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Postcolonial¹, Transnational, Literary Fields: Sámi and Tornedalian Counter-Histories

During the last decades there has been a vivid discussion about the writing of literary history and how this enterprise is connected with transformations of nation-states related to the impact of the EU, migration, and historical multiculturalism, multilingualism and domestic ethnic minorities. In 1998 Hans Hauge contributed to this debate with a plea for a postnational Danish literary history (Hauge 1998). From the vantage-point of the contemporary situation in Denmark he claimed that nation-states are being phased out and that the factors just mentioned are being hidden by national, monolingual literary histories: “The phasing out of the nation-state compels us to revise our literary history” (“Nationalstatens afvikling tvinger os til at revidere vores litteraturhistorie”, 1998: 78).

This article will discuss contemporary challenges of stories about national literatures based on the concept of a relatively homogeneous nation-state, with the set out from Sámi and Tornedalian imaginative writing as well as narratives about Sámi and Tornedalian literature. The issue of what Sámi literature is may be approached from different points of departure. When discussing Sámi women’s path to authorship Hirvonen addresses this issue and concludes that she has restricted her study to authors who live in the “Nordic countries, leaving out the Russian Sámi”, the decision being based on “both historical and cultural differences between the Russian and Nordic Sámi” (Hirvonen 2008: 19). The scope of this article’s discussion is limited by another factor captured by the concept of the “literary field” (Bourdieu 1996). Today there are alternative literary fields with local publishers publishing in Sámi languages and Meänkieli, previously called Tornedalian Finnish. These publishers are vital elements of alternative literary fields. The major Sámi publishers, DAT and Davvi Girji, are both located in Finnmarken,

¹ The term “postcolonial” is used here in connection with the concept “counter-histories” in analogy with the way Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin use the terms in their classic *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literatures* (2009). This implies that the term is used as a synonym to “anti-colonial”. The concept “counter-histories”, of course, implies practices of resistance, protest and decolonisation in a situation when colonialism has not come to an end. In her thesis about Sámi women’s path to authorship Hirvonen uses what she calls “postcolonial criticism” as a tool of Sámi research, and she devotes a chapter to “Sámi identity and the experience of colonization” (Hirvonen 2008). One point of establishing a connection between the concepts “postcolonial” and “counter-history” is that it emphasises the theme of decolonisation in response to the establishment of colonising binaries which have denigrated the cultures of minorities and indigenous peoples (Heith 2016). However, it should be noted that there are Sámi activists today who reject the term “postcolonial”, while stressing that Sápmi is still colonised, for example Swedish performer Sofia Jannok and artist Anders Sunna (Heith 2015a).

Norway.² The establishment of these publishers is related to the language-revitalisation which was enhanced in the 1970s. But, as there are several Sámi languages, some of which are facing extinction (Pietikäinen et al. 2010) the issue of language is complex. Today, even the dominant Sámi language, North Sámi, struggles to strengthen its position, and the publishers DAT and Davvi Girji play a vital role for preserving and developing it. The Sámi literary field in focus in this article is thus a field where the most prominent Sámi publishers contribute to revitalization of the North Sámi language. When it comes to the question of how to define a Sámi or Tornedalian author, *self-identification* is a central concept. If an author defines her- or himself as a Sámi or Tornedalian, performs Sáminess and Tornedaliness as a public persona, and is active on a Sámi and Tornedalian literary field, respectively, this qualifies her/him as a Sámi or Tornedalian author.³

Sámi and Tornedalian writers are also published in national majority languages by well-established publishers located at a distance from Sápmi and Meänmaa. Both Sápmi and Meänmaa, the traditional homeland of the Sámi and Tornedalians respectively, overlap nation-state borders. While Sápmi stretches from northern Norway in the west to the Kola peninsula in the east, Meänmaa, literally “Our land”, covers a space on both sides of the Swedish-Finnish border in the north. A major theme of present day cultural mobilization is, as mentioned above, language revitalization aiming at strengthening Sámi languages and Meänkieli. However the exchange between traditions and literary fields is complex. The Swedish Tornedalian writer Bengt Pohjanen, to mention one example, is published by Kamos and Barents Publisher, two publishing houses he started himself in Meänmaa, and by Norstedts. Norstedts, located in Stockholm, was founded in 1823 which makes it Sweden’s oldest, still existing, publishing house. When writing for a Tornedalian readership Pohjanen writes alternatively in Meänkieli, Swedish and Finnish, while all his work published by Norstedts is in Swedish.

The emergence of alternative Sámi and Tornedalian publishers is related to cultural mobilization and decolonization, but also to minority politics and official political recognition of minorities. While the Sámi and Tornedalian local publishers that were established in the context of cultural mobilization are engaged in language revitalization, this does not prevent them from publishing also in national majority languages, and as is the case with the major Sámi publishers DAT and Davvi Girji in English. This indicates that the publishers address multiple readerships with varying language skills. While old, established publishers in the capitals of the nation-states do publish works by minority writers in national

² All Sámi publishers mentioned in Solbakk’s *The Sámi People: A Handbook* are located in Norway (Solbakk 2006: 295). Of course there are other publishers as well, but when it comes to publishing in the dominant Sámi language, North Sámi, the roles of DAT and Davvi Girji cannot be over-estimated.

³ For a discussion of performativity in connection with Tornedalian literary history and Sámi culture, respectively, see Anne Heith “Platsens sanning. Performativitet och gränsdragningar i tornedalsk litteraturhistoria och grammatik” (Heith 2012d) and “Indigeneity, Cultural Transformations and Rethinking the Nation: Performative Aspects of Sámi Elements in Umeå 2014” (Heith 2015b).

majority languages, it is mainly local publishers like DAT, Davvi Girji and Barents Publisher that publish in Sámi and Meänkieli, respectively. This implies that one role of the local publishers is to contribute to the development of alternative literary fields where Sámi languages and Meänkieli, respectively, are used.⁴ However, there are exceptions. In 2011 Gyldendals in Oslo published Sámi Rawdna Carita Eira's debut as a poet in a bilingual volume in Sámi and Norwegian (Eira 2011). The publication of *løp svartøre løp / ruohta muzetbeallji ruohta (run blackear run)* represents something new as it is not customary that a publisher with a central position in the dominant, Norwegian literary field publishes a text in Sámi. As opposed to DAT and Davvi Girji, Gyldendals is an old well-established publisher which from the vantage point of anticolonialism is located in the colonial centre.

Homogenizing nationalism under attack

Although nation-states are changing, they can hardly be said to be in the process of being phased out in contemporary Europe, as suggested by Hauge (1998). One only has to consider the recent success of EU-skeptical parties in order to see that there is a considerable popular dissatisfaction with the idea of a Europe without national borders. Nevertheless, transformations have occurred which modify the ways in which nation-states are being conceptualised. This theme may be approached with theories formulated in order to describe the ideology behind the formation of nation-states. Umut Özkirimli discerns three sets of claims that underpin what he calls the nationalist discourse: 1) identity claims, 2) temporal claims, and 3) spatial claims (Özkirimli 2010: 208-209). Identity claims involve that the world is divided into 'us' and 'them', while temporal claims imply that a construction of the past is used in the present for the purpose of legitimizing decisions related to the shaping of the nation. Spatial claims finally, are connected with "a fixation of territory, the quest for a 'home', actual or imagined" (Özkirimli 2010: 208-209). A central question is how these claims are supported, alternatively challenged and deconstructed, today. My claim is that Sámi and Tornedalian literature and narratives about literature problematize and challenge all three sets of claims that underpin the construction of traditional literary histories used in educational institutions in the Scandinavian countries.

To some extent the critique of homogenizing nationalism has influenced politics. In Sweden for example there are five domestic,

⁴ As indicated above in the discussion of a North Sámi literary field where there are publishers publishing in North Sámi this does not exclude that there are other literary fields focusing upon other Sámi languages, or other dominant national languages such as Finnish in Finland. For example, when there was a breakthrough for Sámi literature in the 1970s, Kirsti Paltto from the Finnish part of Sápmi was one of the most prominent new Sámi authors. Her books were published in Sámi and translated to Finnish. Paltto was nominated for the Finlandia Prize for literature for the translation *Vojjja minun poroni*, which shows that the works of a Sámi author may very well circulate on a dominant literary field, provided it is available in a majority language.

historical minorities that have been recognized by the Government. Two of them are the Sámi and the Tornedalians. This is not something which is applauded by Sámi people who emphasize that the Sámi are an indigenous people and not a minority among other. If the Sámi were recognized as an indigenous people by the Swedish Government this would strengthen the position of the Sámi politically. However, so far the Swedish Government has not ratified Convention No. 169, also known as the ILO-convention 169, a legally binding international instrument dealing with the rights of indigenous and tribal peoples (Heith 2015a: 111). In the contexts of Sámi and Tornedalian cultural mobilization identity claims that have marginalized or effaced the cultural traditions of the Sámi and Tornedalians respectively, are questioned, and homogenizing narratives deconstructed. In a seminal essay Homi K. Bhabha describes colonizing nationalism as the dissemination of the idea of the nation as the many as one (2008: 204). In the geographical context of northern Scandinavia a version of this ideology was implemented in assimilationist policies, which have resulted in language loss, as well as loss of cultural identity for Sámi people and Swedish Tornedalians. A study of the situation of minority languages at the North Calotte concludes that all Sámi languages as well as Meänkieli, are threatened by extinction today (Pietikäinen et al. 2010: 6). This historical backdrop is vital for the understanding of the emergence of alternative, postcolonial, decolonizing Sámi and Tornedalian narratives.

Critical examinations of the genre of literary history

In contributions to the debate about the writing of literary histories alternatives to homogenizing nation-building have been proposed. Both *Rethinking Literary History* from 2002 (Hutcheon and Valdés: 2002) and *History of the Literary Cultures of East-Central Europe* from 2004 (Cornis-Pope and Neubauer: 2004) emphasize that the writing of literary history must be connected with economical, political and broad cultural and societal perspectives so that issues related to ethnicity and gender are explicitly addressed (Heith 2008). In *Rethinking Literary History* Linda Hutcheon explicitly criticizes a model for writing literary histories that doesn't take into account the ethnic and linguistic plurality of the globalized world. The editors of *History of the Literary Cultures of East-Central Europe*, Marcel Cornis-Pope and John Neubauer, emphasize that their aim is to redefine literary traditions by playing down nationalist myths and to include elements that previously have been excluded, in particular elements that contradict the idea of the cultural homogeneity of the nation-state. The idea of the homogeneous nation-state is based on the metaphorical notion that the nation is a closed container, with a content which must be kept pure. Cornis-Pope and Neubauer propose an alternative model which may account for analogies, exchange between cultural traditions, hybridity and elements that have been seen as marginal within the homogenizing nation-building context. As these examples show there is a critical discussion going on about the writing of

literary history with an emphasis on the need for critical examinations of traditions based on obsolete, and even racist, understandings of national culture.

The central themes of the two critical examinations of the genre of literary history just mentioned are prevailing also in histories of postcolonial literature. *The Cambridge History of Postcolonial Literature* published in 2012 emphasizes that cultural differences, marginalization and exclusion are central themes of postcolonial studies, furthermore that postcolonial studies pays equal attention to minorities in the West, as to regional, indigenous forms of representation around the world (Quayson 2012). This is a broader context useful for the analysis of Sámi and Tornedalian counter-histories.

Strategic essentialism

One vital element of Sámi and Tornedalian new literary histories is the use of 'strategic essentialism'.⁵ This concept is central to postcolonial studies. It was proposed by Spivak in interaction with the Subaltern Studies Group, which aimed at rewriting the history of colonial India from the position of subordinated social groups. A central goal for the Subaltern Studies Group was to provide access or space for the subaltern to speak (Wolff 2014). *A Dictionary of Critical Theory* defines Spivak's notion of 'strategic essentialism' as a strategy "which simultaneously recognizes the impossibility of any essentialism and the necessity of some kind of essentialism for the sake of political action" (Buchanan 2010). *A Dictionary of Media and Communication* gives the following definition: "A political tactic employed by a minority group acting on the basis of a shared identity in the public arena in the interest of unity during a struggle for equal rights." (Chandler and Munday 2011).

Strategic essentialism is a central element of the ideological backdrop of contemporary Sámi and Tornedalian literature and narratives about literature. Without the insistence upon the existence of a specific Sámi and Tornedalian culture and identity, respectively, there would be no basis for a struggle for obtaining redress, decolonization, visibility, alternative spaces and histories. Against the horizon of homogenizing nation-building which has excluded specific Sámi and Tornedalian cultures and histories there is a performative quality in present-day challenges. Just as the Subaltern Studies Group performed the rewriting of the history of colonial India, Sámi and Tornedalian alternative histories perform rewritings of Scandinavian colonial histories. Although postcolonial literatures from different parts of the world have distinctive features, they also share some concerns, such as the reclaiming of spaces and places, assertions of cultural integrity, and revisions of history. These concerns are the catalysts of resistant descriptions which counteract a colonizing discourse circulated in educational, legal, political and social

⁵ The concept has been used in Sámi studies previously, see for example Lill-Ann Ledman's thesis about representations of Sámi women in Swedish and Sámi press (Ledman 2012: 39 ff).

texts (see Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin 2009). A common trait of the Sámi and Tornedalian literary histories discussed in this article is that they represent insider stories, i.e. they are written by Sámi and Tornedalians themselves. This is a central aspect of decolonization as described both in postcolonial theory and the methodology of indigenous studies.⁶

Narratives of Sámi literature

The most prominent persona among contemporary Sámi authors, Áillohaš – Nils-Aslak Valkeapää (1943–2001) – was born in Enontekiö in Finnish Lapland. During long periods of his life he lived in Käsivarsi near the Swedish border and in Skibotn, Norway, Áillohaš came from a family of reindeer herders who traditionally had moved their herd to summer pastures in northern Norway. Enontekiö, Käsivarsi and Skibotn are situated in Sápmi, the traditional homeland of the Sámi people. As the northern parts of Scandinavia were colonized and nation-state borders established traditional Sámi ways of life were in many respects disrupted. The histories, memories and emotions evoked by this development are themes addressed by Áillohaš in *Beaivi áhčážan* (*The Sun, My Father*) a book consisting of a lyrical text and a large number of photographs (Valkeapää 1988; Heith 2010a; Heith 2014). Áillohaš was well aware that publishing a book in North Sámi would limit the readership as linguistic skills among Sámi people themselves were, and still are, varying. He referred to *Beaivi áhčážan* as a Sámi family album, thus evoking the notion of a collective Sámi identity (Heith 2010: 336; Kulonen et al. 2005: 423). The choice of language reflects Valkeapää's engagement in the ethnopolitical mobilisation of the 1980s and his preoccupation with Sámi language revitalisation. Valkeapää was also engaged in the international movement of indigenous peoples and the struggle for political and cultural recognition (Gaski 2008). In this context he actively promoted the idea of a collective Sámi identity by claiming that the Sámi are one people, that there is a Sámi 'we', a specific Sámi culture and history, and a place, Sápmi, that is the traditional homeland of the Sámi. The very foundation of Valkeapää's identity, temporal and spatial claims is the idea that there is a collective Sámi identity, and he himself contributed actively to shaping such an ethnonational identity in his role as an activist, writer and artist.

While engaging in the revitalisation of the North Sámi language Valkeapää also saw to it that *Beaivi áhčážan* became accessible for readers with diverse linguistic skills. A translation to the two versions of Norwegian (*bokmål* and *nynorsk*) and Swedish, *Solen, min far* was published in 1990. In 1992 the Finnish translation, *Aurinko, isäni*, was published and a few years later in 1997 the English translation *The Sun, My Father*. When addressing the issue of the Finnish translation Valkeapää claimed that one of its purposes was to make the Sámi original accessible also to Sámi people who do not fully master the Sámi language: "The Finnish translation is

⁶ For a discussion of methodologies in indigenous studies, see Maori Linda Tuhiwai Smith's *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples* (2008).

meant as a guide to readers who cannot access the Sámi original” (Dana 2004: 21–22). One important feature of the translations is that they lack the large number of photographs of the original (Heith 2014).

Beaivi áhčážan and its translations exemplify how strategic essentialism is used for the promotion of a collective identity which may function as the basis for political and cultural struggle. Definitions of strategic essentialism indicate that the use of group identity as a basis of struggle does not exclude that complexities and diversity are debated within the group (Wolff 2014). This certainly is the case in Sámi and Tornedalian cultural mobilization. A quick survey of narratives about Sámi literature show that there is a great variety concerning intended readerships and circulation on various literary fields. *Beyond the Wolf Line: An Anthology of Sámi Poetry*, edited by Pekka Sammalahhti and Anthony Selbourne is a volume introducing modern Sámi literature for an international readership. It was published by Waveland Press in 1996 (Sammalahhti and Selbourne 1996). Another anthology, *In the Shadow of the Midnight Sun*, edited by Harald Gaski was published in English in 1997 (Gaski 1997). *Skriftbilder. Samisk litteraturhistorie (Written Pictures. Sami Literary History)* by Gaski was published in Norwegian by one of the major Sámi publishers, Davvi Girji in 1998 (Gaski 1998). The volume is part of a thematic series intended for use in the upper secondary school. Both Gaski’s booklet and Vuokko Hirvonen’s dissertation from the same year are pioneering works. Hirvonen’s dissertation was the first one ever published entirely in a Sámi language, while Gaski’s contribution is the first attempt at writing a Sámi literary history presenting literature in a broad sense, from the oldest period of oral culture to the present.

Hirvonen’s dissertation about Sámi women’s path to authorship from 1998 was published by the Sámi publisher, DAT (Hirvonen 1998). In 2008 an English translation entitled *Voices from Sápmi: Sámi Women’s Path to Authorship* was published by the same publisher (Hirvonen 2008). The dissertation exemplifies how a focus upon gender and feminist perspectives introduces complexity and diversity to the Sámi literary field. The primary aim of the study is to distinguish a tradition of Sámi women writers. Among the writers discussed some are explicitly critical of aspects of traditional Sámi culture which is seen as male oriented and dissatisfactory for women. Rauni Magga Lukkari is mentioned as one successful poet critical of certain aspects of traditional culture. Hirvonen’s study is important as it contributes to introducing contemporary debates and theoretical perspectives to the study of Sámi literature (Heith 2010b). Critical voices and voices addressing current issues of debate are in fact vital for the development and survival of a Sámi and Tornedalian tradition, respectively. In a survey of Greenlandic literature from colonial times to self-government, Karen Langgård addresses this issue from a Greenlandic point of view. She argues that the “old ethno-national discourse” is not “constructive any more” but that Greenlandic literature needs to develop in order to thrive (Langgård 2011: 171). According to Langgård “ethnic-national symbols reifying general concepts from the spiritual pre-colonial culture [...] have been over-communicated for a too long time” (Langgård 2011: 169).

Renewal, development and adaption to modern modes of writing are themes addressed by the Sámi writer Sigbjørn Skåden (b. 1976). Like John Trygve Solbakk in *The Sámi. A Handbook*, Skåden has warned against the risk of a homogenization of Sámi culture which implies that North Sámi culture and the life of nomadic reindeer-herders become ethno-national symbols which exclude other groups of Sámi (Solbakk 2006: 44–45). Within Sápmi there are several groups of Sámi with different traditional livelihoods. There is also linguistic diversity which complicates the issue of linguistic revitalization. This is a theme Skåden elaborates upon in his master's thesis in literature from Tromsø University which has the development of Sámi poetry in the 20th century as its main topic (Skåden 2004).

Skåden made his debut as a fiction writer in 2004 with a long epic poem entitled *Skuovadeddjiid gonagas (The King of Shoemakers)*. For this book he was nominated to the Nordic Council's Literature Prize. The much discussed short novel *Ihpil. Láhppon mánáid bestejeaddji (Ihpil: The Saviour of Lost Children)* was published in 2008. The text was first written and published as a blog during the autumn 2007. In the summer of 2008 it was edited as a book and marketed as the work of a young Sámi, lesbian woman student who had been found drowned in the harbor of Tromsø in December 2007. Ihpil, which means 'ghost', is the pseudonym of the dead blogger presented as the author. A Norwegian translation with the title *Ihpil. De fortapte barns frelser* was published in April 2010. In the same year it was revealed that the book in fact is not the authentic diary of a lesbian, Sámi student in Tromsø but a work by Sigbjørn Skåden. In an interview from 2011 Skåden explains that he wanted both to write Sámi literature in a modern form, and to explore the theme of homosexuality in the Sámi community (Lieungh 2011).

By using sexual orientation as a major theme Skåden contributes to the renewal and development of narratives about identity. This is also the aim of the Swedish project "Queering Sápmi" which has resulted both in an exhibition and a volume. During three years Elfrida Bergman and Sara Lindquist worked with the project which aims at making visible the lives and experiences of Sámi homo, bi, trans, and queer persons. The project explores how people have managed their lives having two strong, intersecting identities, an ethnic and a sexual, and the material they have used are the life-narratives of both anonymous and public individuals from Norway, Sweden and Finland. A book entitled *Queering Sápmi – samiska berättelser bortanför normen* was published in 2013 (Bergman and Lindquist 2013). In 2014 an English translation, *Queering Sápmi: Indigenous Stories Beyond the Norm*, was published (Bergman and Lindquist 2014). Both Skåden's formal renewal and conscious challenges of conservatism within the Sámi community, as well as the Queering Sápmi project's challenges of heteronormativity, exemplify an ongoing discussion within the Sámi community concerning ethnic and sexual identity. As mentioned in the discussion of strategic essentialism a focus upon diversity within the community is not incompatible with the use of a collective identity for the purpose of retribution, decolonization and cultural mobilization.

Tornedalian Literary History

In the context of Tornedalian cultural mobilization two volumes of Bengt Pohjanen and Kirsti Johansson's history of Tornedalian literature have so far been published. In 2007 the first volume, *Den tornedalsfinska litteraturen. Från Kexi till Liksom* (Tornedalian Finnish Literature from Kexi to Liksom) was issued by the local, Tornedalian publisher Barents Publisher which publishes in Meänkieli, Swedish and to some extent in Finnish (Pohjanen and Johansson 2007). It was followed by the second volume by the same authors, *Den tornedalsfinska litteraturen. Från Kalkkimaå till Hilja Byström* (Tornedalian Finnish Literature from Kalkkimaå to Hilja Byström) two years later (Pohjanen and Johansson 2009). Pohjanen has become known as an advocate of Meänkieli and Tornedalian cultural mobilisation. Throughout his authorship, he has criticized the cultural homogenisation complicit with the modernisation of Swedish society and its negative consequences for the Tornedalian minority. The central theme of his widely disseminated poem "Jag är född utan språk" ("I was born without language"), first published in 1973, is language loss and loss of identity (Heith 2007: 235; Heith 2009a: 142; Heith 2012a: 166–168; Heith 2012b: 89; Heith 2012c: 19). The critique of assimilationist policies and marginalisation is elaborated upon in the two volumes of the Tornedalian literary history. In the first volume Pohjanen introduces the term 'l'Ugritude' – a combination of "Ugric" and "Négritude", in order to perform a critique of the marginalisation of Tornedalian culture in Swedish nation-building. In one of the chapters he criticises the role of Selma Lagerlöf's well-known book about Nils Holgersson's journey from the south to the north of Sweden. Lagerlöf's book was originally commissioned as a textbook aiming at teaching Swedish school-children about Swedish geography. It has been an important element in the construction and teaching of Swedish geography, variations in the nation's landscape and history and specific character (Heith 2008; Heith 2009a; Heith 2012d). This is the target of Pohjanen's critique, which is expressed as follows:

Nils Holgersson never saw us. The author left out a large part of the country: Meänmaa whose first language during its first three thousand years has been Meänkieli. Selma Lagerlöf simply gave us a Swedish identity. We were there through another people, another language and another culture, in our own country, where the Swedes immigrated long after us. (Pohjanen 2007: 11, my translation.)

Pohjanen and Johansson evoke a communal Tornedalian ethnic identity as a point of departure for the struggle for the cultural visibility of a group that historically has been marginalised in Sweden. The marginalisation of Finno-Ugric groups in northern Scandinavia also affected the Kven population in Norway which at times was seen as a potential threat to the nation (Niemi and Eriksen 1981). The notion of a Finno-Ugric threat also prevailed among the Swedish elite during the period when Finland was a Russian Grand Duchy (Åselius 1994; Rodell 2009). This historical backdrop is a vantage point for present day cultural mobilisation among

Tornedalians in Sweden and Kvens in Norway. In this context strategic essentialism is used in the interest of unity during a struggle for equal rights (cf Chandler and Munday 2011). As in the case of Sámi cultural mobilisation this does not preclude the existence of diversity within the Tornedalian group. Ester Cullblom, for example, has depicted traditional Tornedalian culture as being patriarchal from a feminist perspective both as an investigator of unequal gender structures and as a writer of fiction (Cullblom 1996; Cullblom 2005; Cullblom 2007; Heith 2009c).

Conclusion

Today there are Sámi and Tornedalian postcolonial, transnational, literary fields from where counter-histories are produced which challenge the tradition of homogenizing nation-building. Surveys of Sámi and Tornedalian literature produced for the Sámi and Tornedalians themselves explicitly challenge the claims of the nationalist discourse described by Özkirimli. By making the excluded Other the agent of history, from whose perspective events are narrated and circumstances described, Sámi and Tornedalian alternative histories challenge the notion of the majority as the norm with the preferential right of interpretation. By insisting that there are specific Sámi and Tornedalian shared histories respectively, Sámi and Tornedalian narratives undermine the temporal claim of the nationalist discourse. And finally, through the emphasis on Sápmi and Meänmaa as the historical homeland of the Sámi and Tornedalians respectively, the spatial claim is deconstructed. When analyzed with critical perspectives from postcolonial and indigenous studies the homogeneous nation-state is no longer a legitimate construction. Neither are the histories produced in compliance with it. This is the ideological backdrop of recent Sámi and Tornedalian counter-histories.

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