



# Laestadius and Laestadianism in the Contested Field of Cultural Heritage

A Study of Contemporary Sámi and Tornedalian Texts

Anne Heith



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## PREFACE

This volume is the outcome of a project entitled “Decolonisation and Revivalism: The Role of Laestadianism in Contemporary Sámi and Tornedalian Texts”, funded by the Bank of Sweden Tercentenary Foundation’s RJ Sabbatical programme, the aim of which is to provide researchers with a possibility to complete research projects that have reached an advanced stage. The volume was written in the aftermath of the project “Tornedalian Textual Landscapes” which I worked on between 2008 and 2011 at Tromsø University, Norway.<sup>1</sup> My interest in Tornedalian literature at the time of my research period in Tromsø is related to the fact that the Tornedalians have been acknowledged as a historical minority in Sweden. In the year 2000, Sweden ratified the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages and the Council of Europe Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities. Today the Tornedalians, Sámi, Finns, Roma and Jews are national minorities (see Elenius 2006, 26). One consequence of the acknowledgement is that the specific languages of these groups are officially recognised minority languages in Sweden. All varieties of Sámi are recognised, as well as Meänkieli, previously called Tornedalian Finnish.<sup>2</sup>

However, the official recognition that Sweden historically has been a multi-ethnic, multilingual and multicultural nation state has not always permeated the discussion about ethnic, linguistic and cultural diversity, which has often been seen in the popular debate as a consequence of migration and globalisation in recent decades. The vantage point for the project “Tornedalian Textual Landscapes”, my previous research on Sámi literature and culture and this volume, is that the notion of Sweden as a historically homogeneous nation when it comes to ethnicity, language and culture needs to be deconstructed and that new histories need to be written which include the diversity that has been suppressed in homogenising narratives of the nation. Cultural homogenisation and assimilationist policies are related to the issue of cultural encounters whereby a dominant culture has spread while the cultures of minorities without status and political power have been marginalised. Regardless of whether the official policies have

<sup>1</sup> Today the name has been changed to Tromsø University, the Arctic University of Norway

<sup>2</sup> While Meänkieli is officially recognised as a minority language in Sweden, the linguistic situation is different on the Finnish side of the border. In Norway, the term “Kven” is used about the language spoken by the descendants of Finnish-speaking immigrants of northern Norway. This volume focuses upon Tornedalian literature produced in a Swedish national context, which differs from the situation in Finland and Norway because of the historical backdrop of the present-day linguistic and cultural mobilization.

been aimed at promoting assimilation or segregation, as in the case of the 'Lapp shall remain Lapp' policies in Sweden, the cultures and languages of the Sámi on the North Calotte and the Tornedalians in Sweden have become threatened.

During my work on this volume, I have had the opportunity to present work in progress at Tromsø University, the Arctic University of Norway. A special thanks to Associate Professor Roald Kristiansen for arranging a research seminar in May 2017 and for providing valuable response. I would also like to thank Associate Professor Rolf Inge Larsen, whose expertise in the field of Laestadian Studies has been of great value, and Professor Steinar Thorvaldsen for his positive interest in the project. Furthermore, my thanks go to Professor Håkan Möller who invited me to present the project at a research seminar arranged by the Department of Literature, History of Ideas, and Religion, University of Gothenburg, in May 2017. Thanks are also due to the seminar participants for a stimulating discussion. I am also grateful for having been invited to be a guest researcher at the Hugo Valentin-centre, Uppsala University on several occasions between 2010 and 2017. This has given me the opportunity to develop my research interest in the role of Laestadius and Laestadianism in the Sámi and Tornedalian cultural mobilisation. The development of the book has relied on the support of the editors Professor Lars-Erik Edlund and Associate Professor Olle Sundström, Umeå University. I am indebted to them for their interest in publishing the volume in the series Northern Studies Monographs, and assistance with editorial work and proof-reading.

*Umeå, December 2017*  
*Anne Heith*

# Introduction

The Laestadian revivalist movement started in Sweden following the spiritual reorientation of Lars Levi Laestadius (1800–1861), which occurred after he had been a minister of the National Swedish Lutheran Church for almost 20 years. According to legend, Laestadius' spiritual renewal is closely related to his encounter with a young Sámi woman, often referred to as Maria. Her real name was Milla Clementsdotter. After this encounter, Laestadius appeared as an adamant penitential preacher advocating conversion among the Sámi, Tornedalians and settlers living under harsh conditions in northern Norrland. One of Laestadius' primary concerns was the widespread use of alcohol and the social problems caused by it. In order to reach the Sámi and Finnish-speaking population, Laestadius preached in Sámi and Tornedalian Finnish, today known as Meänkieli. The revival started in Karesuando in the winter of 1845–1846 (Talonen 2001, 37). It was to become the largest revival in the Nordic countries (ibid.). In the spring of 1846, people started coming to the church in Karesuando to hear Laestadius preach (Larsson 2004, 83). The revival spread to Finland and Norway, and even to the USA and Hungary (Talonen 2001a, Talonen 2001b).<sup>3</sup>

The Laestadian revival is not unique in a Swedish national context as a movement with pietistic elements that attracted followers among marginalised groups or groups at a low social level. Like Lars Levi Laestadius, Henric Schartau (1757–1825) was a minister in the Swedish Lutheran Church who developed a theology which influenced a revivalist movement. This movement, known as Schartauanism, spread in southern and south-western Sweden (Jarlert ed. 2005). While there are some similarities between Schartauanism and Laestadianism when it comes to the social status of the people who were attracted by the movements and elements of pietism and asceticism, there are also differences. For example, their geographical and ethnic distribution differ, in that Laestadianism spread in a northern space among the ethnic and linguistic minorities of the North Calotte. In a discussion of Martin Luther's position in the Swedish Church, church historian Anders Jarlert emphasises that the writings of Luther were interpreted in multiple ways and used for diverse purposes and that the image of Luther therefore varied among Swedes (Jarlert 2001, 20–27). As a consequence, Luther could be used both for representing religious renewal *and* continuity (see Larsen 2012, 31).<sup>4</sup>

<sup>3</sup> There has been division as a result of schisms. Following Talonen there are at least 18 separate Laestadian groups (Talonen 2001b, 53).

<sup>4</sup> When discussing this theme Larsen mentions that Laestadius himself used the expression 'true Lutherans' in *Ens Ropandes Röst i Öknen*, which he points out is a synonym for 'Laestadians' (Larsen 2012, 32).

## Choice of Primary Material

According to linguists, all minority languages on the North Calotte are threatened by extinction today (Pietikäinen et al. 2010). This is one backdrop of this study's analysis of responses to cultural marginalisation in the wake of colonialism in present-day anti-colonial cultural production among Sámi and Tornedalian authors and artists. As the focus is on Sámi and Tornedalian counter-narratives in the context of cultural and linguistic revitalisation and postcolonial identity formation, works by authors and artists from a majority background are not included in the primary material, unless they are activated in Sámi and Tornedalian counter-narratives.<sup>5</sup> The delimitation to investigate cultural and linguistic revitalisation and postcolonial identity formation among the Sámi and Swedish Tornedalians implies that the primary focus will be on cultural production from the 1970s and 80s onwards. These are the decades when Sámi and Tornedalian responses to cultural marginalisation and colonialism began to be expressed in literature and works of art influenced by the international movement of indigenous peoples, postcolonial currents and critical historiography emphasising the importance of writing the histories of the minorities of the North Calotte.

The 1980s is also the decade when *Ethnofuturism*, aimed at the strengthening of threatened Finno Ugric and Uralic languages and cultures, was launched (Sallamaa 2006). More recently, *Critical Race and Whiteness Studies* have been introduced in Sweden, providing critical perspectives for the analysis of categorisations and hierarchisations of ethnic groups. Perspectives from this field of research are relevant in so far as they provide vantage points for the analysis of distinctions made between the majority population on the one hand, and the Sámi and Tornedalians on the other, in a colonising and decolonising context.

The research question of this volume is what roles Lars Levi Laestadius and Laestadianism play in Sámi and Tornedalian responses to colonial cultural encounters in a selection of literature and art from the 1970s onwards. As my disciplinary affiliation is that of comparative literature, I primarily use various forms of fiction as material, but also artistic representations in different media. This notion of text is in accordance with that promoted by *Skolverket*, the national institution regulating the content of curricula in Swedish schools, which launched the term “det vidgade textbegreppet” (‘the extended notion of text’) in order to emphasise that images and film

<sup>5</sup> Cultural encounters between the Sámi and Swedes with a majority background is a theme explored for example by the successful Swedish author Kerstin Ekman in the trilogy *Vargskinnet* (‘The wolf’s skin’) published by Bonniers between 1999 and 2003 (Ekman 1999, Ekman 2002, Ekman 2003).



are included in the concept of 'text', in addition to written and oral texts.<sup>6</sup> The choice of primary texts of course shapes the nature of the investigation. The main focus is on representations of Laestadius and Laestadianism in fiction. This being said, there are no fixed or stable borders between fictions and factual representations. The narration and focalisation of the Sámi reminiscence literature by Sara Ranta-Rönnlund is highly subjective and her choice of perspective colours her narrative emotionally and ideologically, which results in a personal story charged with strong feelings and ideas of right and wrong. Bengt Pohjanen, on the other hand, who is an established writer of fiction, published by Sweden's oldest still existing publishing house in Stockholm, Norstedts, extensively refers to documents and publications related to Laestadius and Laestadianism, blending facts and fiction in a manner characteristic of historiographic metafiction in the novel *Ropandes röst* ('Crying voice') from 1981.<sup>7</sup> The blending of facts and fiction also characterises Mikael Niemi's novel *Koka björn* ('Boiling bear') from 2017. Lars Levi Laestadius is one of the main characters of this novel which mixes elements from Laestadius' biography with the story of a purely fictitious murder investigation.

The reason behind the choice of the primary material is that new perspectives for analysing the relationship between the ethnic and linguistic minority of the Swedish Tornedarians and the indigenous Sámi people emerged in the 1970s and 1980s. Another reason is that there are established authors, film makers and artists contributing to an anti- and postcolonial narrative criticising the colonisation of lands, as in the case of the Sámi, and minds, as in the case of both the Sámi and the Swedish Tornedarians. Among the Sámi, there are successful authors, such as the pioneer Nils-Aslak Valkeapää, Áillohaš,<sup>8</sup> (1943–2001) who is strongly connected with the cultural mobilisation and language revitalisation of the 1980s (Heith 2017a). In 1991 Valkeapää was awarded the Nordic Council's Literature Prize for *Solen, min far* (*The Sun, My Father*), a translation of the Sámi original *Beaivi áhčážan*. Unlike Valkeapää, Swedish Sámi Sara Ranta-Rönnlund is not a renowned author, but she was quite successful with her four reminiscence books published in the 1970s by a Swedish publishing house in Stockholm.

<sup>6</sup> There are a number of posts about "det vidgade textbegreppet", 'the extended notion of texts', on the website of *Skolverket*: <https://www.skolverket.se/sok?page=search&web-site=&q=vidgade+textbegreppet&search=S%C3%B6k> accessed 28 May 2017.

<sup>7</sup> The concept "Historiographic metafiction" was coined by literary theorist Linda Hutcheon in the 1980s. The term is used for works of fiction combining the literary devices of metafiction with historical fiction. It is closely associated with postmodern literature, mainly novels (Hutcheon 1988).

<sup>8</sup> *Áillohaš* is Valkeapää's Sámi name.

Ranta-Rönnlund wrote about a lifestyle and part of Sweden that she had a first-hand experience of, unknown to many 'southerners'. In Sweden, Tornedalian Bengt Pohjanen made his debut as a novelist in the 1970s. Ever since then, he has been published by the prestigious publisher Norstedts in Stockholm. Both Valkeapää and Pohjanen have published in majority languages in the Nordic countries, and in Sámi and Meänkieli, respectively, and both have been engaged in establishing opportunities for publishing in Sámi and Meänkieli, respectively. The successes of authors like Valkeapää and Pohjanen in a dominant literary field (cf. Bourdieu 1996) is connected to the fact that their literary works have been appreciated by central actors in these fields, in the Nordic countries in the case of Valkeapää, and in Sweden in the case of Pohjanen. Sara Ranta-Rönnlund also had some success as a writer of reminiscence literature. This implies that these authors are not marginalised when it comes to positioning in the literary field. The situation is different for writers who are not seen as presenting something 'new' and to a large extent unknown, or who have not been awarded prestigious prizes or been published by reputable publishers and reviewed in national and/or international media.

Wendelius proposes that there is a four-level hierarchy of publishers in Sweden. The old quality publishers Bonniers and Norstedts are at the top level, while provincial and 'ethnic publishers' are at the lowest level (Wendelius 2002, 25). Below the top level, Wendelius discerns a level with newer 'quality publishers'. The main part of the material in focus in this study is not publications or artistic representations disseminated only locally or among specific interest groups.<sup>9</sup> In addition to Sámi and Tornedalian texts, the material consists of texts by authors who have been criticised for their prejudiced representations of Tornedalian culture. In the Tornedalian literary history co-authored by Pohjanen and Johansson, Björn-Erik Höijer and Stina Aronsson are highlighted as authors with a

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<sup>9</sup> However, it must be kept in mind that publishers with a Sámi or Meänkieli profile, are of great importance for language revitalization. As the primary material of this study consists of artistic representations disseminated on a national and/or international level, thus contributing to a national and/or international debate, autobiographical presentations of Laestadianism published by individuals and local, 'ethnic' publishers (see Wendelius 2002, 25) are not included. In the year 2000, an autobiographical book about living in a Laestadian community, was published by Maj-Lis Palo in co-operation with Biblioteka Laestadiana. This publication has no aesthetic ambitions. Its author, Maj-Lis Palo, emphasises that her aim is to contribute information about how Laestadians live today from the vantage point of her own family history (Palo 2000).

majority background disseminating prejudiced narratives about the Torne Valley (Pohjanen 2007f., 73).<sup>10</sup>

One issue that is often discussed in connection with categorisations of texts is for whom they are intended. In the feminism of the 1970s, for example, women's literature was often defined as literature written *for* women. In analogy with this, it is possible to make narrow delimitations of Sámi and Tornedalian texts. However, it is not always possible to distinguish between addresses, intended or real, readers and audiences. If a text is written in a Sámi language or Meänkieli, this naturally delimits the readerships. However, language proficiency is not necessarily tied to ethnicity, and not all Sámi and Tornedalians know a Sámi language or Meänkieli. This is particularly the case in a situation when these languages have become threatened by extinction as a result of assimilationist policies (see Pietikäinen et al. 2010). Still, languages function as powerful ethnic and national symbols and identity markers, even if not all members of a group are proficient in the old, ancestral language which is activated as an ethnonational symbol in cultural revitalisation (see Edwards 2009). Like other symbols used for the creation of group identity, language may function as a distinguishing marker used to create differences between groups and, by extension, group identity (see Barth 1998). One vantage point for this study is that literature, and artistic representations in general, contribute to perform Sámi and Tornedalian ethnicity and group identity by challenging colonising narratives and representations, and by providing new, alternative depictions.

The scope of performances of Sámi and Tornedalian alternative narratives are not confined to local, or restricted, contexts – on the contrary. Critical, anticolonial works by Sámi activist and artist Anders Sunna, for example, are exhibited in prestigious museums in Stockholm and Gothenburg. The works of multimedia artist and author Nils-Aslak Valkeapää are gaining attention in Sápmi, the Scandinavian countries and internationally, not least in the context of indigenous cultural production. And to mention another example, literary texts by Swedish Tornedalian Bengt Pohjanen are distributed both by the local Barents Publishers and by Sweden's main online bookshops. This implies that there is a dynamic and overlapping when it comes to the distribution, circulation and consumption of literature and art works which transgress the conceptualisation of a solid centre-peri-

<sup>10</sup> The issue of who is a Sámi or Tornedalian author is connected with self-definition in this study. This is related to performativity. A Sámi author, or artist, is somebody who performs Sáminess and is acknowledged as a Sámi author or artist by central agents in the cultural field, while Tornedalian authors and artists perform Tornedalianness and are acknowledged as Tornedalian authors/artists in the field (see Heith 2012b & Heith 2015a).

phery, or majority-minority, binary. Authors and artists may be activated in multiple spaces and contexts and by multiple readerships/audiences (see Bydler 2014). Like Pohjanen, Mikael Niemi (b. 1959), has reached a national readership in Sweden. His novel *Populärmusik från Vittula* (*Popular Music*) was a great success both nationally and internationally (Niemi 2000). It has been translated into numerous languages and introduced the Torne Valley to readers in a large number of countries (see Heith 2016a).

Given the fact that there is an ethnic dimension in the spread of Laestadianism, and that Lars Levi Laestadius is a prominent historical character in northern Sweden, as well as in Norway and Finland, this volume aspires to elucidate a specific history of northern Scandinavia in which the Sámi and Tornedalians play major roles. As my interest in Tornedalian literature is connected with an ambition to highlight the Tornedalian minority in Sweden, and its language and culture from the vantage point of present-day cultural mobilisation, the works of Swedish Tornedalian author Bengt Pohjanen constitute the core of the analysed Tornedalian material. This implies that when the concept 'Tornedalen', the Torne Valley, is used, it refers to the geographical area representing 'Tornedalen' in the works of Bengt Pohjanen. As Pohjanen's writings consistently repeat and vary autobiographical subject matter, the Torne Valley of his works is constituted by his birth village of Kassa, the villages on the Finnish side of the border where his relatives lived and whom he visited regularly, the villages that his father toured as a smuggler, as well as the places on the Swedish side of the border where Pohjanen has lived during different periods of his life, such as Haparanda, Pajala and Övertälj. "The upper villages" are occasionally mentioned in Pohjanen's books about the Korpela movement and his childhood's Torne Valley. This definition of the Torne Valley is captured by the concept 'Meänmaa' (literally 'Our land') which refers to a geographical space constituted by five Finnish and five Swedish municipalities on both sides of the Torne River. The choice of Pohjanen's texts is connected with the fact that he has a vast literary production spanning over decades, from the 1970s onwards. He is also a pioneer when it comes to writing and publishing in Meänkieli. Furthermore, Pohjanen has actively promoted the concept of 'Meänmaa'. Together with Finnish photographer Jaako Heikkilä, he made a book entitled *Meänmaa* (Pohjanen & Heikkilä 1992). He is also actively engaged in the association Meänmaa which presented a Tornedalian

flag in 2007. Starting in 2009, the association publishes a magazine initially called *Meänmaan aviisi*. In 2010 its name was changed to *Meänmaa*.<sup>11</sup>

## The Ethnic Dimension

Fenton and May emphasise that ‘race’, ‘ethnicity’ and ‘nation’ are discourses made up of classificatory systems, representations and symbolic elements (Fenton & May 2002, 2). All three hinge upon difference – Fenton and May point out that in certain contexts these discourses may be elevated to ‘social facts’ with real consequences. Furthermore, they highlight the “shared terrain around ancestry, claims of family-like membership or belonging, and a sense of identity which may be expressed through custom and culture, language and religion.” (Fenton & May 2002, 3). As an example, they mention that in the sociology of racism it is recognised that racialization is connected with the creation and sustaining of national identities (ibid.). These ideas of ‘race’, ‘ethnicity’ and ‘nation’ underlie this study’s discussion of the role of Laestadius and Laestadianism in contemporary Sámi and Tornedalian texts. In order to demarcate ethnic groups, ‘races’ and ‘nations’, Fenton and May propose a methodology which aims to “identify the shared terrain – the marking of difference, the claims of descent, the formation of boundaries of language, culture and religion – and to contextualise these within the arenas of specific states and specific forms of social and political action.” (Fenton & May 2002, 7.)

As regards the role of Laestadius and Laestadianism in contemporary Sámi and Tornedalian texts, this study aims to analyse interconnections between Sámi and Tornedalian ethnicity, the role of Sámi, Finnish and Meän-

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<sup>11</sup> There are other ways of conceptualizing the Torne Valley. Tornedalsrådet, ‘the Torne Valley Council’, founded in 1987, has a wider definition which includes municipalities in Sweden, Norway and Finland. The issue of who is a Tornedalian is quite complex. According to a geographical definition, the population along the Torne River are Tornedalians. However, there are exceptions, as not everyone living by the mouth of the river call themselves Tornedalians. Following another definition, the Finnish-speaking population in a more extensive area including areas by the Muonio and Könkämä rivers are also Tornedalians. The issue is complicated by the fact that some people in Malmöfälten prefer to call themselves “malmöfälsbor” rather than Tornedalians, and there is another group that uses the denomination “lantalaiset”. In Norway, the term “kven” is used to denominate the descendants of Finnish-speaking immigrants in northern Norway. In a parliamentary bill from 1993, the Swedish Tornedalians Bruno Poromaa and Ewa Hedqvist Petersen compares the situation of the Tornedalians in Sweden with that of the Kven in Norway, mentioning that the Kven are a population in northern Norway with roots in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century Torne Valley (Poromaa & Hedqvist Petersen 1993). It is evident that these Swedish, Tornedalian Members of Parliament do not see the Kven in Norway as Tornedalians.

kieli, as well as religion and culture in the context of postcolonial identity formation and cultural mobilization aiming at decolonization. Smith has pointed out that ethnic groups, or *ethnies*, are not perennial entities, but that there are patterns of ethnic survival, and instances of ethnic demise and extinction (Smith 2000, Smith 2003, also see Conversi 2007, 21). This theory of the changing status of ethnic groups provides a point of departure for this study's discussion of Sámi and Tornedalian cultural mobilisation as processes counteracting marginalisation connected with colonialism and assimilationist policies. A question in focus is what roles Laestadius and Laestadianism have in the production of narratives which challenge the marginalization of the Sámi and Swedish Tornedalians.

From the vantage point of the spread of Laestadianism in northern Norway, the theologist Kåre Svebak has developed a theory of Laestadianism that distinguishes between Laestadianism as a religious community connected with ethnicity and practice on the one hand, and Laestadianism as an expression of faith which is universal on the other (Svebak 1983, 260). Already from the beginning, there was an ethnic dimension in the Laestadian revival. In Norway, the revival attracted followers among the Sámi and Kven. In Sweden it had great success among the Sámi and the Finnish-speaking minorities at the northern fringes of the Swedish nation-state (Lindmark 2016 ed.). The revival spread to Norway with reindeer-herding Sámi moving across the Swedish-Norwegian border. While these minorities were seen as alien elements in Sweden and Norway in the context of homogenising nation-building, Laestadius acknowledged them by preaching to them in their own languages.

Sámi and Finnish were also used in Bibles and hymn-books disseminated by the Church.<sup>12</sup> Elenius describes the role of the Church as paradoxical as regards the Sámi and Finnish languages in northern Sweden, as the Church promoted assimilationist policies in relation to education and the administration of schools, while at the same time disseminating texts in Sámi and Finnish (Elenius 2016, 32). He presents an account of the language issue which he proposes is shaped both by a 'multicultural nation-

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<sup>12</sup> Anderzén mentions that there was a proposal from the estates of the realm ("ständerna") to His Majesty the King as early as 1738 proposing that the Bible and other 'useful' books should be translated into Sámi, and furthermore that missionaries should be taught Sámi (Anderzén 2001, 11). Anderzén connects this with the state's colonisation of northern Sweden which went hand in hand with missionary activities aiming at the Christianisation of the Sámi (Anderzén 2001, 10). At this time there was an interest in missionary activities in European countries directed at other continents, and to groups of people nearby such as the Sámi in a Swedish national context. Following Anderzén, this is the backdrop of the 'Lapp mission' ("den lapska missionen", Anderzén 2001, 10).

al discourse' and a 'monocultural national discourse' (Elenius 2016, 32–33). While this is true in the sense that the Church disseminated material in Sámi and Finnish, and that Finnish ministers were preaching in the Torne Valley during certain periods (Elenius 2016, 40–41, Mustakallio 2016, 61–62), this does not necessarily imply that these activities and instances of multilingualism represent a 'multicultural discourse' that grants various cultures and languages equal value. If there is a hierarchical relationship between languages and cultures within a discourse that elevates one specific culture and language while granting less value to other cultures and languages, this represents a form of power assertion which has marginalised groups that have not had the power to shape their national culture and identities.

In legislation adopted in 1842, it was enacted that Sweden should have a public elementary school. Lars Levi Laestadius himself saw the role of the school in spreading the revival as very important and he contributed to the establishment of schools with a Laestadian profile (Anderzén 2001). In particular, Anderzén mentions the school in Lainio which started in 1847 as a successful example of the dissemination of Laestadius' ideas (Anderzén 2001, 26f.). Following Anderzén, the successful example of Lainio led to the use of Laestadian missionary schools as an instrument for the dissemination of the revivalist movement (Anderzén 2001, 27). Anderzén also mentions that there were attacks on Laestadius and the revival, and that the activities of the Laestadian missionary schools had ceased to be a part of public education in 1861 (Anderzén 2001, 29).

Anderzén explains Laestadius' interest in the establishment of schools as being connected with his awareness of the importance of the school in converting people to Laestadianism. He also emphasises that Laestadius was a controversial figure under attack from a number of different directions. An important aspect of the controversy is the issue of the shaping of people's minds. When Anderzén discusses the success of the school in Lanio, he mentions that students and grown-ups were captured by the revival. Some local innkeepers even poured away spirits as a protest against widespread, excessive alcohol consumption. The rumour and the revival spread (Anderzén 2001, 27). In this narrative, Laestadianism represents a radical, positive force with a potential to improve social conditions. However, when seen over time, Laestadianism is not a uniform movement and reactions to it have varied (Niemi 2000).

Elenius gives examples of both the implementation of assimilationist policies and of instances of acceptance of ethnic and linguistic diversity within the Swedish nation state. (Elenius 2016, 13–47.) Mustakallio, who discusses the same issue, presents a different picture. Following him, there was a development in Sweden resulting in the status of the Finnish lan-



guage changing from being a language of education to becoming a school subject and finally a kind of forbidden language (Mustakallio 2016, 49). This is in line with the distinction Elenius made between the Finnish used in a Church context ('kyrkospråk') and that used in a wider context of citizenship ('medborgarspråk'). However, Mustakallio's description of Finnish as a Church language differs somewhat from that of Elenius. Mustakallio highlights that Finnish was a *lingua sacra* used in the Laestadian revival (Mustakallio 2016, 49). However, he discerns a shift from the 1880s onwards implying that the State and the National Swedish Lutheran Church attempted to implement administrative uniformity and 'Swedification'. (Ibid.) Following Mustakallio, this was the end of the old order whereby all pastors in the Finnish-speaking areas ('finnbygder') should know Finnish. (Ibid.). Mustakallio relates this to fears of a Finnish threat (Mustakallio 2016, 52).<sup>13</sup>

Elenius claims that there was a continuity in the work of the Church to support the minority languages. To support this idea, he mentions the translation and dissemination of bibles and hymn-books (Elenius 2016, 32). However, alternative interpretations are possible. There is a pragmatic dimension of the translations, as many people in the north did not know Swedish. In that respect, the translations represent a form of acculturation well known in missionary activities aimed at establishing contacts between groups from different cultural backgrounds (Heith 2016c, 21–22). Within the framework of missionary activities and acculturation, translations may be seen as rhetorical strategies that make it possible to communicate a message.

Within anti- and postcolonial studies, as well as indigenous studies, missionaries and representatives of the Church represent the colonial power (Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin 2007, 128–129, Smith 2008). This does not,

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<sup>13</sup> Elenius also mentions ideas of a 'Finnish threat' but still claims that there was a continuity in the Church's work to preserve the Sámi and Finnish minority languages in northern Sweden. Mustakallio, on the other hand, highlights homogenisation and 'Swedification' both in the context of education and in a Church context. He particularly dwells upon the role of the first bishop of the Luleå Diocese in northern Sweden, Olof Bergqvist (1862–1940), in counteracting the use of Finnish also in church contexts. In regard to the 1923 agreement to allow Finnish pastors in northern Sweden, Mustakallio highlights that the agreement stipulated that the pastors should engage in the pastoral cure of Finnish citizens only (Mustakallio 2016, 6). Thus, this agreement can hardly be seen as an instance of the Swedish Church's concern to preserve the Finnish language in northern Sweden.



however, imply that the missionary activities are seen as solely negative.<sup>14</sup> While Elenius proposes that there was a continuous effort on the part of the Church to support the Sámi and Finnish languages in northern Sweden, an interpretation of the implications of the translations inspired by perspectives from postcolonial and indigenous studies is that the translations were motivated by the mission and attempts to strengthen the position of the Church in areas inhabited by Sámi and Finnish-speaking groups. Within this theoretical framework, colonisation is connected with the dissemination of ideas and values which have had an impact on people's emotions and self-understanding. These ideas are reflected in the preface of a volume about the historical relationship between the National Swedish Lutheran Church and the Sámi.<sup>15</sup> Swedish Archbishop Antje Jackelén describes the effects for the Sámi as follows: "The wounds, pain, shame, self-contempt, anger and all hard memories are real." (Jackelén 2016, 11.)<sup>16</sup>

In accounts of the Church's contribution to a disempowerment and racialisation of the Sámi in Sweden, three influential men connected with the Church play a prominent role: the first bishop of the Luleå Diocese Olof Bergqvist, the vicar and nomad school inspector Vitalis Karnell in Kareuando and the assistant vicar and headmaster Georg Bergfors in Vittangi (Oscarsson 2016). These men all contributed to a racial hierarchisation that has split the Sámi population and resulted in negative notions of the Sámi as being an inferior people unfit for modern life. In his pastoral letter of 1904, Bishop Bergqvist formulated ideas that were to become normative for the education of Sami children for years to come. In practice, the letter functioned as an instruction to teachers and minister (Oscarsson 2016, 945). Bergqvist expresses the idea that the children of the nomadic reindeer-herd-

<sup>14</sup> Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin mention that although accounts of missions and their role have emphasised negative impacts, there are also accounts of positive effects. For example it has been pointed out that mission presses were often the first places in which colonised people were able to find a voice, "even though they did so under conditions of patronage which were deeply constraining." (Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin 2007, 129.) When discussing a project about the Church's relationship to the Sámi in Sweden, Lindmark comments on a wish expressed by various stakeholders that the narrative should not merely be an altogether negative account about oppression. In this context it is mentioned that the Church contributed to the development of a written Sámi language and the publishing of literature in different Sámi language varieties (Lindmark 2016, 128).

<sup>15</sup> The volume is the outcome of a reconciliation project initiated by the Church. The project is presented by Lindmark and Sundström (Lindmark & Sundström 2016, 21–39) and Lindmark, respectively (Lindmark 2016, 115–142).

<sup>16</sup> "Såren, smärtan, skammen, självföraktet, vreden och alla svåra minnen är verkliga." (Jackelén 2016, 11.)

ing Sámi should be separated from the children who attended elementary school, as that would ensure that the Sámi would not be affected by modern life. Following Bergqvist, a modern life style would lead to the extinction of the Sámi as a people. In Bergqvist's view, the children of the nomadic Sámi should be protected from modern life and their education should not be as comprehensive as that offered in the elementary school (cf. Mebius 1999, Heith 2010).

These ideas were also disseminated by Vitalis Karnell, the man behind the expression 'Lapp shall remain Lapp'.<sup>17</sup> Karnell formulated ideas that were to shape the system of nomad schools intended for children of reindeer herders. The segregated school system was supported by people like Karnell during the first part of the 20th century and influenced policies as well as legislation (Oscarsson 2016, 949). According to these ideas, it was only the nomadic reindeer-herding Sámi who were the 'real' Sámi. Another influential character behind the shaping and implementation of the nomad school system, Georg Bergfors, held the view that the Sámi were not part of that which was originally Swedish (Oscarsson 2016, 953). In his opinion, the Sámi differed from Swedish people with regard to origin, language, means of supporting themselves and customs. He was also of the opinion that the Sámi had immigrated from the north and the east and that their origin was unknown (Oscarsson 2016, 953).

Like Bishop Bergqvist, Bergfors was a supporter of Swedish race biology. He actively helped Herman Lundborg, who became the first director of the Swedish State Institute for Race Biology founded in Uppsala in 1922. In 1913, Lundborg made his first visit to Lappland where he planned to investigate the mixing of 'races'.<sup>18</sup> When visiting the north of Sweden, Lundborg stayed with Bergfors at the vicarage in Vittangi on several occasions and Bergfors saw to it that Lundborg was assisted by elementary school teachers when visiting schools for the purpose of measuring Sámi children (Oscarsson 2016, Hagerman 2016). Oscarsson points out that there was an exchange

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<sup>17</sup> The statement 'Lapp skall lapp vara' meaning that the Sámi should be kept isolated from modern society was first expressed in an article in the magazine *Dagny* in 1906 (Oscarsson 2016, 949).

<sup>18</sup> Hagerman emphasises Georg Bergfors' role as Lundborg's helper from the time when he planned his first visit to Lappland in the autumn of 1912 until he was appointed a professor at the new Institute for Race Biology in Uppsala in 1922. Bergfors had then left Vittangi for a position elsewhere. According to Hagerman, the contacts with Bergfors taught Lundborg how he could proceed with examinations of the Sámi in the years to come using school teachers as assistants and getting access to information in church books for the purpose of mapping marriages, child births and factors he believed provided evidence of 'the mixing of races' (Hagerman 2016, 971 ff.).

of influences between Bergqvist and Bergfors on the one hand, and race biologists on the other. Bergqvist's and Bergfors' writings on the subject of racial hierarchisation and the need to 'protect' the Sámi from modern life no doubt contributed to the construction of the Sámi as the Others of modern Swedish society (cf. Mebius 1999). Following Oscarsson, these ideas also influenced Bishop Bergqvist's view of the two large minorities of his diocese, the Sámi and the Finns (Oscarsson 2016, 944–948). The view of the Sámi and the Finns, including the Tornedalians, was shaped by race biologists, and after 1922 by the State Institute for Race Biology and its director Herman Lundborg, whose ideas were cherished by the power elite (cf. Persson 2013). This view also influenced ideas of 'us' and 'them' in education when children were taught about citizenship, and national identity and culture (Lindgren 2002).

Berge has pointed out that processes of shaping collective identities are influenced by power asymmetries, as it is those in power who make decisions about what constitutes group belonging and what group individuals belong to (Berge 1998). According to Berge, there is a social categorisation in ideas of how certain groups should live, and this is built into society through political decisions (Berge 1998, cf. Oscarsson 2016, 955). This issue may be related to the attempt to create an 'authentic' minority based on ideas about the need to separate the nomadic Sámi from the modern world. Following Amft, the legislation regulating reindeer pasturage from the end of the 19th century stipulated that the law only applied to 'authentic' Sámi. Being an 'authentic' Sámi implies being of Sámi descent, having reindeer-herding as a livelihood and owning a reindeer mark (*renmärke*). Through this, the legislators stipulated ideas of who the real Sámi were. Amft furthermore points out that the 1913 nomad school reform strengthened theories about the 'authentic' Sámi. (Amft 1998). The reform resulted in the education of the children of the reindeer-herding Sámi being less ambitious and of lower quality, while the children of domiciled Sámi were educated in elementary schools. As the latter category was not seen as 'authentic' Sámi, they were expected to assimilate. This segregation between nomadic reindeer-herding Sámi and domiciled Sámi also affected the 1928 law about the right to reindeer pasturage as well as other rights. Following Oscarsson the consequence of this is that most of the Swedish Sámi today have been deprived of these rights as a result of not having been categorised as 'authentic' Sámi (Oscarsson 2016, 955).

## Postcolonial Challenges to Narratives of the Nation

Following Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin, nations are social constructions that are "potent sites of control and domination within modern society." (Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin 2009a, 135.) This implies that "specific iden-

tifiers are employed to create exclusive and homogeneous conceptions of national traditions.” (Ibid.). A consequence of this is that diversity is suppressed: “Such signifiers of homogeneity always fail to represent the diversity of the actual ‘national’ community for which they purport to speak, and, in practice, usually represent and consolidate the interests of the dominant power groups within any national formation.” (Ibid.). This conception of nation and nationalism forms the vantage point for this book’s analysis of the role of Laestadius and Laestadianism in contemporary Sámi and Tornedalian texts understood in a broad sense. There are studies of the modernisation of Sweden and Norway, suggesting that cultural homogenisation and marginalisation of minorities are characteristic of the building of the modern welfare-state (Arvastson 1999, Bjørklund 1985, Heith 2010, Heith 2016a, Paine 1965). Neither the Sámi nor the Tornedalians in Sweden have ever been among the dominant power groups within the Swedish national formation. With perspectives from postcolonial theory, the consequences of this may be described as a suppression of the specific traditions and cultures of both groups in representations of the Swedish nation aimed at the creation of an exclusive and homogeneous conception of national traditions in Sweden. This historical backdrop constitutes a point of departure for today’s anti and post-colonial cultural mobilisation among the Sámi and the Tornedalians.

As Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin point out, constructions of the nation are supported by constructions of national tradition, which they describe as a ‘myth’ (ibid.) employed in order to legitimise an idea of a people, but also to construct a modern idea of a nation-state in which “the instrumentalities of state power” (ibid.), such as military and police agencies, judiciaries, religious hierarchies, educational systems and political assemblies or organizations, “are subsumed and legitimised as the ‘natural’ expressions of a unified national history and culture.” (Ibid.). Within this theoretical framework, the National Swedish Lutheran Church represents one such “instrumentality of state power” contributing to the creation of a unified national history and culture.

Homi K. Bhabha has described the cultural homogenisation of modern nation-building as the construction of a myth about “the many as one” (Bhabha 2008, 222). As a present-day counter-movement to this, Bhabha mentions the emergence of minority discourses from “the liminal movement of the culture of the nation” (ibid.). This movement is characterised as a “strategy of intervention” (ibid.). One example is when minorities “confront the pedagogical, or powerful master-discourse with a contradictory or negating referent.” (Bhabha 2008, 223.) The theme of Bhabha’s discussion is the emergence of counter-histories, or alternative histories, which contra-

dict and negate nationalising pedagogies and master-discourses. This is also the main theme of Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin's *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literatures* (Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin 2009b).<sup>19</sup>

The production of counter-histories is vital both in Sámi and Tornedalian anti- and postcolonial texts. Sámi Nils-Aslak Valkeapää's, *Àillohaš', Beaivi áhčážan* (*The Sun, My Father*) from 1988 is a pioneering work that challenges nationalising pedagogies which have marginalised the Sámi by depicting a specific Sámi history, homeland and cultural identity that contradict notions of "the many as one" (Heith 2010, Heith 2014). Photographs of Laestadian prayer meetings are included among the photographs of the Sámi original of *Beaivi áhčážan*, which Valkeapää called a Sámi family album. For example, illustration number 441 shows an interior from a Laestadian meeting in Karesuando in 1913 with a crowd dressed in traditional Sámi costumes. This indicates that Valkeapää saw Laestadianism as part of a specific Sámi history. *Beaivi áhčážan*, originally published in North Sámi in 1988, is a seminal text for Sámi language revitalization and cultural mobilization. The title refers to a Sámi creation myth according to which the Sámi are the children of the sun. The myth is activated by Valkeapää in a poem that consists of a monologue voiced by a Sámi *noadi*, shaman, looking back to a time of harmony and peace before strangers came to Sápmi. With the arrival of the intruders, a time of deterioration for the Sámi begins. (Heith 2017a). The poem has a clear anticolonial stance in its depiction of the effects of the colonisation of Sápmi (Heith 2010a).

## Theoretical and Methodological Considerations

### *The Making of Cultural Heritage and Meaning*

Both the historical character Lars Levi Laestadius and the revival he initiated have been highlighted as part of the cultural heritage of the North

<sup>19</sup> Elenius makes the point that religion connected with nationalism from the period when the nation was imagined as a religious community cannot be clearly distinguished from the period of political nationalisation of the masses ('politisk massnationalism'), but that the two forms of nationalism overlapped (Elenius 2016, 13). However, as the Church was responsible for the administration of education at the time when schools were established in northern Sweden and was thus historically entangled in issues related to the view on various languages disseminated in the compulsory education, it is hard to make the kind of distinction that Elenius makes between a Church context separated from an educational context or 'citizen's context'. In many colonised parts of the world, missionary activities and the dissemination of Christianity went hand in hand with the establishment of schools run by churches. This kind of entanglement is in fact paradigmatic of colonialism.

Calotte (Norderval & Nettet eds. 2000). But, what does this mean? In what respect are Laestadius and Laestadianism a cultural heritage and what does this imply? The view of heritage underlying this study's discussion of the role of Laestadius and Laestadianism in contemporary Sámi and Tornedalian texts is that heritage is intangible (see Smith 2006, 3). This supposition is inspired by Laurajane Smith's proposition that heritage-making is a process of meaning-making that identifies objects and phenomena as "symbolic of particular cultural and social events, and thus give them value and meaning." (ibid.). The primary material is constituted by texts that are seen as being part of a meaning-making process whereby the historical character Lars Levi Laestadius, and the revival he initiated, are activated in present-day texts that explicitly relate to ethnicity. This implies that the value and meanings given to Laestadius and Laestadianism are connected with present-day responses to a historical character and a transforming, diverse revival. The responses in focus are in the form of texts produced primarily by Sámi and Swedish Tornedalian authors, film makers and artists.

#### *Perspectives from Postcolonial Studies and Decolonising Methodologies*

Practices of othering and exotification are elements of meaning-making and heritage production in a colonial context that has marginalised indigenous peoples and minorities. Today, colonising heritage production and meaning-making are being challenged by groups advocating alternative narratives of identity and belonging. The issue of power is a central theme in analyses of how colonising knowledge has been produced. Maori researcher Linda Tuhiwai Smith describes the dynamics of the production of colonising knowledge from the vantage point of Indigenous Studies as follows: "Imperialism and colonialism are the specific formations through which the West came to 'see', to 'name' and to 'know' indigenous communities." (Smith 2008, 60.) Today's decolonisation aims both at the negating of colonising narratives, as well as at the construction of counter-narratives making visible formerly suppressed groups. The production of counter-narratives involves questioning and negating dominant narratives of the nation, such as the myth of homogeneity and the superiority of the dominant and most powerful group. It also implies a critical scrutiny of nationalist symbols and metaphors.

As mentioned above, the National Swedish Lutheran Church, which existed between 1536 and 2000, was one of the institutions representing and symbolising the state. In the year 2000, it was separated from the state following a Government decision. Thus, the Church played a vital role in the colonisation of northern Sweden. Linda Tuhiwai Smith points out in

a discussion of the 'spatial vocabulary of colonialism' that the Church represents the Centre when new areas are put under the control of the state (Smith 2008, 53). According to the logic of the spatial vocabulary of colonialism, lands previously uncontrolled by the state are seen as the Outside, empty land, 'terra nullius', hinterland, free to control and exploit by settlers, traders, missionaries and other representatives of the colonial centre.

While the National Swedish Lutheran Church represents the Centre in a spatial vocabulary of colonialism as described by Smith, Laestadianism represents a movement which started in the periphery – still following the spatial vocabulary of colonialism (cf. Smith 2008, 50–53). Not only did the movement start in a geographical periphery (northernmost Sweden), it also spread among ethnic and linguistic groups that in many respects were seen as alien elements in the Swedish nation (the Sámi and the Tornedalians).<sup>20</sup> This implies that when seen from the vantage point of majority culture, Laestadianism is connected with a space distant to, and alien to, the Centre of the nation. Furthermore, there are studies which have highlighted that the establishment of a binary between north and south in a national context in Sweden (Eriksson 2010) and Finland (Savolainen 1995, Ridanpää 2003, Heith 2015c) has resulted in a marginalisation of the people and culture of the northern parts of the nation, both in Sweden and in Finland. The analyses of this book will examine the implications of the fact that the identity, spatial and temporal claim of the nationalist discourse is deconstructed in contemporary Sámi and Tornedalian texts about Laestadius and Laestadianism. However, this does not imply the construction of a homogenous anti and post-colonial narrative of Laestadianism, as there are diverse and sometimes contradictory uses of the theme of Laestadianism (Heith 2016a).

The constructivist view on nationalism discussed above prevail in analyses of the emergence of modern nation-states in Europe. Özkirimli describes nationalism as a discourse that makes identity claims, temporal claims and spatial claims (Özkirimli 2010). This is one way of emphasising the impact of homogenisation in modern nation-building. The identity claim implies that the people is seen as sharing a common identity, while the temporal claim refers to the idea of a shared history. The spatial claim refers to the notion of a shared geographical space – a homeland. All these claims are challenged in present-day Sámi and Tornedalian cultural produc-

<sup>20</sup> In a collection of essays about the modernisation of Sweden, Anders Mebius discusses the construction of the Sámi as the 'Others of modernity' (Mebius 1999). The Tornedalian Finnish population was also seen as an alien element in the nation (Arvastson 1999, Persson 2013). After Sweden lost Finland in 1809 there was a concern about a 'Finnish threat' from the east, as Finland was no longer a part of Sweden (Åselius 1994). Similar concerns about a 'Finnish threat' prevailed in Norway (Niemi & Eriksen 1981).



tion, which aims at creating and reinforcing a Sámi and Tornedalian cultural identity and producing counter-histories that challenge and negate histories of 'the many as one' (cf. Bhabha 2008, 222). Furthermore, promotions of Sápmi as the ancient Sámi homeland, and Meänmaa as the Tornedalian one, negate the spatial claim of the nationalist discourse.<sup>21</sup> Thus, challenges and negations of a homogenising nationalisation which has marginalised the Sámi and the Tornedalians are at the very centre of present-day anti and post-colonial cultural production.

A central theme of post-colonial theory is that minorities and migrants contribute to alternative narratives of the nation which deconstruct homogenisation based on the idea that the majority population has the preferential right of interpretation and that the majority constitutes a norm to which other groups ought to conform (Heith 2016a). Analyses of post-colonialism in the Nordic Region emphasise the role of minorities in changing ideas of the nation (Rantonen & Savolainen 2002). Today self-images and notions of Nordic exceptionalism involving explicit or implicit notions of Nordic superiority are being questioned (Keskinen et al. eds. 2009, Loftsdóttir & Jensen eds. 2012). In the collection of articles *Complying with Colonialism: Gender, Race and Ethnicity in the Nordic Region*, the concept 'colonial complicity' is used in discussions of colonising structures and practices that have marginalised and racialised minorities and immigrants in the Nordic Region (Keskinen et al. 2009). The concept has been activated for the purpose of drawing attention to the existence of colonialism and colonising structures also in the Nordic countries. This notion challenges prevailing ideas of Nordic exceptionalism that have shaped self-images of the Nordic countries as being more democratic, inclusive, and equal than other parts of the world.

The assumption that Sweden has a colonial heritage that still lives on and has consequences in contemporary society is also the point of departure in the present-day discussion of research ethics and Indigenous Studies, with a specific focus on Sámi Studies in Sweden (Drugge 2016, 194–195). A central theme of the volume *De historiska relationerna mellan Svenska kyrkan och samerna* ('The historical relationship between the Church and the Sámi') is how education has contributed to the marginalisation of Sámi culture (Lindmark & Sundström eds. 2016). A Swedish proponent of emerging

<sup>21</sup> Although the term 'Meänmaa' (literally 'Our land') is used to denominate the valley on both sides of the Torne River where the Tornedalian Finnish population resides, this does not necessarily imply that everybody at the local level agrees that it is a relevant concept. In a mail correspondence Juha Ridanpää, has indicated that some of his respondents consisting of people from the Torne Valley were rather critical of the notion that there is a specific Tornedalian homeland called *Meänmaa*.



discourses which negate the idea of the homogeneous nation-state, Swedish Tornedalian author Bengt Pohjanen, draws attention to the role of the educational system in a nationalising process that has deprived the Tornedalian children of their Tornedalian Finnish language, culture and identity. The fourth stanza of the poem “I was born without language” reads: “I was whipped at school/ into language, clarity/ nationality/ I was whipped into contempt for that which was mine/ the want of a language/ and the border” (Heith 2007, 235, Heith 2009). Pohjanen’s poem, first published in 1973, gives a glimpse of a history of nationalisation that has socialised the Tornedalian children into subordination and identity loss. The same theme is addressed by Mikael Niemi in his successful novel *Populärmusik från Vittula*. The narrator Matti ironically enumerates what Tornedalian children were taught at school. The enumeration ends as follows: “We spoke broken Finnish but we were not Finns, we spoke broken Swedish but we were not Swedes. We were nothing.” (Niemi 2000, 50, also see Heith 2016a.) Both Pohjanen’s poem and Niemi’s novel address the role of the compulsory school in causing language loss, identity loss and shame of one’s own cultural background among Tornedalian children. This form of nationalisation may be described as socialisation into cultures of poverty, which implies that children have been taught that their home cultures are deficient and of no value. This kind of pedagogy is characterised as a form of ‘internal colonialism’ in a study by Hechter (cf. Hechter 1975, Heith 2012, 169).<sup>22</sup>

Studies of Tornedalians in Sweden and Kven in Norway suggest that stigmatization and shame have contributed to language shifts and language loss (Lindgren 2003, 111). The themes of language loss, shame and negative self-images are also highlighted by Sámi Vuokko Hirvonen whose study about Sámi women’s path to authorship is the first academic thesis entirely in North Sámi (Hirvonen 1998). In 2008, an English translation was published (Hirvonen 2008). Hirvonen argues that colonisation comes in many guises, for example in disempowerment through the colonization of people’s minds and thoughts (Heith 2012, 169). This is a theme explored by Frantz Fanon (1925–1961) already in the 1950s, and later by Ngugi wa Thiong’o in the postcolonial classic *Decolonizing the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature* (Fanon 1967, Thiong’o 1986). As the title of Thiong’o’s book indicates, anti and post-colonial strategies are aimed at decolonisation. This involves both challenges and negations of colonising narratives, as well as constructions of positive self-images and pride in formerly suppressed cultural traditions.

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<sup>22</sup> Michel Hechter’s study discusses the Celtic fringes in Great Britain (Hechter 1975).

'Strategic essentialism' is a central concept in postcolonial alternative histories. 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 groups (Heith 2017a). The concept recognises the impossibility of essentialism *and* at the same time the necessity of some kind of essentialism for the sake of political action (Buchanan 2010). *A Dictionary of Media and Communication* defines it as follows: "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 & Munday 2011.) Strategic essentialism is a central element of the ideological backdrop of contemporary Sámi and Tornedalian narratives.<sup>23</sup> Without the insistence upon the existence of a specific Sámi and Tornedalian Finnish<sup>24</sup> culture, there would be no basis for a struggle for obtaining redress, decolonization, visibility, alternative spaces and histories (Heith 2017a).

It goes without saying that anti and post-colonial narratives evolve as a response to colonialism. This does not, however, imply that there is one single homogenous narrative of colonialism against which counter-narratives based on the use of strategic essentialism are produced. But it does imply that there are wounds, pain, shame, self-contempt, anger and hard memories that are real, to paraphrase the comments of Archbishop Jackelén on the historical relationship between the Church and the Sámi (Jackelén 2016, 11). It may be noted that Jackelén attaches great significance to emotional and psychological consequences of the historical relationship between the Church and the Sámi, which is in line with Fanon's and Thiong'o's analyses of the effects of colonialism. This kind of focus on emotional responses is important for this volume's discussion of anti and post-colonial narratives, as these are based on the notion that there have been injustices and wrong

<sup>23</sup> Ledman discusses the concept in connection with Sámi Studies in her thesis *Att representera och representeras. Samiska kvinnor i svensk och samisk press 1966-2006* (Ledman 2012, 39 ff.).

<sup>24</sup> The term *tornedalsfinsk* (Tornedalian Finnish) has been replaced by *tornedalsk* (Tornedalian). Still *tornedalsfinsk* is used occasionally, for example in the title *Den tornedalsfinska litteraturen* (Pohjanen & Johansson 2007). This of course highlights the bond with the Finnish language and culture.

doings that have affected the Sámi and the Tornedalians negatively (also see Heith 2016a, 223).<sup>25</sup>

Strategies that have contributed to suppressing disempowered groups include exclusion, exotification and othering. *Othering* is a term coined by Gayatri Spivak to denominate “the process by which imperial discourse creates its ‘others’” (Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin 2009, 156, Spivak 1985). Processes of othering are characteristic of colonialist narrative: “[T]he other is the excluded or ‘mastered’ subject created by the discourse of power. Othering describes the various ways in which colonial discourse produces its subjects.” (Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin 2009, 156). The concepts ‘exclusion’, ‘exotification’ and ‘othering’ are central in the post-colonial theoretical framework that is the ideological vantage point for today’s criticism of the kind of homogenising nation-building that has excluded, exotified and othered the Sámi and the Tornedalians. As the examples relating to compulsory education above suggest, education that has resulted in identity loss, language loss and shame is targeted in counter-narratives produced by historically disempowered groups (cf. Bhabha 2008, 217–226).

### *Ethnofuturism*

In his autobiography from 2007, Pohjanen makes an explicit reference to ethnofuturism (Pohjanen 2007c, 17), an aesthetic movement founded in Estonia in 1989. Its aim is the preservation of threatened, small Finno-Ugric and Uralic languages and cultures (Sallamaa 2006). One theme highlighted by ethnofuturists is the connection between language, local culture and mentality (Vadén 2006). When exploring the concept of local thinking,

<sup>25</sup> I have previously commented on the discrepancy between historian Lars Elenius’ and author Bengt Pohjanen’s accounts of assimilationist policies in the Torne Valley relating to the fact that Pohjanen’s account is based on subjective emotional responses, while Elenius compiles various documents which reflect shifts and variations in language politics (Heith 2009, 86). Elenius claims that the Church supported the minority languages in an ecclesiastical context and thus contributed to their status as part of national identity, while not supporting them in a school context (Elenius 2016, 42). As support for this conclusion, he refers to various documents. However, Elenius’ conclusion can be problematised. Even if there are documents stating that Finnish and Sámi may be used in a Church context, this does not necessarily reflect the practice in real life, nor does it reflect people’s evaluation of the languages in question. It is problematic to claim that the minority languages were on a par with Swedish when it comes to status in the construction of a national identity. If the minority languages were marginalised in the educational system, this is likely to have affected the way the Sámi and Tornedalians themselves, as well as other groups, saw their languages. Today it is a fact that Sámi and Meänkieli are threatened by extinction (Pietikäinen et al. 2010). As Lindgren has pointed out, language shifts may be related to shame and stigmatisation (Lindgren 2003).

Vadén suggests that people with a non-Indoeuropean language may experience the world differently compared to people with an Indoeuropean language. When discussing the dominance of English in the western world, he uses the term colonialism, making the point that there may be alternative modes of thinking and experiencing related to Finno-Ugric languages. Vadén goes as far as to suggest that there is a tension between modes of thinking and experiencing related to minority status and having a non-Indoeuropean language on the one hand, and the dominant European languages and the philosophies created in them on the other: “At times the non-Indo-European Finnish and Fenno-Ugric view of the human being are in tangible conflict with Europeaness.” (Vadén 2006, 233.)

There are overlappings between ethnofuturism and postcolonial theory in so far as both criticise homogenising paradigms that have marginalised ethnic and linguistic minorities. With this in mind, ethnofuturism may provide a framework for decolonisation and positive identity formation. One aspect of Laestadius’ and Laestadianism’s role in contemporary Sámi and Tornedalian texts is that they may function as distinguishing markers in opposition to homogenisation and marginalisation. This positive role is indicated in Bengt Pohjanen’s discussion of the subversive potential of Laestadian prayer meetings in *Den tornedalsfinska litteraturen* (Pohjanen 2007). There are considerable resemblances between Pohjanen’s foregrounding of minority status and of speaking a Finno-Ugric minor language in a Swedish national context, and ethnofuturism’s emphasis on the same themes. Following Sallamaa, ethnofuturism relates to:

*ethnos* – to minority peoples and ethnic groups with their own traditions and cultures, whose ethnic and national existence is at stake or threatened by state assimilationist policies or multinational enterprises. *Ethnos* experiences pressure from larger peoples, for example Russians, or in case of the Samis, the Nordic majority peoples in Finland, Sweden and Norway. (Sallamaa 2006, 238)

### *Critical Whiteness Studies*

Critical Whiteness Studies have shown how positions as privileged whites have been constructed through the othering of categories seen as non-white or ‘not quite white’. These constructions are not solely related to skin col-

our, but also to social status.<sup>26</sup> Eriksson claims that Northern Sweden, 'Norrland', has been constructed as 'different' in literature, politics and science for as long as the idea of 'Norrland' has existed, emphasising that there is a discourse that constructs the identity of Norrland in opposition to Swedish national identity (Eriksson 2010). Constructions of binaries are related to issues of control and power. The issue of control over descriptions is emphasised in Dyer's classic study *White* which discusses representations of white people in white Western culture (Dyer 1997: xiii). Constructions of Swedish whiteness in visual culture and explorations of the theme of racism directed against groups conceived of as 'un-Swedish' with regard to their physical appearance is a theme both in studies of Orientalism in Swedish (Catomeris 2005) and in analyses of visual art (Werner & Björk 2014).

While the majority of the people of Northern Sweden could be constructed as 'different' because of low social status, living in a periphery and poverty, as indicated in Eriksson's study (Eriksson 2010), there is an added dimension in constructions of the Sámi and Tornedalians as being different, namely the issue of 'race', or ethnicity. These categories were extensively examined by race biologists during the first part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century intent on mapping 'the racial character' of the Swedish nation (Lundborg & Linders 1926). Already in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, research expeditions travelled to Lappland to collect material about the Sámi. This is a theme highlighted by photographs from various research expeditions in Nils-Aslak Valkeapää's *Beaivi áhčážan*. Among the photographs are pictures taken by race biologists for the purpose of comparing the Sámi 'racial character' with that of Finns and ethnic Swedes (Heith 2013, Heith 2014). Herman Lundborg, the director of the Swedish State Institute for Race Biology in Uppsala, believed in documenting 'racial types' through photographs. One purpose of this was didactic. The public was to learn to discern racial differences by comparing photographs of individuals representing different racial characters (Zippel 2009, Kjellman 2013). The 'Nordic racial character', that is ethnic Swedes, was constructed as the privileged category at the top of the hierarchy of races, while the Sámi and Finns – referred to as the 'East Baltic racial character' in

<sup>26</sup> Since the publication of Dyer's pioneering book *White* (Dyer 1997), Critical Race and Whiteness Studies have developed and resulted in analyses of how whiteness functions as a norm that racialises and excludes groups of people that have been seen as deviant. In the USA, for example, there are studies showing that Italian immigrants were not considered 'quite white' by the Immigration Authorities at a certain time in history (Guglielmo 2003, Roediger 2006), and how some groups were seen as deviant due to low social status, poverty, and/or ethnicity (Wray 2006). This field of research has inspired studies of colonialism and the establishment of binaries between groups of people also in the Nordic countries (see Loftsdóttir & Jensen eds., 2012, Hübinette ed. 2017).

Lundborg and Linder's mapping from 1926 – were placed on a lower level (Lundborg & Linders 1926, also see Heith 2013).

Using terminology from Critical Race and Whiteness Studies, this may be described as a construction of certain groups as 'not quite white' (Wray 2006). However, the boundaries of whiteness are shifting. If a group's status increases, this group may 'become white', as Roediger's study of immigrants in the USA indicates (Roediger 2006). When it comes to the Sámi and Swedish Tornedalians, these groups were seen as different in a Swedish national context. The difference of the Sámi was related both to exotism and a romantic view of a people living close to nature, but also to Darwinist ideas of a people not fit to survive in the modern world (Mebius 1999, Vallström 1999).<sup>27</sup> The Tornedalians, on the other hand, were seen as an alien element in the nation because of their ethnicity (Persson 2013). Both groups were constructed as 'not quite white' in a Swedish national context, that is as different in a negative sense compared with the majority population. The contexts of this othering are the anthropological science of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and the race biology of the first part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Both anthropologists and race biologists contributed to knowledge production. Linda Tuhiwai Smith emphasises that knowledge production is an intrinsic element of colonialism when discussing the cultural formation of Western research (Smith 2008, 42 ff.).

## Narratives about Laestadianism in Presentations and Academic Studies

Laestadianism started as a revivalist movement within the National Swedish Lutheran Church. After Laestadius' death in 1861, Johan Raattamaa became the primary leader of the movement (Brännström 1962, Brännström 1990, Hofgren ed. 1990). During Raattamaa's time the pastoral cure was formalised to an emotionally charged practice with strong expressions of joy and sorrow called *liikutuksia* (Finnish for 'movements'). Laestadianism diversified into a western branch with its centre in Gällivare in northern Sweden. This branch cherishes traditions going back to Laestadius himself and his sermons. Another characteristic of this branch is its critical stance towards certain aspects of modern society, such as TV. "Gammallaestadianerna", 'the Old Laestadians', are a conservative branch with most of its

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<sup>27</sup> There was a romanticising discourse about indigenous people in the cultural criticism of the 1970s and 80s. Thisted points out that this was criticised by Pia Arke from Greenland (Thisted 2012, 281).

adherents in Finland.<sup>28</sup> There are various factions of Laestadianism also in Finland (Talonen 2001, 39f.). While the western branch of Laestadianism and the 'Old Laestadians' are conservative, the eastern one is divided into various factions with weaker bonds to the original movement. The preachers hold a strong position in all factions, playing a central role in the pastoral cure. Generally, the preacher is the one who receives confessions of sin and offers deliverance to those expressing penitence.

Reactions to the revivalist movement varied from the very outset.<sup>29</sup> While a senior enforcement officer in Torneå at first saw it as a positive contribution to the prevention of crime among the Sámi, a district medical officer found the mental agitation at the gatherings to be too strong. He even accused the converted of indecency (Zorgdrager 1997, 202). Later, the senior enforcement officer also expressed more negative feelings towards Laestadianism, comparing the sounds made by the believers during prayer meetings to the howling of dogs (Zorgdrager 1997, 204). He also remarked on the 'indecent behaviour' of the women during the meetings (ibid.). As these examples indicate, there was opposition to Laestadianism even at an early phase of the movement. In 1850, an article in *Norrbottens-posten* accused Laestadius of encouraging the peasantry to disobey the authorities, and of being impudent and recalcitrant towards local officials. Laestadius was also accused of leading people astray from the true Evangelical faith (Zorgdrager 1997, 203).

Although Laestadianism was initiated by Lars Levi Laestadius as a movement within the National Swedish Lutheran Church, the revival also came to be associated with anti-establishment protest during Laestadius' lifetime.<sup>30</sup> The Kautokeino rebellion in 1852 is a major occurrence inspired

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<sup>28</sup> Jouko Talonen gives a presentation of Laestadianism in Finland in a publication with contributions to a Laestadius seminar at the University College of Finnmark, Norway, in the year 2000 (Talonen 2001, 37–51).

<sup>29</sup> According to Talonen, the relationship between Laestadianism and the Evangelical Lutheran Church was ambiguous from the beginning. The National Finnish Lutheran Church was accepted as head and administrator of the sacraments. However, the episcopal administration of Finland's Evangelical Lutheran Church remained critical towards Laestadianism during a considerable period of time, which caused some bitterness among Laestadians (Talonen 2001, 43). In his thesis, Larsen highlights the Norwegian Lutheran Church's construction of Laestadians and Kven as enemies in the period 1870–1940 (Larsen 2012).

<sup>30</sup> Jarlert points out that there were different readings of Luther (Jarlert 2001, 20–27). This explains divisions between people who saw themselves as Lutherans. In his thesis on the relationship between the National Lutheran Church in Norway, Laestadianism and the Kven minority (Larsen 2012, 31), Larsen highlights that Lutheranism represents both breaks and renewal on the one hand, and continuity on the other.



by the preachings of Laestadius that has come to be seen as a protest against the oppression of the Sámi in northern Norway. This historical incident is seen by the social anthropologist Nelljet Zorgdrager as an expression of Sámi resistance to Norwegian colonialism (Zorgdrager 1997). The title of Zorgdrager's study reflects the author's evaluation of the incidents that occurred in Kautokeino in 1852: "De rettferdiges strid. Kautokeino 1852" ('The struggle of the righteous: Kautokeino 1852').<sup>31</sup> The perspective is different in another narrative of the same event, namely the chapter "Tragedin i Kautokeino 8 nov. 1852" ('The tragedy in Kautokeino 8 Nov. 1852') in Bengt Larsson's *Lars Levi Laestadius. Hans liv, verksamhet och den Laestadianska väckelsen* ('Lars Levi Laestadius. His life, fields of activity and the Laestadian revival'; Larsson 2004, 127–131). Following Larsson, the Kautokeino rebellion was a hard blow to Laestadius. He characterises the rebels as a group of misguided Sámi who had misinterpreted Laestadius (Larsson 2002, 128). He also highlights Laestadius' attempts at self-defence by disavowing any connections between the revivalist movement and the incidents that occurred in Kautokeino in 1852 (Larsson 2004, 131). The difference between Zorgdrager's and Larsson's narratives is relevant for this book's discussion of the role of Laestadianism in contemporary Sámi and Tornedalian texts in so far as it points to the role of a theoretical framework for interpretation. While Larsson's study is biographically oriented, Zorgdrager's analysis is clearly inspired by postcolonial theory. This difference in the theoretical and ideological framework makes Larsson draw the conclusion that the rebellion of Kautokeino in 1852 was a tragedy. Zorgdrager, on the other hand, concludes that the same incident exemplifies righteous resistance to oppression.

Zorgdrager's thesis is not the only study that highlights connections between Sámi protests and Laestadianism. English social anthropologist Robert Paine argues that Laestadianism had a "therapeutic function", socially and psychologically, for the Norwegian Kven and Sámi, claiming that Laestadianism "fitted the Sámi situation like a glove" since the Laestadians equated "material poverty with spiritual richness" (Paine 1965, 7). The Sámi that Paine has in mind is the population living on the coast of Norway. During the inter-war period, the living standards of this group deteriorated and, following Paine, Laestadianism came to play a positive role for the coastal Sámi in this specific context. Minde points out that: "Clearly Laestadianism was seen to create a place of refuge, a sanctuary for the minority populations, at a time – from 1870 down to World War II – when the au-

<sup>31</sup> In reality, there was no uniform resistance on the part of Laestadian Sámi. As Larsen points out, the first retaliation directed against the rebels in Kautokeino came from Sámi Laestadians in the neighbouring village of Avzzi (Larsen 2012, 101).



thorities were tightening the screw of Norwegisation in the name of Social Darwinism and Nationalism.” (Minde 1998, 9.) The role of Laestadianism as an identity marker for the Kven and Sámi in northern Norway has also been highlighted by Ivar Bjørklund. According to Bjørklund, the Kven and the Sámi engaged in opposition towards the policies of Norwegisation by using their mother tongue and practising Laestadianism (Bjørklund 1985, 320, 407–408).

There are studies of Laestadianism as a religious movement in Swedish (Brännström 1962), Finnish (Miettinen 1942, Lohi 1989) and Norwegian (Sivertsen 1955). There are also studies inspired by feminist theory that explore the role of women in Laestadius’ theology and preachings (Nils-son 1988). Furthermore, Laestadius’ relationship to Sámi religion is a topic which has been analysed (Outakoski 1991, Myrvoll 2010), as well as Laestadius’ preaching style (Kujanpää 1997). Laestadius’ achievements in the fields of biology and natural sciences have also been the subject of study (Franzén 1973). The success of Laestadianism among the Sámi is a topic explored, for example, by Elgvin (Elgvin 1991, Elgvin 2010), while Larsen has examined relations between Laestadianism, the National Lutheran Church in Norway and the Kven (Larsen 2012). The theme of Larsen’s study is the Norwegian Church’s construction of the Kven and Laestadians as hostile elements in the Norwegian nation in the period 1870–1940.<sup>32</sup> As this brief survey indicates, there are quite a few studies of Laestadianism with a focus on the historical backdrop, the emergence of the movement, Laestadius’ theology and rhetorics and the socio-cultural space where the movement emerged and spread.

The vantage point is somewhat different in the collection of articles *Vekkelse og vitenskap. Lars Levi Laestadius 200 år* (‘Revivalism and science: Lars Levi Laestadius 200 year’; Norderval & Nessel eds.) from 2000. This volume was published in connection with the celebration of the 200th anniversary of Laestadius’ birth, which was commemorated with a number of events and publications (cf. Anderzén et al. 2001). Through articles representing various fields of research, the volume wishes to highlight Laestadius’ importance for the religious, cultural, and political life of the North Calotte, as well as for its trade and industry. Together, the contributions and the presentation of the volume on the cover produce a narrative of Lars Levi

<sup>32</sup> Larsen does not analyse the relationship between the Norwegian Lutheran Church, Laestadians and the Kvens using perspectives from Postcolonial Studies. Instead he uses Norbert Elias’ distinction between establishment and outsiders, as well as perspectives from Reinhardt Kosellecks, Anders Jarlert and Einar Niemi. However, a theme that is highlighted is that assimilationist nation-building played a role in the construction of the Kven and Laestadians as ‘enemies’.

Laestadius as a prominent spiritual, cultural and political character shaping the lives of people in northern Norway. The text on the cover emphasises that Laestadius was a versatile person who contributed in several fields and that Laestadianism is still an important element of the Christian life of today's northern Norway.

Another publication which also emphasises the positive impact of Laestadianism and its continuing importance in today's society consists of presentations from a seminar in connection with the 200th Jubilee at the University College of Finnmark in northern Norway (Anderzén et al. eds. 2001). The final contribution argues for the establishment of Laestadian independent schools in Norway as a protest against the secularisation of contemporary society in general, and against the compulsory school in particular (Paulsen 2001, 74). This positive, celebratory approach to Laestadianism is manifest also in a letter from the University College of Finnmark to the postal authorities in Sweden, Finland and Norway, asking that a postage stamp be issued to celebrate the birth of Lars Levi Laestadius in the year 2000. The initiative was successful in the sense that a Norwegian stamp with a portrait of Laestadius was released in connection with the jubilee.

The seminar at the University College of Finnmark and the stamp initiative exemplify an attempt to create a new positive narrative about Laestadius and Laestadianism, but not from an anti or postcolonial vantage point. As the contribution discussing why Laestadian independent schools are needed suggests (Paulsen 2001, 73–78), this narrative is not about colonialism versus decolonisation, but of secularism versus Laestadianism as a privileged form of Christianity. While the other contributors to the volume are affiliated to universities, in one case a university college, Paulsen is the headmaster of a Laestadian independent school (Varden skole). The positive view on Laestadianism as a privileged form of Christianity is evoked already in the publication's first contribution, in which Anderzén mentions his own conversion to Laestadianism (Anderzén 2001, 7).

While the issue of an insider versus an outsider perspective is central to Post-colonial and Indigenous Studies, the theoretical frameworks of these currents include critical analysis of structures which have contributed to the colonisation of people's minds, thoughts and emotions. They also include critical scrutiny of practices seen as unethical and which have not taken the wishes of indigenous people seriously. Laestadius, for example, was engaged in the sale of Sámi skulls and skeletal parts taken from burial sites and graves against the wishes of local people (Ojala 2016). When seen from the vantage point of contemporary narrativisations of Laestadianism and Lars Levi Laestadius, the publication *Læstadius 200 år* represents a celebration, as well as a volume with scholarly ambitions. The volume is part

of the activities in connection with the 200th anniversary in 2000, which took place in the region where the revival first spread, that is, the movement's historical core area. In this context there is a strong focus on those aspects of Laestadianism that are seen as positive and on the movement's continuing impact on the cultural and spiritual geography of northern Norway, Sweden, and Finland.

*Vekkelse og vitenskap. Lars Levi Laestadius 200 år* highlights connections between a northern geography and linguistic minority status. This is also a central theme in a study which explores interconnections between ethnic and linguistic minority status and Laestadianism (Lindmark ed. 2016). *Gränsöverskridande kyrkohistoria. De språkliga minoriteterna på Nordkalotten* ('Border-crossing Church History. The linguistic minorities on the North Calotte') highlights the fact that the Sámi and Finnish languages have tied people together across national borders, as has the Laestadian revival in Norway, Sweden and Finland (Lindmark 2016, 7).<sup>33</sup> The volume is the outcome of attempts to write a church history of northern Sweden which, following the editor, Daniel Lindmark, is to a large extent a border-crossing transnational history. Elenius' contribution to the volume discusses a shift in Sweden in the first part of the 20th century resulting in race no longer being seen as the basis of values. Instead, there was a stronger focus on Swedish culture and the Swedish language (Elenius 2016, 38). According to Elenius, the Church continued to support the Tornedalians educational system, which contributed to linguistic assimilation. The policies vis-à-vis the Sámi are described as 'patriarchal' in the sense that the Sámi were seen as an inferior group in society, incapable of managing their own affairs (ibid.). Elenius furthermore stresses connections between nationalisation and the status of the Sámi and Finnish-speaking Tornedalians. Following him, the Swedish Church continued: "to view the Sámi and Tornedalians as a kind of strange elements in the nation who required continuously new efforts to be integrated." (Elenius 2016, 39).<sup>34</sup> However, there were also transnation-

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<sup>33</sup> The title of the volume is somewhat problematic from the vantage point of today's Sámi anticolonial activism in Sweden, which does not see the Sámi as a minority, but as an indigenous people. Sweden has not ratified Convention No. 169, a legally binding international instrument dealing with the rights of indigenous and tribal peoples (Heith 2015a). Today there are Sámi voices who want Sweden to ratify the convention, as that would strengthen the position of the Sámi.

<sup>34</sup> As Elenius presents some diversity and variations over time, it is not clear what his position is when it comes to the question of assimilation and its consequences. He emphasises that assimilationist policies were implemented, but also that there was an acceptance of bilingualism for example in 'Finnbygdsutredningen' from 1921 (Elenius 2016, 32).

al efforts linking the Finnish-speaking Tornedalians to a Finnish linguistic sphere. Mustakallio's transnational Church history of the Finnish-speaking people ('finnbygden') highlights an agreement in 1923 which allowed Finnish ministers to preach in the Swedish Torne Valley, provided that they did not disseminate Finnish nationalist propaganda or separatist politics. Initially, these ministers were close to the Laestadian revival (Mustakallio 2016).

A focus on border-crossings and transnationalism is also the vantage point for a history and encyclopaedia of the Barents Region: *The Barents Region: A Transnational History of Subarctic Northern Europe* (Elenius et al. eds. 2015) and *Encyclopaedia of the Barents Region* (Elenius ed. 2016). The section "State Churches and revivalist movements" in a chapter about the period between 1809 and 1905 characterises Laestadianism as the largest and longest-lasting revival in the region (Elenius et al. eds. 2015, 223). Following the authors, the revival "strengthened the cultural affinity among Sámi and Finnish-speaking people." (Elenius et al. eds. 2015, 225.) The 'ethnic dimension' is also highlighted through the information that the Laestadian preacher Juhani Raattamaa, who had a leading role after the death of Laestadius in 1861, never learned Swedish but kept to his Finnish mother tongue (Elenius et al. eds. 2015, 225–226). Strained relations with authorities are foregrounded as a result of the rebellion in Kautokeino in 1852, and also because of the transnational dimension of the movement which worried Governments and Church authorities (ibid.). The role of mission schools in disseminating the revival is highlighted (ibid., cf. Anderzén 2001) as an example of an activity that strengthened the movement. Following the authors, the first wave lasted from the 1840s to the 1870s and it "was regarded in Sweden as a militant movement in opposition to the official state church, while nevertheless remaining an internal movement within the separate state churches of Sweden, Norway and Finland." (Elenius et al. eds. 2015, 226.) This is a very strong claim which captures the radical use of Laestadianism in certain contexts, for example the Kautokeino rebellion and ensuing narratives of the role of Laestadianism for igniting protest among the Sámi. But, it hardly provides a correct depiction of Laestadius' own intentions or wishes.<sup>35</sup>

While border-crossing and transnationalism are central to the volumes just mentioned, the point of departure is different for *De historiska relationerna mellan Svenska kyrkan och samerna* ('The historical relationships

<sup>35</sup> It would be interesting to know what the claim that Laestadianism was seen as a 'militant movement' is based on (cf. Elenius et al. 2015, 226). The Kautokeino rebellion is well-known, and it is also well-known that Laestadius himself did not approve of it (cf. Larsson 2004).

between the Established Church of Sweden and the Sámi') published in two volumes in 2016 (Lindmark & Sundström eds., 2016). The rationale behind these volumes is that present-day historical studies may contribute to reconciliation processes.<sup>36</sup> In the preface of the first volume, Archbishop Antje Jackelén emphasises the need to critically scrutinise the role of the Church in order to achieve reconciliation. Resonating with notions also found in Postcolonial Theory and Indigenous Studies, Jackelén describes the effects of the historical relationships between the Church and the Sámi as follows: "The wounds, pain, shame, self-contempt, anger and all the hard memories are real. They cannot be ignored by a Church that wishes to live in the Imitation of Jesus Christ." (Jackelén 2016, 11.)<sup>37</sup> The ambition to critically scrutinise the relationship between the Church and the Sámi is also reflected in a declaration by representatives of the Church asking for an investigation of 'the Sámi issue': "The Sámi people are an indigenous people. Ever since the early colonisation and far into the 20th century there have been abuses of the Sámi population. The Swedish Church has contributed to this." (Ekström & Schött 2006, 1.)<sup>38</sup>

As the presentation above shows, there are trends in the present-day writing of church history, and history in general, from points of departure other than that of the nation-state. These recent studies focus on regions, for instance the volumes on the North Calotte and the Barents region. There are also studies aimed at exploring how histories may be used in present-day processes of reconciliation. Although this does not necessarily mean that the histories in question are embedded within the frameworks of Postcolonial Studies or Indigenous Studies, there are overlappings in so far as the critical scrutiny of histories seen as oppressive is a central methodological strategy. While these studies provide a valuable backdrop for this volume, the perspective here is different, as the aim is not to engage in the writing of church history but to analyse depictions of Laestadianism in contemporary Sámi and Tornedalian texts, with a specific focus on the role of Laestadianism in anti and post-colonial narratives.

<sup>36</sup> The volumes are related to the project *Saami Voices and Sorry Churches: Use of History in Church-Saami Reconciliation Processes*. They are the outcome of the project 'Svenska kyrkan och samerna – ett vitboksprojekt' which started in the autumn of 2012.

<sup>37</sup> "Såren, smärtan, skammen, självföraktet, vreden och alla svåra minnen är verkliga. De kan inte nonchaleras av en kyrka som vill leva i Jesu Kristi efterföljd." (Jackelén 2016, 11.)

<sup>38</sup> "Det samiska folket är en ursprungsbefolkning. Alltifrån den tidigare kolonisationen och långt in på 1900-talet har övergrepp begåtts gentemot den samiska befolkningen. Svenska kyrkan har bidragit till detta." (Ekström & Schött 2006, 1.)

## Content of the Volume

In this study, the focus will be on how the cultural heritage of Laestadius and Laestadianism are represented in a number of Sámi and Tornedalian contemporary texts. There are some overlappings between the chapter “Situatenedness and Diversity: Representations of Lars Levi Laestadius and Laestadianism” and the rest of the volume. Some of the subject matter is repeated elsewhere so that the chapters can be read separately. The chapter discusses various representations of Laestadius and Laestadianism starting with the only known portrait of Laestadius made in 1839 by Charles Giraud during the *La Recherche Expedition*.<sup>39</sup> The chapter highlights that the representations are connected with different ideological, geographical and cultural points of departure. This is shown by means of analysis of depictions of Laestadianism as being alien and oppressive on the one hand, and as a significant cultural heritage which continues to affect the cultural and spiritual landscape of the North Calotte on the other. A new trend with representations coloured by perspectives from Postcolonial and Indigenous Studies is analysed, but it is emphasised that there is no consensus as to Laestadius’ and Laestadianism’s role in anticolonial struggle and decolonisation among the Sámi. While Nils Gaup’s movie *The Kautokeino Rebellion* presents Laestadianism as a radical force in the Sámi resistance to Norwegian colonisation, Anders Sunna’s painting “Racial Comment” depicts Laestadius as an accomplice of a colonial system that has racialised and abused Sámi people. Furthermore, the theme of abusive Laestadian fathers is discussed from the vantage point of Höjjer’s play about Isak Juntti, Tito Colliander’s biography about the Finnish painter Tyko Sallinen and the Finnish movie *Pahat pojat, Bad boys*.

The chapter “Sara Ranta-Rönnlund’s Contribution to Sámi Reminiscence Literature: Memories of Laestadianism” discusses Sara Ranta-Rönnlund’s four books from the 1970s with a specific focus on the depiction of Laestadianism. The discussion is embedded in a wider context through an analysis of the author’s criticism of the traditional life of the nomadic reindeer-herding Sámi in northern Sweden. Through her positive view on modernity, education and enlightenment, which she saw as beneficial for the nomadic Sámi, Ranta-Rönnlund opposes the Swedish policies captured by the phrase ‘Lapp skall lapp vara’ (cf. Oscarsson 2016, 949). By being strongly critical of the effects of the lack of education and enlightenment for the Sámi, she opposes prevailing notions stipulating that ‘authentic’ Sámi do

<sup>39</sup> This chapter is a reworking of an article previously published in *Kult 14: New Narratives of the Postcolonial Arctic*, 90–110, <http://postkolonial.dk/files/KULT%2014/7%20Anne%20Heith%20LJ.pdf> (Heith 2016b).

not live in houses, keep livestock or engage in agriculture – ideas that were disseminated by Bergqvist and Bergfors (Oscarsson 2016). Ranta-Rönnlund establishes a binary relationship between backwardness and modern society, arguing that the living conditions and quality of life of the Sámi can only improve if they are not segregated from modern society. Her depiction of Laestadianism is multifaceted, including both tales of good preachers and preachers abusing their position as spiritual leaders. Although negatively inflected accounts of doomsday preachers threatening people with hell fire dominate, Ranta-Rönnlund is also critical of exaggerated depictions of Laestadian laymen preachers. In particular, she engages in a dialogue with Björn-Erik Höijer's play *Isak Juntti hade många söner*, arguing that the play misrepresents the preacher whom Isak Juntti is modelled after (Heith 2016b).<sup>40</sup>

The chapter "Exotification, Oppressive Gender Structures and Post-modern Approaches: Höijer, Cullblom and Korpi on Laestadianism" contrasts representations of Laestadianism in texts by Björn-Erik Höijer, Ester Cullblom and Annika Korpi. Höijer's representations are discussed as examples of 'outsider narratives'. The characterisation of the preacher Isak Juntti and his discussion of the theme of Laestadianism in the programme of the 1954 performance of *Isak Juntti hade många söner* ('Isak Juntti had many sons') at *Dramaten* in Stockholm are compared with the Finnish author Tito Colliander's depiction of Laestadianism in his biography about the painter Tyko Sallinen, as well as with Sara Ranta-Rönnlund's discussion of Höijer's play. Colliander's biography is explicitly mentioned by Höijer in the 1954 programme of the play about Isak Juntti. The analysis is situated within Bengt Pohjanen's criticism of ethnoracism in the writings of Höijer. The play *Isak Juntti hade många söner*, as well as novels by Höijer, are used as primary texts. Ester Cullblom's narratives inspired by the feminist current of the 1970s, as well as Annika Korpi's novel *Hevonen Häst* from 2003 are highlighted as texts presenting contrasting narratives of Laestadianism.

The following chapter focuses on Bengt Pohjanen's use of Laestadius and Laestadianism as a subject matter in his writings, from the debut novel *Och fiskarna svarar Guds frid* ('And the fish answer God's peace') in 1979 and onwards. Laestadianism constitutes a significant element of the cultural heritage of the Torne Valley, where Pohjanen was born and where he has lived a great part of his life. He has written about Lars Levi Laestadius and Laestadianism in novels, in his autobiographical writing and in an opera. In

<sup>40</sup> A comparison of Ranta-Rönnlund's and Höijer's representations of the preacher character Isak Juntti has been published under the title "Exotifierande skildringar av laestadianismen kontra personliga minnen och antikolonial kritik. Höijer, Ranta-Rönnlund och *Den tornedalsfinska litteraturen om Isak Juntti*", in *Norsk Tidsskrift for Misjonsvitenskap*, nr 2–3 2016, 16–28 (Heith 2016c).



the year 2000, when the 200-year anniversary of Laestadius' birth was celebrated, a song of praise to Lars Levi Laestadius by Pohjanen was performed in the Pajala Church. Pohjanen has used Laestadianism as a theme and motif in depictions of the Torne Valley and its people from the 1970s until today. This includes the use of the Korpela movement as a subject matter. The Korpela movement was a millenarian movement that emerged in the 1930s. At first, the man whose name has inspired the movement, Toivo Korpela from Finland, was a Laestadian preacher. Later he had a controversy with leading Laestadian preachers and had to leave Sweden. Pohjanen explores the theme of the controversy and the emergence of a new movement named after Toivo Korpela in both fiction and local history. The emergence of the movement and a later generation's attempts to depict what really happened among the Korpelians while they were waiting for a heavenly arc to arrive, is explored in the metatextual novel *Dagning; röd!* ('Daylight; red!') from 1988. This complex novel is analysed as a specimen of historiographic meta-fiction, a genre that was in vogue in the 1980s.

Pohjanen's novels are discussed chronologically starting with the debut novel from 1979. Interspersed with the analysis of the novels, there are discussions about Pohjanen's contribution to various genres over the years. The chapter is concluded with an analysis of Mikael Niemi's novel *Koka björn*, which provides a blending of facts and fiction from a different angle compared to Pohjanen's use of Lars Levi Laestadius and Laestadianism as a subject matter. Finally, the last chapter sums up the analysis of the representations of Laestadius and Laestadianism discussed in the respective chapters.



## CHAPTER II

### Situatedness and Diversity: Representations of Lars Levi Laestadius and Laestadianism

The aim of this chapter<sup>41</sup> is to analyse contradictory narratives about Lars Levi Laestadius (1800–1861) and the Laestadian movement. The material discussed consists of pictorial and textual forms of representation, which produce narratives related to different cultural, ideological and geographical contexts. This implies that narratives attribute different roles to the man and the movement. Partly, this is related to the fact that Laestadianism is not a uniform movement. Even in the early phase, various groupings were formed. But it is also related to the making of cultural heritage in the present whereby Laestadius and Laestadianism are attributed diverse meanings (cf. Smith 2006).

The concepts ‘worldliness’ and ‘unworldliness’ capture some of the issues that have been controversial and resulted in diversification. Following Steinlien, Laestadianism contains prescriptions for how to behave, based on a refusal to split the world into a sacred and a mundane sphere. This process involves a dichotomisation of values (Steinlien 1998). While some Laestadian groups have held on to an unworldly, simple way of life without the amenities of modernity, other groups have been less strict and more inclined to integrate novelties such as radio, television and bicycles into their lives. Partly, the dichotomisation of the world view of conservative Laestadians is connected with the system of laymen preachers introduced by Laestadius. One objective of these preachers was to make people aware of traps and dangers that might jeopardise their spiritual salvation, and for this purpose, preachers took it as their duty to warn people against sinning. In this context, a vast number of phenomena were characterised as sinful and leading to damnation. Nevertheless, as mentioned, it must be kept in mind that there are variations between groups and preachers in their view on what counts as sinful.

The first representation in focus was produced during Laestadius’ lifetime and the last in recent years. From his lifetime and onwards, Laestadius and Laestadianism have been connected with the Sámi, Tornedalian and Kven minorities in the Nordic north (Minde 1998, Lindmark ed. 2016). English social anthropologist Robert Paine argues that Laestadianism had a

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<sup>41</sup> This chapter is a modified version of the article “Situatedness and Diversity: Representations of Lars Levi Laestadius and Laestadianism” published in *Kult* 14, 2016 (Heith 2016a).

‘therapeutic function’, socially and psychologically, for the Norwegian Kven and Sámi. He claims that it “fitted the Sámi situation like a glove”, since the Laestadians equated “material poverty with spiritual richness” (Paine 1965, 7). The Sámi that Paine has in mind is the population living on the coast of Norway. During the inter-war period, living standards deteriorated for this group. Following Paine, Laestadianism came to play a positive role for the coastal Sámi in this specific context. Minde points out that “clearly Laestadianism was seen to create a place of refuge, a sanctuary for the minority populations, at a time – from 1870 down to World War II – when the authorities were tightening the screw of Norwegisation in the name of Social Darwinism and nationalism” (Minde 199, 9). The role of Laestadianism as an identity marker for the Kven and Sámi in northern Norway has also been highlighted by Ivar Bjørklund. According to Bjørklund, the Kven and the Sámi engaged in opposition against the policies of Norwegisation by using their mother tongue and practising Laestadianism (Bjørklund 1985, 320, 407–408).<sup>42</sup> As these examples show, there is an ethnic dimension in Laestadianism, which has given rise to new narratives of the movement. These highlight the vulnerable situation of ethnic and linguistic minorities in periods when these groups were left behind economically and culturally. This was due to unevenly distributed economic growth and cultural homogenisation connected with nation-building. This kind of vulnerability is also a prominent theme in narratives produced by Sámi and Tornedalian writers and artists inspired by postcolonial theory and indigenous studies.

In his various roles as a revivalist preacher, botanist and scientist, Laestadius was active in several different contexts. While the revivalist Laestadius was intent on improving living conditions among poor people living under harsh conditions, the botanist and scientist Laestadius was engaged by the prestigious French *La Recherche expedition* 1838–1840. Laestadius was ordained as a minister in Uppsala. However, after his spiritual awakening, he abandoned the preaching style he had learned there as he set out to convert the parishioners of his vast, sparsely populated parish in northern Sweden. While Uppsala, during Laestadius’ lifetime, was considered an old national cultural centre, northern Lappland was regarded as an uncivilised fringe of the nation state.

The binary ‘centre versus periphery’ is central to conceptions of space developed in connection with colonialism. As a minister of the Swedish Lutheran Church, Laestadius represents the ‘colonial centre’. This also applies to his capacity as an expert involved in a major scientific expedition, as

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<sup>42</sup> The Kven in Norway are descendants of Finnish-speaking immigrants from the Torne Valley in northern Sweden and Finland.

well as to his role as a provider of plants and specimens of human remains to scientists in colonial centres. However, in his role as a revivalist preacher, Laestadius in many respects took a stance against the centre of the Swedish nation state, advocating conversion and temperance, in a preaching style that he developed as a form of acculturation (Heith 2016c). His aim was to reach the formally uneducated people of the northern sparsely populated areas where the majority spoke Sámi and Finnish. Laestadius' importance for the Sámi and Finno-Ugric minorities in Sweden and Norway has been highlighted in studies discussing linguistic aspects of the revival (Sivertsen 1955, 442, Elenius 2001, 85). The fact that he used Sámi and Finnish as *lingua sacras* has been of major importance for identity formation among the Sámi and Finno-Ugric minorities in northern Sweden and Finland (see also Larsen 2016).

#### *The Only Known Portrait and Biard's Painting*

The only known contemporary portrait of Laestadius was drawn in 1839 by Charles Giraud, a member of the *La Recherche expedition*, which Laestadius was invited to join in his capacity as an expert on local botany and



Illustration 1: François Auguste Biard, "The Minister Laestadius preaching", 1840, ©Nordnorsk Kunstmuseum.





Illustration 2: Bror Hjorth's altarpiece in Jukkasjärvi Church. Photo: Tomas Utsi, naturfoto.se.







Sámi mythology (Larsson 2004, 50–52). Later, a lithograph was made from the drawing by Émile Lassalle, in which Laestadius is wearing the Medal of Honour of the Legion of Honour of France. He received this award in 1841 for his contribution to the *La Recherche expedition*. Another member of the expedition, François Auguste Biard, is the man behind the painting “The Minister Laestadius preaching”, believed to have been painted in 1840 when Biard had returned to France (Aaserud 2005, 29–47).

Today, Biard’s painting belongs to Nordnorsk Kunstmuseum in Tromsø, where it is displayed with other more or less exoticised images of the Sámi and the northern landscape. In the painting, Lars Levi Laestadius wears a top hat of the kind worn by the higher social classes at the time the painting was made. However, it is unlikely that Laestadius would have worn a hat like that when preaching to the Sámi and Finnish-speaking people in traditional Sámi land. It is well known that Laestadius lived in great simplicity, condemning worldliness and using vernacular language in his preaching, which was seen as vulgar by the social elite. For example, Laestadius frequently used expressions like ‘the devil’s piss’ for alcohol (Heith 2009, 342–361).<sup>43</sup> The landscape is the result of a combination of imagination and various sketches made on different locations. Aaserud points out that the dramatic snow formations surrounding Laestadius and the group of Sámi he is preaching to do not exist in the northern parts of Norway that Biard visited (Aaserud 2005, 43).

The imaginative qualities of Biard’s painting reflect the context of its production. In 1841, it was exhibited at the Salon in Paris.<sup>44</sup> The painting represents an outsider’s view of the Sámi, produced with a Parisian audience in mind and as such, it exemplifies a form of colonising practice that involves othering, exoticisation and marginalisation of an indigenous people in a distant location. Laestadius’ role in this representation is that of a person complicit with colonialism, a gentleman whose clothing signals that he is affiliated to the colonial centre, speaking to a group of natives.

#### *Bror Hjorth's Version of Laestadius Preaching to the Sámi*

The Swedish artist Bror Hjorth has also produced a work of art representing Laestadius preaching to the Sámi, namely the altarpiece in Jukkasjärvi Church in northern Sweden.

<sup>43</sup> A Swedish encyclopedia from 1956 characterises Laestadius’ language as drastic, effective and often defying all sense of propriety (*Svensk Uppslagsbok* 1956, vol. 17. Carlquist and Carlsson 1956, vol. 17, 372).

<sup>44</sup> It was not until 2002 that Nordnorsk Kunstmuseum in Tromsø took action in order to acquire it (Aaserud 2005, 41).

The altarpiece is a triptych carved from wood and painted with bright colours. The middle piece represents Christ and the flanking pieces show scenes from the mythologised narrative about Laestadius' spiritual awakening and his preachings among the Sámi. One of the panels shows Laestadius and a young Sámi woman who, according to Laestadius himself and the Laestadian legend, planted the seed that led to the Laestadian revivalism (Østtveit Elgvin 2010, 50–66). The young woman Milla Clementsdotter, whom Laestadius called 'Mary of Lapland', was a poor servant girl with no education. Still, according to the legend, Laestadius' encounters with her had a deep impact on his spiritual reorientation (Kulonen et al. 2005, 167–169). When speculating about the reasons behind Milla Clementsdotter's importance for Laestadius, Østtveit Elgvin suggests that the answer may lie in the similarities between her life story and his own. They both had a Sámi family background and shared personal experiences of poverty and alcoholism in the family (Østtveit Elgvin 2010, 56).

The issue of whose perspective is represented in Hjorth's altarpiece is quite complex. It was a gift from the Swedish mining company Luossavaara-Kiirunavaara Aktiebolag (LKAB), presented to the Jukkasjärvi Church in 1958 at the celebration of the 350th anniversary of the church. The church building, dating back to 1607–08, is the oldest preserved church in Swedish Lapland. LKAB was established in 1890. Throughout its history, it has mined iron ore in Kiruna and Malmberget in northern Sweden. Since the 1950s, it has been 100% state-owned. Bror Hjorth depicts Laestadius as a minister of the National Lutheran Swedish Church, dressed in a traditional black minister's outfit with a white collar. The Sámi, however, are dressed in traditional Sámi costumes in bright red, yellow and blue. In this way, visible distinctions operating as ethnic markers (see Barth 1998, 9–38) are created between the minister and the Sámi people.

Considering the background to the commissioning of the altarpiece, it is hardly surprising that Laestadius is depicted as a representative of the established church, who successfully disseminates the gospel to the indigenous Sámi. However, the piece also acknowledges the role of Milla Clementsdotter, depicted with a halo, in the spiritual renewal of Laestadius. In this way, the altarpiece destabilises the borders between the national Lutheran Swedish Church and local characters, as well as events shaping the Laestadian movement, by presenting a syncretisation between Swedish mainstream Lutheranism and Laestadian revivalism among the Sámi. The altarpiece is embedded in an official Swedish celebration of the church's 350-year presence in traditional Sámi land. Against the backdrop of a spatial vocabulary of colonialism (see Smith 2008), this exemplifies how the colonial centre asserts its presence at the fringes of the nation. Laestadius' role

in this official celebration is that of a representative of the colonial centre.

From the vantage point of postcolonial and indigenous studies, both the National Lutheran Swedish Church and mining companies, exploiting natural resources in traditional Sámi territory, are agents in the colonisation of indigenous territory. According to Maori scholar Linda Tuhiwai Smith, borders between centre and periphery are created through a 'spatial vocabulary of colonialism' (Smith 2008, 53). The spatial vocabulary of colonialism furthermore implies that areas remote to the centre are seen as empty space, free for exploitation (Smith 2008, 53). In various ways, Biard's painting and Hjorth's altarpiece present narratives of colonial complicity. However, Hjorth's work does not represent the relationship between the centre (the National Lutheran Church) and the periphery (represented by the poor, uneducated Sámi woman Milla Clementsdotter) as binary. On the contrary, Milla Clementsdotter's halo and the composition giving her an elevated position and proximity to Christ and to Laestadius, contribute to a narrative of local spirituality with a capacity to challenge the doctrines and values of the centre.

#### *Alien and Oppressive Laestadianism*

While it has been acknowledged that Laestadius played a positive role in the formation of Sámi, Kven and Tornedalian identity, it does not follow from this that he appealed to the majority population. As indicated by titles such as "Laestadianism as a religion for the Kven" (Kristiansen 1998, my translation) and "Laestadianism as an arena for the formation of Kven identity in Nord-Troms and Finnmarksvidda" (Sundelin 1998, my translation), the Laestadian movement was also seen as an alien element from the point of view of the majority population in Norway and Sweden. The Norwegian historian Rolf Inge Larsen has examined the relationship between the Norwegian Lutheran Church, Laestadianism and the Finno Ugric Kven minority in northern Norway, drawing attention to the church's construction of the Laestadians and Kven as hostile, alien elements in the Norwegian nation during the period 1870–1940 (Larsen 2012). There were also instances of conflicts during Laestadius' lifetime that may be related to different interpretations of Luther, whose writings were used both to support breaks and renewal, and continuity (see Jarlert 2001, 20–27, Larsen 2012, 31).

In an article about Lars Levi Laestadius in a standard Swedish encyclopedia (Söderberg 1944, 566), the people who were attracted by the Laestadian revivalism are described as "den halvt förvildade lappmarksbefolkningen" ('the semi-uncivilised population of Lappland', my translation). The narrative of a man using strong language and disregarding propriety when preaching to uncivilised Laplanders, does acknowledge Laestadius' role in



improving the living conditions of people living in misery, but it also establishes borders between the majority population, the civilised Swedes on the one hand, and the coarse, uncivilised northern minorities on the other. From the perspective of Critical Whiteness Studies, this narrative of the relationship between the majority population and the 'uncivilised minorities in the northern peripheries' can be described as the establishment of a category of the population which is seen as 'not quite white'.<sup>45</sup>

As the quotation from the Swedish encyclopaedia above indicates, a negative view of the population of Lapland is not alien to national knowledge-production (see also Eriksson 2010). In some cases, such as in Björn-Erik Höijer's novel *Djävulens kalsonger* ('The devil's long johns') from 1974, Laestadianism and Laestadians are described in altogether negative terms (Höijer 1974). Höijer, born in Malmberget in northern Sweden, repeatedly writes about the impact of Laestadianism on the lives of people in northern Sweden. A significant difference between him and Bengt Pohjanen, who is from a Tornedalian minority background, is that while Pohjanen presents a nuanced image of the role of Laestadianism in the Torne Valley, Höijer repeatedly highlights negative aspects.

The setting of Höijer's novel *Djävulens kalsonger* is a small village in a mining-district in northern Sweden. The villagers have become Laestadians with strict views on morals and sexuality. The title of the novel refers to a Laestadian expression used for curtains, which were called 'the devil's long johns'. The followers of this version of Laestadianism claimed that putting up curtains in front of the windows implied that people doing so had something to hide. The idea that having curtains is a sin is one example of the influence of laymen preachers in the establishment of criteria for distinguishing between 'worldly' and 'unworldly' behaviour. One of the men in the village challenges the prevailing code of behaviour by marrying a cheerful woman from Finland. She has no experience of what it is like to live in a small village, where elderly misogynist, hypocritical men are in charge. Of course, conflicts arise. The novel ends with the couple embarking on a quest for the freedom they cannot have among the narrow-minded Laestadians in the village.

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<sup>45</sup> Since the publication of Dyer's pioneering book *White* (1997), Critical Race Studies and Whiteness Studies have developed and produced analyses of how whiteness functions as a norm that racialises and excludes groups of people that have been seen as deviant. In the US, for example, there are studies showing that Italian immigrants were not considered 'quite white' by the Immigration Authorities at a certain time in history (Guglielmo 2003, Roediger 2006). Some groups were regarded as deviant due to their low social status, poverty, and/or ethnicity (Wray 2006).

### *Feminist Responses to Laestadianism*

The themes of Höijer's novel are also prominent in studies inspired by feminist theory. Ester Cullblom has highlighted the lives of Tornedalian women in debates, investigations and as a fiction-writer (Cullblom 1997, Cullblom 2004, Cullblom 2006, Cullblom 2007, Heith 2009b). Her novels and short stories set in the Torne Valley give a sombre picture of the lives and opportunities of women in traditional villages dominated by patriarchal values and traditions.

Another female writer who portrays Laestadianism in a predominantly negative light is Sara Ranta-Rönnlund, who made her debut as a writer at the age of 68. She was born and raised in a reindeer-herding Sámi family. Both parents were western Laestadians, a branch that is more strict and more concerned with issues of sin than the eastern branch. The title of Sara Ranta-Rönnlund's first book, *Nådevalpar* ('Puppies of mercy'), is an expression used by Laestadius to denominate new followers. Ranta-Rönnlund published four books that include several portraits of dictatorial, hypocritical preachers (Ranta-Rönnlund 1971; 1972; 1973; 1978). Vuokko Hirvonen points out that "on the basis of the opinions expressed in these books, the work and thoughts of Sara Ranta-Rönnlund can be described as showing women's consciousness and even feminist consciousness to some extent, as she also tried to change and break down the hierarchies between the genders" (Hirvonen 2008, 177). When analysed from a feminist vantage point, Laestadianism is often connected with patriarchal structures. However, there are also alternative analyses emphasising the central role of women in the revivalist movement, for example in narratives about Milla Clementsdotter and Mathilda Fogman, who played a central role in the early phase of the revival (Nilsson 1988, Palo ed. 2007).

### *The Topos of the Abusive, Laestadian Father*

The relationship between father and son and the character of the abusive, tyrannical father have become something of literary topoi in negatively in-

flected depictions of Laestadianism.<sup>46</sup> One example is the character Henriksson's soliloquy in Björn-Erik Höijer's play *Isak Juntti hade många söner*, 'Isak Juntti had many sons' (Höijer 1954). In the third act Henriksson speaks to himself about how he was whipped by his father as a child: "A true Laestadian."; "Everything was sin ; I was made to suffer." (Höijer 1954, 74.)<sup>47</sup> The description of the whipping bears resemblances to an episode described in Tito Colliander's biography about the Finnish painter Tyko Sallinen who was raised in a Laestadian family. This book is mentioned by Höijer as an inspiration in the program of the stage performance of the play at *Dramaten*, Stockholm, in 1954 (Colliander 1952, Höijer 1954b).

Both in Colliander's *Sallinen* and Höijer's play, there are episodes describing how a son has to go and collect a whip from a carpet of birch twigs, hand it to the father who then beats him. Even if attitudes have changed and the beating of children is prohibited by law today, the depictions of the abusive father in Colliander's book and Höijer's play were not in accordance with dominant ideas about an ideal upbringing when the texts were published. Rather, the theme of the father physically abusing and humiliating his son functions as descriptive elements in narratives about otherness, brutality and how misguided beliefs affect actions. These function as distinguishing markers creating an opposite to modern, civilised, enlightened society. Both in Colliander's and Höijer's texts these markers are connected with Laestadianism.

The abusive, tyrannical Laestadian father whose religiosity is blended with insanity is a theme both in the Finnish movie *Pahat pojat* and Mikael Niemi's novel *Popular music* (Niemi 2000). *Pahat Pojat* (*Bad Boys*) from 2003 is directed by Aleksi Mäkelä. The subtitle, "A true story" reflects the fact that it is based on events from real life. The movie is about four brothers who are left on their own when their father is taken to a mental hospital. The boys who have been brought up by their abusive father who sees

<sup>46</sup> My intention is not to argue that physical and psychological abuse and punishment have not existed in Laestadian communities. As ideas about punishment and child abuse have varied over time and differed in various contexts, it is a simplification to claim that all beating per se has been sadistically motivated. As educators have remarked, there have been ideas inspired by the Old Testament that physical punishment is a form of positive care. In the Swedish online encyclopedia *Bibelfrågan. Ett interaktivt lexikon över bibeln och kristen tro* ('The Bible issue. An interactive encyclopedia about the Bible and Christian faith') the idea that the Bible supports physical punishment (Swedish *aga*) is explained as a misunderstanding relating to the translation of the Hebrew word *musar* which has been translated as *aga* (corporal punishment). According to the encyclopedia the correct translations are "raise", "bring up" or "reprimand": <http://www.alltombibeln.se/bibelfragan/aga.htm> accessed 20 May 2016.

<sup>47</sup> "En äkta læstadian!"; "Allting var synd ; jag fick lida." (Höijer 1954, 74).

himself as a Laestadian know little about modern life outside their farm. They think of themselves as Laestadians and that is also how the surrounding community sees them. The characters are modelled after four brothers who were nicknamed 'the Eura Daltons'. These brothers became notorious nation-wide in Finland for stealing money from fruit-machines, tearing gas pumps apart and robbing post offices and a bank.

The father of the narrator Matti's best friend Niila in Niemi's *Popular music* is described as a Laestadian who has been abandoned by God: "But when the children started coming he was abandoned by God. One day, everything just went silent. Nobody answered anymore." (Niemi 2000, 29.)<sup>48</sup> The father becomes mean-spirited and finds that he enjoys committing sins, but he still calls himself a Laestadian: "He held on to the rituals and brought up his children according to the prescriptions. But in the place of the Lord he placed himself. And that was the worst form of Laestadianism, the most chilling, the most relentless. Laestadianism without God." (Niemi 2000, 299.)<sup>49</sup> The consequence for Niila is that he becomes a child who survives by trying not to be noticed in order to avoid the attention of his father.

The father of *Pahat pojat* also calls himself a Laestadian and he follows Laestadian ideas about how to raise children in so far as he is against modernity, for example in the shape of devices such as television sets. It is imprinted in the boys that they must not fight, swear, or drink alcohol. Already in the opening, it becomes clear that the father himself does not live by these rules. The film opens with a flashback in which the father chases one of the boys with a sickle. The terrified little boy hides under a bed while the father slashes with the sickle trying to cut him. The mother tries to intervene. She falls to the floor – it is not quite clear whether the father kills her, but he certainly is infuriated and threatens her when she tries to help the boy. The scene with the father slashing at his son with a sickle lifts the issue of corporeal punishment to a level beyond normality. This is not a depiction of a caring father, but of an insane monster whose outbursts may have a lethal outcome.

The time of the plot of *Pahat pojat* covers a period when the older brothers are in their twenties while the youngest still goes to school. Their father is in a mental hospital and the brothers live on their own at the family farm. They have no income and eventually they get the idea to steal money from

<sup>48</sup> "Men när barnen började komma övergavs han av Gud. En dag blev det bara tyst. Ingen svarade längre." (Niemi 2000, 29.)

<sup>49</sup> "Han höll på ritualerna och uppfostrade sina barn enligt föreskrifterna. Men i Herrens ställe placerade han sig själv. Och det var den värsta formen av laestadianism, den kyligaste, den mest skoningslösa. Laestadianismen utan Gud." (Niemi 2000, 29.)

a fruit machine in a café. It all escalates and finally they rob a bank. The father has by then escaped from the hospital. Like the father of Niemi's character Niila, he sees himself as a Laestadian although he does not live by any rules or restrictions. The movie's focus on this shows that he is an unreliable character. In one scene, he is with a prostitute woman whom he refuses to pay, arguing that whoring is a sin. The boys pursue their criminal career, explaining their sudden wealth as deriving from Lotto winnings. The father returns to the farm and demands money from the boys. In his opinion, the money belongs to him. If the boys do not comply, he threatens to tell the police about their criminal activities. Finally he does so and the boys are arrested. When opening the boot of the boys' old Volvo, the father accidentally drops a lit cigar on a heap of explosives. There is a huge explosion that kills the father. In the final scene the boys carry the coffin with their father to the burial site. When they leave the church yard, they signal to each other to run. They start running and the police guarding them are left behind.

Like the father of Niila in Niemi's novel, the father in *Pahat pojat* does not refrain from committing actions that by 'normal' Laestadian standards would be seen as sinful. This introduces the theme of hypocrisy and not living as one teaches. The boys' father believes himself to have special privileges and has a way of arguing in his own favour, for example when he claims that the money the boys have stolen is his, as the Government owes him money as compensation for locking him up at a mental hospital. The father in *Pahat pojat* represents a form of perverted Laestadianism, as does Niila's father in Niemi's novel. A major difference is that while the narrator of Niemi's book describes the father's religiosity as perverted – as the worst form of Laestadianism, "Laestadianism without God" – the theme of differences within Laestadianism is not part of the narrative of *Pahat pojat*. The literary topos of the dysfunctional family with an abusive father and a terrorised family is connected with markers of difference that single out the family from the majority society. Mental illness in combination with social isolation shape the life of the family. As part of his delusions, the father has ideas of being chosen. The boys have developed negative self-images, thinking of themselves as not normal. They live on a farm in decline. Before they come into money, they do not have electricity or a TV. They live in a world of their own which is not part of the modern surrounding community. The logic of the film is that their upbringing has made them unfit for life in a modern Finnish community.

The teacher of the school that the youngest brother goes to reprimands him several times for being too different from the other youngsters. He tells him straight out that it would be better if he was more like the other boys raised without any Laestadian ideas about swearing, alcohol and fighting.

However, the teacher does not seem to be aware of the real situation of the boys, of the circumstances behind the death of their mother and the abusiveness of the mentally ill father. This is not presented as a problem in the film, which on the whole tones down the theme of the children's vulnerability. It is only in the flashback, where the father chases one of the boys with a sickle, that this theme is highlighted. Through highlighting markers of difference and the father's and brothers' failure to integrate into the surrounding community, *Pahat pojat* depicts the family as the others of contemporary Finnish society. In this construction, Laestadianism is used as a distinguishing marker. However, as mentioned above, it can be questioned whether the film depicts Laestadianism (see Sjö & Häger 2015).

Another interpretation is that the film depicts how Laestadianism is used in a context where mental illness and isolation shape the living conditions of a dysfunctional family. It is hard to see that the mentally ill father who supposedly has killed his wife, chased his young son with a sickle trying to slash him, consorted with a prostitute and demanded money from his sons' robberies represents Laestadianism. Rather, the father represents mental illness, a lack of sense of reality and extreme egotism. In this depiction, the film uses Laestadianism as a spice to flavour the portraits of the mentally deranged father and the anti-social sons. The real problem depicted in the film is the creation of illusions related to Laestadianism that have resulted in the abandonment of the brothers by society and their precarious situation at the mercy of their father.

*Pahat pojat* is one of the most successful Finnish films ever at the national box office. The film received a prize for best director and best male protagonists at the international film festival at Antwerp in 2003.<sup>50</sup> The prize for best male actor was awarded the four actors playing the boys, as well as Vesa-Matti Lori, who plays the role of the father. The movie had previously been awarded the Prize of the Church (*kyrkans pris*) at the Nordic film festival in Lybeck with the motivation that "Bad boys is a straightforward, impressive and warm-hearted story about the brothers who despite having lived their childhood in the shadow of a cruel father, do not lose hope but find inner strength, which leads to the evil also being ennobled

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<sup>50</sup> The film and the festival are presented on the website of the Finnish Embassy in Bruxelles, "Stygga pojkar (Pahat pojat) segrar i Antwerpen", <http://www.finlande.be/public/Print.aspx?contentid=93898&nodeid=37416&culture=...>, accessed 17 May 2016.

into something good.”<sup>51</sup> While this characterisation hardly reflects the portraits of the brothers in the film, it is true that the father is cruel and mentally deranged and that this has affected the brothers negatively, and perhaps even deprived them of the possibility of having ‘normal’ lives. The issue of predestination versus free will is not a theme addressed in the film. It is difficult to understand what ‘the inner strength’ mentioned in the motivation refers to.

The film depicts the brothers as rather simple-minded young men whose sense of reality has been skewed because of the ideas their father has imbued them with during their upbringing. Before embarking on their criminal careers, they spend their time reading comic papers and doing bodybuilding. They have no income and they live ostracised from society. Largely, this is related to the ideas their father has implanted in them, presented in the movie as ‘Laestadianism’. The fact that the father is violent and mentally ill, as well as a Laestadian in his own and the community’s opinion, contribute to the social exclusion of the brothers. Clearly, this is not a family background that provides the brothers with social and cultural capital that may help them to lead ‘normal’ lives. The theme of normality is addressed on several occasions both by the brothers themselves, who do not see themselves as ‘normal’, as well as by other characters who describe them as aberrant. There is nothing in the film indicating that the brothers have resource to an inner strength that may help them to get along. They steal money which they spend on fancy sun glasses, motor vehicles and a boat – in spite of there being no lake nearby where to keep a boat. This is one of the ‘comic’ elements, contributing to depicting the brothers as unrealistic and living in a reality of their own. Eventually, one of the brothers proclaims that he has recovered his faith. The ‘recovery’ is shown in an unintentionally parodic scene where he exposes his muscular torso in a waterfall at sunset. The characters are shown as immature young men with a mental disposition that makes life in the surrounding society hard. The exception is the youngest brother who seems to grasp that social integration is vital if the ostracisation is to come to an end. He is the only one of the brothers who has not quit school.

Despite the fact that the film was a success, there were also reviewers who reacted negatively. One Swedish reviewer questions the plausibility of

<sup>51</sup> Website of the Finnish Embassy in Bruxelles, “Stygga pojkar (Pahat pojat) segrar i Antwerpen”: ”Stygga pojkar är en rättfram, imponerande och varmhjärtad berättelse om bröderna som trots att de levat sin barndom i skuggan av en grym far inte mister hoppet utan finner inre styrka, vilket leder till att det onda också förädlas till något gott.”, <http://www.finlande.be/public/Print.aspx?contentid=93898&nodeid=37416&culture=...>, accessed 17 May 2016.



the brothers and their father being Laestadians, as they are never seen going to church and the father “fights, drinks alcohol and whores”.<sup>52</sup> Another Swedish reviewer characterises the film as an “exciting but fairly ordinary glimpse of our wild neighbours”.<sup>53</sup> This is a misleading characterisation, as the very point of the film is that the brothers and their father are not ‘normal’ citizens but strange people with odd ideas and habits. This theme is discussed by Sjö and Häger who conclude that the movie’s depiction of Laestadianism implies that the movement is connected with abnormality (Sjö & Häger 2015). However, this needs to be modified, as alternative interpretations are possible. Sjö and Häger suggest that: “An essential theme of the film and the way the film turns Laestadianism into something different is also money. Money seems to be the central value for the father [. . .].” (Sjö & Häger 2015, 31.) They go on to propose that “The father character in particular can be argued to normalise certain actions and to underline the difference between him and his faith in contrast to the rest of society.” (Ibid.).

An alternative interpretation is that the film does not depict Laestadianism *per se* but how the mentally ill father uses elements from Laestadianism for his own muddled and malevolent purposes. It is of importance that the film does not depict a Laestadian community, but a dysfunctional family with a mentally ill father who has possibly killed his wife. The othering in the film, which Sjö and Häger discuss, is related not only to the theme of Laestadianism and the particular values connected with the movement, but also to insanity. It is emphasised in the movie that the father is insane and that he is subjected to compulsory institutional care. There are several scenes demonstrating his obsessions and delusions. With this in mind, it is hard to see that the father normalises certain actions and that this underlines the difference between “him and his faith in contrast to the rest of society”, as Sjö and Häger suggest (Sjö & Häger 2015, 31). On the contrary, the father represents an unreliable character. By his words and actions he is depicted as a violent, mentally ill person who uses elements from Laestadianism when it suits him. Considering the focus on the father’s mental illness and the family’s isolation, the main theme of the film is how these factors result in social exclusion and anti-social behaviour. Thus, the ‘problem’ depicted in the film is not Laestadianism, but how the children of a dysfunctional family are abandoned by society and left at the mercy of a violent, abusive adult.

<sup>52</sup> The title of Jeanette Gentele’s review in *Svenska Dagbladet* is “Logiska brister tar över i finsk skräna” (Logical flaws take over in Finnish tall story); <http://www.svd.se/logiska-brister-tar-over-i-finsk-skrona-6NBT> accessed 17 May 2016.

<sup>53</sup> Jonas Cramby writing for *Expressen*: “En spännande, men ordinär inblick hos våra vilda grannar.”, <http://www.expressen.se/noje/recensioner/film/stygga-pojkar/> accessed 17 May 2016.



The depiction of the dysfunctional 'Laestadian' family of *Pahat pojat* reflects the suspicion with which Laestadianism has been seen in Finland. According to Talonen, the public image of Laestadianism has been shaped primarily by the public criticism that the SRK ("Suomen Rauhanyhdistysten Keskusyhdistys") received in the 1970s (Talonen 2001b, 54). SRK is an umbrella organisation for communities of Old Laestadians. The theme of Laestadianism as a problem in *Pahat pojat* reflects the negative view of the movement in Finnish society, which was enhanced by the negative publicity disseminated in national media in the 1970s.

### *Celebrating Laestadius and Laestadianism*

A positive view of the role of Laestadius in the Sámi and Finno-Ugric minorities' struggle was emphasised in the year 2000, when the 200th anniversary of Laestadius' birth was celebrated in the parts of the North Calotte affected by the Laestadian revivalist movement. In Norway, a postage stamp with a portrait of Laestadius was issued as a token of recognition.



Illustration 3: Postage stamp issued in 2000 in connection with the 200th anniversary of Laestadius' birth.

The portrait is framed by a Sámi noaidi drum, which is flanked by plants from the northern fauna, thus acknowledging Laestadius' Sámi background and his expertise in the fields of Sámi mythology and botany. The image reproduced is based on Giraud's portrait of Laestadius made during the *La Recherche expedition* in 1839.

In 2000, Lars Levi Laestadius was also commemorated through seminars and publications. In the publication *Vekkelse og vitenskap. Lars Levi Laestadius 200 år* ('Revivalism and Science: Lars Levi Laestadius 200 Years'), connections between Laestadianism, Sámi ethnicity and a Sámi cultural

landscape are highlighted in contributions discussing the appeal of Laestadianism to the Sámi in northern Norway (Drivenes and Niemi 2000, Nergård 2000).<sup>54</sup> In the Swedish Torne Valley, there were both seminars and events in honour of Laestadius. In this context, the Swedish Tornedalian writer, Bengt Pohjanen, wrote a text celebrating Lars Levi Laestadius in the form of an Orthodox Christian Akathistos hymn (Heith 2009, 355–359, Heith 2010b, 24–43). The text was performed in the Pajala Church as part of the celebrations and was later published in *På ett litet men vilar ett helt millenium. Andliga tal och privatfilosofisk mottagning* ('On a small but rests an entire millennium. Spiritual speeches and private philosophical consulting room'). This is a collection of texts about individuals and events that have shaped the cultural landscape of the Tornedalians in the Swedish-Finnish borderlands (Pohjanen 2000).

Pohjanen's *Lovsång till Lars Levi Laestadius* ('Song of praise to Lars Levi Laestadius') is provided with a subtitle: "Kiruna-Lasse in memoriam". 'Kiruna-Lasse' is the nickname of the skier Erik Larsson, born in 1912 in Kurravaara, ten kilometres north of Kiruna. He unexpectedly won a gold and a bronze medal at the Olympics in Garmisch Partenkirchen in 1936. When he was 26 years old, he became a Laestadian, left competitive skiing and became a miner. Pohjanen's text juxtaposes the reorientation of Kiruna-Lasse with the workings of Laestadianism and the significance of the movement's originator. While the classical, Byzantine Akathistos hymn is a song of praise to the Mother of God, Pohjanen's Tornedalian version praises the revivalist Laestadius. This involves a blending of the idiom of the Orthodox Christian hymn and the idiom of the Laestadian popular revivalism.

#### *Anticolonial Perspectives on Laestadius and Laestadianism*

The theme of the colonisation of northern Scandinavia has been approached from various theoretical points of departure. While Sámi researchers, such as Vuokko Hirvonen and Harald Gaski, have examined colonisation from the vantage point of indigenous studies, social scientists and cultural geographers have examined it from the perspective of rural studies and studies of areas seen as peripheries (Hirvonen 2008, Gaski 1987, Eriksson 2010). The theme of colonisation is furthermore addressed in art and imaginative writing, for example in texts by the Sámi writer and artist Nils-Aslak Valkeapää (1943–2001) and the contemporary Swedish Tornedalian writers Bengt Pohjanen and Mikael Niemi (Heith 2010, 335–350, 2012a, 71–85;

<sup>54</sup> Previously, a similar perspective was used in analyses of the appeal of Laestadianism to the Kven Finno-Ugric minority in northern Norway (Kristiansen 1998, 155–166, Sundelin 1998, 104–114).

2012b, 85–108, 2014, 41–58). The role of Laestadius in present-day anticolonial and postcolonial narratives varies widely. Among present-day Sámi artists in Sweden, there is a strong focus on an ongoing colonisation of Sápmi. Singer Sofia Jannok frequently addresses this theme in her performances, as do Katarina Pirak Sikku and Anders Sunna in their art (Heith 2015a, 2015b). Laestadius' commitment to improve the living conditions of the people of the north by taking a stand against widespread alcoholism is a theme in Mikael Gaup's movie, *The Kautokeino Rebellion*, from 2008. The depiction of co-existence found in Hjorth's altarpiece in Jukkasjärvi Church differs significantly from the narrative presented in this anticolonial movie in which the Laestadian revival among the Sámi is presented as one of the catalysts of the rebellion in 1852. The movie depicts an antagonistic relationship between the National Lutheran Norwegian Church and the rebelling Sámi. It is a historical fact that the minister Fredrik Waldemar Hvoslef in Kautokeino was physically attacked by Sámi rebels. In the movie, the Laestadian revivalism provides the spark which ignites the rebellion against the representatives of the colonising state – the minister of the National Lutheran Church, the local policeman and the tradesman.<sup>55</sup>

The movie is based on real events that occurred in 1852. In the movie, as well as in real life, the Norwegian state retaliated and the Sámi uprising was subdued. Two Sámi, Mons Somby and Aslak Hætta, were executed. The outline of these events has undergone transformations as it has become embedded in narratives coloured by anticolonial struggle among the Sámi. In Gaup's movie, the Laestadian movement functions as a positive, anticolonial force strengthening the Sámi in their struggle against the colonising oppressors. This perspective also prevails in Nelljet Zorgdrager's thesis from 1997, *De rettferdiges strid Kautokeino 1852. Samisk motstand mot norsk kolonialisme* ('The struggle of the righteous Kautokeino 1852. Sámi resistance against Norwegian colonialism'). Zorgdrager devotes an entire chapter to the life and ideas of Laestadius, highlighting the circumstance that while Laestadius' social work inspired appreciation, he also had adversaries who blamed him for encouraging disobedience and lack of respect for the authorities (Zorgdrager 1997, 203). Zorgdrager's thesis and Gaup's movie both contribute to the shaping of an anticolonial narrative in which Lars Levi Laestadius has a prominent role in the Sámi's struggle against colonial oppression.

<sup>55</sup> Gaup's depiction of the retaliation of the Norwegian authorities in connection with the Kautokeino uprising is embedded in a narrative of a conflict between a colonising power and the colonised Sámi. There are other accounts of the same incident that do not emphasise the authorities' retaliation as emphatically as Gaup does. Rolf Inge Larsen, for example, points out that the first retaliation came from Sámi and Laestadian people from the neighbouring village of Avzzi (Larsen 2012, 101).

### *Colonial Complicity*

One of the expressions of joy in Bengt Pohjanen's "Song of Praise to Lars Levi Laestadius", discussed above, praises Laestadius for selling skulls from Sámi burial sites in order to raise money: "Rejoice thou who sold plants and skulls to the rich in order to give food to the poor" (Pohjanen 2000, 118, *my translation*).<sup>56</sup> It is documented that Laestadius was involved in the selling of Sámi skulls and other specimens of human remains that had been plundered from graves and burial sites. In present-day Sámi activism and cultural mobilisation, this way of handling human remains is connected with colonial violence and dehumanisation. There is a struggle among the Sámi, as among other indigenous peoples, to retrieve human remains from museum collections and relocate them in their traditional homeland (Ojala 2016). This history has also become a theme of contemporary Sámi art (Heith 2015b). For example, the pain caused by race biologists is a prominent theme in works of the Swedish Sámi artist Katarina Pirak Sikku. Her exhibition *Nammaláhpán*, which was commissioned for the series *Eight Sámi Artists* at Bildmuséet in Umeå in 2014, explores whether sorrow can be inherited (Heith 2015a, 2015b). Anders Sunna, another Sámi artist and activist, also deals with this theme in the painting *Area Infected*, which was his contribution to Umeå's year as a European Capital of Culture in 2014 (Heith 2015b). In this work, Sunna uses images of skulls and pictures of Sámi people in race biological collections.

Race biology and colonialism are also central themes in Sunna's exhibition *Maadtoe*, which was shown at the *Museum of World Culture* in Gothenburg 2014–15. The title is a South Sámi term meaning 'origin'. On Sunna's webpage, *Maadtoe* is described as a project that is performed together with the documentary photographer Michiel Brouwer "about racial institution and its consequences, and racism" (Sunna 20 January 2016). *Maadtoe* as well as *Area Infected* use subject matter from Sámi history in general and Sunna's family history in particular (Heith 2015b). In the painting "Racial Comment" from *Maadtoe*, Anders Sunna makes explicit connections between Lars Levi Laestadius and Swedish race biology by integrating a modification of Giraud's portrait from 1839. The painting also contains a modification of an image of Herman Lundborg, Sweden's most (in)famous race biologist in the twentieth century.

Through the use of the portraits of Laestadius and Lundborg, "Racial Comment" emphasises the theme of colonial complicity. Lundborg was an officially sanctioned scientist who came from the colonial centre to Sápmi

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<sup>56</sup> "Gläd dig, som sålde växter och kranier till de rika för att ge de fattiga mat" (Pohjanen 2000, 118).



Illustration 4: Anders Sunna working on the painting "Racial Comment".

to document Sámi and Finnish 'racial characters'. They were distinguished from the 'Nordic racial character', the term Lundborg used to denominate 'ethnic Swedes'. Although Laestadius had long since passed away when Lundborg came to Sápmi, Sunna places him in a narrative about colonial complicity as a person who contributed to Swedish race biology and exam-



inations of Sámi people.<sup>57</sup> The Swedish Sámi poet Rose-Marie Huuva also emphasises that Lars Levi Laestadius played a central role in the shaping of a traumatising Sámi history through his collaboration with race biologists. In the bilingual volume *Viidát – divttat Sámis/Vidd – dikter från Sápmi*, Huuva explicitly mentions Laestadius: “Laestadius’ merchandise/yield good proceeds/a high market value//sometimes he gets/special orders/a race scientist asks for/the skull of a/Sámi baby/” (Huuva 2006, 23, my translation).<sup>58</sup>

One of the scientists Laestadius was in touch with was Anders Retzius (1796–1860), a pioneer in the field of anthropological race classification. Various studies confirm that Laestadius was involved in the plundering of Sámi burial sites. From a present-day standpoint, he had an extremely callous view of skull collecting (Broberg 1982, 55, Franzén 1973, 212–215, Lundmark 2010, 145–147).<sup>59</sup> Franzén draws the conclusion that the issue of collecting skulls and human remains was not particularly controversial during Laestadius’ lifetime, since Laestadius was open about his grave plundering, making no attempts to hide information about his expeditions and endeavours.<sup>60</sup> Mitigating interpretations of the implications of taking human remains from burial sites are in stark contrast to contemporary Sámi responses. Ojala points out that the term ‘collect’ in itself is inappropriate, since skulls and body parts were stolen, often in secret and against the will of the local population (Ojala 2016). The shift in attitudes is also reflected in a recent study about the historical relationships between the National Lutheran Swedish Church and the Sámi (Lindmark & Sundström eds. 2016).

<sup>57</sup> In an e-mail conversation, Sunna explicitly wrote that he wanted to establish a connection between Lundborg’s race biological research and the minister Laestadius representing the National Lutheran Swedish Church. Sunna emphasised that Laestadius contributed to colonialism by showing and plundering Sámi burial sites, and by enforcing Christianity upon the Sámi (Heith 2015d).

<sup>58</sup> “Laestadius varor/har god avsättning/högt saluvärde//ibland får han/särskilda beställningar/en rasforskare begär/kraniet av ett/samiskt spädbarn/” (Huuva 2006, 23).

<sup>59</sup> Physicians and ministers seem to have been the most active suppliers of skulls to scientists (Lundmark 2010, 145). Broberg, Franzén and Lundmark all comment on Laestadius’ insensitive and callous manner of discussing the pursuit of skulls, documented in letters, his personal diary and newspaper articles (Broberg 1982, 55, Franzén 1973, 212–214, Lundmark 2010, 146–147). On one occasion, Laestadius complains in a letter about the difficulties of getting a skull from a newborn child and he speculates about whether the physician in Haparanda might cut the head off a buried infant. It is likely that this is the incident Huuva refers to in her poem quoted above (also see Huuva 2006, 23–24).

<sup>60</sup> As a comparison, Franzén mentions that mass graves around Kalmar in south-eastern Sweden were commercially exploited in the 1830s and that the director of finances, Fröberg, made a fortune by producing bone meal from thousands of Swedish and Danish skeletons. This made him both rich and esteemed (Franzén 1973, 214).

*Summing Up: New Sámi Representations Presenting Laestadianism as a Radical Force, and Laestadius as an Accomplice of Colonialism*

As shown in the above analysis of Charles Giraud's drawing from 1839 and François Auguste Biard's painting "The Minister Laestadius preaching" from 1840, Laestadius was embedded in diverse narratives even during his lifetime. In contrast to Biard's painting, Bror Hjorth's altarpiece places Laestadius in a visual narrative about spirituality and exchange between religious traditions, thus producing a narrative of syncretisation. The Sámi woman, Milla Clementsdotter, plays a central role in this narrative. Contradicting this story of a woman's importance for Laestadius' spiritual reorientation, feminist narratives from the 1970s onwards tend to portray Laestadianism as patriarchal and misogynist, leaving little influence to women. However, there are also studies that highlight the central role of women in Laestadianism (Nilsson 1988, Palo ed. 2007).

Today, the tradition of producing knowledge in the geographical and cultural centres of the nation state is challenged by anticolonial and postcolonial counter-narratives, as a result of which Laestadius and his followers may be transformed from uncivilised alien elements within the nation into bearers of local culture, history and traditions, as exemplified by the celebrations in 2000. There are earlier studies of Laestadianism that highlight the role of the movement in the creation of ethnic identities in opposition to Swedish and Norwegian nation-building. However, it is a new trend that the Sámi and the Tornedalian minorities in Sweden produce anti-colonial and postcolonial representations of Laestadius and Laestadianism as a response to their own history of colonial subjugation. Yet, there is no uniform view of the man or the movement. As the Sámi director Gaup's movie *The Kautokeino Rebellion* shows, Laestadianism may be represented as a radical force in an anticolonial struggle. As a contrast to this, the Sámi artist Sunna's painting "Racial Comment" represents the initiator of the movement, Lars Levi Laestadius, as an accomplice in the exercise of colonial violence.

## Sara Ranta-Rönnlund's Contribution to Sámi Reminiscence Literature: Memories of Laestadianism

Sara Ranta-Rönnlund was born in 1903 in the Sámi village of Kaalasvuoma, Årosjåkk, in the municipality of Kiruna in northern Sweden and died in Uppsala in 1979.<sup>61</sup> She was raised in a nomadic reindeer-herding family. Both her parents and grandparents were devout Laestadians. She learnt to speak and write in Swedish on her own, and she also spoke Finnish and Sámi. She had hardly any formal education – in her first reminiscence book *Nådevalpar. Berättelser om nomader och nybyggare i norr* ('Puppies of mercy. Narratives about nomads and settlers in the north', 1971), she mentions that she went to a summer school for a short period (*vistesskola*).<sup>62</sup> Vuokko Hirvonen points out that Sara Ranta-Rönnlund was the first Sámi woman author writing reminiscence literature (Hirvonen 2008, 86). In Ranta-Rönnlund's third book, *Njoalpas söner. Berättelser om dagligt liv i norr* ('The sons of Njoalpa. Narratives about daily life in the north', 1973), she devotes a chapter to reminiscences of her schooling, which took place during six summers when the children of her settlement went to a school in a Sámi cot. However, as her mother wanted her to help with sewing chores at home, her attendance was sporadic. Today this form of school is seen as segregatory by representatives of the Sámi Council in Sweden, and this negative view also permeates Sara Ranta-Rönnlund's chapter "Vistesskolan" in *Njoalpas söner* (Ranta-Rönnlund 1973, 21–32). In a report about Sámi educational politics, the Sámi Council emphasises that the Swedish system with separate schools for the children of the reindeer-herding Sámi was aimed at preserving a nomadic lifestyle by preventing the Sámi from becoming integrated into the modern society.<sup>63</sup> The education provided for children of nomadic reindeer-herding Sámi was not as comprehensive as that offered by the mandatory elementary school, as decision makers were of the opinion that the Sámi children who were supposed to preserve a traditional lifestyle as reindeer-herders did not need the same education as other Swedish children (Oscarsson 2016).

<sup>61</sup> Today the name 'Kaalasvuoma' has been replaced with 'Laevas'.

<sup>62</sup> Vuokko Hirvonen discusses Sámi reminiscence literature in her thesis about Sámi women's path to authorship in the section "The oral tradition evolves into writing", emphasising that this genre is based on oral discourse (Hirvonen 2008, 83).

<sup>63</sup> Samisk utbildningspolitik – en introduktion, [https://www.sametinget.se/31895?file\\_id=1](https://www.sametinget.se/31895?file_id=1), p. 5, accessed 22 February 2016.



Sara Ranta-Rönnlund had an unsentimental view on the nomadic lifestyle she describes in her four books, which were all published in the 1970s. She married for the first time in 1926 and lived for eleven years in the Laestadian villages of Nilivaara and Dokkas. The marriage was dissolved and she remarried in 1947 and settled in Gällivare. She gave birth to nine children, two of whom died at infancy. Her second husband died in 1953 and in 1958 she moved with her youngest child to Uppsala where two of her sons were studying. Years of hard work followed. Sara Ranta-Rönnlund worked as a cleaning woman, a maid and a factory worker. A change occurred in her life when she started cleaning at Uppsala University, where she met Professor Björn Collinder at the Department of Finno-Ugric languages. Collinder, whose field of research was Sámi studies, encouraged Sara Ranta-Rönnlund to write down her stories, and later he helped her to get in touch with a publisher. She started writing at nights after she had finished work. After her retirement, she made her debut as a writer at the age of 68.

Altogether, Sara Ranta-Rönnlund wrote four books with reminiscences from her childhood and youth. The books include hearsay and tall stories about the life of Sámi people and settlers in Swedish Lapland. All of them have a first-person narrator, Sara Ranta-Rönnlund, who narrates in much the same fashion as in traditional oral narration – a mode with a long history in Sámi society. Events are not told chronologically – the books consist of episodic chapters that overlap at times. More than once, the narrator refers to previous books where she has written about the same person or event which she returns to in later books. In the first one, she frequently refers to the oral tradition and the role of narrative in the Sámi society she grew up in.

All of Sara Ranta-Rönnlund's books are published in Swedish by Askild & Kärnekull, a publishing house located in Stockholm. She became a quite well-known figure in the Swedish literary field as a writer with a knowledge about the life of the Sámi and settlers in northern Sweden, which was unknown to many Swedes. Her early life among reindeer-herding Sámi proved an asset providing her with themes, experiences and stories to transform into literature. However, there are personal experiences she chose not to write about. In the description of her literary works in a Swedish encyclopaedia, her narrative style is characterised as luxuriant and expressive with a humorous undertone (*Svenskt Biografiskt Lexikon*).<sup>64</sup> And this is true, the narrative mode is bold-hearted, implicitly portraying the narrator Sara Ranta-Rönnlund as a capable, clear-sighted and rational individual who sees

<sup>64</sup> "Boken [*Nådevalpar*] blev den första delen i en svit om fyra, präglad av en frodig och målande berättarkonst med en humoristisk underton." (Lundmark 1995–1997; <http://sok.riksarkivet.se/sbl/artikel/7541>; accessed 16 February 2016).

through superstitions and who does not hesitate to speak up against intolerance and bullying. However, a diametrically different portrait is presented in a book by Sara Ranta-Rönnlund's daughter, Eileen Rönnlund Holmgren, entitled *Måndagar med Kerstin* ('Mondays with Kerstin') from 2012. This is also an autobiographical book with reminiscences from the author's childhood.

Eileen Rönnlund Holmgren is Sara Ranta-Rönnlund's youngest child, born in her second marriage. When she was five, her father died and a life of misery began as her mother's first husband started to harass the family. The book tells the story about how Sara Ranta-Rönnlund left her first husband after having been locked in a small cellar without food and water for three days when she was eight months pregnant. The children were beaten brutally and they saw their mother lying in her own blood on the kitchen floor. At times, the husband was imprisoned for illicit distilling and for causing grievous bodily harm. When Eileen was 11 years old, she moved with her mother to Uppsala and the harassment they had experienced came to an end. The daughter's book is based on these traumatic experiences and repressed memories which are confronted during sessions with her therapist Kerstin. In this book the mother is depicted as the victim of a brutal, bullying man.

While the narrative mode of Eileen Rönnlund Holmgren is that of tragedy, Sara Ranta-Rönnlund's own books have a humorous tone. In the preface of *Nådevalpar* the ethnographer Ernst Manker sets the tone when characterising Sara Ranta-Rönnlund as an independent, strong person who in her two marriages "gave birth to and happily raised a large flock of children" (Manker 1971, 5, my translation).<sup>65</sup> Sara Ranta-Rönnlund's first marriage is mentioned several times in the second book, *Nåjder*, but there are no comments about any problems or difficulties, only that her life as a nomad ended when she married and settled with her husband in the village of Nilivaara in 1927.

Vuokko Hirvonen, professor of Sámi literature, emphasises that there is a strong gender perspective in the books of Sara Ranta-Rönnlund:

Of the authors of reminiscence literature, only Sara Ranta-Rönnlund takes a strong stand on the position of reindeer-herding women in her writing. In her works [- -] she depicts the burdensome physical and social life of Sámi women. On the basis of the opinions expressed in these books, the work and thoughts of Sara Ranta-Rönnlund can be described as showing women's consciousness and even feminist consciousness to some extent, as she also tried to change and break down the hierarchies between the genders. (Hirvonen 2008, 177)

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<sup>65</sup> "födde och lyckligen fostrade en stor skara barn." (Manker 1971, 5.)

The gender perspective in Sara Ranta-Rönnlund's books makes them different from other Sámi reminiscence literature. It also explains why her books are critical of elements in traditional Sámi life which made the lives of women hard. Ranta-Rönnlund's sensitivity to issues of gender also constitute a backdrop for her critical views on patriarchal structures within the Sámi society, not least within Laestadian communities (see Hirvonen 2008, 181).

Sara Ranta-Rönnlund did not hesitate to criticise the old nomadic life-style, and nostalgic, romanticising descriptions of the traditional life-style of the Sámi reindeer-herders. Hardships, child mortality, poverty, superstition and bullying preachers are themes addressed in her books. She depicts social inequality, bad living conditions, poor health and patriarchal gender structures. Modern life is not depicted as a threat, but as an opportunity for the Sámi to improve their lives. The chapter "Riklappar och tjänare" ('Rich Lapps and servants', my translation)<sup>66</sup> portrays life among the reindeer-herding Sámi in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century as unequal, both from a gender perspective and a perspective that takes social stratification into consideration. This evaluation, made by an individual who has first-hand knowledge and experience of life in a nomadic reindeer-herding community, contrasts against ideas of influential persons who contributed to a segregation of the nomadic Sámi from modern society, claiming that the Sámi would not survive in the modern world (Oscarsson 2016). When comparing this system based on old traditions to life in modern Sweden, the narrator concludes that life among the Sámi in the old times in many ways resembles that of primitive peoples where the division of labour is unequal:

When I look back upon my youth as a nomad, certain strange cultures come to mind, where women do most of the hard work and where men are leading a comfortable life, and I find that the Lapps of the old times in many ways resemble these primitive peoples where the work load is distributed in such a wrong way, according to our Swedish way of seeing things. (Ranta-Rönnlund 1971, 174, my translation).<sup>67</sup>

As the quote indicates, the narrator does not see herself as one of the 'backward Lapps' but as a modern Swede, and this explains her often critical per-

<sup>66</sup> Sara Ranta-Rönnlund uses the term "Lapp" (Lapp) which today is considered pejorative. It has been replaced by the term "Sámi". I use the term "Lapp" when quoting Sara Ranta-Rönnlund, as it is the term she uses herself.

<sup>67</sup> "När jag ser tillbaka på min ungdom som nomad, kommer jag att tänka på vissa främmande kulturer, där kvinnorna gör det mesta grovarbetet och där männen är bekväma av sig, och jag finner, att äldre tiders lappar i många stycken påminner om dessa primitiva folkslag, där arbetsbördan fördelas så felaktigt, enligt vårt svenska betraktelsesätt." (Ranta-Rönnlund 1971, 174).

spective on traditional Sámi society. In her second book, *Nåjder. Berättelser om trollkarlar och trolldom i sameland* ('Shamans. Narratives about magicians and magic in the land of the Sámi', 1972)<sup>68</sup>, contrasts are established between the healing and care provided by shamans, wise men and women and various people believed to have supernatural powers on the one hand, and modern health care on the other. It is clear that the narrator views the old traditions with scepticism. There are frequent comments in the reminiscences on her attempts to dissuade the traditional healers from practising their healing methods (Ranta-Rönnlund 1972). Sara Ranta-Rönnlund herself, who had some training in health care, is clearly in favour of hygiene and modern forms of treatment.

Modern health-care and education are repeatedly foregrounded as being necessary for improving living-conditions. The narrator's belief in modern health care and her attempts to spread the knowledge she herself had obtained is highlighted as a reason why she was frozen out from the community of reindeer-herders she lived with before she settled down in a village and left the nomadic life style. Sara Ranta-Rönnlund actually uses the term "frozen out" when she describes her relationship to her fellow Sámi (Ranta-Rönnlund 1978, 11). Her own contacts with the majority society are mentioned as the reason behind this conflict:

But I had spent far too much time in the company of Swedes and other settlers. And my contacts with modern medicine, soap, tooth paste and a number of other new ideas were one of several reasons why I eventually fell out with both my own family and a number of other people in the Lappish society. (Ranta-Rönnlund 1978, 44–45, my translation)<sup>69</sup>

The livelihood gained from reindeer-herding is described as insecure due to variations in the size of the herd beyond the control of the owner, and the maintenance of the herd is portrayed as extremely hard work causing bad health and even death. When describing the conditions of the not so wealthy Sámi working for rich reindeer-herders as slave-like, Sara Ranta-Rönnlund mentions the son of a friend of the family who in spite of being a strong lad did not survive the chasing of runaway reindeer while carrying heavy

<sup>68</sup> *Noaidi*, Swedish *nåjd*, is the Sámi word for shaman. The *noaidi* was the most important person in the ancient Sámi religion.

<sup>69</sup> "Men jag hade umgåtts alldeles för mycket med svenskar och andra bofasta, och mina kontakter med modern läkekonst, med tvål, tandkräm och diverse andra nya idéer var en av flera orsaker till att jag så småningom kom på kant både med den egna familjen och med diverse andra personer inom det lapska samhället." (Ranta-Rönnlund 1978, 44–45.)

packing. His lungs burst and the young man died in the prime of his life as a lung patient (Ranta-Rönnlund 1971, 180).

While Ranta-Rönnlund's description of life among reindeer-herding Sámi in the old times is negatively inflected, she also describes positive examples of people who manage to improve their living-conditions by adapting to modern society. One such example is the reindeer-herder Tomas Nilsson Skum who starts combining reindeer-herding with the cultivation of land in order to be able to feed his large family also at times when the income from reindeer-herding is insufficient (Ranta-Rönnlund 1971, 191–198). The success of this man is described as being the result of his capacity to learn about agriculture from the settlers and to use his new knowledge in practice. Thus, Ranta-Rönnlund describes a transfer of knowledge by which the indigenous Sámi may benefit from the expertise of people from the majority society who have come to live in Lappland. This is a very different conception of the implications of the colonisation of the north, compared to anticolonial narratives that conceive of the newcomers as intruders complicit with colonialism (Gaski 1987). It is also a negation of the Swedish policies which aimed at preventing the nomadic Sámi from changing their traditional lifestyle. Vitalis Karnell, who formulated the sentence “Lapp shall remain Lapp”, believed that the nomadic lifestyle was a prerequisite for the survival of the Sámi (Oscarsson 2016, 950). This idea also entails that Sámi were not to keep livestock or engage in agriculture, as that was not part of their traditional life style. Ranta-Rönnlund, on the other hand, presents adaptations to the settlers' way of life as a way for the nomadic Sámi to survive in the face of the uncertainty of the outcome of reindeer-herding.

In Norway, anticolonial currents among the Sámi influenced Sámi activism and politics from the 1970s onwards (Heith 2010, Heith 2014). Today, Sámi singer Sofia Jannok, painters Katarina Pirak Sikku and Anders Sunna, as well as artist Maxida Mäarak in Sweden, use their art as a platform for decolonisation and anticolonial struggle (Heith 2015b, Felander 2016). This indicates that there are generational differences when it comes to the issue of narrating the history of the Sámi. In her study of Sámi women's path to authorship, Hirvonen places Ranta-Rönnlund in the generation of grandmothers (Hirvonen 2008, 178, 81 ff.). The term “grandmothers” refers to the “second generation of Sámi women authors [. . .] born between 1900 and 1940” (Hirvonen 2008, 81). When Sara Ranta-Rönnlund's books were published in the 1970s, postcolonial studies and theory were not established in Sweden. Today the situation is different and studies of colonial complicity and postcolonialism in the Nordic countries have been gaining ground for some decades (Hirvonen 2008, Keskinen et al. eds. 2009, Loftsdóttir & Jensen eds. 2012). There is also a consciousness among Sámi activists in Sweden

that Sápmi has been colonised and that the Sámi have been treated unjustly.

As opposed to present-day Sámi artists thematising negative effects of the colonisation of Sápmi, Ranta-Rönnlund does not deal with themes like land loss or racism. Effects of Swedish race biology and compulsory transfers of Sámi from their traditional lands are themes explored for example by Katarina Pirak Sikku in the 2014 exhibition *Nammaláhpán* shown at Bildmuseet in Umeå when Umeå was a European Capital of Culture (Heith 2015a, Heith 2015b). In the work “Map of Memories”, which is part of *Nammaláhpán*, Pirak Sikku uses her own family history to highlight injustices on the part of the Swedish state towards the Sámi. The work addresses the theme of how the artist’s family members had to leave their lands when the state decided to dam rivers for the purpose of generating electricity in hydro-electric power plants (Heith 2015a, 77). This kind of appropriation of lands traditionally used by indigenous peoples is characteristic of a colonial paradigm whereby the lands and natural resources traditionally used by indigenous peoples have been taken over by the state (Smith 2008). This practice is strongly criticised by organisations promoting the rights of indigenous peoples. One aim for today’s activists is that Sweden should ratify the 1989 ILO Convention which guarantees the rights of indigenous peoples. So far, the Swedish government has not agreed to do so (Heith *ibid.*).

Sara Ranta-Rönnlund mentions visits by race biologists to Lapland and her own amicable relationship with Herman Lundborg, who became the director of the Swedish State Institute for Race Biology (Ranta-Rönnlund 1971, 81–84).<sup>70</sup> But she does not mention that Swedish race biology was, and still remains, a traumatic experience for the Sámi who were examined, as well as for their descendants living with painful memories. This issue is a major theme of Katarina Pirak Sikku’s exhibition *Nammaláhpán*, which poses the question whether sorrow can be inherited. The site where Sara Ranta-Rönnlund was raised, Årosjokk in Kaalasvuoma Sámi village, was visited by Herman Lundborg during the first phase of his studies when he examined Sámi people in 1913–1917. Following Maja Hagerman, Lundborg was helped by the vicar of Vittangi who gave him advice on how to get access to Sámi children whom he could examine. In Hagerman’s narrative, the vicar,

<sup>70</sup> Sara Ranta-Rönnlund mentions that Lundborg was not liked by everybody, but she does not herself express any negative feelings towards him. The chapter called “Rasbiologen” (‘The race biologist’) in *Nådevalpar* begins with a recollection of how Lundborg did the author a favour by writing out a prescription for a medicine (Ranta-Rönnlund 1971, 81). Oscarsson highlights that Lundborg was supported and helped by people connected to the Church. For example, Georg Bergfors, headmaster of the nomad school seminar in Vittangi, saw to it that local teachers assisted Lundborg in his examinations of Sámi children in northern Sweden (Oscarsson 2016, 952).

having a central position in the administration of local education, was a valuable helper who made Lundborg's work possible. Hagerman also places Lundborg in a narrative about racialisation and racism aimed at proving that the Sámi were inferior to the 'Nordic racial character' (Hagerman 2016, 961–989). The fact that Sara Ranta-Rönnlund does not mention Swedish race biology as part of a traumatising Sámi history, nor the issue of land loss, indicates that she does not wish to present a narrative of colonisation. This is in stark contrast both to the Sámi activism that gained momentum in the 1970s and today's activism aimed at decolonisation and the promotion of the Sámi's rights to their traditional land.

One of Sara Ranta-Rönnlund's predecessors in the genre of writing reminiscence literature, Johan Turi (1854–1936) was encouraged to write and publish by the Danish artist Emilie Demant-Hatt. Among the illustrations in Ranta-Rönnlund's *Nådevalpar* there are two photographs of Turi: a portrait by the mountain photographer Borg Mesch and a photograph showing Turi receiving the King's Gold Medal on his 80<sup>th</sup> birthday in Jukkasjärvi.<sup>71</sup> The caption to the portrait reads "Sámi author Johan Turi" (my translation). Interestingly, the word "Sámi" is used here and not "Lapp". Thus, a distinction is made between a distinguished Sámi who wrote and illustrated a pioneering book on the one hand, and alphabetic, backward Sámi who are referred to by the pejorative term "Lapps" on the other. However, Sara Ranta-Rönnlund's portrait of Turi is somewhat ambiguous. In her third book, *Njoalpas söner*, she portrays him in a chapter entitled "Bröderna Turi" ('The Turi brothers', Ranta-Rönnlund 1973, 157–166). The chapter describes Johan Turi in a rather irreverent tone, highlighting that he was seen as a failure by other nomadic reindeer-herders because he was not interested in reindeer-herding and eventually lost his animals and fortune. She also foregrounds that while Turi had a success as a writer and artist among educated people living far from northern Sweden, his work was not appreciated among the Sámi themselves at the time. In this chapter, the epithet "lappmannen" (the Lapp man) is used (Ranta-Rönnlund 1973, 157). Turi is described as a man who rather spent time in the town of Kiruna than in the mountains, and the writing of the book that later made him famous is described as a process that gave rise to envy among other Sámi people, who contested that Turi was qualified as a narrator of Sámi life and traditions which he himself did not cherish (op. cit. 164).

<sup>71</sup> The pages with illustrations do not have page numbers, but the portrait covers a page just before page 145 and the photo of the ceremony in Jukkasjärvi is included in a section with pictures inserted between page 224 and 225.



There is a considerable difference between the role attributed to Turi in later Sámi literary histories and Ranta-Rönnlund's reminiscences depicting jealousy and lack of interest in Turi's literary work from the part of other Sámi. The books from the 1970s indicate that Sara Ranta-Rönnlund had no enthusiasm for the Sámi cultural mobilisation, which included leading figures such as Nils-Aslak Valkeapää, who was engaged in the international movement of indigenous peoples (Heith 2010, Heith 2014).<sup>72</sup> Instead endeavours to highlight injustices towards the Sámi and the idea that their land has been colonised are ridiculed. In the chapter "Lappar och svenskar. Liknelsen om kråkan och räven" ('Lapps and Swedes. The simile about the crow and the fox') in her last book, *Sist i rajden* ('The last one in the reindeer caravan. Narratives of a breakup', 1978), people who are engaged in the struggle of the Native Americans and the Sámi in Sweden are called *tofsromantiker* ('pompom romantics'), a reference to the colourful pompons on traditional Sámi headgear (Ranta-Rönnlund 1978, 106–109): "The pompom romantics see the Lapps as a subjugated people, in the process of being forcefully assimilated into Swedish society. But Lapps in general do not feel particularly oppressed or threatened." (Ranta-Rönnlund 1978, 107.)<sup>73</sup> This opinion is not in line with that of the Sámi, who under the impact of the international movement of indigenous peoples and postcolonial currents had started to make their voices heard, claiming that their traditional homeland Sápmi had been taken from them when the northern parts of Norway, Sweden and Finland were colonised by settlers, merchants and representatives of the established Church from the south (Magga 1985). The variations in the view of Sámi culture and traditions expressed by Sara Ranta-Rönnlund on the one hand, and Sámi activists like Nils-Aslak Valkeapää on the other, point to a negotiation of cultural values and meaning relating to Sámi ethnicity that was enhanced in the 1970s and 80s.

Another Sámi who became a well-known cultural persona, the artist Nils Nilsson Skum, is also referred to as a "Sámi" painter in *Nådevalpar*.<sup>74</sup> In the subsequent books, there are numerous rather disapproving references to him as a playboy and a person more interested in pleasure than in

<sup>72</sup> In 1975 the World Council of Indigenous Peoples (WCIP) was founded in Port Alberni, Canada. Among the founders were Sámi from Sweden, Finland and Norway (Solbakk 2006, 248). A WCIP conference took place in Kiruna, Sweden, in 1977.

<sup>73</sup> "Tofsromantikerna uppfattar lapparna som ett förtryckt folk, som håller på att tvångsasimileras i det svenska samhället. Men lapparna i allmänhet känner sig inte så förtryckta och hotade." (Ranta-Rönnlund 1978, 107.)

<sup>74</sup> The caption to a photograph by Borg Mesch of the artist and his wife just before page 81 reads: "Sámi painter Nils Nilsson Skum and his wife Elli-Marja, née Kuhmunen" (my translation).



hard work as a reindeer-herder. The characterisations reflect the fact that Sara Ranta-Rönnlund is not an objective narrator. Her sympathies and antipathies are explicitly expressed. While her criticism of patriarchal gender structures are in line with today's notions about gender equality, her lack of sympathy for the Sámi cultural mobilisation and her often negative views on the Sámi make her a potentially controversial figure among Sámis intent on decolonisation and the shaping of positive Sámi self-images and counter-narratives.

The term *lapp*, which Ranta-Rönnlund uses without hesitation, reflects a phase when it was not seen as problematic that the Sámi were described by outsiders. *The Saami: A Cultural Encyclopedia* defines the term *Lapp* as "the old exonym (name given by others) of the Saami." (Kulonen, Seurajärvi-Kari & Pulkkinen 2005, 184). Today this "name given by others" is rejected by the Sámi and seen as pejorative. The issue of naming is of major importance in indigenous and post-colonial studies, as the rejection of the colonisers' terminology is a conscious strategy aimed at decolonisation (Smith 2008). Sara Ranta-Rönnlund's reminiscences are nostalgic in the sense that they depict the past. However, they are not nostalgic in the sense that the past is idealised. Rather, the past is represented as a negative contrast to the present time of modernity. This is reflected in the often negative views on 'the Lapps' as representatives of backwardness, views that are at odds with the anticolonial cultural mobilisation of the 1970s onwards, aimed at the decolonisation of the minds of Sámi people who were othered and marginalised in the building of the modern Swedish welfare state (Heith 2010, Heith 2014).

In 1910, Turi's book *Muittalus samid birra*, was published<sup>75</sup> and the same year a Danish translation by Emilie Demant-Hatt appeared. Turid's book is the first printed book in a Sámi language, written by a Sámi writer about Sámi life (Gaski 1998, 22). *Muittalus samid birra* is illustrated with the writer's own drawings, while Sara Ranta-Rönnlund's books are illustrated with photographs mostly taken by the well-known photographer Borg Mesch and Ossian Elgström, ethnographer, author and artist. Both Borg Mesch and Elgström travelled in Lapland, documenting the lives of the Sámi and the settlers. From the vantage point of indigenous studies and anti-colonial studies, they both represent outsiders documenting the Sámi for the benefit, education or amusement of the majority society. The cover picture of Sara Ranta-Rönnlund's *Nådevalpar* is a reproduction of Ossian Elgström's painting *Liikutuksia*, a Finnish term which literally means "movements". In a Laestadian context, the term is used to denominate the ecstatic move-

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<sup>75</sup> In 1966 an English translation was published, *Turi's Book of Lapland*.

ments and the speaking in tongues of the congregation at prayer meetings.

Through her choice of title and cover picture, Sara Ranta-Rönnlund explicitly points to Laestadianism being a central theme of her first book. While both text and illustrations present a Sámi insider perspective in Turi's book, the point of view is more complex in Sara Ranta-Rönnlund's books, which all are written in Swedish and illustrated with photographs taken by a photographer and an ethnographer from a majority background. On a couple of occasions, it is mentioned in captions to photographs by Borg Mesch that the people who were portrayed tried to avoid being photographed as their religion considered it to be a sin. In *Nådevalpar* there is a photograph of some Sámi people in a mountain landscape with a screen of smoke behind them. The caption reads: "According to Borg Mesch, the smoke in this picture came from a fire that the Lapps had lit in order to prevent Mesch from taking a photo of them. As we know, depicting a person was a serious sin". (Ranta-Rönnlund 1971, photo after page 176, my translation).<sup>76</sup> The same kind of reluctance to be photographed is commented on in a caption to a photo in the fourth book, *Sist i rajden*. The caption to a photograph by Borg Mesch from a "Lapp meeting" reads: "Large Lapp meeting in Jukkasjärvi in 1905. The reason why the woman in the foreground covers her face is probably that among the western Laestadians it was considered to be a serious sin to allow oneself to be depicted." (Ranta-Rönnlund 1978, photo after page 48, my translation).<sup>77</sup> There are no comments on any ethical considerations concerning the documentation of people by outsiders from the majority society without the consent of the people who were being documented.

In today's discussion of research ethics in Indigenous Studies and in international regulations of indigenous peoples' right to their own culture, great importance is attached to the issue of consent (cf. Drugge 2016, Ojala 2016, 1015). Apparently, Borg Mesch had no hesitation in photographing people who did not wish to be photographed, and disseminating the images without the permission of the people photographed. With this in mind, Borg Mesch's photos represent a colonising practice whereby a weaker group, the Sámi, are documented by outsiders who disseminated their documentation in locations at a distance from the peripheries of modernity that they visited. It is not entirely clear what Sara Ranta-Rönnlund thought

<sup>76</sup> "Enligt Borg Mesch kom röken på denna bild från en eld som lapparna anlade för att hindra Mesch från att fotografera dem. Avbildning av människan var ju en svår synd." (Ranta-Rönnlund 1971, after p. 176.)

<sup>77</sup> "Stort lappmöte i Jukkasjärvi 1905. Att kvinnan i förgrunden döljer ansiktet beror förmodligen på att det bland västlaestadianerna ansågs vara en svår synd att låta avbildas sig." (Ranta-Rönnlund 1978, after p. 48.)

about this practice, but the fact that she does not hesitate to disseminate the images in her own narrative about connections between backwardness and Laestadianism indicates that to her these photos are examples of how religion interconnects with curious beliefs and customs.

Ranta-Rönnlund's books that followed her debut, namely *Nåjder. Berättelser om trollkarlar och trolldom i sameland*, *Njoalpas söner. Berättelser om dagligt liv i norr* and *Sist i rajden. Berättelser om ett uppbrott* do not evoke Laestadianism in the same explicit manner as the first book, and as their titles indicate, the focus is different. The two books following the debut also have cover pictures by Ossian Elgström, while the last one has a photograph by Jan Bohman on its cover, showing a Sámi in traditional costume walking in front of a caravan of reindeer pulling sleighs, that is a traditional Sámi "rajd", a form of transportation which by and by disappeared as a modern way of life spread. This breakup from an old lifestyle is alluded to in the subtitle – "Narratives of a breakup". In Ranta-Rönnlund's account, this breakup stands for a form of liberation and integration into modern society. This may be compared to the narrative of the perils of leaving a traditional way of nomadic life as reindeer-herders established by bishop Bergqvist, nomad school inspector Karnell and vicar and headmaster Bergfors, who all supported the notion that the nomadic Sámi should be separated from the modern society. As a contrast, Ranta-Rönnlund's narrative is a negation of the discourse of 'Lapp shall remain Lapp' promoted by Bergqvist, Karnell and Bergfors (cf. Oscarsson 2016).

Turi's and Ranta-Rönnlund's reminiscence books both relate to the Sámi oral tradition and they are both *insider narratives* in the sense that both authors are Sámi themselves and familiar with the life of reindeer-herding Sámi. However, there are also differences between their works. As mentioned above, Ranta-Rönnlund uses photographs as illustrations while Turi uses his own drawings. While Turi's book has an anticolonial stance directed against the colonisation of Sápmi (see Gaski 1998, 24), Ranta-Rönnlund depicts interdependence and amicable relationships between the Sámi and the settlers. Neither does Ranta-Rönnlund depict any antagonism between Sámi people and representatives of modern science travelling to Lappland in order to examine the Sámi. In the chapter "Rasbiologen" ('The race biologist') she describes the visits of the director of the Swedish State Institute for race biology, Herman Lundborg, to Sámi villages before and after World War I. The rumours among the children about what would happen at the examinations are commented on, and it is mentioned that the small children were rather frightened. But she concludes that when the examination was over after a couple of hours the children found the break in the school work interesting and they laughed when their initial fears based on rumours

proved to be wrong. (Ranta-Rönnlund 1971, 83). Ranta-Rönnlund mentions that Lundborg was not appreciated by everybody as he had a tendency to comment on people's ancestry in a way some found offensive, but there are no comments about traumatic experiences connected with race biology (Ranta-Rönnlund 1971, 84).

The conflicts in Ranta-Rönnlund's books are related to differences between pre-modern modes of relating to the world characterised by superstition and beliefs in magic on the one hand, and an 'enlightened', 'modern' mode of seeing the world on the other. In this mental mapping, Sámi *noaidi*, shamans, and Laestadian preachers alike inhabit the old world where irrationality and superstition thrive. The disappearance of this old world is a theme explicitly addressed by Sara Ranta-Rönnlund. In her first book, she comments on the passing away of beliefs in premonitions which were widespread in the old times:

During the 1950s and later I have not really heard of any cases of premonitions. True, I have lived in the centre of learning by the Fyris River [Uppsala] since 1958, among whose institutions and laurel wreaths such ideas ["tocke' där": colloquial expression] don't thrive, but I have maintained contact with the countryside of Norrbotten, and I ought to have heard of cases of premonitions if there had been any. Perhaps the explanation lies in better popular enlightenment, better street lightning and in the wealth of impressions washing over us from the radio, TV and press and which don't give us the time to perceive and ponder over other sorts of impressions. (Ranta-Rönnlund 1971, 126–127, my translation)<sup>78</sup>

Ranta-Rönnlund lacks nostalgia concerning traditions that she does not see as worth preserving. In this context, both Laestadianism and traditional Sámi shamanism are to a large extent connected with superstition which goes hand in hand with a lack of modern education. However, Sara Ranta-Rönnlund is not altogether negative towards Laestadianism. At the end of the first chapter of *Nådevalpar*, the narrator mentions that her godparents were three great Laestadian preachers and that she was brought up in a Christian spirit. In the idiom of Laestadianism reflected in the book, 'Christian' means Laestadian, and becoming a Christian implies converting to

<sup>78</sup> "Under 1950-talet och senare har jag egentligen inte hört talas om några fall av varsel. Visserligen har jag sedan 1958 bott i lärdomsstaden vid Fyrisån, bland vars institutioner och lagerkransar tocke' där inte trivs, men jag har upprätthållit kontakten med den norrbottniska landsbygden, och jag borde ha hört talas om fall av varsel om det hade förekommit. Förklaringen ligger kanske i bättre folkupplysning, bättre gatubelysning och i de mängder av intryck som sköljer över oss från radio, TV och press och som inte längre ger oss tid att uppfatta och begrunda andra sorters intryck." (Ranta-Rönnlund 1971, 126–127.)

Laestadianism. The view of Laestadianism expressed is somewhat ambivalent: "I have seen the good things that follow from religion, moderation, diligence, helpfulness towards fellow men and other good features. But I have also seen how intolerance and bullying and spiritual brutality may follow in the footsteps of religion." (Ranta-Rönnlund 1971, 22, my translation.)<sup>79</sup>

## Sara Ranta-Rönnlund's Distanced View on Laestadianism

The title of Sara Ranta-Rönnlund's first book, "Nådevalpar", is a term launched by Laestadius himself to denominate new converts. Literally, the term means "puppies of mercy". The book has a preface by Ernst Manker (1893–1972), a Swedish ethnographer known for his work on Sámi history and ethnography. Manker travelled in Sámi districts in the 1920s. At the very beginning of the preface, Manker mentions that the artist and ethnographer Ossian Elgström took a photograph of a Sámi 17-year old girl and the mountain photographer Borg Mesch in the Jukkasjärvi area in 1920. Manker describes the girl as follows: "The girl was 17-year old Sara Poidnack [Poidnack is Sara Ranta-Rönnlund's maiden name], raised in a strict Laestadian spirit but herself totally undisciplined and full of zest for life." (Manker 1971, 5.)<sup>80</sup> The preface provides a concise presentation of Sara Ranta-Rönnlund's family background and the various phases of her life. The tone is humorous and no traumatic or troublesome incidents are mentioned. Sara Ranta-Rönnlund is presented as a strong individual able to hold her ground against the influences of various kinds of authorities: "With her loquacity and sparkling intellect, little Sara came near to squeezing the juices out of Laestadian preachers, Lutheran ministers, and professors during her long and shifting life." (Ibid.)<sup>81</sup>

Sara Ranta-Rönnlund is presented both as an independent observer and as a person with a first-hand experience of the northern parts of Sweden. Manker highlights the role of Laestadianism in this world, how it permeates everything and that tensions arise between human frailty and strict commands. The preface characterises Sara Ranta-Rönnlund as an individ-

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<sup>79</sup> "Jag har sett det goda som följer med religionen, måtta, flit, hjälpsamhet mot ens nästa och andra goda drag. Men jag har också sett hur intolerans och översitteri och andlig brutalitet kan följa i religionens spår." (Ranta-Rönnlund 1971, 22.)

<sup>80</sup> "Flickan var 17-åriga Sara Poidnack, uppvuxen i sträng laestadiansk anda men själv helt otuktad och livsglad." (Manker 1971, 5.)

<sup>81</sup> "Själv kom lilla Sara att under ett långt och växlingsrikt liv med löpande tunga och sprudlande intellekt nära nog att krama musten ur både laestadianpredikanter, präster och professorer." (Manker 1971, 5.)

ual who sympathises with the weak and who does not hesitate to criticise self-righteousness and intolerance in the rich language of Laestadians. Manker tells the reader directly about her background and personality, but he also recounts episodes that indirectly tell the reader what kind of person Sara Ranta-Rönnlund is. When narrating the episode when Elgström photographed Sara Poidnack and Borg-Mesch, Manker reports a comment from Sara characterising her as a person unimpressed by national celebrities such as Borg Mesch: “Can you on the Day of Doom answer for all the people you have photographed and enticed to sin?!” (Manker 1971, 5.)<sup>82</sup> While the reminiscences indirectly as well as directly characterise Sara Ranta-Rönnlund as a person with a rational mindset who critically views superstitions and irrationality among the people she grew up with, this comment is in line with her upbringing in a western Laestadian family. The quote indicates that the girl Sara connected being photographed with sin, in accordance with the western Laestadian belief-system.<sup>83</sup>

Manker’s role in the preface is that of a benevolent promoter. In his capacity as a well-known ethnographer specialising in Sámi history, he legitimises Ranta-Rönnlund’s reminiscences through his cultural capital in the Swedish academic and cultural field (cf. Bourdieu 1996). However, Manker is a rather ambiguous character when viewed with perspectives from today’s discussion on research ethics in Indigenous Studies. Like other researchers, Manker examined Sámi graves with human remains (Manker 1961). One case which has been the subject of discussion in the context of demands from the Sámi that human remains taken from graves should be reburied is that of the grave of the so called ‘Shadow man’ in Tärna, Västerbotten. This grave was excavated in 1950 by Ernst Manker from the Nordic Museum in Stockholm (Manker 1961, 156 ff., Ojala 2016, 1009). Manker made a promise in writing that the bones would be brought back to the grave after having been analysed. However, this did not happen until 2002, after demands from the local Sámi association that the bones should be reburied (Ojala 2016, 1009). Ojala mentions this as an example of violations of Sámi culture and people, whose concerns and wishes were not met in an ethically sustainable way. In Ojala’s account, this forms a dark side of the Swedish scientific legacy that must be addressed in present-day reconciliation endeavours (Ojala 2016, 1020). As the comparison of the role of Manker in Ranta-Rönnlund’s book and Ojala’s article indicates, there is a considerable discrepancy

<sup>82</sup> “-Kan du på domens dag stå till svars för alla du fotograferat och lockat till synd?!” (Manker 1971, 5.)

<sup>83</sup> It is explicitly mentioned in the fourth book, *Sist i rajden*, that the narrator’s parents were registered as western Laestadians (Ranta-Rönnlund 1978, 33).

between the image of the ethnographer as a respectable scientist on the one hand, and that of the ethnographer as a grave-robber misleading the local Sámi people in order to get skulls and skeleton parts to be sent to Stockholm on the other.<sup>84</sup>

*Nådevalpar* consists of 26 chapters followed by a personal index, a geographical index and a short wordlist. The narrative itself includes metatextual comments about where and when it was written, as well as reflections on the fact that stories are told about well-known characters from real life. There is not only a geographical distance between Uppsala, where the writing takes place, and Lappland, where the stories unfold, but also a cultural difference which, following the spatial vocabulary of colonialism described by Linda Tuhiwai Smith, establishes binaries between the colonial centre, representing civilisation, and peripheries in the hinterlands of the nation (Smith 2008, 52–53). While the colonial centre, represented by Uppsala, is seen as modern and progressive, Lappland is to a large extent seen as a region in need of modernisation and civilisation. There is also a gap in time between the time of narration and the story time.

It is of importance that the volume's preface is written by a well-known professor of Sámi history and ethnography and that it includes photographs by another well-known ethnographer and artist, as well as by the celebrity photographer Borg Mesch. Manker, Elgström and Borg Mesh are all professionals with a great intellectual and cultural capital when it comes to representing the Sámi and producing academic and visual narratives about them. They are also part of the Swedish establishment that contributed to colonising the land of the Sámi. With this in mind, Sara Ranta-Rönnlund's position is rather ambivalent. As the epithet *lilla Sara* (little Sara) in the preface indicates, Sara Ranta-Rönnlund is not seen as an equal to the male authorities – and of course the genre of the reminiscence book is not that of an academic study. The narrator Sara Ranta-Rönnlund is not part of the academic establishment represented by Manker and Elgström, nor is she part of the old Sámi society she writes about. The cognitive, emotive and ideological orientation of the focaliser is clearly distanced from the 'backward' people described. The narration in *Nådevalpar* may be described as a first-person retrospective narrative where a grown up narrator looks back to her past. The implications of this for *Nådevalpar* is that the experiences and accumulated knowledge of the adult narrator colour the narration of episodes from the past, and it explains the critical perspective on Laestadianism, highlighted by Manker in the preface.

<sup>84</sup> Ojala's critical view of the practice of collecting human remains from graves is shown in his choice of terminology. When discussing the ethnographer Gustaf Hallström's excavations of Sámi graves in the Kola Peninsula, Ojala suggests that 'grave-robbery' is an appropriate term to describe what Hallström was engaged in (Ojala 2016, 1012).



Sara Ranta-Rönnlund describes her writing project as follows in *Nådevalpar* when explaining why she mentions by name Laestadian preachers she criticises:

But now, such a long time afterwards, now that the prophet's nearest family are no longer with us or are aged, now that more than fifty years have passed and I am in the act of writing the history of a Norrbottnian epoch, now I don't think it is wrong to tell about one of these great spiritual personalities who left his mark on the lives of the people in the sparsely populated areas. (Ranta-Rönnlund 1971, 159)<sup>85</sup>

The prophet in question is the famous, and later notorious, Viktor Apelqvist, whose fall was great when he was excluded from the Laestadian community due to a lack of repentance after it had become known that he had fathered an illegitimate child. Ranta-Rönnlund devotes a chapter to the story about Apelqvist, concluding that the rumours about him probably were exaggerated, but that he did in fact have one child outside wedlock (Heith 2016b). A prominent theme which she dwells upon is the hypocrisy of the preachers who preached against sin and were prone to see sin everywhere, while at the same time often giving proof of lax moral standards themselves.

The Laestadian preachers' strong focus on sin is one of the elements of the Laestadian movement that Ranta-Rönnlund criticises. In particular, she has a keen eye for gender structures, such as the fact that elderly male preachers were prone to chastise young women. In the chapter "Laestadian Shepherds and Puppies of Mercy" she recounts an episode where a preacher abused and insulted hard-working youngsters for being improperly dressed (Ranta-Rönnlund 1971, 146). A distance is created between the narrator who views the preacher critically and the people who, according to the narrator, are manipulated and misled by the preacher's exaggerated talk about sins: "But these girls in the mountain village were not allowed to dress in a more modern and nice way, but their dress was to be scrutinised and regulated by snuffy old men [i.e. Laestadian preachers]." (Ranta-Rönnlund 1971, 147.)<sup>86</sup> The power of these preachers is described as a phenomenon of the past, and not as something that affects people today, that is, at the time of narration. The narrator mentions that she did not react to the preacher's abuse

<sup>85</sup> "Men nu så här långt efteråt, nu när profetens närmaste är bortgångna eller åldriga, nu sedan mer än femtio år har förflutit och jag är i färd med att skriva en norrbottnisk tidsepoks historia, numera anser jag det inte fel att berätta om en av dessa stora andliga personligheter som satte sin prägel på ödebygdsbornas liv." (Ranta-Rönnlund 1971, 159.)

<sup>86</sup> "Men dessa flickor i fjällbyn tilläts inte att klä sig modernare och snyggare, utan deras klädsel skulle nagelfaras och bestämmas av snusiga gamla gubbar." (Ranta-Rönnlund 1971, 147.)



and insults at the time when the incident happened, but that she realised at the time of writing that it was a form of bullying: "I did not react to it then. I was used to these familiar strains, and all these abusive words passed through me without leaving any immediate traces. I did not realise then how abusive these insults were for these hard-working young people [. . .]" (Ranta-Rönnlund 1971, 146, my translation).<sup>87</sup>

The impression of Laestadianism provided by the reminiscences recounted by the narrator is that it to a large extent was an oppressive movement, spread and maintained by dictatorial, elderly men with a strong lust for power. As a complement to the written narrative, there are illustrations with brief captions, for example a portrait by Borg Mesch of the founder of the eastern branch of Laestadianism, August Lundberg (1863–1930), and a photograph taken by Borg Mesch in 1917 of four preachers from the eastern branch, one of whom is Lundberg.<sup>88</sup> This eastern branch differs from the western one, which is more strict and focussed on issues of moral and sin. But, for readers who are not familiar with the various factions within the Laestadian movement, the photos of the eastern Laestadian preachers will hardly contribute to mitigating the negative characterisation conveyed by the reminiscences of abuse of power and hypocrisy. This negative image is supported by the chapter about the Lutheran minister Orajärvi, "Orajärvi, en färgstark präst" ('Orajärvi, a colourful minister'). As opposed to the Laestadian preachers, Orajärvi cares about the poor and the weak. The preachers in Ranta-Rönnlund's account abuse and threaten the poor, while speaking fair words to the wealthy. The chapter ends with Ranta-Rönnlund's analysis of the reasons behind the differences between the Laestadian layman preachers and the minister Orajärvi of the National Lutheran Church:

The minister was a civil servant and a learned man. He had learnt not to look at how large the homestead, or how small the cottage, was. He treated everybody alike, and felt compassion for the poor homes with many children and came to visit many of them during his ministry in many parishes in the district (Ranta-Rönnlund 1971, 223, my translation).<sup>89</sup>

<sup>87</sup> "Jag reagerade inte mot detta då. Jag var ju van vid dessa tongångar, och alla dessa okvädande ord passerade genom mig utan att lämna spår. Jag insåg inte då hur pass kränkande dessa tillmälen var för dessa arbetsamma unga människor [. . .]" (Ranta-Rönnlund 1971, 146.)

<sup>88</sup> The portrait of Lundberg is just before page 129 and the one of the four preachers after page 160 (the pages with illustrations are not numbered).

<sup>89</sup> "Prästen var en tjänsteman och en lärd man. Han hade lärt sig att inte titta efter hur stor gården var, eller hur liten stugan var. Han behandlade alla lika, och han ömmade mycket för de fattiga, barnrika hemmen och kom att se in i många av dem under sin tjänst i många socknar i dessa trakter." (Ranta-Rönnlund 1971, 223.)

In the chapter “Laestadianska herdar och nådevalpar (‘Laestadian shepherds and puppies of mercy’), there is a characterisation of the language of Laestadianism and of Laestadius’ own idiom which also connects the preaching style with socio-cultural aspects such as poverty and lack of education: “The preachers had inherited the technique to persuade listeners to submission, confession of sins and penance through fear and threats of death, torment and punishment from Laestadius himself.” (Ranta-Rönnlund 1971, 145, my translation).<sup>90</sup> Sara Ranta-Rönnlund makes a connection between the language of the preachers and the socio-cultural setting of the mountain villages up north, emphasising Laestadius’ pragmatism. At the time described, analphabetism was widespread and many Sámi and Finnish-speaking villages did not know Swedish:

The preachers go back to Laestadius and find support in his deeds. Laestadius dealt with an uncivilised and analphabetic world in the land of the Lapps. If he had preached in our times to people who can read and who are familiar with the words of God, I do not know if he would have used the same words as he actually did in the old times when he worked in Norrbotten. He explained to the Cathedral Chapter that the people did not understand any other kind of language than that which he used, and that he would speak to deaf ears if he used the style and vocabulary he had learned at the divinity school in Uppsala (Ranta-Rönnlund 1971, 139, my translation).<sup>91</sup>

Although the narrator acknowledges the pragmatism behind the Laestadian preaching style in areas where people were uneducated analphabets, she herself is no longer the accepting youth she used to be at the time when the incidents she recounts unfolded, but a critical observer who looks back to events in the past (Ranta-Rönnlund 1971, 146). And this present-day narrator in Uppsala has no sympathy or awe for the preacher who threatens a pregnant woman by telling her that she is carrying death in her womb

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<sup>90</sup> “Sin teknik att genom skrämsel och hot om död, pinor och straff förmå åhörarna till underkastelse, syndabekännelse och botgöring hade predikanterna ärvt från Laestadius själv.” (Ranta-Rönnlund 1971, 145.)

<sup>91</sup> “Predikanterna går tillbaka till Laestadius och stöder sig på hans gärningar. Laestadius hade med en ociviliserad och analfabetisk värld att göra i lappmarken. Hade han predikat i våra dagar för människor som är läskunniga och underkunniga om Guds ord, så vet jag inte om han hade använt samma ord som han faktiskt gjorde då han verkade i Norrbotten. Till domkapitlet förklarade han att folket inte förstod annat slags språk än detta som han brukade, och att han skulle ha talat för döva öron om han brukat den stil och de ordvändningar som han lärt sig vid prästseminariet i Uppsala.” (Ranta-Rönnlund 1971, 139.)

(Ranta-Rönnlund 1971, 142), or the one who condemns hard-working girls for making slight changes to the way they dress (op. cit. 147).<sup>92</sup>

Ranta-Rönnlund's first book was published in 1971 at a time when feminism and women's literature were much discussed and is in line with contemporary literary trends aiming at criticism of patriarchal and misogynist power structures. In *Nådevalpar*, this criticism is levelled at traditional gender structures among the reindeer-herding Sámi, elements in the Laestadian movement related both to hypocrisy and double-standards among the preachers and the preachers' power to meddle with people's lives. Laestadianism is not the main theme of Ranta-Rönnlund's subsequent books, but the second book is related to the first in that it represents popular beliefs, with a focus on delusions, among the Sámi and Finnish-speaking population in Norrland as a contrast to a modern, civilised mode of perceiving the world. Ethnicity and language are major components of the 'backward' society that Ranta-Rönnlund depicts.

In the hierarchy that Ranta-Rönnlund depicts, Sámi and Finnish have a lower status than Swedish. Two women who move to a village where Finnish is spoken are seen as gentlefolks because they do not speak proper Finnish (Ranta-Rönnlund 1972, 181). A childless couple in a village where Finnish is spoken decide to adopt a child from an orphanage in Stockholm as the wife believes that these children are 'better' than people in their parts of the country (Ranta-Rönnlund 1972, 185). In the society that Ranta-Rönnlund describes there is a social hierarchy with ethnic Swedes at the top. It is also evident from the narrator's comments about connections between ethnicity and value that Sámi and Finnish-speaking people were seen as inferior compared to modern Swedes. Ranta-Rönnlund is somewhat contradictory when it comes to the issue of whether or not there were racist structures that disadvantaged the Sámi. In one chapter in *Sist i rajden* she claims that it was not primarily "race" and language that decided a person's status, but class: "It was not primarily race and language that counted, the most important factor was which social class you belonged to." (Ranta-Rönnlund 1978, 95, my translation.)<sup>93</sup> In spite of this statement, the very same chapter contains an episode about racism in a story about two teachers from the south of Sweden who come to the north at the time of World War I to teach Sámi children residing in settlements. The two women, dressed

<sup>92</sup> The episodes of a preacher condemning young women for not dressing properly and the abuse of a pregnant woman by a preacher are discussed by Hirvonen in a chapter entitled "I had to take on a role I wanted to escape – Sara Ranta-Rönnlund" (Hirvonen 2008, 178–184).

<sup>93</sup> "Det var inte främst rasen och språket som räknades, utan det viktigaste var vilken samhällsklass man tillhörde." (Ranta-Rönnlund 1978, 95.)

in traditional Sámi costumes although they are not Sámi themselves, go to the parish registrar's office in Gällivare to ask about ration cards. However, the vicar refuses to help them and the narrator concludes: "Their Lapp costumes, which were very practical and which made them less different from the people in the mountains, was a signal to the vicar to treat them in a condescending way." (Ranta-Rönnlund 1978, 96, my translation.)<sup>94</sup>

The angle of vision from which characters are viewed in Ranta-Rönnlund's books implies that distinctions are established between the Sámi ("we") and Swedes ("them"). One example is a discussion about different ways of perceiving directions in the third book: "[. . .] we also accepted that the four cardinal points were located somewhat differently among us, than among the Swedes." (Ranta-Rönnlund 1973, 8, my translation.)<sup>95</sup> However, as Sara Ranta-Rönnlund by and by becomes more distanced to the nomadic life she experienced in her childhood, her perspective also becomes more critical. This is related to the fact that she leaves the nomadic life behind her. First she moved to a small village, later to Gällivare and finally to Uppsala. She also had some medical training, which made her see traditional forms of healing in a new light. Although she describes her schooling as sporadic, she also emphasises that she was a quick learner and eager to learn, and that as an adult she was an avid reader of newspapers. Thus, distinctions are established not only between various ethnic groups, but also between 'backward' and progressive Sámi, respectively. It is obvious that Sara Ranta-Rönnlund does not see herself as a 'backward Sámi'.

In the chapter "Panken" in *Njoalpas söner*, the narrator reminisces about Sámi people's distrust in the Swedish banking system, and the Sámi custom of hiding or keeping valuables in places where they sometimes were lost or forgotten. The narrator establishes connections between this discrepancy between modern Sweden and traditional Sámi society, and the Swedish policy aiming at segregating the nomadic reindeer-herding Sámi from modern life through the 'Lapp shall remain Lapp policy' (Ranta-Rönnlund 1973, 141,

<sup>94</sup> "Deras lappdräkter, som var mycket praktiska plagg och som hjälpte dem att inte avvika för mycket från fjällbefolkningen, var en signal till kyrkoherden att behandla dem nedlåtande." (Ranta-Rönnlund 1978, 96.)

<sup>95</sup> "[. . .] vi också accepterade, att väderstrecken låg litet annorlunda hos oss än vad de gjorde hos svenskarna." (Ranta-Rönnlund 1973, 8.)

Solbakk 2006, 189).<sup>96</sup> “Panken” also includes a story about a Norwegian Sámi family who became the narrator’s neighbours when they bought a house in Swedish Gällivare. This family who had never lived in a house before is described as unfit to cope with modernities such as running water and heating. Their house is damaged as pipes freeze when the heating does not work. In this case, the narrator, who otherwise describes herself as a compassionate and helpful person, does not intervene but remains an observer of the decay. Eventually, the family has to leave the house and the money they have paid is kept by the bank as compensation for the damages. While this episode seems to support the idea that Sámi people are unfit for modern life, it is obvious that the narrator herself has managed to adapt. She has no problems living in a modern house and coping with modern Swedish society.

Ranta-Rönnlund repeatedly characterises the relationship between the Sámi (*Lapps* is the term she uses) and the Finnish-speaking country folks as good, and emphasises that they had a long tradition of helping one another and that they shared the same religious beliefs (Laestadianism). She also repeatedly points out that Finnish was the language used in religious contexts both by the Sámi and the people in the countryside: “Finnish was the language used, as it also was the language of the Holy Scripture. The prayer meetings were always held in Finnish, and it was from the Finnish Bible that the preachers got their texts and vigorous preaching language.” (Ranta-Rönnlund 1978, 137–138, my translation.)<sup>97</sup>

Although Laestadianism is not the main theme of *Nåjder*, there are a couple of reminiscences about Laestadian preachers. These do not alter the mainly negative depiction in the first volume; rather they enforce it. One chapter describes a Laestadian preacher who absolves people from sins if he is paid enough for it (Ranta-Rönnlund 1972, 88). Another preacher who resides in the village of Nilivaara is described as an unreliable person who

<sup>96</sup> John Trygve Solbakk traces this policy back to an article by the “Lapp specialist” and Swedish Government’s Sámi expert Karl Bernhard Wiklund. Following Solbakk, Wiklund did not believe that “the Lappish race” had the qualities necessary to live at a higher cultural level (Solbakk 2006, 189). Oscarsson, on the other hand, traces the expression to an article by Vitalis Karnell published in *Dagny* in 1906 (Oscarsson 2016, 949). Following Oscarsson, the architects behind the ‘Lapp shall remain Lapp policy’ are bishop Bergqvist, vicar and nomad school inspector Karnell and vicar and headmaster Bergfors (Oscarsson 2016). Oscarsson makes the point that these persons contributed to the Swedish policy that favoured segregation between the nomadic Sámi and modern Swedish society.

<sup>97</sup> “Finska var det språk man använde sig av, eftersom det ju också var Skriftens språk. Bönemötena hölls alltid på finska, och det var ur den finska bibeln som predikanterna hämtade sina texter och sitt kärnfulla predikospråk.” (Ranta-Rönnlund 1978, 137–138.)

speaks a lot of rubbish (Ranta-Rönnlund 1972, 140). Still another chapter is devoted to the Korpela movement, “Glasarken” (‘the ark of glass’). However, this movement is not described as a branch of Laestadianism but as a competitor in conflict with Laestadian preachers who condemned the new movement. Conflicts within Laestadianism are briefly commented on and the western branch of Laestadianism is said to have spread rumours that the eastern branch was sympathetic to the preacher Korpela, whose preachings inspired the Korpela movement (Ranta-Rönnlund 1972, 153). The narrator ruminates on which rumours about the Korpela movement were true or false and comes to the conclusion that there were some exaggerations in the stories that were spread. Nevertheless, she concludes that ‘orgies’ did occur and that one of the prominent prophets of the movement was sent to prison for having had sex with underage girls. Thus, the reminiscences and hearsay about the Korpela movement that Ranta-Rönnlund uses as a subject matter contribute to the depiction of a backward part of Sweden where uneducated Sámi and Finnish-speaking people fell under the spell of seductive and manipulative preachers and various kinds of charlatans and healers.

The theme of conflicts between a strict western branch of Laestadianism and a less strict eastern branch is also touched upon in *Njoalpas söner*, in an episode where the narrator mentions that she used to go to meetings with the eastern Laestadian preacher August Lundberg, in spite of her parents’ disapproval: “[. . .] I was well acquainted with the preacher August Lundberg, as, in spite of my parents’ prohibition, I quite often stole into his prayer meetings and listened to his eastern Laestadian preaching, which was a sin considered at least as serious as theft.” (Ranta-Rönnlund 1973, 98.)<sup>98</sup>

In the first chapter of her third book, *Njoalpas söner. Berättelser om dagligt liv i norr*, Sara Ranta-Rönnlund explains her choice of title. Njoalpa was a rich Sámi in the 19th century who moved to Lappland with the author’s ancestor. He had two sons and a daughter, who in their turn had many children. However, the people in focus are not only Njoalpas descendants but also the Sámi and settlers in the municipality of Jukkasjärvi. These people, who lived under harsh conditions and often had short lives, are the characters that Sara Ranta-Rönnlund wishes to draw attention to through her reminiscences. As in the previous book, Laestadianism is not the main theme, but just as in *Nåjder. Berättelser om trollkarlar och trolldom i sameland*, Sara Ranta-Rönnlund recounts reminiscences of preachers and

<sup>98</sup> “[. . .] predikanten August Lundberg, kände jag väl till, eftersom jag trots mina föräldrars förbud allt som oftast slank in på hans bönemöten och hörde på hans östlaestadianska förkunnelse, vilket var en synd som ansågs minst lika svår som stöld.” (Ranta-Rönnlund 1973, 98.)

events relating to Laestadianism. And as in the previous book, these consolidate the predominantly negative depiction of Laestadianism presented in *Nådevalpar* and *Nåjder*.

Already in the second chapter, "Aftonstjärnan" ('The evening star'), a Laestadian preacher who also is a representative of the poor relief board is described as a hard-hearted man who will rather save the taxpayers' money than spend it on a poor, sick old woman: "– Money should not be spent on people like that. No taxpayers' money will be spent on such people. It is better that they die as quickly as possible." (Ranta-Rönnlund 1973, 17.)<sup>99</sup> In the chapter about the author's schooling, Laestadianism is explicitly represented as an element of a policy aimed at keeping the Sámi outside the modern society, as a religion aiming at keeping the Sámi in a subordinate position as the 'Others of modernity'. In Ranta-Rönnlund's reminiscences, the preachers forbade children and young people to read newspapers, and their parents encouraged them to go to prayer meetings and read the preachings of Laestadius (Ranta-Rönnlund 1973, 25). From the critical vantage point of the narrator, this is part of an educational system aimed at preserving a nomadic lifestyle by keeping the Sámi outside the modern society.

The last book, *Sist i rajden*, includes a positive evaluation of the role of Laestadius in improving living conditions among the Sámi and Finnish speaking population of Norrbotten:

When you think back upon how Lars Levi Laestadius in a couple of decades managed to transform Finnish and Lapp-speaking Norrbotten from a true Sodom into one of the most decent parts of the long realm of Sweden, you have to admit that it was a fantastic achievement. (Ranta-Rönnlund 1978, 129, my translation).<sup>100</sup>

However, this assessment is immediately followed by a section attempting to rationalise the reasons for the success of Laestadianism. This section, with its focus on the role of ideas of sin, contributes to reinforce the predominantly negative depiction of Laestadianism in the previous books. Ranta-Rönnlund's analysis proposes that Laestadius himself, as well as preachers after him, consciously preached about sin, damnation and the possibility of forgiveness in order to control and manipulate their followers.

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<sup>99</sup> "– Såna där ska man inte kosta på. Det ska inte läggas några skattepengar på såna där. Det är bättre om de får dö så snabbt som möjligt." (Ranta-Rönnlund 1973, 17.)

<sup>100</sup> "När man tänker tillbaka på hur Lars Levi Laestadius på några årtionden lyckades förvandla det finsk- och lappskalande Norrbotten från ett Sodom i kvadrat till en av de absolut anständigaste landsdelarna i det långa riket Sverige, så måste man säga att han gjorde en fantastisk prestation." (Ranta-Rönnlund 1978, 129.)



In this context she elaborates upon the preachers' ever-increasing lists of sins related to novelties such as bicycles and radios, dress, behaviour and so on.

The theme of dictatorial, intolerant and bullying preachers who have no compassion for the poor is repeated also in other episodes about the impact of Laestadianism in Sámi and Finnish-speaking communities. Laestadianism is presented as a religion for the Sámi and the Finnish-speaking villagers of Norrbotten, and the movement is characterised as being hostile to modernity, patriarchal and conservative. In this context, the dissemination of ideas of sin is seen as a strategy that preachers used in order to preserve their power (Ranta-Rönnlund 1978, 129–144). When referring to the negative impact of Laestadianism, Ranta-Rönnlund quotes Karl Marx: "Marx coined the phrase 'Religion is the opiate of the masses', and, at least in the mountains of Norrbotten, this is an appropriate phrase." (Ranta-Rönnlund 1978, 143, my translation.)<sup>101</sup> While expressing some sympathies for socialism, the narrator does not reject religion altogether. Instead she describes a growing sympathy for the ritual of the Swedish Lutheran Church, which is seen as a positive contrast to Laestadianism:

In my youth I became more and more captured by the calmer way in which God's words were preached in the Swedish Lutheran National Church. I often felt depressed by Laestadianism's search for sin, by the blunt behaviour of the preachers towards the weak and the poor and also by the irrational condemnation of flowers, bicycles, handkerchiefs and other things that really belong to practical everyday life. (Ranta-Rönnlund 1978, 145, my translation).<sup>102</sup>

Ranta-Rönnlund's reminiscences, interspersed with comments from the narrator looking back to her childhood and youth, describe Laestadianism as an oppressive religion from which the narrator is not freed until late in life and far away from Norrbotten:

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<sup>101</sup> "Marx myntade ju uttrycket 'religion är ett opium för folket', och åtminstone i den norrbottniska fjällvärlden passade detta uttryck." (Ranta-Rönnlund 1978, 143.)

<sup>102</sup> "Själv kom jag i min ungdom allt oftare att fångas av det mer lugna sätt att predika Guds ord som förekom i den svenska, lutherska statskyrkan. Jag kände mig ofta betryckt av laestadianismens krampaktiga sökande efter synd, av predikanternas burdusa beteende mot de svaga och fattiga och även av det väl orationella fördömandet av blommor, cyklar, näsdukar och annat som faktiskt hör till den praktiska vardagen." (Ranta-Rönnlund 1978, 145.)



Not even when, about a decade later, I moved to the Swedish-speaking densely populated area could I completely get away from the pressure of religion. It is only now, in old age, that I've been able to do so, residing in the city of the Archbishop, in the vicinity of the rational university. (Ranta-Rönnlund 1978, 145).<sup>103</sup>

Once again Sara Ranta-Rönnlund establishes a binary relationship between irrational, backward Norrbotten and rational, modern Uppsala. In this construction of opposites Laestadianism functions as a marker of the peripheral, backward north.

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<sup>103</sup> "Inte ens när jag något decennium senare flyttade till den svensktalande tätorten skulle jag helt komma bort från religionens tryck. Det har jag inte gjort förrän nu på gamla dar, när jag bor i ärkebiskopens stad, i närheten av det rationella universitetet." (Ranta-Rönnlund 1978, 145.)

## Exotification, Oppressive Gender Structures, and Postmodern Approaches: Höijer, Cullblom and Korpi on Laestadianism

*Björn-Erik Höijer – Author from the Mining-Town Malmberget*

Björn-Erik Höijer was born in Malmberget in 1907 and died in Uppsala in 1996. He was trained as a woodwork teacher. He was also a successful prose writer and playwright. His extensive literary production of more than fifty works include short stories, novels, plays for the stage and the radio and poetry. His literary debut occurred in 1940 with the collection of short stories *Grått berg* ('Grey mountain'). His play *Isak Juntti hade många söner* ('Isak Juntti had many sons') had its premiere at the Small Stage of *Kungliga Dramatiska Teatern* in Stockholm in 1954. The same year it was published by one of Sweden's oldest and most prominent publishing houses, Albers Bonniers Förlag in Stockholm. The publication is dedicated to Ingmar Bergman, and the actor and director Bengt Ekerot. Previously Bergman had directed Höijer's debut as a playwright, *Requiem*, at the City Theatre of Helsingborg in 1946.

As a writer, Höijer is rooted in the mining town of Malmberget and the province of Norrbotten, whose people and nature he frequently depicts. This has rendered him the epithet *nyprovinsialist* ('neo-provincialist').<sup>104</sup> *Nationalencyklopedin* concludes that: "With his close ties to Norrbotten he [Björn-Erik Höijer] may be included in the 'neo-provincialist' school of the epoch." (my translation).<sup>105</sup> In 1963, a film version of *Isak Juntti hade många söner* directed by Keve Hjelm was shown on Swedish national TV. In a brief

<sup>104</sup> The website [norrbottensforfattare.se](http://www.norrbottensforfattare.se) provides a backdrop to the term "nyprovinsialism", attributing it to the author Lars Bäckström: "Utanförskapet kom också honom att urskilja och lansera riktningen 'nyprovinsialism' (i *Under välfärdens yta*) i 50-talets unga svenska litteratur, med Sara Lidman som främsta företrädare. Det norrbottniska utgångsläget blev en förutsättning för det gränsöverskridande i Lars Bäckströms verksamhet." – 'His outsider status also made him discern and launch a new movement, 'neo-provincialism', (in *Under the Surface of the Welfare*) in the young Swedish literature of the 50s, with Sara Lidman as its foremost representative. The Norrbottnian point of departure was a prerequisite for that which was border-crossing in Lars Bäckström's occupation' (my translation): <http://www.norrbottensforfattare.se/indexForfattare.php?xnr=498fe00859e6d&rubrik=3>, accessed 15 March 2016.

<sup>105</sup> "Med sin norrbottniska förankring kan han räknas till epokens 'nyprovinsialistiska' skola.": <http://www.ne.se/uppslagsverk/encyklopedi/l%C3%A5ng/bj%C3%B6rn-erik-h%C3%B6ijer>. . . 11 March 2016.

programme to the 1954 stage production, Björn-Erik Höijer mentions that the play had the motto "*Mitt finska arv*" ('My Finnish heritage') at an early stage. He points out that his paternal grandparents immigrated to Sweden from Finland, but that, as far as he knows, they were not Laestadians (Höijer 1954b, 5–6).<sup>106</sup> He also calls attention to the fact that he does not know very much about the movement, but that there were Laestadians in the vicinity of his home in Norrbotten. Laestadianism is called "den märkvärdiga läran" ('the peculiar faith'). Höijer mentions that he himself never visited a Laestadian chapel, but that there were stories circulating about the monotonous preachings and psalm-singing in Finnish, as well as the ecstatic movements called "liikutuksia" (Höijer op. cit., 6).

With the information provided in the 1954 programme, Höijer establishes an outsider position from which he views Laestadianism. Although the movement is an important element of the religious landscape of Norrbotten, he sees it as something strange which he himself is not a part of.<sup>107</sup> Another factor that points to a distance between the theme of Laestadianism and the performance and publication of the play is related to that of the literary field (Bourdieu 1996). The publisher, Bonniers, and the theatre, Kungliga Dramaten, are both at the centre of the Swedish literary field, being old, prestigious, national institutions located in Stockholm, far away from the Norrbottnian rural periphery with a Finnish-speaking population that is the setting of the play. This implies that Höijer's play presents an outsider narrative of Laestadianism in more than one sense.

Anders Persson suggests that religious ecstasy is at the core of Höijer's play *Isak Juntti hade många söner* (Persson 2010, 82). This, however, is not

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<sup>106</sup> Höijer uses the term "läsare" (pietist) when mentioning that, to his knowledge, there was no element of Laestadianism in his Finnish heritage's religious affiliations (Höijer 1954b, 6).

<sup>107</sup> In a discussion of Höijer's play, Anders Persson suggests that Höijer may have had first-hand experience of a Laestadian prayer-meeting. When exploring the theme of religious ecstasy, he refers to the novel *Det är något bortom bergen* from 1971 ('There is something beyond the mountains') describing it as a novel with autobiographical elements. The novel includes an episode depicting the protagonist's visit to a Laestadian prayer meeting with his foster mother. (Höijer 1971, 159f.). However, Persson's autobiographical reading of the novel contradicts Höijer's own presentation of his connections to Laestadianism in the 1954 programme.

how I read the play using Postcolonial Studies as a theoretical framework.<sup>108</sup> This reading takes into account the issue of the distanced perspective from which Laestadianism is viewed by Höijer. As mentioned above, he establishes an outsider position in the 1954 programme, stating that:

There was much talk about it at home. (1319 km. from Stockholm.) There were Laestadians here and there in the shacks, some had been converted in old age: it was seen as very strange and worthy of many comments. In the vicinity, there was a Laestadian chapel that I never went to. There were stories told about monotonous preaching and psalm-singing in Finnish and about ecstasy, so called *liikutuksia*. Laestadianism where I grew up was seen as life-denying, primitive, and hostile to culture (Höijer 1954b, 6, my translation)<sup>109</sup>.

This characterisation of Laestadianism shows that Höijer creates a distance between himself and Laestadianism by emphasizing that he grew up in an environment where Laestadianism was seen as a strange movement with negative characteristics. This kind of characterization is related to the issue of perspective and insider versus outsider narratives, a theme mentioned in the preface of Bengt Pohjanen's and Kirsti Johansson's *Den tornedalsfinska litteraturen. Från Kexi till Liksom* ('Tornedalian Finnish literature. From Kexi to Liksom') from 2007. Kirsti Johansson describes one of the themes of the volume as that of "Viewing the Torne Valley from inside its own language, and from the outside with the eyes of a Swedish-speaking person." (Johansson 2007, 8.)<sup>110</sup> This theme is of major importance in the chapter entitled "Etnisk nyckel – fördom och okunnighet" ('Ethnic key. Prejudice and ignorance'), which consists of three articles that were originally printed in the local newspaper *Haparandabladet* in the 1950s. These articles exem-

<sup>108</sup> Persson mentions that colonialism is a theme in Höijer's novel *Mannen på myren*, as the character *geografen* ('the geographer') is a scientist visiting what he sees as an exotic isolated spot (Persson 2010, 104). However, Persson does not relate this observation to Postcolonial Studies. While I see Höijer's use of exotification as a colonising practice, Persson connects this to influences from the 'primitivist movement' in Sweden, which he does not relate to a postcolonial theoretical framework.

<sup>109</sup> "Det talades mycket om den där hemma. (1319 km. från Stockholm.) Det fanns laestadianer här och där i kåkarna, en och annan blev omvänd på gamla dar: det ansågs mycket besynnerligt och värt många kommentarer. I grannsamhället fanns ett laestadiankapell, dit jag aldrig gick. Man berättade om monoton predikan och psalmsång på finska samt om rörelse, s.k. *liikutuksia*. Laestadianismen i mina hemtrakter ansågs vara livsförnekande, primitiv, kulturfientlig." (Höijer 1954b, 6.)

<sup>110</sup> "Att betrakta Tornedalen inifrån dess eget språk och att med den svenskspråkiges ögon titta utifrån." (Johansson 2007, 8.) In this context Johansson is describing a chapter about Bengt Pohjanen's reflections on life at a border.

plify reactions to prejudiced images of the Torne Valley disseminated by 'outsiders'. The last one, "Med Isak Juntti på Dramaten" ('With Isak Juntti at Dramaten'), presents a discussion of the performance of Höijer's play at Dramaten in 1954. The writer, William Snell, comments on Höijer's outsider perspective when it comes to the depiction of Laestadianism. As opposed to Höijer in the programme of the 1954 performance, Snell explicitly establishes an insider perspective. When discussing the character Berit, he remarks that: "It is as if Berit was talking about my own western Laestadian parental home, where we had both flower pots and pictures on the walls and curtains, but where Christianity nevertheless was taken most seriously even in everyday life." (Snell 1954, reprinted in Pohjanen & Johansson 2007, 63, my translation).<sup>111</sup> There is a considerable difference between Höijer's adoption of a distanced outsider position and Snell's sympathetic insider perspective, which has consequences for the image of Laestadianism presented by the two writers. It also explains Snell's verdict over Höijer's play:

However, as an image of Laestadianism it is extremely misleading. Rather, it reminds of the Korpelian delusion. Individual escapades, which also leading Laestadian characters may have been guilty of, have been treated by the author in a manner that may give the theatre audience the impression that Laestadianism really is life-denying, hostile to culture, primitive and immoral. (Snell 1954, reprinted in Pohjanen & Johansson 2007, 64, my translation).<sup>112</sup>

There are also many examples in Höijer's novels of distanced, critical views on Laestadianism. In the novel *Det är något bortom bergen* ('There is something beyond the mountains'), the protagonist accompanies his foster mother to a Laestadian prayer meeting (Höijer 1971). The foster mother falls into ecstasy and starts jumping and screaming incoherently in a thick voice. The episode is seen from the boy's point of view. He watches his stepmother scream, almost howl, as if she has become mad. She is transformed far away from her everyday personality, bellowing "God! God!" in Finnish (Höijer 1971, 159f.). This episode is mentioned by Persson as an example of Höijer's

<sup>111</sup> "Det är som om Berit berättade om mitt eget västlaestadianska föräldrahem, där vi hade både krukväxter och taylor och gardiner, men där kristendomen ändå togs på djupaste allvar även i vardagslivet." (Snell 1954, reprinted in Pohjanen & Johansson 2007, 63.)

<sup>112</sup> "Som en bild ur laestadianismen är den dock mycket missvisande. Snarare påminner den om den korpelanska förvillelsen. Individuella snedsprång, som även ledande laestadianska personer kunnat göra sig skyldiga till, har behandlats av författaren på ett sätt, som kan få teaterpubliken till att tro att laestadianismen i verkligheten är livsförnekande och kulturfientlig, primitiv och osedlig." (Snell 1954, reprinted in Pohjanen & Johansson 2007, 64.)

preoccupation with the theme of ecstasy (Persson 2010, 84). However, it is of importance *how* the religious ecstasy in question is depicted. The use of negative words such as “howl”, “mad”, and “bellow” points to this religious rapture connoting irrationality and uncivilised behavior. The mentioning that the foster mother bellows “Jumala! Jumala!” (‘God! God!’ in Finnish) furthermore functions as an ethnification of this type of ‘uncivilised’, seemingly mad, form of religiosity. In my reading, the issue at stake here is not primarily that of religious ecstasy on a general level, but of a kind of religiosity that is connected with Finnish ethnicity and ‘uncivilised peripheries of the nation’.<sup>113</sup>

However, Persson makes an interesting observation when commenting on gender aspects of religious ecstasy at Laestadian prayer meetings. When discussing the boy’s response to his foster mother’s *liikutuksia* in Höijer’s novel *Det är något bortom bergen*, he points out that the boy becomes aware that the woman finds happiness when experiencing ecstasy, which is a contrast to her otherwise rather joyless life (Persson 2010, 85). A version of this kind of positive interpretation of the prayer meeting is presented in a discussion by Bengt Pohjanen of the concept ‘participation mystique’ in *Den tornedalsfinska litteraturen: Från Kexi till Liksom* (‘Tornedalian Finnish Literature: From Kexi to Liksom’):

In this account [the chapter “Teater på meänkieli” – ‘Theatre in Meänkieli’], the prayer meeting exemplifies an art form arising in a third space where metaphysical borders are crossed and where mystical connections established between subjects and objects may take place. In Pohjanen’s account, the social setting where this may occur is the collective space of Laestadian prayer meetings where individuals may cease to be themselves while temporarily experiencing a heightened awareness of unity and community. (Heith 2009b, 220)<sup>114</sup>

While gender and sexuality are not mentioned in the quote above, nor in Pohjanen’s discussion in *Den tornedalsfinska litteraturen: Från Kexi till Liksom*, it is pointed out that falling into ecstasy at prayer meetings may be seen as liberating and fulfilling in a social setting with strong control and strict rules for socially acceptable behaviour.

Sara Ranta-Rönnlund’s first book *Nådevalpar* has a chapter entitled “Hade Isak Juntti många söner?” (‘Did Isak Juntti have many sons?’), which

<sup>113</sup> Persson mentions that Höijer seems to primarily view religious ecstasy as a timeless instance of man’s need to express sensuous (“sinnliga”) and sensual (“sensuella”) feelings in a broad sense (Persson 2010, 83). This is not how I interpret Höijer’s texts.

<sup>114</sup> Also see Heith 2009b, page 215, for a discussion of the concept ‘participation mystique’ in *Den tornedalsfinska litteraturen: Från Kexi till Liksom*.



is a direct reference to Björn-Erik Höijer's play *Isak Juntti hade många söner* (Ranta-Rönnlund 1971, 149–164). The chapter starts with the statement that it is believed in Norrbotten that the portrait of Juntti is modelled after the preacher Viktor Apelqvist:

In Norrbotten it is generally believed that the model for Björn-Erik Höijer's literary character Isak Juntti was the great preacher and county councillor Viktor Apelqvist, one of the most prominent western Laestadian preachers during the first decades of this century. This man had only one son born within wedlock (Ranta-Rönnlund 1971, 149, my translation).<sup>115</sup>

According to Ranta-Rönnlund, the rumours and gossip about the preacher's polygamous life were greatly exaggerated. The chapter concludes that he did not have many sons, but that he had one illegitimate son and when this became known, the preacher lost his position as a spiritual leader (Ranta-Rönnlund 1971, 163). This incident is touched upon in an expose of the growth and propagation of Laestadianism. Kristiansen concludes that Viktor 'Apelqvist' [sic] performed the functions of a spiritual leader badly and was consequently removed from office and replaced.<sup>116</sup>

#### *Höijer's Play about a Notorious Laestadian Preacher*

The play *Isak Juntti hade många söner* is divided into four acts. The setting is a cottage in the wilderness of Norrbotten. Finnish expressions in the dialogue contribute to showing that the characters belong to the Finnish-speaking population of northern Sweden. In the first act, the Lutheran minister Grape comes to visit the cottage where the hunter and fisherman Johan Larsson lives with his wife Berit. The relationship between husband and wife is strained. Berit hardly speaks at all and she seems to be depressed. When Grape enters, Johan Larsson recognises him. In the conversation that ensues, Larsson starts asking Grape about his relationship to Laestadianism, pointing out that he grew up in a Laestadian home and that the preacher Isak Juntti often used to stay with the Grape family. It is hinted by Larsson that Grape is the illegitimate son of Juntti. Grape in his turn asks the

<sup>115</sup> "I Norrbotten anses det att den som stått modell för Björn-Erik Höijers litterära figur Isak Juntti var storpredikanten och landstingsmannen Viktor Apelqvist, en av de främsta västlästadianska predikanterna under de första decennierna av detta århundrade. Denne man hade i äktenskapet en enda son." (Ranta-Rönnlund 1971, 149.)

<sup>116</sup> "Etter Purnus død i 1902 gikk ledelsen av den vest-læstadianske retningen, "de første-fødte", over til Viktor Appelqvist (1871–1938). Han fungerte imidlertid dårlig som leder og ble avsatt i 1915 og erstattet med Viktor Bjørkmann (1871–1938)." Kristiansen 2001; [www.love.is/roald/lestad01.htm](http://www.love.is/roald/lestad01.htm);

Larssons about their relationship to the movement. The husband and wife admit that like other people in the area they come from Laestadian families. It also becomes clear that Johan Larsson has come to loathe Laestadianism and that he has moved to the wilderness in order to get away from the Laestadian community which he does not want to have anything to do with.

After a while, the wood carver Henriksson enters with his dog Tjappi, carrying “a grotesque, gaudily painted wooden sculpture of great strength, depicting a naked, fat old man with his hands crossed under his belly” (Höijer 1954, 20–21, my translation).<sup>117</sup> The sculpture is placed on the table and Larsson excitedly realises that it represents the deceased preacher Isak Juntti, whom he and Henriksson irreverently call *gubben* (‘the old man’). When Grape at first does not see the likeness, Larsson entices him to: “Think of a notorious Laestadian preacher, whom you have seen many times in your mother’s chamber. Who is it?” (Höijer 1954, 23, my translation).<sup>118</sup> A conversation follows in which Larsson expresses negative feelings towards Laestadianism in general and towards Isak Juntti in particular: “[. . .] he had one brat in every village along the river, and there are fifty villages there, if not more!” (Höijer 1954, 28, my translation.)<sup>119</sup>

At first Larsson is reluctant to let Grape stay the night in the cottage, but after some pressure from his wife he agrees that he can stay. Preparations are made for the night and the conversation about Laestadianism continues in the second act. Berit takes a stand against her husband and Henriksson, claiming that Laestadianism is not such an ugly teaching as they say.<sup>120</sup> However, she speaks to deaf ears. Larsson goes on expressing his disgust for Laestadianism and Isak Juntti with coarse examples relating to the preacher’s seduction of women. Eventually, Grape admits that “Laestadianism is a primitive teaching for primitive people” (Höijer 1954, 45, my translation).<sup>121</sup> Johan Larsson reminisces about his childhood when the preacher visited his poor home and how the family watched him eating the best food they could offer. Towards the end of the second act, there is a dialogue between Grape and Larsson about the character of Laestadianism. Grape claims that “One feels how true and proper that teaching still is – in

<sup>117</sup> “en grotesk, bjärt målad träskulptur av stor kraft, föreställande en naken, fet gubbe med händerna korslagda under magen.” (Höijer 1954, 20–21.)

<sup>118</sup> “Tänk på en beryktad læstadianpredikant, som du sett många gånger i din mammas kammare. Vem är det?” (Höijer 1954, 23.)

<sup>119</sup> “[. . .] han hade en unge i varje by utefter älven, och där finns femtio byar om inte ännu fler!” (Höijer 1954, 28.)

<sup>120</sup> “Laestadianismen är visst ingen sån där ful lära som du och Henrik säger” (Höijer 1954, 42.)

<sup>121</sup> “Laestadianismen är en primitiv lära för primitiva” (Höijer 1954, 45.)

the wilderness.”. Larsson replies: “Well, if one didn’t know how untrue and improper it is!” Then there is a comment from Grape making connections between the Laestadian movement on the one hand, and darkness, exoticism and a peripheral status on the other: “Still we live as if in an exotic darkness. Far, far away at the utmost fringes of the world, a dark fire is burning!” (Höijer 1954, 60, my translations).<sup>122</sup> A group of Laestadians enter the cottage, unnoticed at first. Berit pleads that they should be allowed to stay. Larsson turns his back to them and they sing a psalm.

When the third act begins, it is night and the Laestadians have left. Johan Larsson and Henriksson are still awake. Grape has retired to a small chamber and Berit is asleep. The men are talking. When Larsson has fallen asleep, Henriksson speaks aloud to himself about how he was whipped by his father as a child: “A true Laestadian.”; “Everything was a sin ; I suffered. His mindset was gloomy. Heavy. Serious. Everything was sin.” (Höijer 1954, 74, my translations.)<sup>123</sup> He ruminates on how his religious father drank alcohol in secret in the sauna with the other men. When pondering upon Laestadianism, he uses words similar to those of Grape in the previous act: “There is something peculiar about that teaching; true. Something dark. Something completely dark, which yet shines.” (Höijer 1954, 74, my translation.)<sup>124</sup> When both men are asleep, Berit wakes up. She gets up and enters the chamber where Grape is. There is a sound from the door and Henriksson wakes up.

The fourth act takes place on the following morning. Berit has changed. She seems to be calm and almost happy. Her dress is different from the previous day – tidier and more womanly. Shots are heard from a distance – Larsson is out hunting. Henriksson and Berit talk about Isak Juntti. Henriksson calls the women who were with Juntti ‘whores’. Berit reprimands him for calling his own mother a ‘whore’ and suggests that he does not understand what kind of relationship Juntti had with women, proposing that it was something beautiful and not the blackest sin as Henriksson believes.

Larsson and Grape enter at the same time. Grape’s looks have changed. He does not look like a minister any more, but more like a ‘layman preacher’ (*lekmannapredikant*): “yes, he resembles Isak Juntti as he is portrayed in the sculpture” (Höijer 1954, 84, my translation).<sup>125</sup> They talk about the previous

<sup>122</sup> “Man känner, hur sann och riktig den läran ändå är – i ödemarken.”; “Om man int visste, hur osann och oriktig den är, nämligen.”; “Vi lever ju ändå i ett exotiskt mörker. Långt långt bort i världens yttersta utkant brinner en mörk eld! (Höijer 1954, 69).

<sup>123</sup> “En äkta læstadian!”, Allting var synd ; jag fick lida. Han var dyster till sinnes. Tung. Allvarlig. Allting var synd.” (Höijer 1954, 74.)

<sup>124</sup> “Det är nånting märkvärdigt med den läran; sant. Nånting mörkt. Nånting alldeles svart, som ändå lyser.” (Höijer 1954.)

<sup>125</sup> “ja, han liknar Isak Juntti sådan han framstår på skulpturen.” (Höijer 1954, 84.)

night and Grape says that he slept badly as he heard strange noises in the chamber. Larsson tells him that it might have been the ghost of a child buried in the chamber by a woman who got into trouble because of Isak Juntti. They talk about Juntti and Grape suggests that the preacher may have come back. Or that one of his sons may be continuing in his footsteps (Höijer 1954, 93). Larsson talks about Berit's transformation, how her cheeks were red and how she was smiling in bed beside him in the morning. Grape gets more and more gloomy suggesting that he has sinned and that heaven is closed to him. They talk about the meeting with the Laestadians the previous evening. Larsson seems to have changed his opinion. His hatred is gone and he confesses that he even felt a kind of happiness while it lasted (Höijer 1954, 101). Like Grape before him, he makes connections between Laestadianism and living in the wilderness:

To be embraced by kin – people you recognise – children of the same teaching and same country; this must be the pinnacle of happiness – in a way – mustn't it? Not having to be alone. Yes, I confessed, that even a person like me felt a kind of happiness while it lasted. . . (Höijer 1954, 101, my translation).<sup>126</sup>

Grape more or less confesses that Berit was with him in the chamber, and when Larsson realises this he becomes furious. There is a slip of the tongue when he refers to Grape as the preacher, but he corrects himself: "The minister, of course." (Höijer 1954, 105 my translation). When confronted with Larsson's fury, Grape suggests that he may have been dreaming and that nothing in fact happened. He tells a somewhat incoherent story about a woman visiting a man at night crying and talking about how another man had treated her badly. He says that the woman knelt on the floor, got cold and that the man helped her up: "The rest is rather muddled." (Höijer 1954, 109, my translation).<sup>127</sup> Eventually, Grape and Henriksson leave. Larsson and his wife are reconciled. The play ends with them embracing and Larsson stroking her hair tenderly. The final stage direction reads: "In the ever-increasing darkness, the sculpture of Isak Juntti is visible, now rather human, perhaps, and maybe even tolerable." (Höijer 1954, 116, my translation).<sup>128</sup>

<sup>126</sup> "Att omfamnas av fränder – människor man känner igen – barn av samma lära och samma land: måst inte det vara höjden av lycka – på ett vis? Att slippa vara ensam. Ja, jag erkände, att tillochmed en sån som jag kände som en sorts lycka medan det pågick. . ." (Höijer 1954, 101.)

<sup>127</sup> "Resten är ganska oklart." (Höijer 1954, 109.)

<sup>128</sup> "I det tilltagande mörkret syns skulpturen av Isak Juntti, nu ganska mänsklig, kanske, och rentav uthärdlig." (Höijer 1954, 116.)

### *Colliander's book about Sallinen as an Intertext*

Björn-Erik Höijer's presentation of *Isak Juntti hade många söner* in the 1954 programme of the stage production concludes with a reference to the Finnish author Tito Colliander's book about the Finnish painter Tyko Sallinen (1879–1955). Sallinen grew up in a strict Laestadian home and one of his most famous paintings reproduced in Colliander's book depicts Laestadians, or "hihuliter" as he calls them. The term *hihulit* is an old denomination for Laestadians referring to their falling into ecstasy and making sounds during prayer-meetings.<sup>129</sup> Like Höijer in the play about Isak Juntti, Colliander highlights a strict Laestadian father's brutal beating of his son (Höijer 1954, 74, Colliander 1952, 39). In both texts, the boy has to go and collect a whip from a carpet of birch twigs and bring it to the father for the purpose of being whipped. Another resemblance is that both Henriksson's father in the play and Tyko Sallinen's are tailors, and yet another is that Henriksson is a wood carver – Sallinen is a painter – and that he has made the grotesque sculpture of Isak Juntti that he brings to the Larsson's home. As a painter, Sallinen also depicted Laestadianism, but there is a major difference as Sallinen's paintings are neither grotesque or coarse, nor negatively inflected. The painting "Hihuliter", for example, (Colliander 1952, 19) represents a group of simply dressed Laestadians engaged in worship in what seems to be a wooden building with a low ceiling. Four of them have a grave, stern countenance, and they are looking straight ahead of them. A hunched woman has closed her eyes, and two people are seen in profile looking up and raising their hands to Christ on the cross and an angel. These two seem to be in direct contact with the Christ and the angel. This kind of spiritual connection and the seriousness of the group looking straight ahead that Sallinen depicts is not something that is emphasised by Höijer. Höijer highlights that he was moved by the story of how a 'son of Laestadianism' broke with the movement, and then perhaps was reconciled with it in loving depictions of divine worship and ecstasy (Höijer 1954b, 6). In my reading, this is not reflected in Höijer's play, but there are parallels between Colliander's depiction of how a Laestadian father whips his son, and the character Henriksson's account

<sup>129</sup> Interestingly, Tyko Sallinen has been described as one of the most important Finnish artists contributing to the creation of ideas of the nation through his depictions of Laestadianism. *Biografiskt lexikon för Finland* emphasises this aspect of Sallinen's work: "Som en skildring av finskhet framstår 'Hihuliter' i varje fall som en av de viktigaste 1900-talsmålningarna; nationen tycker sig upptäcka sin egen avbild, eller åtminstone sina rötter, i Sallinens tavla." ('As a depiction of Finnishness, 'Hihuliter' at least appears as one of the most significant 20<sup>th</sup> century paintings; the nation seems to discover its own image. Or at least its roots, in Sallinen's painting.', my translation.) Karjalainen [2009] (2014); URN:NBN:fi:sls-4178-1416928956784 25 March 2016.

of how he was beaten by his father in the same manner. The details of how the boy had to collect a birch twig from a carpet and bring it to his father who was to give him a whipping correspond. Far from being a narrative of reconciliation with Laestadianism, this episode in Höijer's play and Colliander's book are part of a narrative in which Laestadianism is connected with paternal abuse.

As mentioned above, Höijer says that he was moved by Colliander's book about Sallinen. However, Sallinen's depiction of the group consisting of four sombre, self-absorbed persons, a woman with her eyes closed and two persons reaching up their hands to the Christ and angel above them, expresses sincere devotion and joy at the prospect of connecting with a spiritual reality. Deceit, coarseness of mind and behavior, male brutality and sexual transgressions are not themes depicted by Sallinen, but they are central themes in Höijer's depiction of Laestadianism. The play about Isak Juntti ends with a reconciliation between Gunnar Larsson and his wife Berit, but this does not imply that reconciliation with Laestadianism is a major theme. In fact, as the reasons for the couple's reconciliation are rather dubious, this end does not present a positive image of Laestadianism. It seems clear that Berit has visited Grape at night and that he has listened to her. In giving her the opportunity to unburden herself, he has performed as a 'proper' religious leader. However, the play strongly suggests that the nocturnal encounter did not end with this, but that Grape abused his position in a way that makes him resemble Isak Juntti. In the second act, Grape speaks disapprovingly about Juntti, saying that he was not in control of his passions, that maybe he was seduced by women, that he was lecherous, and that he put his gift and position to an improper use. He concludes that: "He was too primitive. He lacked a sense of responsibility. He had too weak a character." (Höijer 1954, 62).<sup>130</sup> Through the hints about Grape's behaviour in his nocturnal meeting with Berit, the play suggests that the difference between Grape and Juntti might not be that great, as Grape himself seemingly turns out to be one of those spiritual leaders who cannot control their passions. Still, the play also depicts a change in Berit that makes the reconciliation with Gunnar possible. In my reading of the play, the reconciliation is not related to a loving, or reconciled, view of Laestadian divine worship or ecstasy, but to themes of sexual attraction and abuse of power. It is suggested quite early on in the play that Berit is attracted to Grape. In the second act, she admires his hands, complimenting him on how nice they look: "They are so soft." (Höijer 1954, 48, my translation.) Grape flinches but Berit

<sup>130</sup> "Han var för primitiv. Han saknade ansvarskänsla. Han hade för svag karaktär." (Höijer 1954, 62.)



insists: "Yes. They whisper, they do not scream. (Carefully, she touches one of his hands.]" (Ibid., my translation.) Berit goes on expressing her attraction to Grape while he tries to calm her down. The scene is charged with eroticism. Berit is described as clasping Grape's feet and legs passionately as she sinks to the floor, exclaiming: "I can't believe that you finally came to me! That you finally came!" (Ibid., my translation.)

The play makes it clear that Berit is dissatisfied with her marriage to Gunnar. Several reasons for this dissatisfaction are suggested. Gunnar has treated Berit badly. They live isolated in the wilderness and as a consequence, Berit is depressed. Berit also sees the educated minister with his soft hands as a positive contrast to her coarse, unpolished husband. When Gunnar notices that Berit has changed in the last act, this change is related both to her encounter with Grape as a man of the cloth who has listened to her grievances, but also to the fact that he has behaved in a way similar to that of Isak Juntti, who abused his power as a spiritual leader by having sexual relationships outside marriage. Thus, Höijer's play does not offer a depiction of the kind of reconciliation with Laestadianism that Höijer sees as a major theme of Colliander's book about Tyko Sallinen. Instead, the play offers a rather ambiguous image of Laestadianism.

The character Larsson mentions that he was affected by the prayer meeting with the Laestadians, that he experienced community (Höijer 1954, 101). However, this experience is connected with the loneliness and solitude of Larsson's life in the wilderness, and not with any spiritual dimension of Laestadianism. The play indicates that the most important reason for Larsson's change of mood is the fact that his wife Berit has changed. He comments on this in a dialogue with Grape in the last act: "Berit – as she lay stretched out there on the pillow next to me – breathing quietly – cheeks red – and on her lips a kind of girlish smile! The true Berit – the first Berit : she had returned!" (Höijer 1954, 94, my translation.)<sup>131</sup> The "first" and "true" Berit whom Larsson refers to is the woman who broke with the Laestadians when she married him. This Berit was a happy woman, different from the depressed, quiet woman in the first act of the play. Why Berit has changed is an open issue. While it is hinted that the prayer meeting has contributed to breaking her isolation temporarily, the most important factor behind Berit's transformation, in my reading, is the nocturnal meeting with Grape in the chamber. This meeting has given her the opportunity to speak with a spiritual authority about problems

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<sup>131</sup> "Berit – som hon låg utsträckt på kudden där bredvid mej – andades stilla – kinderna röda – och på läpparna som ett flickaktigt smil! Den rätta Berit – den första Berit : hon hade kommit tillbaka!" (Höijer 1954, 94.)

in her marriage. Previously in the play, it is suggested that Berit's depression began after her husband had forced himself on her. It is also strongly hinted that there was a sexual element in the meeting, which Grape feels awkward and penitent about the next day, while Berit is happy. The plot of the play evolves around the theme of a spiritual authority who abuses his power. This mirrors the play's main theme, which is the transgressions of the Laestadian preacher Isak Juntti and how such transgressions continue after his death. This interpretation suggests that deceit and delusion are central components of the kind of spirituality that the play depicts. Larsson is deluded, Berit is engaged in denial and self-delusion and Grape is deceitful – all this put together are the prerequisites for Berit's transformation and the reconciliation between the Larssons. This is an image of Laestadianism that stands in contrast to Sallinen's depiction of sincere devotion and joy in the painting "Hihuliter".

*Höijer's versus Ranta-Rönnlund's Version of the Story about Viktor Apelqvist*

As the description of the play above suggests, there are considerable differences between Björn-Erik Höijer's dramatisation of the story about the western Laestadian preacher Viktor Apelqvist and Sara Ranta-Rönnlund's chapter "Hade Isak Juntti många söner?" in *Nådevalpar* (Ranta-Rönnlund 1971). While Höijer establishes an outsider position in the 1954 programme,<sup>132</sup> Ranta-Rönnlund emphasises that Laestadianism was a significant element in her life. As opposed to Höijer, Ranta-Rönnlund has first-hand knowledge of western Laestadianism. She grew up in a western Laestadian home and both her parents were registered as Laestadians. Her reminiscences include stories about active participation in prayer meetings and being a helper cooking and serving food during meetings. As Höijer points out himself in the programme, his narrative is based on stories he has heard. With this in mind, it is interesting that the title of Höijer's play consists of a statement ('Isak Juntti had many sons') while Ranta-Rönnlund's chapter in *Nådevalpar* is a question ('Did Isak Juntti have many sons?'). The implication of this is that Ranta-Rönnlund enters into a dialogue with Höijer's text, questioning his narrative about a historical character in the Laestadian movement. The outcome of the questioning is that the hearsay, gossip and rumours about Viktor Apelqvist that Höijer presents in a dramatised disguise are grossly exaggerated. Ranta-Rönnlund's

<sup>132</sup> The fact that Björn-Erik Höijer establishes an outsider position vis-à-vis Laestadianism is not mentioned by Anders Persson in his discussion of the play. Persson highlights that Höijer is from Malmberget and that Norrland is the setting of many of his novels (Persson 2010, 77). My point, however, is that although Höijer is from Norrbotten and familiar with life there, he distances himself vis-à-vis Laestadianism in the 1954 programme of *Isak Juntti hade många söner*.

chapter concludes that it became known that there was one illegitimate son, not fifty or more, as suggested in Höijer's play.

Another modification that Höijer makes in relation to established facts about the western Laestadian preacher Viktor Apelqvist is that he changes the Christian name and family name of the preacher from ordinary Swedish names to a Biblical Christian name ("Isak") and a typical Finnish family name ("Juntti"). The 'Finnification' is made more prominent through the use of Finnish words in the dialogue. Thus, there is an explicit ethnification in Höijer's play that foregrounds connections between Finno-Ugric ethnicity and Laestadianism. Ethnification in the shape of 'Finnification' is also a theme of the first reprinted article from *Haparandabladet* in *Den tornedalsfinska litteraturen. Från Kexi till Liksom* (Pohjanen & Johansson 2007). The article critically examines a Lutheran minister's presentation of the Torne Valley in Skåne in southern Sweden (Pohjanen & Johansson 2007, 47–52).<sup>133</sup> As indicated by the main title of the chapter, 'Ethnic Key – Prejudice and Ignorance', the purpose of the article is to show how 'ethnic keys', prejudices and ignorance have shaped narratives about the Torne Valley produced by people who view its people and culture from a distance. The writer draws attention to specific phenomena that the Lutheran minister in Skåne presents as different and strange. The minister particularly highlights that this part of Sweden is an area inhabited by Finns ("finnbygder", Pohjanen & Johansson 2007, 47). The minister also foregrounds that 90 per cent of the population has Finnish as their mother tongue (ibid.). The *liikutuksia* at Laestadian prayer meetings are seen as "genuine expressions of primitive people's lack of ability to control their feelings" (Pohjanen & Johansson 2007, 48). Thus, ideas about connections between primitivism, lack of control, Laestadianism and 'Finnishness' are shaped into a narrative which according to Pohjanen and Johansson is ignorant and prejudiced. Pohjanen and Johansson's criticism exemplifies one instance of a negotiation of a contested cultural heritage. The conclusion of the final contribution to the chapter in *Den tornedalsfinska litteraturen. Från Kexi till Liksom* is a strong assertion of the positive power of Laestadianism which constitutes a counter-narrative to the 'prejudiced' and 'ignorant' narratives that have othered and exotified the Torne Valley and deprived it of a culture of its own. The final sentence describes Laestadianism as a "power having promoted culture and providing a spark of life among the population in the northernmost part of our country for more than a decade" (Snell reprinted in Pohjanen & Johansson 2007, 65, my translation).<sup>134</sup>

<sup>133</sup> The original, by the signature B.S., was printed in *Haparandabladet* 11 January 1951.

<sup>134</sup> "kulturfrämjande och livständer kraft bland befolkningen i vår nordligaste landsända i mer än ett sekel" (Snell reprinted in Pohjanen & Johansson 2007, 65).

Furthermore, Höijer's play establishes connections between a northern periphery and living in the wilderness. With indigenous studies' 'spatial vocabulary of colonialism' as a theoretical framework (Smith 2008), the Finno-Ugric ethnicity and Laestadianism portrayed in Höijer's play are depicted as existing outside civilization. While the Established Church represents the centre, the ministers in the wilderness, like Grape in the play, function as missionaries disseminating the values of the centre and exerting control over people's minds. As Ngugi wa Thiong'o pointed out in the 1980s, the colonisation of people's minds is a prominent feature of colonialism (Thiong'o 1986). Following the 'spatial vocabulary of colonialism', missionaries played a vital role in marking the presence of the Centre in the wilderness (Smith 2008, 52–53). This is also one of the functions of ministers of the National Lutheran Church, like Grape in Höijer's play.

By hinting that Grape is the illegitimate son of a notorious Laestadian preacher, and that he performs the same kind of transgression that his presumed father was infamous for, as well as the fact that, after spending the night at the Larssons' home, he is transformed into resembling Isak Juntti, the play evokes the theme of contamination or hybridization. When spending time in the wilderness among people with a Laestadian background, Grape's persona as a minister of the National Swedish Lutheran Church is transformed. When he enters the room in the last act, the stage directions read: "without his 'minister's collar' he resembles a layman preacher much more than a minister of the Established Church; yes, he looks like Isak Juntti does in the sculpture." (Höijer 1954, 84, my translation.)<sup>135</sup> As the stage direction indicates, the play aims at showing how markers of civilization fall off Grape when he is confronted with the wilderness represented by the Finno-Ugric people from Laestadian families and the heritage of Isak Juntti.

Grape, Larsson and Henriksson all refer to Laestadianism as a strange teaching. Henriksson mentions its darkness, that there is something black in it which nevertheless shines (Höijer 1954, 74). Grape talks about it as a dark fire burning at the fringes of the world, pointing out how right its teachings are for the wilderness (op. cit. 60). These descriptions of Laestadianism by characters in the play duplicate Höijer's own statement in the 1954 programme that it is a 'peculiar faith'. One effect of this drawing attention to strangeness is that the movement is exotified. While the connections established to wilderness indicate that the movement's 'otherness' is related to the periphery of the nation and the civilised world, the emphasis on ethnic minority status also contribute to the exotification. So do the comments

<sup>135</sup> "utan 'prästkrag' påminner han bra mycket mera om en lekmanapredikant än om en högkyrkopräst; ja, han liknar Isak Juntti sådan han framstår på skulpturen." (Höijer 1954, 84.)

connecting Laestadianism with darkness and blackness, which metaphorically draw attention to the movement being connected with irrationalism and mysticism alien to enlightenment and the kind of modernity cherished in the building of the modern Swedish welfare state. 'Strangeness', geographical distance, a Finnish-speaking population and a sparsely populated region are themes addressed in *Den tornedalsfinska litteraturen. Från Kexi till Liksom* in the contributions of the chapter "Etnisk nyckel – fördom och okunnighet" ('Ethnic key – prejudice and ignorance'). In the context of this volume, which was published in 2007, the foregrounding of outsider narratives, which present a misleading image of the Torne Valley and its inhabitants, exemplify a postcolonial strategy aiming at criticism of a history of marginalization, and the production of counter-narratives that contribute to positive self-images. As mentioned above, Laestadianism is one element in local Tornedalian culture that is given a positive evaluation in Pohjanen's and Johansson's Tornedalian literary history from 2007.

A comparison between Höijer's and Ranta-Rönnlund's use of narratives about the preacher Viktor Apelqvist shows that while Ranta-Rönnlund treats the subject matter in a sober mode, rejecting rumours and gossip that she finds unfounded, Höijer establishes a dichotomy between the civilised world and its outside, using tall stories about the scandalous life of a preacher. The effect is that the otherness of the peripheral north is emphasised. Sara Ranta-Rönnlund's chapter about Viktor Apelqvist in *Nådevalpar* is a counter-narrative to the portrait of Isak Juntti and Laestadianism in Höijer's play. Both writers draw attention to negative aspects of the movement, such as the existence of hypocritical, dictatorial preachers taking advantage of poor people. Both also connect the spread of Laestadianism with wilderness and lack of education. But, a difference is that while Sara Ranta-Rönnlund retells stories and events from her own life world, Höijer presents an outsider's view of a character and a movement that gains larger than life qualities in a narrative of otherness, exoticism and strangeness.

One aspect of Höijer's play published by Bonniers and performed at Kungliga Dramaten in Stockholm is that Laestadianism is isolated from the geographical and cultural contexts depicted in the play. When viewed from the vantage point of postcolonial theory, this kind of displacement is problematic because of its connections with issues of power and the right to define:

Isolated from their own geographical and cultural contexts, they [in this case, people or animals exhibited at royal courts] represented whatever was projected onto them by the societies into which they were introduced. Exotics in the metropolises were a significant part of imperial displays of power and the plenitude of empires. (Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin 2009, 88)

Höijer's play represents exotification in the sense that it presents a narrative of Laestadianism and Laestadians that may titillate the public imagination by drawing attention to sexual transgressions, ecstasy and mystery within an ethnic minority in the periphery of the nation. Another postcolonial theme is the minister Grape's transformation, as he seems to 'go native' when his persona as a Lutheran minister is dissolved. In Höijer's version, this kind of hybridity experienced by Grape is not empowering, but an example of the frailty of civilization when put under pressure in the wilderness.<sup>136</sup>

### *Novels by Höijer Depicting Oppressive Laestadianism*

As a writer, Höijer has strong ties to his native town of Malmberget and the province of Norrbotten where it is located. This is highlighted in presentations of his work which place him among the 'neo-provincialists'. *Den svenska litteraturen*, volume 3, raises the question whether there was a 'neo-provincialism' and concludes that there was indeed such a trend after World War II (Furuland 1999, 336). Another history of Swedish literature, *Litteraturens historia i Sverige*, presents Björn-Erik Höijer briefly under the title "Från nyprovinsialism till globalism" ('From neo-provincialism to globalism') – Höijer is one of the authors presented representing 'neo-provincialism' (Olsson & Algulin 1987, 517). Höijer himself emphasised his ties to Malmberget. When addressing this theme, the website "norrbotensförfattare.se" quotes him saying: "My feeling for Norrbotten has become stronger over the years. Malmberget is my solid basis on earth and I am grateful for having had the opportunity to grow up here" (my translation).<sup>137</sup> Höijer himself, as well as presentations of him, emphasises that he writes about a cultural and geographical landscape that he is strongly connected to. As mentioned in the discussion of the play *Isak Juntti hade många söner* above, this does not imply that he always presents insider narratives. Through the programme from 1954 in which Höijer emphasises that his knowledge about Laestadianism is based on stories he has come across, he establishes an outsider position. This is of importance when it comes to the issue of exotification.

Bengt Pohjanen, who himself has written about Laestadius and Laes-

<sup>136</sup> *Post-Colonial Studies: The Key Concepts* offers the following discussion of colonialist fears of going native: "The fear of contamination that is at the heart of colonialist discourse, and which results in the menacing ambivalence of **mimicry** or the obsessive colonialist fear of **miscegenation**, is often expressed through a fear amongst the colonisers of **going native**, that is, losing their distinctiveness and superior identity by contamination from native practices." (Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin 2009, 142.)

<sup>137</sup> "Malmberget är min fasta ort på jorden och jag är tacksam för att få ha växt upp här": <http://www.norrbotensförfattare.se/indexFörfattare.php?xnr=483d18f90c9df&rubrik=3>, 15 March 2016.



tadianism in various genres, is explicitly critical to Höijer in *Den tornedalsfinska litteraturen: Från Keksi till Liksom*. Pohjanen describes Höijer as one of the authors using an ethnic key when depicting the specific culture of Meänmaa. Other authors using the same perspective according to Pohjanen are Selma Lagerlöf and Stina Aronsson (Heith 2009b, 215). In this context, Pohjanen describes Aronsson as a writer who opens up Meänmaa using an ethnic key forged by Swedes: “In her stories prejudices are preserved.” (Pohjanen 2007, 73, Heith 2009b *ibid.*). In the same chapter, Pohjanen mentions Höijer as an exponent of ‘ethnoracism’ (“etnoracism”, Pohjanen 2007, 73). These are strong words, describing Aronsson and Höijer as authors presenting prejudiced narratives about the Tornedalians in Meänmaa and the specific kind of spirituality in the shape of Laestadianism that spread among the Finnish speaking population of Norrbotten.

Stina Aronsson’s novel *Hitom himlen* (‘On this side of heaven’) includes an episode about a prayer meeting attended by the character Mira. Mira falls into ecstasy, described in terms similar to those of Höijer in *Det är något bortom Bergen*. Mira’s rapture is described as disturbing for the people around her – their hearts are filled with agony: “In the end, she lost every inch of self-control and roared and howled without tears.” (Aronsson 1946, 220, my translation.)<sup>138</sup> The chapter with the episode about the prayer meeting is called ‘The Lover’ (“Älskaren”). The title is a reference to Mira’s attraction to the preacher. After the meeting, she leaves her husband to follow him. Both the theme of religious ecstasy, the *liikutuksia* of Laestadianism, resembling madness and described with a negative terminology, as well as the theme of a married woman’s sexual attraction to a preacher, are used also by Björn-Erik Höijer, as mentioned above.

In Pohjanen’s first novel, *Och fiskarna svarade Guds frid* (‘And the fish answered God’s peace’) from 1979, there is a direct reference to Höijer’s novel *Djävulens kalsonger* and the play about Isak Juntti. The novel’s main character, Kurt Göran Polemalm, is irritated by a TV programme which in his opinion presents a misleading image of the town of Haparanda on the Swedish-Finnish border in the Torne Valley. In this context, he makes the reflection that the reason behind this prejudiced image must be “Höijer’s novels and plays, such as *The Devil’s Long Johns* and *Isak Juntti*” (Pohjanen 1979, 92, my translation).<sup>139</sup> This reflection suggests that although Höijer was born in Malmberget in northern Sweden and grew up there, this does not prevent him from producing narratives of northern Sweden that are

<sup>138</sup> “Till sist miste hon all självkontroll och tjöt och ylade tårlöst.” (Aronsson 1946, 220.)

<sup>139</sup> “Han tänkte att det nog var Höijers romaner och pjäser, *Djävulens kalsonger* och *Isak Juntti* och sådana.” (Pohjanen 1979, 92.)

deceptive. In the debut novel, the character Poleman asks himself: "From where did he [Höijer] get such a model for Haparanda.", thus questioning Höijer's depiction of Haparanda (Pohjanen 1979, 92, my translation).<sup>140</sup> In this case, the critique suggests that Höijer uses models presenting Haparanda as a town with old men stumbling out of tumbledown shacks – a model that the character Poleman rejects (Pohjanen 199, 92). Without making too much of this reference in Pohjanen's first novel, it is clear that the novel raises questions about representations, in particular representations that present northern Sweden as an opposite to the modern, progressive welfare state. In Pohjanen's later discussion of authors' using ethnic keys in *Den tornedalsfinska litteraturen: Från Kexi till Liksom*, he continues this critique, adding the theme of ethnicity to the production of prejudiced representations (Pohjanen 2007, Heith 2009b).

Although Höijer does not consistently emphasise negative aspects of Laestadianism (Höijer 1954 b, 6), intolerance, hypocrisy and bullying within Laestadian communities are prominent themes of several of his novels. The setting of *Trettio silverpengar* ('Thirty pieces of silver') from 1949 is a community marked by the local prayer-house where not everything is what it seems to be. The major theme of *Mannen på myren* ('The man in the bog') from 1957 is intolerance. The main character of the novel, 'the man in the bog', is Albert Eliasson who moved to a small village consisting of five houses when he married a woman from a Laestadian family. Eliasson is not accepted by the Laestadian villagers, and as a consequence he and his wife are excluded and denied any help or support. A visiting geographer is stuck in the village as the midday thaw makes travelling across the bog difficult. The visitor both admires and abhors what he sees of the village and its inhabitants. The isolation and primitiveness are like nothing he has experienced before – only three Swedish miles from civilization. As in the play about Isak Juntti, Laestadianism is connected with a geography of wilderness outside civilization. A key episode of the novel evolves around Eliasson's attempts to collect much needed hay at the station situated on the other side of the bog. Although the village desperately needs the hay, Eliasson, who has taken on himself to collect it, does not get any help. He does not ask if he can borrow a horse, and nobody offers him one. Instead he attempts to pull a sledge loaded with the hay himself. The effort does not succeed and the hay is lost. This is a very different narrative of life in the wilderness compared to that of Sara Ranta-Rönnlund in her four books from the 1970s (Ranta-Rönnlund 1971, Ranta-Rönnlund 1972, Ranta-Rönnlund 1973, Ranta-Rönnlund 1978). Ranta-Rönnlund repeatedly emphasises that people

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<sup>140</sup> "Varifrån hade han fått ett sådant mönster för Haparanda." (Pohjanen 1979, 92.)

in the wilderness helped one another, and among her reminiscences there are no examples of people refusing to assist their neighbours. Höijer, on the contrary, depicts an intolerance among the Laestadians in *Mannen på myren* that is irrational, and even self-destructive, as their exclusion of Eliasson and unwillingness to help him does not remedy the desperate lack of hay in the village, which has dire consequences for the cattle-farmers.

Religious intolerance in a Laestadian community is also the main theme of the novel *Djävulens kalsonger* from 1974. The setting is a small village in a mining-district in Norrbotten. All the inhabitants are Laestadians of the western branch, which in the world of the novel requires complete submission and denial of worldly things. The main character Helge, who has grown up in this atmosphere, eventually protests against this form of spirituality that takes pride in self-denial and lack of joy. He marries a Finnish woman, Agnes, and they move to a house in the village that he has inherited. Helge and Agnes do not conform to the strict behavioural code of the village. They paint their house red, put up curtains (by the Laestadians called 'the devil's long johns') in front of the windows, and Agnes has flower pots on the window sills. One of the leading men in the village sees it as his duty to return Helge to obedience and submission. The novel ends with the couple leaving the village, feeling more and more liberated as the distance from it increases. The title of the novel evokes a phenomenon within Laestadianism that is frequently associated with backwardness, namely the ever-expanding 'catalogues of sin' ('syndakataloger') which the preachers constructed in order to control the lifestyle and morals of their followers. In Sara Ranta-Rönnlund's reminiscences, this particular Laestadian phenomenon is connected with patriarchal structures whereby male preachers strove to maintain their grip over people's minds.

In Höijer's 1974 novel, a distinction is made between the mining-town and the Laestadian village: "Those who lived out here [in the village] were considered retarded and reactionary, compared to the enlightened and advanced mining people." (Höijer 1974, 77, my translation.)<sup>141</sup> With 'the spatial vocabulary of colonialism' as a backdrop, this distinction may be related to the issue of 'the Line'. Linda Tuhiway Smith describes how 'the spatial vocabulary of colonialism' establishes a dichotomy between the colonial Centre and its Outside (Smith 2008, 52–53). She points out that: "The establishment of military, missionary or trading stations, the building of roads, ports and bridges, the clearing of bush and the mining of minerals all involved processes of marking, defining and controlling space." (Smith op. cit

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<sup>141</sup> "De som levde här ute ansågs vara efterblivna och reaktionära i motsats till det upplysta och avancerade gruvfolket." (Höijer 1974, 77.)

52.) In this kind of colonial geography, a mining-town represents a location controlled by the Centre, while a village without roads or markers of modernity such as radios and television sets represents the outside of civilization. The couple leaving the Laestadian village at the end of the novel experience liberation as they approach the mining-town, which stands for the Line exerting the presence of the Centre in areas that are controlled.

The novel depicts a space where the Centre has outposts in the form of mining-villages and Lutheran Churches which function as Lines that establish boundaries and map territory. This theme is evoked by an episode when Helge and Agnes visit the Jukkasjärvi Church on their journey away from the village. This church has a famous altar-piece by Bror Hjorth depicting Laestadius preaching to the Sámi. Responses to this colourful altarpiece is a recurring theme of the novel. At the beginning of the novel, Aron, one of the most prominent Laestadians of the village, remembers the day when the altar-piece was installed as a day of defeat and shame for Laestadianism (Höijer 1974, 22). It is clear that its depiction of Laestadianism represents sin for the strict western Laestadian patriarchs of the village. When Helge takes Agnes to the church he says: "My guess is that you will be overjoyed. There are flowers on it, you see, real damned flowers of sin." (Höijer 1974, 249, my translation.)<sup>142</sup>

Laestadianism in Bror Hjorth's version is full of vivacity, colour and joy, and this is a version that appeals both to Helge and Agnes. In Höijer's narrative, the villagers rejecting the values of the Centre and holding onto a pietism incompatible with modernity are represented as deluded and backward. The kind of Laestadianism that has found its way into the Lutheran Church, on the other hand, is represented as more palatable and fit for inclusion in the modern welfare-state. In her reminiscence books, Sara Ranta-Rönnlund frequently comments on differences between the western and eastern branches of Laestadianism. While she is critical of the strict, moralizing western branch with dictatorial preachers, she has more sympathy for the eastern branch and its focus on forgiveness and mercy. As opposed to Höijer, Ranta-Rönnlund depicts diversity, even conflicts, within Laestadianism. Höijer makes no such distinctions between a strict, joyless, moralizing and condemning version of Laestadianism and a more joyful one in *Djävulens kalsonger*. Sara Ranta-Rönnlund, who writes in the genre of reminiscence literature, has a different approach. Diversity within Laestadianism is a theme in her reminiscence books, which reflect the fact is that there is great difference between the Laestadianism practiced by the elders

<sup>142</sup> "Jag tippar, att du blir stormförtjust. Det är blommor på den, ser du, riktiga jävla syndens blommor." (Höijer 1974, 249.)

in a small village like the one which is the setting of *Djävulens kalsonger*, and the eastern branch of Laestadianism and the kind of Laestadianism that may be incorporated in a Lutheran church, exemplified by Bror Hjorth's altarpiece in Jukkasjärvi church on the other.

### *Laestadianism and Oppressive Gender Structures*

The theme of Laestadianism as a movement with dictatorial, patriarchal preachers meddling with people's lives is present also in fiction inspired by feminist theory. Like Sara Ranta-Rönnlund, Ester Cullblom (b. 1932) had a late debut. She was 72 when her first book *Olga: Kejsarinnan av Kummavuopio* ('Olga: The empress of Kummavuopio') was published in 2004 (Heith 2009c). The title alludes to Olga Raattamaa, a historical character who moved to Kummavuopio after getting married. Kummavuopio was then the northernmost settlement in Sweden. The book is a historical novel about a strong woman living under harsh conditions.

Cullblom's second book, *Första tvättmaskinen i Ohtanajärvi – och andra berättelser från Tornedalen* ('The first washing machine in Ohtanajärvi – and other stories from the Torne Valley') is a collection of short stories (Cullblom 2006). The title story starts with a family father saying that he will not order a washing machine as everything has worked just fine without one for so long. "There are only fifteen of us left at home now." (Cullblom 2006, 9, my translation.) The theme of the story is the conservatism of a patriarchal family father who sees no need for devices that might make the women's work less burdensome. Laestadianism is not a major theme of the collection, but one of the stories is about a prayer-meeting seen from the perspective of a little girl who does not understand what it is all about. In "O huvud blodigt sårat" ('Oh, head, wounded, bloody', 76–79), the girl who is the narrator and focaliser wonders why her father is crying at the meeting. She ponders about the meaning of words like 'sacrificial lamb' and 'drop of blood' and she wonders why Jesus was taken away to be crucified. She cannot understand how it can be her mother's, father's and everybody's fault. Neither can she understand the issue of sin – how the people at the meeting can be sinful, which they claim to be. Although the little girl finds the ritual incomprehensible, the story hardly presents any serious criticism of Laestadianism. This, however, is the case in Cullblom's second novel *Berta och Byn. En kvinnas liv i Tornedalen* ('Berta and the village: A woman's life in the Torne Valley') from 2007.

The main character of *Berta och Byn. En kvinnas liv i Tornedalen*, Berta, marries a man from the Torne Valley and moves there to live with her husband (Heith 2009c, 79–80). Her life becomes miserable. She is raped by her husband's brother who brags to his mates about having made her pregnant.

She realises that as the wife of Gunnar she is seen as a maid whose obligation it is to take care of the cowshed and household. The men of the family are described as sexist. Her father-in-law lifts her skirts up when he passes by her, grunting slyly (Cullblom 2007, 10), and the male family members make coarse sexual allusions. The year is 1963 and Berta is 22. Laestadianism has a strong grip over people's minds. When Berta's mother-in-law is wounded badly, a preacher suggests that it is God's punishment and a reminder of the Last Day (Cullblom 2007, 28). On one occasion, a visiting Laestadian preacher talks about the sinful life of Tornedalian young people in Stockholm, about the horror of sexual relations and contraceptives (Cullblom 2007, 68–69). Cullblom's Torne Valley is a place dominated by men. Among these men, the Laestadian preachers use religion to subdue and control people and to reinforce oppressive gender patterns.

Tornedalian women's lack of power and influence is a theme Cullblom has also discussed in the context of regional politics. One of her studies, which is part of a regional development programme in the administrative province of Norrbotten, draws attention to the migration of women from the Torne Valley, depopulation and cultural and economic stagnation (Heith 2009c, 76). The report *Män styr och kvinnor flyr Tornedalen – Kvinnliga strategier i en värld av manlig maktdominans* ('Men rule and Women flee from the Torne Valley – Women's strategies in a world of male power dominance') was commissioned by the county administration of Norrbotten in a project aimed at promoting gender equality in line with national goals (Heith 2009c, 76). Depopulation and economic and cultural stagnation are problems addressed in regional politics. The County Administrative Board of Norrbotten has reported "women migration to be about twice as common compared to that of men in the 18–24-year age group in 2005." (Juntti-Henriksson 2008, 17.) This of course affects the local economy in a negative way. It is of great regional importance that women stay in the region, and in this context the implementation of gender equality is seen as a viable political strategy. The image of the gender equal region is also a component of new European regionalism. This new form of regionalism includes the creation of new regional images aiming at the promotion of regional growth and prosperity in the knowledge-driven economy (Hudson 2008, Heith 2009c, 77). This has affected Swedish regional politics: "since the end of the nineteen-nineties, gender equality has been introduced as an overarching, horizontal goal that is to infuse and permeate all aspects of Swedish regional policy" (Hudson 2008, 261).

According to Cullblom's report and novel about Berta, the strong local culture, of which Laestadianism and the system with laymen preachers are a part, has preserved traditional gender patterns that are oppressive for



women. This is also the conclusion of Ann-Kristin Juntti-Henriksson's thesis from 2008, *Women Narratives from Tornedalen – Northernmost Sweden. Gender and Culture in Perspective*. Juntti-Henriksson does not specifically address Laestadianism in her brief characterisation of Tornedalian culture. However, she does mention on a general level that spiritual features are part of a culture that characterises a society or a social group, and that this includes value systems, traditions and beliefs (Henriksson-Juntti 2008, 22).<sup>143</sup> Cullblom's novel *Berta och Byn* depicts the same kind of gender structures and local Tornedalian traditions that Juntti-Henriksson discusses, but with the difference that Laestadianism is explicitly mentioned as a spiritual tradition at odds with modernity. Juntti-Henriksson also draws attention to patriarchal structures, but without mentioning Laestadianism. The system with laymen preachers who took upon themselves to specify what was sinful and condemn the sinners is not mentioned either, as opposed to in Cullblom's novel. The Tornedalian culture and village mentality depicted by Cullblom places Laestadianism within a specific, local culture that is described as cruel, primitive, and misogynist. The specific mentality depicted implies that a man can take the law into his own hands. Berta's brother-in-law motivates his rape of Berta by claiming that it is a compensation for his having been unfairly treated when his brother Gunnar, Berta's husband, was favoured in the division of the estate of their deceased father. Within this narrative, 'traditional Tornedalian culture' is represented as a negative opposite to civilised, modern life.

The character Berta moves from Stockholm to the village in Tornedalen. She finds the Tornedalian family life she experiences uncivilised, strange and demoralizing. The novel ends with Berta stabbing her brother-in-law, the rapist. While Cullblom's first book is about a strong woman who makes ends meet in the northernmost settlement in Sweden, Kummavuopio, the 2007 novel is about a woman who goes under as a consequence of male abuse in a culture where there is no respect for women. Cullblom's negative depiction of Tornedalian traditional male-oriented culture is part of a fiction inspired by the author's interest in the feminist currents that spread in the 1960s and 70s. During this period there were both demands for literature about strong women and examinations of patriarchal gender patterns that disadvantage women (Heith 2009c). While the book about Olga

<sup>143</sup> Juntti-Henriksson's thesis is based on interviews with 103 women from the Torne Valley. The concept 'traditional culture' is mentioned repeatedly. A division of chores and activities on the basis of gender is the 'local culture' in focus in the thesis. Laestadianism is part of this shaping of culture, but this is not specifically mentioned by Juntti-Henriksson. She does mention that the traditional culture of the Torne Valley still existed in the late 1990s (Juntti-Henriksson 2008, abstract).

Rattamaa provides a story about a strong woman who is a survivor, the one about Berta presents a story about a woman who is the victim of male abuse in a misogynist culture. In this latter narrative, Laestadianism is depicted as one of the components contributing to a local culture and mentality that oppress women.

*Annika Korpi's Hevonen Häst*

While Ester Cullblom is from the Swedish Torne Valley, Annika Korpi (b. 1972), who was born in Stockholm, has family ties to the Torne Valley as her father is from there. Korpi belongs to a younger generation. Like Cullblom, she uses Tornedalian subject matter, but their respective depictions of Tornedalian culture differ. Korpi's debut novel *Hevonen Häst* from 2003 is about a young girl in a dysfunctional family in Stockholm. The girl Eila visits her paternal grandmother in The Torne Valley. She is both the narrator and focaliser, so the Torne Valley is seen through the eyes of a visiting girl from Stockholm (Heith 2009c). In Eila's narrative, urban Stockholm, where her mother and sister are struggling with mental problems, is contrasted to the Torne Valley. In Stockholm, Eila takes care of her mother, struggling to prevent her from committing suicide. Her father is absent. It is not clear where he is, but in Eila's fantasy he is an agent on an international mission.

The title of Korpi's novel explicitly evokes Tornedalian culture and the bilingual situation in the border area. It alludes to a mnemonic rhyme used by Tornedalian children when learning Swedish (Heith 2009c, 80). From Eila's child's perspective, life in the Torne Valley appears more satisfying than life in Stockholm. The most important person for Eila when she comes to the Torne Valley is her aged paternal grandmother who represents caring and concern. The only male presence Eila encounters is a friendly, helpful farmer and three 'queer' male poodles belonging to her grandmother's sister. These poodles with their dainty moves and ribbons around their necks are represented as caricatures of masculinity. In the novel's Torne Valley, masculinity is not threatening in any way (Heith 2009c, 82), nor are women oppressed there. Laestadianism is mentioned through references to the religious activities in the eastern part of the village (Heith 2009c, 83). In Eila's mind, Laestadianism appears as something mystical and exciting, but never as frightening or repressive (ibid.).

While Ester Cullblom depicts the Torne Valley of the 1960s as patriarchal, backward and misogynist in her novel about Berta from 2007, Annika Korpi depicts the same place as a positive contrast to Stockholm in her novel from 2003. Both Cullblom's and Korpi's main characters are from Stockholm, but there is a difference between the respective author's depiction of the protagonist's encounters with Tornedalians and Tornedalian

culture. In Korpi's novel, people can act unconventionally without being noticed by the authorities. This is exemplified by one of the characters, a minister who has been removed from office. He lives in a caravan, putting out rat poison and running mile after mile screaming across the bogs. Such behaviour would not be possible in Stockholm, where insanity is noticed by the authorities and the mentally disturbed are confined in clinics, like Eila's mother and sister. Korpi's novel depicts the Torne Valley as a place with fewer restrictions and regulations than Stockholm. As opposed to in Cullblom's *Berta och Byn*, this has no negative consequences.

The Torne Valley of Korpi's novel is depicted as a periphery that stands out in a positive way compared to Stockholm. This periphery with strong caring women and friendly, helpful men is a land where people such as the failed minister can be freer than in Stockholm. This implies that the centre, in the shape of Stockholm, is not represented as a positive contrast to the Tornedalian village. Neither is Laestadianism depicted as an element of a backward, misogynist culture, as in Ester Cullblom's novel about Berta and in Sara Ranta-Rönnlund's books from the 1970s. While Ranta-Rönnlund depicts the modern Swedish welfare state as a positive contrast to the backward northern periphery with its patriarchal, misogynist culture, Korpi problematises life in the centre in a fashion that makes Tornedalian village life seem quite appealing when seen through the eyes of a girl from a dysfunctional urban family.

In Cullblom's novel, the miserable life of the woman main character Berta is related to a kind of Tornedalian masculinity that oppresses women. Juntti-Henriksson, who has examined connections between gender structures in the Torne Valley and traditional culture, gives a more nuanced picture when she points out that: "Many women have a clear positive view of men in Tornedalen and describe them as masculine, strong, targeted, trustworthy, silent, and hard working. Some women even feel that Tornedalen men are the ideals of what men should be like." (Juntti-Henriksson 2008, 58.) There is also research about the role of women in Laestadius' work emphasising that women play a positive role both in Laestadius' preachings as symbols of divine love and mercy, and as characters in real life whom he esteemed and thought highly of (Nilsson 1988, Elgvin 2001). When using the metaphor 'the heavenly parent', Laestadius highlights that the main characteristic of this parent is its 'mother's heart'. It is also known that Laestadius used both women and men as missionaries to spread the revival. For example a young Sámi woman was sent to Gratangen in Troms, Norway, by Laestadius (Schøyen 1977, 58).

While Cullblom streamlines her depiction of Tornedalian traditional culture into a dichotomous narrative about a male abuser and a woman vic-

tim, Korpi presents a narrative of strong, target-oriented, trustworthy, silent and hard- working men in line with the description in the quote above from Juntti-Henriksson. In Cullblom's narrative, Laestadianism complies with oppressive, traditional local culture, while Korpi's depiction of Laestadianism is not negatively inflected. On the contrary, Korpi depicts Laestadianism as part of a culture that stands out positively in relief to urban Stockholm. Both Cullblom and Korpi depict subjective, emotional responses to Laestadianism, using Laestadianism as a theme in imaginative writing. Although they do not aim at presenting complex narratives based on known facts and previous research, they nevertheless contribute to the contemporary negotiation of the value and meaning of Laestadianism.

## Laestadius and Laestadianism in Bengt Pohjanen's Narrativisations of Self and Place

Bengt Pohjanen is one of the local cultural personas of the Swedish Torne Valley who has contributed most to contemporary linguistic and cultural mobilisation among the Swedish Tornedalians. This involves the adoption of perspectives from postcolonial theory in the production of narratives that challenge Swedish colonialism, and the cultural homogenisation that has marginalised the Tornedalian minority in a Swedish national context. Pohjanen's career as a writer spans a period of almost four decades. He made his debut as a novelist in 1979, but had published minor works before that. Although he repeats themes, motives, linguistic expressions and stories connected with his Tornedalian minority background, explicit references to ideas from postcolonial and minority studies have by and by become prominent elements in his texts. Already in his debut novel, Pohjanen explores themes that reappear in later texts, for example in the autobiographical books *Smugglarkungens son* ('The son of the smuggler king') and *Tidens tvång* ('The constraint of time'), from 2007 and 2009 respectively. There are also considerable similarities between these two autobiographical books and the novel *Kasaland* from 1984. A major difference is that while *Kasaland* is presented and marketed as a novel, *Smugglarkungens son* and *Tidens tvång* are presented as autobiographies.

Studies of othering, colonial complicity and internal colonialism in the Nordic countries developed at the beginning of the 21st century (Mattis ed. 2005, Ekström & Gerholm eds. 2006, Keskinen et al. eds. 2009, Loftsdóttir and Jensen eds. 2012, Heith 2017b). At the time when Pohjanen began his career as a writer, there was no discussion of postcolonialism as a phenomenon related to assimilationist policies, marginalisation of minorities and racialisation in the Nordic countries. On the contrary, there was a trend in the Nordic countries whereby they saw themselves as exceptional, modern and more democratic and inclusive than parts of the world seen as less progressive (see Keskinen et al. eds. 2009, and Loftsdóttir & Jensen eds. 2012). Today these self-images are being challenged by studies that highlight discrepancies between images of modern, progressive welfare states on the one hand, and histories and practices of marginalisation and racism on the other. One field where postcolonial perspectives are applied to the analysis of the marginalisation and suppression of minority cultures is studies of Sámi and Tornedalian counter-narratives expressed in art and literature

(Heith 2009b, Heith 2010a, Heith 2012, Heith 2012, Heith 2014, Heith 2015b, Heith 2015c).

This chapter will present Bengt Pohjanen's alternative narrative of a part of Sweden often represented as peripheral (see Eriksson 2010). The analysis is based on a reading of fiction and non-fiction by Pohjanen from the 1970s and onwards. Pohjanen's counter-narrative is shaped in opposition to notions of Swedish colonialism interconnected with assimilationist policies that have resulted in negative attitudes towards the traditional Finno Ugric Tornedalian culture.<sup>144</sup> Negative attitudes together with assimilationist policies are the backdrop of a cultural marginalisation that has resulted in identity loss, language loss, and shame. These are themes reflected in the writings of Bengt Pohjanen already in the 1970s. When highlighting these themes, Pohjanen criticises the cultural homogenisation characteristic of the building of the modern Swedish welfare-state (see Arvastsson 1999). The postcolonial awareness of the texts is related to the fact that the Swedish Tornedalians are presented as a group that has been constructed as domestic others due to their peripheral status in the Swedish nation-state. This peripheral status is connected with Finno Ugric ethnicity, as well as cultural and linguistic background. It is also of importance that the Torne Valley is located in the geographical periphery of the Swedish nation state and that it is an area that in many respects epitomises that which was seen as undesirable in the modern, progressive welfare state: 'backwardness', a traditional rural life style that became increasingly threatened by the modernisation of Swedish society, poverty and a low level of education (also see Eriksson 2010). This is the geographical location where Lars Levi Laestadius lived and served as a minister in the 19th century, and where the Laestadian revival spread, particularly among the Finnish and Sámi-speaking minorities.

## Bengt Pohjanen

Bengt Erik Pohjanen was born in 1944 in the village of Kassa in the parish of Pajala, close to the Finnish border. His father's family were atheists while his mother's were pious Laestadians. Pohjanen has had a diverse, multi-faceted career. He studied theology in Uppsala and was ordained as a minister in 1970 in the Evangelical Lutheran Swedish Church. He has a PhD in Finnish literature from 1979 – his thesis explores the authorship of the Finnish, Laestadian, author Antti Hyry. In 2004, he was ordained as an Orthodox Christian priest in Paris. Prior to this, he had converted to the Or-

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<sup>144</sup> In *Smugglarkungens son* and *Tidens tvång* Pohjanen uses the term 'Ugric' to denominate the specific Tornedalian culture and to describe various phenomena connected with it. He calls the language spoken Finnish and alternatively Meänkieli.



thodox Christian faith after resigning from his position as a clergyman and leaving the Evangelical Lutheran Swedish Church.<sup>145</sup> Pohjanen wrote the letter of resignation from his position as a minister under chaotic circumstances during a meeting with the Cathedral Chapter of Luleå in February 1984 (Michanek 1984, *Upsala Nya Tidning* 1984).<sup>146</sup> Before his resignation, Pohjanen had claimed in the media that there was too much religion in the Swedish Church, in terminology echoing Laestadius' words in the novel *Ropandes röst*: "There has been too much religion in the National Swedish Lutheran Church and too little Christianity." (Abbing 1981, my translation).<sup>147</sup>

Parallel to, and succeeding, these activities Pohjanen has had a career as an author, translator and publisher. His first novel, *Och fiskarna svarar Guds frid* ('And the fish answer God's peace') was published in 1979 by Norstedts, Sweden's oldest, still existing publishing house. In a short prose text on the theme of how he became a writer, Pohjanen writes that when he had signed the contract for the publishing of his first novel, the editor at Norstedts, Thomas von Vegesack, opened the door to the corridor and exclaimed "Now the Torne Valley enters Swedish literature via Riddarholmen [in central Stockholm where Norstedts is located]!" (Pohjanen 1996, 148). This anecdote illustrates that the Torne Valley is a part of Sweden that has been peripheral in national cultural production, a theme which Pohjanen continues to elaborate on and emphasise in his later fiction and non-fiction. Norstedts has continued publishing works by Pohjanen from his debut as a novelist in Swedish and onwards. In 2007 and 2009 respectively, Norstedts published the autobiographical books *Smugglarkungens son* ('The son of the smuggler king') and *Tidens tvång* ('The constraint of time'). These are published in Swedish, and marketed and sold in the same manner as other literature written in the national majority language. However, Pohjanen has multiple readerships and addressees. He also publishes in Meänkieli and Finnish.

Bengt Pohjanen has had a major importance for the revitalisation of the Tornedalian Finnish language, today officially called 'Meänkieli', and

<sup>145</sup> In the year 2000 the Evangelical Lutheran Swedish Church was separated from the State which it had had close relations with since 1527.

<sup>146</sup> Contemporary articles about Pohjanen and reviews are from the archives of the Sigtuna Foundation (see the list of references). I had the opportunity to stay at the Foundation for a week and work in the archives.

<sup>147</sup> "Det har blivit för mycket religion i svenska statskyrkan och för lite kristendom." (Abbing 1981.)

the development of a written language.<sup>148</sup> The term 'Meänkieli' began to be used in the 1980s. Pohjanen's role as a promoter of Meänkieli is highlighted on the website [norrbottnensforfattare.se](http://norrbottnensforfattare.se) administered by *Norrbottnens länsbibliotek* ('The County Library of Norrbotten'): "No other author is as strongly associated with Meänkieli as Bengt Pohjanen. He has shown that it is possible to write in Meänkieli." (My translation.)<sup>149</sup> Pohjanen's role has in many respects been that of a pioneer when it comes to the revitalisation of the Tornedalian Finnish language.<sup>150</sup> This revitalisation was initiated before the term 'Meänkieli' was officially recognised. The bilingual volume *Tungan mitt i munnen/Kieli keskelä suuta* ('The tongue in the middle of the mouth') includes columns from the local newspaper *Haparandabladet*. In a section entitled "Meänkieli och Pänktti"/"Meänkieli ja Pänktti" ('Meänkieli and Bengt'), issues topical in the 1980s are commented on (Pohjanen 2011). This was a period when there were discussions about whether Tornedalian Finnish ought to be developed into a language of its own, or whether it should be seen as a Finnish dialect (see Wande 1990, 448). In fact, writing in Meänkieli had started as early as the 1940s (see Gröndahl, Hellberg & Ojanen 2002, 148). However, not all Tornedalian writers during this period advocated the use of Meänkieli in writing. While William Snell wrote in Meänkieli, Hilja Byström, described by Bengt Pohjanen as a pioneer in the creation of a specific Tornedalian literature in *Den tornedalsfinska litteraturen. Från Kalkkimaä till Hilja Byström* (Pohjanen & Johansson 2009), did not believe that bilingualism was something to strive for (Gröndahl, Hellberg & Ojanen 2002, 148). In her novel *Byn*, ('The village'), the opinion is

<sup>148</sup> On the website [minoritet.se](http://minoritet.se) it is pointed out that there are different varieties of Meänkieli in Sweden. The ones mentioned are: the Tornedalian variety in Pajala, Övertorneå and Haparanda, the Gällivare variety in Gällivare, and Lannankieli in Kiruna, Kurravaara and Jukkasjärvi. The website was established by the Sámi Council in 2010 at the request of the Government.

<sup>149</sup> "Ingen annan författare förknippas så starkt med meänkieli som Bengt Pohjanen. Han har visat att det är möjligt att skriva på meänkieli." /<http://www.norrbottnensforfattare.se/indexForfattare.php?xnr=481adcdf3e212&rubrik=2>, accessed 16 August 2016.

<sup>150</sup> Attitudes towards Meänkieli vary among Swedish Tornedalians. In a book with interviews done by Mikael Niemi in 1988 and 1989, not all young people interviewed are convinced of the benefits of learning the language (Niemi 1989, also see Gröndahl, Hellberg & Ojanen 2002, 158).

expressed that the aim ought to be that future generations should only use Swedish (Byström 1940, 113).<sup>151</sup>

The columns in *Tungan mitt i munnen/Kieli keskelä suuta* present a history of how the idea that Meänkieli is a separate language that can be used as a written language was formed. It is an emerging history that is depicted, because in the 1980s the outcome was not known, that is, that Meänkieli was to become an officially recognised minority language in Sweden. Pohjanen concludes that from the time when *Lyykeri* ('The Luger pistol'), the first youth novel written in Meänkieli (Pohjanen 1985), was published, he began to see Meänkieli as a language in its own right (Pohjanen 2011, 146). Before that he had seen it more as a dialect. At the time when *Lyykeri* was published, there were no publishing houses publishing in Meänkieli. This is the reason why Pohjanen himself started Kaamos, today run by *Svenska Tornedalingars Riksförbund – Tornionlaaksolaiset*, 'The National Association of Swedish Tornedalians – Tornionlaaksolaiset' (Pohjanen 2011, 152). Pohjanen is also the first author to have written a play in Meänkieli, *Kuutot*, ('The Kuuto family'; Pohjanen 1987), and he was moreover active in the establishment of a Tornedalian theatre, *Tornedalsteatern*. On 27 February, 1988 there was a celebration in Pajala which Pohjanen claims was the official birthday of Meänkieli, even though Meänkieli was not officially recognised as a minority language in Sweden until the year 1999 (Pohjanen 2011, 158–159).<sup>152</sup>

In the autobiographical *Smugglarkungens son*, the narrator depicts his struggle with the Swedish language in his childhood and how he started studying standard Finnish in the want of possibilities to study the local Tornedalian language, later to be named Meänkieli. The adult narrator sees

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<sup>151</sup> *Byn. Berättelse från Tornedalen* is the first part of a trilogy. It was followed by *Ungfolk* 'Young people' (1941) and *Bondfolk* 'Country folk' (1943). The trilogy was translated into the Nordic languages and it was published as a serial story in weekly magazines. Lately, there has been a renewed interest in Hilja Byström in connection with Tornedalian cultural mobilisation. In 2008, Barents Publisher published the novel *Byn* anew. Previous to this, Hilja Byström was highlighted as a pioneer in the second volume of Bengt Pohjanen and Kirsti Johansson's Tornedalian literary history (Pohjanen & Johansson 2009).

<sup>152</sup> A Government decision in 1999 gave Meänkieli the status of a minority language in Sweden. In 2000, Sweden ratified the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages and the Council of Europe Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities.

Swedish, Finnish and Meänkieli as different languages.<sup>153</sup> While Meänkieli is his mother tongue and first language, Swedish and Finnish are characterised as strange languages (Pohjanen 2007c, 224–225). The adult narrator depicts aspirations entertained by the child Bengt in the 1950s that later became topical when the issue of creating a written Tornedalian Finnish language was a topic of the day for Swedish Tornedalians (see Pohjanen 2011, 133–166): “I will give birth to my language and later help others to give birth. I want to be a midwife of the language.”<sup>154</sup> (Pohjanen 2007c, 225.) The same metaphor of giving birth to a language that does not yet exist as a written language reappears in *Tidens tvång* (Pohjanen 2009, 166). This is one example of a blending of the child’s perspective at the time of the story and the adult narrator’s at the time of narration: “I want to become a midwife of language. But I do not yet understand that the language I am writing in [i.e. Swedish] is not my mother tongue.” (Pohjanen 2009, 166, my translation.)<sup>155</sup>

## The Role of Culture for Decolonisation: Expressing Awareness of Oppression and Resistance

In the poem “Jag är född utan språk” (“I was born without a language”), first published in 1973, Bengt Pohjanen draws attention to the development of negative self-images, shame as well as identity loss connected with language loss. The theme of language loss was highlighted early on by Hilja Byström (1908–1993), who wrote about life in the Torne Valley and how it was shaped by Laestadian spirituality. In her debut, *Ett år i Järvi. Berättelser från Tornedalens skogsbygd* (‘A year in Järvi: Stories from the Torne Valley’s forest district’) there is a depiction of the farmer’s son Lennart who experiences muteness and a lack of language when he sits down to write:

Not one letter was born. It was as if the powerful river within him had all of a sudden been stopped by an invincible barrier. Only a faint echo was able to force its way through. He knew what it was: he had no mother tongue. His heart would never be able to speak out. He was mute. [. . .] It could not

<sup>153</sup> As a comparison, it can be mentioned that David Vikgren (b. 1975), who grew up in Övertorneå, strongly emphasises that the Torne Valley is neither Sweden nor Finland in a volume with modifications of a classical Tornedalian oral poem by Antti Keksi, published under the title ‘Antti Keksi-kvade’: “*The Torne Valley is neither Sweden nor Finland. It is a country of its own with its own language.*” (Vikgren 2010, 56, my translation.) Also see Heith 2008, 19.

<sup>154</sup> “Jag skall föda mitt språk och sedan hjälpa andra att föda. Jag vill bli en språkets barnmorska.” (Pohjanen 2007c, 225.)

<sup>155</sup> “Jag vill bli en språkets barnmorska. Men jag förstår ännu inte att det språk jag skriver på inte är mitt modersmål.” (Pohjanen 2009, 166.)

be said in Swedish – it was too Finnish. Yet, it could even less be said in Finnish – it was after all Swedish. (Byström 1932, 142–143, also see Gröndahl, Hellberg & Ojanen 2002, 148).<sup>156</sup>

Hilja Byström is a pioneer in the creation of a specific Tornedalian literature whose contribution is highlighted in the second volume of the Tornedalian Finnish literary history co-authored by Pohjanen: *Den tornedalsfinska litteraturen. Från Kalkkimaå till Hilja Byström* (Pohjanen & Johansson 2009). Already in her debut in 1932, Byström gives expression to the notion that Tornedalian Finnish is neither Swedish, nor Finnish – an idea that was of major importance for the establishment of Tornedalian Finnish as a language of its own, called Meänkieli. Byström's text is a predecessor of Pohjanen's poem "Jag är född utan språk" echoing the themes of muteness, of being neither Swedish nor Finnish, and the lack of a mother tongue that can be used as a written language.

Language loss, and being exposed to negative attitudes because of his Tornedalian Finnish background, are also central themes in Gunnar Kieri's (b. 1928) autobiographical books about the Tornedalian boy Lars: *Av dig blir det ingenting* (Kieri 1976, 'You will come to nothing'), *Jag ska ändå inte stanna* (Kieri 1978, 'I am not going to stay anyway'), *Varför skulle jag ljuga?* (Kieri 1982, 'Why would I lie?'), and *Är han inte svensk?* (Kieri 1985, 'Isn't he Swedish?'). In these books, as well as in *Var som folk!* ('Be like normal people!'), Kieri explores the impact of Swedish assimilationist policies for the creation of negative self-images among the Swedish Tornedalian minority (Kieri 1987). Like Bengt Pohjanen, Kieri highlights Laestadianism as being a part of the local Tornedalian culture. There is a depiction of a Laestadian prayer-meeting in the first volume, *Av dig blir det ingenting*, when the boy Lars has started to work as a log-driver. The use of the Finnish language is highlighted, as well as the sombre mood and the preacher's emphasis on doom and sin. As in other negative depictions of Laestadianism, there is a preacher who is characterised as a hypocrite. While he preaches against sin, he makes sexual advances to a young woman. There is a difference between Kieri's and Pohjanen's narrative of a boy growing up in the Torne Valley when it comes to the social aspirations of the protagonist. While Kieri's main character remains working class, Bengt Pohjanen's protagonist from the debut novel and onwards pursues studies and becomes a minister.

<sup>156</sup> "Inte en bokstav föddes fram. Det var, som om den mäktiga floden inom honom plötsligt hejdat av en obetvinglig spärr. Bara ett svagt eko kunde tränga sig igenom. Han visste, vad det var: han ägde inget modersmål. Hans hjärta skulle aldrig få tala ut. Han var stum. [...] Det kunde inte sägas på svenska – det var för finskt. Ännu mindre kunde det sägas på finska – det var dock svenskt". (Byström 1932, 142–143.)

Pohjanen's "Jag är född utan språk" was first published in the ecumenical magazine *Vår lösen*.<sup>157</sup> The use of this poem in various texts, points to Pohjanen's development as a writer. The poem is embedded in different publications published over time. In a Tornedalian Finnish literary history from 2007, co-authored by Pohjanen, it opens a chapter entitled "Att skriva på tre språk", 'Writing in three languages' (Pohjanen 2007e, 112–126).<sup>158</sup> The chapter consists of Pohjanen's reflections on becoming an author writing in three languages. When compared to previously published works which include the poem "Jag är född utan språk", the attitude towards the theme of language loss is different in the 2007 volume. Pohjanen concludes that there is an irony in the poem, exemplifying this claim by referring to the language of the midwife who delivered his mother when he was born. She, and other Tornedalians, are said to have had a rich language when they spoke or when they performed ancient rituals (Pohjanen 2007e, 115). This positive acknowledgement of the Tornedalian Finnish language is contrasted to the theme of marginalisation and identity loss: "The point of the poem is found in the sentence 'deprived of my identity card'. Language is the fingerprint of the soul. And if the language you are born with and into lacks status as a language, then you do not exist." (Pohjanen 2007e, 115, my translation.)<sup>159</sup> Pohjanen's emphasis on the richness of the Tornedalian Finnish language in the 2007 text points to a shift in the view of Meänkieli away from ambivalence and shame to a positive apprehension of the language as an ethno-symbol to be proud of (cf. Sallamaa 2006).

The language loss depicted in "Jag är född utan språk" is the result of Swedish assimilationist policies. In this context, negative attitudes towards Finnish evolved, resulting in stigmatisation and shame among Finnish-speaking people in Sweden. The poem depicts a colonisation of people's minds, an 'internal colonisation', and a socialisation into a culture of poverty implying that the Tornedalians were socialised to believe that their Finno Ugric culture and language were deficient and of no value (also see Hech-

<sup>157</sup> The poem is reproduced in the autobiographical book *Tidens tvång* in a section about the young boy Bengt's aspirations to become a writer (Pohjanen 2009, 164–165). The narrator tells a story of how the poem was written on a bench outside the church in Torneå in 1961 for publication in the then prestigious literary magazine *BLM* (*Bonniers litterära magasin*). However, it was not published until 1973, and then in *Vår lösen*.

<sup>158</sup> So far two volumes of a Tornedalian literary history co-authored by Bengt Pohjanen and Kirsti Johansson have been published (Pohjanen and Johansson 2007, Pohjanen and Johansson 2009).

<sup>159</sup> "Poängen i dikten finns i meningen 'berövad min legitimation'. Språket är själens fingeravtryck. Och om språket du föds med och in i saknar status som språk, då finns du inte." (Pohjanen 2007e, 115.)



ter 1975).<sup>160</sup> However, attitudes to Tornedalian Finnish transform over time. This theme is reflected in Pohjanen's various uses and embeddings of the poem over time. While there are no expressions of pride in the early works, the characterisation of the language in *Den tornedalsfinska litteraturen. Från Kexi till Liksom* testifies to a reorientation. This is related to an interest in multicultural writing that emerged in the 1980s, as well as to perspectives from Postcolonial Studies which influenced the cultural debate.

Another influence Pohjanen has mentioned is that of ethnofuturism. There are correspondences between postcolonial theory and the ethno-futurist movement that emerged in Estonia in the late 1980s in that both are concerned with the cultural mobilisation of minorities who have been marginalised and whose languages and cultures are threatened (see Sallamaa 2006). When describing the specific character of Tornedalian Finnish, Meänkieli, Pohjanen highlights the role of Laestadianism, claiming that "Someone who has not been embraced at a general meeting [i.e. a Laestadian meetings held every summer] in three languages does not have an in-depth knowledge of the Torne Valley." (Pohjanen 2007e, 119, my translation.)<sup>161</sup> Also when commenting on the social affiliation of the people born into and using Tornedalian Finnish, Pohjanen highlights that Laestadianism is a vital element of the cultural baggage of this group. In the 2007 text, the feelings of the author writing in three languages is described as love: "There is no point in trying to describe why you are in love. Especially not if the scales over people's eyes come from such humble stairs as the Laestadian and from the smugglers' [. . .] social class." (Pohjanen 2007e, 120, my translation.)<sup>162</sup>

Following the introduction of postcolonial theory into academic studies in Sweden, there have been studies of colonialism and Orientalism in Sweden highlighting marginalisation due to ethnicity, racism or low social status related to other factors (Mattis ed. 2005, Ekström & Gerholm 2006, Heith 2009, Heith 2012c). Shame of one's own cultural background is also a prominent theme in a Meänkieli grammar book by Bengt Pohjanen and Matti Kenttä, *Meänkielen kramatiikki*, published in 1996 (Pohjanen & Kenttä 1996, also see Heith 2012c). The authors comment on the shame connected with belonging to the Meänkieli-speaking minority which resulted in peo-

<sup>160</sup> Hechter discusses internal colonialism in the geographical context of the Celtic fringes in Great Britain (Hechter 1975).

<sup>161</sup> "Den som inte blivit omfamnad på ett stormöte på tre språk känner inte Tornedalen på djupet." (Pohjanen 2007e, 119.)

<sup>162</sup> "Det är ingen idé att försöka förklara varför man är kär. I all synnerhet om fjällen i folks ögon kommer från så låga trappor som Laestadianen och från smugglarnas [. . .] samhällsklass." (Pohjanen 2007e, 120.)

ple changing their Finnish family names into Swedish ones and choosing to use Swedish instead of Tornedalian Finnish (Heith 2012, 99). Against this backdrop, the official recognition of Meänkieli is important for the creation of a positive cultural identity. Language functions as an ethnic marker and the recognition of the language of a minority is vital for positive identity formation (see Lindgren 2003, 111).

## The Debut Novel

Shame and identity loss are central themes not only in the poem “Jag är född utan språk”, but also in Pohjanen’s first novel published in Swedish in 1979, *Och fiskarna svarar Guds frid* (‘And the fish answer God’s peace’). The protagonist of the novel is a man who has changed his Finnish name ‘Polonen’ to the Swedish name ‘Polemalm’. Kurt Göran Polemalm works as a director of studies and teacher in a school in Malminge, a mining-town in northern Sweden.<sup>163</sup> As an adult, he struggles with the effects of his socialisation which has made him feel that his original Tornedalian Finnish culture is deficient: “He felt bitterness, and a series or a chain of events passed through his memory, occasions when he had been standing in shame, failure and contempt, mainly self-contempt for not having a viable mother-tongue.” (Pohjanen 1979, 10–11, my translation.)<sup>164</sup>

The theme of the novel is Polemalm’s existential ponderings and dissatisfaction. The duration of the story is a week-end when the protagonist is alone in his apartment while his wife and children have gone to stay with their grandmother. Polemalm, who is under great stress, thinks back upon his life and influences from various ideologies and thinkers he has encountered during his lifetime. Although Polemalm tells himself that he is professionally and socially successful, he is not happy or content. To a large extent, the novel consists of flashbacks and stories from Polemalm’s childhood in the Torne Valley, before he Swedified his name and language. In the present, he can pass as a Swede while in the past, his Tornedalian Finnish language and name revealed his ethnic and cultural background. During the week-end he drinks alcohol to the extent that he does not remember what has happened when he wakes up on the floor after a night of drinking. At the end of the novel he has a heart attack and dies.

<sup>163</sup> There are numerous correspondences between the character Kurt Göran Polemalm and Bengt Pohjanen himself, who has also worked as a director of studies and teacher in a town in northern Sweden (see Berglund 1985).

<sup>164</sup> “Han kände bitterhet och en serie eller kedja av händelser passerade hans minne, händelser där han stått med skam och misslyckanden och förakt, mest självförakt för att han inte ägde något gångbart modersmål.” (Pohjanen 1979, 10–11.)

The reason behind Polemalm's stressful situation is that he experiences multiple and diverse impulses that he cannot reconcile. In particular, the Laestadianism and Stalinism of his childhood in the Torne Valley continue to cause inner conflicts. The title of the novel is both a biblical reference and a reference to Kierkegaard. Matthew 13:47–48 present the simile of the heavenly net that will gather humanity for the purpose of removing the bad fish (people), which will be thrown away. One reviewer highlights that this is a theme found both in Lutheran and Laestadian traditions (Andersson 1979). The reviewer also comments on the character Polemalm's attempts to get solace from another simile present in Kierkegaard's notion that fish cannot experience anguish as they cannot reflect (*ibid.*).

On several occasions, titles on Polemalm's bookshelf are enumerated, among them *Den gamla och den nya människan i Lars Levi Laestadius' theology*; 'The old and the new man in Lars Levi Laestadius' theology' (Dahlbeck 1950). This is quite ironical – in Laestadius' work, the new man is the man who has been spiritually awakened. However, the mentality of the Laestadian revival is alien to the educated, modern Swede that Polemalm aspires to be. At the same time, he occasionally seems to miss his childhood's Laestadianism. The description of his childhood's Sunday readings of Laestadius' collection of sermons in Finnish conjures up a past before he became Swedified and split. The theme of shame is elaborated upon throughout the novel: shame of his Tornedalian Finnish roots and cultural affiliation, and later shame stemming from having disconnected himself from the beliefs of his childhood and his cultural roots, which continue to play a central role for his inner life, emotions and thoughts, as well as for his aspirations as a writer of fiction. Sections of the novel are specimens of Polemalm's attempts at imaginative writing inspired by his childhood in the Torne Valley.

#### *Laestadius' Bewildered Gaze upon a Swedified Tornedalian*

At the end of the novel, before he dies, Polemalm looks at a portrait of Laestadius on a wall. He meets the gaze of Laestadius and feels sad when he thinks about his childhood and adolescence. Polemalm suffers from anguish and a hang-over and in this state he interacts with the portrait: "He looked at Lars Levi. He [Lars Levi] raised one eyebrow and looked bewildered. He smiled." (Pohjanen 1979, 191, my translation.)<sup>165</sup> The gaze of Laestadius is experienced by Polemalm as soft in a Moravian fashion. It turns out that this is a near-death experience, as Polemalm passes away shortly afterwards. However, the text is quite open when it comes to possible interpretations of

<sup>165</sup> "Han såg på Lars Levi. Denne höjde på ena ögonbrynet och såg frågande ut. Han log." (Pohjanen 1979, 191.)

the implication of Polemalm's interaction with Laestadius' anthropomorphic portrait. He experiences an existential crisis and his mind is muddled by the influence of alcohol and pills. Thus, Polemalm is hardly a reliable focaliser. Still the novel depicts an interaction with the portrait which is experienced by Polemalm as a personification of Laestadius.

Laestadius and Laestadianism are part of Polemalm's Tornedalian Finnish suppressed heritage which he has mixed feelings about. The distance from the Laestadianism of his childhood's Torne Valley is indicated by the description of the placing of the portrait in his present-day home. The portrait is surrounded by clips from a children's cartoon, *Bamse*, which Polemalm's children have attached to the wall. The cultural distance is enormous between Laestadius' ideas of good and evil expressed in his writings and the cartoons that contribute to shaping the beliefs of Polemalm's children. Among the clips are images of the bad Black Woolf and the little white rabbit Skutt. The embedding of Laestadius in Polemalm's modern Swedish home draws attention to the gap between cultures influencing his life. Although on the surface Polemalm is an ordinary modern Swede, he is torn by feelings of stress and anguish. The portrait of Laestadius communicates with him, as do the texts by, and about, Laestadius in his book shelf, although it is not obvious what they say. While Polemalm is watching the portrait, he starts feeling sick. The floor sways under him and the images from the cartoons start swirling around. Shortly after this, Polemalm passes away of a heart attack.

## Responding to Internal Colonialism and the Construction of Domestic Others

As the examples of the poem "Jag är född utan språk" and the novel *Och fiskarna svarar Guds frid* indicate, internal colonialism that has constructed the Tornedalian Finns as the domestic others of the Swedish nation-state is a central theme already in the early phase of Pohjanen's authorship.<sup>166</sup>

<sup>166</sup> In 1979, when the novel was published, there was no discussion in Sweden about internal colonialism and the othering of minorities such as the Sámi and Tornedalians. Interpretations of the character Poleman's alienation and anguish varied widely. One reviewer claimed that Polemalm represents the alienation of the Swedish middle class related to a lack of belonging to a class and secularism (Gummerus 1979). Others specifically emphasised Polemalm's Tornedalian Finnish roots and irreconcilable tensions between Laestadianism and Stalinism (Communism) as a backdrop of the character's crisis (signature G A-m 1979, Sandström 1979, Ståhl 1979). Of these reviewers, one mentions that the setting is Norrbotten "where Finnish during a long period was the language of the homes [i.e. the private, domestic sphere] and the lower classes." (Sandström 1979, my translation.)

Already in texts published in the 1970s, Bengt Pohjanen demonstrates an awareness of the negative effects of internal colonialism in Sweden that has marginalised the Tornedalian Finns. The implications of the themes of Swedish assimilationist policies and internal colonialism depicted have affinities with Franz Fanon's (1925–1961) analysis of the impact of colonialism and racism on people suffering from negative psychological effects of colonial subjugation (see Heith 2012, 102). Like Fanon, Pohjanen emphasises the role of cultural background in colonial subjugation and the development of feelings of alienation among the colonised. By bringing these themes to the fore, Pohjanen's poem "Jag är född utan språk" performs a break with a Swedish assimilationist upbringing and education – a vital step in the process of achieving decolonisation of people's minds and to engender pride in one's own cultural background (see Thiong'o 1986 and Hirvonen 2008).

When Pohjanen takes the step to write in Meänkieli, this implies that he himself starts to see it as a language of its own and not only as a spoken language, a dialect. He describes this transformation in the section "Meänkieli och Pänktti/Meänkieli ja Pänktti" in *Tungan mitt i munnen/Kieli keskelä suuta* mentioned above. After the novel in Meänkieli, other steps followed: the establishment of a publishing house, the writing of the first play in Meänkieli and grammar books, translations of children's literature, the writing of opera librettos and a Tornedalian literary history, engagement in language standardisation and preservation work, and the publication of a Meänkieli dictionary and a magazine in Meänkieli, *Meänmaa*. This indicates that the internal colonisation depicted in the poem "Jag är född utan språk" is by and by accompanied by a focus on other mental dispositions connected with affirmative actions aimed at preserving Tornedalian culture and the local language. This transformation is commented on by Pohjanen when he mentions the writing of the poem "Rättipäät" ('Ragheads'), which starts as follows: "Now the sun rises over all the negroes of the world" (Pohjanen 2011, 154, my translation, also see Heith 2012c). This poem was written in the context of an international seminar, "New Writing in a Multicultural Society" held in Stockholm in 1985 (ibid.). Later it was included in Bengt Pohjanen and Matti Kenttä's *Meänkielen kramatiikki* (Pohjanen and Kenttä 1996, 153, also see Heith 2012c, 90–92). The theme of the poem is the awakening of oppressed groups and the need to stand up against injustices. As a whole, *Meänkielen kramatiikki* highlights the theme of internal colonialism from the perspective of the colonised. (Heith 2012c, 94).

In the first volume of *Den tornedalsfinska litteraturen* Pohjanen comments on the importance of the seminar "New Writing in a Multicultural Society" for making him aware that he is one of many authors worldwide who write and publish in a language other than the one they were born into

(*födelsespråk*) and that he is part of a worldwide community of intellectuals (Pohjanen 2007d, 115). The focus on writing in a multicultural society in the seminar held in 1985, testifies to a move away from the monolingual paradigm that shaped Swedish assimilationist policies and its concomitant cultural homogenisation. Acknowledgement of cultural and linguistic diversity is also a central issue of postcolonial cultural analysis (see Bhabha 2008, Thiong'o 1986). In the 1980s there was an increased focus on issues of ethnicity and minority status in Sweden (see Svanberg & Runblom eds. 1988). This is manifest in a handbook on ethnic groups and minorities in Sweden first published in 1988. Following the editors, the aim was to provide an inventory of ethnic groups in Sweden, both new ones and groups with a long history in Sweden (Svanberg & Runblom, 2nd ed., 1990). The volume clearly aims at presenting other histories than that of Sweden as an ethnically homogeneous country. One of the historical minorities presented is the Tornedalians (Wande 1990, 438–449). The presentation highlights negative attitudes towards the Finnish language, but also that there has been a shift in attitudes that has resulted in the previously negative or indifferent attitude to Finnish “nowadays having vanished from an ever larger proportion of the Tornedalians, and the attitude among many is outspokenly positive.” (Wande 1990, 442.)<sup>167</sup>

The association *Svenska tornedalingars riksförbund – Tornionlaaksolaiset*, ‘The National Association of Swedish Tornedalians – Tornionlaaksolaiset’, was founded in the 1980s for the purpose of strengthening the position of the Tornedalian Finnish language and promoting the cultural and linguistic interests of the Tornedalians (see Wande 1990, 448). The shift in attitudes mentioned by Wande is reflected in depictions of emotions and ideas connected with Tornedalian Finnish in the writings of Bengt Pohjanen. While Pohjanen describes his feelings towards Meänkieli as ‘love’ in *Den tornedalsfinska litteraturen* from 2007, this is not the feeling expressed in earlier texts such as the poem “Jag är född utan språk”, and the novel *Och fiskarna svarar Guds frid* from the 1970s. In the chronicles published in *Haparandabladet* under the headline “Meänkieli och Pänktti/Meänkieli ja Pänktti” (‘Meänkieli and Bengt’) which reflect the attitudes towards Meänkieli in the 1980s, Pohjanen claims that Meänkieli was a dialect in 1983, but he sees a development whereby Meänkieli may become a language in its own right, with its own grammar and rules, as possible (Pohjanen 2011, 140). However, this was not a development one could take for granted in the 1980s. As

<sup>167</sup> “den tidigare negativa eller likgiltiga inställningen till finskan numera försvunnit hos en allt större del av tornedalingarna, och inställningen hos många är uttalat positiv.” (Wande 1990, 442.)

Wande points out there were diverse opinions in the Torne Valley as well as elsewhere concerning whether Tornedalian Finnish ought to become a language of its own separated from both Finnish and Swedish, or whether it should be seen as a Finnish dialect (Wande 1990, 448).

The rewriting of oppressive histories for the purpose of empowering and emancipating minorities that have been disadvantaged is a central theme of postcolonial theory (Bhabha 2008, 245 ff.). Bhabha points out that for these groups, culture can become a strategy of survival. This is one reason why culture plays a central role in the identity formation of suppressed groups. It also indicates what is at stake in the cultural mobilisation of minorities. The formation of a Tornedalian identity is connected with cultural production and agency. This kind of connection is highlighted by Bhabha when drawing attention to relations between consciousness and agency, “deliberative, individuated action and specificity in analysis” (Bhabha 2008, 265). The notion of this type of connection is useful for the analysis of Pohjanen’s poem “Rättipää”. The poem reflects anti and postcolonial currents in the sense that it evokes the theme of oppressed, colonised groups engaging in communal protest and fight against their oppressors (Heith 2012c). This awakening and protest is based on a critical analysis of colonising structures. In the poem, Pohjanen draws parallels between the Tornedalians in Sweden and various oppressed and racialised groups globally, comparing the Swedish Tornedalians to black people in the USA and Arabs in Europe. Minoritarian affiliations and solidarities as a response to discrimination is a theme evoked. This is also a prominent theme in the writings of Fanon, whose ideas are echoed in Pohjanen’s ideas of the awakening and empowerment of the oppressed. When Pohjanen received the Ivar Lo-Johansson Award in 1993, this orientation in his authorship was highlighted in the jury’s motivation, which emphasised that Pohjanen draws attention to socially and culturally oppressed people and their struggle against self-contempt.<sup>168</sup>

Pohjanen’s narrative of colonised northern Sweden is an emerging history, shaped through the input of perspectives from postcolonial studies. The concept “emerging histories” is used by Bhabha in his analysis of the development of alternative histories shaped by colonised groups and minorities in *The Location of Culture* (Bhabha 2008). It captures the changes in consciousness, as well as the agency and performative actions (see Heith 2012b) behind the development of the notion of Meänkieli as a language of its own that may be used in writing, discussed by Bengt Pohjanen in *Tungan mitt i munnen/Kieli keskelä suuta*. In Pohjanen’s emerging Tornedalian his-

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<sup>168</sup> See: <http://www.ivarlopriset.se/pristagare/bengt-pohjanen-1993/>, accessed 1 December 2016.



tory, the revivalist Lars Levi Laestadius and the Laestadian movement have central roles in the creation of a specific culture and identity in which Finno Ugric ethnicity plays an important part.

Pohjanen used Laestadius and Laestadianism as a subject matter already at the beginning of his career as a writer of fiction. The title of his second novel, *Ropandes röst* ('Crying voice'), from 1981 is a direct reference to Laestadius. "Ens ropandes röst i öknen" ('One's crying voice in the desert') is the title of a magazine published by Lars Levi Laestadius between 1852 and 1854. The protagonist of the novel is a fictionalised version of the popular revivalist. Pohjanen returns to the theme of Laestadius and Laestadianism throughout his authorship, also depicting the Korpela movement in a couple of novels. The Korpelians were a faction in northern Sweden in the 1930s that broke away from the Laestadian community (Lundmark 1985, Heith 2009d). In the year 2000, when the 200-year anniversary of Laestadius' birth was celebrated, Pohjanen furthermore contributed a hymn in honour of Laestadius. After that, he wrote the libretto for a Laestadius opera, first performed in the Torne Valley in 2007.

### *Ropandes röst*: Postmodernist Metafiction about the Narrativisation of Laestadius and Laestadianism

Bengt Pohjanen's *Ropandes röst* from 1981 is a metafictional novel that draws attention to narrativisations which have resulted in diverse narratives about Lars Levi Laestadius. Patricia Waugh defines metafiction as "a term given to fictional writing which self-consciously and systematically draws attention to its status as an artefact in order to pose questions about the relationship between fiction and reality." (Waugh 1993, 2). The concept of metafiction is not mentioned in contemporary reviews, but there are comments about Pohjanen's experiments with narrative levels and the relationship between an author character who is writing a book about Laestadius and the protagonist Laestadius. While some reviewers find this interesting (Ståhl 1981, Gellerfeldt 1982), others see it as confusing (Franzén 1981, Sandström 1982). References are made to the historical novel (Sandström 1982), and to Garcia Marquez and magical realism as influences (Franzén 1981).

Metafiction and intertextuality are characteristic traits of the postmodernist novel in general, and also of the Swedish postmodernist novel of the 1980s (see Jansson 1996, 18).<sup>169</sup> In the autobiography *Smugglarkungens son* from 2007, Pohjanen makes a couple of references to the postmodern

<sup>169</sup> When discussing a shift from modernism to postmodernism in Sweden, Jansson mentions that the breakthrough of postmodernism occurred in the 1980s (Jansson 1993, 8–9).

novel.<sup>170</sup> On one occasion, he compares its plot to that of a smuggler story that has lived on in people's memories in the Torne Valley:

The plot is complicated and fragmentary, as in a postmodern novel, and still full of turning points and details which all the time lead towards an imagined climax, while the main thread of the plot is constantly cut off, as imagination altogether lacks the good order of memory. (Pohjanen 2007b, 126, my translation).<sup>171</sup>

In the same section, the smuggling incident is described as an *Alexandria Quartet* in miniature in which all the people involved tell the story of the same event and the characters involved in it in different ways. This is a technique used by Lawrence Durrell in his best-known work, the tetralogy *The Alexandria Quartet*, published between 1957 and 1960. It is also a technique used in postmodernist fiction, such as Swedish Lars Gustafsson's novel *Bernard Foy's tredje rockad* ('Bernard Foy's third castling'). As to Pohjanen's reference to the postmodernist novel and *The Alexandria Quartet* in *Smugglarkungens son*, it gives the hint that he sees a postmodernist aesthetics as being more 'true' to reality than traditional realism, which creates illusions of describing reality as it is.<sup>172</sup> The chapter about the smuggling incident includes first-person testimonies from characters involved in a case of smuggling of coffee that has become part of local lore. The chapter is concluded with a section entitled "Postmodernistisk roman" ('Postmodernist novel') (Pohjanen 2007b, 136). In this section, the narrator Bengt Pohjanen recapitulates the outcome of the trial against the smugglers, whose stories have just been told in the first person by the smugglers themselves. Thus, the stories generated by the smuggling incident consist of multiple narratives produced by people with subjective memories and agendas, situated in various locations and time frames. This is one way of presenting multiple perspectives on a single set of events and characters, a technique also used in *Ropandes röst*.

One reviewer of *Ropandes röst* suggests that the Laestadius novel has become a genre in itself (Jarlert 1981). However, the only novels he mentions

<sup>170</sup> Pohjanen, as a writer who has written postmodernist novels, is an under-examined theme in criticism and research. Wendelius, for example, comments on Pohjanen being seen as a modernist by reviewers (Wendelius 2002, 43).

<sup>171</sup> "Intrigen är invecklad och fragmentarisk som i en postmodern roman och ändå full av vändningar och detaljer som hela tiden leder mot en tänkt höjdpunkt medan den röda tråden ständigt klipps av, eftersom fantasin helt saknar minnets goda ordning." (Pohjanen 2007b, 126.)

<sup>172</sup> For a discussion of Durrell's writing technique in *The Alexandria Quartet*, see Hans-Roland Johnson's "Från Alexandria med kärlek och anarki" (Johnson 2012; <http://www.svd.se/fran-alexandria-med-karlek-och-anarki>, accessed 2 December 2012).

apart from Pohjanen's are novels by Harry Blomberg and Macke Nilsson, respectively. Harry Blomberg's *Det brinner i snön* ('The snow is burning') was published in 1935, while Macke Nilsson's debut novel *Profeten i Pajala* ('The prophet in Pajala') was published in 1979. Harry Blomberg was born in Strängnäs and grew up in Stockholm. By and by, he became interested in religious themes – this is exemplified by his novel about the Laestadian revival. Macke Nilsson on the other hand, was born in Töre in the municipality of Kalix. As opposed to Blomberg and Pohjanen, he shows less interest in the spiritual and religious aspects of Laestadius' work. The focus of his novel is on Laestadius as a social reformer and opponent of the establishment. The novel ends with the event of the Kautokeino Rebellion in 1852, which was inspired by Laestadius' sermons. When briefly comparing the novels, Jarlert concludes that while Blomberg's novel is ahistorical and Nilsson's focuses on the social dimension of Laestadius' work, Pohjanen's is based on Laestadius' own writings. Following Jarlert, the use of Laestadius' own texts is combined with a quest for historical correctness and the freedom of the novel genre (Jarlert 1981).<sup>173</sup>

Another reviewer proposes that the novel is a kind of psychodrama (Lundstedt 1981). Still another suggests that as in Pohjanen's first novel, Hjalmar Sundén, psychologist of religion from Uppsala, is a major reference. Ståhl points out that in a section of *Ropandes röst* where the author character has a discussion with somebody called Hjalmar, the reasoning almost literally corresponds to that in Hjalmar Sundén's *Religionen och roller-na. Ett psykologiskt studium av fromheten* ('Religion and roles. A psychological study of piety'), which discusses the psychological background to Lars Levi Laestadius' spiritual development (Sundén 1959, Ståhl 1981).

The introductory and the final chapter, entitled "Introitus" and "Postludium", respectively, constitute a frame for the three chapters about Laestadius' family background and life. The time of the framework chapter "Introitus" is the 1960s. An author character planning to write a book about Laestadius is introduced. In the final chapter, "Postludium", the author character reflects upon his book project: "He no longer thought he would write the book about Lars Levi Laestadius. Nobody would. A semicolon would

<sup>173</sup> Jarlert mentions a comment by the author character towards the end of the novel. "Ha, ha, Victor Hugo's whore was not on the first expedition. As if he didn't know." (my translation). Jarlert interprets the comment as a strategy on Pohjanen's part to respond in advance to criticism concerning lack of historical correctness in details. However, manipulation (and fabrication) of facts is an element typical of self-conscious metafiction. Thus, the comment need not be seen as a strategy on the author Pohjanen's part intended to forestall criticism. In the context of the postmodern novel of the 1980s, this kind of play with facts draws attention to the nature of fiction.

be his last comment on the matter.” (Pohjanen 1981, 282, my translation.)<sup>174</sup> As opposed to a full stop, a semicolon indicates a pause. Through this comment, the outcome of the author’s project is described as one story in a succession of stories about Laestadius. The writing of the book about Laestadius may be described as a quest for the true, or final, story about the man and the movement, but at the end of *Ropandes röst*, the author character has reached the insight that this is an impossible task that nobody will succeed in carrying off.

Throughout *Ropandes röst* there is a focus on various narratives about Laestadius that are occasionally commented on by the author character and a character called Hjalmar. Hjalmar is neither introduced nor described, and accordingly he remains a mystifying element throughout the novel. The narrative levels, time frames and settings of the novel are typical of metafiction and modern self-conscious texts, which “often play with narrative levels in order to question the borderline between reality and fiction or to suggest that there may be no reality apart from its narration.” (Rimmon-Kenan 1999, 94.) Narrative levels are juxtaposed in a manner that blurs distinctions between the author writing a book and the protagonist Laestadius in the book that is being written.

The introductory chapter’s title “Introitus” is a term used for the psalm that precedes morning mass. The setting of the chapter is the celebration in Pajala in 1961 of the 100-year anniversary of Laestadius’ demise. Among the attendants is a man who ruminates on the appropriation of Laestadius and Laestadianism by representatives of the Swedish National Lutheran Church, which at times had a conflictual relationship with Laestadius during his lifetime. He also ponders upon the legend and myth created by people close to Laestadius. This man views the celebrations with a critical gaze and questions whether they are compatible with Laestadius’ own preferences expressed during his lifetime. Laestadius’ simple life and great impact on the cultural landscape of the North Calotte are highlighted. It is implied that the present-day celebrations are a kind of neo-colonialism whereby the establishment and the Swedish National Lutheran Church appropriate Laestadius for their own purposes. This is indicated by ironical comments about a man aspiring to become a bishop and the use this aspiring bishop makes of Laestadius for promoting his cause.

The setting of the end of the introductory chapter is Uppsala, where he began writing the book about Laestadius. Prior to this, various narrativisations and uses of Laestadius have been scrutinised by the author - myths and

<sup>174</sup> “Han trodde inte längre att han skulle skriva boken om Lars Levi Laestadius. Det skulle ingen. Semikolon var det sista han skulle säga i ärendet.” (Pohjanen 1981, 282.)

legends about Laestadius' success in transforming living conditions and the spiritual life of the people of the North Calotte, but he also questions some of the myths, for example that Laestadius passed away in peace despite the fact that he died from a painful stomach cancer and without receiving any alleviation of his pain. There is a strong focus on metafictional aspects of narrating and creating stories exemplified by an explicit discussion of the narratological concept of the 'implied author' (Pohjanen 1981, 21).

The implied author is a concept from the study of narratology, referring to "the governing consciousness of the work as a whole, the source of the norms embodied in the work." (Rimmon-Kenan 1999, 86.) The text changes from a third-person narrative into a first-person narrative as the author character addresses the readers, pointing out that a great deal has been produced about Laestadius in various media and genres, but that the book about Laestadius still remains to be written: "And yet I want to claim that the book about Laestadius is unwritten." (Pohjanen 1981, 21, my translation.)<sup>175</sup> As mentioned above, the author character concludes in the final chapter that it is not possible to write *the* book about Laestadius. In that respect he has failed, or seen from a more positive angle, gained the insight that Laestadius' life is only accessible via narration. The author character ponders on his own relationship to the implied author and "the fictive Lars Levi Laestadius" (ibid.). This theme reappears in the final chapter when the author character poses the question "Yet who can blame the implied man, who in a few minutes will exist no more!" (Pohjanen 1981, 283, my translation.)<sup>176</sup>

The final sentence of *Ropandes röst* reads: "He held both halves in each hand and smiled; the Moravian soft smile" (Pohjanen 1981, 284, my translation.)<sup>177</sup> This enigmatic end depicts a blurring of the level of narration with the author struggling to write a book and the story about Laestadius he is writing. It exemplifies one end of the author's attitude towards his subject matter that oscillates between distance and identification. As *Ropandes röst* ends with a depiction of an identification between the author character and the protagonist of the narrative he is writing, the theme of psychology and border-crossings is evoked. Through the mentioning of the soft Moravian smile that has passed on from the portrait of Laestadius to the author

<sup>175</sup> "Och ändå vill jag påstå att boken om Lars Levi Laestadius är oskriven." (Pohjanen 1981, 21.)

<sup>176</sup> "Vem kan väl klandra den implicite mannen, som inte längre finns om några minuter!" (Pohjanen 1981, 283.)

<sup>177</sup> "Han höll de båda halvorna i var hand och log; det herrnhutiskt milda leendet;" (Pohjanen 1981, 284.)

character, the novel ends on a positive note as regards Laestadius' impact on a contemporary intellectual in search of truth and meaning. The end is open. Identification, mildness, happiness and transgressions of borders in the inconclusive narrative render the ending 'happy', in that the reaction of the author character to the outcome of the impossible quest for a final, true narrative, is peace and contentment.

A central theme of *Ropandes röst* is that Laestadius lives on through representations in various genres and media, but that the real Laestadius is inaccessible. Like other artists and writers, the character planning a book will produce a fictionalisation of Laestadius. The theme of an ambivalence concerning what is fiction and what is reality is introduced already in the first chapter. Towards the end of it, the author character reads a sermon by Laestadius while waiting for dinner to get ready. On this occasion, the well-known words of Laestadius, that never before have had any special meaning for him, begin to come to life: "That time he experienced a presence which for him was unknown and indescribable. The words began to live. They filled the entire room with a reality that was not of this world." (Pohjanen 1981, 22, my translation.)<sup>178</sup> The chapter ends with a description of how he gets paper, turns on his type writer and starts writing: "From the wall, Lars Levi Laestadius looked down, Moravian soft eyes, smiling: Keep writing." (Pohjanen 1981, 23.)<sup>179</sup> This depiction echoes the section in Pohjanen's first novel describing Kurt-Göran Polemalm's interaction with a portrait of Laestadius. However, the outcomes are different. While the protagonist of the first novel passes away in a heart attack shortly afterwards, the author character of the second novel starts writing under the auspices of Lars Levi Laestadius.

It is significant that the first chapter of *Ropandes röst*, which embeds the subsequent narrative, is about a man in the 1960s who is searching for material for a book about Laestadius. During the 1960s and 70s, critical approaches to historiography developed. Einar Niemi in Norway, for example, pleaded for historiography sensitive to minority status, ethnicity and the regional specificity of northern Norway and the North Calotte. The critical view expressed by Pohjanen on the establishment's appropriation of Laestadius and his exploration of the theme of alternative historiography captures the currents of the 1960s that challenged homogenising narratives

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<sup>178</sup> "Den gången erfor han en närvaro som för honom var okänd och obeskrivlig. Orden började leva. De fyllde hela rummet med en verklighet som inte var av denna världen." (Pohjanen 1981, 22.)

<sup>179</sup> "Från väggen blickade Lars Levi Laestadius ned, herrnhutiskt milda ögon, leende: Skriv på." (Pohjanen 1981, 23.)

from ethnic, minority and regional vantage points. A focus on a minoritarian condition (see Bhabha 2008) and a colonial organisation of space which has constructed dichotomies between cultural centres and peripheries are also central themes of postcolonial theory that Pohjanen explores before postcolonialism had had a breakthrough in a Swedish national context.

Between the introductory and final chapters of *Ropandes röst*, there are three chapters consisting of the narrative produced by the author character: "Den första födelsen" ('The first birth'), "Den andra födelsen" ('The second birth') and "De var i födslovånda såsom kvinnor, och när de födde var det vind" ('They were in labour pains like women, and when they gave birth, there was wind'). The theme of "Den första födelsen" is Laestadius' family background, his studies, marriage, botanical excursions, early career, and the serious illness that almost led to his death. The focus is on the time before Laestadius' spiritual reorientation and the revival. However, the motif of the first birth is present in the text in a depiction of a spiritual experience Laestadius has at the death of one of his sons. It is mainly a third-person narrative, but occasionally there are dialogues. The focaliser is Laestadius who thinks back on his life, feels miserable, and fears the future. He is particularly concerned that he might die leaving his wife and children destitute. However, there are breaks destabilising the narrative levels and drawing attention to the author writing the book about Laestadius. A section describing Laestadius' memories from the *La Recherche expedition* in 1861 ends with the statement: "He felt disgust about it all." (Pohjanen 1981, 81, my translation.)<sup>180</sup> In the section immediately after this, the pronoun "he" appears, referring to the author writing the book in the 1960s:

He must probe deeper, not just recount what seems to happen, he must play God, examine hearts and minds. He must behave as usual at the coffee table, at Ica [a grocery store] and among people, while his spirit invisibly travels between heaven and hell, searching the images, moods, ideas and truth [. . .] (Pohjanen 1981, 81, my translation).<sup>181</sup>

Through this focus on the author character, the theme of narrativisation and fictionalisation is emphasised. Still, there are sections depicting Laestadius' emotions and memories in a mode that invites empathy rather than distance and narratological analysis. Laestadius' inner crisis is depicted

<sup>180</sup> "Han kände vämjelse för allt." (Pohjanen 1981, 81.)

<sup>181</sup> "Han måste tränga djupare, inte bara berätta vad som synes ske, han måste leka Gud, utrannsaka hjärtan och njurar. Han måste vara som vanligt vid kaffebordet, på Ica och bland människor, medan hans ande osynlig färdas mellan himmel och helvete, söker bilderna, stämningarna, idéerna och sanningen [. . .]." (Pohjanen 1981, 81.)



through an interior monologue that describes his oscillation between feverish fantasies and more sober moments. In these sections the author/narrator is invisible.

A recurring theme of this chapter on Laestadius' early life prior to his spiritual rebirth is his feeling of failure at not being able to reach out to people. Both physically and emotionally, Laestadius is depicted as vulnerable. He is unable to support his family, he suffers from illness threatening to end his life, and he doubts the meaningfulness of choosing to become a minister. He even considers leaving his office in order to become a settler in Kummavuopio in northernmost Sweden. Not even his work as a botanist makes him entirely happy, as one of the botanists he has co-operated with is said to have stolen his findings in order to promote his own career.

### *Feminism and Psychoanalysis*

Not surprisingly perhaps, considering that the time of narration established in the introductory chapter of *Ropandes röst* is 1961, and the place the university town of Uppsala, feminism is a theme included in the narrativisation of Laestadius' career and life. In a depiction of a feverish dream – alternatively a spiritual experience – about a woman sweating blood for the sake of Christianity, the narrator claims that this is probably Laestadius' first sketch for "his feminist theology, where the Father is replaced by the Parent in whose bosom a mother's heart beats and whose breast the child of mercy may suckle." (Pohjanen 1981, 46, my translation.)<sup>182</sup> The depiction of Laestadius' experiences is intersected with comments from Hjalmar who discusses the text with the author character. Hjalmar concludes that: "Lars Levi was a strange man, who preceded both feminist theologians and the Old Man [Freud]" (Pohjanen 1981, 47.)<sup>183</sup> Thus, the text evokes the theme of possible theoretical frameworks for interpretation, suggesting the possibility to analyse Laestadianism from the vantage point of Feminist Theology and the works of Hjalmar Sundén and Psychoanalytical Theory, all in vogue at Swedish universities at the end of the 1970s.<sup>184</sup>

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<sup>182</sup> "hans feministteologi, där Fadern byts ut mot Föräldern i vars bröst modershjärtat klappar och vars bröst nådebarnet får dia." (Pohjanen 1981, 46.)

<sup>183</sup> "Lars Levi var en märklig man, som var före både feministteologerna och Gubben." (Pohjanen 1981, 47.)

<sup>184</sup> Kristina Nilsson's thesis *Den himmelska föräldern. Ett studium av kvinnans betydelse i och för Lars Levi Laestadius' teologi och förkunnelse* from 1988 exemplifies a study of Laestadius' theology from the vantage point of Feminist Theology. In her review of *Ropandes röst*, Ståhl highlights the impact of Hjalmar Sundén's work as an influence for 'Hjalmar' in Pohjanen's novel (Ståhl 1981).

Although *Ropandes röst* includes some derogatory comments about Freud, the references to psychoanalysis contribute to introducing the theme of complexity in the novel's characterisation of Laestadius by means of the establishment of intertextual relationships. Laestadius' own interest in inner life and psychology is also a recurring motif. The French physician and author Jean Baptiste Félix Descuret (1795–1871) is mentioned as an important contemporary influence he received as a result of his participation in the *La Recherche expedition*. There are a number of references to Descuret's best-known book, *Médecine des passions, ou les passions considérées dans leurs rapports avec les maladies, les lois et la religion*, which discusses passions from a medical, religious and economic standpoint (Descuret 1841). The influence from Descuret is described as vital for Laestadius' insights into the mechanisms behind spiritual rebirth and his attempt to create a system for describing how men are governed by passions and why some become believers while others do not (Pohjanen 1981, 271). In the final chapter, this theme is embedded in a contemporary context through satirical comments about the contributions of psychologists, in particular psychologists of religion, as well as researchers and biographers, to the production of narratives (Pohjanen 1981, 283). This points to the theme of the contextual nature of narratives in the field of psychology, thus relativising ideas that truth transgresses time and space.

“Den första födelsen” describes Laestadius as being marked by his childhood and relationship to his mother and father. His sexual life and thoughts are depicted in an explicit manner. While self-doubt and despair are quite conventional elements in stories of conversion, thoughts about, and acts of, excessive masturbation are potentially more controversial themes in life-writing about religious leaders. *Ropandes röst* highlights that it is the author character's visions of Laestadius that are presented:

Sometimes he [the author character] sees him [Laestadius] on ordinary days. He walks back and forth in his small draughty cottage, restless, worried, happy, angry, sad, sick, scared, throwing himself here and there in anguish, concealing everything from the parishioners, sleepless nights, walks on scientific journeys, around the church, coffee, tobacco, escape away from people to the mountains, horrifying experiences at night, voices speaking to him, Satan showing himself, his forehead wet from anxiety, year after year, misfortunes in the family, failed expeditions with drinking Frenchmen, time passes, he becomes nothing, ambitions that are not satisfied, no revival, no teetotallers, scared, not in any particularly pious manner but scared, in the pulpit screaming out his anguish, anger, hatred because the Lapps murdered the heavenly

Father, accusing his own father, attached to his mother, infantile and stable, lacking will-power and strong-willed. (Pohjanen 1981, 10)<sup>185</sup>

The author character's text describes Laestadius' feeling of alienation among the French members of the *La Recherche expedition*, but it also focuses on the theme of influences, as discussions about psychology and sexuality are said to guide his life and thinking for the rest of his life (Pohjanen 1981, 76). Again, there is a curious section destabilising narrative levels when a description of Laestadius listening intently for anything that might be related to himself in the conversations among the Frenchmen in a manner reminiscent of Narcissism and neurosis, becomes situated in a present-day context, where people are said to deal with their neuroticism by becoming "psychologists, scientists, athletes, stamp collectors, doctors and policemen, joggers and alcoholics." (Pohjanen 1981, 77.) In this context, "The Hoax of Freudism" is mentioned (*ibid.*). Freud (1856–1939), of course, is not contemporary with Laestadius, but Descuret, who is mentioned a number of times, is. As psychoanalytical theory inspired by Freud was in vogue in Europe and the USA in the 1960s, the references to Freud establish a connection to the author character suggesting that he, like Laestadius in his lifetime, struggles with the implications of inner life in shaping the individual.

Psychology is highlighted as a major inspiration on Laestadius' journey towards spiritual rebirth and development of a theology about the old and new, reborn man, and the work of Descuret is mentioned as an important influence (Pohjanen 1981, 204). The effect of the focus on the author character in the 1960s is that the theme of filtering subject matter, establishing causality and creating a story is foregrounded. These are all characteristic traits of the experimental postmodernist novel of the 1980s, the decade

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<sup>185</sup> "Ibland ser han honom i vardagen. Han går av och an i det dragiga pörtet, rastlös, orolig, glad, arg, sorgsen, sjuk, rädd, kastande sig av och an i ångest, döljande allt för församlingsborna, sömnlösa nätter, vandringar på vetenskapliga resor, runt kyrkan, kaffe, tobak, flykt undan alla människor ut i fjällvärlden, hemska upplevelser om nätterna, röster som tilltalar honom, satan som visar sig, pannan våt av ångest, år efter år, motgångar i familjen, misslyckade expeditioner med supande fransmän, tiden går, han blir ingenting, ambitioner som inte tillfredsställs, ingen väckelse, inga nykterister, rädd, inte på något speciellt fromt sätt utan rädd, stressad och nervös, i predikstolen ropande ut sin ångest, sin vrede, sitt hat för att lapparna mördat fadern i himmelen, anklagande sin egen fader, bunden vid sin moder, infantil och stabil, viljelös och viljestark." (Pohjanen 1981, 10.)

when *Ropandes röst* was published.<sup>186</sup> At this time, there was an interest in postmodernist fiction and experiments with metafiction highlighting the constructed nature of fiction and narrative in general (White 1973, Hutcherson 1980, McHale 1987). At the end of the introductory chapter the author is compared to an omnipotent God: “[. . .] the poet pretending to be a God, eternally, without end, omnipresent in time and space. With a sigh he typed the first letters. The sigh meant: May I not aspire to climb the high mountains of the gods up north, but only to be a poet.” (Pohjanen 1981, 23, my translation.)<sup>187</sup>

In *Ropandes röst*, one story line represents Laestadius’ road to the new birth in a manner reminiscent of the *Bildung*’s story (see Moretti 2000). The protagonist encounters difficulties, he is tested, he experiences drawbacks, but eventually he gains insight and is transformed. Another story line is about the author writing a book about Laestadius in the 1960s. He, too, experiences difficulties on a journey towards the insight that the ‘true’ story about Laestadius will not be written. Furthermore, there is an ambivalent level of the novel where the borders between the story about Laestadius and the creation of the story seem to dissolve as the author identifies with the protagonist of his story. Whether this represents a mystical, transgressive experience of border-crossing and unity or the psychological disposition of the author character, or something else, is an open question. It is obvious that the reviewers who characterised *Ropandes röst* as a historical novel depicting the life of Laestadius’ in a convincing manner, did not pay much attention to the narrative level representing the author writing a book about Laestadius. One reviewer concluded that *Ropandes röst* is a splendid historical novel (Sandström 1982). While this statement takes into account that Pohjanen used various sources, among them Laestadius’ own writings, when shaping his narrative, it disregards the prominent metafictional elements of *Ropandes röst*.

<sup>186</sup> As a comparison, Lars Gustafsson’s *Bernard Föys tredje rockad* from 1986 may be mentioned. This is a metafictional novel experimenting with narrative levels in a manner characteristic of postmodernist fiction. Following Bo G. Jansson, Gustafsson’s novel is *the* postmodernist Swedish novel of the 1980s (Jansson 19f., 124f.). This is a disputable claim. *Ropandes röst* from 1981, for example, is undeniably metafiction experimenting with narrative levels.

<sup>187</sup> “diktarens lek att vara Gud, allstädes närvarande utan ände i tid och rum. Med en suck slog han de första bokstäverna. Sucken betydde: Måtte jag inte vilja bestiga de höga gudabergen i norr, utan blott vara diktare.” (Pohjanen 1981, 23.)

### *The Theme of Colonialism*

Other themes related to currents that began to be in vogue in the 1980s and continued to inspire research and debate, are colonialism, racism, and multiculturalism. In the introductory chapter of *Ropandes röst* it is mentioned that Laestadius was mourned by people from three realms who spoke four languages, Finnish, Sámi, Swedish and Norwegian, when he died in 1861.<sup>188</sup> He is also described as a man in opposition to members of his contemporary establishment (Pohjanen 1981, 7).<sup>189</sup> The colonisation of the land of the Sámi is described through the eyes of Aslak Hetta.<sup>190</sup> Aslak Hetta (1824–1854) was one of the Sámi who were executed after the Kautokeino Rebellion, and he has become a symbol of Sámi resistance to Norwegian colonialism. This subject matter is central in research inspired by postcolonial theory (see Zorgdrager 1997).

In Pohjanen's novel, one of the Raattamaa brothers, Johan (Jussi), is talking with a group of Sámi from Kautokeino at an inn. The men are drinking although they are aware that the innkeeper lures them into doing so in order to gain a profit. The theme of Sámis buying alcohol on credit and the inn-keeper later coming to collect the best reindeer as payment, is recurring. This is also a central theme of the movie *The Kautokeino Rebellion* from 2007. *The Kautokeino Rebellion* is a Sámi anticolonial movie about Sámi resistance to Norwegian colonialism. As mentioned above, Aslak Hetta is a historical character known for being one of the Sámi who initiated the rebellion. In the movie, Laestadius' preachings and criticism of the use of alcohol play an imperative role for the rise and outburst of Sámi resistance.

In *Ropandes röst*, the eyes of Aslak Hetta are described as burning with liquor fumes and hatred. He speaks about the humiliation of the Sámi who lose their possessions while the masters (*herrarna*) become rich: "Soon they will have taken everything from us, mark my words, the waters and pastures." (Pohjanen 1981, 53, my translation).<sup>191</sup> The arrival of Christianity is connected with the destruction of traditional Sámi life and deteriorating living conditions:

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<sup>188</sup> Pohjanen uses the term *lapska*, 'Lappish' instead of *samiska* 'Sámi' (Pohjanen 1981, 12).

<sup>189</sup> This is a central theme of Macke Nilsson's *Profeten från Pajala*. As the theme of this study is the role of Laestadius and Laestadianism in contemporary Sámi and Tornedalian texts, Nilsson's novel will not be discussed.

<sup>190</sup> The spelling *Hætta* is also used. I will use the same spelling as that in *Ropandes röst*, namely *Hetta*.

<sup>191</sup> "Snart har de tagit ifrån oss allt, sanna mina ord, vattnen och betesmarkerna." (Pohjanen 1981, 53.)

Christianity is to blame. He [Aslak Hetta] is burning with hatred for the ministers, who have brought a new religion, much weaker and worse than the old one. People believed before, and were reverent before the seits [holy rocks in ancient Sámi religion]. They kept sober and honest. (Pohjanen 1981, 54, my translation)<sup>192</sup>

However, the author character's narrative in *Ropandes röst* does not suggest that Laestadius himself was positive to Aslak Hetta's reorientation and the use he made of Laestadius' sermons and the revival for justifying violent actions and rebellion. On the contrary, Laestadius' reaction to Hetta's hatred and agitation is described as fear: "He [Lars Levi Laestadius] was afraid of Aslak Hetta. There is something unsound about him, a spiritual hatred which makes Laestadius scared." (Pohjanen 1981, 274–275, my translation.)<sup>193</sup>

The author character of *Ropandes röst* includes motifs and themes connected with colonialism and anti-colonial resistance in his narrative about Laestadius. Although he does not depict Laestadius as being sympathetic to Aslak Hetta's rebellious inclinations, Hetta's use of Laestadianism is a prominent theme. This introduces the theme of Laestadius' lack of control. Once the revival has started, he cannot control its consequences, a theme highlighted in *Ropandes röst*. The Kautokeino rebellion is not mentioned, but the miserable conditions among the reindeer herding Sámi, inn-keepers taking their animals as payment for alcohol and racist attitudes towards the Sámi defining them as not quite human are recurring themes. Thus, the author character's narrative depicts the colonisation of the North Calotte as a process that has caused loss of traditional social structures and alcoholism and poverty among the Sámi. And this depiction of colonialism provides a rationale for the anti-colonial resistance that resulted in the Kautokeino Rebellion. *Ropandes röst* highlights the role of Laestadianism for anti-colonial resistance and struggle by emphasising the use the rebels made of Laestadianism.

#### *From Stories from the Outside to Insider Stories*

In the introductory chapter of *Ropandes röst*, various frames of reference that influence the author character's story are commented upon. One such major frame of reference is connections between histories of homogenisation and dichotomisations between north and south and colonialism,

<sup>192</sup> "Det är kristendomens fel. Han brinner av hat till prästerna, som kommit med en ny religion, mycket kraftlösare och sämre än den gamla. Människorna trodde förr och var andäktiga vid seitarna. De höll sig nyktra och hederliga." (Pohjanen 1981, 54.)

<sup>193</sup> "Han är rädd för Aslak Hetta. Det är något osunt, ett andligt hat hos honom som gör Laestadius rädd." (Pohjanen 1981, 274–275.)

respectively. As Linda Tuhiwai Smith has emphasised, colonialism may be described as an organisation of space that rests on binaries between the Centre and its Outside. She calls this a spatial vocabulary of colonialism. (Smith 2008, 52–53). Tuhiwai Smith describes a dynamic of colonisers coming to the outside of Western civilisation, into lands traditionally used by indigenous peoples. Missionaries, traders, explorers and settlers function as representatives of the colonial centres in the process of colonisation. This dynamic is described in *Ropandes röst* through the theme of conflicts between the indigenous Sámi on the one hand, and ministers and inn-keepers selling alcohol on the other. The description of Aslak Hetta's standpoint in the novel provides a critical, anti-colonial perspective on the religion disseminated through colonisation, as well as on the traders' profit hunger that resulted in widespread alcoholism and poverty. From the perspective of the character Laestadius, poverty and alcoholism are the most serious problems among the Sámi and settlers in his parish (Pohjanen 1981, 61). Alcoholism and poverty are also effects of colonialism highlighted by Aslak Hetta in *Ropandes röst* and in the present-day postcolonial narrative of the Kautokeino rebellion (see Zorgdrager 1997 and Gaup 2007).

Other categories associated with the modern centres of colonialism are those of scientists and explorers who travelled to the outskirts of the known world in order to map it (see Smith 2008). In *Ropandes röst* frequent mentions are made of the French *La Recherche expedition* which Laestadius joined in 1861. The author character in the 1960s views this expedition critically. The French members are described from the perspective of the character Laestadius as drunkards. A woman accompanying them is called 'Victor Hugo's whore'. The men are described as chatting about meaningless topics thought to be entertaining. There is a considerable social distance between Laestadius and the French members of the expedition who call him *le prêtre lapon*, that is, they see him as a Sámi minister (Pohjanen 1981, 75). As opposed to Laestadius, the French are described as unfocused, more interested in drinking and eating well than in strenuous work.

Dichotomisations between 'us' and 'them', colonisers and colonised, is a characteristic element of colonialism connected with othering and racialisation. As Linda Tuhiwai Smith points out, the establishment of binaries depends on a power asymmetry that implies that one group, the colonisers, have the power to define and name other, less powerful groups.<sup>194</sup> This kind of asymmetry is a theme of *Ropandes röst* in the chapter that provides the

<sup>194</sup> This power asymmetry is the theme of the chapter "Research Adventures on Indigenous Lands: They came, They saw, They named, They claimed [...]" of *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples* (Smith 2008).



backdrop of the revival. The time before the revival is described as a period of loss and despair. The narrator draws attention to ancient Sámi mythology and shamanism which were suppressed by the missionaries who came to convert the Sámi. The arrival of colonisers is called “the time of the great exploitations”, and the naming of the Sámi is commented on: “Sámi they call themselves. They have been given the name Lapps by their enemies as they live at the end of the world.” (Pohjanen 1981, 85, my translation.)<sup>195</sup> The narrator goes on exemplifying prejudices about the Sámi disseminated by their enemies, and a story about the Sámi being the descendants of a princess and a dog is mentioned (ibid.). As a contrast to this malicious story of the Sámi as being not quite human, the Sámi’s own ancestral myth about the Sámi being the children of the sun is presented: “They are related to the sun and light, they are the sons of the sun.” (Pohjanen 1981, 85, my translation.)

While the malicious, prejudiced story of the ancestry of the Sámi is an outsider story, the Sámi ancestral myth represents an insider story. The juxtaposition of these diverse stories is in line with the metafictional direction of *Ropandes röst*. A central theme is that stories are produced by various agents with diverse agendas and in different contexts. One of these contexts is the Swedish 1960s when the author character is writing a book about Laestadius. The years between the 1960s and the 1980s, when *Ropandes röst* was published, is the period when the Sámi started to become more visible, not least as a consequence of the Alta conflict in Norway. It is also the period when postcolonial theory began to make an impact in Scandinavia. These factors provide a backdrop to the themes of anti-colonialism and postcolonialism in Pohjanen’s novel about an author character’s attempts to frame and narrate the story about Lars Levi Laestadius.

*Paradoxical Lars Levi Laestadius: Champion of the Poor and Grave-Robber*

One of the pursuits of the *La Recherche expedition* mentioned a number of times in *Ropandes röst* is that of collecting Sámi skulls and other human remains. At the time when the expedition took place there was a great demand for such items. It is known that Lars Levi Laestadius functioned as a guide showing the French expedition members where skulls were available and helping them to procure them (Franzén 1973, 213, Broberg 1982, 27–86, Lundmark 2008, 145ff., Ojala 2016, 999–1001). In *Ropandes röst* Laestadius’ business with Sámi skulls and human remains is mentioned as a means for Laestadius to alleviate the poverty his family was suffering from, as the selling of “Lapp skulls to Stockholm” was one way of generating a much needed income

<sup>195</sup> “Sabme, sameh kallar de sig själva. Namnet lapp har de fått av sina ovänner för att de bor vid världens slut.” (Pohjanen 1981, 85.)

to his starving family (Pohjanen 1981, 72). A connection between the *La Recherche expedition* representing the modern science of the 1860s and abuse of Sámi culture and traditions is established. When the president of the expedition recovers after having been ill, he declares that “they could now go to the churchyard to look for Lapp skulls.” (Pohjanen 1981, 80, my translation.) Another member of the expedition whispers to Laestadius: “This is how to cure a hang-over” (ibid.). The Frenchmen are described as not caring about the fact that they are robbing graves. In one place, they find “a great treasure, two large sacks full of Lapp skulls and human bones. The president was elated and put every bone fragment that appeared from the graves in the sack.” (Pohjanen 1981, 80, my translation.) They make jokes and laugh when talking about the separation of skulls from bodies and exhibiting the collected items in “fancy rooms” (*granna rum*, Pohjanen 1981, 81).

There was also a demand for Sámi skulls in a Swedish national context. There is a reference to an episode when Laestadius proposed that a doctor should cut the head of a dead baby so that the scientist Anders Retzius could add the infant’s skull he desired to his collection (Pohjanen 1981, 80). This episode is documented in studies of Laestadius’ complicity with grave robbers abusing Sámi traditions and culture (Broberg 1982, 55, Franzén 1973, 212–214, Lundmark 2010, 146–147). Laestadius’ contribution to race biological research is highlighted as a traumatising Sámi history in a poem by the Sámi poet and artist Rose-Marie Huuva. The incident of Laestadius attempting to obtain an infant’s skull is emphasised in a cruel image that underlines Laestadius’ callousness and disrespect: “a sharp edge/ separates the head/ from the body of the child/getting cold” (Huuva 2006, 23, my translation).<sup>196</sup> Huuva’s poem exemplifies a critical view of Laestadius from the vantage point of present-day decolonization and anti-colonial, indigenious counter-history.

The section containing the morbid details about grave robberies ends with the sentence “He [Laestadius] felt disgust at it all.” (Pohjanen 1981, 81, my translation.) Thus, it is implied that Laestadius is drawn into activities that are not beneficial for him through his co-operation with the French expedition. This is a different depiction of Laestadius’ activities as a ‘grave robber’ than that in Pohjanen’s “Song of Praise to Lars Levi Laestadius” from the year 2000 (see the discussion of “Song of Praise to Lars Levi Laestadius” below). The difference between the novel’s critical depiction and the song’s celebratory one, may be attributed to a method used by Pohjanen on several

<sup>196</sup> “en vass egg/ skiljer huvudet/ från det kallnade/ barnets kropp” (Huuva 2006, 23). I do not know if Laestadius himself separated heads from bodies, but it is known from his correspondence that he asked a doctor to cut the head off a deceased infant’s body.

occasions, namely the presentation of the same subject matter from different viewpoints. This method is used within one and the same novel, such as in *Ropandes röst* and *Dagning; röd!*, but also in texts published separately displaying intertextual and paratextual relationships.

In contrast to the French colonial connection, which results in feelings of alienation, anguish and disgust, the encounter with the poor Sámi woman Milla Clementsdotter leads to the new birth, the second birth, which is a prerequisite for the revival. While the association with the Frenchmen is depicted as being destructive for Laestadius mainly in a moral sense, the encounter with the poor, uneducated, Sámi woman eventually empowers him to work for the benefit of the poor Sámi and settlers. Grace is a vital element in this development as Laestadius cannot achieve the much-wanted spiritual rebirth through will-power.

As opposed to the spatial vocabulary of colonialism which describes the outside of civilisation as a wilderness that is free for exploitation by colonisers (see Smith 2008, 53), the author character of *Ropandes röst* highlights Laestadius' reversal of this mode of describing space. This is reflected in the title of the novel. It is indicated that Laestadius' identification with John the Baptist implies a challenge of the legitimacy of the Centre from where 'dead Christianity', that is, Christianity without true faith, and traders selling alcohol with catastrophic consequences for the Sámi and poor settlers come. Like Laestadius, John the Baptist is described as an unusual man, despised and curious (Pohjanen 1981, 109). He is also described as a man chosen by God to preach about improvement and baptism. A theme of the author character's narrative is that, like John the Baptist, Laestadius sees himself as a crying voice in the desert (Pohjanen 1981, 110). When discussing this topic with Juhani Rattamaa, Laestadius clarifies "A crying voice in the wilderness." (Pohjanen 1981, 110, my translation.) This notion is important, as it suggests that salvation does not come from the centre, but from its outside, the wilderness or periphery. In this respect, the idea of the power and importance of the voice crying in the wilderness represents a reversal of the value-coding of the spatial vocabulary of colonialism. This implies that the periphery's challenge of the legitimacy of the colonial centre is a central theme of *Ropandes röst*, and that it is the Laestadian revival and theology that are the vantage points for the reversal.

### Establishing Connections: Paratexts and Postcolonial Life-Writing

A central theme of Pohjanen's third novel *Kasaland*, published by Norstedts in 1984, is conflicts in the Swedish-Finnish border area between local vil-

lagers engaged in smuggling and customs officers. This novel, too, experiments with narrative levels. The chapters consist of a third-person narrative about the Polonen family who live on both sides of the Torne River. The story line focuses on a case of horse smuggling which by and by involves a majority of the Polonen family as they commit perjury as witnesses in a court case. In the final chapter “Epilog” (‘Epilogue’), which is also a third-person narrative, an author character reflects upon the story he has written: “He only had the epilogue left and two ‘Workers’ [translation of the Finnish cigarette brand *Arbetare*].” (Pohjanen 1984, 246). Kurt-Göran in Malminge is mentioned (see Pohjanen 1979).<sup>197</sup> The chapter ends with a specification of the location of the author and the month and year when the book is finished, “Sirillus in April 1984”. Through this, Bengt Pohjanen’s homestead Sirillus in the Torne Valley, which has not been mentioned previously in the text, is highlighted as the location where the author character finishes the book. The time reference also makes it clear that the preceding narrative is a flashback. The time of the chapters vary. Two chapters are made up of transcriptions from a tape consisting of Kurt-Göran Polemalm’s narrative of the past when the smuggling that resulted in the trial occurred (chapter XVI and XIX). Furthermore, there are chapters presenting tapes with interviews with suspects and witnesses from the investigation of the smuggling and perjury case.

Through the references to the protagonist of *Och fiskarna svarar Guds frid* and the author Bengt Pohjanen, *Kasaland* explicitly refers to a *paratext*, that is, a text that is of consequence but which is not included in the story line or discourse (Lothe et al. 2007, 166). As Lothe et al. point out, the concept of the paratext is important for critics questioning ideas about the text as a closed, self-contained entity. As to *Kasaland*, Bengt Pohjanen establishes links both to his debut novel and to his own person by means of references to paratexts. Narratologist Gérard Genette discerns two types of paratexts: *peritexts* and *epitexts* (Genette 1997). Peritexts, following Genette, are elements printed in the work in question, such as author’s name, title, dedications etc. In *Kasaland*, the final naming of a location connected with Bengt Pohjanen that has not been mentioned in the novel, and a date – “Sirillus in April 1984” – function as a peritext establishing connections to a place, an individual and activities that are not part of the story line. The novel also has a peritext in the shape of a dedication that reads “Till minnet av min bror Holger Pohjanen” (‘In memory of my brother Holger Pohjanen’). This peritext must have been added after the novel was finished, as it

<sup>197</sup> In *Och fiskarna svarar Guds frid* Kurt Göran is spelled without a hyphen, while it is spelled with a hyphen in *Kasaland*.

refers to the tragic death of Bengt Pohjanen's brother, a police officer who was shot in the line of duty in Gällivare on 17 June 1984.<sup>198</sup>

Another type of paratext discussed by Genette is *epitext*. By this, Genette means all text that is relevant for the understanding of a work, but which is not included in the book in question. In the case of *Kasaland*, the references to Kurt Göran Polemalm point to Pohjanen's first novel being an epitext. While the life of the adult Kurt Göran Polemalm is a central theme of *Och fiskarna svarar Guds frid*, *Kasaland* presents the life of the adolescent Kurt-Göran Polonen, his shame of his cultural affiliation and his first steps towards a break with his Tornedalian background. The novels depict different phases in the life of the same character with a focus on the impact of growing up in a border area with a language that is mocked and despised by majority Swedes and Finns. The effects of the shame engendered in the adolescent Kurt-Göran Polonen, which is a theme of *Kasaland*, is also a theme of *Och fiskarna svarar Guds frid*. As mentioned above, self-hatred, shame, and identity loss are central themes of decolonisation aimed at coming to terms with, and overcoming, traumatising histories.

The backdrop of the plot of *Kasaland* is the extensive cross-border traffic between Sweden and Finland. The local people with family on both sides of the river hardly see Finland as a foreign country. The imposition of taxes on goods taken across the border is seen by the locals as an interference with their old traditions and social patterns. The smuggling of a horse from Finland to Sweden initiates a controversy between villagers protecting one another on the one hand, and the authorities' intent on catching the smugglers on the other. The smuggling takes place in the Torne Valley in 1959. Another theme is Kurt-Göran Polonen's adolescence and his breakup when he eventually leaves his home village to pursue studies in Haparanda. After one of the occasions when his uncle Rudolf has smuggled a horse from Finland, customs officers and policemen turn up to interrogate members of the Polonen family. The boy Kurt-Göran feels shame about the way things are and he fantasises about various scenarios for the future: "He thought that he would change his name when he was grown up and a public official, teacher or something, and then nobody would ask questions, and he would not go

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<sup>198</sup> This incident is mentioned on Swedish policemen's memorial website: Svenska polismäns minnesportal, "Rune Holger Pohjanen", [http://www.spmp.se/site/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=100:1984-06-17-rune-holger-pojanen&catid=8:1984-2004&Itemid=126](http://www.spmp.se/site/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=100:1984-06-17-rune-holger-pojanen&catid=8:1984-2004&Itemid=126), accessed 17 November 2016.

back home and he would no longer know the people there.” (Pohjanen 1984, 49, my translation.)<sup>199</sup>

In another fantasy, he has become a cadet or an officer. He imagines that everybody can see that he is back home and that he is different: “that he has changed his name to Polén or Polonius or Polemalm. He speaks Swedish [. . .].”<sup>200</sup> In this fantasy, the roles have been reversed. Kurt-Göran sees himself as a representative of the authorities, as opposed to the Tornedalian smugglers who are being questioned by customs officers and policemen. The Torne Valley of the boy’s childhood is characterised as a border zone that is neither Swedish nor Finnish (also see Vikgren 2010, 56). In the opening of the novel, Kurt-Göran thinks about the specific character of this geographical area: “they should have known that neither Finland nor Sweden was located here, that people’s spoken Finnish was mixed with Swedish and that they cursed when they spoke Swedish in order to find words [. . .]” (Pohjanen 1984, 11, my translation.)<sup>201</sup> The nature of the Tornedalian border zone is accentuated by the contrasting of its language to that of the Finnish customs officers who speak standard Finnish (Pohjanen 1984, 51). Thus, linguistic differences function as distinguishing markers between Tornedalians and the Swedish and Finnish majority population.

While Laestadianism is not a central theme of the novel, references to Laestadianism function as a description of the setting. One example is the depiction of an aunt of the Polonen family on the Finnish side of the border. She is a Laestadian, and reads Laestadius’ collection of sermons which colour her language and mindset (Pohjanen 1984, 13–16). There are also references to ‘the red Kasaland’, a stronghold of Communism which is being challenged by Social Democratic agitators (Pohjanen 1984, 19). Laestadianism is depicted as one of the popular movements that attracted followers in the border area. Like Communism, Laestadianism is depicted as a movement that appealed to the Tornedalian population, described as being neither Finnish nor Swedish when it comes to language and cultural background. Thus, there is a social and an ethnic dimension connected with Laestadianism.

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<sup>199</sup> “Han tänkte att han skulle byta namn när han blivit vuxen och tjänsteman, lärare eller vad som helst. Och då skulle ingen fråga och han skulle inte åka hem och inte längre känna människorna där.” (Pohjanen 1984, 49.)

<sup>200</sup> “att han bytt namn till Polén eller Polenius eller Polemalm. Han pratar svenska [. . .]” (Pohjanen 1984, 49.)

<sup>201</sup> “de borde ha vetat att här varken låg Finland eller Sverige, att man här bröt på svenska när man talade finska och svor när man talade svenska för att hitta ord [. . .]” (Pohjanen 1984, 11.)

In reviews of *Kasaland*, parallels are established between Bengt Pohjanen and Lars Levi Laestadius stemming from the fact that Pohjanen resigned from his position as a minister because of a controversy with the bishop of the Luleå Diocese. One reviewer mentions that Pohjanen resigned because he found the sermons of the National Swedish Lutheran Church too tepid and namby-pamby (Schwartz 1984). Another points out that Pohjanen himself became a Laestadian in 1968 when he studied in Uppsala, highlighting the controversy between Pohjanen and the diocese that led to his resignation. The reviewer concludes that solidarity with the oppressed and the burdened is manifest in Pohjanen's novels and that *Kasaland* depicts the hatred of the crofters towards the authorities (Grenberg 1984). Yet another reviewer claims that the novel *Ropandes röst* contributed to Pohjanen's resignation and his leaving the Swedish National Lutheran Church (Schueler 1984). Laestadius' criticism of the National Lutheran Church in *Ropandes röst* is echoed by Pohjanen himself when he criticises the 'dead faith' of the Church and its compliance with authorities, combined with a lack of consideration for the burdens of the poor and the people whose social structures were crumbling because of widespread alcoholism. These are also themes commented on by reviewers.

Although Laestadianism is not a major theme of *Kasaland*, reviewers highlight an opposition between the periphery and the centre, even though they do not use this terminology. This is conveyed by headlines such as: "Vilda berättelser från Tornedalen" (Schwartz 1984, 'Wild narratives from the Torne Valley'), "Stark Solidaritet med de förtryckta i Tornedalen" (Grenberg 1984, 'Strong solidarity with the oppressed of the Torne Valley'), and "Mustiga detaljer och obscena ord" (Werkmäster 1984, 'Juicy details and obscene words'). One headline, "Pohjanen, uppfödd mellan Stalin och Laestadius. Ett liv i ytterligheter", ('Pohjanen, raised between Stalin and Laestadius. A life between extremes', Schueler 1984) draws attention to a central theme of Pohjanen's debut novel, *Och fiskarna svarar Guds frid*, whose protagonist Kurt Göran Polemalm is anguished by the religious and ideological conflicts of his childhood's Torne Valley.

The theme of conflicts between social commitment and religious reform is echoed in Pohjanen's narrative about Laestadius' crisis preceding his spiritual rebirth. One of the things that Laestadius learns in *Ropandes röst* is that grace and unworldliness are the prerequisites for a spiritual rebirth. *Kasaland* depicts another kind of conflict, namely that between authorities imposed by the Centre and local villagers in the periphery of the Swedish nation state. Elements from Laestadianism and notions of a conflict between the Swedish national centre and the Tornedalian periphery are part of a Tornedalian minoritarian mindset recurrently depicted by Pohjanen.



This points to the theme of the self-representation of non-dominant ethnicities as postcolonial constituencies (see Moore-Gilbert 2009, xv). Moore-Gilbert discusses postcolonial life-writing as a subgenre of auto/biography, emphasising the importance of paying greater attention to issues of ethnicity when analysing auto/biographical genres (Moore-Gilbert 2009, xvi). He highlights that any auto/biographical writer “working within an epistemology of ‘collective inner worlds’, partly derived from specific ‘racial myths’, is likely to have a different conception of psyche and Selfhood to what usually obtains in the West, which one might also expect to be reflected in his/her life-writing.” (Moore-Gilbert 2009, xix.)

In a discussion about the possibility of creating a Finnish philosophy, Vadén highlights related themes in a discussion of the differences between Indo-European languages and Finnish, which is not an Indo-European language. Vadén suggests that the consequences of this is that there are specific ways of experiencing related to language that are not translatable, thus criticising the idea of a universal philosophy (Vadén 2006). When discussing the dominance of certain Western European languages, Vadén uses the term *colonisation* to denominate the suppression of minor languages and modes of experiencing related to them in a global context (ibid.). The Torne Valley depicted in Pohjanen’s first three novels is a kind of domestic Orient (see Said 1978 and Mattis ed. 2005) and its people the Others of the modern, Swedish welfare-state. In Pohjanen’s narrativisation of this space, the local people share a ‘collective inner world’ shaped by the local histories of the impact of the division in 1809 and the transit of German troops through northern Sweden at the end of World War II, religious and political movements such as Laestadianism and Stalinism, feelings of shame for speaking neither standard Swedish nor Finnish, together with feelings of being outsiders in the modern majority society.

Lars Levi Laestadius is a local, historical character whose biography Pohjanen explores in his writings, while Kurt-Göran Polemalm is a character contemporary with Pohjanen himself. As mentioned above, Pohjanen establishes a paratext to himself in the conclusion of *Kasaland* by mentioning the name of his homestead Sirillus. Other paratexts that establish connections between Bengt Pohjanen and the character Kurt-Göran Polonen/Polemalm are the autobiographical books *Smugglarkungens son* (‘The son of the smuggler king’) and *Tidens tvång* (‘The constraints of time’) from 2007 and 2009, respectively. The first is about Bengt’s childhood in the border area of the Torne Valley. Like Kurt-Göran’s father in *Kasaland*, Bengt’s is a smuggler. The ‘smuggler king’ of the title refers to his father. The second volume is about Bengt’s adolescence. Like Kurt-Göran, he moves to Haparanda to go to upper secondary school. While *Och fiskarna svarar Guds frid, Ropandes*

*röst* and *Kasaland* exemplify fictive auto/biographical life-writing, the paratexts in the shape of cover-texts of *Smugglarkungens son* and *Tidens tvång* explicitly state that these books are autobiographical stories.

### *Autobiographical Writing*

*Smugglarkungens son* and *Tidens tvång* are first-person narratives, whose narrator Bengt Pohjanen looks back upon his childhood. Following genre conventions, there should be a connection between the name on the title page and the person whose life is represented (Lejeune 1989). However, there are no fixed boundaries between autobiographies and genres like the autobiographical novel and the *Bildungsroman* (Moretti 2000). As Sandberg has pointed out, issues of truth and reality in autobiographies are complex, as autobiographical writing may function as a form of subjective historiography (Sandberg 2000). Besides, there are subjective elements in all kinds of writing as the writer always chooses what subject matter to include, how to emplot, and what linguistic shape to use in order to create the desired effect. Apart from the question of desired effect on the part of the author, there is also the fact that memories are subjective and that some may even be made up.

In the case of Bengt Pohjanen's *Smugglarkungens son* and *Tidens tvång*, the adult author looks back to events that happened decades ago. As mentioned above, this retrospection is combined with fictionalisation at the time of writing. *Smugglarkungens son* starts with the event of the author's birth on Monday 26 June 1944, which Bengt has no personal memory of. He mentions that it is narrated to him on the 25 December 1982 by a person who was present. This points to the role of stories for the creation of identity. While Bengt Pohjanen establishes causalities in his personal life story, he also acknowledges the role of story-telling for shaping culture and ideas of who we are. Throughout *Smugglarkungens son* and *Tidens tvång*, oral story-telling is commented on and its impact on the boy Bengt and his future choice to become an author is highlighted.

A common narrative technique is that the autobiographical author uses a first-person narrative to demonstrate his, or her, development. This is exemplified in *Smugglarkungens son* and *Tidens tvång*. While sections of the books present a child's perspective, for example the focus on the young child's fascination with words and language while learning to speak in the first book, other sections draw attention to the gap in time between the time of the story and the time of narration. On one occasion the narrator mentions that "This happened fifty-five years ago." (Pohjanen 2007c, 111, my translation.) While this kind of statement is a convention of autobiographical writing, establishing a connection between the author in real life,

the first-person narrator in the book and the protagonist of the story, it also draws attention to the narrativisation process and the gap in time between story time and time of narration.

### *Ethnofuturism, Minorities in the Margin, L'Ugritude*

While motives, themes, descriptions, characterisations and the meaning conveyed by the implied author in Pohjanen's earlier books are echoed in *Smugglarkungens son* and *Tidens tvång*, there is a difference compared to the early books discussed above, in so far as concepts and notions from postcolonial theory are explicitly mentioned in the later books. The early books address themes like feelings of inferiority, shame of one's own culture, language and identity loss, conflicts between majority and minority, racialisation and assimilationist policies. These themes are also central to *Smugglarkungens son* and *Tidens tvång*, but in these books they are explicitly connected with theories that are critical of the marginalisation of minorities. One such movement mentioned by Pohjanen is ethnofuturism. Attention to ethnicity and minority status are at the core of this movement, which:

sees possibilities even for small peoples to retain their ethnic peculiarities: ethnic diversity is considered possible in the future. Orientation is toward the future, ethnic or national culture is viewed as dynamic and developing. Adopting elements of foreign material culture does not inevitably bring about the adoption of foreign mental culture.<sup>202</sup>

The concept 'ethnofuturism' is used by Pohjanen in an episode describing his own birth. The midwife assisting at his birth is described as a character rooted in an ancient Ugric culture, and as an appropriate *ur icon* and prototype of ethnofuturism (Pohjanen 2007c, 16). The practices of this midwife are clearly at odds with modern health care, and so are the other circumstances surrounding Bengt's birth that are mentioned. A 'we and them binary' is evoked with a reference to race biology that contributed to marginalising the Tornedalians in Sweden. The narrator dwells upon the issue of round and oblong skulls, respectively, pointing out that after his birth the midwife had kneaded the head of the baby into a rounder shape so that he "looked like a real human and not like an Arian egghead." (Pohjanen 2007c, 17, my translation.)<sup>203</sup> In the same section, the Torne Valley is described as 'the third space of the border' (*gränsens tredje rum*) and as a margin.

<sup>202</sup> Heinapuu & Heinapuu, "Some treatments of the concept of ethno-futurism in Estonia", accessed 24 November 2016; [http://www.suri.ee/etnofutu/idnatekst/ethno\\_en.html](http://www.suri.ee/etnofutu/idnatekst/ethno_en.html); also see Sallamaa 2006.

<sup>203</sup> "såg jag ut som en riktig människa och inte som en arisk äggskalle." (Pohjanen 2007c, 17.)

*L'Ugritude* is mentioned, as well as the motives of language loss and exclusion. *L'Ugritude* is a term coined in analogy with *Négritude*, launched by black intellectuals in order to promote notions of a specific black culture expressed through a "distinctive 'personality'" that extends to all spheres of life (Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin 2009, 145). While the concept 'l'Ugritude' functions to celebrate cultural expressions connected with Finno-Ugric ethnicity, the coining of it is related to a history of marginalisation. A version of the theme of marginalisation is depicted through the focus on connections between minority language and lack of status: "My destiny was to be born to Meänkieli, and such a destiny is no event of importance, hardly an event at all." (Pohjanen 2007c, 17, my translation.)<sup>204</sup> As the birth takes place in 1944, before the term *Meänkieli* was established, there is an incongruence here, repeated on other occasions when the term *Meänkieli* is used to denominate the local language before the term was actually in use. Alternatively, the term *Finnish* is used, and occasionally the point is made that the local Tornedalian language is neither Swedish nor Finnish (Pohjanen 2007, 88). This reflects the mingling of the adult narrator's vocabulary and the terminology used at the time of the narrative. As mentioned above, the term *Meänkieli* began to be used in the 1980s.

Ethnicity and minority status are prominent themes of *Smugglarkungens son* and *Tidens tvång* providing the rationale for the postcolonial frame of reference captured by the concept 'l'Ugritude'. It appears repeatedly in *Smugglarkungens son* (Pohjanen 2007c, 11, 17, 20, 101, 123). It is also used in the first volume of a Tornedalian Finnish literary history published in the same year as *Smugglarkungens son* (Pohjanen & Johansson 2007a). One of the chapters in *Den tornedalsfinska litteraturen. Från Kexi till Liksom* is entitled "l'Ugritude – vår andes stämma i världen" ('l'Ugritude – the voice of our spirit in the world'). This is an alternative history compared with majority histories, attempting to present a Tornedalian literary tradition that is neither Swedish, nor Finnish. Through allusion, this history functions as a paratext for *Smugglarkungens son*. With a slight variation, Pohjanen's critique of Selma Lagerlöf's *Nils Holgerssons underbara resa genom Sverige* appears both in the literary history and the autobiography (Pohjanen 2007a, 11,

<sup>204</sup> "Mitt öde var att födas till meänkieli, och ett sådant öde är ingen viktig händelse, nästan ingen händelse alls." (Pohjanen 2007c, 17.)

2007c, 55).<sup>205</sup> As in the literary history, the term *ethnora* is used to denominate majority writers viewing the Tornedalians from the outside (Pohjanen 2007a, 73, 2007c, 35). Stina Aronsson and Björn-Erik Höijer are mentioned in this context. A similar kind of allusion, combined with repetition, is exemplified by the description of Laestadian prayer meetings as interactive performances with the potential to undermine the established order, found in the first volume of *Den tornedalsfinska litteraturen* and in *Smugglarkungens son* (Pohjanen 2007s, 142–143, Heith 2016).

Throughout his authorship Pohjanen establishes paratextual connections between his books. They may be in the shape of the repetition of an episode, such as the one about Bengt eating chips of horse's hoof in *Smugglarkungens son*, which was previously used in *Kasaland*. In *Kasaland* the boy Kurt-Göran Polonen eats pieces of horse's hoof which cause blue marks on his body. In *Smugglarkungens son*, the boy Pänktti does the same thing. In both episodes, the chips come from smuggled horses whose old shoes have been replaced in order to cover up the fact that they have been smuggled from Finland. And in both books, blue marks on the boy's body are discovered at school and examined by a medical doctor.

Another paratextual connection in *Smugglarkungens son* is the references to the poem "Jag är född utan språk" and the theme of socialisation into a culture of poverty. The motif of the first day at school points to the postcolonial awareness of the text, manifested in its focus on assimilationist policies and the role of the school as a disciplinary institution teaching the children that their Tornedalian language is deficient and that they ought to switch to the 'superior' Swedish language. *Smugglarkungens son's* description of the first day at school highlights that the children only speak Finnish before starting school. Bengt's mother reminds the children that they must speak Swedish (Pohjanen 2007c, 149) – a language they do not know. Among Bengt's class mates, there is only one pupil who speaks Swedish, the son of a custom's officer (Pohjanen 2007c, 151). When the names of the children are called out by the teacher, Pänktti hears his Christian name in

<sup>205</sup> Selma Lagerlöf's book about Nils Holgersson is also an intertext of Mona Mörtlund's and Monica Johansson's children's book in Meänkieli *Hanna hakkee joukkaista* (Mörtlund & Johansson 1991). The book is about a girl who helps a wounded swan. To thank her, the swan takes her on a flight on its back, giving her the opportunity to see the beautiful Tornedalian landscape from above. Nils Holgersson in Selma Lagerlöf's book, on the other hand, missed the entire Torne Valley when riding on the back of a goose. An interesting detail is that both Lagerlöf's and Mörtlund's books were written for children. A difference is that while the book about Nils Holgersson was intended as a reader for the compulsory school, Mörtlund's and Johansson's book was produced in the context of the linguistic and cultural revitalisation of the Swedish Tornedalians in the 1990s.

Swedish for the first time: "So my name was Bengt, not Pänktti." (Pohjanen 2007c, 153.)<sup>206</sup>

The explicit use of terminology from postcolonial theory and references to central themes of postcolonial studies make the narrative presented in *Smugglarkungens son* and *Tidens tvång* an alternative postcolonial narrative with its characteristic themes, emplotment and terminology. The role of Laestadianism in this narrative is that of a motif characterising the specific minority culture and mentality of the Swedish Tornedalians, separated by an artificial border from their relatives on the Finnish side of the border. Thus, Laestadianism functions as a distinguishing marker between Swedish majority culture and the culture of the Finnish/Meänkieli speaking minority in the Torne Valley. In this cultural landscape Laestadianism has affected the mindset and language of both believers and non-believers. In an episode describing a log jam in a river, the language of the log-drivers is described as religious (Pohjanen 2007c, 108). This makes one character conclude: "we are all Laestadians" (Pohjanen 2007c, 208). The chapter has made it clear that not everybody is a Laestadian, but the comment points to the impact of Laestadianism on local language used by Laestadians as well as non-Laestadians.

The time depicted in *Smugglarkungens son* is a period of transition, when old local traditions and life styles are being challenged by the modernity of the Swedish Social Democratic welfare state. Per Albin is mentioned a number of times as a champion of change. Social Democrat Per Albin Hansson (1885–1946) is known for launching the idea of the Swedish People's Home (*folkhemmet*), which became a central concept in the Social Democratic vision for social change. In Pohjanen's books, this vision threatens and marginalises the old Tornedalian culture. The narrator of *Smugglarkungens son* comments on this development and the status of Laestadianism in the Torne Valley of the 1950s: "The entire Torne Valley is in rapid transformation. Laestadianism is still the dominant cultural power." (Pohjanen 2007c, 179, my translation.) In the second volume, *Tidens tvång*, the adolescent Bengt depicts the vanishing impact of Laestadianism and traditional Tornedalian culture when confronted with the modernity of the 1950s: "The old Pohjanen homestead is falling into decay. A whole world is going under. This is called modernisation." (Pohjanen 2009, 86, my translation.)<sup>207</sup> At this point in history, the Laestadian summer meeting in Övertorneå competes with performances by pop singers Chubby Checker and

<sup>206</sup> "Jag hette alltså Bengt, inte Pänktti." (Pohjanen 2007c, 153.) NB *Pänktti* is the Finnish version of *Bengt*.

<sup>207</sup> "Gamla Pohjanengården förfaller. En hel värld går under. Detta kallas modernisering." (Pohjanen 2009, 86.)

Emile Ford (Pohjanen 2009, 86–87). At the age of fourteen, Bengt attends his last prayer meeting arranged at his home in Kassa. This development is described as part of a generational shift:

My interest in prayer meetings is diminishing. In fact, we, my generation, the people born in the 1940s, are severing our bonds with Laestadianism. A few villages in Pajala and Karesuando remain. Why are we doing it? We are losing our faith! The modernisation is carried out when we are at our most impressionable. (Pohjanen 2009, 92, my translation)<sup>208</sup>

The postcolonial awareness of Pohjanen's texts is manifest also in the depiction of a power asymmetry between Swedish official institutions, such as the compulsory school, and the Church, which contribute to disseminating the values of the Centre:

The Church, rejected by the Communists, politically exploited by the Social Democrats and respected by the middle class out of old habit, doesn't mean much to us "ordinary people". This is the fate of the Church in Meänmaa and this is reflected in our actions. (Pohjanen 2009, 80.)<sup>209</sup>

The actions referred to in the quote are childish pranks such as the breaking of windows and a bicycle ride in the church building with the vicar's poodle on the luggage carrier. The focaliser is both the young boy Bengt and the adult narrator analysing the relationship between the Swedish National Lutheran Church, diverse political ideologies and social status. Laestadianism as depicted by Pohjanen, functions as an alternative to the Church emanating from the Centre, and the prayer meetings are described as subversive performances of local culture shaped by a specific mentality that questions the legitimacy of the Centre. In this context, smuggling across the Swedish-Finnish border is not seen as a crime by local Tornedalians, rather the crime is the establishment of the border that has divided the old cultural landscape on both sides of the river.

In an episode in *Smugglarkungens son*, Pohjanen depicts intertwining between a Laestadian prayer meeting and horse smuggling. During the meeting, customs officers come to the homestead of the Pohjanen fami-

<sup>208</sup> "Mitt intresse för bönemöten är i avtagande, i själva verket klipper vi, min generation, fyrtiotalisterna, banden med laestadianismen. Kvar blir några byar i Pajala och Karesuando. Varför gör vi det? Vi tappat tron! Moderniseringen genomförs när vi är som mest påverkbara." (Pohjanen 2009, 92.)

<sup>209</sup> "Kyrkan betyder inte mycket för oss 'vanliga människor', ratad av kommunisterna, politiskt utnyttjad av sossarna och av gammal vana respekterad av borgerligheten. Det är kyrkans öde i Meänmaa och detta avspeglas i våra handlingar." (Pohjanen 2009, 80.)



ly and find a horse that has been smuggled from Finland in a stable. The narrator concludes that this is not good news for the Laestadians. But immediately after this, a question is posed: “but who has drawn the border between the brother peoples? It is certainly not God!” (Pohjanen 2007c, 146).<sup>210</sup> Through the use of ‘free indirect speech’, the opinions of the local people are intertwined with the words of the narrator. The effect is that the legitimacy of the laws of the Centre is questioned, while local opposition to the values of the Centre is highlighted. In this context, Laestadianism and smuggling both function as assertions of local culture. The point of free indirect speech is that it is not possible to distinguish whether the opinions expressed are those of the local people, or/and the narrator.

While the autobiographical *Tidens tvång* depicts a time of transition when Laestadianism loses its grip over the minds of the young generation, this does not mean that Laestadianism vanishes as a cultural influence that affects the way people think, act and speak. In one episode, some communist men are waiting outside a church while their wives and children attend the service. In spite of being communists, they are described as being shaped by their Laestadian background:

Most communists have pious parents. The fathers of the leading communists have been leading preachers. That is why few people can pronounce *Jumala* [‘God’ in Finnish], God, with such devotion and reverence, not to say beauty, as these atheists. When they say *Jumala* their body curtsies and if they add *Jumalan Poika* [‘the Son of God’ in Finnish], the Son of God, they dance lightly. (Pohjanen 2009, 80, my translation.)<sup>211</sup>

As the quote indicates, Laestadianism is part of the complex Tornedalian culture Pohjanen depicts. *Tidens tvång* depicts the decline of prayer meetings among the young generation growing up in the 1950s. In *Den tornedalsfinska litteraturen. Från Kexi till Liksom*, Laestadian prayer meetings gain a new role as an ethnofuturist symbol in performative attempts to shape a Tornedalian cultural identity (Pohjanen 2007, 134ff.). In this volume, Pohjanen describes the prayer meetings of his childhood as interactive performances with the potential to momentarily subvert the established order.

<sup>210</sup> “men vem har dragit gränsen mellan brödrafolken? Inte är det Gud!” (Pohjanen 2007c, 146.)

<sup>211</sup> “De flesta kommunister har fromma föräldrar. De ledande kommunisternas fäder har varit ledande predikanter. Därför kan få uttala *Jumala*, Gud, med en sådan andakt och vördnad för att inte säga skönhet som dessa ateister. När de säger *Jumala* niger kroppen och lägger de till *Jumalan Poika*, Guds son, dansar de lätt.” (Pohjanen 2009, 80.)

## Tornedalian Books for Young People

The themes, motives and setting of *Kasaland* are reflected in *Lyykeri*, a book for young people first published in Meänkieli in 1985.<sup>212</sup> A Swedish version, *Lugern*, was published by Norstedts in 1989 (Pohjanen 1989a). There are some differences between the two versions. For example, the Meänkieli version is a first-person narrative, while the Swedish version is narrated in the third person. The main characters of the book are two children, Assar and Anne, who find a German army pistol. The time is the postwar 1950s when the Cold War and fears of espionage made the Swedish-Finnish border interesting from a security point of view. Laestadianism, Communism and Social Democracy are mentioned as part of the local religious and ideological landscape. While Laestadianism is described as being a part of the spiritual heritage, Social Democracy is mentioned as a contender. One of the characters, the customs officer Lindgren, actively tries to attract the villagers to the Social Democratic Party. The village where Assar and Anne live is described as consisting half of communists and half of newly converted Social Democrats (Pohjanen 1989, 47). In this particular village, the people are described as mainly atheists: “the church did not even have services, as nobody ever attended” (Pohjanen 1989, 47).<sup>213</sup> However, Laestadianism lives on in this transforming, conflictual, ideological landscape:

However, the old village prayer-sermons held by an ecclesiastical revival movement, Laestadianism, lived on. Some of the women in the village believed in both Stalin and Laestadianism. On the kitchen walls they had portraits of Stalin and other Soviet bigwigs, and of Laestadius. (Pohjanen 1989, 47, my translation).<sup>214</sup>

In the latter part of the book is a chapter about a prayer-meeting, ‘In the kitchen there was a fragrance of prayer-meeting’ (“I köket doftade

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<sup>212</sup> While *Lyykeri* is a pioneering book in the context of the linguistic mobilisation initiated in the 1980s, it is not the first book written, or published, in Meänkieli. William Snell's *Kamaripirttiltä*, a collection of stories in Meänkieli, was first published in Finland in 1944 (Snell 1944). In 1972, a revised version was published by Tornedalica, a series aiming at promoting Tornedalian culture (Snell 1972). In 1976, a Swedish translation was published, also by Tornedalica: *Berättelser från Kamaripirtti* (Snell 1976, also see Gröndahl, Hellberg & Ojanen 2000, 148–149).

<sup>213</sup> “kyrkan hade inte ens gudstjänster eftersom det aldrig kom någon till dessa.” (Pohjanen 1989, 47.)

<sup>214</sup> “De gamla byaböngudstjänsterna, som hölls av en kyrklig väckelserörelse, laestadianismen, levde dock kvar. Några av kvinnorna i byn var både stalin- och læstadiustroende. På köksväggen hade de porträtt av Stalin och andra sovjetpampar, samt av Læstadius.” (Pohjanen 1989, 47.)

bönemöte”) that provides a different description of the womens’ view on the relationship between Stalinism and Laestadianism. Women arriving at the meeting are described as crying over the evil of the world and the anti-Christian spirit of Stalin (“Stalins antikristliga ande”, Pohjanen 1989, 107). While the blending of Stalinism and Laestadianism points to cultural hybridity, the distinction between worldly evil and a Stalinist anti-Christian spirit on the one hand, and Laestadianism on the other, points to a Laestadian mindset that rejects worldliness and political ideologies as viable strategies for improvement. As the disparate descriptions are presented as equally characteristic of the Tornedalian setting, they exemplify *polyphony*, i.e. a structure in which various voices are juxtaposed (see Lothe et al. 2007, 173). Thus, the culture of the village is described as both hybrid and as influenced by Laestadianism’s notion of the importance of unworldliness for spiritual rebirth.

The description of women juxtaposing portraits of Stalin and Laestadius and believing in both, functions as a representation of extreme cultural and ideological hybridity. The border of 1809 is described as random and as causing splits in families and between friends (Pohjanen 1989, 14). The villagers on the Swedish side are Swedish citizens, but they struggle with the Swedish language. There are a number of references to difficulties in understanding spoken Swedish and expressing oneself in Swedish. The Torne Valley is described as a contact zone between different cultures. Following postcolonial theory, hybridity thrives in this kind of contact zones (Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin 2007, 108).<sup>215</sup> Pohjanen’s juxtaposition of Stalinism and Laestadianism in the description of women believing in both is one example of a description of a contact zone where new transcultural forms emerge. Another is his description of linguistic hybridity. In *Kasaland*, the term *svinska* is used to describe a mixture of Swedish and Finnish. However, it should be emphasised that Pohjanen does not describe a hybridisation of Stalinism and Laestadianism as a dominant, new transcultural form, but as one form in a transforming polyphony.

Although the villagers in Kasaland, where Assar and Anne live, are described as predominantly atheist, there is an entire chapter about a Laestadian prayer meeting that engages the villagers. The children help in the preparations by carrying chairs. Assar’s mother has taken psalm books and collections of sermons that will be used at the meeting from a brown leath-

<sup>215</sup> The term *hybridity* is used by Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin, who make a reference to Bhabha (Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin 2007, 108). In this context they mention the possibility of “empowering hybridity”. Thus, I do not attach any negative connotations to the concept of “hybridity” as used above.

er bag which is brought from one homestead to another (Pohjanen 1989, 105). Thus, the Laestadian prayer meetings are described as an intrinsic part of local traditions, engaging both young and old. The appeal of Laestadianism to all ages is described through the reactions of the older generation, crying and confessing their sins, and the girl Anne's view of the meetings as a kind of entertainment:

Anne hoped that the village's reader of prayers would read from Laestadius' collection of sermons, as its preachings were much shorter and more fun because he cursed almost all the time and it was exciting to watch the aunties making faces och sighing even more when his "devils of hell" started to resound in the kitchen. (Pohjanen 1989, 106–107, my translation)<sup>216</sup>

There is an interesting comment concerning the theme of discrimination of the Tornedalians in Sweden in a review of the Swedish translation of *Lyyk-eri*, indicating that this is a theme that has come to the fore quite recently: "He [Bengt Pohjanen] presents a nasty picture of the discrimination of the Tornedalians, who were bilingual, but who were to be Swedified in the usual manner when it comes to minority groups." (Hedén 1989, my translation.)<sup>217</sup> The review hints that there has been a shift in the view of assimilationist policies, implying that cultural homogenisation is not necessarily seen as a positive thing by majority Swedes. This reorientation is reflected in the theme of the seminar "New Writing in a Multicultural Society" held in Stockholm in 1985. (Pohjanen 2007, 115.) It is also the theme of a collection of articles about the modernisation of Sweden which highlights that the cultures and languages of minorities were marginalised in the building of the modern welfare state (see Arvastson 1999).

As to the issue of Tornedalian bilingualism mentioned in the quote above, Pohjanen's *Lugern* gives a more complex depiction of the linguistic situation in the Torne Valley in the 1950s than indicated by the quote. As it is mentioned in Pohjanen's text that the school teacher did not laugh at the children's difficulties to speak Swedish, "nor did she punish them if they spoke Swedish, which she strictly speaking should have done, as it was prescribed by law" (Pohjanen 1989a, 49, my translation) the children can

<sup>216</sup> "Anne hoppades att byabönsläsaren skulle läsa Læstadius' postilla för predikningarna i den var mycket kortare och roligare för han svor nästan hela tiden och det var spännande att se på tanterna hur de grimaserade och suckade ändå mer när alla hans 'helvetes djävlar' började leva om i köket." (Pohjanen 1989, 106–107.)

<sup>217</sup> "Han ger en otäck bild av diskrimineringen av tornedalingarna, som ju var tvåspråkiga, men skulle försvenskas på känt manér när det gäller minoritetsgrupper" (Hedén 1989).

hardly be said to be bilingual.<sup>218</sup> The children's difficulties with the Swedish language is a recurring theme throughout the book. When one of the protagonists, the boy Assar, starts school he has learnt Swedish to some extent, but he still has problems understanding spoken Swedish: "Even if he could speak and write it, he had problems apprehending speech, as Swedish was so rarely spoken in the village." (Pohjanen 1989, 88, my translation.)<sup>219</sup> In this linguistic context, Laestadianism functions as a preserver of the Finnish language, as it is the language of the collections of sermons and hymns used at local prayer meetings. This implies that Laestadianism functions as a counterweight to Swedification and its concomitant cultural homogenisation.

When *Lyykeri* was first published in 1985, all copies of the first edition were sold out in a few days. At the time, there was a program on the local radio station focussing upon the etymology and meaning of Tornedalian Finnish words and expressions. Pohjanen was also involved in a project run by Umeå University, "Mångkulturell miljö – en rikedom att upptäcka", ('Multicultural environment - a richness to discover'), aimed at making Tornedalians aware of the richness of living and working in the Torne Valley (Berglund 1985). In an interview, Pohjanen mentions that Tornedalian Finnish has often had a weak position in the Torne Valley itself, connecting this with negative attitudes related to assimilationist policies. With *Lyykeri*, he wishes to contribute to the survival of the Tornedalian Finnish language and to hand over the cultural heritage to the younger generation (Norén 1986). Both the project run by Umeå University and Pohjanen's comments testify to a new awareness of the positive character of Tornedalian culture gaining ground in the 1980s.

The name *Assar* appears in another book for young people, *Land i lågor* ('Land in flames') from 1992. There are similarities in the Tornedalian family constellation at the centre of the narrative in *Land i lågor* and other books by Pohjanen, even though some names have been changed. In this book, Assar is a minor character, the younger brother of the protago-

<sup>218</sup> "inte heller bestraffade hon dem om de talade finska, vilket hon borde ha gjort för lagen föreskrev det" (Pohjanen 1989, 49). The issue of the prohibition to speak Finnish/Tornedalian Finnish in Swedish schools originate from the fact that the state started to contribute economically to all-Swedish schools (*helsvenska skolor*) in the year 1888. In 1958, the prohibition to speak Finnish during breaks was abolished. However, this was not implemented everywhere, which is why there was a reminder from the National Board of Education (*Skolöverstyrelsen*) in 1968 that the prohibition to speak Finnish during breaks was no longer valid (see Wande 1990, 442).

<sup>219</sup> "Även om han kunde tala och skriva det hade han svårt att uppfatta tal, för det var så sällan någon talade svenska i byn." (Pohjanen 1989, 88.)

nist Erik. The time of the story is the period when the Germans evacuated from Finland during World War II. This affected the Torne Valley deeply as German troops headed north through the Torne Valley in order to get to Norway. One theme of *Land i lågor* reflected by the title is the burning of all buildings on the Finnish side of the border. The novel depicts a dramatic period of local history through a story about the Swedish Tornedalian boy Erik who goes to Finland with his cousin and gets involved in the fighting. Erik, who initially has romantic ideas about war as an arena for heroism and courage, realises its true nature when he is confronted with killed and wounded soldiers. The beloved family home Unhula on the Finnish side of the border is burned down. *Land i lågor* provides a realistic depiction of the war in opposition to the romantic image entertained by Erik before he experiences the effects of war himself. Laestadianism is mentioned a couple of times as being a part of Erik's Tornedalian upbringing. This Laestadian cultural affiliation is highlighted through the mentioning that Erik often went to Sunday prayer in order to sing the old Songs of Sion (*Sions sånger*).<sup>220</sup> The impact of Laestadianism on the mindset of the people is evoked by a description of Erik falling into an ecstasy similar to that which the women at the Sunday prayer meetings experienced. Although not a major theme, Laestadianism is depicted as part of the local, living Tornedalian culture that has shaped Erik's Tornedalian identity.

As opposed to *Land i lågor*, Pohjanen's book for young people *Dödens ängar* ('The meadows of death'), which is set in the 1990s, does not depict Laestadianism as part of a living local culture, but as a phenomenon of the past. The main characters are fifteen-year-old Hanna and Petrus who experience mystical, supernatural things against the backdrop of investigations aimed at exploring the possibility to store nuclear waste in the local mountains. Hanna becomes convinced that the authorities are not truthful when claiming that there will be no risk of radiation and she takes a stand by holding a public speech against the storage plans. The part of northern Sweden where Hanna and Petrus live is characterised by unemployment, depopulation and clear-felled areas. In this area in need of job opportunities, the local politicians emphasise the advantages of a nuclear-waste storage facility which they claim will generate jobs. However, there is protest among local people who want to stop the plans through a referendum. Laestadianism is characterised as a movement of the past through a depiction of Hanna's great-grandmother's way of worshipping: "Great-grandmother started taking small dance steps and clapping her hands, the way she used

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<sup>220</sup> *Sions sånger* is the title of various Laestadian song books.

to do when praising God.” (Pohjanen 1995, 105.)<sup>221</sup> There is a considerable difference in the picture of the 1940s and 1990s, respectively, presented in *Land i lågor* and *Dödens ängar*. While Laestadianism is part of the personal experiences of the teenage protagonist of *Land i lågor*, it is associated with older generations in *Dödens ängar*.

## Kamos:

### The Time of the Year When the Sun Doesn't Rise

In 1986, Bengt Pohjanen's first collection of poems, *Kamos, i hjärtat av vintern* ('Kamos, in the heart of winter') was published in Swedish by Norstedts. The collection is divided into various sections starting with a prologue consisting of a stanza inspired by the Finnish national poem the *Kalevala*. The *Kalevala* hero Väinämöinen is addressed by the lyrical "I" asking for another "Sampo", a magical artefact in Finnish *Kalevala* mythology which produces flour, salt and gold without any raw materials.<sup>222</sup> In Pohjanen's stanza, this 'Sampo' that the lyrical "I" is referring to is said to have created him as well: "en som även mig har skapat" ('one that has also created me'). Thus, already at the beginning of the collection, references are made to an artefact that functions as a distinguishing marker (cf. Barth 1998) in the creation of a Tornedalian ethnic and cultural identity that shares some of its content with that of Finns in Finland, while being different from that of the Swedish majority population.

Another artefact is mentioned in the dedication on the title page: "Tillägnas Antti Mikkelinpoika Keksi, bonde, soldat, Kamoslands skald som sjöng om den stora floden" ('Dedicated to Antti Mikkeli's son Keksi, farmer, soldier, poet of the Kamos country who sang about the great flood'). Antti Keksi is a significant character in the history of Tornedalian literature. His 17th-century orally transmitted poem about the spring flood in the Torne River is the oldest preserved literary work in Tornedalian Finnish. This is why the first volume of Bengt Pohjanen and Kirsti Johansson's Tornedalian Finnish literary history presents Keksi as a 'father' of Tornedalian Finnish literature (Pohjanen & Johansson 2007). While the Finnish *Kalevala* provides a mythological subject matter relating to the creation of a Finnish national identity and to a Finnish ancient cultural landscape, Keksi's poem

<sup>221</sup> "Gammalfarmor började ta små danssteg och klappa i händerna, som hon brukade göra när hon prisade Gud." (Pohjanen 1995, 105.)

<sup>222</sup> This description of the Sampo is offered by Elias Lönnrot, the compiler of the oral poems that were published as *The Kalevala*. However, there are other interpretations as well. What is of interest with regard to Pohjanen's stanza is that he uses subject matter from the Finnish national poem, thus establishing affiliations to a Finno Ugric cultural sphere.



activates a specific Tornedalian cultural landscape and geography where the river is central, as well as its annual flood.

Among the poems of *Kamos, i hjärtat av vintern* there are private, autobiographical stanzas referring to Bengt Pohjanen's controversy with the bishop of Luleå diocese and his resignation from his position as a minister. There are also poems evoking a northern landscape with snow, darkness and cold – all characteristic of the Torne Valley. Occasionally explicit references are made that situate the collection in the 1980s. The mining company *LKAB* is mentioned, as well as *Domänverket*, a state-owned forest company.<sup>223</sup> Mining, forestry and the production of electricity through the damming of rivers all contributed to wealth creation seen by some as an exploitation of Norrland typical of colonialism. This began as early as the 17th century when the Swedish Crown gave settlers benefits if they moved to the North (see Eriksson 2010, 31). Eriksson highlights that the interest in the North was motivated by security reasons, but also “by a colonial perspective” (ibid.). Following Sörlin, the wealth produced through exploitation of natural resources and raw materials was not intended to benefit the North (Sörlin 1988).

Although Eriksson's and Sörlin's emphasis is on historical colonialism in the studies referred to, the notion that Norrland is still being exploited remains. This is a frame of interpretation for Pohjanen's references to mining, forestry and hydroelectric power in *Kamos, i hjärtat av vintern*.<sup>224</sup> These enterprises are all controlled from the centre of the Swedish nation. Pohjanen's view can be derived from comments on unemployment affecting local people and the destruction of natural resources. As the dedication to Keksi and the reference to his river poem indicate, the local rivers constitute external environmental factors activated in the creation of a local culture and Tornedalian identity formation. This kind of environmental identity marker is described as threatened in Pohjanen's poem: “Water wants to move in its own way. But there is also dead water, that which is led through turbines and then the northern lights will play a requiem over the angel of

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<sup>223</sup> Domänverket has since the time of the publication of Pohjanen's collection been renamed and reorganised.

<sup>224</sup> Another more recent example of a focus on the traditional basic industries of Norrland in contemporary poetry is David Vikgren's *Skogen Malmen Vattenkraften*, “The forest the ore the hydroelectric power” (Vikgren 2013). Vikgren's poem, which repeats the words “skogen, malmen, vattenkraften” in various constellations, is very different from Pohjanen's *Kamos, i hjärtat av vintern*. Still, there are affinities in that both authors have a Tornedalian background and draw attention to raw materials playing a central role in the colonisation of Norrland.

the river. What will be left if the water dies, too, asks the sad eyes of the black dog." (Pohjanen 1986, 105.)<sup>225</sup>

While wood, ore and water are external environmental factors activated in Tornedalian identity formation, Laestadius and Laestadianism are connected with activities and beliefs that contribute to shaping a Tornedalian identity. Laestadius is mentioned on five occasions in *Kamos, i hjärtat av vintern* (Pohjanen 1986, 11, 32, 55, 123). These factors are not exclusive for Swedish Tornedalians, they are found also among other groups in Norrland. However, there is a reference to the theme of being born in the Torne Valley and to lack of language that situates the poem in a specific geographical and linguistic context, namely that of the Swedish Tornedalians. The first stanza echoes both the poem "Jag är född utan språk" and the depiction of Bengt's birth in the autobiography *Smugglarkungens son*: "Vacuum extractors pulled us/ through a black August night/ up on to a shore/ without a language." (Pohjanen 1986, 9, my translation.)<sup>226</sup>

There is another indirect connection to Laestadianism in the last section of *Kamos, i hjärtat av vintern*: "Kamos. I hjärtat av vintern IV – Tolkningar av Niilo Rauhala" before the epilogue. The section consists of Pohjanen's interpretations of poems by the Finnish poet Niilo Rauhala (b. 1936). Like Pohjanen, Rauhala uses motives from the northern Scandinavian landscape with flowing water, ice, snow, winter nights and cold. Although not exclusive for the Torne Valley and northern Finland, these references to a northern landscape function as markers of a specific geographical space connected with roots, belonging and home. One reviewer mentions that Rauhala was inspired by Laestadianism (Mannheimer 1986). Laestadian motives found in the poems are a certain melancholic attitude to existence, an orientation towards 'unworldliness' and the possibility of experiencing grace: "In a melancholy snowfall,/ which filled the entire spring sky/ a grace sounded/ through the window pane,/ a friend who arrived,/ a bird from a snowy branch,/ the frosty flute of the great titmouse." (Pohjanen's interpretation of Rauhala, in Pohjanen 1986, 148, my translation.)<sup>227</sup>

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<sup>225</sup> "Vattnet vill röra sig på sitt eget sätt. Men det finns också dött vatten. Sådant som leds igenom turbiner och då skall norrskenet spela requiem över älvens ängel. Vad blir kvar om också vattnet dör, frågar den svarta hundens sorgsna ögon." (Pohjanen 1986, 105.)

<sup>226</sup> "Sugklockor drog oss/ genom en svart augustinatt/ upp på en strand/ utan språk." (Pohjanen 1986, 9.)

<sup>227</sup> "I ett vemodigt snöfall,/ som fyllde hela vårhimlen/ klingade en nåd/ genom rutan,/ en vän som kom,/ en fågel från en snöig kvist,/ talgoxens köldflöjt." (Pohjanen's interpretation of Rauhala, in Pohjanen 1986, 148.)

## The Korpela Movement as Subject Matter: Revivalism Gone Astray

In 1987, Bengt Pohjanen's *Kuutot*, the first play entirely in Meänkieli, was a great success at the Tornedalian theatre, *Tornedalsteatern*, founded in 1986.<sup>228</sup> The play is about choices made by a woman called Jorinda and the effects these choices have on her children and grandchildren. Jorinda, who escaped to Sweden in 1918, has had to hide her political affiliations during the Finnish civil war when she marries a Tornedalian man. This is a period with strong class conflicts, and in order to survive in her new surroundings, Jorinda suppresses things from her past that would make her new life problematic. She is once again put in a situation where she chooses between extremes – the Laestadian movement opposed to sensuality and the Korpela movement offering people possibilities to live out their sexual desires. Unfortunately for Jorinda and her family, she again makes a choice that has to be forgotten and hidden like her switching of sides in the class conflict of 1918. Her choice continues to generate shame for her family to the extent that her children and grandchildren become dysfunctional.

Pohjanen's play explores the theme of shameful histories, which continue to generate negative self-images and social exclusion (cf. Lundmark 1985, Strandberg 1987, Heith 2009d). After the play *Kuutot*, Pohjanen has continued using the Korpela movement as a subject matter. In 1988, the novel *Dagning; röd!* ('Daylight; red!') was published (Pohjanen 1988), and ten years later the short novel *Kristallarken* ('The Crystal Ark', Pohjanen 1998). The first volume in the series *Tornedalska öden och äventyr* ('Tornedalian fortunes and adventures') entitled *Korpelarörelsen* ('The Korpela movement') was published in 2015 (Pohjanen 2015). The second volume in the series, *Kirunasvenskarna* ('The Kiruna Swedes') is about Tornedalians who went to the Soviet Union in the 1930s and the hardships they encountered there (Pohjanen 2016).

The Korpela movement has got its name from the Finnish preacher Toivo Korpela who preached among Laestadians in northern Sweden, in the Torne Valley and Lappland, between 1928 and 1934. There were around 300 active Korpelians in Sweden. When Toivo Korpela returned to Finland in 1934, new male and female 'prophets' began preaching about the imminent doomsday. They firmly believed that a crystal arc would appear to collect 664 faithfuls. As two faithfuls were to ascend to heaven directly, it was believed that all in all 666 people were to be saved. The date when this was going to happen was 20 July, 1937. However, the date came and passed but

<sup>228</sup> I have read the play in the form of a pdf-file which I received from Bengt Pohjanen. The first performance was on 3 October 1987.

no crystal arc appeared. All these events were reported in the national press by journalists who had come north to cover the story about the strange things that were happening among a group of religious fanatics who had prepared to leave on a heavenly arc. This is a theme of *Dagning; röd!* One of the present-day characters is the daughter of a journalist at the large daily paper *Dagens Nyheter* who went to the Torne Valley in the 1930s to write about the Korpela movement. The Korpela movement became notorious for promoting promiscuity and drunkenness, and for collectively entertaining delusions with catastrophic effects for the people involved. There was also a rumour that they had sacrificed a child. One scandalous fact that attracted a great deal of attention was that the leading 'prophet' had sexual intercourse with a number of women and young girls as part of religious devotion.

### *Dagning; röd!*

After 45 individuals had been convicted of indecent behaviour in 1939, the movement disappeared from the public arena (Lundmark 1985). However, the history of indecent behaviour, promiscuity and drunkenness continued to stigmatise people who had been captured by the movement. This is the backdrop of the character Jorinda's shame and denial in the play *Kuutot*. Members of the Kuutto family are also among the characters of the novel *Dagning; röd!*. It is mentioned that Jorinda Kuutto was intimate with the leading prophet of the Korpela movement, and one of the narrators mentions that Korpela came to Jorinda's chamber at midnight. (Pohjanen 1988, 15). The character also mentions that Korpela refrained from participating in sexual orgies initiated by the female prophet Tyra Lind (ibid.). In *Dagning; röd!*, Tyra Lind is mentioned repeatedly in connection with the proclamation of periods of rut encouraging the Korpelians to have sexual intercourse with one another regardless of marital bonds. On the whole, however, Toivo Korpela is not presented as a promiscuous person, or as a person who was carried away by the visions of the new prophets.

It is hinted that Jorinda knew Toivo Korpela in Finland, before she came to Sweden as a refugee and that her oldest son Börje is the son of Korpela. Towards the end of the novel, when Jorinda is old, she calls herself Minna and denies that her name is Jorinda (Pohjanen 1988, 345). Previously, Minna has been mentioned as a young woman seduced by Korpela. However, the issue of truth is complex in *Dagning; röd!* and it is difficult to establish whether these are facts in the world of the novel or fictionalisations contrived by one of the characters planning to narrate the story of the movement. Both Jorinda and her husband Hannes are mentioned early on in the novel – it is suggested that their marriage is rather unhappy. Hannes frequently leaves the home to go drinking, insinuating that he is not the father of Jorinda's

children (Pohjanen 1988, 18). Both are depicted as Korpelians. While Jorinda is described as participating in sexual excesses, her husband Hannes drinks extensively. On one such occasion after a period of heavy drinking, he is proclaimed to be a God by delirious Korpelians (Pohjanen 1988, 50–51).

The theme of shame and denial is introduced from the outset in *Dagning; röd!*. In chapter 1.2., entitled “Tomas Lind, regissör” (‘Tomas Lind, director’), the project of writing a book about the Korpela movement is introduced. The character Lars foresees difficulties: “the people were very reticent; they carried an ineffaceable shame.” (Pohjanen 1988, 19, my translation.)<sup>229</sup> The chapters are numbered from 1 to 6.6.6. – a number charged with multiple connotations. Not only is 666 the number of people the Korpelians believed would be saved when the world came to an end, it is also the number of the beast mentioned in the *Book of Revelation* 13:18.

*Dagning; röd!* has two quotes from the Finnish national epic the *Kalevala* as epigraphs. From the vantage point of ethnofuturism, this exemplifies the use of ancient poetry in present-day literature aiming at highlighting the specific culture and mentality of an ethnic group that has been marginalised in a Swedish national context (cf. Sallamaa 2006). Before the first chapter, there is a list of the most important characters, including characters contemporary with the Korpela movement of the 1930s, as well as present-day characters in the shape of two authors and a film director attempting to tell the story of the movement. The set of characters also includes their acquaintances and people they encounter during their search for material.

There are considerable similarities between *Dagning; röd!* from 1988 and *Ropandes röst* from 1981 when it comes to composition and narrative techniques. Both novels experiment with narrative levels and both have an author among the characters, in the case of *Dagning; röd!* even two, who plan to write a book about historical characters and events in the Torne Valley. Like in *Ropandes röst*, the author characters of *Dagning; röd!* reach the insight that an absolute truth is inaccessible, in this case about the Korpela movement and the Korpelians. Motives highlighting this theme are issues of misunderstandings and false facts. One character claims that Korpela was a communist and a Christian, while another says that he has heard that Korpela was never a member of the Communist Party (Pohjanen 1988, 36–37). On another occasion, the director character states that he believes that the Laestadian preacher Herman Dahlberg, who was Toivo Korpela’s antagonist, was a Korpelian. When the director talks about making a film about this, one of the author characters thinks to himself: “I did not have the energy to start explaining to him that Herman Dahlberg had not been a leader in

<sup>229</sup> “Människorna var mycket förtegn; de bar på en outplånlig skam.” (Pohjanen 1988, 19.)

the Korpela movement, but its main antagonist.” (Pohjanen 1988, 46, my translation.)<sup>230</sup> This draws attention to the theme of limited knowledge, suppression of truth and facts and misunderstandings that are not solved. It also underlines the fact that the narrators and focalisers are not omniscient.

As in previous novels, Pohjanen uses multiple voices and perspectives depicting the same events. In this respect *Dagning; röd!* represents a polyphonous novel just like *Ropandes röst* and *Kasaland*. It also represents metafiction through its foregrounding of the themes of narration and fictionalisation. Like other postmodernist metafiction of the 1980s, *Dagning; röd!* distances itself from literary realism, aiming at presenting an illusion of reality. Another way of seeing it is that the novel attempts to depict a complex reality shaped by numerous, contradictory narratives about people and events in the past. The inaccessibility of the past – and the fact that it is accessible only through narratives, is a theme highlighted in characterisations of postmodernism: “there is [“within the postmodern project” . . .] a recognition that the past is only available to us through various (and often contradictory) texts or discourse.” (Marshall 1992, 150.)

One of the author characters of *Dagning; röd!* is Lars Leander, grandson of the narrator Oskar Leander who was contemporary with the Korpela movement. The other is Olof P. who inherits tapes that Lars recorded when collecting material about the Korpela movement. Early on in the novel, it is revealed that Lars died at the age of 39 and that his manuscript about the Korpela movement was burnt. The other author, Olof P., never saw it (Pohjanen 1988, 19). This introduces the theme of lost information, and highlights the theme of the futility of attempting to get access to the whole story. As in *Ropandes röst*, the theme of the futility of searching for a homogeneous story with a single story-line is evoked.

There are numerous references to the task of the writer-historian as that of somebody creating stories. In a section highlighting the task of “Återberättaren” (the ‘reteller’), the author-character’s pursuits are foregrounded: “He [the author character Olof P.] looked it up in his handbook for Retellers: The servant of the plot, narration, reality, dream and a few ideas, cannot follow everything in detail, he can only randomly choose among the subject matter that is heaved before his eyes.” (Pohjanen 1988, 75.)<sup>231</sup> The author-character is furthermore described as experiencing inadequacy related to his lack of proficiency in the local language:

<sup>230</sup> “Jag orkade inte börja förklara för honom att Herman Dahlberg inte varit ledare inom korpelärörelsen utan dess huvudmotståndare.” (Pohjanen 1988, 46.)

<sup>231</sup> “Han slog upp i sin handbok för Återberättare: Skeendets, berättandets, verklighetens, drömmens och några idéers tjänare, kan inte följa med allt i detalj utan har endast ett godtyckligt välja bland det stoff som vräks fram för hans blick.” (Pohjanen 1988, 75.)

He was not only an editor; he was an interpreter and translator. Or strictly speaking, that was exactly what he wasn't. He thought about one of the witnesses during the trial against Teodor Ossian. This man had begun to testify in his own language and the judge had remarked that the currency of this country was the crown and that the country was Sweden: here Swedish was spoken. Then the witness had said: It happened in Finnish, and it needs to be retold in Finnish! (Pohjanen 1988, 75, my translation)<sup>232</sup>

The novel's contrasting of two author characters' and a film director's attempts at narrating the Korpela movement contributes to the novel's polyphonous depiction of the movement. This is highlighted in a section preceding Chapter 2 consisting of quotes from Lars, the director, and Olof P. which provide an image of their diverse modes of narrating (Pohjanen 1988, 28). Lars compares the creation of his narrative to the building of a smoke sauna with stones polished by running water, placed on a supporting structure that is burned down when the construction of the sauna is finished. If the stones do not collapse when the support is removed, the construction is sound. The director, on the other hand, compares his method to the thorough method of a Russian brain surgeon. However, it is mentioned within parenthesis that he says this ironically, suggesting that he is not a sincere narrator. Olof P. finally, says about his narrative that it is at its most beautiful when the snow falls, and transforms us, and makes us remember. Through this contrasting, different approaches to the construction of narratives are evoked. While it is suggested that building a house using ancient methods and traditional local materials and that evoking beauty that transforms are viable methods, the ironical comment about Russian brain surgery mocks traditional realism.

The character Teodor Ossian Martinson mentioned in the quote above is based on the shopkeeper Sigurd Siikavaara, one of the self-proclaimed prophets who was prosecuted and sentenced. He was to a large extent responsible for the development of the ecstatic sect that attracted followers with the promise of salvation and participation in orgies with sex and alcohol. In the novel, Pohjanen has modified some of the characteristics of Siikavaara when he created the character Teodor Ossian Martinson. The most conspicuous change is the use of the Swedish family name "Martinson" instead of the Finnish "Siikavaara". One reviewer suggests that the

<sup>232</sup> "Han var inte bara redigerare; han var tolkare och översättare. Eller rättare sagt det var just det han inte var. Han tänkte på ett av vittnena under rättegången mot Teodor Ossian. Denne hade börjat vittna på sitt eget språk och domaren hade påpekat att valutan i detta land var kronan och landet Sverige; här talades svenska. Vittnet hade då dagt: Det har hänt på finska, det måste återberättas på finska!" (Pohjanen 1988, 75.)



reason behind this is a wish not to further exotify and Other the Finnish-speaking Tornedalians who were Korpelians (Schwartz 1988). It is a fact that reporters writing about the Korpela movement in the 1930s tended to portray the followers as alien elements in the modern Swedish nation because of their ethnicity and cultural background (Heith 2009d). This is a theme commented on recurrently by the various narrators of *Dagning; röd!*.

The section quoted above draws attention to one of the author-character's collection of material for his book, but also to his struggle to create a narrative. The main obstacle pointed out, that of not having access to the local language, is a theme highlighted in a discussion of connections between experiencing, relating to the world and linguistic background. It is suggested in an essay about local thinking that having a non-Indo-European, Finno-Ugric language is connected with specific modes of experiencing that differ from that of people speaking Indo-European languages (Vadén 2006). This is a theme also touched upon by Hilja Byström, one of the authors Pohjanen has foregrounded as a pioneer in a Tornedalian literary tradition. In *Ett år i Järvi. Berättelser från Tornedalens skogsbygd* ('A year in Järvi. Stories from the woodland of the Torne Valley'), one of the characters is faced with the impossibility of using Swedish for writing about experiences he has had in Finnish.

While Byström depicts the psychological consequences of language loss in a way that is later echoed in Pohjanen's 1973 poem "Jag är född utan språk", the passage from *Dagning; röd!* above draws attention to the ethnofuturist notion of connections between local thinking, experiencing and language (see Vadén 2006). This is a theme mentioned by a reviewer of *Dagning; röd!* who characterises Pohjanen as an anomaly in the Swedish literary landscape: "True, Pohjanen is formally and geographically a Swedish author, but from the vantage point of culture he is a Finnish author who happens to be writing in Swedish." (Bromander 1988, my translation.)<sup>233</sup> The same reviewer sees similarities between Pohjanen and the Finnish author Hannu Salama, who has also written about problems of writing a novel. From the vantage point of ethnofuturism and Pohjanen's later construction of Meänmaa, it is interesting that the reviewer considers Pohjanen's Tornedalian experiences and mode of narrating as being Finnish rather than Swedish. The culture mentioned is of course that of the Finnish-speaking Tornedalians in the area later to be known as Meänmaa.

Pohjanen does not conflate the Tornedalian border culture with that of the majority Finns. As in other texts, he distinguishes between the

<sup>233</sup> "Pohjanen är visserligen formellt och geografiskt en svensk författare, men kulturellt sett är han en finsk författare." (Bromander 1988.)

Finnish spoken in a Tornedalian setting and that of the majority Finns. In *Dagning; röd!*, a boy is listening to Toivo Korpela speaking Finnish, “his beautiful Finnish, so unlike ours.” (Pohjanen 1988, 17.) The term *svinska* is also used in the novel to denominate the mixed nature of the local language, which makes it neither quite Finnish, nor quite Swedish (Pohjanen 1988, 45).<sup>234</sup> This view of the language is a version of the motif of experiencing lack and inadequacy relating to one’s Tornedalian cultural background, which is repeated throughout Pohjanen’s authorship. The last chapter of *Dagning; röd!* includes a depiction of the two author characters visiting Helsinki in their search for material. The narrator does not view himself or the other author as Finns, but as *kamosländare*, people from *Kamosland*, a term used about the Swedish-Finnish border area before the name *Meänmaa* was launched (Pohjanen 1988, 422).

Sigrid Combüchen, a Swedish author and reviewer, also comments on the impact of geographical space on Pohjanen’s literary style. She concludes that his mode of narrating differs greatly from that of authors from Västerbotten, also in northern Sweden, comparing his literary province with that of Central European authors: “The river that constitutes the border between Sweden and Finland is a fairway where languages and cultures merge, where bilingualism affects the vision, where new ideas and movements are born, transformed and die.” (Combüchen 1988, my translation.)<sup>235</sup> This is another version of the notion of local thinking and mentality being shaped by language and culture, but with a focus on multilingualism. This may be compared to ethnofuturism’s emphasis on the preservation of minority languages as a means to promote local thinking (see Vadén 2006 & Sallamaa 2006). Combüchen’s notion of a bilingual contact zone, on the other hand, corresponds with celebrations of cultural forms mixing elements from different languages and cultures in a manner not found in other literature written in Sweden.

In *Dagning; röd!*, one of the author-characters acknowledges that he has a problem that hampers his abilities as an ‘interpreter’ and ‘translator’ because of his lack of linguistic proficiency. One reviewer remarked that the author-character might be a depiction of Pohjanen himself, that is, that the novel is autobiographical (Willner 1988). However, the author-character’s reflections upon the problem of not having access to the local language through which the Korpelians’ experiences were filtered and shaped does

<sup>234</sup> The word *svinska* is a combination of *svenska* (‘Swedish’) and *finska* (‘Finnish’).

<sup>235</sup> “Älven som utmärker gränsen mellan Sverige och Finland är en farled där språk och kulturer förenas, där tvåspråkighet påverkar seendet, där nya idéer och rörelser föds, omformas och dör.” (Combüchen 1988.)

not point in this direction. Pohjanen's first language is Tornedalian Finnish and as an author he is a pioneer when it comes to publishing in Meänkieli. Still, there are autobiographical elements in *Dagning; röd!*. Quite a few of them are recirculated from earlier novels and some are modified and mixed with new components. The character Kurt-Göran Polemalm is mentioned (Pohjanen 1988, 351). The grandfather of the author character Lars Leander is a former customs officer who has become a horse smuggler. The depiction of Lars' brother's resignation from his position as a minister of the Swedish National Lutheran Church echoes, and parodies the story of Pohjanen's own resignation circulated in newspapers (Pohjanen 1988, 389). Thus, the novel evokes a number of paratexts which contribute to its polyphonic narrative.

There is an explicit emphasis on the theme of Swedification when the narrator Oskar Leander retells a conversation he had with Hannes Kuuto and Toivo Korpela about the introduction of Social Democracy in the Torne Valley. Leander mentions that a Social Democrat had come to the Torne Valley because of the strike, which Leander believed was the result of a communist attempt to disrupt the social order. However, the man who came did not speak Finnish. The difference in social position between Finnish-speaking and Swedish-speaking Swedes is mentioned, as well as the ongoing Swedification of the Torne Valley. Following Oskar Leander, the reason why Korpela was prohibited from preaching in Sweden was that the Cathedral Chapter feared that the position of the Finnish language might be strengthened (Pohjanen 1988, 59). Opposition from Laestadians is also mentioned, particularly from conservative western Laestadians (Pohjanen 1988, 105ff.). Korpela himself is said to be an opposite of conservative preachers sympathetic to the right-wing Lappo movement (Pohjanen 1988, 97).

Swedification is a theme that the 1980s' narrators return to, as well as the marginal social position of the Tornedalians. Furthermore, ethnicity is a recurring theme. Towards the end of the novel, one of the present-day narrators characterises Tyra Viola Lind as a "typical Baltic race" from the vantage point of race biology (Pohjanen 1988, 409). This is a category used in *The Racial Characters of the Swedish Nation* by Herman Lundborg and F.J. Linders to denominate people with a Finnish ethnic background (Lundborg & Linders 1926). Thus the present-day narrator displays an awareness of the racialisation of Tornedalians and Finns and of the history of Swedish race biology that contributed to establish a racial hierarchy with ethnic Swedes at the top.

In accordance with the novel's polyphonic structure, various opinions on Korpela as a preacher are presented. While complaints about Korpela's swearing are mentioned, this is countered by the narrator's comment that

Laestadius also used swearwords (Pohjanen 1988, 96). This is mentioned in a parenthesis – seemingly a remark thrown in by the present-day narrator reacting to the material he is examining. Other parallels to Laestadius are Korpela's ability to move people's hearts and his concern for the poor. Toivo Korpela's beautiful voice is furthermore compared to that of Laestadius, which is said to have attracted people to the churches in Karesuando and in Pajala, who came just to listen to it (Pohjanen 1988, 132). Although Laestadianism is known for ascetism and unworldliness – though it must be kept in mind that there are various factions within the movement – *Dagning; röd!* highlights similarities between Laestadius as he is depicted in *Ropandes röst* and the depiction of Toivo Korpela. Both are represented as characters struggling with self-doubt and sexual desires (Pohjanen 1988, 132 ff.). While the novel foregrounds these parallels, differences between the depiction of Laestadius in *Ropandes röst* and Toivo Korpela are also highlighted. It is mentioned on several occasions that Korpela is a good-looking man and that women are attracted to him. In the third main chapter, entitled *Dagning; röd!*, is a section where Korpela's relationship to a young woman is compared with Laestadius' encounter with Maria. This section, which is narrated in the first person, presents Korpela's thoughts when he meets the young woman: "She seemed to me like a gate to eternity. I thought she was the Maria who had also redeemed the vicar Lars Levi Laestadius so that he got a foretaste of heavenly joy. He never forgot the evening when he talked with this Maria" (Pohjanen 1988, 165, my translation.)<sup>236</sup>

But, the similarities end there. Korpela takes advantage of the young woman Minna and makes her pregnant. She leaves the neighbourhood and becomes involved with Lappo fascists and returns with Korpela's dead child. The story is complicated by the introduction of alternative facts, for example that Jorinda's/Minna's oldest son Börje is said to be Korpela's son. There is uncertainty as to whether the child died or whether he was born in Sweden after Jorinda's/Minna's escape. This blurred, or forking, story line about Korpela's encounter with a young, innocent woman is a perverted version of the Laestadian legend. The chapter also includes descriptions of Korpela's quite excessive consumption of illicit distilled liquor – another element alien to the narrative about Laestadius. But, due to the complex issue of narrative voice and level, it is doubtful whether these sections represent Korpela's own story, or one of the author character's or the director's fictionalisation of Korpela's life story. The chapter ends with still another episode that casts doubts

<sup>236</sup> "Hon tycktes mig som en port in i evigheten. Jag tänkte, att hon var den Maria, som även löst prostens Lars Levi Laestadius så att han fick känna en försmak av himmelens glädje. Han glömde aldrig den kvällen han fick samtala med denna Maria." (Pohjanen 1988, 165.)

upon Korpela's reliability and moral standards. When his mother asks about his father's last words, Korpela says that they were "Dagning; röd!" ('Daylight; red!'), which the mother interprets as the blood of the lamb, drawing the conclusion that her husband was redeemed (Pohjanen 1988, 167). This, however, is not how Korpela experienced his father's passing away, in dark disbelief and in the glare of sulphurous fire, indicating what kind of place he was heading for (Pohjanen 1988, 162–163). As to the meaning of the phrase "Daylight; red!", the chapter ends by establishing connections between daybreak and "fire or blood" (Pohjanen 1988, 167), which corresponds with the themes of political revolution or religious revival as vehicles for change. In this respect, the title of the novel may be seen as a metatextual reference to the extremes that attracted followers in the Torne Valley in the 1930s.

On the whole *Dagning; röd!* tones down the connection between Toivo Korpela and the scandalous activities that have come to be associated with the Korpela movement. It is mentioned that dissatisfaction with Laestadianism as it had developed and the Swedish National Evangelical Church lay behind the 'prophet' Martinson's spiritual reorientation that contributed to the emergence of the Korpela movement (Pohjanen 1988, 93). This is what Martinson conveys to Oskar Leander after he has returned home after a stay at a mental hospital: "he [Martinson] still had the belief that he would be able to tear people from the Laestadian curse and the ecclesiastical swindle through his preachings." (Pohjanen 1988, 93, my translation.)<sup>237</sup> But, as the narrator Oskar Leander concludes, Martinson falls under the influence of other Korpelians preaching the need of disrupting the order of "this evil world" through erratic behaviour (ibid.).

Some reviewers suggest that one reason behind the complexity of the narrative structure of *Dagning; röd!* is connected with the fact that several of the people involved in the movement and their family members were still alive when the novel was published (Nilsén 1988, Nygren 1988). This theme is highlighted in the novel itself when one character says that the story of the Korpela movement cannot be told out of consideration for the integrity of Teodor Ossian, his children and relatives (Pohjanen 1988, 21). In the context of the novel's metafictional discussion of writing, this represents a reference to the concerns and ethical considerations behind a writer's choices when writing about real people and real events. Several reviewers comment on the fact that the novel has multiple narrators, time frames and settings and that there are switches that occasionally make it hard to establish who the narrator is, when the narration takes place and where the narrator is

<sup>237</sup> "han hade ännu den tron att han med sina predikningar skulle kunna slita människorna från den laestdianska förbannelsen och det kyrkliga lurendrejeriet." (Pohjanen 1988, 93.)

(Bratt 1988, Bromander 1988, Gummerus 1988, Oldberg 1988, Smedberg 1988, Schwartz 1988). One of the narrators is Lars Leander, author and grandson of former customs officer and horse trader Oskar Leander. Occasionally, Oskar is the narrator. This is reflected by the language, which then becomes more archaic. He has the role of a contemporary witness, a non-believer who observes the Korpelians and contemplates over the events. With the issue of the complex narrative structure in mind, it is an open question whether Oskar Leander's narration represents a story line or whether it is a story line constructed by one of the present-day author characters, which in its turn draws attention to the issue of origin and authenticity. Is Oskar Leander's narrative 'authentic' in the world of the novel, or an example of fictionalisations made by the author characters or the director in the 1980s?

Another parallel to *Ropandes röst* is that there are various characters in *Dagning; röd!* who wish to create their respective version of the story. In addition to the author-characters, there is a film director who aspires to create his own version of the Korpela movement based on his relationship with Tyra Viola Lind, who initiated orgiastic excesses during the Korpelians' meetings. This director is presented as the nephew of Tyra Viola Lind. The author character Lars is also related to one of the characters involved in the Korpela movement through his marriage to Jorinda's granddaughter. Thus, there are persons with access to disparate material and with different agendas who aspire to create the history about the movement in the novel. This makes the issue of multiple story lines and plots a theme of *Dagning; röd!* – a theme found in the postmodernist novel of the 1980s.

Both the Korpela movement and the departure of the Kiruna Swedes are related to the emergence of movements that captured the minds of people in the Swedish-Finnish border area to the extent that they were prepared to change their lives fundamentally. They also reflect the political and social tensions of the Torne Valley of the 1930s. In the early 1930s, the Torne Valley was characterised religiously by Laestadianism and politically by communism. One reviewer draws parallels between the severe poverty of the Torne Valley in the 1930s and the attraction of religion or communism as means to escape from the harsh reality (Nilsén 1988). The novel highlights the ideological turbulence of the 1930s with communism coming from the east and the Finnish right-wing Lappo movement (Pohjanen 1988, 14). In this ideological landscape, Laestadianism remained a cultural power of significance.

Pohjanen has not only explored religious movements that have had a great impact on Tornedalian culture, he has also made connections between Laestadianism and the Korpela movement on the one hand, and social revolt and identity formation on the other. This is highlighted in an interview

made when the novel *Dagning; röd!* was published: “Laestadianism was also a social revolt and the Korpela movement a form of revolution. These movements provided an identity and cosmic significance to the people and that was why they had such a tremendous attraction.” (Pohjanen interviewed by Bratt 1988, my translation.)<sup>238</sup> This statement indicates that Pohjanen sees Laestadianism and the Korpela movement as being connected with the social position of the Tornedalians, and as a vehicle for counteracting marginalisation. In this respect, Pohjanen suggests, both Laestadianism and the Korpela movement function as religions of the oppressed, providing means to reverse and compensate for factors on which the marginalisation of the Tornedalians is based. These factors relate to a Finno-Ugric cultural background and language, poverty, a premodern lifestyle and living in a marginal space at the fringes of the nation state. This implies that both Laestadianism and the Korpela movement are seen as providing a reversal of the value coding imposed by the majority society, a challenging of the cultural homogenisation connected with the modernisation of Sweden, as well as a protest against the hard living conditions made worse by unemployment and low wages.

*Dagning; röd!* highlights differences between the Laestadianism of the 1930s in the Torne Valley and Toivo Korpela’s preachings before he left for Finland, and the new ‘prophets’ came to influence the movement so that it moved in a new direction. At the beginning of the novel, one character questions whether Toivo Korpela could be called a Laestadian preacher as he had been banned from some villages by pious Laestadians (Pohjanen 1988, 13). Thus, the theme of differences within the Laestadian movement is introduced. This is a theme mentioned by several reviewers who highlight political differences between Korpela and conservative Laestadians.

A prominent theme of *Dagning; röd!* is the question of why people were attracted by the Korpela movement and why they became Korpelians. This makes Pohjanen’s novel different from other fictionalisations which emphasise sensational elements and the strangeness of the movement and the people attracted by it.<sup>239</sup> One reason behind this, suggested in a review, is that Pohjanen depicts the movement from the inside based on his cultural

<sup>238</sup> “Laestadianismen var också en social revolt och Korpelärörelsen en form av revolution. Dessa rörelser gav identitet och kosmisk betydelse åt folket och det var därför de utövade sådan oerhörd lockelse.” (Pohjanen interviewed by Bratt 1988.)

<sup>239</sup> One example is *Silverarken* (‘The Silver ark’) by Henning and Ernst Sjöström, which contributes to an exoticisation of the Korpela movement and othering of the Korpelians through its focus on irrationality and sexual orgies among the followers (Sjöström & Sjöström 1969, also see Heith 2009d)



competence connected with his background (Nordvall 1988). This points to themes like self-definition and insider stories that challenge colonising narratives. However, Pohjanen does not present a simplified story of the Korpela movement, instead *Dagning; röd!* is an open text that suggests multiple possibilities for interpretation. The novel does not one-sidedly highlight scandal, strangeness, or irrationality as major characteristics of the movement. Instead, it suggests that there are parallels between the excesses of the Korpelians on the one hand, and the 'promiscuity' and excessive drinking of the two present-day author characters and the director on the other. Thus, the novel does not depict excessive drinking and promiscuity as a phenomenon connected with a strange sect in a geographical periphery in the past, but just as much as ingredients in the lifestyle of contemporary intellectuals spending time in urban environments.

One reason behind the movement's success proposed above is a connection between the rise of utopian revivalism and unconscious or conscious political protest. This is a theme explored by sociologists of religion and psychologists of religion. However, one reviewer claims that Pohjanen is critical of these explanations and that this is manifested in the novel's motif of a mystery as an explanation behind the movement's ability to attract followers (Sandström 1988). In the 1930s, there was unemployment among the Tornedalian lumberjacks. There was also a strike among road workers which, however, was not successful. Some people, like the Kiruna Swedes, were attracted by utopian socialism and moved to the Soviet Union, while others found solace and meaning in religion. One reviewer asks the question whether this was an answer to the same kind of despairing hope, suggesting that the attraction of the Korpela movement lay in the fact that it offered "an absolute truth about life" and "a total liberation, an order in disorder", and an "ecstasy that would dispel despair" (Sandström 1988, my translation).<sup>240</sup> On one occasion, one of the author characters dwells upon this theme when describing a propensity to view the world as borderless:

I, too, know that words shine through, borders cease to exist, that inner and outer, subject and object, life and death, tears of grief and joy, moaning and lust, are faces of the same reality. That all opposites may vanish as a result of severe ascetism and lived lust. (Pohjanen 1988, 32, my translation)<sup>241</sup>

<sup>240</sup> "en slutlig sanning om livet" och en "total befrielse, en ordning i oordningen", och en "extas som skulle följaga ångesten" (Sandström 1988).

<sup>241</sup> "Vet väl även jag att ord skiner igenom, gränser upphör, att inre och yttre, subjekt och objekt, liv och död, tårar som någon skrattar, gråter, kvidan och lust är samma verklighets olika anleten. Att alla motsatser kan upphöra som resultat av sträng askes och levd lust." (Pohjanen 1988, 32.)

This notion of the dissolution of opposites expressed by Lars in Stockholm in a chapter entitled “Av demoner buren (Lars från Stockholm)” – ‘Carried by demons (Lars from Stockholm)’ draws attention to the theme of mystical experiences beyond everyday common sense logic. Lars’ narrative represents one mode of interpretation, and experiencing, in the novel’s exploration of the Korpela movement and the narratives it has generated.

As regards the role of Laestadianism in *Dagning; röd!*, it represents one of the dominant local movements of the 1930s, the time of the Korpela movement. Various factions of Laestadianism are commented upon. The narrator Oskar Leander, among others, comments on differences between the strict and conservative western Laestadians and the more liberal eastern branch (Pohjanen 1988, 55). Another character, Hannes Kuuto, suggests that the most conservative preachers sympathise with the fascists, a statement which, however, is contradicted by Oskar Leander (Pohjanen 1988, 60). The fascist movement of the 1930s in the Torne Valley referred to is the Finnish Lappo movement. Toivo Korpela seen through the eyes of Oskar Leander is a man preoccupied with the situation of the poor. On one occasion, when Korpela draws parallels between caring for the poor and the Holy Spirit, Leander discovers “an air of communism in Korpela” (Pohjanen 1988, 56, my translation). Korpela is presented as a contrast to conservative Laestadian preachers, and as a threat because of his preaching ability which moves even the sceptic Oskar Leander at a meeting when the people present are deeply affected (Pohjanen 1988, 71). Following Oskar Leander, the Laestadian preacher Herman Dahlberg is so unpleasantly affected by the preaching and its consequences that he never again set foot in the same building as Korpela (*ibid.*). The effect of this is that a contrast is established between the jealous Laestadian preacher and the successful preacher Toivo Korpela who cares about the poor and has the ability to move an audience.

While *Dagning; röd!* suggests that the Korpela movement represents a revivalism that has gone astray, it also suggests that the movement afforded possibilities to cope with marginalisation and despair, and possibly also mystical experiences of the divine. Like Laestadius before him, Korpela is compared to both John the Baptist, a foreboder, and to a prophet with a special relationship to God. Towards the end of the novel, the mother of Laila Erika, a woman friend of the author characters Lars and Olof P., admits that she believed that Toivo Korpela had had a special connection to God, suggesting that he might have been a saint (Pohjanen 1988, 399–400). This she bases upon encounters with Toivo Korpela during visits to the Torne Valley and Ähtäri in Finland in her capacity as a journalist at *Dagens Nyheter*. In the context of the polyphony of *Dagning; röd!*, this represents one extreme in the view of Korpela. Other voices suggest that he was a womaniser, a

charlatan and a dishonest man who profited financially from his preaching tours in Sweden.

Laestadianism in the 1930s is depicted as a movement with factions, e.g. a western wing sympathetic to the fascist Lappo movement and conservatism. From the vantage point of postcolonialism, this can be described as an orientation away from social reform towards the establishment of an institution intent on preserving the power of conservative preachers. This implies that conservative Laestadianism becomes a centre that is being challenged by a new peripheral preacher and the movement springing from his preachings. For a time, and locally, social order is disrupted by a group claiming to represent the true faith. However, the extreme character of the ideas disseminated by the Korpelians make the movement a short-lived phenomenon. As to the novel *Dagning; röd!*, it represents a multifaceted story with a polyphony of voices that provide contradictory accounts of Toivo Korpela and the Korpela movement. No final truth is established, but in the vein of the 1980s postmodernist metafiction, multiple story lines are presented highlighting narrative as construction and fictionalisation. A mystifying passage at the end of the novel destabilises the not very solid logic established by the previous chapters by proposing that the character Lars was born by a first-person narrator whose identity remains unclear: "But you, Lars, was born alone in me." (Pohjanen 1988, 433, my translation.)<sup>242</sup> Does this suggest that the two author characters (and the director?) are aspects of one and the same character? In any case, it represents a loose end in the story line that is not concluded. Again, this is typical of modernist and postmodernist fiction, which does not establish an intelligible logic or conclusion that explains mysteries and uncertainties previously introduced.

### *Kristallarken*

*Kristallarken* ('The Crystal Arc') is a short novel published in 1998, which differs considerably from *Dagning; röd!*. While *Dagning; röd!* is a complex polyphonous novel that presents multiple contradictory narratives about the Korpela movement, *Kristallarken* is a first-person story that presents one individual's thoughts about the movement. Already at the beginning, it is established that the narrator and focaliser is an ex-customs officer who has taken to horse smuggling. This character corresponds with Oskar Leander in *Dagning; röd!* In the presentations of the characters at the beginning of *Dagning; röd!*, he is described as "avhoppad tullman, hästhandlare" ('a defected customs officer, horse dealer'). Despite the fact that "horse dealer" is a euphemism, this characterisation is valid for the narrator and focaliser

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<sup>242</sup> "Men du, Lars föddes ensam i mig." (Pohjanen 1988, 433.)

of *Kristallarken* as well. Once again, Pohjanen establishes intertextual links between his texts in the form of paratextual references. There are also other correspondences between the narrator-focaliser of *Kristallarken*, Oskar Leander in *Dagning; röd!* and characters in other texts who share characteristics with the grandfather character of Pohjanen's autobiographical books. At the time of narration in *Kristallarken*, the narrator is approaching death as a result of a cancer. He looks back to his encounters with Toivo Korpela and the Korpelians in the 1930s, describing himself as a pragmatic person, neither religious nor interested in politics. Still, he has sympathy for Toivo Korpela and the Korpelians. He comments on people's talk about Korpela and concludes that he was a ladies' man, but that he did not take part in the scandalous elements of the devotion of the Korpelians.

There are great similarities between *Kristallarken* and the sections of *Dagning; röd!* narrated by Oscar Leander. The characters are the same and so are the episodes. Johannes Kuutto is introduced on the very first page, and his wife Jorinda is mentioned later.<sup>243</sup> However, there are also some differences when it comes to details. While it is suggested in *Dagning; röd!* that the oldest son of the Kuuttos is the son of Toivo Korpela, the narrator of *Kristallarken* mentions that the boy Börje might be a vicar's son, Toivo Korpela's or his own. Jorinda is described as a beautiful woman who was saved by the narrator when she escaped from Finland. In *Kristallarken* it is mentioned that when Börje got to know about his mother's relationships with the men, he was so infuriated that he burned down the old homestead of the narrator (Pohjanen 1998b, 35). This is not included in the storyline of *Dagning; röd!* Another difference is that it is established in *Kristallarken* that the narrator is an aged man who looks back to the dramatic incidents of the 1930s in the Torne Valley. There is no ambivalence with regard to narrative levels. Johannes and Jorinda Kuutto are also described as aged at the time of narration, Johannes as a senile old man at a home for old people and Jorinda as a cursing old woman in her second childhood (Pohjanen 1998b, 24).

While the style of *Dagning; röd!* shifts, as do the narrators, the style is more uniform in *Kristallarken*, indirectly characterising the narrator as a pragmatic, down to earth Tornedalien villager at the prime of his life in the 1930s. This is conveyed by numerous colloquial, rustic stylistic features in his language. The narrative mode is that of burlesque comedy. This has consequences for the narration of the Korpela movement. In *Kristallarken*, it is presented as it is seen by a pragmatic villager who views it from the outside as he is not captured by the movement to such an extent that he becomes

<sup>243</sup> In *Kristallarken* the name *Johannes Kuutto* is used, while the short form *Hannes* is used in *Dagning; röd!*. Thus the narratives are not identical.

a follower. While he is not swept away by the prospect of flying away in a crystal arc, he expresses sympathy for the Korpelians' capacity to avoid the dreariness of the struggle for everyday life through escapism to a world of sensual pleasures. This poses a stark contrast to the influence of rigid, condemning Laestadianism on Tornedalian mentality.

As in Pohjanen's other texts about the Korpela movement, the time when it attracted followers is described as a time of unrest and change. In the narrator's recollection, the people are looking for signs in the sky or waiting for a revolution. His business as a horse trader gives him the opportunity to visit the different villages of the Torne Valley, including the upper villages to which the "Jerusalem dancers" and "Crystal Arc travellers" also came. As these people are waiting for the arc, they do not care about performing any daily chores or work. This results in the narrator's business suffering, as nobody needs a horse. This break with traditional everyday life is described as the effect of a transformation that captured and moved people. The narrator, who is looking back upon this time, concludes:

I can to this day feel the ground sway under me and see the unmilked cows dance and the wild dancing in the barns, where buckets of mash simmered and the beautiful women lay in the cribs, where I, too, got to taste the sweetness that the young beautiful girls of that time from the mining town of Kiruna had to offer an almost unemployed horse dealer and no-longer-active, fired customs officer [the original literally means 'customs dog', a pejorative word used by locals], whose wife furthermore lay on her deathbed." (Pohjanen 1998b, 4).<sup>244</sup>

The first section ends with the statement that despite people speaking badly about the time of the Korpela movement, the narrator himself enjoyed it. This is a point of view that explicitly challenges other retrospective evaluations. The theme of the play *Kuutot*, for example, is the shame experienced by ex-Korpelians and their families. This is a theme also of *Dagning; röd!* in the author characters' and the director's discussion of how to deal ethically with the material they are collecting and in their comments about the shame connected with having been a Korpelian. *Kristallarken* differs from these in that it presents another response to the history of the Korpela movement in the shape of the narrator-focaliser's positive recollections of

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<sup>244</sup> "Jag kan än idag känna marken gunga under mig och se de omjölkade korna dansa och den vilda dansen i ladugårdarna, där mäskhinkarna puttrade och de vackra kvinnorna låg i båsen, där även jag fick smaka av den sötma som den tidens unga vackra flickor från gruvstaden Kiruna hade att bjuda på för en nästan arbetslös hästhandlare och i tjänst icke varande, sparkad tullhund, vars hustru dessutom låg för döden." (Pohjanen 1998b, 4.)

a time characterised by a plentitude of sensual pleasures in the shape of sex and alcohol in an alternative Korpelian space.

However, the implications of the Korpela movement for people is represented as complex. While the pragmatic, non-believing narrator-focaliser sees the time of the movement as a period when sensual desires could be fulfilled, he also recognises the disastrous effects the movement had on the followers who stopped working and got rid of their possessions in anticipation of the arrival of the arc. When the arc did not arrive, many of these people were left without any means to support themselves. The novel also mentions scandalous incidents among the Korpelians. As in *Dagning;rödl*, a rumour about a planned human sacrifice is mentioned. It comes to nothing, and it is left unclear whether an elderly man was to be sacrificed or not. The incident of a child's death is also mentioned – however it is not suggested that the girl was intentionally killed by the Korpelians, but that she was killed accidentally when playing. Another incident that is recounted and not contradicted as a rumour or falsehood is that the Korpelians tried to revive a corpse. The narrator-focaliser remembers an episode when his son together with a policeman had fetched a corpse that the Korpelians were trying to revive. Another incident that is presented as a truth in the world of the novel is that the Korpelians had encouraged Jorinda to have sexual intercourse with her son Börje, as they believed that offspring resulting from incestuous relationships would become angels (Pohjanen 1989b, 46, 52, also see Pohjanen 2015, 59). In the retrospection, the narrator-focaliser makes a connection between this incident and Börje's suicide. While the movement is described as unsound and disastrous in a number of different ways, the narrator-focaliser concedes that he took advantage of the insanity and acted as though he was a follower in order to be welcomed to join the excesses. When describing the movement, he uses the term *aberration* (Pohjanen 1989b, 47). Still, when he cannot stop what is happening, he goes with the flow without believing in the spirituality of it, concluding:

When they had started screaming the whores of Babel to hell and lying naked on the floors of the cottages, then I stopped preaching to them and went inside and crawled there on all fours [...] too. I had many a good intercourse, but the horses suffered. If Härje [his son] had not sold [carried on the business], we would have gone bankrupt. (Pohjanen 1989b, 52).<sup>245</sup>

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<sup>245</sup> "När de börjat ropa Babels horor till helvetet och ligga nakna på pörtgolven, då slutade jag predika för dem och gick in och kröp där på alla fyra jag också. Jag fick mig mångt bra könsamgänge, men hästarna led. Om inte Härje sålt skulle vi ha gått i konkurs." (Pohjanen 1989b, 52.)

As this quote indicates, the narrator-focaliser is attracted by some aspects of the movement, although not for spiritual reasons, and this to such an extent that had his son not carried on business as usual he might have lost his livelihood. This is a rather powerful statement about the attraction of the Korpela movement, when a sceptical pragmatist such as the narrator is swallowed up by it to the extent that he forgets his horse-trading business. At the time of narration, he wonders about how people could become as crazy as the Korpelians, and admits that he himself pretended to be crazy, mentioning that he has sometimes wondered how many of the others were also just acting. These reflections are concluded with the statement: "But we had fun" (Pohjanen 1989b, 54, my translation).

The narrator-focaliser of *Kristallarken* is a sceptic who views representatives of the Church and the Laestadian movement with a critical gaze. The Korpela movement is seen as an aberration that provided pleasure for a time. Toivo Korpela himself is described as being unsympathetic to the direction in which the movement was heading, with erratic behaviour and strange ideas. At the end of the story, the narrator gives the reason for telling his version of the story, commenting on the facts about Toivo Korpela disseminated in later knowledge production in the shape of encyclopedias. Before dying, he wishes to correct the false story of Toivo Korpela as the initiator of an orgiastic sect up north (Pohjanen 1989b, 59). Thus, *Kristallarken* is also a novel about the production of stories and facts. As opposed to the multiple stories of *Dagning; röd!*, it is a story about one man's, a contemporary eye witness's, thoughts and experiences of Toivo Korpela and the movement named after him. He draws attention to Korpela's ability as a preacher to move people, and the willingness of the local people to embrace utopian solutions to their material sufferings: "It is not as strange as the southerners believed, I mean, that the fever to travel increased and that the dance became increasingly wild. People even lived in dens in the earth. But I do not believe that utopias are solutions of [. . .] poverty." (Pohjanen 1989b, 50.)<sup>246</sup> In accordance with the narrator's pragmatic, sceptic and down-to-earth mindset, the Tornedalians' disposition towards embracing radical utopian movements is connected with the socio-economic circumstances people were living under. This is one way of indirectly describing a fictive character through his thoughts and beliefs. Laestadianism is mentioned as a contrast to the new movement, and the motif of hypocritical and reactionary preachers known from other critical narratives of Laestadianism is present also in *Kristallarken*.

<sup>246</sup> "Inte är det så konstigt som sörlänningarna tror, jag menar, att resfebern ökade och dansen blev allt vildare. Folk bodde tilloch med i jordkulor. Men jag tror ju inte att utopier är lösningar på [. . .] fattigdom." (Pohjanen 1989b, 50.)



A fictive character's subjective view of Toivo Korpela and the Korpela movement is also a theme in the novel *Trevliga djävlar* ('Nice devils') from 2003. The narrator of the novel is a former customs officer who has become a smuggler. Not until in the middle of the novel is the name of the narrator revealed: Oskar Leander (Pohjanen 2003, 122). This narrator character also appears in *Dagning; röd!* and *Kristallarken*, but he has a somewhat different function in *Trevliga djävlar*. There is a resemblance between *Dagning; röd!* and *Trevliga djävlar* in that translation and interpretation of narratives in the Tornedalian Finnish cultural landscape to Swedish is highlighted. In *Trevliga djävlar*, Oskar Leander refers repeatedly to the translator/interpreter Tornæus as being responsible for the Swedish version of the story that constitutes the text of the novel. Tornedalian Finnish expressions occur throughout the text, thus highlighting the specific Tornedalian language, culture and mentality. This draws attention to the issue of cultural differences related to ethnicity and linguistic background. Thus, the narrative represents a counter-history to that of the story about the culturally homogeneous nation. This counter-narrative fits into a postcolonial theoretical framework that draws attention to internal colonialism and the status of minorities, into the program of the ethnofuturist movement that emphasises the impact of local thinking related to having a Finno Ugric language (see Vadén 2006), as well as into the aesthetic program advocating the use of small Ugric languages and elements from the cultures of Ugric minorities (Sallamaa 2006). Furthermore, there are elements of *Trevliga djävlar* that highlight social differentiation and exclusion related to poverty and 'backwardness'. With theoretical perspectives from Critical Whiteness Studies, the depiction of a group as being othered and excluded in the modern Swedish welfare state may be described as the construction of a group of people as 'not quite white', in analogy with British constructions of the Irish as 'not quite white' and American constructions of the category 'white trash' (see Guglielmo 2003, Wray 2006). The novel explicitly draws attention to impoverishment and depopulation related to the building of the modern Swedish nation. The 1930s, when the Korpela movement emerged, the Torne Valley is described by the narrator as "this our previously so rich and prosperous area that modern times made poor" (Pohjanen 2003, 132, my translation).<sup>247</sup>

The first-person narrator of *Trevliga djävlar* refers to Toivo Korpela as one of the new prophets of the time, claiming that the Russian monk

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<sup>247</sup> "denna vår förr så rika och välmående trakt som den nya tiden gjorde fattig" (Pohjanen 2003, 132).

Iliodor, was a teacher of Korpela (Pohjanen 2003, 59).<sup>248</sup> According to the narrator, Iliodor was active in a radical religious movement in Russia after the revolution, and he claims that the ideas and practices of Iliodor influenced Toivo Korpela, who tickled the lowest desires of men with the teachings of the Russian monk (Pohjanen 2003, 59). This negative image of Toivo Korpela differs from depictions in other texts by Pohjanen, which present him as a quite balanced person who distanced himself from behaviour at odds with decorum. A popular belief that Korpela had questionable motives for his visits to Sweden is conveyed by the lyrics of a song claiming that Korpela came to Sweden because of his lust for money (Pohjanen 2003, 74). The same singer who performs his songs to the tunes of an accordion sings about Toivo Korpela talking about the Arc in another song (Pohjanen 2003, 105). In this specific song, it is mentioned that the stories of the Arc appealed to people, as they provided joy and amusement and an escape from notions of sin and sorrow: "That it [the Arc] sins and sorrows drives away,/ offering peace and joy to all of us here." (Pohjanen 2003, 105, my translation.)<sup>249</sup>

The time of the Korpelians is referred to as "the time of Korpela", when sin became permissible (Pohjanen 2003, 75). This is very different from other depictions, for example in *Dagning; röd!*, which highlight that Toivo Korpela himself was not sympathetic to the new movement that has become known as 'the Korpela movement'. These characterisations of Toivo Korpela and the Korpela movement are presented by a fictive character who tells a tall story of a turbulent period in Tornedalian history. They are not multifaceted like the various stories and contrasting depictions presented in *Dagning; röd!*, but they represent popular beliefs and rumours circulated in local oral narratives. As in *Dagning; röd!* and *Kristallarken* the depiction of Toivo Korpela is diverse. The narrator also mentions that Korpela left Sweden when the new movement was radicalised and that he did not support the ideas of a heavenly arc which was to arrive.

The story elements of *Trevliga djävlar* correspond with *Dagning; röd!* and *Kristallarken* to a high degree in the presentation of the emergence of the Korpela movement, central characters, and episodes that were seen as scandalous and shocking. The major difference is that the story of a group of Tornedalian men being passengers on the Titanic has been added, constituting the first part of the novel. The characters have different names

<sup>248</sup> Sergei Michailovich Trufanov (1880–1952) was ordained a hieromonk under the name of *Iliodor* in 1903. Iliodor, who was controversial, wrote a book about Rasputin. Eventually, he emigrated to the USA, where he became a baptist and worked as a janitor.

<sup>249</sup> "Att den synder och sorger fördriver,/ Frid och glädje oss alla här giver." (Pohjanen 2003, 105.)

in *Trevliga djävlar* compared with *Dagning; röd!* and *Kristallarken*, which reflects the metatextual focus on the theme of translation from Tornedalian Finnish into Swedish. The Finnish names are kept in the text, highlighting the local Tornedalian Finnish language. One of the women of the movement, for example, is consistently called *TrimpaRärrä*, a colloquial Tornedalian name not used in *Dagning; röd!* or *Kristallarken*. Another difference is that this TrimpaRärrä is presented as the partner of the narrator in the last chapter before the epilogue (Pohjanen 2003, 236).

Although the examples from *Trevliga djävlar* given above are not factual, the mentioning of the theme of 'driving away sins and sorrows' points to the contrast between rigid and life-denying Laestadianism on the one hand, and the frivolities, pleasures and possibility of reversing the social order offered by the new teachings, which were not approved by Toivo Korpela himself, on the other. Compared to *Dagning; röd!* and *Kristallarken*, there is a stronger focus on local Tornedalian story-telling in *Trevliga djävlar*. While *Dagning; röd!* represents historiographic metafiction exploring multiple and contradictory narratives, this theme is downplayed in *Trevliga djävlar*, as there is only one narrator, albeit with a translator/interpreter whose activities he comments upon. The first part of the novel depicts the time of the sinking of the Titanic, the passenger ship that sank on its maiden voyage in 1912. The Tornedalians on the ship on their way to America represent local history in the shape of emigration. This history is connected both with hard times in the Torne Valley and with Laestadianism. One of the emigrants is a Laestadian preacher intent on disseminating 'true Christianity' among the Americans. The subsequent chapters include the story of the emergence and growth of the Korpela movement in the Torne Valley, recirculating story elements and descriptions from other books by Pohjanen. Although much is the same in terms of correspondences, the mode is different, as the style is more colloquial with explicit references to the circumstance that the story evolves in a Tornedalian Finnish cultural landscape where Tornedalian Finnish is spoken. Such references include the use of local words, such as *Kuulkaas*, Tornedalian Finnish for 'Do you hear'/'Listen' (Pohjanen 2003, 7). As Laestadianism is presented as a part of this local culture and as shaping both the mentality and the language, it is represented as a religion of the marginalised minorities of the Torne Valley. The Tornedalian Finns are mentioned, and also the variation among Finnish-speaking groups. *Lantalaiset*, mentioned a couple of times, refers to Finnish-speaking people who do not see themselves as Tornedalians (Pohjanen 2003, 221).<sup>250</sup> Throughout

<sup>250</sup> The website <http://www.minoritet.se/svenska-spraket-var-norm> defines *lantalaiset* as Finnish-speaking people in northern Sweden who do not see themselves as Tornedalians, accessed 9 April 2017.

the text, there are references to the Sámi and elements of Sámi culture. In this cultural landscape with Sámi and Finnish-speaking groups, Laestadianism is presented as a movement having a special appeal to those groups.

*Tornedalska öden och äventyr – Korpelarörelsen*

Bengt Pohjanen's *Tornedalska öden och äventyr – Korpelarörelsen* ('Tornedalians' fates and adventures – The Korpela movement') from 2015 is the first volume of a series. The text on the flyleaf points out that the volume is based on Pohjanen's essays, chronicles, stories and interviews with Tornedalians involved in the Korpela movement. The volume is divided into three sections: I "Kristallarken – Ett tidsvittne" ('The Crystal Arc – A contemporary witness'), II "Toivo Korpela – Personen" ('Toivo Korpela – the person'), and III "Paradisets barn" ('The children of Paradise'). To a large extent, the first section corresponds with the short novel *Kristallarken* and parts of *Dagning; röd!* narrated by Oscar Leander, but they are not literally the same, there are variations in wording and detail. The narrator of the second part is a fictionalised version of Bengt Pohjanen, who tells about his quest for the truth about Toivo Korpela. Like the character Lars in *Dagning; röd!*, he uses a tape-recorder when interviewing people. There are also a number of references to a 'Pohjanen archive' containing information about interviews and facts collected over the years.

As in previous books, the Korpela movement is contrasted with Laestadianism, which in the eyes of the narrator-focaliser represents a form of local establishment. In Oscar Leander's reminiscences of the time when the movement emerged, the Laestadians are called "Babel's whores" and *storkristna*, a local word connoting that the Laestadians were part of the local establishment (Pohjanen 2015, 13). The theme of Laestadianism as a form of spectacle and theatre is also present in the narrator's mentioning that the midwife who had just delivered his wife pretended to fall into "Laestadian ecstasy" when singing the songs of Sion with a group of visiting women (Pohjanen 2015, 22). This depiction of Laestadianism corresponds with that presented in *Kristallarken* and *Dagning; röd!*. One difference is that the mentally challenged 'prophet' who is called "Martinson" in *Kristallarken* and *Dagning; röd!* is referred to as "Siikavaara", the real name of the 'prophet' who is associated with the development of the scandalous elements of the movement (Pohjanen 2015, 23). As in the other narratives by Pohjanen, the prophet has a history of mental illness. This corresponds with facts known about Siikavaara, who became depressed after the death of his first wife.

After spending some time at a mental hospital, Siikavaara came back home to find that the movement had been radicalised under the influence of Ebba Strålbeg/Tyra Lind. The female prophet who saw visions that came to

affect the radicalisation of the Korpela movement is called Ebba Strålberg in *Tornedalska öden och äventyr – Korpelarörelsen*, which is the name of the real person who was a prominent member of the movement (Pohjanen 2015, 50). In *Dagning; röd!* and *Kristallarken*, the name Tyra Lind is used. Another difference is that the narrator in *Tornedalska öden och äventyr – Korpelarörelsen* claims that the father of Siikavaara was going to be sacrificed to God, but was saved by a policeman and one of the narrator's sons. The narrative is somewhat ambivalent concerning whether or not there was really going to be a human sacrifice. First, it is mentioned that the old man was going to be sacrificed but later, Oscar Leander suggests that the old man might have been delirious due to an over-consumption of alcohol (Pohjanen 2015, 72).

Following the narrator, Siikavaara could not stop the radicalisation that had begun while he was in hospital. Thus, the development of the movement is described as a process that goes out of hand. The first part of *Tornedalska öden och äventyr – Korpelarörelsen* ends with the outbreak of the revival. Toivo Korpela, who has not been able to dissuade the Korpelians, returns to Finland and has no part in the ensuing events, other than that the Korpelians had begun to see him as an enemy when he did not support the development that led to the establishment of the belief that an arc would come to collect the true believers. Neither did Korpela support the specific forms of devotion that emerged under the influence of Siikavaara and Ebba Strålberg. It is emphasised repeatedly that the times are turbulent with poverty, strikes, bolshevism and fascism.

Oscar Leander himself is troubled by his wife's illness, which eventually leads to her demise, and by the modern times that threaten his business as a horse tradesman. A couple of his sons have left the horse trade and started driving cars. Oscar Leander himself reflects upon the Korpelians and their projected journey on the arc, fearing that he might lose all his customers as motor cars had begun to oust horses from the roads (Pohjanen 2015, 66). Leander recounts the beliefs of poor, uneducated people who became firm believers in the transformations they believed were to take place. Like Laestadius in his time, a female follower of the Korpela movement expresses faith in local truths, in opposition to the learned centre of Uppsala: "The dead ministers could not interpret the Scripture. They just read from the book. And they had learned that in Uppsala. In the school of the spirit in Lapland you had to read everything sort of upside down." (Pohjanen 2015, 67, my translation.)<sup>251</sup> The woman's beliefs are retold by Oscar Leander who remains sceptical to all forms of religious beliefs. In the world of the narra-

<sup>251</sup> "Döprästerne kunde inte tolka Skriften. De läste innantill. Och det hade de lärt sig i Uppsala. I andens skola i lappmarken fick man läsa allt likasom upp och ner." (Pohjanen 2015, 67.)

tive, the woman's interpretation points to the theme of popular, local protest against the Swedish nation-state's ecclesiastical and educational centre where ministers had been educated for a long period of time. In this respect, the woman's viewpoints represent a challenge of the centre from a peripheral position. This is a theme found in the works of Lars Levi Laestadius, who also made connections between the centre and dead faith, and the role of the periphery for spiritual renewal. However, the reversal between centre and periphery found in the woman's statement is a parody of Laestadius' 'centre versus periphery-narrative'. When elaborating on the reading of the Scripture in "the school of the spirit in Lapland", the woman claims that Maria was a harlot, while Oholiba in the *Book of Ezekiel* was a pure virgin (ibid.).<sup>252</sup> This is clearly a modification of Laestadius' narrative of Mary of Lapland. Thus, one thread in Pohjanen's narrative of the Korpela movement in *Tornedalska öden och äventyr – Korpelarörelsen* consists of a parody and travesty of the story about Mary of Lapland in the Laestadius legend.<sup>253</sup>

The second part of *Tornedalska öden och äventyr – Korpelarörelsen*, "Toivo Korpela. Personen", introduces Bengt Pohjanen as a narrator. In this section, Pohjanen has the role of an investigator and collector of facts. At the beginning of the section, the narrator mentions that he visited Toivo Korpela's home village of Ähtäri in Finland for the first time in 1983, hoping to meet people who could tell him about Korpela. This quest for facts resembles to a large extent the depiction in *Dagning; röd!* of the author-character Lars' visit to Ähtäri. One difference is that in *Tornedalska öden och äventyr – Korpelarörelsen*, Pohjanen refers to himself as an author intrigued by the enigmatic Toivo Korpela. Although the text claims to be autobiographical, there is a strong element of fictionalisation and the creation of an author persona drawing attention to the borders between fact and fiction being rather porous.

When commenting on his career as an author, Pohjanen highlights the role of the author as a provoker, claiming that the role of art is to break silences and to draw sensitive subject matter to the fore. He particularly mentions Laestadian preachers as opponents of the project of breaking silences (Pohjanen 2015, 84). When refuting some of the rumours about Korpela, the narrator Pohjanen concludes that he was a creative and skilled narrator,

<sup>252</sup> The name *Oholiba* in the *Book of Ezekiel* connotes adultery and prostitution.

<sup>253</sup> There is another example of parody when Oscar Leander describes an episode when a man called Johansson came from Moscow to disrupt negotiations between workers and employers. Following Leander, the workers started spitting one another in the face and Johansson was also spat at. This resulted in the emergence of a new sect, "the Spitters", also called "the Johanssonites" (Pohjanen 2015, 56). This description provides an indirect characterisation of the narrator as a man with a secular mindset, a sense of humour and an inclination towards parody.

drawing attention to similarities between Korpela's manipulations of truth and his own pursuits as an author: "Like other preachers, authors and artists he [Korpela] willingly elaborated upon already existing myths. Nothing strange about that! It's an occupational injury or – occupational benefit." (Pohjanen 2015, 85.)<sup>254</sup> He goes on suggesting that it might be because of Korpela that Laestadianism has a strong position in Sattajärvi and Kuttainen, and that several of the most prominent men of the revival had come to faith through the preachings of Korpela (Pohjanen 2015, 82).<sup>255</sup> Pohjanen, the narrator, does not propose that these Laestadians were Korpelians, but that Korpela had had a decisive impact on their spiritual development. He furthermore claims that Korpela continues to remain of current interest, and that he himself knows him very well:

I know him very well. I am probably the one person who carries the knowledge about him. I have visited Korpela's home, I have interviewed his relatives and I have met with those who were there. My male and female informants are all reliable [. . .]. (Pohjanen 2015, 83, my translation).<sup>256</sup>

As manifested in *Dagning; röd!*, the issue of reliability is complex. This theme is also touched on in Pohjanen's comparison between authors', preachers' and artists' creative ways of using subject matter. Against the backdrop of a poetics of postmodernism, the truth claim of the quote above reads as a statement that is undermined by the later focus on creative uses of subject matter. Thus, the fictive quality of the 'factual' autobiographical writing of the volume's second section is highlighted in a way that blurs distinctions between fiction and facts. While the elusiveness of truth and the proliferation of stories is a theme of *Dagning; röd!*, the narrator Pohjanen claims that he knows the truth about whether Korpela died a Christian (Pohjanen 2015, 89). In view of certain intertextual relations with other texts where Pohjanen problematises the concept of the omniscient narrator as a kind of God who knows everything, the question is whether he is a reliable narrator in the section about Toivo Korpela the person.

Following the narrator Pohjanen, Korpela was an intelligent man who

<sup>254</sup> "I likhet med andra predikanter, författare och konstnärer byggde han gärna på de myter som redan fanns. Inget konstigt med det! Det är en yrkesskada eller – yrkesförmån." (Pohjanen 2015, 85.)

<sup>255</sup> Sattajärvi is a village in the municipality of Pajala, while Kuttainen is in the municipality of Kiruna.

<sup>256</sup> "Jag känner honom mycket väl, troligen är jag den som bär på kunskapen om honom. Jag har besökt Korpelas hem, jag har intervjuat hand släktingar och jag har träffat dem som var med. Mina sagesmän och sageskvinnor är alla tillförlitliga [. . .]."



made the mistake of not appearing to be humble enough when establishing himself as a preacher. Through this, he broke a code of behaviour among preachers which stipulates that self-confidence and aspirations are not to be demonstrated openly. Furthermore, Korpela is represented as the victim of controversies within Laestadianism that resulted in factions hostile to one another joining in opposition against Toivo Korpela, with the result that a ban was issued that prohibited Korpela from preaching. Pohjanen depicts an unholy alliance between representatives of the National Lutheran Church, with the bishop and diocese of Luleå as primary agents, and Laestadian preachers who saw Korpela as a threat. As opposed to his opponents, Korpela is described as an intelligent and creative person who did not grasp the rules of the 'rigid religious game' ("det stela religiösa spelet"). This made him make mistakes that resulted in a conflict with the leading Laestadian Koivulampi, who emerged as one of his major enemies (Pohjanen 2015, 94). Pohjanen concludes: "He [Korpela] was simply too intelligent for this crowd [Koivulampi and his fellow Laestadians]." (Pohjanen 2015, 95, my translation.) In this narrative Toivo Korpela is depicted as an honest person and a refreshing contrast to a self-righteous, jealous, hypocritical and vindictive Laestadian establishment.

The narrator Pohjanen emphasises the variations within Laestadianism with a right wing, a left wing and a middle faction. Within this diversity, he places Korpela in the middle: "I see him as a humanitarian Laestadian, who politically was to the left, which was not unusual in the villages of Pajala municipality." (Pohjanen 2015, 97.) He claims that there was an affinity between Korpelians and communists and that a number of Korpelians later became communists when the movement dissolved (Pohjanen 2015, 89). In the text, Communism and Laestadianism are characterised as twin ideologies (Pohjanen 2015, 89). While this idea corresponds with a focus on Laestadius as a social reformer, it does not take into consideration the role of unworldliness in shaping a Laestadian mentality and way of life. However, the aim of Pohjanen's description of Laestadianism and the Korpela movement in this context is not to provide an analytical account, but to present how the movements were experienced by local people. Thus, it is a form of local and subjective truth that is presented.

Pohjanen highlights that Korpela was a quite ordinary person in Meänmaa at the time, but that he was a victim of internal conflicts within the Laestadian movement and opposition from local representatives of the National Lutheran Church. Pohjanen also highlights the use Sigurd Siika-vaara and others made of Korpela when they started reading the Bible on their own and offering new interpretations, including the conviction that a heavenly arc would arrive. Thus, Pohjanen explains Korpela's role as being that of a victim of Laestadian preachers and the bishop and diocese of

Luleå, and as a source of inspiration for the movement that grew up around Sigurd Siikavaara, Artur Niemi and Ebba Strålberg. In the chapter entitled “Toivo Korpela – inte jag, det är de här pojarna” (‘Toivo Korpela – not me, it is those fellows’), Pohjanen claims that this was what Korpela said when asked about the revelations of Siikavaara and Niemi, and concludes that “The Korpela movement was never Korpela’s movement” (Pohjanen 2015, 110, my translation).

When describing the role of Siikavaara in the radicalisation of the Korpela movement, Pohjanen refrains from commenting on his mental illness. Instead he characterises him as an intelligent young man who starts to read the Bible on his own at a time of unrest and uncertainty. Siikavaara’s, Niemi’s and Ebba Strålberg’s roles as witnesses and prophets who were filled with the spirit of life that had come from God in accordance with *The Book of Revelations* 11:11 are compared with Laestadius’ preachings about the keys to heaven. According to Pohjanen, this idea gave rise to such confusion even during Laestadius’ lifetime that people in Kautokeino took to violence, killing people and burning houses (Pohjanen 2015, 108). He furthermore goes on to compare Siikavaara’s and Niemi’s interpretations of the Bible to Laestadius’ method of preaching: “Siikavaara and Niemi also made religious theatre, cast roles, played themselves and directed performances” (ibid.).<sup>257</sup> The activities of the Korpela movement is referred to as “this strange performance in Meänmaa” (Pohjanen 2015, 109). Thus, Pohjanen draws parallels between the effects of Laestadius’, Siikavaara’s and Niemi’s preachings, suggesting that this is characteristic of a Tornedalian mentality that oscillates between self-effacement and megalomania (Pohjanen 2015, 109).

Although Pohjanen contrasts Korpela with powerful Laestadian preachers who represent a religious establishment among Tornedalians and Finns, he also refers to the notion of Laestadianism as a ‘living Christianity’ (*levande kristendom*) that constitutes an opposite to ‘dead faith’. Thus, Pohjanen does not target Laestadianism as such, but the influential preachers who went against Toivo Korpela. In the last section of *Tornedalska öden och äventyr – Korpelärörelsen*, “Paradisets barn” (‘The children of Paradise’), Pohjanen embeds the movement into a larger context by highlighting parallels to gnosticism. According to Pohjanen, there are so many correspondences between ideas entertained and disseminated by the leading Korpelians and gnosticism that there is reason to see the Korpela movement as a branch of gnosticism. He particularly dwells upon the idea that worldly wisdom becomes insanity before God, and that God’s wisdom becomes in-

<sup>257</sup> “Siikavaara och Niemi gjorde också religiös teater, tillsatte roller, spelade själva och regisserade föreställningarna.” (Pohjanen 2015, 108.)

sanity in the world (Pohjanen 2015, 113). With this as a backdrop, the ideas and activities of the Korpelians become logical in a sense, as the effects of an alternative way of interpreting. This mode of interpreting is connected with opposition to oppression and hierarchies (ibid.). Pohjanen establishes connections between the specific socio-cultural situation of the Swedish Tornedalians, and the emergence of a protest movement with roots in ancient beliefs in mystical and esoteric experiences, gnosticism. These experiences are connected with the idea of certain people's participation with the divine, which explains the role of the 'prophets' in the Korpela movement, who believed that they had a special contact with God, as did their followers. This, Pohjanen suggests, may be one reason behind the development of the Korpela movement.

Pohjanen in particular highlights feminism as an element of the 'secret, gnostic wisdom' of the Korpela movement, claiming that there was a protest against patriarchal oppression in the movement (ibid.). Clearly, the movement was in opposition to certain elements of Laestadianism, such as the prevailing negative view of sexuality as being connected with sin, and the powerful position of certain male preachers who condemned a vast number of phenomena as being sinful. When elaborating on this, Pohjanen exemplifies with episodes from meetings with people who were involved in the movement. One leading woman in the Korpela movement tells him that she always felt sinful as a Laestadian, but that the Korpela movement offered her liberation from feelings of sin (Pohjanen 2015, 117). When depicting encounters with Korpelians, Pohjanen mentions people he has met in person. His role is that of an eyewitness with a first-hand experience of meetings with people who were Korpelians in the 1930s.

There is a comment relating to the issue of perspective when Pohjanen emphasises the differences between the mode of dealing with theology he incorporated through his theological studies in Uppsala and the local Tornedalian Laestadian theology encompassed by preachers (Pohjanen 2015, 125). Implicitly, this draws attention to the theme of centre versus periphery. Pohjanen mentions that when he came to Muodoslompola as a young vicar, he met the Laestadian preacher Aarne Filppa, who had come to faith through Toivo Korpela, but who was not a Korpelian himself (Pohjanen 2015, 125). Pohjanen describes how he acts as a translator for this preacher. The position of Pohjanen is both that of a person educated in the centre and of a man with local roots and knowledge. This implies that he becomes a mediator between the modern world and the local Tornedalian world with its own customs and modes of experiencing. Although the episode with the preacher Filppa suggests that the relationship between Toivo Korpela and the Laestadians was amicable, Pohjanen also proposes that the Korpela

movement posed a threat to Laestadianism in Meänmaa (Pohjanen 2015, 118). However, there are no fixed boundaries between the movements in Pohjanen's account. As with Laestadianism, there are various phases of the Korpela movement. Pohjanen discerns four such phases: 1) 1932–1934: the time of Korpela, 2) 1934–June 1935: waiting for the Arc, 3) June 1935–1937: the time of liberty, and 4) 1937–the present: the time of shame (Pohjanen 2015, 147). In this narrative of the Korpela movement, Pohjanen again comments on the theme of the reliability of sources, proposing that the police records are not reliable, as interpreters had been used who may not have understood the metaphoric language of the believers (Pohjanen 2015, 147). He also mentions that the Korpelians had agreed among one another to speak nonsense, and that this nonsense has later been turned into 'truths' (Pohjanen 2015, 147). In another context, Pohjanen elaborates on this theme when commenting on Siikavaara's fear of being sent to prison. In this situation, he was recommended to speak nonsense so that he would be sent to a mental hospital instead.

Pohjanen gives examples of controversies, but also of overlappings and similarities. He highlights the heterogeneous character of Laestadianism, which makes it misleading to speak of the movement in the singular. As to the issue of distinguishing markers between Laestadianism and the Korpela movement, gnosticism is also highlighted as an element in Laestadianism. Pohjanen in particular mentions Laestadius' notion of 'the heavenly parent', that is a deity that is "both man and woman or neither woman nor man" (Pohjanen 2015, 118, my translation). Another example of correspondences between the Korpela movement and other religious movements given by Pohjanen is the use of laymen preachers (Pohjanen 2015, 151). This notion is said to be encompassed by Laestadians, Lutherans and Korpelians who base their beliefs on the New Testament. The chapter highlighting this theme is entitled "Alla är präster" ('Everybody is a minister', Pohjanen 2015, 151). When discussing variations within Laestadianism, Pohjanen suggests that if the Korpelians had not started using alcohol, the movement would have gone down in history as a left-wing branch of Laestadianism "where the Laestadian communists and communist Laestadians belonged" (Pohjanen 2015, 160). Although this form of Laestadianism is alien to Laestadius' own ideas, Pohjanen proposes that this kind of ideological border-crossings was not uncommon in the ideological and spiritual landscape of the Torne Valley. The Kautokeino Rebellion is mentioned as one instance of a blending of radicalism and spirituality, which according to Pohjanen springs from the notion that man is a god – a belief he also attributes to Leninism (Pohjanen 2015, 161).

According to Pohjanen, the Korpela movement was before its time in the sense that it offered liberating 'primal therapy' to two vulnerable mi-

norities that had suffered from workhouses, times of skull measurings and enforced ideas of a People's Home and nation-state (Pohjanen 2015, 139). It is mentioned that the minorities in question are the Sámi and the Finnish-speaking population of northern Sweden (ibid.). Thus, in this text from 2015 Pohjanen makes explicit connections between the oppression of the Sámi and Finnish-speaking minorities, Swedish race biology, homogenising modernity and Swedish nation-building on one hand, and the rise of the Korpela movement as a reaction to this on the other. The section also includes chapters that provide a comment on Pohjanen's previous narratives about the Korpela movement. He recapitulates a story told by his grandfather about naked women being placed on a floor and male Korpelians crawling all over them in order to satisfy their sexual desires. However, he makes the reservation that his grandfather was a good story-teller, thus suggesting that the story is not necessarily true. Once again, the theme of story-telling and the use of information that might not be true is commented upon (Pohjanen 2015, 159).

In the final chapters of the section entitled "Paradisets barn", Pohjanen comments on the most controversial elements of the Korpela movement. While mentioning that there were incestuous relationships, he emphasises that these were not common (Pohjanen 2015, 160). On the whole, Pohjanen tones down the frequency of controversial incidents, such as the revival of dead people. This, he claims, was attempted on only one occasion when the people present had been drinking heavily (ibid.). Siikavaara is characterised as a talented and intelligent person, as one of the "most interesting personalities in our [Tornedalian] culture" (Pohjanen 2015, 162). This making of Siikavaara into a Tornedalian ethnosymbol is a significant reversal from prevailing narratives of Siikavaara as a mentally unbalanced and delirious person suffering from severe delusions. When describing his arrival at Muodoslompola as a young vicar in 1972, Pohjanen mentions that the Korpela movement was seen as a common trauma in his parish, as something shameful that should not be spoken about (Pohjanen 2015, 163). This characterisation is supported by the last chapter's description of a visit to a couple who it turns out are living in shame and sorrow due to a rumour that they had killed their own daughter as a sacrifice to God. This incident is also told in *Dagning: röd!* and *Kristallarken*, with the difference that in the 2015 volume, Pohjanen recounts a meeting with the couple, the mother and the father of the girl, who tell him what really happened: that the girl died by accident when she was playing. Thus, this episode functions as documentary evidence that contradicts rumours about child sacrifice. While this is an example of a traumatic incident connected with the Korpela movement, Pohjanen also mentions a meeting with an old woman who remembers her time as a Korpelian with joy. In the chapter "Vi

ler när vi ses” (‘We smile when we meet’), an old woman tells Pohjanen about her ‘wild youth’, which was in opposition to the strict Laestadianism of her home village: “The young people had read the Bible and concluded that it did not at all forbid dancing, singing, joy, wine and earthly pleasures.” (Pohjanen 2015, 167, my translation.) This woman tells Pohjanen that jealous villagers had spread rumours about the Korpelians, for example that they had built an altar by the Muonio River where they were going to sacrifice people. According to the woman, this was not true – the ‘altar’ was in reality a grill built for the purpose of preparing salmon (ibid.).

With Pohjanen’s representation of the Korpela movement in *Tornedalska öden och äventyr – Korpelarörelsen*, the movement is embedded in a new context, namely that of the writing of local history and cultural mobilization inspired by ethnofuturism. The name *Meänmaa* is used in the volume and Pohjanen emphasises connections between the Korpela movement and other historical movements when oppressed groups have protested against discrimination and oppression in times of social, political and ideological unrest. In emphasising this theme and toning down the scandalous elements associated with the movement, Pohjanen presents a counter-history to stories disseminated in the Swedish majority society. He comments on the circulation of rumours and he particularly describes the Sjöström brothers’ novel *Silverarken* (‘The silver arc’) as being a superficial and prejudiced book (Pohjanen 2015, 163, also see Heith 2009d). Thus, Pohjanen’s book presents a counter-narrative to a Swedish majority discourse about the Korpela movement by embedding the narrative in the context of local history and local opposition to marginalisation and oppression. However, when compared with other texts by Pohjanen, the role of Laestadianism, the Korpela movement and Communism, respectively, is not presented as uniform. In an essay published in the year 2000, Pohjanen mentions that his interest in the Communism of eastern Norrbotten and his interest in Laestadianism have the same root: “a fear of and fascination with two, secluded, totalitarian worldviews-ideologies-religions” (Pohjanen 2000b, 44, my translation). This characterisation differs considerably from that presented later in the Tornedalian Finnish literary history published in 2007 (Pohjanen & Johansson 2007a, 134ff.). The discrepancy may be explained by the heterogeneity of the Laestadian movement. While there have been secederist, conservative Laestadian groupings, Laestadianism has also functioned as a positive spiritual and cultural force addressing social problems such as poverty and alcoholism. The aspect highlighted in the Tornedalian Finnish literary history is Laestadianism as an opposition to hierarchies, and as a means to temporarily subvert the social order at Laestadian prayer-meetings which function as a kind of carnivalisation.

## Commemorating the 200-Year Anniversary of Laestadius' Birth: Pohjanen's "Song of Praise to Lars Levi Laestadius"

In connection with the 200-year anniversary of Laestadius' birth in the year 2000, a number of activities took place celebrating Laestadius' role in the shaping of the cultural landscape of the North Calotte. In this context, Bengt Pohjanen wrote a song of praise acknowledging Laestadius' role as a spiritual renewer, social reformer and champion of the Tornedalian Finnish speaking people. "Lovsång till Lars Levi Laestadius" ('Song of praise to Lars Levi Laestadius') was first performed in the Pajala Church as part of the celebrations (Pohjanen 2000, Heith 2009, 355–359, Heith 2010b, 24–43, Heith 2016a). It was later published in *På ett litet men vilar ett helt millennium. Andliga tal och privatfilosofisk mottagning* ('On a small but rests an entire millennium. Spiritual speeches and private-philosophical consulting room'), a collection of texts about individuals and events that have shaped the cultural landscape of the Tornedalians in the Swedish-Finnish borderlands (Pohjanen 2000).

"Lovsång till Lars Levi Laestadius" has the subtitle "Kiruna-Lasse in memoriam". *Kiruna-Lasse* is the nickname of the skier Erik Larsson, born in 1912 in Kurravaara, ten kilometres north of Kiruna.<sup>258</sup> He attracted the attention of the national media when he unexpectedly won a gold and a bronze medal in the Olympics in Garmisch Partenkirchen in 1936. After enjoying a period of fame and success, he became a Laestadian at the age of 26, left competitive skiing and became a miner. Kiruna-Lasse's life story exemplifies a Laestadian conversion narrative that involves a life-changing choice. Through this choice, he left the social sphere of worldly success in order to live a simple Laestadian life focussed on unworldliness. In the novel *Silvertorpeden* ('The silver torpedo') from 1992, one of the characters makes a reference to Kiruna-Lasse, comparing him to a Laestadian preacher whom he sees as a holy man: "He was robed in a solid peace, such great peace I had only encountered once before, in Kiruna-Lasse, the skiing star who converted and therefore gave up possible future medals from the devil of honour.

<sup>258</sup> Kiruna-Lasse's success as a skier and his conversion to Laestadianism is also the theme of Karl Erik Johansson i Backe's novel *Frestelsens berg. En roman om Kiruna-Lasse* ('The mountain of temptation. A novel about Kiruna-Lasse') from 1983. In the preface, the author mentions that his aim is to explore the enigma of why Kiruna-Lasse left competitive skiing. This reorientation is described as winning the greatest victory over himself (Johansson i Backe 1983, 9). The novel focuses on Laestadian 'unworldliness', simplicity and asceticism as values that contributed to Kiruna-Lasse's choice to withdraw from the arena of competitive skiing and his role as a national sports hero.



I met him once. He was transparent.” (Pohjanen 1992, 215, my translation.)<sup>259</sup>

Pohjanen’s song of praise to Lars Levi Laestadius displays a blending of elements from different traditions through its mixture of the form of an Orthodox Christian hymn and content related to Laestadianism. There is a northern dimension in the text as both Laestadianism and Orthodox Christianity are represented in the spiritual landscape of the North Calotte. In another essay in the collection, which includes the song of praise, Pohjanen writes about a prophetic belt stretching from Bodø in Norway to Narjan Mar in Russia, highlighting that the local people’s propensity for strong commitment to religious and political utopias is an essential element of the belt (Pohjanen 200b). In the cultural and spiritual composite of the prophetic belt envisioned by Pohjanen, Communism, Laestadianism and Orthodox Christianity form central components. The Orthodox Christian influence is reflected in the song of praise to Laestadius, which is written in the form of an Akathistos hymn.

The Akathistos hymn is a genre with a long tradition in Orthodox Christian worship. The most well-known specimen is anonymous and undated, but is believed to be the work of Saint Romanos the Melodist dating from the early sixth century (Peltomaa 2001). This hymn praises the Mother of God in a series of salutations addressed to her. The term *Akathistos* literally means ‘non-seated’ and refers to the standing position of the congregation during its performance (von Gardner 1980, 46–47). The Byzantine Akathistos to the Mother of God is a living part of the liturgical tradition of Orthodox Christian churches, and according to Peltomaa it has shaped the spirituality and cultural mentality of “those within the sphere of the eastern rite” (Peltomaa 2001, 22). With this eastern connection in mind, Pohjanen’s text performs a syncretisation of the idioms of two religious traditions from the vantage point of an idea of a prophetic belt stretching from the Bodø in Norway to Narjan Mar in Russia. This northern space overlaps with configurations such as the North Calotte and the Barents Region. One of the essays of the collection from the year 2000 has the main title “Norra Sverige – gränsland mellan Byzans och Rom” (‘Northern Sweden – borderland between Byzantium and Rome’) which explicitly evokes the idea of a border area where east and west meet (Pohjanen 2000c). In the case of the song of praise to Lars Levi Laestadius, the encounter is enacted in the shape of a syncretisation between the Orthodox Christian tradition and Laestadian-

<sup>259</sup> “Han var iklädd en kompakt frid, en så stor frid hade jag bara erfarit en gång tidigare hos Kiruna-Lasse, skidstjärnan som blev omvänd och därför avstod från eventuella framtida medaljer från äredjävulen. Honom hade jag träffat en gång. Han var genomskinlig.” (Pohjanen 1992, 215.)

ism. Although different, these traditions in the northern belt envisioned by Pohjanen have in common that they are part of a northern cultural landscape, and that the religious traditions of this northern space differ from those of the south.

Pohjanen's use of the Akathistos form when praising the impact of Laestadius and Laestadianism in a northern Scandinavian cultural landscape corresponds with the traditional use of the Akathistos for expressing gratitude and thanksgiving (see Peltomaa 2001, 21). The genre of the Akathistos hymn is mentioned already in the novel *Himmlalots* from 1995, which is about a man who goes to Russia when experiencing an existential and spiritual crisis. He stays at a monastery and gets guidance from an Orthodox Christian monk (Pohjanen 1995, 88). In Pohjanen's Tornedalians version, the content of the traditional hymn has been reworked and modified in order to highlight Laestadius' role as a social reformer, cultural mobiliser, spiritual leader and champion of marginalised linguistic minorities in northern Sweden. A major difference compared to the traditional Akathistos is that Laestadius is placed in a specific context in which his role as a saviour of the poor and suffering people is emphasised. Laestadius is described with a chain of metaphors and similes referring to a particular geographical and historical context. His role in changing the lives of the Sámi and the Finnish and Swedish-speaking population of northernmost Norrland is repeatedly emphasised. Apart from being linked to Laestadianism and a northern geographical belt, Pohjanen's Akathistos is in accordance with the most characteristic traits of the Byzantine hymn, which are repetitions and expressions of joy, using the word *chaire* meaning 'rejoice'.<sup>260</sup> Pohjanen's song of praise to Lars Levi Laestadius expresses praise and thanksgiving with the *chairetismos* "Gläd dig" (Swedish for 'rejoice'), which is repeated in the same manner as in the Byzantine classical hymn (see Heith 2009a, 357).

The *chairetismoses* used in Pohjanen's song of praise are all related to the cultural history of Norrbotten and the role of Laestadianism in this context. There are numerous references to Laestadius' biography, his sermons and the specific idiom of Laestadianism. The implied reader of the hymn, or listener to a live performance, is someone who is familiar with the idiom of Laestadianism and Laestadius' specific rhetoric (Heith 2009a, 357). Thus Pohjanen's text represents a local discourse familiar to people who share a Laestadian cultural and spiritual heritage. In this respect, it represents an insider narrative embedded in a local celebration of a historical character

<sup>260</sup> The repetition of the word "chaire" is called *chairetismos*. It refers to: "a rhetorical device derived from Luke 1:28 in which the Mother of God is addressed in a series of titles, each preceded by the word 'Hail' or 'Rejoice' (*chaire*). The Akathistos Hymn offers the best-known example" (Custer 2004, 442).

who played a central role in improving living conditions among the Sámi and Finnish-speaking people of Norrbotten.

The themes of performativity and articulations of difference from a minority perspective have been highlighted by Bhabha in a discussion about postcolonial cultural forms (Bhabha 2008, 3). Against this backdrop, Pohjanen's hymn may be characterised as a postcolonial challenge performed from the vantage point of the Tornedalian Finnish-speaking minority in Sweden. Bhabha furthermore mentions the 'restaging of the past' and the 'invention of tradition' as elements of postcolonial challenges performed by minorities (*ibid.*). He also mentions "cultural hybridities that emerge in moments of historical transformation" (*ibid.*). The celebrations of Laestadius in the year 2000 coincide with new modes of historiography attentive to local history and the histories of minorities. They also represent a restaging of the past, in that a local character, Laestadius, is highlighted as a cultural persona of major significance. This challenges both the discourse of homogenising modernity and the centre-periphery binary which has marginalised the cultures of the minorities of Norrbotten.

"Lovsång till Lars Levi Laestadius" celebrates Laestadius and Laestadianism as long-lasting influences that continue to perform miracles: "Rejoice, Lars Levi, who still performs miracles." (Pohjanen 2000, 110, my translation.) "Rejoice, because your achievement lives on, now that the villages of Lappland and cities of Norrbotten celebrate your memory" (Pohjanen 2000, 121, my translation). The living faith of Laestadianism is opposed to the dead faith of the centre through references to Laestadius' attacks on "the dead faith" (Pohjanen 2015, 113). This opposition is highlighted by a *chairetismos* setting Laestadius as an example of living faith: "Rejoice, thou eternal model of the living faith" (Pohjanen 2000, 116, my translation). In a *chairetismos* that exemplifies an invention of tradition in the sense discussed by Bhabha (see above), Pohjanen highlights Laestadius' role as a promoter of Meänkieli long before there was any discussion concerning whether Meänkieli should be seen as a Finnish dialect or a language of its own: "Rejoice, thou who laid the foundation of Meänkieli" (Pohjanen 2000, 112, my translation). The effect of this is that Lars Levi Laestadius is given a major role in present-day language revitalisation. The *chairetismos* exemplifies how the past can be used in the present, in this case in the context of a 200th anniversary which provides an opportunity for the creation of a local history. One theme of this history is the situation of the Sámi and Finnish-speaking minorities and the role of Laestadius in improving the living conditions of these groups, as well as attending to their cultural and spiritual needs.

While there are elements in the text that are in accordance with the

theme of alternative histories in the shape of challenges made from the vantage point of marginalised minorities, there are also elements that problematise narratives of anticolonial resistance and colonial complicity. Although Laestadius himself did not sympathise with the Kautokeino Rebellion in 1852, the rebellion has become connected with the preachings of Laestadius and their effect on the rebelling Sámi. There are studies emphasising that the rebellion was a righteous Sámi resistance to Norwegian colonialism (see Zorgdrager 1997). Others see it as a tragedy and a hard blow to Laestadius, who was under attack for his sermons (Larsson 2004, 127). In Pohjanen's song of praise, it is referred to as an almost deadly stab at Laestadius from the sword of an enemy: "You, too, received an almost deadly stab from the sword of the enemy through the rebellion in Kautokeino" (Pohjanen 2000, 119, my translation). As Laestadius himself was not in favour of the rebellion, this comment reflects biographical accuracy in its interpretation of the effects of the rebellion on Laestadius, who was accused of disrupting the social order (see Larsson 2004, 127ff.). Previously, Pohjanen has commented upon the theme that the rebels were influenced by Laestadius' preachings in the novel *Ropandes röst*, describing Laestadius' response to the Sámi rebels as fear. With regard to Laestadius' own view of the rebellion, his negative reaction to it may be described as a form of colonial complicity. Still, Laestadianism was used by the rebels to justify their revolt, which shows that ideas travel, are modified and appear in new contexts with new functions.

While the song of praise to Laestadius highlights the Sámi people as one of the marginalised groups whom Laestadius addressed through his sermons and social reform, there are a couple of elements in the text that are problematic from the vantage point of present-day Sámi anti-colonial struggle. As already mentioned, there is a discrepancy relating to the issue of the Kautokeino rebellion when it is embedded in Laestadius biography on the one hand, and narratives of Sámi anti-colonial struggle, for example in Zorgdrager's book and Nils Gaup's movie *The Kautokeino Rebellion*, on the other. Another problematic element of the Laestadius' biography from the vantage point of today's views on ethics, as well as present-day Sámi decolonisation, is mentioned in the chairetismos "Gläd dig, som sålde växter och kranier till de rika för att ge de fattiga mat", 'Rejoice, thou who sold plants and skulls to the rich in order to feed the poor' (Pohjanen 2000, 118). Following the genre conventions of the Akathistos, it expresses joy and thanksgiving. It is a biographical fact that Laestadius did indeed collect skulls and bones from Sámi graves which he sold on. However, the embedding of this biographical fact in a glorifying text that presents the robbing of graves as a feat is strongly at odds with today's discussion about ethics

in research related to Sámi material. As Ojala points out, the ‘collection’ of skulls and skeleton parts from Sámi graves should be named ‘grave robbery’ (Ojala 2016, 994ff.). Lars Levi Laestadius is one of the people known to have contributed to the collection and sale of skulls and skeletal parts. (Franzén 1973, 213, Broberg 1982, 27–86, Lundmark 2008, 145ff., Ojala 2016, 999–1001.)

The question is whether Pohjanen’s chairetismos is conscious in its representation of Laestadius as a champion of the poor and a grave robber, or whether it displays insensitivity to today’s discussion on ethics? Or, might the puzzling chairetismos have an aesthetic function? It is a fact that the classical Akathistos uses paradoxes in its addresses to the Mother of God – the most obvious one is that the Mother of God is both a virgin and a mother. Is this a model Pohjanen had in mind when addressing paradoxical Lars Levi Laestadius as both a champion of the poor and a grave robber? A comparison of recently published text with older ones reveals a conspicuous change in terminology. While older texts may describe the collection of remains from Sámi burial sites by ethnographers as a respectable pursuit, this has changed in recent texts in which the term “grave robbery” is used. I will return to this question in the discussion of Pohjanen’s *Laestadius opera*, which also includes the theme of grave robberies.

### Autobiographical writing, Pictures of the Time and Local History in the Form of the Novel

During the 1990s, Bengt Pohjanen wrote a number of novels inspired by dramatic events in his personal life. The theme of *Silvertorpeden* (‘The silver torpedo’) from 1992 is the killing of a policeman in the fictive northern mining town of Malminge, known from other novels by Pohjanen. After the killing, the brother of the policeman experiences a crisis. This is a story based on real events – Pohjanen’s brother, who was a policeman in Gällivare, was shot by a mentally imbalanced young man in 1984. In the novel, Johan, the brother of the policeman, is unemployed as he has left his position as a vicar in the Swedish National Lutheran Church because of a conflict with the bishop and dissatisfaction with the Church. The circumstances surrounding Johan’s leaving the Church and his position presented in the novel correspond with articles published in connection with Pohjanen’s controversy with the diocese (Pohjanen 1992, 68). Johan does not find ‘true faith’ in the Church, which is described as an institution with superficial prelates not really interested in spiritual matters. Instead, Johan has turned to the Orthodox Christian faith. The novel includes conversations with a Father Feofan, who func-

tions as a spiritual guide to Johan, who is undergoing a crisis.<sup>261</sup> Visits to Moscow and Karelia are mentioned and at the end there is a note with the geographical locations “Moscow and New Valamo 1990–92” within a parenthesis. Both these locations connote Orthodox Christianity. The New Valamo in eastern Finland is an Orthodox Christian monastery that was established after the Russian revolution had disrupted the activities of the old Valamo monastery in Karelia.

While the Swedish Lutheran Church is depicted as unsatisfactory for Johan, the Orthodox Christian faith is described as a positive alternative in that his spiritual needs are satisfied through experiences of holiness. Laestadianism is also depicted as a contrast to the National Lutheran Church. Laestadianism is part of the spiritual heritage of the northern part of Sweden, which is the setting of *Silvertorpeden*. In Johan’s interior monologue, the Laestadian spiritual landscape is experienced as “the landscape where repenting murderers and the friends of Jesus depart at the sound of the evening bell, but meet again at the coast of peace, high above earthly constraints.” (Pohjanen 1992, 81, my translation.)<sup>262</sup> The idea of a diffusion of borders separating the villain from the saint also recurs in a dialogue with Father Feofan: “Finally the villain and the saint are the same.” (Pohjanen 1992, 62, my translation.)<sup>263</sup> This notion is later elaborated upon in the discussion of the Korpela movement as a kind of gnosticism in *Tornedalska öden och äventyr – Korpelarörelsen*. However, there is a difference. While Johan in *Silvertorpeden* struggles with accepting the murder of his brother and freeing himself from vindictive feelings towards the murderer, the discussion in *Tornedalska öden och äventyr – Korpelarörelsen* lacks this emotional tension.

Although Johan does not see himself as a Laestadian, he acknowledges the impact Laestadianism has had in making him the person he is. When discussing ascetism and spirituality with Father Feofan, he draws parallels between Orthodox Christianity and Laestadianism, which he describes as being an integrated part of himself: “No, well I am a child of this simplicity, this ascetism that running metres have been written about: novels, plays, dissertations, documentaries. The attitude has been the same: disdain

<sup>261</sup> *Feofan* is a form of the name *Theophanes*. Theophanes, or Feofan, is a famous Byzantine Greek icon painter, thus the name has a specific significance in an Orthodox Christian context.

<sup>262</sup> “landskapet där ångrande mördare och Jesu vänner skiljs åt vid aftonklockans ljud men möts igen på fridens kust, högt över jordens tvång.” (Pohjanen 1992, 81.)

<sup>263</sup> “Till slut är skurken och helgonet lika.” (Pohjanen 1992, 62.)

and contempt [. . .].” (Pohjanen 1992, 201, my translation).<sup>264</sup> Johan goes on describing Laestadianism as a despised subculture generating shame in a Swedish national context. When Father Feofan makes the comments that the view of ascetism described by Johan is prejudiced, Johan agrees: “So much that we ourselves, the children of this ascetism, have begun to despise our subculture, taken the offered knife and stabbed it into the bosom of our culture, our language and our faith. It is called the Swedish model.” (Pohjanen 1992, 2019, my translation.)<sup>265</sup> In the character Johan’s mind, the implementation of ‘the Swedish model’ is associated with assimilationist policies, and the generation of negative self-images and shame among Swedish Tornedalians.

*Silvertorpeden* presents a critical picture of the time, relating to the depopulation of the villages in Norrland, minority status and assimilation and, as mentioned, the lack of spirituality in the National Lutheran Church experienced by the character Johan. Johan comments on the spirit of the time in the 1960s and 70s, claiming that: “Everybody Had to Go South, and the last person to leave was told on signs at the exits from the villages to turn off the lights.” (Pohjanen 1992, 73, my translation.)<sup>266</sup> The theme of lack of language related to having a Tornedalian Finnish background is mentioned. In a depiction of his youth, Johan refers to himself as “the one without a language” – a theme Pohjanen elaborates upon already in the early poem “I was born without language” (Pohjanen 1992, 75). Another theme repeatedly explored by Pohjanen is that of replacing Finnish family names with Swedish-sounding names. In *Silverarken* these new names are referred to as ‘bought names’: “– Was Lantto. Nowadays I have the bought name Töreström.” (Pohjanen 1992, 187, my translation.)<sup>267</sup>

*Silvertorpeden* is a quest novel in that the protagonist Johan is engaged in a search for spiritual fulfillment. The crisis he is experiencing is not only related to the murder of his brother, but also to his dissatisfaction with the Swedish National Lutheran Church. Johan has reached the insight that his time as a representative of the Church is over and that his life has entered a new phase. In this situation, he can view the Laestadianism of his

<sup>264</sup> “Nej, jag är ju barn av denna enkelhet, denna askes som det skrivits hyllmeter om: romaner, pjäser, avhandlingar, dokumentärer. Attityden har varit densamma: hån och förakt [. . .].” (Pohjanen 1992, 201.)

<sup>265</sup> “Så mycket att vi barn av denna askes själva börjat förakta vår subkultur, tagit den erbjudna kniven och stuckit den i bröstet på vår kultur, vårt spårk och vår tro. Det kallas den svenska modellen.” (Pohjanen 1992, 201.)

<sup>266</sup> “Alla Måste Söderut, och siste man uppmanades på skyltar vid utfarterna från byarna att släcka lysena.” (Pohjanen 1992, 73.)

<sup>267</sup> “– Var Lantto. Numera har jag köpesnamnet Töreström.” (Pohjanen 1992, 187.)



background in a new light. This reorientation is made easier by the break with the National Lutheran Church which was part of the Swedish state until the year 2000. At the time of narration in *Silvertorpeden*, Johan sees Laestadianism and Orthodox Christianity as positive counterparts to the Lutheranism of the Swedish National Church. As in the song of praise to Laestadius published in 2000, there is a diffusion of borders between Laestadianism and Orthodox Christianity. When visiting the house of a man he sees as holy in Malminge, Johan notices a portrait of Laestadius and Johan Raattamaa on the wall. This leads him to reflect upon the significance of Laestadius and Raattamaa in a mode that reverses the centre-periphery dichotomy of Swedish colonialism which has marginalised the culture and people of Lappland:

There was a corner cupboard and above it hung a portrait of Lars Levi Laestadius, le prêtre lapon, and his disciple Johan Raattamaa, staret and bishop of Lappland and the entire world. In this stillness and humility bordering on self-effacement, there was a self-consciousness and pride which to an outsider might seem like megalomania. No, the Pope of Rome has not received the keys to heaven, they were given to Johan Raattamaa from Saivomuotka village and he gave them to Jonas Purnu in Purnu village. Rome was not the centre of living Christianity, it was the prayer house in Malminge and Lars Levi Laestadius, the seventh angel of the Book of Revelation. (Pohjanen 1992, 203, my translation).<sup>268</sup>

The story about Johan is a spiritual quest story, but it is also a postcolonial quest story in the sense that his reorientation and the insights he expresses are connected with a decolonisation of the mind that involves becoming aware of assimilationist policies and cultural homogenisation that has marginalised the Tornedalian minority and resulted in language loss and shame. In this specific situation, Laestadianism is reactivated as a positive symbol of Tornedalianness. However, something has been added when Laestadianism is syncretised with elements from Orthodox Christianity.

The term “starets” which Johan uses about Laestadius is used in the Orthodox Christian tradition for a ‘holy man’ or ‘spiritual leader’. The man whom Johan sees as holy is one of the influences in his spiritual search. In

<sup>268</sup> “Där stod ett hörnskåp och ovanför det hängde ett porträtt av Lars Levi Laestadius, le prêtre lapon, och hans lärjunge, Johan Raattamaa, staret och biskop av Lappmarken och hela världen. I denna stillhet och ödmjukhet intill självutplåning fanns en självmedvetenhet och en stolthet som för en utomstående kunde te sig som megalomani. Nej, inte har påven i Rom fått himmelrikets nycklar, dem fick Johan Raattamaa från Saivomuotka by och han gav dem till Jonas Purnu i Purnu by. Rom var inte den levande kristendomens centrum, det var bönhuset i Malminge, och Lars Levi Laestadius Uppenbarelsebokens sjunde ängel.” (Pohjanen 1992, 202–203.)

accordance with the structure of the *Bildungsroman* he is one of the 'stations' that the protagonist has to pass in order to reach his goal. One of the teachings of this man is that there is a specific form of Christianity in the northern regions: "Christianity is not a merchandise here in our parts. It might be in the South. But here the deepest secrets of faith are carried by cherubs and seraphs." (Pohjanen 1992, 216, my translation.)<sup>269</sup> Although Malminge is described as a part of modern Swedish society, it is also characterised as a place with a specific form of Christianity that represents 'true faith'. When Johan goes to the police station in Malminge to find out more about the murder of his brother, a policeman unexpectedly replies "In Jesus' name and blood", when Johan apologises for being rude to him before (Pohjanen 1992, 102, my translation). Johan is surprised, wondering if he really has heard right. He finds the Laestadian expression out of place. Still, it indicates the impact of Laestadianism on the way people speak and think.

The continuity of Laestadianism is also represented by Johan's great-grandmother, described as a true Laestadian. This old woman does not question the meaning of the murder, but accepts it as God's will. At the funeral, she is moved, singing in tongues and moving ecstatically in "liikutuksia" (Pohjanen 1992, 232). This is not described by Johan as shameful or embarrassing but as something beautiful, which indicates that his mental decolonisation has reached a point when he can view "liikutuksia" and the speaking in tongues as positive elements of local spirituality: "She sang in a clear voice and after a while the song passed into an angelic song in tongues. Her voice became increasingly clear and her face was shining. Her wrinkles disappeared and she looked very young, as beautiful as she had once been. She danced and sang to the glory of the Lord." (Pohjanen 1992, 232, my translation.)<sup>270</sup>

In the account of Laestadianism presented in *Silvertorpeden*, the revival functions as a positive alternative to the Swedish mainstream Lutheranism of the time of the story line. Pohjanen's account presents a diametrically different image of Laestadian ecstasy and worship compared to those presented by authors he labels as prejudiced and "ethnoracist" in *Den tornedalsfinska litteraturen* (Pohjanen 2007, 73). In this context, Stina Aronsson and Björn-Erik Höijer are highlighted as examples of authors writing about Tornedalian culture from the vantage point of outsiders. Both Aronsson and

<sup>269</sup> "Kristendomen är ingen handelsvara här i våra bygder. Söderut kan den vara det. Men här bärs trons djupaste hemligheter av keruber och serafer." (Pohjanen 1992, 216.)

<sup>270</sup> "Hon sjöng med klar röst och sången övergick efter en stund i änglasång på tungor. Hennes röst blev allt klarare och hennes ansikte lyste. Rynkorna försvann och hon såg mycket ung ut, lika vacker som hon varit en gång. Hon dansade och sjöng till herrens ära." (Pohjanen 1992, 232.)

Höijer have described women experiencing rapture at Laestadian prayer meetings as frightening and seemingly mad. One example is Aronsson's depiction in *Hitom himlen* of the woman Mira who falls into ecstasy and loses control of herself, roaring and howling (Aronsson 1989, 228). Another is Höijer's depiction of a woman howling in Finnish in a manner that scares her stepson (Höijer 1971, 159ff.).<sup>271</sup> Like Höijer, Aronsson emphasises that the language used at the prayer meetings is Finnish. In Aronsson's *Hitom Himlen*, there are numerous references to the animal-like looks of the local people. The woman Mira's face is described as being wolf-like, and a man is described as having small eyes like a bear and thick hair like an animal's fell, to mention two examples (Aronsson 1989, 256). There are also comments about round skulls and yellowish faces with Mongolian traits. The effect of these comments on the looks of the local people with a Finno-Ugric background is that they are foregrounded as being different from the Swedish majority population. This kind of differentiation has a history in anthropology and race biology that contributed to a racialisation of the Sámi and Finno Ugric minorities. As Werner and Björk point out, art, and visual culture in general, has contributed to the construction of a 'Swedish look' in which blond hair and blue eyes play a prominent role. (Werner & Björk 2014). Considering that the focus on round skull shape, yellowish skin colour and Mongolian traits distinguishes the Finno Ugric people in *Hitom himlen* as being racially different, which is in accordance with the race biology of the 1940s when the novel was first published, Pohjanen's use of the term 'ethnoraacist' seems appropriate. As a contrast to Aronsson's and Höijer's depictions of Laestadianism, Laestadianism's capacity to move people like Johan's great-grandmother in *Silvertorpeden* is likened to that of Russian holy men. As the use of the term *starets* as an epithet to Lars Levi Laestadius manifests, there is a syncretisation of Byzantine and Laestadian spirituality in Pohjanen's novel, as well as in the song of praise to Laestadius published in 2000.

The novel *Himlalots* ('Heavenly pilot') from 1995 is a follow-up to *Silvertorpeden*. The narrator and protagonist is Johan who experiences a crisis related to the murder of his brother in Malminge and to experiences of being out of place as a minister in the National Swedish Lutheran Church. He goes to a monastery in Russia where he gets spiritual guidance from Fa-

<sup>271</sup> Höijer's depiction of the stepmother's transformation at the Laestadian prayer meeting is predominantly negative and experienced as strange and scary by the stepson. However, it is also mentioned that the meeting provides the woman with an opportunity to live out emotions in a way not possible in her ordinary life. The stepson also experiences her as beautiful in the aftermath of the ecstasy (Höijer 1971, 162). Still, the depiction of the peak of rapture is clearly negative.

ther Feofan. The novel consists both of a depiction of Johan's stay in Russia at the time of narration and flashbacks to his childhood and youth in the Torne Valley. A theme that evolves and culminates at the end of the novel, when it is revealed that a minister friend of Johan has killed his family and himself with an axe that Johan has brought to him, is that Johan himself is not without guilt. As in the discussion of gnosticism in *Tornedalska öden och äventyr – Korpelarörelsen*, there are several comments about mystical experiences connected with experiences of a totality including both good and evil. The term 'participation mystique' recurs repeatedly in Johan's flashbacks to occasions when he experienced a mystical unity (Pohjanen 1995, 45–46, 116, 167). This is a term also used in the first volume of the Tornedalian Finnish literary history by Pohjanen and Johansson in connection with Pohjanen's characterisation of the author Timo K. Mukka (Pohjanen 2007c, 69–76).

Johan's crisis is also related to his feelings of being out of place as he has left, and to some extent denied, his Tornedalian Finnish background by going to Uppsala to study theology and becoming a minister in the National Lutheran Church. Johan's experiences are mirrored in the character Hans, the minister who kills his family and himself. Hans is described as a man who denies his Tornedalian background in poverty and his previous affiliations to Communism. This is a background that his middle-class wife encourages him to ignore. Hans has made efforts to pass as a majority Swede, creating a life as an academic in Uppsala. This involves having taken lessons from a speech therapist in order to remove all traces of a Tornedalian accent from his speech. Johan, who is younger than Hans, mirrors his development, but while Hans' crisis culminates in suicide and murder, Johan's leads to a journey to an Orthodox Christian monastery.

Laestadianism is mentioned as being part of Johan's upbringing. Laestadius' expression the 'Parent' for God is used in the text, indicating that Laestadianism has shaped the minds and modes of experiencing of local people. On one occasion when the boy Johan experiences a mystical unity in a typical Tornedalian landscape with "the river. . . stillness. . . and God", the term *Föräldern* ('the Parent') is used to denominate God (Pohjanen 1995, 117). Both Hans' and Johan's theological studies in Uppsala and denial of their Tornedalian cultural background metaphorically represents a journey away from the Torne Valley and its specific culture. While Hans' journey ends in disaster, Johan experiences a kind of homecoming in a syncretisation of Laestadianism and Orthodox Christian spirituality. In this respect, the depiction of Johan's crisis and journey represents a postcolonial counter-narrative to the colonisation of people's minds and cultural homogenisation brought about by colonialism and its ensuing assimilationist policies.

The novel also depicts a form of decolonisation, as Johan's development

involves his becoming aware of mechanisms such as denial of one's background and self-contempt. Again, Pohjanen explores the theme of quest and its related theme of *Bildung*. Hans, like Johan, does not experience contentment after having reached his goal to become a minister in the National Swedish Lutheran Church. Johan's crisis is explicitly connected with his dissatisfaction when performing the duties of a minister in a Church he finds has no sense of spirituality. The depictions of Johan's encounters with parents who wish to halt a christening ceremony so that they can go and get a camera from the car, and a bride and groom who crawl up to the altar having misunderstood how the ritual is supposed to proceed, are sheer parody. Johan's childhood memories of a Heavenly Parent and a mystical unity with the river, stillness and God represent a contrast to his experiences of the National Lutheran Church as a secular parody. So does the Orthodox Christian spirituality he encounters in connection with his quest.

The character Hans functions as a warning example for Johan in his search for a place in society. When thinking about Hans, Johan asks himself what really characterised his friend: "He had been so at one with his land [the Torne Valley/Meänmaa] and all of a sudden he goes away, starts studying and becomes – a minister. Away from his class, his language, his life-story." (Pohjanen 1995, 118.)<sup>272</sup> This depiction of Hans mirrors Johan, whose crisis is connected with an unsatisfactory attempt at assimilation and passing as a middle-class, mainstream Swede. Through his spiritual journey to Russia, Johan initiates a new life-story leading back to experiences of Laestadian spirituality during his upbringing, but with elements from Orthodox Christianity that have been accumulated during the process.

The novel *Trevliga djävlar* ('Nice devils') from 2003 recirculates subject matter from Pohjanen's autobiographical writing and previous fiction. As mentioned above in the discussion about Pohjanen's depiction of the Korpela movement, the narrator is a former customs officer who becomes a smuggler in the early 20th century at the time when Finland was a Russian Grand Duchy. The novel provides a picture of the first part of the 20th century as a period of great changes and unrest. The local history of smuggling is a prominent theme. The narrator tells a tall story mixing historical facts with unrealistic elements. One example is the story of how a group of Tornedalian men were among the survivors when the Titanic sank on her maiden voyage. Laestadianism is mentioned as being part of local culture affecting the lives and minds of people. One of the men on the Titanic is a prominent Laestadian preacher on his way to the USA for the purpose of

<sup>272</sup> "Han hade varit så ett med sitt land och plötsligt reser han, börjar studera och blir – präst. Bort från sin klass, sitt språk, sin berättelse." (Pohjanen 1995, 118.)

disseminating 'true Christianity'. The linguistic situation in the Torne Valley is highlighted. The narrator emphasises that he does not know Swedish and that the text has been translated into Swedish. He highlights that the events he retells all happened in Finnish, thus drawing attention to a Finno-Ugric life world in a manner resonating with ideas of language as a shaper of local experiences (see Vadén 2006).

There are also elements that fit into the ethnofuturist aesthetics with a focus on small Ugric cultures, formulated by Estonian writers in the 1980s (see Sallamaa 2006). One example is the narrator's references to local lore and superstitions, ancient 'folk beliefs', when referring to a magical stone, "den ugriska Torneåstenen i Käymäjärvi", 'the Ugric Torneå stone in Käymäjärvi' (Pohjanen 2003: 105–106). The border of 1809 is characterised as unjust, as the random red line of the tsar that divided families and communities (Pohjanen 2003, 30, 35). Ethnicity is also a theme, with a focus on differences between ethnic Swedes and Finns, and the local Finnish-speaking people. Ethnic Swedes are called *finsvenskar* ('fine Swedes'), while Finns are called *purfinnar* ('pure Finns'), indicating that the Tornedalians do not belong to either of these categories (Pohjanen 2003, 13–14). In this culturally 'impure' and mixed space, Laestadianism co-exists with the Korpela movement and Communism which emerge in connection with the spiritual and ideological unrest of the time. Remnants of Sámi shamanism are also part of the local cultural mix. The narrator does not characterise himself as a Laestadian but his wife belongs to the movement. However, the narrator acknowledges a belief in the powers of a contemporary "nåjd", Sámi shaman, Vasilij Jatuni from Jatuni village in the Finnish Grand Duchy (Pohjanen 2003, 35). Thus, the novel depicts a spiritual Tornedalian cartography in which Laestadianism stands strong and where ancient Sámi spirituality remains and co-exists with the millenarian Korpela movement.

The blending of elements from various traditions in local culture and from the development of Laestadianism, is conveyed by characterising terminology such as *laestadiankommunisterna* ('the Laestadian Communists'), *kommunistlaestadianerna* ('the Communist Laestadians'), who are said to have existed among the older generations, *kulturlaestadian* ('Cultural Laestadian'), and *neokorpelan* ('Neo-Korpelian'). The latter term is said to have been adopted by the narrator's grandson living in Stockholm (Pohjanen 2003, 95). In both cases, the narrator highlights Laestadianism as a politically radical movement, which is in contrast with other narratives of Laestadianism as an 'unworldly' or politically conservative movement. This focus highlights the theme of what use local villagers in the older generations and a man with Tornedalian roots living in Stockholm today have made of Laestadianism. In this respect, Pohjanen depicts a form of creative agen-

cy, as the local people subsumed under the terms *læstadiankommunisterna*, *kommunistlæstadianerna* and *kulturlæstadian* adapt and use Laestadianism in accordance with their own specific needs.

## The Laestadius opera

As the “Song of Praise to Lars Levi Laestadius” shows, Pohjanen has written about Laestadius and Laestadianism in a number of different genres and diverse contexts and for different readerships/audiences. As an author, he moves between the local, the regional, the national and the international. In the context of constructing a specific Tornedalian culture, Laestadianism plays a significant role as an ethnosymbol, manifest in Pohjanen’s prose writing, in the song of praise celebrating Laestadius and in the Laestadius opera from 2007.

The first performance of the opera took place on 23 June, 2007 in a barn at the Kengis iron works by the Torne River in the municipality of Pajala.<sup>273</sup> Although the performance is called an opera in marketing, interviews and articles, both the text, the music and the embedding of the performances in an old barn are not elements of traditional operas conceived of as elitist, high culture. The choice of Kengis as a venue for the performance is not accidental, as it represents a central location in the life story of Lars Levi Laestadius. This is where he served as a minister during his last ten years, and this is also where he was buried in 1861. However, his remains were taken to Pajala when the church and graves were moved from Kengis. The libretto is written by Pohjanen and the music is composed by Kaj Chydenius, a well-known Finnish composer. Chydenius’ music is a blending of ballads, folk music and psalms. Chydenius also composed the music to Pohjanen’s *Smugglaroperan/Joppariooppera* from 2004 (‘The smuggler’s opera’) and *Krigsoperan/Sotaooppera* (‘The war opera’), first performed in Haparanda on 23 May, 2008. The theme of this trilogy is local history, with a focus on smuggling, Laestadius and Laestadianism and the 1809 war which resulted in a division of the Tornedalian cultural landscape through the new border. Events and characters of major significance for shaping local culture, mentality and history are at the centre, highlighting a specific local history that has had an impact on the life of the Sámi and Tornedalians. In this respect, the operas thematise the history of minorities at the fringes of the Swedish nation-state.

Although there is no uniform view on Laestadius among the Sámi or Tornedalians, it is highlighted on the website [www.samer.se](http://www.samer.se) under the heading

<sup>273</sup> The Laestadius opera has not been published. This discussion is based on a copy of the manuscript I received from Bengt Pohjanen.



“Laestadianismen” that Laestadius took a stand against unscrupulous traders making money by selling alcohol to reindeer herders who neglected their families and animals as a consequence of excessive drinking ([www.samer.se](http://www.samer.se) accessed 8 May 2017).<sup>274</sup> As mentioned previously, there are positive assessments of Laestadius’ role for the Sámi both in research emphasizing his sermons as an inspiration in a just fight (Zorgdrager 1997) and in artistic representations such as Gaup’s movie about the Kautokeino rebellion in 1852. However, there are also negative interpretations of Laestadius’ role in a colonising context. The artist Anders Sunna, for example, depicts Laestadius as an accomplice of colonialism and racism in the painting “Racial Comment” which juxtaposes portraits of the race biologist Herman Lundborg and Lars Levi Laestadius. The Sámi artist Simon Marainen who played the role of Laestadius as a young man in the Laestadius opera, on the other hand, characterises Laestadius as a positive force who improved the life of the Sámi: “To me, he was a good man who saved us Sámi from ruin and helped people back on their feet” (my translation; Spets 2007).<sup>275</sup>

To a large extent, the content of the Laestadius opera corresponds with that of the novel *Ropandes röst* from 1981, spanning over the time before Lars Levi Laestadius’ birth until his death. A chronological depiction of the various phases of his life is presented, with the encounter with Milla Clementsdotter as a turning-point. Pohjanen’s text focuses on three dreams or ambitions entertained by Laestadius, viz. becoming a renowned scientist, becoming happily married and getting over his existential anguish. In the dramaturgy of the story, the well-known elements of social misery, poverty, illness and crisis followed by spiritual renewal and the spread of the revivalist movement lead to a ‘happy ending’. The ethnic dimension of Laestadianism is emphasised through its embedding in a Sámi and Finno Ugric Tornedalian linguistic and cultural sphere. Like other texts by Pohjanen, it incorporates sections from previous publications. In a scene depicting Lars Levi’s birth, his father claims that the birth was announced by angels. His joy is expressed with a chairetismos echoing the song of praise from the year 2000: “Rejoice, Lars Levi,/ Your name is announced by angels,/and you cry so loudly/ that the wolves flee,/ Rejoice Lars-Levi!”<sup>276</sup> Like in *Ropandes röst*, the notion of the ‘heavenly parent’ highlights a gender perspective by not

<sup>274</sup> [www.samer.se](http://www.samer.se) is a website administered by the Sámi Council for the purpose of disseminating information about the Sámi. The website was set up at the request of the Government.

<sup>275</sup> “För mig var han en god man som räddade oss samer undan fördärvet och fick folk på fötter”. Simon Marainen interviewed by Britt-Louise Spets, *Norrbottnenskuriren* 19 May 2007.

<sup>276</sup> There are examples of literal correspondences both of expressions of joy in the song of praise and the opera, respectively, and of slight modifications.

using notions of masculinity to characterise divinity. In the scene depicting Laestadius' death, Laestadius envisions the Saviour as a beautiful woman with bare breasts: "A beautiful woman was just here.[. . .] The Saviour came with bare breasts to collect me."

The Laestadius opera emphasises Laestadius' conflict with the Swedish National Lutheran Church. In scene 25, Laestadius' wife Brita Kajsa asks why he became a minister when he is so angry with the Church. Laestadius' answer proposes that he sees ministers and bishops as lacking in humility and as being too self-centred to accept anyone being above them. Laestadius' engagement in science is depicted both through references to botany and to the French *La Recherche expedition*. Scene 18, entitled "Gravplundrar-en/Hautarosvo" ('The grave robber'), depicts Laestadius at a burial site, digging in the earth. A Sámi man arrives and asks what the minister is doing, poking in the earth. Laestadius replies that "Now is the time of science. In the name of science. [. . .]", thus justifying the grave robbery. However, this is in contrast to the values conveyed by Pohjanen's text. The use of the term 'the grave robber' in the title of the scene clearly indicates that digging out graves at burial sites is no positive or neutral scientific pursuit. The placing of this motif in the narrative of Laestadius' life story also indicates that it represents misguided actions and beliefs on the road to true enlightenment, which comes after his encounter with Milla Clementsdotter.

Modern science in the shape of the *La Recherche expedition* and the collection of skulls and bones from burial sites represent negative pursuits that do not lead to the fulfillment of Laestadius' role as a champion of marginalised minorities on the North Calotte, or as a spiritual leader for the Sámi and Finnish-speaking minorities. In accordance with the plot of the quest narrative and the *Bildung's story*, the protagonist's experiences function as stations on the road to an overarching goal. In the Laestadius legend, the goal is to become a spiritual leader of significance. One characteristic of the *Bildung's story* is that the protagonist develops and learns from experiences and mistakes. When this plot is activated in the context of the cultural mobilization of the minorities of the North Calotte, story elements that highlight Laestadius development with regard to issues related to ethnicity and minority status become relevant. In an emplotment coloured by perspectives from postcolonial and indigenous studies, Laestadius' co-operation with collectors of human remains represents a deviation from the road to fulfillment as a spiritual leader and cultural mobiliser.

The local linguistic diversity is depicted through the dialogue and the songs, which are in Swedish, Sámi, Meänkieli and Finnish. In the second scene, Laestadius' mother Anna sings in Sámi to the baby. In the fifth scene, his father yoiks and speaks both Sámi and Swedish with Milla Clementsdot-

ter. Sámi, Finnish, Meänkieli and Swedish are all part of the linguistic and cultural landscape of the opera and of its depiction of Laestadius' life world.

### Mikael Niemi's *Koka björn*: Laestadius as a Character in Crime Fiction

Mikael Niemi's novel *Koka björn*, published by Piratförlaget in Stockholm in 2017, introduces a new element in the use of Laestadius and Laestadianism in contemporary fiction. Several novels had been written about Laestadius before, but Niemi was the first author to place Lars Levi Laestadius in a murder story in the capacity of a private crime investigator. This purely fictive story line is interwoven with Laestadius' life story known from Laestadius' own writings and biographical writing. The theme of fictionalization is highlighted already on the dust cover's painting of two men in a wood. In an interview, Niemi points out that the white flowers in the foreground which resemble the mountain avens (*fjällsippa*) were consciously painted as a plant that does not exist in real life. He emphasises that mountain avens do not grow in woods and that he asked the artist to change the shape of the leaves of the plant to underscore that they are fictive and not real specimens (Sandberg 2017).<sup>277</sup> Through these comments, Niemi draws attention to the blending of facts and fiction which also characterises the novel.

Fictionalisation aside, Niemi highlights that Lars Levi Laestadius has always been a part of his life. He grew up in Pajala in the vicinity of Laestadius' home. His mother had a great interest in Laestadius and collected books about him. He emphasises that, like Laestadius, he himself has Sámi family ties, underlining that this makes his position that of an insider: "Well, Laestadius was Sámi himself, there are Sámi ancestors both on his mother's and his father's side. He was well versed in the Sámi way of thinking, identified with the Sámi and felt love for them. We share that. I also have Sámi family ties." (Sandberg 2017).<sup>278</sup>

*Koka björn* starts in the summer of 1852 in the village of Kengis, known from Laestadius' biography. A shepherdess disappears. The county sheriff, after having drawn too hasty and inaccurate conclusions from the crime scene examination, is certain that she has been killed by a bear. The dean Lars Levi Laestadius, together with the Sámi boy Jussi, later finds the girl's body hidden in a bog. Throughout the novel, Laestadius acts like a detective, making observations at crime scenes, collecting evidence and drawing con-

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<sup>277</sup> The painting on the cover has been made by Carl-André Beckston.

<sup>278</sup> "Laestadius var ju samisk själv, både på mammans och pappans linjer finns det samesläkt. Han var väl insatt i det samiska tänkandet, identifierade sig med samer och kände kärlek till dem. Det delar vi. Jag har också samesläkt." (Sandberg 2017.)

clusions based on observations and facts. The boy Jussi, whom Laestadius has taken under his wings after the boy's escape from a dysfunctional home with abusive, alcoholic parents, functions as his assistant and pupil.

In the world of the novel, Laestadius represents a rational person interested in science and progress that may improve the living conditions of the poor Sámi and Tornedalian settlers. His opponents are representatives of the social establishment, like the county sheriff, tradesmen and innkeepers selling alcohol, the foundry proprietor and the local bourgeoisie, who view Laestadius' preachings and the revival he initiated with suspicion and distaste. The county sheriff, who officially is in charge of the investigations of the murders that occur – the first one is followed by two more killings – is an alcoholic bully. The novel depicts a socially stratified society with a strict hierarchy with the Sámi at the bottom.

The revival and its impact on people is mentioned, but the main focus is on Laestadius as a botanist and scientist, and as a crime investigator. The narrator and focaliser of the main part of the novel is the young man Jussi. Jussi thinks of Laestadius as his master and the person who made him human when he baptised him, registered him in the church records and taught him to read and write. Throughout the novel, Laestadius and his wife Brita Kajsa are depicted as caring for the poor and despised. They are a positive contrast to Jussi's biological mother, called 'the witch', as well as the local social elite and country folk who treat Jussi with contempt. Laestadius' fight against alcoholism is a central theme, depicted with references to his own family background with a father who drank and was abusive. Thus, Niemi's novel draws attention to the negative consequences of colonialism and the dissemination of elements of 'civilization' that disrupted traditional Sámi social structures. The focus on the negative impact of alcohol consumption in the portraits of the drinking county sheriff Brahe, Jussi's alcoholic, abusive parents and Laestadius' own father contributes to a negative depiction of the colonization of the north. As a contrast to these negative influences, Laestadius struggles to improve agriculture and provide spiritual guidance.

While Jussi is the narrator and focaliser of the main part of the novel, there are also sections where Laestadius is the narrator and focaliser. At the beginning of chapter 59, the narrator states: "This is my people, the people in the north. It is for them I preach. They are so few, so dispersed." (Niemi 2017, 353.)<sup>279</sup> Of course, the depiction of a person's inner life in the shape of thoughts in a novel is a fictionalising device aimed at adding richness to the characterisation of a person. Through the depiction of social hierarchies

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<sup>279</sup> "Detta är mitt folk, människorna i norr. Det är för dem jag predikar. De är så få, så utspridda." (Niemi 2017, 353.)

connected with colonialism, as well as the way people are characterised as being affected by colonialism through the negative effects of alcohol on living conditions, and in the representations of Jussi's and Laestadius' thoughts, Laestadius is presented as a character intent upon improving the life of the people he refers to as his own in the quote above.

However, Niemi also integrates the theme of the collection of Sámi human remains. This is subject matter known from previous studies of Laestadius' interest in the natural sciences (see Franzén 1973). A difference between Franzén's study of Laestadius' engagement in the natural sciences and Niemi's novel is that the novel contains fictive representations of Laestadius' thoughts and conversation that ridicule the pursuits of scientists coming to the north to procure Sámi skulls (Niemi 2017, 354–359, 431). The encounters and contacts with skull collectors are filtered through the fictive character Laestadius' mind. Through his detached view, a distance is established between himself and the 'greedy', unscrupulous collectors who, when seen from today's vantage point, are clearly racist. In an episode depicting a visit to Karesuando by two scientists, one of the visitors suggests that the "Lapps" might be related to the "Negro race" (Niemi 2017, 354). In this context, the Sámi and Black Africans are seen as specimens in a racial hierarchy. Niemi's depiction of the science of the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, which the visiting skull collectors represent, is satirical. Laestadius is described as being detached and critical when he presents alternative reasons for dark skin complexion that are not related to race (Niemi 2017, 355). Still, Laestadius is depicted as an accomplice in the sense that he does in fact guide the collectors to a Sámi church yard where they rob graves of human remains and objects (Niemi 2017, 356–358).

It is highlighted that Laestadius has been promised a generous reward for guiding the visiting scientists. In the interior monologue that presents his feelings and thoughts, he thinks of the reward as Judas money, as thirty silver coins, which he donates to parish work (Niemi 2017, 358). As in Pohjanen's novel *Ropandes röst*, which also depicts Laestadius' encounters with skull-collecting grave robbers, the depiction of Laestadius' unease in *Koka björn* contributes to characterising Laestadius as a person who acts in a way that he realises is morally questionable. As the expression 'thirty silver coins' indicates, the fictive character Laestadius is aware that he has betrayed the Sámi by contributing to grave robberies. This awareness of betrayal reflected by Laestadius' feelings and thoughts resonates with recent decades' Sámi protests and claims that human remains taken from

graves be brought back and reburied.<sup>280</sup> Whether it reflects Laestadius' own feelings and thoughts is another matter. A theme that both Pohjanen and Niemi highlight is that of Laestadius' pride in his success in the field of science, and his struggle against the 'devil of pride'. They both highlight that Laestadius had scientific ambitions which at times were in conflict with his theological vocation. Seen within the framework of the *Bildung's story*, whose main theme is Laestadius finding his role as a spiritual renewer and redeemer, the visiting scientists and requests from race biologists for Sámi skulls may be seen as temptations and deviations leading him away from his true vocation (see Moretti 2000).

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<sup>280</sup> In an article on *Koka björn*, Niemi is criticised for giving too positive a depiction of Laestadius, specifically against the backdrop of Laestadius' co-operation with skull collectors (Johansson 2017). In 2012, Bosse Johansson, who has written about the cultural landscape of Norrbotten, its history and people, published a book in which he criticises Laestadius for contributing to the grave robberies (Johansson 2012). The book was published by Johansson's own publishing company, Stigfinnaren, which he established after having retired and started writing. To a large extent, Johansson's criticism is based on Franzén's study from 1973.

## Summing up: Conclusions

The representations of Lars Levi Laestadius and Laestadianism discussed in this volume are connected with various contexts that colour them ideologically, rhetorically and aesthetically. This implies that Laestadianism is used in various ways in different contexts, and that the meaning of Laestadianism differs depending on the kind of narratives it is embedded in. This theme is connected with issues in present-day research focused on the uses of history and cultural heritage (Smith ed. 2006). This study has explored how the historical character Lars Levi Laestadius and the revival he initiated have been activated in a number of texts which partake in the process of making cultural heritage and attributing value and meaning that reflect contemporary cultural and social values, debates and aspirations (see Smith 2006, 3). In this context, Laestadius and Laestadianism function as a resource used by the Sámi and Tornedalians, who both exemplify 'subaltern groups' when viewed from within a postcolonial frame of interpretation. This implies that cultural heritage is negotiated and transformed in new narratives expressing awareness of oppression.

Already in the 1970s, Bengt Pohjanen depicts language and identity loss in the poem "I was born without a language", as well as in the story about the protagonist Polemalm's shame of his Tornedalian background, highlighting the suppression of Tornedalian cultural heritage in a Swedish national context. Pohjanen recurrently depicts Laestadianism as being part of this heritage experienced as shameful by Tornedalians who have been socialised into a culture of poverty. However, the meaning attributed to Laestadius and Laestadianism is not uniform when it comes to the issue of colonisation versus decolonisation. This testifies to Smith's point that heritage is inherently dissonant and contested (Smith 2006, 4).

Pohjanen's writings also point to the issue of transformations over time. While the theme of "Jag är född utan språk" is internal colonialism and its effects on an individual who has been colonised, other mental dispositions connected with a wish to preserve Tornedalian culture and local language are by and by explored in fiction, grammar books, newspaper articles, autobiography and accounts of local history. One effect of this is that depictions of experiences of having been colonised are complemented with the rewriting of history and the embedding of Tornedalian cultural heritage in new, empowering and emancipating counter-histories. This development corresponds with both postcolonial writing back and ethnofuturism. In this con-



text the concept *l'Ugritude*, launched by Pohjanen, functions as a reference both to the postcolonial struggle of black people to engender pride in their cultural background, and to ethnofuturism's focus on the role of ancient symbols and traditional cultural elements in present-day struggles to preserve threatened cultures (see Sallamaa 2006).

Smith highlights that heritage implies an affirmation of identity and a sense of belonging (Smith 2006, 7). This notion underlies this study's analysis of intersections between representations of Laestadius and Laestadianism on the one hand, and Sámi and Tornedalian anticolonial, cultural mobilisation on the other. According to Stuart Hall, postcolonial identity formation is a process that relies on the uses of history, language and culture in the process of "becoming rather than being: not 'who we are' or 'where we came from', so much as what we might become, how we have been represented and how that bears on how we might represent ourselves." (Hall 2005, 4.) This focus on becoming, and the issue of present-day representations as a reaction and response to previous representations is a key element of decolonisation (see Smith 2008). In the fields of literary and cultural studies, this includes studies of literary and artistic representations. A central theme is analysis of the narrativisation of historical phenomena and depictions of indigenous peoples and minorities.

While the main focus of this study is on how Laestadius and Laestadianism are narrativised in fiction, other forms of representations are also discussed. The genres represented by the primary texts are Sámi reminiscence literature, drama, fiction – primarily novels, autobiography, biography, pictorial art, photographs used as illustrations, film, academic studies, literary history and local history. The variety of forms of representation of the primary material is in accordance with the 'extended notion of textuality' (*det vidgade textbegreppet*) promoted in steering documents regulating studies of textuality in Swedish schools.

### *Representations of Backwardness*

As this study shows, the image of Laestadianism in the Swedish Sámi author Sara Ranta-Rönnlund's reminiscence books from the 1970s is coloured by an enthusiasm for the modernization of the Swedish society. While her predecessor Johan Turi takes a stand against the colonization of Sápmi in *Muitalus sámiid birra*, *Turi's Book of Lapland* from 1910 (see Gaski 2011, 22), this is not the case with Sara Ranta-Rönnlund.

The period described by Ranta-Rönnlund spans from the time of previous generations, the time of her birth in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, until the time when she left her life as a nomad in the late 1920s. As the genre is that of reminiscence literature, there is a gap in time between the time

of narration and the story time. There is also a geographical distance between the narrator's setting, Uppsala, and the places in northern Sweden she writes about. Sara Ranta-Rönnlund is both the narrator and the focaliser, who at a mature age looks back upon her family history, childhood and youth among reindeer-herding Sámi and her departure when she married for the first time and settled in a Tornedalian village. As a narrator and focaliser she is subjective, expressing strong antipathies to phenomena she sees as being negative. Through the recurring focus on the crudeness of Laestadius' preaching style, which is explained as being connected with a wish to reach out to the uneducated alphabets of the sparsely populated areas of northern Sweden, and the hypocrisy and uncharitable nature of preachers with a developed lust for power, Ranta-Rönnlund predominantly depicts the movement as backward, and as an alien phenomenon in modern Swedish society. However, there are also examples of positive depictions of Laestadian preachers of the more liberal eastern branch.

Ranta-Rönnlund's depictions are shaped by her positive view of modern life. She embraces the higher standard of living brought about by the building of the modern Swedish welfare state, depicting a dichotomy between a modern life style with health care based on medical science, comfortable housing and education on the one hand, and the nomadic lifestyle of reindeer-herding Sámi on the other. The ideological backdrop includes her expressing some sympathies for socialism as a movement intent upon improving the lives of the poor. Furthermore, she gives voice to a criticism of gender patterns in the traditional Sámi lifestyle she was brought up with. Thus, there is both a political awareness, as well as a sensitivity to patriarchal gender patterns, which form a backdrop to her mainly negative view of Laestadianism and the reindeer herding lifestyle of her early life. This ideological colouring of Ranta-Rönnlund's narrative is in accordance with dominant trends in the 1970s in the university town of Uppsala where Sara Ranta-Rönnlund wrote her books. Her last book was published in 1978, two years after the Swedish feminist classic *Textanalys från könsrollssynpunkt* edited by Karin Westman Berg (Westman Berg 1976). The chapter "Bröderna lilla piga" ("The brothers' little maid") in *Sist i rajden. Berättelsen om ett upp-brott*, displays the same kind of sensitivity to oppressive patriarchal structures as the contemporary feminist critique. This sensitivity also colours Ranta-Rönnlund's depiction of Laestadianism through her focus on bullying preachers condemning and criticising young women for being sinful.

Ester Cullblom's depictions of life in the Torne Valley are also coloured by her feminist sympathies and her focus on patriarchal gender structures. In the short story "Den första tvättmaskinen i Ohtanajärvi" and the novel *Berta och byn* set in the 1960s, men are depicted as being insensitive to wom-

en's needs, in *Berta och byn* even as misogynist. This view on traditional Tornedalian culture also colours Ester Cullblom's reports on gender patterns in the context of regional politics. In Ester Cullblom's narrative, women cannot have a satisfactory life in a traditional village without gender equality. However, there are other narratives highlighting life in the Torne Valley as a positive contrast to life in contemporary Stockholm. Annika Korpi presents a postmodern narrative of the Torne Valley in her novel *Hevonen häst*, problematising modern life in urban Stockholm and representing the Torne Valley as a place with strong women, caring men and interesting Laestadians. In the field of academic writing, Juntti-Henriksson's study of Tornedalian women's views on gender and culture in the Torne Valley also presents a less somber view on gender patterns than Ester Cullblom's reports and imaginative writing (Juntti-Henriksson 2008).

#### *Enthusiasm for Modernity versus Anti and Post-colonial Criticism*

Unlike Nils-Aslak Valkeapää in *Beaivi áhčážan* or the Sámi researcher Harald Gaski in *Med ord ska tyvene fordrives. Om samenes episk poetiske diktning* ('The thieves shall be expelled with words. On the epic poetry of the Sámi'), both from the 1980s, Sara Ranta-Rönnlund's 1970s books do not depict the encounter between the Swedish majority culture and the North Sámi culture she was raised in as colonising. She mentions the segregatory system with nomad schools for the Sámi children and visits by race biologists and ethnographers doing research on the Sámi, but this is not embedded in an anti or post-colonial framework for interpretation. While Valkeapää describes the past, the time before the arrival of strangers to Sápmi, as a time of peace, beauty and harmony, Ranta-Rönnlund highlights negative aspects of the traditional lifestyle of reindeer-herding Sámi. In her narrative, the influences from the Swedish majority society are seen as improvements of living conditions connected with enlightenment and modernity. In this narrative, Laestadius' and Laestadianism's role is primarily that of representing the backwardness of the lifestyle of the Sámi and Tornedalians in northern Sweden.

While Turi and Valkeapää, as well as the researcher Harald Gaski, depict the cultural encounter between the majority population and the Sámi as colonialism that has disadvantaged the Sámi, Ranta-Rönnlund depicts the encounter as a chance to improve the Sámi's way of life. Thus, they make diametrically different uses of history and interpretations of what the process of becoming should lead to. Ranta-Rönnlund sees assimilation as a positive alternative in the process of Sámi identity formation, while the aim of Valkeapää and others is the shaping of a positive Sámi cultural identity based on decolonisation and uses of history that highlight positive aspects of the Sámi culture.

Although Ranta-Rönnlund does not express any sympathies for the Sámi anticolonialism that emerged in the 1970s with prominent characters such as Nils-Aslak Valkeapää, she does criticise a prominent element of Swedish colonialism that constitutes the rationale behind the segregatory educational system implemented in connection with the 'Lapp shall remain Lapp policies' first formulated in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The 'Lapp shall remain Lapp' policies were based on the idea that the reindeer-herding Sámi were the 'real' Sámi. A main point was that they should not be integrated into modern Swedish society. For this purpose, nomad schools were established for the purpose of giving the children of the nomadic Sámi an elementary education that was less ambitious than that provided by the regular Swedish schools. As a consequence, the Sámi were divided, as some groups were defined as not being Sámi, and the nomadic reindeer herders were kept as a relic from ancient times. As the adult Sara Ranta-Rönnlund who wrote the reminiscence books is a great believer in education, rationality and modernity, she views the nomad schools with a critical gaze. She sees herself as a modern individual who has come to benefit from the advantages of a modern lifestyle and she sees this as an ideal. The lifestyle of reindeer herders, on the other hand, is connected with hardships, lack of adequate health care and a hierarchical Sámi society that disadvantaged women as well as poor Sámi men working for the wealthier reindeer herders. In her narrative of the 'bad old days', Laestadianism is represented as a movement that could thrive because of the lack of education and enlightenment among the people in northern Sweden.

Negative depictions of Laestadianism are also found in the writings of Björn-Erik Höijer, both in the play *Isak Juntti hade många söner* and in subsequent novels. Like Ranta-Rönnlund, Höijer distances himself from Laestadianism. In the program of the 1954 performance of the play at *Dramaten* in Stockholm, he mentions that Laestadianism was a part of the religious setting of Malmberget where he grew up, but emphasises that he himself did not go to prayer meetings. The play about Isak Juntti embeds the Laestadian preacher in a narrative of hypocrisy, immorality, exotification and othering. Through 'Finnification', Höijer emphasises the ethnic dimension of Laestadianism, representing it as a movement alien to the modern Swedish society. Laestadianism is connected with the periphery of the Swedish nation state, geographically, culturally and with regard to ethnicity. This construction, which corresponds with the spatial vocabulary of colonialism discussed by Linda Tuhivai Smith, makes use of the colonising strategies of othering, exclusion, and exotification. The negative view on Laestadianism is also found in novels by Höijer depicting Laestadianism as a movement for people in small, backward villages in sparsely populated areas in northern Sweden.

The theme of colonialism is found also in Bengt Pohjanen's texts. In *Ropandes röst*, the time when the colonisers arrived is called "the time of the great exploitations" (Pohjanen 1981, 85, my translation). The novel depicts encounters between the Sámi and tradesmen who contributed to a destabilisation of the traditional Sámi lifestyle by selling alcohol. The novel highlights that the consequences for the Sámi were disastrous, but also that Lars Levi Laestadius actively fought against the colonising system with traders benefitting from the sale of spirits. Thus, Laestadius is depicted as a character who takes a stand against the unscrupulous tradesmen in order to improve conditions for the Sámi. The value and meaning attributed to Laestadius' fight against alcohol is that it represents a righteous resistance to a destructive colonising system that disrupted the Sámi society.

Another element of "the time of the great exploitations" depicted in *Ropandes röst* is that of the *La Recherche expedition* which represents modern science during Laestadius' lifetime. The members of this expedition also contribute to destabilising and destroying Sámi cultural heritage by demonstrating disrespect for local traditions. In particular, Pohjanen highlights the plundering of Sámi graves and burial sites for the purpose of collecting human remains. Laestadius is described as an accomplice. However, Pohjanen depicts Laestadius as being rather critical towards the French expedition members. In *Ropandes röst* it is mentioned that he felt disgust at it all. In the Laestadius opera from 2007, one scene is entitled "Gravplundrar-en", ('The grave robber'). Thus, the plundering of graves is not mitigated or excluded in Pohjanen's depiction of Laestadius.

Niemi's novel *Koka björn* also depicts Norrland as being colonised and exploited. As in Pohjanen's *Ropandes röst*, Laestadius' role as an accomplice in grave robberies is thematised. Both describe Laestadius as struggling against academic pride and hunger for success as a scientist. They also highlight the gap between unworldliness and a simple lifestyle on the one hand, and worldly success on the other, as well as Laestadius' struggle to rid himself of worldly ambitions. Pohjanen treats this conflict more extensively than Niemi – one story line of *Ropandes röst* is the spiritual journey of Laestadius. There is a generic difference between Pohjanen's novel and Niemi's *Koka björn*. The latter combines elements from Laestadius' biography and one of today's most popular entertainment genres, namely that of crime fiction. While Pohjanen's novel poses questions about truth in the mode of historiographic metafiction, Niemi's novel combines biographical writing on Laestadius and elements characteristic of crime fiction. Pohjanen's novel poses philosophical questions about the possibility to reach truth, while Niemi's novel poses the questions of who 'has done it', that is committed the murders.

### *Contradictory Anticolonial Narratives about Laestadius*

Like the discussion in Zоргdrager's study about the Kautokeino rebellion, Norwegian Sámi director Gaup's movie about the same event presents Laestadius as a source of inspiration for Sámi anticolonial struggle (Zоргdrager 1997, Gaup 2007). However, a diametrically different role is attributed to Laestadius in Swedish Sámi artist Anders Sunna's painting "Racial Comment", and in Swedish Sámi poet Rose-Marie Huuva's contribution to the volume *Viidát – divttat Sámis/ Vidd – dikter från Sápmi* (Huuva 2006). Both Sunna and Huuva highlight Laestadius' connections with race scientists and his contribution to the science of race biology through his guiding of people to Sámi burial sites for the purpose of collecting human remains, as well as Laestadius' own activities as a collector. In the decolonising, anticolonial narrative of Sunna and Huuva that Laestadius is embedded in, Laestadius is represented as having contributed to a Sámi history that is seen as traumatic and painful. The theme of Laestadius' role as a collector of human remains and guide to burial sites is not included in the celebratory Laestadius' narrative produced in connection with the jubilee in the year 2000 highlighting Laestadius' positive role for the North Calotte and its minorities. However, there is an exception, namely Bengt Pohjanen's "Song of Praise to Lars Levi Laestadius" which highlights Laestadius' role as a champion of the poor, a social reformer and a counterforce to assimilationist policies that marginalised the Sámi and Tornedalians, but also as a person engaged in the sale of Sámi skulls. In the Laestadius opera from 2007, the term 'grave robber' is used. Thus, the role of Laestadius in contemporary Sámi and Tornedalian texts dealing with the themes of anticolonialism and decolonisation is diverse and complex.

Mikael Niemi's novel *Koka björn* also depicts Laestadius as a champion of the poor, intent on improving living conditions. Laestadius is depicted as a courageous and clear-sighted person who did not hesitate to confront the social establishment when he thought this was necessary for dealing with the widespread use of alcohol that threatened the social fabric of society. The local establishment and visiting explorers and scientists are described as exploiters with no respect for the local people. Laestadius is described as being different, viewing the colonisers from a critical perspective: "Norrland is for them an India. [. . .] Norrland is for them an unnamed country. It did not really exist before they came here. The people here are not human, not as human as they themselves are." (Niemi 2017, 358.)<sup>281</sup> This perspective is a fictionalising device that contributes to presenting Lars Levi Laestadius as

<sup>281</sup> "Norrland är för dem ett Indien. [. . .] Norrland är för dem ett odöpt land. Det fanns inte riktigt till innan de kom hit. Människorna här är inte människor, inte lika mycket människor som de själva." (Niemi 2017, 358.)

a person who views Swedish colonialism with a critical gaze. This portrait is a contrast to other representations focussing on Laestadius as part of a colonising system (Huuva 2006, Johansson 2017, Johansson 2012).

### *Critical Whiteness*

In his writings, Bengt Pohjanen has highlighted the theme of racism and racialisation of Sámi and Swedish Tornedalians when depicting Sweden as a nation state with a racial hierarchy with ethnic Swedes at the top and racialising practices implying that some groups are categorised as being inferior. One example is the story commented on in the novel *Ropandes röst* of the Sámi not being quite human, as they are the descendants of a woman and a dog. This story is contrasted to the Sámi ancestral myth of the Sámi being the children of the sun. By juxtaposing these stories, Pohjanen highlights the theme of colonising outsider stories versus empowering insider stories. It is significant that the Sámi ancestral myth is activated in the 1980s by Sámi activists, for example by Valkeapää in *The sun, my father*, which reactivates the myth in the context of Sámi protest and cultural revitalisation.

Pohjanen has also repeatedly thematised constructions of Swedish Tornedalians as being inferior in a Swedish national context. The poem “I was born without a language” from the 1970s depicts a Tornedalian’s emotional response to internal colonialism and socialisation into a culture of poverty. The same theme is highlighted in Mikael Niemi’s novel *Popular Music*. In the 2007 Tornedalian Finnish literary history co-authored by Pohjanen and Johansson, there is an explicit criticism of racist depictions of Tornedalians by authors from a majority background. In this context, Pohjanen refers to Stina Aronsson and Björn-Erik Höijer as being prejudiced and ‘ethnoracist’ (Pohjanen 2007f. 73). Pohjanen’s characterisation represents a new way of seeing these authors’ depictions of the Finnish-speaking population of northern Sweden.

Both Aronsson and Höijer have established connections between Finnish ethnicity, living in the wilderness and being a Laestadian. Höijer’s play about the preacher Isak Juntti is one example, Aronsson’s novel *Hitom himlen* (‘On this side of heaven’) from 1946 is another (Aronsson 1989). One of the main characters of *Hitom himlen*, Emma Niskanpää, is described as a short, pious, Laestadian Finnish-speaking woman with a round skull like a cat and a flat, yellowish Mongolian face (Aronsson 1989, 78, 105, 119). She lives on a secluded, small homestead in the wasteland. As the emphasis on the yellowish skin colour, the flat, Mongolian face and her height suggests, Emma Niskanpää is represented as ‘not quite as white’ as the privileged category of ethnic Swedes (also see Werner & Björk 2014). Pohjanen does not provide examples from Aronsson’s or Höijer’s writings supporting the view



that their depictions of the Torne Valley are 'ethnoracist', but as the example from *Hitom himlen* indicates, there are elements that contribute to constructing the Tornedalian minority in Sweden as 'not quite white'. In the 1940s, when the novel was first published, it was definitely not considered an asset to have a round skull and a flat, yellowish, Mongolian face. These are traits found in racial stereotyping employed in order to establish racial hierarchies based on physical appearances. The focus on physical appearance is line with Swedish race biology in the 1930s and 40s (Zippel 2009). One of the pursuits of the Swedish State Institute of Race Biology in Uppsala was to map the racial character of the Swedish nation. In this context, physical appearances had a major role for the division of people into various racial characters (Lundborg & Linders 1926).

### *Ethnofuturism and l'Ugritude*

Both ethnofuturism and l'Ugritude refer to cultural negotiations performed by Finno Ugri minorities aimed at engendering a positive identity and pride in Finno Ugri culture. It is significant that Bengt Pohjanen launches the concept 'l'Ugritude' at a time when Postcolonial Studies had a breakthrough in Sweden. In this context, the view that there is an internal colonialism in the Nordic countries has gained terrain, as has the notion that the Nordic nation states share a history of colonial complicity that has racialised various ethnic groups. There are references to ethnofuturism and l'Ugritude in Pohjanen's autobiography from 2007 (Pohjanen 2007c). 'l'Ugritude' is also an important concept in Pohjanen and Johansson's Tornedalian Finnish literary history from 2007 (Pohjanen & Johansson 2007b). This literary history is a counter-history in that it is explicitly critical of the construction of mainstream Swedish culture. Selma Lagerlöf's book about Nils Holgersson's adventures and fiction by Björn-Erik Höijer and Stina Aronsson are mentioned as being prejudiced towards the Tornedalian minority in Sweden. This implies that Pohjanen and Johansson challenge the value and meaning attributed to these texts, proposing alternative meanings from the vantage point of Tornedalian decolonisation. While shame and denial of one's Tornedalian background are themes explored by Pohjanen early on in his authorship, other attitudes are introduced by and by. This is manifested in celebrations of local Tornedalian culture based on a criticism and dismissal of narratives seen as oppressive and prejudiced. This shift colours the view on Tornedalian culture presented in the literary history from 2007.

The project of l'Ugritude, aimed at generating pride in Finno Ugri culture against the backdrop of colonialism, is combined with ethnofuturism's focus on the use of ancient myths and symbols in present-day cultural production. In the 2007 Tornedalian Finnish literary history, as well as in pre-

vious texts, Keksi's 17<sup>th</sup>-century poem about the breaking of ice in the Torne Valley is activated as a Tornedalian ethnosymbol. While Keksi is generally categorised as a Finnish folk poet, he is of particular interest in a Tornedalian context as his most famous poem is about a specific Tornedalian geography – the Torne Valley – and events related to it, such as the annual flooding. Both Bengt Pohjanen and Tornedalian David Vikgren use Keksi's poem in the making of a specific Tornedalian cultural heritage (Pohjanen 2007b, Vikgren 2010). Throughout his authorship, Pohjanen has highlighted the Finno Ugric nature of Tornedalian culture through references to the Finnish *Kalevala* epic. There is a difference in that Keksi's poem is foregrounded in the Tornedalian Finnish literary history, as it is connected with the border area of the Torne Valley and not with Finno Ugric culture in general.

Throughout his career as a writer, Pohjanen has written about Lars Levi Laestadius and Laestadianism, emphasising that they constitute a local cultural heritage. Although Laestadius and Laestadianism are not 'ancient symbols', they still play a role in negotiations of meanings and values. In Pohjanen's authorship, Laestadius and Laestadianism are part of the cultural and spiritual heritage of the Torne Valley, which is his literary province. Pohjanen has repeatedly highlighted that being a Tornedalian implies having been imbued with Laestadianism. Thus, Laestadianism is part of the local cultural heritage, which may be seen in a new light when connected with l'Ugritude and ethnofuturism. This is one aspect of the negotiation of cultural heritage performed in Pohjanen's writings. Clearly, Pohjanen's depiction of prayer meetings as interactive performances with a subversive potential, as well as the focus on the beauty of Laestadian devotion and on Laestadianism as representing 'true faith', stand in stark contrast to Björn-Erik Höijer's and Stina Aronsson's depictions of howling women who seem to have gone mad.

### *Concluding Remarks*

In this volume, the character Laestadius and the Laestadian revival are viewed as being part of cultural and social processes engaged with acts of remembering and the creation of ways to understand and engage with the present (see Smith 2006, 2). The texts analysed function as elements in the process of providing value and meaning in the negotiation of Sámi and Tornedalian identities, and social and cultural values and meanings in the present (cf. Smith 2006, 3). The material analysed is seen as performances of heritage from the vantage point of Anti and Postcolonial Studies, Critical Race and Whiteness theory and Ethnofuturism. This does not imply that the Laestadian heritage in contemporary Sámi and Tornedalian texts is seen as uniform or stable. On the contrary, the conclusion is that the heritage

performed in the material analysed is dissonant and contested, and that diametrically different values and meanings are attached to Laestadius and Laestadianism. On the one hand, Laestadianism functions as a heritage in challenges and redefinitions of values and identities in present-day decolonisation processes. On the other, as an element in narratives of colonialism and racialisation. In both cases, consensual narratives about the nation and identity are being challenged by the diversity of experiences and identity claims expressed in Sámi and Tornedalian texts.

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ISBN 978-91-88466-85-3

The penitential revivalist preacher, writer, botanist and social reformer Lars Levi Laestadius (1800–1861), and the movement he initiated, Laestadianism, have profoundly influenced the spiritual and cultural life of the northern parts of Scandinavia. In the year 2000, the 200-year anniversary of his birth was celebrated in the North Calotte where Laestadius and Laestadianism have remained significant elements of local history and culture. Laestadianism had a specific appeal to the Sámi, the Swedish Tornedalians and the Kven in Norway – all ethnic and linguistic minorities that were marginalised in Norwegian and Swedish nation-building.

However, there is no uniform narrative of Lars Levi Laestadius and Laestadianism in present-day cultural production. While there are narratives presenting Laestadius, and the movement he started, as a positive power for challenging colonialism and improving living conditions in the north, there are also new narratives of Laestadius' role as an accomplice of colonialism, especially in his role as a guide to Sámi burial sites and a collector of Sámi human remains. The theme of this new study is the diverse roles and meanings attributed to Laestadius and Laestadianism in contemporary Sámi and Tornedalian texts. The vantage point for the analysis is the use of history in constructions of cultural heritage. *Laestadius and Laestadianism in the Contested Field of Cultural Heritage: A Study of Contemporary Sámi and Tornedalian Texts* provides a stimulating discussion of the uses of local historical subject matter in the creation of Sámi and Tornedalian anticolonial narratives against the backdrop of colonialism and the cultural homogenisation characteristic of modern nation-building.

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Cover illustration: Stamp issued in connection with the 200-year celebration of Laestadius' birth.



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