“My father is Egyptian, my mother Finnish: what’s so post-colonial about that?” On the resistance of five Scandinavian 21st century authors to be inscribed into a post-colonial discourse

Many of the most popular authors in Scandinavia are using immense amounts of literary energy and ink to combat researchers, journalists and critics who place them into a postcolonial or “immigrant” context. In this niche, authors feel their creative genius is being interpreted merely as a realistic depiction of an everyday life in stigmatized suburbs. Instead of producing art, they are seen as merely bearing witness of life in the margin. Instead of being interpreted as fiction, their works are being examined through the biographies of the authors themselves. At the same time, suburban accounts written in street-credible multiethnic youth slang might just grant the wanna-be debutante a place in the literary field – and once you are in, you can redefine your literary habitus.

Simultaneously as the accounts are being contextualized as evidence of “the new Sweden” or “the new Norway”, many of the novels and poems in fact inscribe themselves into a very global tradition as well as rhetoric of alternative culture and resistance that can nowadays be found in every inhabited corner of the world. Who is then the mainstream, who the alternative? Who is majority, who minority? And does the intersection of a literary career of a darker skinned author with a nation’s wish to redefine itself inevitably have to end in ethnofetishism?