europeans is demonstrated in the use of the first-person plural as a rhetorical device. The homogenisation of the concept of Europe also operates here as a rhetorical device:

Europe must begin to restructure the tissue of lies that continues to be taught and digested at school and at home for we, black people, are an inextricable part of this small continent. And Europeans must learn to understand this for themselves, for there are among us few who are here as missionaries. (*ET*: 129)

It has been claimed that the nation-state is reproduced as an imagined community rhetorically in everyday discourse, also by little words such as ‘we’ and ‘the’ that deictically assume the national borders (Shotter & Billig 1998: 20). As shown above, Phillips also plays with such oppositions as we/you. Even the definite article in the title of the book puts ironic emphasis on the imagined homogenous borders of the continent.

In the text the facts are also used for their rhetorical effects in order to represent the anti-racist and the anti-colonialist vision of the writer. Thus, the compositional uses of facts also authenticate the artist’s political vision (e.g. Zavarzadeh 1976: 62). In the final chapter the protagonist also prophesies the future of Europe after journeying among European migrants. According to him, there will be riots when the second generation of migrants start to resist and relate themselves with the struggles in the Third World (*ET*: 123).

Although the final chapter of *The European Tribe* can be read as a warning, the text also provides views and alternative moral choices that help in the building of multicultural Europe. Jopi Nyman recognises in *The European Tribe* suggestions of “the ethics of coexistence”. According to Bhabha, this ethics stems “from the social space which has to be communally shared with ‘others,’ and

from which solidarity is not simply based on similarity but on the recognition of difference” (Nyman 2000: 196; Bhabha 1996: 211). This ethical dimension is illustrated, for instance, in the scene, where a drunken Norwegian asks the protagonist “how black and white can grow to understand each other”. Here the protagonist answers: “I could only tell him the truth: we already did but that a touch of mutual respect always helped” (*ET*: 105).

6 Conclusion

Phillips can be viewed in the context of the Black intellectual tradition across Atlantic (e.g. in Britain, Latin America, West Indies and the U.S.) that has decentred ways of understanding the constitution of Europe and the West in their exploration of the issues of racism and anti-fascism and their relationship to nationalisms (Gilroy 1996: 18, 26). Finally, Phillips comments that it is not healthy to spend one’s whole European life conscious of “colour” (*ET*: 125). The exploration convinces the reader how pervasive a form of thinking, acting and verbal abuse racism is in Europe. The book also demonstrates the signs of banal nationalism and outdated forms of colonial thinking and colonial mimicry in present-day Europe. For example, the Gibraltarian weather forecast concentrates absurdly on the British weather, whereas the Spanish weather is not mentioned: “Today in London it was 26 degrees, on the Rock we had a high of 29 degrees, in Manchester it was 24 degrees” (*ET*: 27).

Phillips is interested in the narrative power of “facts” in his exploration of the gaps between facts, realities and historical truths. When investigating truth claims Phillips thus manages to debate the factual adequacies of European discourses. However, he does not totally abandon the factographic discourse as he also adopts factual material in his discussion of the forms of racism and migrancy in Europe. For example, the use of statistical reports conveys the intensity of the xenophobic attitudes in European countries and serves as corroborative evidence for the anti-racist statements of the book. The documentary testimonial of the book is engendered by weaving the narrative web from interviews, official documents and autobiographical sketches.

Postcolonial theories have emphasised that history has been “owned” by the dominant facts and historiographies. Such writers as Phillips, who writes from the minority position, display and displace the power structures in the historiography and also point out the constructiveness in the contemporary “delivery” of facts in various media. Interestingly, John Hartsock (2000: 180) has pointed out the complicated issue of the objectiveness of the facts: “Facts can only be understood once there is a reflexive understanding of feeling or subjectivity that determines which facts are to be valued” (see also Lehtimäki 2005: 64). In this cognitive process, the autobiographical mode is a useful postcolonial writing strategy. Phillips rewrites contemporary and historical Europe from the various sources and fragments. In this, he appropriates sociological facts, facts from the newspapers, the evidence of his own eyes, dialogues and events during his trip and also fictional imaginations of European minorities and nations. Thus Phillips brings together in his generic collage the devices of journalistic, autobiographic and essay writing. Moreover, the scrutiny and negotiation of the boundaries between fact and fiction is also the narrative strategy of some of Phillips’s novels.⁸ In his later fiction Phillips has continued to probe the themes presented in *The European Tribe*. For instance, *The Nature of Blood* (1997) focuses on European history and shares the interest in the figures of Anne Frank and Othello.

Finally, when it comes to the relationship between facts and fiction, Phillips has later insisted that artists should not sell their products as “truths” or “facts” but as single views of historical incidents, imaginative reconstructions, subject to factual errors, to decisions that had to be made to accentuate the drama (ANWO: 85).

⁸ For instance, Ledent (2002: 49) states that in Phillips’s novel *The State of Independence* (1986), the journalistic accuracy highlights the novel’s autobiographical dimension, but also probes the boundaries between fiction and reality.

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PUBLICATION II

Postcolonial and Ethnic Studies in the Context of Nordic Minority Literatures

Eila Rantonen & Matti Savolainen

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Postcolonial and ethnic studies in the context of Nordic minority literatures

Eila Rantonen & Matti Savolainen

Setting the agenda

Postcolonial and ethnic studies have offered new frameworks for the analysis of national and cultural minorities. This means a subversive change also in literary studies since the assumptions about the universal features of aesthetics, style, language, epistemologies and value systems are all radically questioned by the postcolonial and ethnic writing and theories.

In fact, the postcolonial perspective offers new conceptualisations of Nordic writing. In order to understand the contemporary position of Nordic minority literatures, we have to rethink the traditional ideas of Nordic national boundaries and national identities. Traditionally, the Nordic countries have not been situated in the history of colonialism in the Western historiography. Compared with the major imperial powers such as Britain, France, and the Netherlands, the involvement of the Nordic countries in colonial enterprise outside Europe has been limited. Yet both Denmark and Sweden entertained colonial interests in the West Indies and were involved in slave trade in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.² Even more so on European ground, the many Nordic national minorities, such as the Sámi people, Inuits and Faroese have for a long time resisted colonisation by the dominant Nordic majorities. Moreover, during the Second World War the British occupied the Faroese islands, while USA occupied Iceland and Greenland.³ The Nordic countries have also ruled over each other during the centuries. For example, Iceland became independent as recently as 1944. In fact, many Icelandic scholars appropriate the term »colonialism« also in the Icelandic context.⁴

Postcolonial studies examine the intersection of knowledge and power. Consequently, colonial violence is understood as including an »epistemic« aspect, i.e.

*One madman asked me
How it is?
Does Sámi language belong to you?
Perhaps it is only a golden
language of linguists, teachers,
consultants, professors
I hit him straight in the eye with my
forefinger*

Kirsti Paltto 1997¹

1. Cited in Finnish by Vuokko Hirvonen (1999:70). English trans. E.R.

2. For Sweden, see Sjöström 1999: 41–57.

3. Greenland is also a tempting site for neo-colonialism as there are many rare minerals that can be used in warfare such as cryolite and uranium.

4. See Njardvik's (1985:70–72) article »Katsaus Islannin nykykirjallisuuteen« in *Färsaarten, Grönlannin Islannin ja Saamen kirjallisuus*.

an attack on the culture, ideas and value systems of the colonised peoples.⁵ Subsequently, this also politicises literary studies and fictional expressions. For instance, postcolonial critics have emphasised how national and geopolitical interests have left their impact on Western literary institutions.⁶

From the start, postcolonial critics have problematised the relationship between the centre/margins or centre/periphery, which can be articulated through other similar dichotomies such as majority/minority, white/black, West/East, us/them (see Savolainen 1995:12–19, Granqvist 1999:7–17). This has resulted in new conceptualisation of »ethnicity«, »regionality« and »locality«. Within the framework of the centre/margin model it is possible to perceive a tension or an imbalance between southern and northern parts of Sweden, Finland, and Norway. In Finland and Norway, for example, the discourse has focused explicitly on colonial terms on the conflict between the industrialised and urbanised South and the undeveloped, mostly rural North, with the North providing material resources and cheap labour for the benefit of the South (Ripatti and Kähkölä 1970, Brox 1984).

The recent emphasis on the regional, diasporic and migrant literatures and intersecting ethnic, cultural, political and gendered identities has also made contemporary Western literary studies more cross-cultural, interdisciplinary and international. The ideas of culture, history, language, nation and identity are in a process of transformation. This dynamic movement creates innovative methodological insights into literary analysis from the Nordic perspective.

The concepts of »ethnicity«, »locality«, and »regionality« are useful in postcolonial analysis. In fact, some scholars see the »politics of location«⁷ or »cultural identity« as more valuable than the term »postcolonial« when studying different positionalities of ethnic minorities. In fact, in the Nordic context the concept »ethnicity« may often be theoretically more explanatory than »postcolonial« analysis. However, the focus on ethnicity is a relatively recent phenomenon in Nordic literary studies and it can also be intertwined with postcolonial analysis.

The rise of ethnic studies has been connected to the political debates of the late 1960s in the Western world. For example, many non-Western cultures, indigenous cultures and also many Western minorities were the topic of study in anthropology departments in Western universities, but not in literary departments. Moreover, the academies tended to marginalise the studies of ethnic and national minorities by »exoticising«, »problematising« and »pathologising« them (Gutierrez 1994:157–158). The result of this discrimination was that the national and ethnic minorities started to demand that the curriculum should reflect their own presence and history. Thus they began to oppose the curricular colonialism that had previously characterised the academic study of minorities. In the United

5. Loomba 1998:54. The term »epistemic violence« (or »epistemic violation«) was introduced to the postcolonial and minority discourse by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak. See Spivak 1987/88:154–155, 171–172 and Spivak 1990:102, 126, 151.

6. For instance, Said is very overt in his criticism of contemporary Western imperialism. See Said 1993.

7. Originally Adrienne Rich's term in her (1984) article »Politics of Location«, which appeared in *Blood, Bread, and Poetry: Selected Prose, 1979–1985*.

States in the 1960s, for instance, many universities created programs and departments devoted to the study of particular ethnic groups.⁸

We can also find some parallels of this political uprise of national and ethnic minorities in Nordic countries. For instance, the Sámi people's civil rights movement was very strong at the end of 1960s and at the beginning of 1970s. In addition, a new generation of Inuit writers, who were ready to struggle for Inuit political and cultural identity and also emphasised their indigenous identity, emerged in the Greenland of the 1960s and 1970s (Hirvonen 1994:109, Rajala and Thisted 1997:551).

It is important that we explore how ethnic identity is constructed and reconstructed over time, internally and externally. However, it is also important to be aware that even the word »ethnic« can be related to Western ethnocentrism. It used to mean non-Christian and pagan (Sollors 1995:288). Not surprisingly, the art forms today that are called ethnic (such as the *yoik* music), were formerly often called »pagan« expressions.

In the following essay, we will outline postcolonial, ethnic and minority studies and try to situate them in the context of Nordic writing. Even though our main focus lies on the historically old and/or indigenous minorities in the Nordic countries, some consideration will also be given to the more recent migrants and diasporic peoples in Scandinavia. Among the Nordic countries, Sweden has the highest percentage of migrants, reaching approximately ten percent of the total population, while Finland has the fewest, approximately 1.4 percent (Huss and Lindgren 1999:300).

Locating resisting and postcolonial representations

The term »postcolonial« has been viewed as problematic if it is restricted only to studies of the national literatures that have become »postcolonial« in the sense of becoming free from colonialism. Subsequently, it is claimed that the term »postcolonial« has ignored the numerous colonising operations still taking place. In fact, for many national groups there may be nothing »post« about colonialism at all. For instance, colonisation has been seen as a continuing process in the Sámi region and in Greenland. However, in postcolonial theories the prefix »post« does not suggest so much the sense of after-colonialism but refers to the continuities and discontinuities of colonialist practices down to the present day.⁹ For instance, postcolonial theories are also employed in studying the literatures of the Baltic countries, which consider themselves to be in the process of decolonisation in the 1990s.¹⁰

8. In the United States the 1980s proved to be the decade of retrenchments. Yet by the end of the 1980s, ethnic studies started to be reinvigorated. It reflected the era of decolonisation of most areas of the world (Gutierrez 1994:160–161).

9. Shohat and Stam 1994:38, Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin 1989:2.

10. Cf. Juris Silenieki's (1991) article »Decolonisation and Renewal of Latvian Letters«, and Violeta Kelertas's (1998) article »Perceptions of the Self and the Other in Lithuanian Postcolonial Fiction«.

Furthermore, postcolonial theories aim to transcend strict binaries such as coloniser/colonised. Although deconstructing colonising strategies, postcolonial criticism also recognises the plurality of contacts between the coloniser and the colonised. Thus it is important to examine literatures that have been produced in bilingual or multilingual mixed ethnic societies.

Anti-colonial struggles have not, however, disappeared from postcolonial analysis. Forms of resistance that oppressed cultures and nations have developed to cope with the hierarchical situation are one focus of postcolonial studies. Locations of cultural and political resistance can also be intertwined with hybrid and multicultural positions. In the cultural and social sphere the struggle can also be seen in terms of resistance to »internal colonisation«, a conscious challenging and critique of the mental habits, norms, and values of the former coloniser and master.¹¹ In minority positions the struggle against and the negotiation with the hegemonic culture is of crucial importance.

Postcolonialism, poststructuralism and postmodernism emerged as related topics of engagement during the 1980s. From the beginning postcolonial theory was deeply informed by literary theory,¹² even though the early writers on colonisation and decolonisation were primarily socially and politically motivated (e.g. Frantz Fanon and Albert Memmi). The crucial study for postcolonial criticism has been Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1978), in which Said describes the hierarchy between West and East, with the West representing knowledge and power over the East. In his study, Said examines how the Orient has been represented in Western scientific, political and historical discourses as »a style of thought based upon an ontological and epistemological distinction between 'the Orient' and (most of the time) 'the Occident'«. ¹³ Orientalism is the product of eurocentrism, which has cut the world into »the West and the Rest« and created binary hierarchies implicitly flattering to Europe: *our* nations, *their* tribes; *our* religions, *their* superstitions; *our* culture, *their* folklore; *our* art, *their* artefacts; *our* demonstrations, *their* riots; *our* defence, *their* terrorism, as Ella Shohat and Robert Stam describe biased eurocentric thinking (Shohat and Stam 1994:2).

While Said's *Orientalism* was concerned with the Western production and manipulation of knowledge of the Orient, Valentine Y. Mudimbe's *The Invention of Africa* (1988) explored the West's epistemological appropriation and exploitation of Africa and the constitution of an African order of knowledge. According to Mudimbe, eurocentrism testifies to »epistemological determinism« which tends to repress otherness in the name of sameness and to reduce the different to the already known (Mudimbe 1988:72–73). It is »the imperial power of the Same«

11. Cf. Ngugi's idea of »decolonising the mind« as an extreme move (Ngugi 1986).

12. In fact, many famous postcolonial theoreticians have also been labelled as poststructuralists (e.g. Edward Said, Gayatri Spivak and Homi K. Bhabha).

13. Said 1978/1995:2. As such, Orientalism represents a mode of discourse with supporting institutions, vocabulary, scholarship, imagery, doctrines, and even colonial bureaucracies and styles.

which transforms differences into Western categories and norms and reduces differences into a Western historicity (Mudimbe 1988:20, 22).

The epistemic violence which has been inflicted on indigenous peoples and non-white races all over the world has been concomitant with a more vicious suppression and discrimination and has, in many cases, legitimated actual violence and even genocide. In his controversial book *»Exterminate All the Brutes«* (1996), Sven Lindqvist has stirred up Western complacency by arguing that there is a direct connection between historical colonial practices and contemporary racism and xenophobia in Europe.

In fact, Greenland and Lapland have represented the non-West or even the East in the farthest »North«. Significantly, the academic branches called »Eskimology« and »Lappology« were being established at the same time as »Orientalism«. Consequently, Eskimology and Lappology also became like Orientalism a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and exerting authority over the Sámi Land and Kalaallit Nunaat.¹⁴

The close examination of the processes of location as recreation provides space for developing new methodologies and epistemologies. In fact, Cultural Studies have also favoured the concept of »the politics of representation«, that signifies the deconstruction of margin and centre. The politics of representation describes a situation where minorities are trying to represent themselves in their marginal position, where the dominant discourses have situated them (Hall 1992:308–309). This marginal position and acts of resistance have offered creative approaches both in dominant and marginalised culture. In fact, minority identity can be both bond and bondage. As Carole Boyce Davies (1994:154) states, »one's location may be a site of creativity and re-memory; exploration, challenge, instability or it may be a site of further repression«.

In Nordic countries Sámi people and Inuits started to resist their misrepresentations early in the twentieth century, for example, by naming themselves Sápmelas (Sámi people) and Inuits. Thus they rejected the terms »Lapp« and »Eskimo« that were given to them by outsiders and which included negative, even racist connotations. Already from the beginning of the same century, Sámi people began to represent themselves by creating their own organisations, newspapers and literature, in which they stressed that their history, culture and language differed from the dominant Nordic cultures (Hirvonen 1999:85–87, 245). Nordic indigenous cultures criticised early on the way in which they were treated as objects of ethnography. In film, the Sámi voice has been heard from the 1980s on with a strong critique of dominant representations of Sámi culture: e.g. in Nils

14. For Lappology, see Lehtola 1997: 47–49 and Hirvonen 1999:33–35. Kalaallit Nunaat, meaning »Men's Land«, is Inuit for Greenland.

Gaup's *Ofelas/The Pathfinder* (1987) and Paul Anders Simma's *Sagojogan ministeri/The Minister of Sagojoga* (1996).

New conceptualisation of regionality

Postcolonial analysis seems to be especially appropriate when studying indigenous literatures in the Nordic countries, even though Western »mainstream« postcolonial studies barely mention Nordic minorities. Despite this, Sámi scholars such as Veli-Pekka Lehtola and Vuokko Hirvonen have willingly employed the concept of »postcolonial« in their literary studies.¹⁵

In fact, both Sámi and Inuit writing¹⁶ can be situated both in the context of the literature of indigenous peoples and colonial literature. Indigenous peoples share similar historical experiences related to the struggle for their cultural, educational and political rights. They also resist colonisation, assimilation and racism. A strong oral tradition and an emphasis on a close and harmonic relationship to nature are furthermore among the shared characteristics of indigenous cultures (Helander 1994:18, Hirvonen 1999:246). The bond between Nordic indigenous peoples is illustrated, for instance, in Nordic women's literary history, *Nordisk kvinnolitteraturhistoria* (1997). It contains a section on »Indigenous cultures«, in which Britt Rajala and Kirsten Thisted discuss both Inuit and Sámi women writers.

Postcolonial theories have explored various geographical models in order to generate the concept of regional literature. In fact, the study of both Sámi and Inuit writing requires a sophisticated knowledge of regional models. Formerly, the concept of »regional literature« easily signified »literature in the peripheries« or »provincial literature«. However, new emphasis on the politics of location means that the literature of the regions transcends the hierarchy between »national«, »international«/»provincial«, »peripheral« modes of expression.

In their pioneering study *The Empire Writes Back* (1989), Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin distinguish four major models that have emerged in postcolonial texts: 1) first, *national or regional* models, which emphasise the distinctive features of the particular national or regional culture; 2) *race-based* models which identify certain shared characteristics across various national literatures, such as the common racial inheritance in the literature of the African diaspora addressed by the »Black writing« model. The concept of »Black Diaspora« in Europe, Caribbean and the U.S. for example, has been used in literary analysis to describe recent Black Writing in the West; 3) *comparative* models of varying complexity which seek to account for particular linguistic, historical, and cultural fea-

15. Veli-Pekka Lehtola's (1997) *Rajamaan identiteetti: Lappilaisuuden rakentuminen 1920- ja 1930-luvun kirjallisuudessa*; Vuokko Hirvonen's (1999) *Saamenmaan ääniä: Saamelaisen naisen tie kirjailijaksi*.

16. The first Greenlandic book *Boken om Pok* ('The book about Pok') came out already 1857 by an anonymous writer. It was published both in Inuit and Danish languages. The book deals with how Copenhagen looks in the eyes of Inuit. See Hamberg 1985:54.

tures across two or more postcolonial literatures, 4) *more comprehensive comparative* models, which argue for features such as *hybridity* and *syncreticity* as constitutive elements of all postcolonial literatures.¹⁷

Also in Nordic countries various kinds of national and regional models can be detected in the literature of Nordic indigenous cultures and national minorities. For instance, Inuit literature, Kven literature, Tornedalian literature, Sámi literature and Romany literature have distinctive national, ethnic or regional characteristics. Nordic countries have also many diasporic nationalities, for instance, Kurdish diasporic writing. In the case of Somali refugee writers one could speak about African diasporic or Black diasporic writing. On the other hand, cultural encounters and assimilation has produced hybrid and syncretic elements in writing that require the comparative analysis suggested above by Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin.

Postcolonial literatures have developed through several stages that correspond to stages both of national or regional consciousness and of the project of asserting difference from the hegemonic centre (Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin 1989:5). First, the colonial period produced a literary elite who represented the ruling administrative or church elite. Despite their detailed reports of landscape, customs, and language, their primary identification was with the hegemonic »centre«. The second stage describes the literature produced »under colonial licence« by natives or outcasts. Thus the ruling class alone licensed the acceptable forms and permitted the publication and redistribution of literary works (Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin 1989:5–6). We can recognise corresponding developments in the writing of Nordic minorities. Inuit, Sámi, Faroese and even Finnish writing under Swedish or Russian rule may have similar historical stages that resemble the stages mentioned above.

On the other hand, literature forms an important »contact zone«, where »transculturation« takes place in all its complexity. For instance, literature written on both sides of the cultural divide often absorbs and appropriates aspects of the »other« culture, creating new modes of writing and identities in the process. Finally, literature is also an important means of appropriating, inverting or challenging dominant means of representation.¹⁸

An inspiring approach to border literature is offered by Veli-Pekka Lehtola in his study *Rajamaan identiteetti* (1997, 'Frontier identity'). In this work Lehtola examines how the literature of Lapland in Finland has been produced both by the Sámi and Finnish settlers in the Sámi region. Although settlers represented dominant culture by carrying its values, »settler literature« also constitutes a »border culture« as the settler writers have also acted as intermediaries between the

17. Syncretism is the process by which previously distinct linguistic categories and cultural formations merge into a single new form. Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin 1989:15.

18. See Loomba 1998:70–71. Mary Louise Pratt uses the term »contact zone« in her (1992) book *Imperial Eyes*.

dominant Finnish (south) and Sámi (north) culture. Moreover, settler literature appropriated many features of Sámi culture. This produced encounters and collisions of multiple strands of referential codes and sign systems. The result has been that in many areas in Lapland a unique Sámi-Finnish hybrid culture emerged, which differed from both dominant Finnish and Sámi culture (Lehtola 1997:26–27, 41–42).

We can also mention that during Finnish nationalism at the end of the nineteenth century, many Finnish Swedish intellectuals and writers acted as mediators between two cultures, a phenomenon which has not received much attention in the studies of Finnish history.¹⁹

Dismantling canons

Postcolonial critics have reread the canonised literary works and reinvestigated the nationalistic constructions of literary histories. Traditionally, literary histories have consisted of homogenous canons with nationalistic undercurrents. They have been building up a literary »nation«, which has excluded national minorities. In fact, the institutional forgetting, as a form of control of one's memory and history, is one of the gravest forms of damage done to minority cultures. This has led oppressed cultures to find their voice in history as historical subjects and form sites of counter-memory. (JanMohamed and Lloyd 1990:6–7.)

Thus the understanding of the concepts of nationalism and nationhood are important for understanding postcolonial and minority positions in literary analysis. The creation of national cultures and literatures among »postcolonial« nations can be seen as a natural move in their struggle for independence. Yet, at the same time, the whole issue of nationalism is a paradox because nationalism is in a certain way part and parcel of colonial and imperialist endeavours (Gandhi 1998, esp. 113–115). In fact, instead of national literatures, what is being born is a kind of global literature, literature of borders and border-crossings, literature of cultural and linguistic confrontations, literature of exile and displacement. Edward Said, one of the spokespersons of this global perspective, suggests that we have to go beyond nationalisms which also means that the concepts of national literature and national canon will have to be radically modified and changed (Said 1993, esp. 261–264, 277–278, 382–383).

Nordic literary studies have been blind to national minorities and even used »racialising« or »colonising« rhetoric in literary scholarship. Often cultural hegemony has been maintained through canonical assumptions, which identify national minorities as isolated national off-shoots of the main canon (Ashcroft,

19. For example, J.V. Snellman and Zacharias Topelius, to mention only the most well known, belong to the canon of Finnish nationalism but were Swedish-speaking intellectuals.

Griffiths and Tiffin 1989:7). This may also mean that only one minority writer or cultural worker is made to represent a whole ethnic group, a strategy which Spivak calls tokenism (Spivak 1987/88:106–107 and 1990:115). For instance, in the extensive Finnish literary history (1981, new ed. 1991) the author Kai Laitinen claims in the epilogue that there was not enough space to deal with Sámi folk poetry or yoiks, although the book contains a whole chapter on Finnish folklore and almost 700 pages in its full execution. Moreover, at the end of the book Laitinen mentions the famous Sámi writer Nils-Aslak Valkeapää. Even so, however, neither the titles of his books are named nor are his poems discussed. Instead, the author claims that »Valkeapää’s poetry reflects the bitter sentiments of a long discriminated race« (Laitinen 1981/1991:582; trans. E.R.). Here this statement represents racialising discourse as it refers to the Sámi people as »race«. In contrast, Finnish Swedish literature is never referred to as »expressions of the Germanic race« or Finnish literature as an expression of Fenno-Ugric race. Here Finnishness and Finnish Swedishness represent the non-racial, non-ethnic norm of Finnish literature, whereas Sámi writers represent »race« and otherness.²⁰ In this sense, national and ethnic minorities and »border literatures« have been excluded for a long time from national literary histories.²¹

The subtitle of Olavi Jama’s 1995 article, »Tornedalen’s literature in the margins of two national literatures«, illustrates the in-between position in the national canons of Finnish and Swedish literature as Tornedalian literature has been written on both sides of the Finnish-Swedish border (1995:93). In fact, many minority literatures do not respect state borders, but move across national or even continental lines. For instance, Sámiland is situated in the whole circumpolar area. Accordingly, Sámi writers describe »Sapmi« as their homeland without borders. (Dana 1997:28.) Furthermore, Inuits live in different continents: apart from Greenland, even Canada, Alaska and Russia have Inuit populations. Thus cultural minorities do not necessarily form a homogeneous group in the literary arenas. There are also a lot of regional differences inside Nordic national and ethnic minorities. For instance, the Tornedalian literature written in Sweden differs from the one written in Finland. Similarly, Sámi and Inuit writing can be divided according to different languages and dialects in the circumpolar area.

Importantly, migrant literature has also formed a border literature or an in-between-literature in the national literary canons. For example, Swedish Finnish literature has a problematical position both in Finnish and Swedish literary institutions. Swedish literary canons do not cover Swedish Finnish books, although some other immigrant writers, such as the Greek-born author Theodor Kallifatides, are included in the Swedish canon, as Marja-Liisa Pynnönen notes. On

20. Analogously, the African-American writing was formerly described in American literary histories as an expression of »Negro race«.

21. E.g., the Romany novelist Veijo Baltzar was not included in Laitinen’s literary history although Baltzar had already published three novels (e.g. *Polttava tie* [’Burning road’], 1968).

the other hand, it has been problematic to include Swedish Finnish writing in Finland's literature (Pynnönen 1995:175). The third possibility is of course that Swedish Finnish could constitute a literary category of its own. This cartography has been drawn in Erkki Vallenius's and Marja-Liisa Pynnönen's comprehensive studies of Swedish Finnish authors (see Pynnönen 1991 and Vallenius 1998). In fact, it may even be a better strategy for minority writers to create their own literary institutions and literary arenas before entering majority canons as the integration has not taken place on equal terms.

Furthermore, ethnic, anti-colonial struggles and feminism have often been likened to one another as they all challenge the dominant »objective« academic ideas of history, culture and representation. Postcolonial, ethnic and feminist critiques have also displayed how canonical literary texts have disguised their political, ethnocentric and androcentric affiliations (Loomba 1998:40; see also Jons-son 1995:140).

Feminist literary scholars have, however, frequently been blind to national minorities. The Finnish women writer's literary history *Sain roolin johon en mah-du* (1998, 'I was given a role which does not fit me') does not include Sámi women writers, although, for instance, Kirsti Paltto had already been nominated as candidate for the Finlandia award with her book *Voijaa minun poroni* (1986). Similarly, Tuula Saarto, who has written about Romany women, was not mentioned in this extensive study. In contrast, the literary history of Norwegian women writers, *Norsk kvinnelitteraturhistoria* (1990), includes an article on Sámi women writers.²² Also the extensive history of Nordic women's literature, *Nordisk kvinno-litteraturhistoria*, contains chapters on Faroese, Inuit and Sámi writers and some other minorities such as the German minority writing in Denmark (see Marnersdóttir 1997:237–240, Rajala and Thisted 1997:548–565).

Editors of literary anthologies and literary histories have been mainly men. The same pattern tends to be true in minority forums, where the male editors generally support the male writers in their group. Tornedalen, for instance, has been described as a society of strong patriarchy. This is also reflected in the literary field. Accordingly, Ester Cullblom mentions the recent impressive history of Tornedalen. Ironically Cullblom notes that the sole female writer in the volume writes about the difficulties of writing about the Tornedaliaman woman because there are so few documents about her!²³

Similarly, Sámi writing was for a long time dominated by Sámi men. A concrete example is the *Cuotnamat* anthology (published in Sweden 1987) which includes eighteen men and four women writers. According to Hirvonen, this gives a distorted view of Sámi literature as at that time half of the Sámi writers were

22. Harald Gaski and Britt Rajala's (1990) »Joikens frie lyder i skrift. Kvinnelige samiske författare«.

23. Cullblom 1998:73–4, 77–78. She points out that the publishing company Tornedalica is run by five men and that only one out of fifty-one writers of Tornedalica is a woman.

women (Hirvonen 1999:66–67). Inuit women experienced the same fate in Greenlandic anthologies: two anthologies, *Puillasoq pikialaartoq* (1970, 'The bubbling spring') and *Allagarsiat* (1971, 'Letters I have received'), include only one women writer, Bolethe Petersen, who is introduced in the text as the wife of the late psalm poet Jonathan Petersen.²⁴

These kinds of discriminatory practices have made many minority women sympathetic to feminist scholarship. For instance, Vuokko Hirvonen appropriates the term »ethnic-feminist criticism« in her study *Saamenmaan ääniä* (1999, 'Voices from Sámi land'), where she rewrites the literary history of Sámi women. In fact, literature has given voice to formerly marginalised Sámi women (Hirvonen 1999:40, 289). Kerttu Vuolab's definition of literature in feminine terms as »the daughter of the mother tongue« illustrates this beautifully (Vuolab 1998). Although Sámi women authors write about their female roles in Sámi society, as is typically the case for many minority women writers, the authors have usually seen the collective construction of Sámi identity and struggle as more necessary than expressing female identity per se (Hirvonen 1999:193–96). However, Sámi women have also established their own organisations from the beginning of this century.²⁵

The focus on language and minority discourse

Postcolonial studies not only delineate the workings of power but try to locate and theorise oppositions and resistance on the part of the colonised and marginalised cultures as well. In particular, language has been a site of struggle and resistance.

Postcolonial writers often have to face the dilemma that the Nigerian Chinua Achebe and the Kenian Ngugi wa Thiong'o represent: Should one write within one's own oral tradition, or should one find a voice in the dominant language learned in schools? Chinua Achebe wants to accept the presence of the »moulded« English language in many African countries:

I feel that the English language will be able to carry the weight of my African experience. But it will have to be a new English, still in full communion with its ancestral home but altered to suit its new African surroundings.²⁷

In contrast, Ngugi makes a decision to start to write indigenous languages that reach local people rather than international audiences (Loomba 1998:92. Cf. Savolainen 1995:21).

The choice of language is a political act and an important resisting strategy for indigenous peoples and ethnic minorities. This is the viewpoint of Vuokko

The language of a small people is like a small fox, unprotected by the pack. It has to look out for itself and hear danger in order to avoid it, it looks about and sees the others. Majority peoples, who are losing their grip on how to stay alive, have much to learn from a small fox.

Kerttu Vuolab²⁶

24. Måliaraq Vebaek's (b. 1917) novel *Historien om Katrine* (1981) was the first Greenlandic novel by a woman writer. Moreover, the novel has also been translated into Sámi. See Rajala and Thisted 1997:551–554.

25. The first Sámi women society, »Brurkanken Samiske Kvindeforening«, was established already in 1910 by Elsa Laula (see Hirvonen 1999:242, Helander 1994:18).

26. Quoted in Lehtola 1995:50.

27. Quoted in Loomba 1998:91–92.

Hirvonen who wrote the first dissertation in the Sámi language. Hirvonen points out the partly paradoxical fact that the readers of the former Sámi studies were not mainly the Sámi people themselves. Consequently, Hirvonen claims that in the Sámi case »the empire does not merely write back to the center«,²⁸ since for the Sámi writers it has been utterly important to reach Sámi readers, too (Hirvonen 1999:99).

Also the choice of language by Finnish migrants to Sweden has changed during the generations. This has to be viewed in the context of the history of immigration. First generations prefer writing in Finnish, later generations often use Swedish as an instrument of artistic expression (Pynnönen 1991:168). Despite these general trends, the choice of language is not automatically motivated by generational lines: Antti Jalava writes and publishes in Swedish whereas Asta Piironen employs Finnish for her medium. The use of the migrant's mother tongue in the hegemonic culture has frequently been burdened with shame and stigma, which in turn have accelerated the rejection of one's original language and the change-over to the majority language (Huss and Lindgren 1999:311–314).

The term »minority discourse«, originally launched by ethnic and feminist critics, is also useful in postcolonial criticism, which examines the marginalising and resisting structures in a society. It is important to emphasise that it is the political situation that makes ethnic groups and literatures »minor«.²⁹ Cultures designated as minorities have certain shared experiences because of similar antagonistic relationships to the dominant culture. According to JanMohamed and Lloyd, the dominant literary institutions have marginalised minorities by making minority texts unavailable – either through publishers and libraries, or through a theoretical perspective that is blind to minority concerns (1990:6). For instance, Sámi and Inuit writers have had difficulties in having their works translated into Nordic majority languages.³⁰

Minority discourse has also been defined as the »language of the wounded« (JanMohamed and Lloyd 1990:3–4, 9). Subsequently, many minority writers problematise in their fiction their painful relationship with the dominant »foreign« language and mother tongue. The fact that the Sámi language was not taught in Nordic schools had disastrous effects. In fact, the majority of contemporary Sámi women writers have learned to write in Sámi later in their lives, during the 1970s or 1980s, when Sámi courses were started in the Sámi region (Hirvonen 1999:68). On the other hand, the ban on Sámi education has also made Sámi writers very conscious of language. For instance, Kerttu Vuolab, who learned to write her mother tongue Sámi thanks to university studies, has explained that this constant struggle with language and constant translation has made her very con-

28. »The empire writes back to the centre« is originally Salman Rushdie's phrase.

29. »Becoming minor« has also to be defined in terms of the effects of economic exploitation and political disenfranchisement (see JanMohamed and Lloyd 1990:9).

30. Less than ten books were translated from Sámi into Finnish during the period 1912–1997 (Hirvonen 1999:17).

scious of language. This has affected her choice of career as a translator and a poet (Vuolab 1998).

The central concern for minorities is thus how to challenge the dominant expressions. In this regard Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's book on Kafka (1975) has been especially influential on the theories of minority literature. Their concept of »minor literature« is based on Kafka's innovative use of the local German language with its socially distinctive linguistic codes. The deterritorialised German language in the Czech region has been described as a »paper language« or even »language in its poverty«, which utilises, for instance, »an incorrect syntax«, an »incorrect use of prepositions«, and »the multiplication of adverbs«. (Deleuze and Guattari 1975/1986:23.) The Czech Jewry are simultaneously a part of this minority and excluded from it as the Prague German that they use is intermixed with Czech and Yiddish. This means that Kafka's language may be deterritorialised to several degrees. Deleuze and Guattari compare this position and new expressivity with, for example, Black American ways of moulding the English language (Deleuze and Guattari 1975/1986:17).

In the Nordic context a good example of »deterritorialised« language is offered by the »migrated« Finnish language. For instance, the Finnish used in Tornedalen, the Finnish used by immigrants in Sweden, in Russian Karelia and by Kvens in Norway are illustrative of deterritorialised and migrated language. Minority writers in »migrated« Finnish are conscious of the specific expressions that may break the codes and grammatical norms of Finnish. Dominant groups usually want to occupy the grammatical power position and to marginalise all variants as impurities or even as symptoms of degeneration and illness (Gröndahl 1996, esp. 81–84). For instance, Tornedalen's writers in Sweden have also complained that Finnish people wanted them to use grammatically »correct« standard Finnish. Some have declared Tornedalen's language to be a distinctive language, different from Finnish. On the other hand, some speakers see it as a Finnish dialect.³¹ Similarly, the Danes considered the Faroese language as a Danish dialect, whereas Faroese nationalists saw it as an independent language (Hylin 1985:20, Marnersdóttir 1997).

Identity and place

A minority position often signifies a multicultural position as is the case of Tornedalian literature and Sámi literature. The multicultural position also creatively links local, national and international perspectives. It can create bridges between »village literatures« and »national« or »international literatures«, as

31. Tornedalian writers depict their history in fictional forms by resisting the norms of academic language. Tornedalen's »meän kieli« ('our language') was once subject to different kinds of restrictions in Sweden as was Finnish in the Kven regions of Norway, and Finnish used in Russian Karelia. On the other hand, the people in Tornedalen do not have similar cravings for national or political autonomy. As Tornedalian author Bengt Pohjanen has put it: they want to be Finnish speaking Swedish citizens. See Jama 1995.

Olavi Jama declares (1995:98). It also requires a theory at the crossroads. The concept »border-crossing« has become popular in recent cultural and post-colonial theories, and in turn alludes to movements over cultural, linguistic, spatial, ideological and geographical lines. Also fiction may cover border crossings or border clashings.

Postcolonial critics emphasise such concepts as »hybridity« and »border« and »cultural negotiation«. In cultural theories, »border identities«³² are seen as spaces of cultural translation and intercultural dialogue. They are spaces where one can find a multiplicity of culturally-inscribed subject positions, a displacement of normative reference codes, and new cultural meanings as MacLaren defines the term (1994:65; see also Simola and Hakkarainen 1998:140–141). Hybridity and border identities have had great impact on various cultural practices and have particularly affected linguistic structures. Differently-oriented accents have hybrid elements also in the Nordic minority languages. For instance, Finnish Swedish contains Finnish elements. In an analogous way, Swedish Finnish contains elements of contemporary Swedish. Also Tornedalian Finnish »Meän kieli« is a hybrid language which has been described as a mixture of old Finnish and new Swedish.³³

32. Chicana writer Gloria Anzaldúa's concept of »mestiza consciousness« is often mentioned as an example of border identity. It signifies a consciousness of borderlands, born of the historical collusion of Anglo and Mexican (Spanish and Indian) cultures. Chicano culture has no fixed geographical entity; Chicano literature is outside both mainstream Mexican literature and American literature. See Anzaldúa's (1991) book *Borderlands/La Frontera*.

33. Kenttä 1986:27, Jama 1995. Tornedalen's language began to develop as an own distinct dialect or language during the beginning of the nineteenth century. It was a hybrid language already in the twentieth century as it contained elements of both Finnish spoken in the Western and Eastern parts of Finland. From the end of the nineteenth century, the new words have been mainly appropriated from Swedish.

34. The term originally by African American W.E.B. DuBois. The term illustrates how the African Americans need to understand the conflict they feel as both American and Black.

One major feature of postcolonial literatures is the concern with place and displacement. Many minority writers deal with how the sense of self may have been eroded by dislocation, resulting from migration or cultural denigration. The dialectics of place and displacement is an important feature of postcolonial societies where these have been created by a process of settlement, intervention, or a mixture of the two (Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin 1989:8–9; cf. Jonsson 1995:9–12). The postcolonial and minority situation tends to produce a double identity or double consciousness,³⁴ which means negotiating between the minority and majority positions when living between two cultures. For instance, in a recent interview the Romany activist Miranda Vuolasranta emphasised the significance of her double identity as both Finnish and Romany (Nurmela 1999:26). The Tornedalian writer Matti Kenttä also describes his double identity as an enriching access to »two worlds« (Kenttä 1986:29). Some writers change their expressions depending on the readership of a particular text. Many minority writers also deal with the issues of cultural encounters and conflicts which accompany intermarriage, as can be seen in many Greenlandic novels (Rajala and Thisted 1997:561). We can also turn to the poet Arja Uusitalo who deals with migrant identity in Sweden and cross-cultural marriage between a Finnish migrant and a Kurdish refugee in her book *Meren syli* (1991, 'Lap of Sea'): »Two foreigners feel the solidarity based on their homelessness right away. – There's no place to go, no inherited summer cottages for the weekends, no grandmother's furniture – everything

Minorities Meeting

Since the 1970s many Nordic minority literatures have begun to portray themselves as independent literary part-cultures. The publication activity of the minority literatures varies however between the Nordic countries. This is also the case when it comes to the immigrant literatures. Today the broadest publication of literature in immigrant languages takes place in Sweden, while e.g. Sámi literature is most strongly represented in Norway and Finland.

The conditions for literature written in minority languages are hard because the reader potential is often low and the pressure from the majority language and culture great. Publication in Greenlandic, *meänkieli* (Tornedalian Finnish), Kurmânji (north Kurdish), Sámi and certain Roma languages constitute examples of literature where the publication activity is intimately associated with the attempts to conserve the language and lay the



From the left: Veli-Pekka Lehtola, Arja Uusitalo, Erkki Lappalainen and Kaarina Kailo.
(Photo: Aarre Heino)

ground for a group identity through the language. Writing in a minority language puts great demands on the writers: to be a cultural intermediary, language maker and even a language custodian. In the public sphere immigrant and minority writers often take the role of representatives for their people or group.

At the same time that the publication of literature in immigrant and mi-

nority languages has increased in the Nordic countries co-operation over the language boundaries has become more common. At the *Milli Seminar* (depicted) – organised by the department of literature at Tampere University and Karstula municipality, Finland, 11–14 July 1998 – Kven, Romany, Russian Karelian, Sámi, Sweden-Finnish and Tornedalian culture and literature was treated. *Ed.*

comes directly from Ikea and every place where they travel together is strange» (Uusitalo 1992: 97).

Many minority writers deal with their in-between position with anguish, as they have had to suppress their minority identities. For instance, in her novel *Ceppari caráhus* (1994) Kerttu Vuolab describes the minority position from the viewpoint of the little schoolgirl Máret. Vuolab describes the difficulties and even racism that Máret has to endure during her school years. In the novel, the author depicts Máret carrying both a Sámi costume and dominant Western signs of femininity in her suitcase, which include make-up and high-heeled shoes. The girl sees it necessary to carry commodities that do not belong to Sámi culture as one can hide oneself in them. Thus Máret has learned to survive as a Sámi woman in the context of the dominant feminine culture. According to Vuokko Hirvonen, this also symbolises the ability to adapt and change, which can be important in the encounters with dominant cultures.³⁵

In fact, »resistance« in postcolonial theories is not necessarily understood solely as an oppositional act of political intention, nor is it a simple negation or an exclusion of the »content« of another culture, but an effect of the ambivalence produced from recognising the rules the dominant discourses. Homi K. Bhabha

35. Hirvonen 1999:137. We rely here on Vuokko Hirvonen's reading of the novel.

(1994:70, 81–81) has emphasised the hybrid and negotiating elements in colonial encounters. Mary Louise Pratt's use of the word »transculturated« describes how subordinated groups select and invent from materials transmitted to them by a dominant culture. This describes the process of inter-cultural negotiation that she calls »the contact zone« where disparate cultures meet, clash and grapple with each other. It signifies the interaction, the borrowings and the appropriations in both directions which transcend binary oppositions between the dominant culture and its »others«. (See Loomba 1998:70, Pratt 1992.)

The descriptions of home and homesickness are naturally connected to the concern with place and displacement. In particular many Faroese and Inuit writers describe the ambivalence due to living »down« in Denmark as outsiders who yearn to be back home on the Faroese islands or in Greenland. The Inuit writer Marianne Petersen, for example, writes about regular flights between Greenland and Denmark. Rajala and Thisted point out an ironic perspective on the colonial relationship when Denmark is described as a tiny and flat land, while Greenland is depicted as a huge land with high mountains (Rajala and Thisted 1997:561, Hylin 1985:38). Colonial discourse used such metaphors as the parent and child, where parents are more important and more substantial than their offspring. When the former colonial power Denmark is described as a tiny piece of land, the colonial relationship between Denmark and Greenland is subverted.

Moreover, living close to nature has influenced the poetic forms of the Nordic nations living in the farthest edge of the earth: Inuits, Sámi peoples, Icelandic and Faroese. This creates different ways of conceptualising poetic space in indigenous writing (cf. Hirvonen 1999:259, Hylin 1985:37–38).

New genres, oral writing

Postcolonial theories have emphasised that the critical tools borrowed from the West are not necessarily suitable for the study of all literatures. This concerns, for instance, the categories of periodisation, aesthetics, stylistic innovations and literary genres. Importantly, indigenous artistic forms and literary genres often differ from Western aesthetics or fictional genres. Western literary studies have scarcely problematised oral narratives, for example. However, especially the Faroese, Inuits and Sámi have a vital oral tradition and specific forms of story telling that are reflected in the literary discourse.

Also musical tradition, such as *kvaed* poems (chain-poems) from the Faroese islands and Sámi *yoiks* have inspired many authors. For instance, like the African-American blues, the yoik went underground. As yoiking was forbidden by

law and society, it became a very subtle act of self-identification and resistance.³⁶ At the end of the 1960s Nils-Aslak Valkeapää was especially credited with revitalising the yoik tradition, whose legacy we see today in a yoik-boom. More recent Sámi performers such as Mari Boine and Wimpe Saari have developed their musical medium further to meet the demands and sensibilities of the contemporary audiences yet, at the same time, paying their respects to their local traditions.

Moreover, indigenous writers often express their »global partnership« with other indigenous cultures. For instance, Marry A. Somby blends both Sámi and Indian mythology in her poem collection *Mu Apache ráhkesvuohta/Krigeren, elskeren og klovnen* (1994) illustrating the close affinity with other indigenous cultures (Hirvonen 1999:109). Kirsti Paltto has also used symbols from Native Americans in her works. For instance, in her poem collection *Beaivváza bajásdánsun* (1985, 'Dance to sunrise') the eagle symbolises the bonds between the indigenous peoples around the world (Rajala and Thisted 1997:556).

An interesting example of a distinctive literary genre is the Sámi writing of collective autobiography or memoirs, which differs from the traditional Western genre of autobiography. As a form of cultural autobiography, it includes mythological, historical and autobiographical elements. Sámi memoirs may contain oral tradition, beliefs, and stories, which are combined with autobiographical experiences. The Sámi memoirs do not necessarily make strict demarcations between fairytales and memoirs. Thus they transcend the binary opposition of truth/fiction, as Hirvonen (1999:92) points out.

Indigenous cultures and ethnic minorities often have views of art which differ from the notions of Western establishments. For instance, formerly the Sámi language did not know the word »art«, and the notion of »art for art's sake« was not known in Sámi culture. Instead, the basis of Sámi art is grounded on art of handicraft (*duodji*; Hirvonen 1994:114). In fact, many Sámi artists and writers are »multiartistic« or »cross-artists«. Thus the sphere of creativity is not categorised in a similar way to the dominant culture. The affinity between the visual arts, music and poetry also creates a challenge in the analysis of Sámi art forms (cf. Lehtola 1995:61). For instance, in his visual-verbal Sámi epos *Beaivi Áhcázan/The Sun, My Father* (1988), Nils-Aslak Valkeapää creates a new literary form where the documentary and fictional narration is intertwined. He also appropriates several artistic techniques in the book, which has been described as mytography or photo essays, where Sámi mythology, history and poetry are combined with visual elements such as photography and drawings. Valkeapää himself has also described this work as *govadas*, which refers to a ceremonial patterned skin of a shaman's drum, thus intertextualising meaning and thematic unity in the poem/picture

36. Cf. Dana 1997:25 and Lehtola 1991:33. In Sweden, for instance, yoik-singing (and witchcraft) was forbidden in religious rituals from the beginning of the seventeenth century and onwards. As late as 1779, a conviction of a Sámi person could result in the death penalty. (Hirvonen 1999:143–144, 153, 258.)

design.³⁷ Moreover, the Finnish Romany writer Veijo Baltzar deals with the rituals, story telling traditions and musical styles of Romany culture in his novels and plays. Recently he has also created the mythological folk opera *Orli* (first performed in 1995) and an extensive epic novel *Phuro* (2000).

Faroese literature also has its distinctive local features. The Faroese language was used for a long time only in spoken forms or in songs, whereas Danish was the official language until as recently as 1948. Faroese literary tradition has employed oral tradition, consisting of riddles, tales and ballads which were transmitted from one generation to another. The kvaed poems from the Middle Ages that have been performed with music and dance have formed an important element in Faroese oral and musical tradition and also affected the use of language.³⁸ It has been said that the respect of the kvaed poems and love for dance has preserved the Faroese language. Singing and dancing has expressed the national bonding and resistance. Kvaed poems also contain »colonial« resistance as they often include political mockery. Hylin claims that the Faroese have been singing in their mother tongue for five hundred years of Danish hegemony (Hylin 1985:14, 23–26). This brings to mind the recent Estonian struggle for independence that has been called a bloodless »singing revolution«.

The novel most often referred to in postcolonial criticism has been Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*, to a large extent due to the relationship between Crusoe and Friday – representing the relationship between the coloniser and colonised. In this light, it is ironic that the first children's book translated into Faroese was *Robinson Crusoe* in 1914. It was given to every Faroese child in schools! (Hylin 1985:15) On the other hand, the significance of the availability of children's books in the mother tongue has been emphasised by many minority writers, who see it crucial that the children learn to read in the mother tongue in their early years.³⁹

In fact, »locality« and »regionality« may produce distinctive forms of expression that have to be situated even in religious contexts. Laestadianism has had a great impact in the northern parts of Finland, Sweden and Norway. This is reflected especially in Tornedalian, Kven and Sámi writing. The religious movement strengthened internal solidarity within the Kven minority in Norway, which was once defined as »the Finnish Danger« (*den finske fare*) in Norway.⁴⁰ Interestingly, religious discourse may form a specific aesthetic mode of expression with its rich source of metaphors. According to Jama, the religious mode has become a way of expressing emotions in Tornedalian literature as, for instance, in Timo K. Mukka's and Bengt Pohjanen's novels.⁴¹ In connection to religious groups on the Faroese islands and in Greenland, we can mention that Herrnhutianism and Grundtvigianism have figured prominently in fiction.

37. Dana 1997:27–29. See also Pekka Sammallahti's introduction to the book.

38. These long epic poems date from eleventh-century France and Spain. The Danish rulers brought the tradition to the islands and the poems were then translated into Faroese. From these texts the new kvaed-poems in Faroese were created. Hylin 1985:12, 13.

39. For instance, Faroese writer Steinbjørn Jakobsen has published many books for children.

40. See Lassi Saressalo's study *Kveennit* (Saressalo 1996:261–62, 278).

41. Jama speaks about Mukka's Laestadian existentialism, although Mukka was critical of Laestadianism (Jama 1995:109, 111). Tornedalen has also been the site for communist movements, which may have had some impact in the language level.

Furthermore, it should be noted that some Nordic postcolonial writers have also resisted Christian dominion as a form of colonialism. Instead, they have brought forth their own religious symbols and mythology. For instance, in her prose-poetry *Liedázan* (1997) the Norwegian Inga Ravna Eira intertwines the themes of motherhood, pregnancy and childbirth with Sámi mythology. Her story is constructed around Sámi women goddesses, who have various duties in childbirth and pregnancy.⁴²

Conclusion: Towards multiculturalism

The rise of postcolonial and ethnic studies is a reflection of the way things are at the moment in the world, and the sheer number of people with postcolonial and/or non-white ethnic backgrounds in Western academia has increased considerably in the last two or three decades. Here we are considering not only institutions of higher learning and culture, but also »the rest of the world« as demographic changes have taken root in several urban centres in the West. If it has been customary to consider such metropolitan centres as New York, London and Paris as multiethnic and mixed in their population, many other cities – Berlin, Los Angeles, Vancouver, and Stockholm, Copenhagen and Oslo, for that matter, have started to look very non-western and non-white when looked at from certain quarters. Berlin houses one of the largest Turkish communities outside Turkey, Vancouver has the largest Chinese population outside mainland China, and in the Los Angeles of the 1990s, the white population became a minority compared with the influx of people across the Mexican border and the Pacific. In the contemporary world multiculturalism is the rule rather than the exception (Liebkind 1994:9).

Yet, the idea of peaceful coexistence implied in multiculturalism is frequently at a far remove from hard reality: the analysis and manipulation of such concepts as »ethnicity«, »culture«, and »identity« may resemble crossing a minefield (Liebkind 1994:12). In a state of cultural and linguistic confrontation, co-existence and transformation, multiculturalism has become a liberal alternative to assimilation (Runblom 1995:199). In the liberal and well-meaning discourse on multiculturalism, its social and political consequences are not always fully realised, and it may be that once the fervour for multiculturalism has waned, we may find ourselves in a society still predominantly grounded in Western, middle-class culture, with a few more added flavours and exotica. According to Stefan Jonsson, postcolonial theory and the acceptance of the historical consequences of western colonialism can help us to perceive the contemporary world in a double perspec-

*When talking with my Eritrean friend
I realise how close a Finn is to a Swede
How long a journey the Eritrean has
made to come here
Here she is not wanted. She is different.
A refugee. Who cannot sleep at night
because of the horrors in her home
country. People try to shock and
frighten her, already deeply distressed.
[...]
Then I turn to myself and realise that I
differ from a Swede only that much
and only that much
I shouldn't dwell on My Big Difference,
My Deep Originality, My Finnishness
to be preserved.
My friend grows in me a sense of
relativity
(Uusitalo 1992:76, trans. E.R.)*

42. Hirvonen 1999:219–224. Risten Sokki, Annok Sarri Nordrå, Kirsti Paltto, Aagot Vinterbo-Hohr and Anna-Stina Svakko are among the writers who refer to Sámi goddesses in their works.

tive: learning to cope with the tension between universalism and particularism, accepting the conflict between Grand Narratives and »little« narratives, and understanding and improving the traffic between the hegemonic culture and minority cultures (Gandhi 1998, Jonsson 1993:80, 236). This is also confirmed by Edward Said's notion of »contrapuntal reading« or »contrapuntal perspective«. According to Said, the reader juxtaposes contradictory and opposing experiences and knowledges and attempts to relate them to each other. At the same time, the reader is aware of both the official narratives produced by the dominant centres of power and the resistant narratives, which challenge the hegemonic histories (Said 1993:37, 59, 78–79). Accordingly, we have a multiplicity of voices: master and slave, centre and margin, »us« and »them«.

Postcolonial theory and the awareness of historical colonialism can contribute to our understanding of the various forms of contemporary racism. This is the main insight in Sven Lindqvist's »*Exterminate All the Brutes*« (1996). Also Stefan Jonsson in *De andra* (1993) has argued for a global perspective as a means of grasping the emerging new racism in Europe. There are clear indications of racism and xenophobia being on the increase, for example, in Sweden, Norway and Finland during the 1990s.⁴³ There is a danger that the less educated and less privileged migrants, refugees and *Gastarbeiter* may form a new underclass needed to support the economies of the Nordic countries, and thereby constitute a ready workforce which can be got rid of if the economic situation so requires (Jonsson 1993:289–291). On the whole, the mass media seems to have an increasingly crucial role in shaping and directing the attitudes of the general public towards immigrants and immigration policies in Nordic countries.

The fact of globalisation in the present-day world is said to affect people and cultures in a radical way. Researchers have claimed that multiculturalism and postcoloniality can be a cultural and intellectual retreat from the new realities of global power.⁴⁴ However, we see that it is important that the concepts of »postcolonial«, »minority«, »ethnicity«, »multiculturalism«, even »globalisation« are used situationally, not as homogeneous or totalising concepts. For instance, in the context of Tornedalian literature the concept »globalisation« may be irrelevant. On the other hand, tourism and travel writing in Sámi and Inuit regions can be related to both globalisation and the postcolonial context. Postcolonial critique seems to be especially suitable for the analysis of the Nordic indigenous literatures. It is also useful to intertwine postcolonial and ethnic analyses when studying other Nordic national minorities or migrant literature or refugee literature. In fact, many refugees and migrants in Nordic countries come from formerly colonised countries. Thus in studying migrant and diasporic literatures, post-

43. For a general survey, see Jaakkola 1997; for Sweden, see Jonsson 1993:241–295 and Nord 1999; for Norway, see Brox 1991.

44. In his latest edition of *Orientalism* (1995) Edward Said refers to this discussion.

colonial theory may be useful when combined with the distinctive theories of migrant literature and regionality.

In the Nordic literatures, the postcolonial matrix has been mostly hidden and silenced by hegemonic nation-building and other exclusionary manoeuvres. Yet, it has surfaced in unexpected configurations: we can find it in the work of Nella Larsen about a Danish-American woman who has her roots in the West Indies and who returns between the wars to look for her family and home in Copenhagen (*Quicksand*, 1928).⁴⁵ Or in a postmodernist vein, the sense of having been suppressed and ignored by the hegemonic culture in the Norwegian Sámiland runs deep in the textual fragments of Aagot Vinterbo-Hohr, filtered through autobiographical reminiscence and informed by a profound knowledge of European thought (*Palimpsest*, 1987). In the contemporary mainstream, the postcolonial resonates strongly in Peter Høeg's exploration into the middle ground between of Denmark and Greenland (*Miss Smilla's Feeling for Snow*, 1992) as well as, in a more indirect way, in the treatment of and attitude toward Black Africa in Ulla-Lena Lundberg's fiction (*Regn*, 1997) or Veronica Pimenoff's novel *Maa ilman vettä* (1999, 'Land without water').

SUMMARY

Postcolonial and ethnic studies in the context of Nordic minority literatures

The essay outlines postcolonial, ethnic and minority studies by situating and examining them in the context of Nordic writing. Even though the main focus is on the historically old and/or indigenous minorities in Sweden, Finland, Norway and Denmark, some consideration will also be given to the more recent immigrants and diasporic peoples in the Nordic countries. The writers are more concerned with the cultural and epistemic aspects of colonialism and postcolonialism than with the more direct economic and social aspects of exploitation and domination. In the context of indigenous minority writing, location, regionality and place become endowed with new meaning and value and provide a site for rewriting hegemonic repre-

sentations and histories. The literary production of the Sámi, the Inuit, and the Faroese islanders, among others challenge the notions of traditional national literatures and canons. In more complex fashion, the Finnish and Kurdish spoken and used as a literary medium in Sweden, for example, create »de-territorialised« languages with new forms and means of expression. The gradual recognition of various ethnic minorities within the Scandinavian nation states and the growing number of immigrants and refugees from the outside have disturbed the notions of linguistic, social, and cultural homogeneity in the Nordic countries. Towards the end of the twentieth century this situation has given birth to new identities and hybrid cultural

45. See Jonsson 1993:15–35. As a writer of the Harlem Renaissance in the 1920s, Nella Larsen in fact belongs to American literary history.

formations but, at the same time, it has created a source of confrontation and conflict as well. The essay advocates – as do such authors as Sven Lindqvist and Stefan Jonsson – the idea that one way of understanding and tackling the challenge of multiculturalism is through grasping the history and the consequences of Western colonialism.

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III

Cultural Hybridity and Humour in Jonas Hassen Khemiri's *Montecore*

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Résumé

Cet essai se penche sur la manière dont l'hybridité culturelle et linguistique est présentée avec humour dans le roman de Jonas Khemiri *Montecore. En unik tiger* (2006) dont l'histoire se déroule entre la Tunisie et la Suède. L'hybridité est examinée au niveau de la caractérisation et du langage, mais aussi en tant que procédé esthétique. En fait, tous les personnages principaux du roman agissent comme des narrateurs bilingues ou multilingues. Par exemple, le protagoniste tunisien, Abbas Khemiri, parle un suédois qui est hybridé avec l'arabe et le français.

L'humour du roman se reflète dans les jeux de mots multilingues et la transgression du langage par rapport aux restrictions normatives. *Montecore* montre aussi que le fait de vivre entre les cultures, dans un « tiers espace » culturel et linguistique, est également amusant et source de créativité. De plus, le passage d'une perspective à l'autre encourage le lecteur à examiner les cultures tunisiennes et suédoises des deux points de vue.

Avec ses nombreuses techniques de distanciation propres à la littérature postmoderne, l'ouvrage *Montecore* ne peut être directement catégorisé comme une représentation réaliste ou authentique des immigrés. L'interprétation donnée par Khemiri des identités dans une Suède multiculturelle engendre une ironie qui invite à la déconstruction des identités nationales et ethniques dans une littérature de type postcoloniale. Toutefois, sa présentation du langage hybride et créolisé que les immigrés nord-africains utilisent en Suède est un outil littéraire qui décrit, d'une manière unique dans la littérature suédoise contemporaine, la vie des immigrés dans la Suède d'aujourd'hui.

Abstract

This essay investigates how cultural and linguistic hybridity is presented with humour in Jonas Khemiri's novel *Montecore. En unik tiger* (2006) set in Tunisia and Sweden. Hybridity is explored on the level of characterisation and language and also as an aesthetic device. In fact, all the main characters in the novel act as bilingual or multilingual narrators. For example, the Tunisian protagonist Abbas Khemiri speaks a type of Swedish, which is hybridised with Arabic and French.

The humour of the novel is evoked by its multilingual word-plays and transgression of the normative restrictions of language. *Montecore* shows how living between cultures, in a cultural and linguistic "third space," is also fun and conducive to creativity. Moreover, switching from one perspective to another encourages the reader to view the Tunisian and Swedish cultures from the perspective of the other side.

With its many postmodern literary distancing techniques, *Montecore* cannot be straightforwardly categorised as a realist or authentic representation of immigrants. Khemiri's portrayal of the hybrid identities in multicultural Sweden provides irony, which characterises the

deconstruction of national and ethnic identities in postcolonial literature. However, its presentation of the hybrid and creolised language that the North African immigrants use in Sweden is a literary device that portrays immigrants uniquely in contemporary Swedish literature.

Introduction

It has been claimed that globalisation and migration have brought about a normalisation of hybridity in contemporary communities. Laura Moss, for example, calls the phenomenon of cultural mixing “the everyday cultural hybridity”.¹ Jonas Hassen Khemiri (born 1978) in his highly acclaimed novel *Montecore. En unik tiger*² (2006) also addresses a space of everyday hybridity that migrants and their children, the second generation, inhabit. Its portrayal of the Tunisian migrant Abbas Khemiri and his family in Sweden highlights the daily dilemmas of those who are living in between different cultures and languages.

In this article I will consider hybridity on the level of characterisation and language and also as an aesthetic device in the novel. Cultural and linguistic hybridisation is highlighted in *Montecore*, which presents the linguistic repertoire available to bilingual or multilingual immigrant speakers in contemporary Sweden. In fact, all the main characters in the novel act as bilingual or multilingual narrators. The Tunisian Abbas and his friend Kadir speak Swedish, which is hybridised with Arabic and French, whereas Abbas’s Swedish born son Jonas speaks Swedish deliberately with an Arabic accent. The hybrid language used and referred to in *Montecore* seems to be a deliberate innovative literary device that mimics the elaborations of language used by migrants and the communities they inhabit. For example, multilingual word-play depicted in the novel can be regarded as a typical mode of language among migrants dealing with a multicultural reality. Furthermore, the depiction of cultural hybridity is also presented in the novel with humour.

Khemiri’s novel *Montecore* unfolds the story of Abbas Khemiri, who marries the Swedish Pernilla Bergman and migrates to Sweden. The novel starts with his friend’s, Tunisian Kadir’s correspondence with Abbas’s son Jonas, who has made his *début* as a novelist in Sweden. In his letter, Kadir suggests that they should together write a biography of Abbas, which would be based on their memories of him: “Let us collaborate in the production of a literary master opus

1 Moss 2006, 12-13.

2 English translation in 2011 as *Montecore. The Silence of the Tiger*.

that attracts a global audience, numerous Nobel prizes, and possibly even an invitation to Oprah Winfrey's TV studio."³

The first part of the novel describes Kadir's memories of Abbas and Tunisia in 1958, which was bombed by the French troops in the Algerian War. Large parts of the novel concentrate on depicting how Abbas tries to find his place in Swedish society.

The title of the book, *Montecore*, can be linked to the postcolonial themes of hybridity, resistance and "writing back" embedded in the text. Originally, *Montecore* was a name of a trained white tiger which attacked his tamer Roy Horn during a show in Las Vegas. In fact, the title of the novel symbolises the national menace in two ways. Firstly, the novel could be regarded as an allegory of postcolonial resistance since it may illustrate Jonas's hope that his assimilated, "tamed" non-European father would fight back like a tiger and show his resistance to the white Western (Swedish) society. Moreover, whiteness of the tiger may illustrate Abbas Khemiri's closeness to the west. Furthermore, the cover of the English translation of the book, with its black and white stripes, can be read as a paratextual reference to the postcolonial themes embedded in the novel. The text refers, for example, to a Nigerian writer Wole Soyinka's statement "A tiger does not proclaim its tigrity. It acts" which has been interpreted an act of postcolonial resistance." In Khemiri's version it goes "a tiger does not broadcast its tigership".⁴ By this statement, Soyinka cautioned promotions of stereotypical dichotomy between Western rationalism and African emotionalism that he saw lurking in the *négritude* movement.⁵

Secondly, the tiger in the title of the novel can be linked to a specific Swedish context, where "en svensk tiger" [a Swedish tiger/ a Swede keeps silent]⁶ was a slogan and an image that was used as part of a Swedish Vigilance Campaign during World War II. It aimed to prevent espionage by encouraging secrecy towards foreigners about information that might damage Swedish military defence. In this light, the whiteness of the tiger may suggest Abbas's attempts to pass himself off as Swedish, and thus represent "the enemy within". A Swedish tiger is humorously referred to in a passage where Abbas tries to become Swedish: "Each time I am about to greet my neighbors I restrain myself into silence by thinking of the proverb 'A Swede is silent.' "⁷ ["Varje gång jag är på väg att

3 *M* 2011, 4. In the article, I will sometimes refer to the original Swedish version and sometimes to the English translation. The Swedish version will be referred to as *M* 2006 and the English one as *M* 2011.

4 *Ibid.*, 309.

5 For example, Ashcroft *et al.*, 1999.

6 In Swedish "tiger" signifies both the noun "tiger" and the verb "to keep silent."

7 *M* 2011, 145.

hälsa på mina grannar hindrar jag mig till tystnad med tanken på ordspråket: *En svensk tiger.*"⁸].

While *Montecore* is a moving depiction of the relationship between father and son, it is also a perceptive study of Swedish society with its increasing number of immigrants and hostility towards them in the 1980s and 1990s.

Hybridity in the characterisation

Khemiri's novels articulate the ways in which cultural identities are reinvented and reinterpreted in different places and by successive generation. The Tunisian Abbas, for example, is involved in many kinds of "Western" masquerades, where he performs ethnicity. While in Tunisia he presents himself to Western tourists as a poetic and erotic Oriental man, in Sweden, striving for acceptance, he starts to mimic the Swedes. Finally, he ends up taking a Swedish-sounding hybrid stage name, "Krister Holmström Abbas Khemiri," in order to gain success as an art photographer; instead, he winds up shooting portraits of people's pets. Furthermore, Abbas names his photography studio after the Swedish Queen Silvia.

Abbas's efforts to please and mimic the Swedes bring to mind Homi K. Bhabha's ideas of colonial mimicry, which can be applied to the migrant situation. Mimicry creates a tension between sameness and difference that Bhabha sees as an "ironic compromise": the mimicking appears to the colonialist as "almost the same, but not Quite," and therefore it becomes at once resemblance and menace. Thus it is conceived "at once a mode of appropriation and of resistance, "a form of camouflage" that subverts colonialist authority.⁹

However, Abbas's camouflage and mimicry of Swedishness as his strategy for success fails since his hybrid name, "Krister Holmström Abbas Khemiri" and his Studio Silvia, do not attract customers. Those who eventually come turn away after encountering an Arab as the owner of the shop. Thus Bhabha's idea of hybridity, as a subversion of power hierarchies is set here in an ironic light. It demonstrates how strategic hybridity and integration may not be strategic enough to subvert cultural and social hierarchies, although postcolonial theories have celebrated the transgressive power of hybrids that subvert hierarchical oppositions.¹⁰ The last part of the novel concentrates on Abbas's downfall in Swedish society, where hostility to foreigners is on the increase. However, Abbas wants to promote integration since he is worried that his children will be outsid-

8 M2006, 175.

9 Bhabha 1994, 126-127 & 181.

10 Werbner 1997, 1.

ers with their black hair and brown skins in a country where neo-Nazis demonstrate openly in the streets and attack with fire bombs.¹¹

Montecore explores especially how the cultural differences affect a bicultural family. Abbas's relationship with his son Jonas demonstrates how migrant children represent the voice of conflict between cultures and generations. The interpretation of Jonas's and Abba's different view-points is amenable to Edward Saïd's notion of contrapuntal reading, a kind of organized interplay embedded in the novel that derives from the conflicting themes.¹² Moreover, a contrapuntal reading helps to understand the relational aspects of hybridity because it stresses the formative role of exchanges between the different ideologies that people present.¹³

It is important to stress the roles of the youthful second generation main characters in the examination of cultural hybridity. The significant role of second generation immigrant characters, especially children and teenagers, has even been defined as a specific literary device in novels depicting postcolonial and multicultural societies. For example, Devon Campbell-Hall has stressed the usefulness of socially and culturally hybrid characters as literary tools. Youth acts as a sort of symbolic distillation of the uncertainties of an entire cultural system. Hence the children of immigrants may be used to criticise and expose moral inconsistencies, ethical and political issues in a society.¹⁴

The use of a child's perspective exemplifies how in many communities the battles are intergenerational rather than between majority and migrant communities. The generational conflict is shown in Jonas's criticism of his father's efforts to assimilate and integrate into Swedish society. Hence, Abbas's attempts to "Swedify" himself and his sons are strongly opposed by Jonas, who even deliberately begins to speak Swedish with an Arabic accent. With his friends of Nigerian-descent Melinda, Balochian Imran and Chilean Patrick, he also sets up a political movement, an antiracist organisation BFL (*Blatte For Life*), promoting the rights of immigrants. One of its slogans, "Blatte-power", is reminiscent of the Black power movement in the U.S.A. in the 1960s: "It's white against black, it's Swediots against *blattar*."¹⁵

Corina Lacatus has claimed that Khemiri formulated in his first novel *Ett öga rött* a fiercest critique of the concept *blatte*¹⁶ in literary form.¹⁷ In fact, *blatte*

11 *M*2011, 135-136.

12 Saïd 1993, 36-37.

13 Kraidy 2005, 13.

14 Campbell-Hall 2009, 290-292, 298 & 303.

15 *M*2011, 235.

16 *Immigrant* and *invandrare* have been the preferred concepts for official designation of people who have migrated to Sweden, while *black head* is a derogatory term initially re-

is used interchangeably with the derogatory expression *black head* (*svartskalle*), and *immigrant* (*invandrare/immigrant*), which have been in public use since after World War Two. *Blatte* especially has become an instrument of ethnic segregation and racism. However, it gains an aura of resistance to discrimination when people use this formerly derogatory word to refer to themselves.¹⁸ Also in *Montecore*, the concept *blatte* is linked with the affirmation of immigrant identity grounded in ethnic pride. For example, Jonas teaches his friend Patrick to rap along with all of *Straight Outta Compton* and carefully switch out every “nigga” for *blatte*: “And you remember how the change is visible on the outside, how Patrik gets another kind of pride in his body [--].”¹⁹

Jonas calls this children’s group as *blattes* and “unidentifiable creoles, the blend of everything, all the pigeonhole-free border people”²⁰ who cannot be categorised. Meanwhile, both Abbas and Kadir in their letters criticise these children, who want to give decisive weight to the value of ethnicity: “And who becomes a better pet of racists than people who accept the existence of an us and a them?”²¹ Kadir asserts that the children are confirming the logic of racism, when they embrace everything that is mixed and black and “other” and oppose everything that is Swedish.²²

Jonas and Abbas symbolise the ideological counterpoint between the incalculant son born in Sweden and the immigrant father, who wants to integrate into Swedish society. A similar ideological counterpoint can be detected in Khemiri’s first novel *Ett öga rött* (2003) [An Eye Red] which tells the story of Halim, who lives in Stockholm with his Moroccan parents. For example, to face his bullies at school, Halim draws strength from his Arabic heroes such as Hannibal, who defeated the Romans. Eventually, Halim, against his father’s will, is drawn into Islamic fundamentalism.

In *Ett öga rött* Khemiri seems to have deliberately created a fanatic, racist and chauvinist discourse for his teenage narrator Halim, a discourse with juvenile exaggeration designed to be read ironically. Moreover, it can be claimed that with the use of the boastful and unreliable Halim as child-narrator, the writ-

ferring to immigrants, whose skin and/or hair colour sets them apart from Swedes. The Swedish rapper Dogge Doggelito has declared, for example, that a *blatte* identity is closely linked to the persons origins in the immigrant suburban periphery, evident language use and life style. See Lacatus 2008, 11-14 & 19.

17 Lacatus 2008, 5.

18 *Ibid.*, 12-13.

19 *M* 2011, 214.

20 *Ibid.*, 274.

21 *Ibid.*, 275.

22 *Ibid.*, 254.

er may be able to deal more easily with sensitive issues, such as fanaticism. One of the benefits of privileging the child's point of view as a literary tool lies in the fact that they may give voice to feelings of anger and resistance within the context of a child's innocence and irresponsibility. Angry outbursts are allowed in children, who have not yet learned the social niceties that curb vitriolic speech.²³

On the other hand, when the perspectives of a naïve small boy and a rebellious teenager are put in the foreground, this endorses not only generational conflicts but humour both in *Ett öga rött* and in *Montecore* since the views reflect juvenile prejudices and condescending attitudes towards parents and older generations. The second generation immigrant children in *Ett öga rött* and in *Montecore* represent the dual or hybrid perspective on Arab and Swedish cultures. Such kind of dual cultural positioning of children renders them useful literary devices for deconstructing various aspects of multicultural Sweden.

Hybridity, speech communities and humour

The humorous elements of the novel are amplified and evoked especially by multilingual word-plays and code-switching that can be detected in the language used by immigrants and their children. The humour is based, for example, on the combinations or words and expressions, and in the transgression of the normative restrictions of language. Moreover, this play on languages serves to create solidarity with such communities as the migrants' 'in-group'.

With its intercultural dialogues, *Montecore* highlights how living between cultures, in a linguistic "third space," where hybridity is used as an intentional device, is also fun and conducive to creativity. For example, Laura Moss stresses that hybridity stems from a conscious choice in cultural interaction.²⁴ Significantly, the idea of hybridity as a conscious choice and as an artistic device has also been discussed by Mikhail Bakhtin.

Postcolonial novels and novels depicting immigrant communities seem to employ Mikhail Bakhtin's idea of ironic and intentional hybridity in their blending of languages. In fact, Bakhtin links hybridity to his idea of the double-voiced language which is described as a blend of two social languages within the arena of an utterance: "It frequently happens that even one and the same word will belong simultaneously to two languages, two belief systems that intersect in a hybrid construction – and consequently, the word has two contradictory meanings,

23 Campbell-Hall 2009, 291, 294 & 297.

24 Moss 2006, 13.

two accents.”²⁵ Thus within a single ‘pidgin’ utterance, the voice divides into two voices, two speech manners, two languages.

Significantly, Bakhtin distinguishes two types of hybridity: unconscious ‘organic hybridity’ and conscious ‘intentional hybridity’, which both can be appropriated in the analysis of novelistic discourse. Firstly, organic, unintentional hybridity signifies a process of unreflective borrowings, mimetic appropriations and exchanges. This kind of hybridization describes the usual mixing of various ‘languages’ co-existing within the boundaries of a single dialect, a single national language, a single group of different branches.²⁶ This unintentional mixing also produces new forms, which comes close to ‘creolisation’ or the French *métissage* (*metis*), where two or more cultures merge into a new mode.²⁷

Secondly, Bakhtin discerns intentional hybridisation which describes the ability of one voice to ironise and unmask the other within the same utterance. Hence it describes the process of the authorial unmasking of another’s speech, through a language that is ‘double-accented’ and ‘double-styled’.²⁸ According to Bakhtin, it is the writer who dialogises hybridity. Then two points of view are set against each other dialogically in an oppositional structure. Thus the novelistic hybrid illuminates one language by means of another.²⁹ The crucial effect of hybridisation comes with its deliberate antagonism as a political category, where, within a single discourse, one voice is able to unmask the other.”³⁰ This means the undoing of authority in language through hybridisation.

Homi K. Bhabha has applied Bakhtinian subversion of authority through hybridisation to the dialogical situation of colonialism, where it describes a process that reveals the ambivalence at the source of the discourses on authority.³¹ Hybridity that deconstructs cultural dichotomies of insider/outsider has been defined as the third element produced by the interaction of cultures, communities or individuals. Bhabha distinguishes a specific ‘hybrid displacing space’, which develops in the interaction between the indigenous and colonial culture which undermines the operation of colonial power. This notion of a ‘Third Space’ signifies a transmutation of national or ethnic cultures in to a compounded, composite mode. In its radical guise of disarticulating authority, hybridity has also in-

25 Bakhtin 1981, 21; see also Bakhtin 1981, 358 & Young 1995, 20.

26 Bakhtin 1981, 358.

27 Young 1995, 21. In fact, the concepts of creolisation and hybridity resemble each other. Both have been used as a linguistic and cultural concepts describing cultural interaction and mixing in language, or in culture.

28 Bakhtin 1981, 20.

29 *Ibid.*, 360-361.

30 Young 1995, 21-22.

31 *Ibid.*, 22.

creasingly come to stand for the languages of minority cultures where the dominant culture and linguistic domination are creolised and destabilised. The identification of hybridity with carnivalisation and creolisation has been considered a critical contestation of a dominant culture.³² The intentional hybridity signifying the provocative aesthetic challenge to the social order may also be experienced as invigorating and 'fun'. Such aesthetic inventions are thus critically different from the routine cultural borrowing by migrant groups.³³

Postcolonial theory has stressed the importance of various speech communities and sees the oral quality of the written text and ethnography of speaking as a significant area of study.³⁴ Khemiri's novels exemplify the use of different linguistic codes as a creative strategy in the portrayal of migrant identities. In fact, Khemiri's narrative style in his novel *Ett öga rött* gained immediate attention because of its originality in Swedish literature. The representation of youth talk in the novel was first labelled by critics as "broken Swedish," typically used in such migrant-dominated suburbs or regions (e.g. "Rinkeby Swedish", "Botkykra Swedish" or "Blatte Swedish").³⁵ This language register has its own stylistic characteristics and deviations from the grammatical rule of Standard Swedish. For example, the loss of inverted word order in subordinate clauses, and free play with prepositions, are common grammatical constructions characteristic of "Rinkeby Swedish" which has been defined as a sociolect, group speech, typical of multicultural Sweden. It has been used, for example, by such Swedish authors as Alejandro Leiva Wenger and Johannes Anyuru.³⁶

Montecore even includes a metafictional comment adhering to the reception of *Ett öga rött* with its discussions of Rinkeby Swedish. In the excerpt it is implied that the protagonist, Sweden-born Halim in *Ett öga rött* deliberately uses non-grammatical Swedish, whereas immigrants usually try to use grammatically correct Swedish:

Despite your protests you are celebrated because you have written a book in "authentic Rinkeby Swedish." Apparently you have brought "the immigrant story" to life in a language that sounds as though one has "dropped a microphone" into an immigrant area of one's choice. Did you not write that your book was about a Swedish-born man who breaks his language with intention? What happened to your asserted exploration of "the authenticity theme"?"³⁷

32 *Ibid.*, 24-25.

33 Werbner 1997, 5.

34 Zabus 1996/1998, 31-32.

35 Sjögren 2003, 3; Leonard 2005, 13 & Nilsson 2010, 38-39.

36 Leonard 2005, 1 & 21-25. See also Lacatus 2008, 27-34. Lacatus also presents a critique of the concept "immigrant Swedish".

37 *M*2011, 27.

Instead of “twisted Swedish” or “Rinkebysvenska,” Khemiri calls the language employed in *Ett öga rött* “innovative Swedish,” “Halim Swedish”³⁸ or “creole language,” since speaking with an Arabic accent and in hybridised Swedish, is Halim’s conscious choice.

Postcolonial theories have stressed the significance of creolisation as a creative medium. It signifies cross-cultural interaction based upon the responses of individuals to their environment and, within culturally discrete groups, to each other.³⁹ It refers to the constantly changing context of oral communication in which interlocutors influence each other.⁴⁰ Switching between two or more codes of language is typical of creolised language.

In migrant suburbs different languages or linguistic registers may jostle for space. The multicultural regions do not only produce discrete dialect forms but an overlapping of ways of speaking between which individual speakers may move with considerable ease. These overlapping ‘lects’, not only contain forms from the major languages, but forms which are also peculiar to themselves. Thus writers, who depict such specific varieties of languages may employ highly developed strategies of code-switching and vernacular transcription that take into account the performance of the speakers.⁴¹

In fact, all the main figures of the novel, Abbas, Kadir and Jonas act as multilingual or bilingual narrators. While Tunisian Abbas and Kadir employ Swedish, which is fluently hybridised with Arabic and French, the Swedish-born Jonas deliberately integrates Arabic into his Swedish, speaking with an Arabic accent. Even the language, “Khemirish” that the Khemiri family uses, refers to the peculiar idiolect of its own. As such, it adheres to the hybrid and creolised elements of the languages used by migrant and multicultural families. Indeed, Jonas describes “Khemirish” as a language where all the languages are mixed:

A language that is all languages combined, a language that is extra everything with changes in meaning and strangewords put together, special rules and daily exceptions. A language that is Arabic swearwords, Spanish question words, French declarations of love, English photography quotations, and Swedish puns. A language where g and h rumble way down in your stomach, where you always “walk” abroad instead of traveling, where toys must always be picked up from the “ground.” A language where “*daccurdo*” means “okay” and “herb salt” is synonymous with “really good”. [--] When you greet someone you roar, “Hello, you damn fools!” and when

38 “Halismska”. See also Leonard 2005, 24-25 & Nilsson 2010, 36-43.

39 Ashcroft *et al.* 1989, 147.

40 Lionnet 1989, 2-3.

41 See Ashcroft *et al.* 1989, 45 & 47.

you leave home you yell, "Beslema hemma." Is there more? Sure; hundreds more special words. Pasta is "potties," candy is "halloua," soda is "gazouz."⁴²

The colloquial neologisms mentioned in the excerpt have been regarded as typical forms of postcolonial texts.⁴³ Khemirish is likewise described as incorporating its own copulative words, "special rules and daily exceptions" and composed of multicultural vocabulary such as Arabic, Spanish, French and English words and phrases and Swedish wordplays.

Examples of hybridity and creolisation are pervasive in the novel. For example, it starts with Kadir's letter, where Swedish is hybridised with French words and expressions:

Divinate who is writing you these phrases? It is KADIR who is snapping the keys!!!! Your father's most antique friend! You memorize me, right?" [--] At that time you were a corpulent, linguistically gifted boy with a well-developed appetite for ice cream and Pez candy [--].⁴⁴

Divinera vem som skriver dig dessa fraser? Det är KADIR som knappar tangenterna!!!! Din fars mest antika vän! Du memorerar väl mig?" [--] Då var du en korpulent språkbegåvad pojke med välvuxen aptit på glassar och Pez-godisar [--].⁴⁵

We can recognise in these excerpts, for example, such French words as 'antique' (antika), 'mémoire' (memorera), 'corpulent' (korpulent), 'appétit' (aptit) and 'glace' (glass). *Montecore* also includes non-transformed and untranslated French and Arabic words, which signal cultural difference. In fact, the use of untranslated words and neologisms is a widely used device in postcolonial literature to convey the sense of cultural distinctiveness.⁴⁶ Significantly, it has been claimed that the untranslated words in the text have the presence of the culture they signify. In this sense they are directly metonymic of that cultural dif-

42 *M* 2011, 88-89. "Ett språk som är alla språk blandade, ett språk som är extra allt med glidningar och sammanslagna egenord, specialregler och dagliga undantag. Ett språk som är arabiska svordomar, spanska frågeord, franska kärleksförklaringar, engelska fotografcitater och svenska ordvitsar. Ett språk där g och h rumlar långt ned i magen, där man alltid "går" utomlands istället för reser, där leksaker alltid ska plockas upp från "marken". Ett språk där "daccurdo" betyder okey och "örtsalt" är synonymt med "jättegott" [--]. När man hälsar vrålar man "Tjena jävla galoscher!" och när man går hemifrån ropar man "Beslema hemma". Finns det mer än så. Såklart, hundratals mer specialord, makaroner är "pattisar, godis är "halloua", läsk är gazouz." (*M* 2006, 108.)

43 Ashcroft *et al.* 1989, 72.

44 *M* 2011, 3.

45 *M* 2006, 13.

46 Ashcroft *et al.* 1989, 64.

ference.⁴⁷ The choice to leave words untranslated in post-colonial texts has also been deemed as a political act, because it puts two languages on an equal level.⁴⁸

The hybrid language in *Montecore* seems to be a deliberate literary device that mimics the elaborations of language in migrant communities. However, the mixed and hybrid language does not merely articulate postcolonial resistance. Although Jonas's deliberate use of Arabic expresses resistance, the French words and expressions used by Tunisian Kadir and Abbas, also point out the linguistic vestiges of the French colonisers in North Africa, which has hybridised the Arabic used in Tunis. Thus the use of French does not necessarily imply a specific political significance for Kadir and Abbas but remains a sign of the creolisation or organic and everyday hybridity that colonial contacts have produced.

However, multilingual word play is also a typical conscious mechanism among migrants faced with a multicultural reality. It is achieved, for example, via humorous code-switching and playing with linguistic devices. This gives the effect of humour, but also demonstrates solidarity with the 'in-group' of migrants, through language that is only understood by members of the insider group.⁴⁹

The language in *Montecore* includes loan translations, loanwords, loan shifts and style-shifting that have been analysed, in particular, in a bilingual context. It also resembles Bakhtin's idea of the double-voicedness of hybrid discourse. In some passages of *Montecore*, however, language is mixed further and becomes multilingual where it refers to the many intersecting languages, Swedish, French, Arabic and English that the North African migrants use in Sweden.

Montecore shows from different angles (Jonas, Abbas, Kadir) how living between cultures, in a linguistic "third space," is also fun and conducive to creativity. The humour of the novel is evoked, for example, by code-switching that can cause mirth to those bilinguals or multilinguals who can understand the transgressions. Being bilingual entails not only in the use of two languages but the entirely new 'system', which is a combination of both. This combination is a play on both languages, giving the effect of humour as well as solidarity of the in-group. Part of the play lies in the games and combinations that one can find; the freedom of playing with the codes and transgressing the 'normative restrictions'.⁵⁰

47 *Ibid.*, 52-53.

48 *Ibid.*, 66.

49 Cortés-Conde & Boxer 2002, 137, 139 & 149.

50 *Ibid.*, 140.

In postcolonial writing grammatical codes are also significant since they entail politics and commitment to a particular group.⁵¹ Jonas's identification with the "hybrid" people is also illustrated by the use of the first person plural as a rhetorical device. This personal pronoun is often used in postcolonial writing as a strategy of postcolonial resistance. Consequently, the shifts from the first to second person plural narration is utilised as a rhetorically persuasive device. This reproduces rhetorically a community in everyday discourse, where little words such as 'we' assume we-ness and play with such oppositions as We/you. In the passage first-person plural "we", which is reiterated and printed in bold face, refers to the second generation, the children of immigrants, who are defined as being "unplacable" and "exceptions":

[--] or fuck YOU, it is WE, WE who wander through life and together are exceptions, WE who together refuse their rules and eat their pigeonholes, WE explode their categorizations because we aren't Swediots or immigrants, we are the perpetually unplaceable.⁵²

The interspace between languages is also reminiscent of "transculturation", meaning the constant interaction between two or more cultural components which creates a third cultural entity that is new even though rooted in the preceding elements.⁵³ *Montecore* includes a passage where Jonas claims that his friends, the children of migrants, 'mixed children,' represent a specific third space that cannot be defined and categorised since they are not "*suédis*" nor "*arabis*" but "some other thing, some third thing":

We have Tunisian dads and Swedish-Danish moms and we are neither totally *suédis* nor totally *arabis* but some other thing, some third thing, and the insight about not having a simple collective grows us into creating our own pigeonhole, a new collective without borders, without history, a creolized circle where everything is blended and mixed and hybridized. We are the reminder that their days are numbered.⁵⁴

The names of the children also signify hybridity, as mentioned "We have Tunisian dads and Swedish-Danish moms". Moreover, the children's manifesto also refers to postcolonial theories of abrogation and appropriation of the dominant languages, seizing the language of the centre and remolding it to new usages.⁵⁵

51 Fraser 2000, 65.

52 *M*2011, 250.

53 Lionnet 1989, 15-16.

54 *M* 2011, 250. "Vi har tunisiska pappor och svenskdaniska mammor och vi är varken helt suedis eller helt arabis utan något annat, något tredje och insikten om att inte ha ett enkelt kollektiv växer oss till att skapa ett eget fack, ett nytt kollektiv som saknar gränser, som saknar historia, en kreoliserad krets där allt är blandat och mixat och hybridiserat. Vi är påminnelsen om att deras tid är räknad." (*M* 2006, 293.)

55 Ashcroft *et al.* 1989, 38.

Appropriation brings the dominant language under the influence of a vernacular and the complex of speech habits which characterise immigrant languages:

We are the ones who take your disgusting language and turn it around. We are the ones who will never accept a language that's designed to screen us out (and which moreover calls the most beautiful part of the breast *a wart yard*). We are the ones who *jet* instead of leaving, we *own* instead of triumphing, we *bang* instead of making love, we say *five-o* when you say police, we *shine* while you rust [--] we're the ones who get that it's actually called *an assist* in basketball and that *mecca* has nothing to do with bingo and that *a fine cat* has nice *boudies* and definitely no fur or pedigree. We are the future!⁵⁶

Vi är dom som tar ert äckliga språk och krokas till det. Vi är dom som aldrig kommer acceptera ett språk som är konstruerat för att sålla ut oss (och som dessutom kallar bröstens vackraste del för *vårtgårdar*). Vi är dom som *gittar* istället för att gå, vi *äger* istället för att triumfera, vi *bazar* istället för att älska, vi säger *five O* när ni säger konstapel, vi *skinar* medan ni rostar – vi är dom som fattar att det egentligen heter *en* basketlinne och att mecka inte har nåt att göra med moppar och att *en fin katt* har snygga *boudies* och verkligen ingen päls eller stamtavla. Vi är framtiden!⁵⁷

The words in italics, “*gittar*”, “*äger*”, “*bazar*” refer to immigrant Swedish/blatte Swedish (or Rinkeby Swedish, Botkyrka Swedish) used in the immigrant areas of Stockholm. It has been claimed that the creolised style represents the linguistic bond which lends the immigrant group an identity. Likewise Jonas and his friends, who represent the second generation of immigrants, start deliberately to integrate into Swedish the expressions of their parent’s mother tongue. The children’s sense of community and their opposition to racist Swedish society is, indeed, extended to their use of language: during the phone calls, Jonas speaks Arabic, whereas his father answers in Swedish. Thus, in *Montecore* the children of migrants deliberately use hybrid language as a symbol of their resistance in racist society.

This switching and crossing from one language to another also encourages the reader to view each language and culture from the perspective of the other side. For example, Swedish is presented humorously in the novel as an “alien” language from the migrant perspective, especially in the episodes where the characters try to teach each other Swedish. First, Abbas teaches Kadir Swedish and emphasises the French and English loanwords borrowed in Swedish such as ‘*paraply*’, ‘*aveny*’, ‘*portmonnä*’, ‘*valör*’ (French ‘*parapluie*’, ‘*avenue*’, ‘*portemanteau*’, ‘*valeur*’:⁵⁸

56 M2011, 250-251.

57 M2006, 293.

58 M2006, 203.

In double column from with linked arrows are the nouns like “chauffeur,” “avenue,” “premier,” “voyeur.” The adjectives include words like “maladroit,” “excellent,” “vital” [–], there are “pronounce,” “terminate,” “disregard,” “march,” “respond,” “lodge.”⁵⁹

I dubbel spaltform med länkade pilar står substantive som paraply, aveny, portmonnä, valör. Adjektiven inkluderar ord so malplacerad, excellent, vital. Ett särskilt uppslag har vigts åt mängdens verb där står prononcera, terminera, negligera, marschera, respondera, logera.⁶⁰

Bilingual children especially act as translators for their elders who do not command two languages. When the Swedish-born Jonas starts to teach Swedish to the Tunisian Abbas and Kadir, he tries to detect certain elements in Swedish that sound humorous to immigrants:

The Swede with importance is called “big cheese” and something that is too sentimental is “cheesy.” “When we photograph, the customer says “cheese.” Something that works smoothly is “like butter,” and someone who is angry is “cheesed off”!!! “Don’t cry over spilled milk” is called scornfully at someone who is upset over a triviality, and when one takes full advantage of a situation it is “milked.” [–] What is the ideal in the world of the Swede? To find the type of success that is called being “the cream of the crop.”⁶¹

Den turliga svensken namnges “lyckost” och den fega epiteras “sillmjölke”. Ett storsäljande foto säljer som “smör”. Den lugna svensken kallas “Filbunke”!!! “Tack för gammal ost” ropas satiriskt som en smutsning av en svensk rykte och när man är olycklig har man “sålt smöret men tappat pengarna”. [–] Vad är idealet i svenskens värld? Att finna den enkla vägen till lyckan som namnges “gräddfil”.⁶²

As shown above, the literal translation from one code to the other, where the semantic content is quite different, can have a comic effect. To offer, for example, a literal translation makes bilinguals chuckle.⁶³ Similarly, Jonas’s literal translations of Swedish have humorous aspects for the Tunisians.

Bilingual word play also goes beyond the lexical to the grammatical level. Cortés-Conte and Boxer have claimed that postcolonial bilingualism in literature may employ deliberate orthographic errors. It teases with the errors that the immigrants make when they try to learn new languages.⁶⁴ Indeed, code-switchers are able to laugh at their own linguistic formulations. Similarly, Jonas and his friends proclaim a deliberately unorthodox use of language. This is expressed in the first person plural which becomes a sign of empowerment, “[–] we are the

59 M 2011, 171-172.

60 M 2006, 203-204.

61 M 2011, 177.

62 M 2006, 209.

63 Cortés-Conte & Boxer 1992, 149.

64 *Ibid.*, 147.

ones who get that it's actually called *an* assist in basketball"⁶⁵; "[--] vi är dom som fattar att det egentligen heter *en* basketlinne"⁶⁶.

Besides, the children's heroes are such critics of colonialism as Frantz Fanon and Aimé Césaire which they begin to cite.⁶⁷ When the children appropriate their immigrant parent's languages, "blatte Swedish", in their resistance to Swedish racism, they might follow Fanon's idea in *Peau noire, masques blancs* (1952) where he stresses that a language is never culturally innocent and to use a language is to assume a world.⁶⁸

Moreover, the children's humorous and boastful use of English, the language of popular culture, further diversifies the linguistic experiments in the novel. The humorous effects are further evoked by children's talk consisting of the metaphors, quotations and extracts from the video games, television series, advertisements, films, pop and rock music. For the reader, those passages where Jonas employs the exaggerating, hyperbolic rhetoric typical of teenagers, are amusing. In children's talk, the immigrant parents become superheroes comparable to rock stars, film stars or protagonists in video games.

Postmodern and postcolonial irony

Many postcolonial novels such as *Montecore* employ irony as device.⁶⁹ For example, ironic references to French colonialism in Tunisia and Algeria are reflected in Kadir's suggestion that the colonial conflict should be omitted from the forthcoming biography of Abbas. Here we find enclosed in parentheses an ironic juxtaposition and comment on literary marketing, where mass-murders would not entice as many readers as an exciting biography concentrating on one magnetic person:

All of their parents and siblings had been erased as a consequence of the French troops' effective hunt for suspicious terrorists. (N.B.: Do not place a tragic weight on the children's stories in the book. Focus on your father's mysterious arrival rather than the million dead in the wake of France's spreading of civilisation.)⁷⁰

The novel contains a plethora of humorous references to expectations of literary markets and of the "average" reader, who only wants to be entertained. Moreo-

65 *M* 2011, 251.

66 *M* 2006, 293.

67 *M* 2011, 251.

68 Fanon 1967, 17.

69 Fraser 2000, 118.

70 *M* 2011, 7.

ver, Kadir suggests that he and Jonas may offer different translated versions of Abbas's biography that are tailored to appeal to the target audiences:

In the French version we can let your father applaud the Eiffel Tower, Jacques Brel, and nuclear tests in the territory of others, enjoying a Brie-filled baguette. The Australian version can fantasize forth a customer who invades the studio and tells of his time as a kangaroo hunter. In the South American version an Indian can play a melody on a pan flute. Indian readers can be served your father's recipe for curry [--].⁷¹

An ironical stance is visually portrayed, for example, on the front cover in black and silver presenting the traditional television emblem of the Eurovision Song Contest with its twelve stars. Thus the picture offers an iconic representation of the main theme or a vital hybrid metaphor in the novel: the Arabic name of the Tunisian protagonist, Abbas, also refers to the Swedish pop-group who won the Eurovision song contest in the 1970s. Intriguingly, it may ironically suggest that the Swedish novel competes for its place with its non-European Tunisian protagonist Abbas in the midst of mainstream European literatures. Putting this common emblem of united European nations in a new context makes an irony of Eurocentric rhetoric. It demonstrates that Europe and its literature are mixed and populated by people originating from different continents.

As a postmodern and postcolonial novel, *Montecore* oscillates between postmodern epistemological irony, where the truth claims are negotiated and postcolonial irony, which deconstructs the structures of cultural domination and hierarchies.⁷² The edge of irony in *Montecore* can be detected in its implicit criticism of Western (Swedish) prejudices regarding non-Western people and racism. On the other hand, *Montecore* also ironises the children's anti-racist movement or overemphasis on ethnic and national identities, which is based on the virulent confrontation between Us (immigrants) and Them (Swedes).

Conclusion

The introduction of the Tunisian Kadir's and Abbas's view-points creates in this Swedish novel an intercultural and intercontinental perspective that transcends and deconstructs the cultural and linguistic boundaries. *Montecore* interweaves shifting Swedish and Tunisian contexts, whereby the novel's language is marked by elements signifying cultural hybridity. *Montecore* uses bilingual and multilingual codes that alternate in unique and humorous ways.

The multicultural and multilingual position is very clearly visible and audible in the language, composed of hybridised Swedish including French and Ara-

71 M2011, 187-188.

72 See Hutcheon 1994, 51-52.

bic words and expressions that Kadir and Abbas employ in their letters. The language of the novel demonstrates the play with languages in contact in migrant communities.

Moreover, the ethnic and cultural differences are also ironised and made relative in the novel. Khemiri's portrayal of contemporary multicultural Sweden thus provides irony which characterises the rewriting of ethnicity and deconstruction of national and ethnic identities. With its many postmodern literary distancing techniques, *Montecore* cannot be straightforwardly categorised as a "realist" or "authentic" representation of migrants. However, its presentation of the hybrid and creolised language that the immigrants use can be seen as a narrative device that portrays migrants uniquely in contemporary Swedish literature.

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PUBLICATION IV

**Writing Biography by E-mail: Postcolonial and Postmodern Rewriting of
Biographical and Epistolary Modes in Jonas Khemiri's *Montecore***

Eila Rantonen

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Writing Biography by E-Mail – Postcolonial and Postmodern Rewriting of Biographical and Epistolary Modes in Jonas Hassen Khemiri’s *Montecore*

Jonas Hassen Khemiri’s second novel *Montecore. En unik tiger* (2006, *Montecore. The Silence of the Tiger*, 2011) emblemizes postcolonial and migration writing, where different culturally marginalised identities are explored. In his highly acclaimed novel, Khemiri uses in an intriguing and subversive way such literary genres as the *novel of letters* (or *epistolary novel*) and *biography* in his portrayal of migrant identities and histories. Moreover, Khemiri’s inventive use of genres is linked with the postmodern literary devices employed in *Montecore*. The text plays with genres, metafictional elements, truth claims, narrative modes and linguistic forms as in postmodern novels. Thus in *Montecore* many kinds of narrative devices are employed, by which the author moulds and mocks the generic conventions and expectations of the reader. Metafictional play between the fictional protagonist Jonas Khemiri and the real author Jonas Khemiri, for example, represents the postmodern lucid irony in the novel.

Apart from its postmodern veins, *Montecore* can also be conceived as postcolonial rewriting of epistolary, biographic and autobiographic modes. The multiple voicing of characters in the novel especially illuminates the innovative ways in the presentation of Tunisian migrants’ lives in Sweden. In this article, I will explore how the dialogic and perspectival technique employed in the epistolary and biographic form is intertwined with the themes of migration and voicing of migrant identity.

Before exploring more closely the generic innovations, I will shortly outline the main events of *Montecore*. The novel unfolds the story of Tunisian Abbas Khemiri, who has migrated to Sweden and finally disappeared. Other main characters are his Swedish-born son Jonas and his old friend Kadir, who lives in Tunis. The novel starts with Kadir’s correspondence with Jonas, who has made his *début* as a novelist in Sweden. In his email-letter, Kadir suggests that they should write a biography of Abbas together, which would be based on their memories of him: ‘Let us collide our clever heads in the ambition of creating a biography worthy of your prominent father!’ (*M* 2011, 4).¹

1 ‘Låt oss kollidera våra kloka huvuden i ambitionen att kreera en biografi värdig din prominente far!’ (*M* 2006, 14.)

In his letters, Kadir describes his memories of Abbas in Tunisia in 1958, which was bombed by the French troops in the Algerian war. Originally the friends had met in the orphanage, where Abbas had ended up after his parents had died in a bomb attack. In the first part of the novel, is outlined briefly the political conflicts and history of Tunisia and Algeria in the 1950s, 1960s and early 1970s are briefly outlined. Abbas meets his wife Pernilla in Tunisia, in a tourist-resort Tabarka in the 1970s, with the result that he moves to Sweden and has three sons with Pernilla. In fact, large parts of the novel concentrate on depicting how Abbas tries to find his place in the Swedish society and how the cultural differences affect a bicultural family. While *Montecore* is a moving depiction of the relationship between son and father, it is also an incisive study of Swedish society with its increasing number of immigrants and hostility towards them in the 1980s and 1990s. It also reflects the growth of neo-Nazi movements in the 1990s in Sweden.

The last part of the novel concentrates on Abbas's downfall in Swedish society, where hostility to foreigners is on the increase. In his letter to Kadir, Abbas is worried that his children will be outsiders in Sweden with their black hair and brown skins in a country where neo-Nazis demonstrate openly in the streets and attack with fire bombs (*M* 2011, 135–136; *M* 2006, 164). Abbas does not want a situation in which migrants become segregated or secluded groups in Swedish society. Instead, he wants to promote integration and even ends up forbidding his sons to play with other children of immigrant descent (*M* 2011, 242; *M* 2006, 284). Furthermore, Kadir humorously describes that Abbas starts to emblematis a hybrid European and North-African identity in Sweden, symbolising 'the globally modern meeting place where East crosses West, where Jesus crosses Muhammad' (*M* 2011, 49; *M* 2006, 64).

The second-generation perspective is presented in Jonas's characterization. Similarly, Khemiri has also dealt with the second-generation identity in his first novel *Ett öga rött* (2003, [One Eye Red]). Thus, the children of migrants portrayed in both of Khemiri's novels skilfully represent the dual or hybrid perspective on Arab and Swedish cultures. This kind of dual cultural positioning of children renders them useful literary devices for depicting various aspects of multicultural societies such as Sweden.

Abbas's son Jonas demonstrates how migrant children represent the voice of conflict between cultures, which arise between and among native and immigrant groups. Khemiri seems to employ the child protagonist to introduce and negotiate the tensions arising between the host and original cultures, which often culminates as generational conflict. Children thus become literary devices that allow insights into disparate cultural issues. (Campbell-Hall 2009, 292–293.) In *Montecore*, Abbas's attempts to 'Swedify' himself and his sons are strongly opposed by Jonas who even deliberately begins to speak Swedish with an Arabic accent. Together with his friends Nigerian-descendent Melinda, Balochian Imran and Chilean Patrick, he starts a political movement, an antiracist organisation *BFL* (Blatte for Life), promoting the rights of migrants. Jonas calls his revolutionary group 'the unidentifiable creoles, the blend of everything, all the pigeonhole-free border

people' (M 2011, 274)² who cannot be categorised. In their correspondence, both Abbas and Kadir criticise the children, who want to give a decisive weight to the valour of ethnicity: 'And who becomes a better pet of racists than people that accept the existence of an us and a them?' (M 2011, 275)³

Three Informants and Writers Composing the Story of Abbas. The Relational Identity and Family Histories

Montecore recounts Jonas's and Kadir's attempt to reconstruct the life story of Abbas. In a postmodern vein, the novel conveys a constant play with truth-claims. In many passages, Kadir makes a direct claim to the 'real,' and the truth of lived experience in the shaping of Abbas's biography, 'THE TRUTH and nothing but THE TRUTH must be our lighthouse in the shaping of a literary master opus' (M 2011, 15–16).⁴ Moreover, in his letter to Jonas, Kadir recommends that they should use a pseudonym in their biography of Jonas's father in order to protect Abbas's anonymity. 'I also agree that certain people's need for anonymity could be damaged if we employ real names. So let us call the book "fiction" and modify certain names. What shall we name your father?' (M 2011, 18)⁵ Therefore, Kadir invents the pseudonym 'Abbas' for Jonas's father in order to illustrate his relocation in Sweden. This name combines the Swedish pop-group Abba with a typical Arabic name, Abbas. In fact, playing with proper names is paradigmatic of toying with identity markers in bilingual literature, where names are part of the game of border crossing (Cortés-Conde & Boxer 1992, 143). Moreover, the anonymity of Abbas, is motivated by political reasons, too. In a footnote, Kadir warns Jonas that all information about the contemporary political situation of Tunisia must be excluded from the biography of Abbas since it may cause problems with his Tunisian passport (M 2011, 76; M 2006, 94).

Although *Montecore* cannot be conceived as a biography or memoir, it uses the literary devices of these genres. The researchers of autobiographical and biographical mode have pointed out the extent to which the self is defined by its relation with others. For instance, Paul Eakin appropriates the term *the relational life*⁶ to describe the story of a relational model of

2 '[...] vi dom oidentifierbara kreolerna allas blandningar alla fackfria gränsfolk?' (M 2006, 322.)

3 'Och vem blir en bättre kelgris till rasister än personer som accepterar existensen av ett vi och ett dom? Vem blir mer tandlöst ofarlig än "blatten" som accepterar sin existens som "blatten"?' (M 2006, 322.)

4 'SANNINGEN och inget utom SANNINGEN måste bli vårt fyrhorn i skapandet av ett litterärt mästeropus' (M 2006, 27.)

5 'Jag håller också med om att vissa personers behov av anonymitet kan skadas om vi brukar deras riktiga namn. Låt oss således kalla boken "fiktion" och modifiera vissa namn. Hur ska vi namnge din far?' (M 2006, 30.)

6 Eakin is inspired in his discussion of 'relational life' by feminist theories of relational selves and autobiographical writing. (Cf. Bella Brodski's and Celeste Schenk's essay 'Other Voice' in *Life/Lines: Theorising Women's Autobiography* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1988) or Domna Stanton's introduction 'Autogynography: Is the

identity, developed collaboratively with others, often family members.⁷ He mentions both autobiographic and fictional family memoirs, in which the lives of other family members are rendered as either equal in importance to or more important than the life of the reporting self. Thus the self's story is viewed through the lens of its relation with some other key person, most often a parent. Eakin (1999, 85–86) calls such an individual 'the proximate other' to signify the intimate tie to the relational autobiographer.

Among others, Eakin's examples consist of ethnic minority writers, whose writing strategies can be compared with Khemiri's *Montecore*. For example, Eakin (1999, 58–59) mentions Jewish-American Art Spiegelman's *Maus: A Survivor's Tale* (1986, 1991), where the cartoonist Spiegelman records and translates into comic strip form his father's tale of his survival at Auschwitz. Eakin claims that in this text the autobiographical act is doubled, since the story of the other, of the informant (Art Spiegelman's father, Vladek), is accompanied by the story of the individual gathering this oral history (Art Spiegelman himself). This second narrative, Eakin (1999, 59) terms 'the story of the story' that structures the text. The stress is on the performance of the collaboration and therefore on the relation between the two individuals involved. However, in *Montecore*, we can note that the narrative position is tripled. Apart from Abbas, whose voice is presented in his letters to Kadir, both Jonas and Kadir collaborate as informants and witnesses in the telling of the life history of Abbas. Notably, we can claim that mediated by Jonas's and Kadir's memories, Abbas's story is also partly both Jonas's and Kadir's life story.

Gayatri Spivak's famous question of whether marginalised people can have a voice of their own and speak for themselves, which Spivak handles in her book *In Other Worlds* (1986), is also dealt with in *Montecore*. In fact, it is suggested in the text that Abbas is not able to write his own autobiography although he would like to do it. He even confides in his letter to Kadir that it is very difficult to bring order to his life since all of his memories are mixed and he cannot even know how he should begin his history (*M* 2011, 298; *M* 2006, 347). When sketching Abbas's biography in his letter, Kadir suggests that they should start the writing process of the book by recalling their memories of Abbas.

Recall you father citing the Baudelaire photographer Félix Nadar: "The best portrait is made by the person one knows best." This rule also applies to authors. How can you (and the reader) know you father's contours and understand his later actions without the forming of his historical history? (*M* 2011, 40.)⁸

Subject Different' in *The Female Autobiograph: Theory and Practice of Autobiography from the Tenth to the Twentieth Century* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1987). However, Eakin wants to extend its use as a cross-gender phenomenon especially in autobiographical writing.

- 7 Here Eakin (1999, 85–86) mentions, among others, Maxine Hong Kingston's *The Woman Warrior* (1976) and Michael Ondaatje's *Running in the Family* (1982).
- 8 'Erinra din far citerande Baudelairefotografen Félix Nadar: "Bästa porträttet görs av den person som man känner bäst." Denna regel gäller också författare. Hur ska du (och läsaren) känna din fars konturer och förstå hans senare aktioner utan gestaltandet av hans historiska historia?' (*M* 2006, 53.)

As it follows, Jonas's childhood memories in Tunisia are inserted in the text:

Here I propose that you inject some of your own memories from your yearly vacations in Tunisia. If you fear needing to compete with my metaphoric magnificence you can vary your font. Do you memorize anything from Jendouba.

Sure you remember Jendouba...

The city in western Tunisia where Dads grew up. The city where wrinkly, straw-hatted farmers sit crookedly on horseback and red trailers rattle iron bars. (M 2011, 10.)⁹

In this passage the shift from Kadir's letter to Jonas's memories is textually marked in bold letters. Noticeably, Jonas's memories, presented in the present tense, are conveyed in the unconventional second-person mode, 'You remember the pounding at the hamam, the eternal rubbing out of sweat dirt, Dads's hairy bodies, and then go home on the truck bed with cactuses whizzing by and stacked mountains of garlic' (M 2011, 10)¹⁰. This distancing device in *Montecore* may promote the idea of studying Jonas from a distance, as if the adult Jonas were discussing with his younger version.

How are then the disparate bits and pieces of Abbas's life story assembled and put together in the text from a variety of sources? Indeed, in *Montecore*, the opacity of creating a life story of a real person is illustrated to the reader. The result is that it is left for the reader to make a connected and coherent story of Abbas's life. Thus the reader has to compose the biography of Abbas from the different kinds of representative modes and sources, such as letters between Jonas and Kadir, reminiscences of Jonas presented in the second person, and Abbas's own letters. With these kinds of fragmentary narrative forms, the text illustrates how the biography of Abbas is a hypothetical and relative construction, composed of many different fragmentary sources and written from different angles.

In fact, Abbas's life story can be viewed in the context of *witness biography*, which Cohn (1999, 43, 87) distinguishes as a special form of life story. This kind of historical texts have often been imitated in fiction like in Joseph Conrad's Marlow novels, where the narrator acts as witness to the actions of other characters. We can also mention Sudanese Tayeb Salih's novel *Season of Migration to the North* where an anonymous narrator tells a story of the voyage to Europe of Mustafa Sa'eed (see Fraser 2000, 81).¹¹ These narrating characters and witnesses, unlike the omniscient tellers of third-person

9 'Här proponerar jag att du injicerar några egna minnen från era årliga semestrar i Tunisien. Om du fruktar att behöva rivalisera med min metaforiska magnificens kan du variera ditt bokstavsformat. Memorera du något från Jendouba? /**Såklart du minns Jendouba...**/ Staden i västra Tunisien där pappor är uppväxta. Staden där skrynkliga halmhattade bönder siter snett på hästryggar och röda traktorvagnar skramlar järnstänger.' (M 2006, 20–21.)

10 'Du minns hammamens mörbultning, det eviga framgnuggandet av svettssolk, pappors håriga kroppar och sen åka bilflak hem med förbibusande kaktusar och staplade vitlöksberg.' (M 2006, 21.)

11 Edward Said has interpreted Salih's novel as a *Heart of Darkness* in reverse (Said 1993, xx.)

The opening sentence in Jonas Hassen Khemiri's Montecore. The Silence of the Tiger (2011/2006) aptly illustrates the problematic situation of hybrid identities: "They just think I'm a strange tiger who walks on two legs". Cover: Lotta Kühlhorn / Norstedts.



novels, seem to simulate the natural (referential) discourses (e.g. Cohn 1999, 43). Khemiri's *Montecore* explores this kind of witness biography by its use of Kadir and Jonas as witnesses of Abbas's life story. Furthermore, *Montecore* also illuminates the problems that this kind of narrative mode induces in biographic writing.

Although Abbas's own voice is heard in a couple of his letters presented in the text, his life story is mainly presented from Kadir's and Jonas's perspectives since they discuss and plan the shape and content of Abbas's biography. The consequence is that they are trying to fill in the gaps in his biography in order to make the biographic narrative more coherent and reasonable. Kadir asserts, correspondingly, that he and Jonas should together formulate a clear motive for Abbas's recovery from his traumatic silence in Tunisia.

Furthermore, as both Jonas and Kadir act as biographers, we can emphasize that the idea of constructing the life story of Abbas is *culturally divided* since Jonas has been brought up in Sweden and Kadir in Tunisia. Thus the dialogues and journeys between Sweden and Tunisia, and Orient and Occident, in the novel are presented in the depiction of the psychological and geospatial voyages of the triadic protagonists of the book, Abbas, Jonas and Kadir.

Although the novel concentrates on the correspondence between Kadir and Jonas, as stated above, Abbas is also given some space to represent himself. This is enacted by the insertion of Abbas's letters to Kadir in the second part



*Jonas Hassen Khemiri.
Photo: Martin
Stenmark / Bonniers.*

of the book, which describes Abbas's settling in Sweden in the 1970s. In his letter, he confides to Kadir that he was told in Tunisia that his memory of his meeting with his father was wrong. Abbas's Tunisian relative Rachid claimed that Abbas's family had been infected with the infection 'where the forms of fantasy are given life in excess and in dangerous cases collide with reality' (*M* 2011, 100)¹². These words shocked Abbas who started to rethink his life course. 'Suddenly all the details of my life seemed to be suspiciously slipping and uncertain. What else could I have fantasized? What else can be untrue that is reality in my thoughts?' (*M* 2011, 100)¹³ Here Abbas's words clearly refer to the constructive nature of autobiography and biography where fact and fiction are easily blended.

Consequently, *Montecore* advocates the hypothetical construction of biography since it does not depict a coherent life story, although it tries to explain Abbas's life and character. We can notice that especially Kadir acts as an empathetic biographer. However, the constructing of Abbas's biography also illustrates the limitations of the biographic work planned by Kadir and

12 '[...] den där fantasins gestalter livges i excess och i farliga fall kolliderar med realiteten.' *M* 2006, 121

13 'Plötsligt tycktes alla mitt livs detaljer vara skumt glidande och osäkra. Vad mer kan jag ha fantiserat. Vad mer kan vara osant som i min tanke är realitet?' (*M* 2006, 121.)

Jonas, who are constrained and subjective in their presentation of their subject's life.

In fact, Abbas's speech is often quoted in the text but his thoughts are not rendered except in a couple of poignant passages, where Abbas ponders, what he is doing in Sweden. These passages resemble interior or narrated monologue. As follows, the information of Abbas is mainly unfolded in Kadir's and Jonas's descriptions of the life of Abbas, meanwhile Abbas's inner life is hardly depicted. On the other hand, the use of both Kadir's and Jonas's viewpoints in the presentation of Abbas's life story, creates an interesting perspective technique. This kind of plural mode for telling live stories serves as an intriguing postmodern and postcolonial stance. By telling and recounting Abbas's story in the incoherent, fragmented way in which it has been revealed to his son and to his friend, Khemiri shows how the construction of another person's life is always a subjective and interpretative process. Furthermore, the reader-addressing metafictional rhetoric highlights the difficulty of creating a coherent and truthful life story of Abbas.

As in biographies, Kadir and Jonas report the misery, oppression and delightful moments that Abbas has encountered and experienced, and they constantly evaluate, from their own point of view, the life course of Abbas and his place in Tunisia and Sweden. Moreover, Kadir wants them to use fictional techniques in the presentation of Abbas's life. Besides, Kadir even suggests some fictional techniques that would shape Abbas's life-story into something more coherent and dramatic. For instance, he advises that Abbas's recovery from his childhood trauma should be brought up to light by employing Joycean stream-of-consciousness technique in order to make the text more inspiring to the reader:

In the book we will do our best to formulate an obvious motive for your father's cured tongue in order to avoid confusing the reader. [...] Or you could have him be afflicted by a magical dream sequence in which his future is depicted in a modern Joyce-esque stream of consciousness.' (*M* 2011, 13.)¹⁴

Kadir also suggests that they should add a bit more drama to the highlights of Abbas's life by using different kinds of literary strategies and orchestrate the text even with musical effects.

Now comes the scene that we can call "Kadir's initiation to Sweden". Together your family and I delight everything that Stockholm's wintery spring has to offer in 1986.

Let us here change the tone of the book and present this sequence in the musical form of the medley (with your father's photographing clicking sound as a steady beat-drum).

14 'I boken gör vi bäst att formulera ett tydligt motiv till din fars kurerade tunga för att undvika läsarnas förvirring. [...] Eller så kan du låta honom drabbas av en magisk drömsekvens där hans framtid tecknas i en modern joycisk medvetandeström.' (*M* 2006, 24.)

Stockholm, oh Stockholm! CLICK! Show how we transport ourselves into the city and wander wharfs and superficially iced lakes. CLICK! (M 2011, 140.)¹⁵

Like many postmodern novels, *Montecore* contains numerous metafictional comments on the writing process.

At the Museum of modern Art we inspect a gigantic and very popular retrospective exhibition of the celebrated Swedish photographer Christer Strömholm. Then write:

My father notes Strömholm's photographs as standardized and unimpressive. Still, is it perhaps this visit which will influence so much of my father's future? Why? Read on and you will receive knowledge!!!

(This is a so-called planting in order to feed the readers' curiosity.)

Here we will die away the musical medley and normalize the form. (M 2011, 141–142.)¹⁶

Multitopicality of the Epistolary Form

Letters have reduced the distances between people and connected them globally. Historically, the letters sent by migrants to their home countries, more than newspapers and books, for example, became the source of knowledge about life in the new location. Thus personal correspondence was a significant source for expanding knowledge of migration and migrants (Elliott, Gerber & Sinke 2006, 2, 3). Furthermore, e-mail form, especially, has made the connective, cognitive and communicative elements of a letter even faster and more easily in reach.

Moreover, letterform has also been employed as a literary device and genre of its own. It has been called, for example, as *epistolary genre* or *novel of letters*. Significantly, some postcolonial and migrant writers use epistolary address in their portrayal of cultural identities and transnational relations. In their works, letterform can be a device in bridging the cultural differences and distances. Conceived transnationally, the letter becomes a unique social space that exists neither in the homeland nor in the host country, but in a third place, which is in effect, in both places simultaneously (Elliot, Gerber & Sinke 2006, 12). Still the epistolary genre has not been studied much in postcolonial and migrant studies. Critics have not successfully related the issues of ethnicity to epistolarity, which can be a viable narrative method

15 'Ny följer den sken som vi kan kalla "Kadirs initiering till Sverige". Tillsammans njuter jag och din familj allt som Stockholms vintriga vår har att erbjuda 1986./ Låt oss här växla bokens ton och presentera sekvensen med medleyns musikaliska form (med din fars fotograferande klickljud som stadig takttrumma). /Stockholm, ack Stockholm! KLICK! Visa hur vi transporterar oss in till city och vandrar kajer och yligt isade sjöar. KLICK!' (M 2006, 169–170.)

16 'Min far noterar Strömholms fotografier som standardiserade och oimponerande. Ändå är det kanske denna visit som kommer influera så mycket av min fars framtid? Varför? Läs vidare så får du vetskap!!! /Detta är en så kallad plantering för att mata läsarnas kuriositet./ Här tonar vi bort det musikaliska medleyt och normaliserar formen.' (M 2006, 170–171.)

for raising contemporary political questions about nationality, ethnicity, diaspority and migration (see also Sanae 2008, 277).

In the representation and voicing of migrant's experience the epistolary form plays a crucial role in *Montecore*. Abbas's biography in *Montecore* is mainly presented by e-mail-letters, which Kadir writes from Tunisia to Jonas in Sweden. Significantly, the epistolary genre usually involves a bifocality of perspectives, as the views of both the sender and the receiver are incorporated. As an epistolary novel, *Montecore* can be classified as *dialogic* (including the letters of two protagonists) or *polylogic* (with three or more letter-writing characters) since Abbas's biography is presented from three perspectives, Abbas's, Kadir's and Jonas's.

When Kadir's Tunisian views are introduced in the correspondence, this gives the novel a specific multicultural focus. Thus, letters present an intercultural dialogue that transcends and crosses cultural boundaries. Moreover, the embedded dialogic letter formula enlarges the more limited perspective of first-person narration. In fact, the striking feature of the letter genre is its dialogism. Thus it highlights the extent to which the self is defined by its relation with others as I mentioned earlier in connection to biographical writing.

Consequently, we can stress here that the letter genre serves as an emblem of changing cultural notions of textuality and generic modification in postcolonial and migrant novels. Moreover, it increases the dialogic elements in the novel. Epistolary genre embodies a postcolonial and multicultural situation in its way of describing a fragmented self in the midst of cultures and cultural differences. Significantly, several contemporary novelists have used the letter genre to express their characters' selves from the different angles and perspectives. This kind of mosaic and fragmentary writing also resembles a postmodern strategy by its emphasis on the significance of collage. Also in new postcolonial, minority, and migrant writing, the life stories are often presented as fragmented residues that the readers must reconstruct, as mentioned above. For instance, Elleke Boehmer (2005, 219) claims that a crucial feature of postcolonial women's writing is its mosaic or composite quality; the intermingling of forms derived from indigenous nationalist and European literary traditions. Coming from a very different cultural context themselves, writers emphasize the need for a lively heterogeneity of styles and speaking positions in their work. Boehmer (2005, 219) argues that they practice what Gayatri Spivak (1986) has described as a 'frontier style', favouring cross-hatched, fragmented, and choric forms. Thus this kind of fragmented form is more often used in women's, postcolonial and migration writing.

We can further emphasise the fact that the epistolary narrative is by definition a fragmented narrative. As Janet Gurkin Altman (1983, 169) notes, discontinuity is built into the blank spaces that makes each letter a footprint rather than a path. In constructing the mosaic of their narrative, epistolary novelists constantly choose between the discontinuity inherent in the letter form and the creation of a compensatory continuity.

We can underline the role of a specific voicing technique of characters in Khemiri's *Montecore*. In fact, in the history of epistolary writing, letters, like

conversation, have increasingly been valued for their ‘natural,’ ‘authentic’ and purportedly inimitable qualities. Good letter writers were said to be those who could make their letters ‘seem to speak,’ in a plain and unpedantic style. Furthermore, the letter form may also provide the writer’s non-authorial stance; thus, the illusion of an authentic text could be strengthened. Indeed, in the studies of epistolary form it has been emphasised that letters give an effect where the narrator’s voice is rendered unmediated and truthful (Goldsmith 1986, 4, 47, 55). Thus, the conversational and personal tone in letters may also increase the effect of ‘authentic’ voicing of the characters. Therefore, the epistolary genre may be employed in order to give a voice to ‘voiceless’ people, for example, to such immigrants as Tunisian Abbas in Sweden. For example, in his letters to Kadir, Abbas describes his experiences in Sweden in the 1980s:

[...] The frequency of immigrants is rising in step with the Swedes’ suspiciousness. In this year’s election commotion, the Conservatives’ master, Ulf Adelson, expressed: “A Swede is a Swede and a Negro a Negro.” He has also said that of course the Swedes’ eyes sting when immigrant children take limousines from “upper-class Östermalm apartments” to sumptuous home language lessons, while Swedish children must hike. Even Sweden’s socialists are starting to fly their kites in the same foreigner-antipathetic wind. Sometimes my soul is unsecured. What am I doing here? How will my three sons grow successfully in this country? How will their brown skin and black hair find success in a context where neo-Nazis have begun to manifest openly in the streets and refugee homes are attacked with firebombs? (*M* 2011, 135–136.)¹⁷

We can stress that epistolary address can add a greater realistic effect to the story, because it reproduces real speech. It is also able to demonstrate differing points of view without recourse to an omniscient narrator. Consequently, in letters we can hear the characters’ voices providing immediacy and ‘authenticity’. Epistolary form also allows the authors to present the characters’ thoughts without interference, and to convey events with dramatic immediacy.

Furthermore, we can stress the letter genre’s communicative and intermediary nature. Thus, it can be employed intentionally as a literary strategy, which bridges the cultural differences and distances. For example, Janet Gurkin Altman (1983, 13) has emphasised the letter’s function as a connector between two distant points, as a bridge between sender and

17 ‘Invandrarnas frekvens stiger i takt med svenskarnas misstänksamhet. I årets elektionrörelse exprimerade dom konservativas patron Ulf Adelson: “En svensk är en svensk och en neger en neger”. Han har också sagt att svenskars ögon såklart svider när invandrarbarn åker limousine från “överklassiska Östermalmlägenheter” till luxuösa hemspråkundervisningar, medan svenska barn måste fotvandra. Också svenska socialister börjar flyga sina drakar i samma främlingsantipatiska vind. Ibland osäkras min själ. Vad gör jag här? Hur ska mina tre söner växa lyckligt i detta land. Hur ska deras bruna hud och svarta hår finna succé i en kontext där nynazister börjat manifesteras öppet på gator och flyktinghus attackerats med brandbomber?’ (*M* 2006, 164.)

receiver, where the author can choose to emphasize either the distance or the bridge. Consequently, the power of the letter is to make the distant addressee present. In this it may also decrease the distance between the letter writer and the (internal and the external) reader. In the letter genre, the narratee is almost as important an agent as the narrator is. Moreover, the internal reader persona frequently loses his/her specificity to coincide with the external reader (Altman 1983, 91). In this way, especially in the epistolary genre, the role of the reader is central and in the foreground. Due to its interplay and dialogue between the text's internal reader (narratee) and 'real' reader, epistolary mode may convey increased affective response in the reader.

Moreover, *Montecore* also illuminates the reading act and experience of letters. When Jonas reads Kadir's reminiscences of his father, for instance, he starts to respond in his mind to Kadir's story and his childhood memories start to flow into his mind. The shift from the letter form into the presentation of Jonas's thoughts is presented here in the rarely used second-person form. The first sentence of Jonas's memories is printed in bold, which marks the shift of the narrator and focalizer from Kadir to Jonas:

[Kadir] I remember that your father returned to this subject in 2001 in an e-mail he wrote me from a Palestinian family in the Ramallah of occupation. He wrote: "Oh Kadir. What modifies life more than the magical insight about the potential freezing of everything?" This is a very beautiful phrase, which should be injected later in the book. (But exclude your father's continuation: "Wait, there is one thing... fifty-three years of permanent oppression by a blood-thirsty occupying power! Fuck the potential freezing of everything!") Do you understand you father's words, or are they on the side of fuzziness? Perhaps this emotion refers to your discovery of writing? If so, inject a section where you write, "As usual, the genial Kadir is entirely correct..."

And Kadir actually has a point, and when you read his letters you remember that day when you had just learned to read, and it has to be the year before Kadir comes to visit. (*M* 2011, 44–45.)¹⁸

As the narrative moves between Tunisia and Sweden, and the other character, the Tunisian Kadir, is located in a distant country; for the reader, the cross-cultural identification may be difficult at first. However, my claim is, that the letter form, with its speaking subject may help the reader to empathise with the interlocutor located in a different country such as Tunisia more than,

18 '[Kadir] Jag minns att din far returnerade till detta subjekt år 2001 i ett e-brev som han skrev mig från en palestinsk familj i ockupationens Ramallah. Han skrev: "Ack, Kadir. Vad modifierar liv mer in den magiska insikten om alltings potentiella infrysning?" Detta är en mycket vacker fras som borde injiceras senare i boken. (Men exkludera din fars fortsättning: "Jo, en sak 53 års permanent förtryck av en blodtörstig ockupantmakt' Knulla alltings potentiella infrysning!" Förstår du din fars ord eller spelar dom flummighetens överkant? Kanske refererar denna emotion till upptäckt av skrivandet? Om ja, injicera en section där du skriver "Precis som vanligt är den geniale Kadir helt korrekt..."/ **Och Kadir har faktisk en poäng** och när du läser hans bokstäver minns du den där dagen när du precis lärt dig läsa och det måste vara året innan Kadir kommer på besök.' (*M* 59–60.)

for example, the more conventional third person form often employed in novelistic discourse. Indeed, the letter genre emphasises the exchange and communicative I-you relationship, which shapes the language used, and in which 'I' becomes defined relative to 'you' whom he/she addresses (see Altman 1983, 118).

In this, the rhetorical employment of the epistolary genre may serve an intentional postcolonial strategy, which tries to give voice and space to marginalised people such as migrants. Significantly, the letter genre may also employ an implied 'double audience' (minority or dominant cultures) or multicultural readers and audiences. Thus by its cross-cultural presentation of different cultural voices and audiences, the letter form, with its intimate form of address, may bring together different cultural voices and audiences, and thus entice the sympathy of the reader. Although the presentation of Tunisian characters, Kadir and Abbas, may imply cultural distance or a cognitive gap for the Swedish reader and his/her response, the first person mode, typical of the letter genre, may be a form that conduces a dialogical response in the (external) reader. Accordingly, it may rhetorically retain the potential to pull the (external) reader easily into the addressee role, invite her/him to project him/herself into the narratee's subject position and so generate empathetic responses although the character-correspondent has a different cultural background.¹⁹

As letters accumulate, they create a story of Abbas. This intercultural dialogue, written in a letter formula, highlights the bicultural positions and living in-between-cultures. Through these intercontinental dialogues between Tunisia and Sweden, different versions and perspectives of Abbas's life story are presented. Both Kadir and Jonas try to explain the choices that Abbas was forced to make both in Sweden and in Tunisia. In his letters to Kadir, Abbas, for example, explains why he has not learned Swedish quickly enough. As his motive, he explains that the choice of language is significant. In Sweden, English or French will be attractive to Swedes, whereas to use an Arabic broken Swedish attracts only angry comments and a negative atmosphere (*M* 2011, 137; *M* 2006, 166).

The letters of Tunisians Abbas and Kadir, written in Swedish (it is explained to the reader that Kadir learned Swedish when he stayed a year in Stockholm), consist of a hybridised language, mixed with French and Arabic words and expressions. By these means, for example, the linguistic pressure of a former colonial country (France) to the colonial selves (Tunisians) is expressed. On the other hand, hybridised language also conceives the culturally hybrid identities typical for the formerly colonised countries as well as migrants in present day postcolonial and multicultural Europe.

We can stress here that migrant and postcolonial writing have renewed the ways in which the spatial issues have been presented in fiction. For example, Gerald Prince (2005, 375) has argued that 'postcolonial narratology should pay particular attention to multitopicality (e.g. "here" as opposed to

19 See also James Phelan's (1996, 135–153) discussion on narrative audiences. However, Phelan does not discuss culturally divided audiences.

“there”) – as well as to the degrees of heterotopicality, to the kinds of mixtures and inconsistencies, of gaps and cracks within spaces or between them, and to spatial alignments along such semantic axes as natural, or artificial, familiar or strange, independent, or colonized. Certainly, this multitopicality is intriguingly presented in *Montecore*, which is set both in Tunisia and Sweden. Moreover, past events and histories can be flexibly conveyed by the use of the epistolary mode. For instance, the novel includes different spatial and temporal levels and different historical chronologies. An example is the temporal polyvalence seen in Kadir’s letters to Jonas; observations of the present-day Sweden are included, as well as descriptions of Tunisia and Sweden in the 1960s, 1970s, 1980s and 1990s.

Significantly, *Montecore* depicts two histories: the historical events of Tunisia and Algeria in the 50s, 60s and 70s and the history of Sweden in the 1980s and 1990s. Hence, it recounts French colonial oppression of Algerians and Tunisians, for example, by telling about the traumatic childhood of Abbas, who experienced a shock and became mute after his parents were killed in a bomb attack during the Algerian war in 1954–1962. Moreover, it depicts a story of a Tunisian protagonist as a victim of racism in Swedish society. On a thematic level, connected with migration and colonial history of Tunisia and Algeria, the novel can therefore be read as giving voice to formerly colonised subjects in Algeria and non-heard migrants in Swedish society. It also describes the migrant spaces such as Rinkeby’s urban neighbourhood where the inhabitants are mainly migrants or immigrant descent.

We can emphasise here the role of epistolary form with its temporal and spatial hiatus that Janet Gurkin Altman (1983, 135) has emphasised. The word present in the letter is charged with both its temporal and its spatial meanings; it signifies ‘now’ as opposed to the ‘then’ of past and future events or contact, and it means ‘here’ as opposed to the ‘there where the addressee always is’. The shifts of places (Tunisia, Sweden) are flexibly produced in *Montecore* by the use of the epistolary form, where the letters describe the life and happenings in different countries and continents. Thus I claim that the epistolary genre seems particularly suited to the presentation of characters of different cultural background and who act as a kind of transnational subjects, crossing and moving between cultures, places and states.

In the history of the epistolary genre, the theme of cultural exchange is often employed as in Montesquieu’s *The Persian letters* (1721) that depicts Europe from the perspective of non-Europeans. This pioneering epistolary novel contains ironic comparisons of East and West, and it tries to serve dialogic or double perspective on both continents. By this kind of setting, Western perspective is rendered as relative. In the letters of Kadir and Jonas between ‘Occident’ and ‘Orient’, irony of the Western orientalist representations of East is used, for instance, in the depiction of ‘imagined’ Tunisia as an exotic East in the fantasies of tourists. Kadir especially describes European women tourists in humorous vein in his accounts when he and Abbas are busy seducing the tourist women in Tabarka in the 1970s. The tourist women are attracted by Tunisian exotic men as Kadir ironically explains; at that time, the word ‘Arab’ was not used as a provocation or virus

but attracted 'sexual frequency'. The result was that Tunisian men took on the role of 'Oriental men', such as oriental poets with melancholy eyes, for the benefit of the western tourist women, when having erotic nights with them in the hotel rooms (*M* 2011, 42, 50; *M* 57–58, 62). The Orientalist discourse employed by Western people towards Tunisians is often noted by Kadir and Abbas in their correspondence. For example, in Tabarka, a Greek photographer staged Abbas in tourist photos as an Arab with a fez, fake moustache, gold platter, tea service, djellaba, veil, decorative hookah, and leather slippers (*M* 2011, 32; *M* 2006, 45).

The introduction of the point of view of Kadir and Abbas creates to this Swedish novel an intercultural and intercontinental perspective that transcends the cultural boundaries. Significantly, the embedded dialogic letter formula augments the more limited perspective of the first-person narrator or omniscient third-person narrator typical of novelistic discourse. For example, Robert Fraser (2000, 45), who has explored the grammatical use of persons in postcolonial narratives, maintains that a third-person narrator especially may signify 'omniscience', which often turns out to be a position with uncomfortable political consequences. Moreover, third person omniscient narration has even been denounced as inherently inauthentic, and the use of epistolary form with its different correspondents and subjects may increase the effect of dialogism (see e.g. Altman 1983, 139) since within a letter written by a single correspondent we may also hear several voices and different points of view. For example, Kadir's letters, for example, often cite and paraphrase Jonas and Abbas, who are represented through their own words. Thus, the use of multilingual narrators and the rejection of the third-person narrative seem to reform the conventional presentations of narrators in fiction. Also the use of epistolary form with its different correspondents and subjects may increase the effect of dialogism (see Altman 1983, 139).

Dialogism inherent in the letter genre may be increased even more with its paratextual elements when epistolary texts also include prefaces, preprefaces, and postfaces, which conduct a dialogue with each other and with the text proper, and which can be viewed as a continuation of the text's dialogical model (Altman 1983, 163). *Montecore* also includes a fictional preface with its metafictional dialogue with the reader addressed as 'dear reader' (hej, kära läsare!) in prologue.

Montecore interweaves shifting Swedish and Tunisian contexts, whereby the novel's metaphoric language is marked by elements signifying cultural differences. The ethnic and cultural differences are also ironised. Besides, we can note that the novel contains ironical remarks on the depiction of authentic migrant speech. In *Montecore*, there is a reference to the reception of Khemiri's first novel *Ett öga rött* where the language of the novel was misinterpreted as a depiction of 'authentic' migrant speech.

Despite your protests you are celebrated because you have written a book in "Authentic Rinkeby Swedish." Apparently you have brought "the immigrant's story" to life in a language that sounds as though on has "Dropped a microphone" into an immigrant area of one's choice. Did you not write that your book was about

a Swedish-born man who breaks his language with intention? What happened to your asserted exploration of “the authenticity theme”? (M 2011, 27.)²⁰

It is true that *Montecore* cannot straightforwardly be categorised as a ‘realist’ representation or voicing of migrants because of the many postmodern distancing techniques. However, the presentation of the multilingual language that the migrants in Sweden of Arabic descent use in *Montecore*, can be seen as a narrative device that approaches realistic representation and has rarely been presented in Swedish literature. The multicultural position is very clearly visible and audible in the language of *Montecore*, which is composed of hybridised Swedish including French and Arabic words and expressions that Kadir and Abbas employ in their letters. Moreover, Elleke Boehmer (1995/2005, 258–259) has asserted that a creolized or polyglot story or poem both recalls the way in which cultures are syncretically interlinked, and provides a gateway to feeling otherness, experiencing how it might be to be beside one’s self. Significantly, postcolonial critical reading can thus put into play the invitation of the text to think as the other.

Is There an Ending in Life Stories or Correspondence?

In the beginning of 1990s, a stolen poster is put up in front of Abbas’s studio Silvia depicting a clown who asserts ‘Keep Sweden CLEAN’ (M 2011, 244).²¹ The consequences of racism culminate, when Abbas’s studio is burned down by the neo-Nazis. Due to these tragic events, Abbas’s artistic dreams collapse and he becomes depressed. His tragic realisation is that his attempts to integrate in Swedish society did not succeed. Finally, Abbas leaves his family and returns to Tunisia and then disappears. However, the end of the story is open to many interpretations since the text includes two endings.

As a proponent for postcolonial narratology, Gerald Prince (2005, 375) has suggested that it could investigate, for instance, the themes and preoccupations of the old and the new, nostalgia and hope, authentic and fake beginnings and ends, or memory, amnesia, and anamnesis. It might also concentrate on the depiction of time such as datelessness, quasi- or pseudo-chronology, heterochronology, multichronology, simultaneities, continuities and inconsistencies.

We can recognise that in *Montecore* the chronological narration of the events presented in the letter form is broken especially by the end of the novel. Significantly, in a postmodern way, two endings of the story are presented. Indeed, the novel juxtaposes multiple realities, since the narrator

20 “Trots dina protester celebreras du för att ha skrivit en bok på “tvättakta Rinkeby-svenska”. Tydligen har du gett liv åt ”invandrarens historia” på ett språk som låter som om man “sänker ned en mikrofon” i valfritt invandrarområde. Skrev du inte att din bok handlade om svenskfödd man som bryter sitt språk med intention? Vad hände med din påstådda exploration av “autenticitetstemat”?” (M 2006, 39.)

21 ‘Håll Sverige RENT.’ (M 2006, 286.)

Jonas suggests to the reader two alternative endings of the story. The first version provides a happy ending of a love story between Abbas and Pernilla. In this positive version, Jonas's father returns to Sweden, and the family lives together happily ever after. This imaginary ending is served as the son's romantic dream. However, in the novel's diegetic reality, emphasis is more on the pessimistic and 'realistic' version, in which the parents are divorced and the father cuts off all contact with his family and leaves Sweden altogether. The alternative scenarios, two endings, presented in the end of *Montecore* particularly underline the constructiveness of the biographic mode, which is emphasised in postmodern fiction. Finally, it refers to the idea of a life-story as open-ended. The uncertain ending also seems to imply the strong involvement of Jonas's imagination in the creation of Abbas's life story.

Similarly, the ending and the prologue refer to Abbas's new heroic life in New York, which seems to remain only as Kadir's boastful fabulation. In the depiction of Abbas's new life, a humorously declarative style is used, where Abbas shuttles between glamorous film stars, rock musicians and powerful politicians on the world stage.

Via the global world net I have followed your father's goldish success. When he is not photographing, he is establishing close relations to political intellectuals all over the world. He drinks righteously pressed juice with Sting, he brunches with writers like Arundhati Roy, and once a month he plays traditional Scrabble with Noam Chomsky. (*M* 2011, 300–301.)²²

The hyperbolic description of a world-wide great success of now glamorous Abbas forms an ironic contrast to Abbas's former pathetic everyday efforts to succeed in Swedish society that were deemed to failure. The imaginative portrayal of Abbas as a super hero is contrasted with Kadir's more 'realistic' tones in descriptions of melancholic Abbas as a pornographic photographer in Tunisia. In this light, Abbas's new successful career as an internationally famous art photographer hardly seems probable to the reader.

Why are two endings implemented in the novel? Firstly, it seems that these unsolvable endings can be traced to Khemiri's interest in postmodern literary strategies. Also the epistolary address itself evokes the question of openness and closure (Altman 1983, 144). For instance, Kadir's letters lend themselves to multiple interpretations and demand the interpreter's collaboration in order to be created and completed. As a literary form, the letter narrative imposes the ritual of closing upon the individual correspondents. On the other hand, a letter narrative may leave the end open: a new letter might be received after the closure. The lack of resolution in open-ended novels is often due to an enigmatic silence on the part of one of the letter writers (Altman 1983, 149).

22 'Via det globala världsnätet har jag följt din fars guldiska succé. När han inte fotograferar knyter han nära relationer till politiskt intellektuella världen över. Han dricker rättfärdigt pressade joser med Sting, han brunchar med skribenter som Arundhati Roy och en gång i månaden spelar han traditionsenlig alfapet med Noam Chomsky.' (*M* 350.)

Silence can also be conceived as a type of communication and it has been claimed to be one form of postcolonial resistance.²³ In fact, by the end of the novel, Abbas remains silent; he has stopped writing letters to Kadir and has not contacted Jonas either. On the other hand, this kind of ellipsis in the narration, Abbas's silence, may suggest the openness of the novel form; for instance, it may imply Abbas's possible later contact with Jonas or Kadir. The circuit of communication by device of the letters may be rendered as unending, a never closed text, typical in postmodern novels. Moreover, Elleke Boehmer (2006, 237) has claimed that multivoiced migrant novels have given vivid expression to theories of the 'open', indeterminate text, or of transgressive, non-authoritative reading.

To make the reading of *Montecore* more complicated, the identity play between Jonas, Kadir and Abbas becomes more enigmatic towards the end of the novel. Surprisingly, in the end it is suggested that Kadir might be a camouflaged identity of Abbas. At this point, his letters may have been an attempt to contact Jonas secretly. Although the 'real Kadir' also exists since Jonas remembers him working in his father's studio in Stockholm. Evidence for Abbas actually taking Kadir's disguise is confirmed, for example, by the use of language since it is difficult for Jonas to discern between the idiom of the speech patterns allotted to Abbas and to Kadir, whose voices echo each other. In any case, in his final letter, Kadir/Abbas disapproves of Jonas's version of the biography of Abbas and thus the interpretation of Abbas's real life-story is left open.

Conclusion

In the novel, it is illustrated how Abbas must constantly struggle and negotiate his place in Swedish society, which has ignored his talents and finally has become hostile to him. Abbas's life story unfolds gradually and indirectly as a palimpsest persisting beneath Kadir's correspondence with Jonas and Abbas. It is also revealed by flashbacks in Jonas's and Kadir's memories.

The changes of chronology and the changes of places (Sweden, Tunisia) may at first perplex the reader. Similarly, it may be difficult for the reader to follow the hybridised language that the characters use. At any rate, *Montecore* merges in a postmodern and postcolonial way with the epistolary and biographical modes. Thus, this mock-biographic travesty works against the expected generic forms, and employs fragmented structure and episodic narrative typical of postmodern texts. *Montecore* converges postmodern writing, which rejects simple closures of realism. This is also evoked by its play with language and use of linguistic dislocation when presenting Abbas's and Kadir's speech (Swedish hybridised with Arab and French words). Ultimately, it shows how Abbas's life-story cannot easily be trapped and

23 See, for instance, Tuomas Huttunen's article 'The Calcutta Chromosome: The Ethics of Silence and Knowledge' in *Seeking the self – Encountering the Other. Diasporic narrative and the ethics of representation*. Ed. by Tuomas Huttunen et al. New Castle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2008.

enclosed. Instead, it is rendered in alternate versions, shaped like a jigsaw puzzle, which the other narrators, Jonas and Kadir, as well as the reader, try to put together. This seems to illuminate that person's selves remain intangible; biographers, as well as writers and readers, can only reconstruct versions of selves.

In its complex form, *Montecore* uses multiple modes of narration as letters in first-person are juxtaposed with short second-person segments and first-person reminiscences. By its taking up three perspectives, Kadir's, Jonas's and Abbas's, *Montecore* can be called as multiperson texts, which moves back and forth between different narrative positions. Brian Richardson (2006, 61–62) has presumed that the use of multiple disparate voices generates a greater degree of dialogism than the application of more conventional literary techniques typically allows. Plural voicing of characters reflects the new innovative literary devices employed especially by postcolonial and ethnic minority writers.

Indeed, when different narrators are weaving the story, this creates a specific kind of pluralism in the narration. When the poignant events of Abbas's life are recounted from many perspectives, this will enlarge the reader's (interpreter's) point of view. Contending with only one perspective, would create a biased and partial biography, whereas many perspectives will create a many-faceted portrait of this unique Tunisian man. We can also note that the use of plural narrators in *Montecore* is not very common in fictional discourse. It is comparable with the new fictional and postcolonial modulations of autobiographic, biographic and epistolary genre.

Montecore also enlarges conventional epistolary form by its use of culturally divergent narrators. With its three talking subjects, Abbas, Kadir and Jonas, it could be called a Bakhtinian *polyphonic* novel, which highlights the presence of dialogue. When the Tunisian characters are permitted to speak for themselves, it engages, for example, Swedish or European reader's identification with their otherwise culturally distant position. Moreover, in the history of the epistolary genre, it has been claimed that the epistolary form was especially well suited for the sympathetic communication of feeling (Goldsmith 1986, 97). Indeed, as a narrative technique, epistolary form with its enunciation in the first person may shape a more close sympathetic identification for the Swedish reader, for example, with the Tunisian characters – sympathy that crosses the cultural boundaries.

Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin (1989, 39; also Ball 2003, 22) claim that on a fundamental level 'all post-colonial literature are cross-cultural because they negotiate a gap between "worlds", a gap in which the simultaneous processes of abrogation and appropriation continually strive to determine their practice. There is a power gap between the majorities and minorities, dominant and dominated. There is a geographical gap, separating different landscapes and climates, and the different cultural and social traditions that arise out of and adapt to those different experiences of place. And there is a language gap, differences in the way of speaking and writing a common language.'

But postcolonial theoreticians and writers have also introduced many kinds of ways to bridge these gaps with their workings of such terms as

hybridisation, ambiguity and ‘thirdness.’ For example, Françoise Lionnet (1989, 3–4) claimed, even as early as the end of 1980s, that the central questions of orality and literacy, speech and writing, truth and hyperbole, transparency and obscurity have become the cornerstone of the cultural aesthetics of many postcolonial writers. *Montecore*, with its versatile literary devices, can also be placed in this kind of postcolonial continuum. Clearly, *Montecore* illustrates that Khemiri is well aware of the dilemmas of contemporary migrant and postcolonial writing. At least, such a prominent theoretician of colonialism such as Frantz Fanon is mentioned in *Montecore*. In addition, some postcolonial writers such as Arundhati Roy, Salman Rushdie and Wole Soyinka are explicitly referred to in the novel. With its themes, use of language and direct references to postcolonial issues, Khemiri’s *Montecore* can clearly be placed in the postcolonial frame. The introduction of the points of view of the Tunisian Kadir and Abbas creates in this Swedish novel a unique intercultural and intercontinental perspective that transcends and deconstructs the cultural and linguistic boundaries underlining the force of dialogue in cultural contacts.

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African Voices in Finland and Sweden

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EILA RANTONEN

African Voices in Finland and Sweden

ABSTRACT:

Nordic writers of African descent have recently gained mainstream recognition in their new home countries. This survey shows how they deal with cultural differences, migration, and African identities. Fine examples of such new voices are the Kenyan-born Joseph Owindi and Wilson Kirwa, both of whom vividly recount their experiences in Finland. Also introduced are second-generation immigrant writers such as Jonas Hassen Khemiri and Ranya Paasonen (ElRamly), who have gained attention for their depiction of the 'New Finn' or 'New Swede' – citizens born in the Nordic countries with one or both parents of African origin. New tendencies in poetry and children's literature are also discussed. It is argued that African literature in Finland and Sweden opens up a fascinating area of cross-cultural dialogue, challenging Western literary forms by merging African and Nordic poetic and cultural traditions.

Something will happen. Something has happened. Senegalese have come to Sweden and planted a tree, a Baobab tree.

— Swedish-Senegalese society

OVER THE PAST TWENTY YEARS, the Nordic capitals have become increasingly multicultural. Sweden, for example, has been a popular destination for immigrants and refugees from around the world. After World War II, Swedish industry grew rapidly and required an expansion of its labour force. From the 1970s onwards, an increasing number of refugees from Africa, Asia, and Latin America ended up in Sweden. The

contribution of these migrants to Swedish society has recently reached new political heights, culminating in last year's appointment of the Burundian-born Nyamko Sabuni (b. 1969) to the office of Minister for Integration and Gender Equality. Sabuni is the first person of African descent to enjoy ministerial status in a Swedish government.¹

Most migratory streams to Europe can be traced to former colonial countries. However, compared to the major imperial powers, such as Britain and France, the involvement of the Nordic countries in colonial enterprise outside Europe was limited. Yet both Denmark and Sweden entertained colonial interests in the West Indies and were involved in the slave trade in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.² Finland, on the other hand, was never a colonial power, and its closest connections with Africa have been through Finnish missions in Namibia and development projects in Tanzania.

Today most immigrant literature in the Nordic countries is produced in Sweden, and these publications reflect the increased immigration to that country since World War II.³ As a result, Sweden has books published in languages such as Amharic, Tigrinya, Swahili, Somali, Mandingo, and the Akan languages. However, this overview will concentrate on immigrant works published in Finnish and Swedish. At present, the Somalis who escaped the civil war in the 1990s constitute the largest African diaspora in the Nordic countries, but not enough time has lapsed for a specific generation of Somali writers to have emerged. Nevertheless, despite the fact that stories depicting the African immigrant and refugee experience are rather rare in Nordic fiction, some writers of African descent have recently gained mainstream recognition. I will explore how these writers deal with cultural differences and migration and will delineate the African themes embedded in their texts. In addition, these writers of African descent in Finland and Sweden will be examined in the light of the literary genres they have chosen to work in.



¹ Her Zairean parents were granted political asylum in Sweden in 1981.

² For example, navigation of the Congo River was dominated by Scandinavians at the end of the nineteenth century. Their involvement also helped Belgians to strengthen their colonial rule in the Congo. Raoul J. Granqvist, "'Virvlande svarta lemmar' och 'goda svenskar' i Kongo i hundra år. – Om svensk rasism i vardande," in *Sverige och de Andra. Postcoloniala perspektiv*, ed. Michael McEachrane & Louis Faye (Stockholm: Natur och kultur, 2001): 111.

³ Satu Gröndahl, "Invandrar- och minoritetslitteratur i Sverige: Från förutsättningar till framtidsutsikter," in *Litteraturens gränsländ: Invandrar- och minoritetslitteratur i nordiskt perspektiv*, ed. Satu Gröndahl (Uppsala University, 2002): 63.

Poets of African Descent

One especially popular and productive genre in Finnish and Swedish migrant writing is poetry.⁴ In Finland, writers of African descent have not yet published poetry collections, although their poetry has appeared in anthologies alongside the work of other authors. Nevertheless, some poets of African descent in Sweden have been critically acclaimed. For instance, Johannes Anyuru (b. 1979) of Gothenburg, who belongs to the second generation of Africans in Sweden (his father is Ugandan), has been praised for his distinctly personal poetic voice. Anyuru writes within the Black Atlantic tradition⁵ (his models include Derek Walcott and African-American writers) and has also been influenced by the Beat generation. In his debut collection, *Det är bara gudarna som är nya* [Only the Gods are New] (2003),⁶ Anyuru rewrites Western myths in a postcolonial vein. Using Homer's *Iliad* as a poetic frame, he measures the realities of immigrants in contemporary Sweden against the Trojan Wars. His modern Troy is an urban environment where immigrants and refugees are under siege: figures such as Black Achilles and the pizza baker Ulysses are confronted with the challenges of a suburban world, with its police cars, asphalt jungles, and yearning and struggling souls. The poems embody 'ghetto' writing: the Greek epic form is interwoven with allusions to the American hip-hop band Mobb Deep's songs about the hardships of urban life. Some black American vernacular forms are also transformed into Swedish. The main figure, Black Achilles, with his many disguises, is described as "an Angel from Buenos Aires" and "the most Dangerous Nigger on Earth."⁷

In his poetry and interviews alike, Anyuru emphasizes a strong sense of 'w-ness'. In *Det är bara gudarna som är nya*, he conveys this through the bonds of the migrant community. The mothers and grandmothers from Somalia and Uganda reinforce continuity and security in the homeless and destructive environment that threatens the urban wanderers: "I try to locate a star / that I when twelve / gave to my dead grandmother / in Uganda."⁸ The poem *Svart neon* [Black Neon] portrays the migrants who have been left out of the "big integral of daylight" of Swedish society. Their foreign surnames are "pasted on

⁴ Satu Gröndahl, "Invandrar- och minoritetslitteratur i Sverige: Från förutsättningar till framtidsutsikter," 64.

⁵ Paul Gilroy's term in his book *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (1993). It signifies the transnational connections between black people in Africa, the Caribbean, America, and Britain.

⁶ Unless otherwise indicated, translations are my own.

⁷ Johannes Anyuru, *Det är bara gudarna som är nya* (Stockholm: Wahlström & Widstrand, 2003): 9.

⁸ Anyuru, *Det är bara gudarna som är nya*, 57.

their doors as a diagnosis of incurable illnesses.” Here the swords of the urban environment have been transformed into words. These words are described as “the helmets that are halved into a bronze bowl and filled with the tears of our fathers.”⁹ These fathers, who tell about wars in Africa, are foregrounded in the book. They also resemble impressive urban warriors in Sweden, whereas sons are depicted as “black-haired thunders” disappearing from their fathers to the new continents. The contemporary and ancient killing fields are compared, as the title *Det är bara gudarna som är nya* [Only the Gods are New] indicates. Poetry becomes an act of scanning and sampling languages and literatures as well as a zone of resistance.¹⁰ Anyuru’s collection is filled with figures of blackness, heroes and saints who tell “the black story of the Creation.” It also articulates visions of the future and ends up depicting homecoming and signs of reconciliation.

Another poet, the Nigerian Cletus Nelson Nwadike (b. 1966), who fled to Sweden in the 1980s, also handles Swedish skillfully, although it is not his mother tongue (he speaks Igbo, Hausa, and English). His three collections include short, aphoristic poems that are derived from oral storytelling. African wars especially constitute a recurrent theme in his poetry, and his third volume, *En sida av regnet som faller* (2003) [One Side of the Rain That Falls], pays homage to those who have been sacrificed in wars. It highlights the tragic consequences of the Biafran war and addresses the violence of contemporary African wars: “The white man says that Africa is poor / and I laugh at him”; “I know that Africa is not poor but / dangerous to itself.” The yearning for home is alleviated by intercontinental dialogue. To Nwadike, Africa resembles a mother, whom the son calls: “I call to Africa and say that I’m still alive.”¹¹ In Nwadike’s first book, *En kort svart dikt* (1998) [A Short Black Poem], too, the dead crave to be remembered: “The dead came to me / and begged / that I read their poems / and translate them.” Poetry and friendship are described as giving meaning to life, and figures of blackness seem to represent the speaker’s bond with Africans: “When I die / I want to be buried / in two graves. / In the hearts of my friends / and in a short black / poem.”¹²

An emphasis on blackness is also emblematic for the Angolan-born Kiluanji Kush, who aims to evoke a black literary style called “*Etu*” in his poetry collection *Sun Woman* (1991). The word ‘*etu*’ comes from the Angolan Kimbundu

⁹ Anyuru, *Det är bara gudarna som är nya*, 35.

¹⁰ Johan Lundberg, “Lyrisk sampling i förortens Troja,” *Svenska Dagbladet* (3 April 2003).

¹¹ Cletus Nelson Nwadike, *En sida av regnet faller* (Torsby: Heidrun, 2003): 66.

¹² Translated into English by Cletus Nelson Nwadike.

language and signifies ‘us’ or ‘we ourselves’.¹³ Kush’s views are also reminiscent of the Négritude movement, promoting as he does the idea that black art should infuse a strong sense of black consciousness and transcend racist misconceptions.

Since Somalis constitute the largest and the most prominent group of Africans in the Nordic countries, it is not surprising to find that Anyuru’s poems include observations of Somalis in Gothenburg: “The Somalis in my work tell about people who have died for love: it burns them inside, they lie under the tree on the savannah and are shaking with fever.”¹⁴ In Finland and Sweden, Somali writing, however, flourishes mainly in the Somali language.¹⁵ The Somali poetic tradition is performed primarily in oral forms – the orthography of the Somali language is, in fact, still being developed – so that Somalis abroad are helping to shape Somali oral poetry into written form. An important example of this work is the anthology *Sagaal Dayrood – Nio höstregn – Yhdeksän syyssadetta* [Nine Autumn Rains] (2000), which includes poems collected and written by sixteen Somali women now living in Finland. It contains religious lamentations, work songs, trance poems, and wedding eulogies. Significantly, its trilingual title¹⁶ indicates that it is directed at Somali, Swedish, and Finnish readers.

Traditional Somali poems often react to a certain event and include political messages. Accordingly, Somali women poets in Finland strongly denounce the war in Somalia. That war is condemned as “men’s war”, as in Sahra Xuseen Faahiye’s poem “Dhambaal Hooyo” [Mother’s Prayer]: “Before the poems were by the male poets / Those who could find the right words no longer utter the slightest sound / Since the reign of terror took the inspiration with it [...] Women’s rebellion will be my salvation / If mothers could speak up for me, I will be at peace again.”¹⁷ Similarly, Ardo Xaashi Samatar’s poem “Qabqabla-yaasha Dagaalka” [Masters of War] blames the warmongers: “Cursed be you who destroyed the peace. [...] You who believed that the tribes are more im-

¹³ Kiluanji Kush, *Sun Woman: Praise-poems of Love, Written in Etu* (Stockholm: Författares Bokmaskin, 1991): 13. The book has been published only in English.

¹⁴ Anyuru, *Det är bara gudarna som är nya*, 26.

¹⁵ For instance, Mohamed Hassan has edited Somali poetry collections. Shaafici Xassan and Ahmad Arten Hanghe have edited Somali folktales. A considerable amount of Somali literature is published by the Swedish publisher Scansom.

¹⁶ *Sagaal Dayrood* [Somali]. *Nio höstregn* [Swedish]. *Yhdeksän syyssadetta* [Finnish]

¹⁷ *Sagaal Dayrood – Nio höstregn – Yhdeksän syyssadetta*, ed. Marja Tiilikainen, Axmed Tiilikainen, Amran Maxamed Axmed & Muddle Suzanne Lilius (Helsinki: Helsinki UP, 2000): 233.

portant than the nation [...] You who chased me away as a refugee and skinned me naked [...] You who dig separate graves for a wife and a husband.”¹⁸

The women give expression to their mixed feelings about migration, as Ardo Xaashi Samatar does in her poem “Dhaqan iyo Dhulkeenna” [Tradition and Our Country]: “If they really would make a peace respecting the laws / I would not preserve my liver in this biting coldness / My name would not be ‘refugee’ for ever. [...] / You Finland [...] / If you are not rich but really poor / If you moan every day / Why were we invited here and received?”¹⁹ However, the anthology also includes prayers and blessings for the new country, as in Hibo Garaad Ibraahin’s “Duco” [Blessing]: “O God, why you do not stop the cry of Finland? / They love snow, let it be good for them / Give them the Economy that they so eagerly talk about / O God, Russia, cut their arm, help them / There are a lot of Muslims, God give them strength!”²⁰

Moreover, the traditional dance songs in *Sagaal Dayrood – Nio höstregn – Yhdeksän syyssadetta* are given novel contemporary dimensions. Reflecting the musical quality of Somali poetry, which is often based on songs and the rhythms of speech, the translators have tried to appropriate Somali rhythmic and alliterative models.

Writing for Children

Another popular genre among migrant writers is children’s literature, which serves as a bridge between generations and offers a shared history to peoples living scattered throughout the world. For instance, Ahmed M. Mahdi of Finland and Hassan Roble of Sweden have published Somali folktales. Another writer, Gambian-born Kebba Sonko (b. 1953), has published books of fairytale in Sweden. In Finland, Kenyan-born Wilson Kirwa (b. 1974) has published *Amani-aasi ja sisäinen kauneus* [*Amani Donkey and Internal Beauty*] (2005) in Finnish. Moreover, children’s books in such African languages as Tigrinya and Amharic have been published in Sweden.²¹ Nordic readers especially enjoy the ethical dimensions embedded in these African fables.

¹⁸ *Sagaal Dayrood*, ed. Tiilikainen et al., 241.

¹⁹ *Sagaal Dayrood*, ed. Tiilikainen et al., 233.

²⁰ *Sagaal Dayrood*, ed. Tiilikainen et al., 217.

²¹ For instance, Tegle Embaye’s *Kab sab aykafenya/be Taxla Embaya; se’eli: be Suléman baxit* (Uppsala: T. Embaye, 1998), and Tseggay Minya’s *Adey itayn Aahchiwan: Wekharyan-chira-an* (Sundbyberg: Admas, 2001).

Novels: In Search of African Fathers

Some writers of African descent have gained attention for their depiction of the ‘New Finn’, or ‘New Swede’ born in the Nordic countries with one or two immigrant parents. Second-generation writing articulates the ways in which ‘Africanness’ is reinvented and reinterpreted by each generation. The Swede Jonas Hassen Khemiri (b. 1978), whose father is Tunisian and mother Swedish, made his debut with the novel *Ett öga rött* [One Eye Red] (2003). It tells the story of Halim, who lives in Stockholm with his Moroccan parents. The novel employs a diary form through which the reader can closely empathize with Halim’s slightly naive, boastfully fanatical teenage perspective. The representation of youth talk in the novel was first labelled by critics as “broken Swedish,” as typically used in such migrant-dominated suburbs as Stockholm’s Rinkeby. Instead of “twisted Swedish,” Khemiri calls the language employed in *Ett öga rött* “creole language,” since writing with an accent, in hybridized Swedish, is his deliberate literary strategy. This conveys the state of living between cultures and different languages.

Khemiri’s novel shows how traditional values are strengthened under threat. At school, Halim becomes a rebel when he finds out that the Arabic lessons are going to be cut. To face his bullies at school, he draws strength from his heroes, such as a wise Arab Sultan, and Hannibal, who defeated the Romans. In affirmation of his Moroccan heritage, he starts to display symbols of Arab culture, which Swedish society perceives as the rebellious gestures of an outsider. Eventually, Halim, against his father’s will, is drawn to Islamic fundamentalism.

Although autobiographical writing is a popular genre among migrants, their writing may be too readily be thought of as autobiographical. *Ett öga rött* was thus misread by critics as an autobiographical account of Khemiri’s own experiences, although it tells the story of a Moroccan family in Stockholm, whereas Khemiri’s father hails from Tunisia. Khemiri’s second novel, *Montecore: En unik tiger* [Montecore: A Unique Tiger] (2006), nevertheless has some autobiographical references, and its protagonist even bears the same name as the author. Blending fiction and autobiography in a postmodern way, the novel recounts Jonas’s attempt to reconstruct the life story of his Tunisian father Abbas.

While *Montecore* is a moving depiction of the relationship between son and father, it is also an incisive study of Swedish society in the 1980s and 1990s. Khemiri’s portrayal of contemporary Swedish society with its migrant Africans provides irony that characterizes the rewriting of nation and ethnicity. The book also refers to the murder of the Prime Minister Olof Palme and the growth of neo-Nazi movements in the 1990s. Striving for acceptance, Abbas starts to

mimic the Swedes. He ends up taking a Swedish-sounding stage name, “Krister Holmström Abbas Khemiri,” in order to gain success as an art photographer; instead, he winds up making portraits of people’s pets. The novel gives a keen-eyed depiction of generational conflicts: Jonas is critical of his father’s efforts to assimilate and integrate into Swedish society. He even begins to deliberately speak Swedish with an Arabic accent, and starts a political movement promoting the rights of migrants. By contrast, Abbas’s artistic dreams collapse when his shop is burned down by neo-Nazis. These tragic events prompt Abbas to leave his family and return to Tunisia.

What is fascinating about *Montecore* is that it is partly written in epistolary form, including letters which Jonas writes from Sweden to his father’s friend Kadir in Tunisia. This intriguing literary device, which involves a bifocality of perspectives, as both the sender’s and the receiver’s views are incorporated and Kadir’s African views are introduced, gives the novel a multicultural focus. The letters in *Montecore* also present an intercultural dialogue that tries to transcend cultural boundaries, so that the embedded dialogic letter formula subverts the more limited perspective of first-person narration.

Whereas a postcolonial reading of *Montecore* would focus on the meaning of the culture-specific resonances and the criticism of racism in the novel, a postmodern reading would emphasize its textual playfulness and generic infusions. Indeed, the novel employs metafictional elements, since the narrator, Jonas, constantly reminds the reader that the book is a fictional construct. In addition, it juxtaposes multiple realities, with the narrator suggesting to the reader two alternative endings for the story. The first version encompasses the happy ending of a love story. In this positive version, Jonas’s father returns from Tunisia and the family live together happily ever after. This imaginary ending serves as the son’s romantic dream. However, in the novel’s diegetic reality, emphasis is more on the pessimistic and ‘realistic’ version in which the parents are divorced and the father cuts off contact with his family. *Montecore* thus blends, in postmodernist fashion, seemingly autobiographical elements with fabulation.

Similarly, Ranya Paasonen’s (b. 1974) first novel *Auringon asema* [The Position of the Sun] (2003), published under her former name Ranya ElRamly, conveys autobiographical reminiscences that have been moulded into fictional form. Born of an Egyptian father and a Finnish mother, Paasonen has lived in India, Chad, Saudi Arabia, Libya, Egypt, and Finland. Like *Montecore*, the novel explores the cultural differences in a bicultural family. Here the young female protagonist recalls her parents’ love story.

Paasonen’s narrative style gained attention because of its originality in Finnish literature. The novel is written in the decorative language of prose poetry,

with thought-patterns, rhythms, and structures that critics attribute to Arabic poetic language. Although Paasonen has claimed that she does not write consciously in an Arabic style, her sensual poetic style is rare in Finnish prose. Not only does she repeat nouns and entire sentences in rhythmical patterns, she also interweaves shifting Finnish, Egyptian, and Libyan contexts, whereby the novel's metaphoric language is marked by elements signifying cultural differences – heat and coldness, day and night, sunshine and moonlight. Moonlight is also associated with imminent night-time bombing raids in the Middle East, and the text also shows, from different angles, how Northern daylight differs from Southern daylight. The novel incorporates a multicultural conception of time as running in circles,²² and this cyclical narration of time reinforces its poetic texture.

Paasonen depicts the everyday dilemmas of all those who must survive in-between different cultures and languages. The cultural perplexity is shown through everyday habits such as food culture, as in the scene in which the narrator discusses her parents' different ways of peeling an orange. Whereas her Egyptian father peels the orange elegantly, making a spiral of the peel that the daughter slips on her wrist like a bracelet, her mother peels it in an efficient Finnish way by cutting the skin into four slices. The protagonist, however, asserts that she has to make a choice: one cannot peel the orange both ways at the same time.²³ The daughter's bicultural background may present her with more choices than people generally have; these choices, Paasonen shows, present a dilemma.

The above-mentioned Anyuru, Khemiri, and Paasonen are among those 'hyphenated' or multicultural writers whose ethnic and national identities are "somewhere in between" European and African identities. Their writing reflects the double consciousness that has been described as typical of migrant identity. Many second-generation writers have rewritten their parents' life stories, as have Khemiri and Paasonen. On the other hand, like many writers belonging to the second generation of immigrants, both Khemiri and Paasonen dislike the label 'migrant writer'. By contrast, Khemiri calls himself a writer who is conscious of migration, racism, and power-structures in a multicultural society.



²² Tapani Ritamäki, "The Orientalization of Ranya ElRamly: A Solstice in Finnish Prose," *Nordic Literature* 3 (2003): online.

²³ Ranya ElRamly, *Auringon asema* (Helsinki: Otava, 2002): 13.

Memoirs and Autobiographical Essays

The emotional component of identity has its roots in ethnicity and nationality and is often explored in the genre of autobiography. Cultural autobiographies often serve as filters for the different kinds of bonds between ethnic and national communities which are all part of the migrant experience. For those African writers living in multicultural environments, a European often collaborates with them to help create their novels and autobiographies. A prominent example of such a collaborative effort is the Kenyan-born Joseph Owindi (b. 1943), whose memoir, provocatively entitled *Kato, kato nekru* [Look, Look, a Nigger!] (1972), was edited and translated from English into Finnish by his friend Risto Karlsson. On his cold safari into Finnish culture, Owindi recounts his experiences as a sociology student in Finland in the 1960s. At that time, Finland had very few foreigners. The book is a humorous, ironic, personal account of an African man who is the target of racism. In the Fanonian sense, Owindi is aware that, as a black man, he is a construction in the Western racist imagination. One of the first migrant autobiographies to be published in Finland, *Kato, kato nekru* offers a bold description of the racism and ignorance of African culture in Finland. Following the book's publication, the Finnish media extensively debated these issues, stimulated by Owindi's powerful and acutely critical observations.

Another Kenyan mentioned earlier is Wilson Kirwa, who dictated his life story *Juoksijasoturin ihmeellinen maailma* [The Runner-Warrior's Fabulous Life] (2006) to Heikki Saure. Saure notes that by listening to Kirwa, he learned the importance of oral tradition as a way of observing life.²⁴ Born of a Nandi father and a Maasai mother, Kirwa has lived in both communities. His book opens with descriptions of his poor but colourful childhood, and also includes details from the history of the Nandi tribe, such as the challenge that the freedom fighter Koitalel Arap Somoei presented to the British colonial power. Kirwa goes on to relate how he came to Finland as a tourist in 1997 and ended up as an athlete representing Finland in the World Athletics Championships. Kirwa's exhilarating book is permeated with humoristic insights into Finnish and Kenyan society. The memoir records his days as a penniless athletic trainee who could not speak Finnish. Although self-irony is prevalent in the text, by the end postcolonial resistance also reveals itself. When describing the humiliating treatment he received from Italian customs officials, Kirwa asserts that "the Europeans used to rob the riches of Africa, take Africans as slaves, seize their best lands, kill and murder masses of Africans. But when Africans today

²⁴ Heikki Saure, *Wilson Kirwa: Juoksijasoturin ihmeellinen elämä* (Helsinki: Otava, 2006): 9.

step onto European ground, they are immediately suspected as criminals and held under surveillance.”²⁵ Here Kirwa’s account brings to mind the Malian Manthia Diawara’s account, in his memoir *We Won’t Budge* (2003), of racist incidents in Paris.²⁶ Kirwa’s postcolonial defiance is also apparent in the anecdote of the quarrelsome brother, who was expelled to cold and dark Europe. There his skin was worn and became white. One day the bad-tempered brother heard about Paradise, and finally he returned to Africa with the Bible and the Rifle.²⁷ Since Kirwa uses this rhetorically accusatory mode only sparingly, he is all the more forceful when he does.

The Kenyan-born Solomon Mwambua (b. 1952), who moved to Sweden in 1980, has also written about his childhood in his autobiographical novel *Gingo: En afrikansk pojkes uppväxt* [Gingo: Growing up as an African Boy] (1998). This work highlights the importance of the fairytales and myths that the protagonist learned from his grandmother in his childhood. The Moroccan-born M’hammed Sabour’s autobiography *Suomalainen unelma* [A Finnish Dream] (1999) also contains acute observations of the Finnish and Western way of life. It is based on his diary and offers his views on the political changes in Finland from the 1970s to the 1990s.

Louis Faye, who has been living in Sweden since the 1980s, combines autobiography and postcolonial criticism in his essay *Piknicken under baobabträdet* [Picnic under the Baobab Tree] (2001). Like much postcolonial writing, it displays a generic hybridity (autobiography, documentary mode, and historical study) and offers counter-histories to Western historical narratives. Faye calls his writing a rhapsodic essay that combines fact and fiction and expresses his feelings about racism, love, and resistance from a diasporic position. His search for cultural identity starts with the symbol of Senegal, the baobab tree, which serves as inspiration for poets and is a metaphor for growth, the shaping of identity, and the reproduction of the riches of the past. The essay consists of retrospective passages concerning his Senegalese father and German mother and his growing up in an intercultural family in Africa and Europe. It dwells on the racist rhetoric of the German journals that interviewed and photographed the family in the 1960s and emphasized the skin colour of the Senegalese father and his children. When describing how he grew up as a ‘hybrid’ child,

²⁵ Saure, *Wilson Kirwa*, 362.

²⁶ Diawara claims that the French merchants had taken more out of Africa than the African immigrants would ever have got out of France, and the French soldiers had destroyed African empires and would continue to fight any African government today to maintain and protect French political and economic interests in Africa, which would always be bigger than African interests in France; Diawara, *We Won’t Budge* (Oxfordshire: Ayeibia, 2003): 33.

²⁷ Saure, *Wilson Kirwa*, 364.

Faye echoes Frantz Fanon's autobiographically inspired theorizing on racism in his *Peau noire, masques blancs* (1952). He also refers to Léopold Sédar Senghor's *Éthiopiennes* (1956), which blends the African and Biblical and Nordic myths in two symbolic figures, the Queen of Sheba and the Princess of Belborg, as well as to Mariama Bâ's novel *Chant écarlate* (1981), which deals with intercultural marriage. Faye concludes by suggesting the Wolof word 'diggante' as a dynamic metaphor for the relation between different cultures; the word signifies distance, interval and connection, in-between place and intermediate time.²⁸

Conclusion

For years Nordic literary studies underrated multiethnic issues and writing. However, there is currently a surge of interest in migrant literatures in the Nordic countries. As Ingeborg Kongslie emphasizes, migration and exile also include feelings of freedom and creative challenge. While migrant writers look at society from an outsider's perspective, they are at the same time also insiders; their texts are therefore examples of cultural interpretation.²⁹ Indeed, migrant literature by authors of African descent in the Nordic countries opens up a fascinating area of cross-cultural dialogue as it challenges Western literary forms by merging African and Nordic poetic and cultural traditions.

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²⁸ Louis Faye, "Piknicken under baobabträdet," in *Sverige och de Andra: Postcoloniala perspektiv*, ed. Michael McEachrane & Louis Faye (Stockholm: Natur och kultur, 2001): 44.

²⁹ Ingeborg Kongslie, "Migrant or multicultural literature in the Nordic countries," in *Nordic Voices: Literature of the Nordic Countries* (Oslo: Nordbok, 2005): 44.

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