

Lill-Ann Körber
Ebbe Volquardsen (eds.)

The Postcolonial North Atlantic

Iceland, Greenland
and the Faroe Islands



Berliner
Beiträge zur
Skandinavistik
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The Postcolonial North Atlantic
Iceland, Greenland and the Faroe Islands

Edited by
Lill-Ann Körber and Ebbe Volquardsen

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Preface to the Second Edition

It is with great pleasure and excitement that we write this new preface to the second edition of *The Postcolonial North Atlantic: Greenland, Iceland and the Faroe Islands*, six years after the book was published in 2014. When we first invited colleagues to contribute to a workshop with the same title at the »Arbeitstagung der deutschen Skandinavistik« at the University of Vienna in the fall of 2011, the idea to frame the North Atlantic archipelago as a coherent postcolonial space appeared new. The situation has shifted considerably since that time. The past ten years have seen dramatic changes of the geopolitical landscape and significance especially of the Arctic part of the region, and of domestic politics, and bi- and multilateral relations of Denmark, Greenland, Iceland, and the Faroe Islands. Academic discourse has shifted accordingly. In short, what seemed avant-garde at the time is now a widely accepted fact: the North Atlantic, and by extension the Nordic region as a whole, has not been exempt from, but is deeply entrenched in colonial thought and practices that still impact its peoples, cultures, and societies.¹ From this recognition of coloniality and its immanent asymmetrical structures originates the wish and imperative to provide access to knowledge beyond paywalls and independent from geographical location and institutional affiliation; hence our decision to republish an open access version of the book.

The articles in this volume have not been changed or amended since the first edition, and thus reflect the state of the art of the first half of the 2010s. Yet, the texts remain relevant and topical in that they provide fundamental insight into negotiations of the postcolonial status of the North Atlantic nations, and into manifestations of their interconnected, often competing, histories in literature, language, politics, art, fashion, and public discourse. They invite to comparative investigations into the region's past and present as seen from its diverse and distinct viewpoints, and to explorations of this part of the Nordic region from a joint critical postcolonial perspective.

So, in which ways has the situation changed since the first edition of *The Postcolonial North Atlantic*? The following paragraphs should be understood as an invitation to further research and reading, rather than as full and representative overview over current events and recent scholarship.

1 See e.g. RUD: 2017.

Many of the tendencies noted in the 2014 edition have proved persistent and grown stronger. First, there is a remarkable increase of the economic, political, and cultural cooperation within the North Atlantic archipelago we already noted in the 2014 introduction: »Vestnorden«, as the region is labelled ever more frequently, manifests itself in the form of political cooperation (among other instances as part of the Nordic Council), joint tourism marketing², or in higher education, such as the joint MA program »West Nordic Studies«, offered since 2015 at the University of the Faroe Islands, the University of Greenland (Ilisimatusarfik), the University of Akureyri in Iceland, and the University of Nordland in coastal Norway. These occurrences witness a region in the making: a region beyond the old motherland Denmark, and beyond its affiliation with Scandinavia, and continental Europe.

When the first edition was published in 2014, the situation in Iceland was marked by the immediate consequences of and reactions to the financial crisis of the years 2008–2011. This was also true for investigations into Iceland's still controversial postcolonial status that were often linked to examinations of the state of crisis.³ Iceland has by now successfully overcome the crisis and is considered one of the wealthiest and most livable nations in the world. However, like other postcolonial nations, a challenge lies in the recruitment of new elites untainted by past regimes' corruption and abuse of power. Furthermore, a new crisis has emerged from the seemingly successful management of the economic crisis, namely an environmental crisis due to overconsumption of resources by industrial development and tourism.⁴

Issues of sustainable development are prevalent in the Faroe Islands, too. The Faroe Islands are currently in a phase of economic upswing, mainly due to the development of two sectors: fish farming, to supplement the traditional fishing industry, and tourism. Both sectors need to be monitored closely to prevent jeopardizing the vulnerable environment. When visiting the Faroe Islands in June 2019, I [LAK] repeatedly heard apropos the rapid growth of the tourism industry, that the aim of its sustainable development was to »not become like Iceland«. Another aspect

2 See www.vestnorden.com

3 See Ann-Sofie Nielsen Gremaud and Kristín Loftsdóttir's articles, and JENSEN and LOFTSDÓTTIR: 2014.

4 See Reinhard Hennig's contribution to the volume.

of the current prosperity is a potential shift of power relations within the The Danish Realm.⁵ One of my hosts held the opinion that »Denmark has not yet understood that we don't need them, but they need us: it is us [referring to both the Faroe Islands and Greenland] who own the resources«. Phases of economic crises and booms bring with them a tide curve of debates about potential independence from Denmark. The first draft of a Faroese Constitution was submitted to the parliament in 2017 after an almost 20-years long process, but consensus among the political parties about the wording is pending. It seems that for now, the argument prevails that the Faroe Islands could use their good starting position to work for more equal relations within The Kingdom of Denmark instead of pushing for independence. According to yet another conversation partner, what stands in the way for a reform of the *rigsfællesskab* is the unwillingness of Denmark to rethink, or give up on, its traditional role of motherland, including a paternalistic attitude towards the two minor partners that is increasingly put into question in both the Faroe Islands and Greenland.

What is true for both the Faroe Islands and Greenland is the fact that the bilateral postcolonial relation to Denmark is currently and increasingly being superseded by a new, global, network of power relations and geopolitical tensions. The United States, Russia and China compete for economic and political prevalence in the Arctic region, and while the focus is on Greenland, the Faroe Islands are not left out of the process. For instance, as the Faroe Islands are not a member of the EU, they were able to bypass EU sanctions on Russia during the 2014 Crimea crisis and keep supplying Russia with farmed salmon. Such »sovereignty games«⁶, performances of an independent political economy, should be interpreted not as primarily driven by anti-Danish and anti-imperialist resentments, but rather by aspirations to diversify dependencies and alliances.⁷

Greenland has, without doubt, seen the region's most dramatic changes and challenges in the past years. The changing geopolitical situation culminated 2019 in the offer by the acting president of the United States, Donald Trump, to »buy Greenland«. While the idea was brusquely

5 The Kingdom of Denmark, in Danish *rigsfællesskabet*, consisting of Denmark, the Faroe Islands, and Greenland.

6 GAD: 2017.

7 Cf. GRYDEHØJ: 2016.

dismissed, the event might in its aftermath contribute to a fundamental reorientation or revision of the Greenlandic-Danish relations: of determining narratives of the shared past as well as of the shape of future relations within the *rigsfællesskab*.⁸ The event forces Denmark to realize that the annual block grant, so far understood as subvention or donation, must rather be regarded as the market value of what nations are willing to pay in exchange for military and commercial presence in Greenland: it turns out for everyone to see that Denmark has not been paying subsidies, but a comparatively low amount to secure its geostrategic position. In Denmark, this recognition challenges centuries-old narratives of benevolent Danes and ungrateful Greenlanders.⁹ Denmark's position is further challenged by additional pressure from the outside: when China recently offered to invest in the development of the airport infrastructure in Greenland, the United States pressured Denmark to step in, despite the reluctance in both Denmark and Greenland to what many see as a resuscitation of the old colonial relationship. In other words, Denmark's shares in Greenland could turn out considerably more complicated and expensive in the years to come.

In Greenland, ten years after the implementation of Self-Government, the recent events have fed new national confidence over the opportunity of partnerships beyond the bilateral bond with Denmark, yet also diffuse feelings of disorientation and uncertainty, and a fear of new dependencies. Two other domestic political occurrences have in the few years since the first edition of *The Postcolonial North Atlantic* reflected the state of ongoing decolonization processes in Greenland, namely the Reconciliation Commission (2014–2017), and the installment of a Constitutional Commission in 2017. It is too early to estimate the resonance to and impact of the work of these two commissions. However, what is interesting to note in view of the framework of the book are the frequent references to the Icelandic way to independence in both the Faroese and the Greenlandic context of drafting future constitutional relationships within the Danish Kingdom.¹⁰

Two more tendencies in the shifting cultural, economic, political, and ecological landscape of the North Atlantic archipelago are worth noting,

8 Cf. OLSVIG and NIELSEN: 2019.

9 Cf. VOLQUARDSEN: 2019.

10 Cf. BERTELSEN: 2019.

as they indicate the region's interconnectedness with global movements and processes. First, the globally growing awareness of anthropogenic climate change, pollution and species extinction brings with it a reconsideration of the utilization of natural resources also, and especially, in the North Atlantic nations. As they strive for prosperity and economic independence, it is inevitable to balance the increasingly disreputed extraction of fossil fuels and expansion of heavy industry (most relevant for the region are mining, the prospect of oil drilling, and Iceland's aluminum plants) with the protection of vulnerable environments and livelihoods.

Second, especially valid for Greenland, there is a growing consciousness and pride of the population's Indigenous heritage. A revitalization of Indigenous knowledge and socio-cultural aspects of life, the most visual of which certainly being the recent revival of traditional facial tattooing, has the potential to bring about epistemological and institutional change, and allows for global Indigenous solidarization and, in turn, a strengthening of decolonization efforts.¹¹ During the devastating bush fires in Australia in 2019, while most European media and initiatives were concerned with the perspective and lifestyle of the majority population, and with consequences for the continent's wildlife, Greenlanders focused first and foremost on the impact on Australia's Aboriginal population. Another instance where Greenland's double European and Inuit heritage and affiliation became apparent was at the Nuuk Nordic Culture Festival in October 2019 that simultaneously stressed, or claimed, Greenland's belonging to the »Nordic family«¹², and manifested Greenland's bond with circumpolar Indigenous peoples via the presence of Sámi artists and representatives of Canadian First Nations and Inuit groups.

These new and old alliances form an alternative or supplement to the trans-North Atlantic ties created and upheld by Scandinavian colonialism and settlement. Together with the strengthening of nation building processes in Greenland and the Faroe Islands, their intensification contributes to a de-centering of Scandinavia and *Norden* that has the potential to further shift emphasis between alleged centers and peripheries and between land-based and oceanic perspectives on the region.¹³

11 Cf. MARKUSSEN: 2017.

12 The festival was initiated by the Nordic Institute of Greenland NAPA, a cultural institution under the Nordic Council of Ministers.

13 See William Frost's article in this volume, and HÖGLUND and BURNETT: 2019.

Parallel to the developments in the North Atlantic nations, the past years have also seen a shift in Denmark's self-understanding of its role as colonial power. The climax has so far been the 2017 centennial commemoration of the transfer of the former Danish West Indies, today's US Virgin Islands, to the United States. Commemorative events and publications arguably reached a wider audience than ever before, with a wealth of exhibitions in Denmark's biggest museums, a large number of scholarly and popular book publications¹⁴, and best-selling historical novels such as Mich Vraa's trilogy about the repercussions of Denmark's transatlantic slave trade.¹⁵ Heightened attention, growing awareness and knowledge, and the increasing admission of voices from the former colonies, have led to a questioning of persistent narratives of Danish innocence and benevolence, but have also triggered aggressively disapproving reactions.

Concerning the postcolonial North Atlantic, while a petition to anchor knowledge about the *rigsfællesskab* as an obligatory part of the curriculum of Danish schools failed in 2018¹⁶, it is, again, visual arts and fiction that might prove a main provider of food for thought to revisit past and imagine future relationships within the Unity of the Realm: Siri Rånva Hjelm Jacobsen, Silvia Henriksdóttir, Niviaq Korneliussen, Sørine Steenholdt, Inuuteq Storch, Julie Edel Hardenberg, Kim Leine and Iben Mondrup, among others, keep shedding a light on past and present trans-North Atlantic histories, fates, and tensions.

We hope that the volume will find many curious new readers, and re-readers, and we look forward to continued discussions and North Atlantic journeys. If nothing else, on a personal level, the journey of which the book's now two editions form a central part has in the meantime brought the two of us to the region itself, and we hope to see you there.

Christiansted and Nuuk, May 2020

Lill-Ann Körber and Ebbe Volquarsen

14 Among them ANDERSEN: 2017 and BRIMNES et al.: 2017.

15 *Haabet* (»Hope«; 2016), *Peters kærlighed* (»Peter's Love«; 2017), and *Faith* (2018).

16 In contrast to a required small share of Norwegian and Swedish as part of the curriculum in Danish literature.

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EBBE VOLQUARSEN/LILL-ANN KÖRBER

The Postcolonial North Atlantic: An Introduction

If the Nordic Countries were one family, the old empires of Sweden and Denmark would be the parents, wrote Icelandic author Hallgrímur Helgason in the Danish weekly newspaper *Weekendavisen* in April 2013.¹ Norway, until 1814 a province in the Kingdom of Denmark and then part of the Suedo-Norwegian Union, became an independent state in 1905. In Helgason's satire, Norway is the affluent eldest sister of the family who looks gorgeous in her brand new opera gown. Brother Finland, the secret illegitimate child of the family, once belonged to Sweden, but became a Grand Duchy of the Russian Empire in 1809. Even since gaining independence in 1917, Finland has remained a mysterious family member that nobody is able to understand. Finally, there are Iceland, Greenland and the Faroe Islands. The Faroes are, in Helgason's family portrait, depicted as a chain-smoking bachelor in his forties who still lives with his mother, whereas Brother Iceland left home much too early and went to America as a teenager. He came into contact with drugs and adopted the Americans' arrogance. After his return he had a serious car accident. With this image Helgason alludes to the crash of the Icelandic banks in 2008. Greenland is the youngest child of the family, adopted by Mother Denmark who never had enough time to adequately take care of her. This, the satire suggests, may be one explanation for the country's myriad social problems, a topic that is often emphasized in the Danish media.

Helgason's text was published prior to the Icelandic general election in 2013, during which the Icelandic electorate subsequently voted the same political parties back into office whose politicians are often blamed for the 2008 crisis that caused the collapse of the national financial system and brought the country to the brink of bankruptcy. As the author of novels such as *101 Reykjavík* (1996) and *Höfundur Íslands* («The Author of Iceland»; 2001), Helgason is one of the most well-respected literary voices of his country. In his article, he not only criticizes his countrymen's amazingly short memory, he also satirizes the paternalism that gave the historical Danish presence in the region a civilizing mission and thus legitimacy. Since the mid-19th century, Danes have continually employed

1 HELGASON: 2013, 6.

mother-child metaphors when describing their country's relationship with its North Atlantic dependencies.²

But despite these entangled family connections, Helgason's text also illustrates the large differences between the individual countries that form a region constituted through its common historical affiliation to the Kingdom of Denmark. Besides Iceland, Greenland and the Faroe Islands, the region also includes Norway. Even after Norway was transferred to Sweden in 1814 (as a result of Denmark's alliance with France during the Napoleonic wars), Denmark still remained a medium-sized European empire.³ The king not only ruled over Jutland, Zealand, Funen and the islands in the North Atlantic; to the south, his territory also encompassed the duchies of Schleswig and Holstein, which Denmark lost to Prussia fifty years later. What is more, until the mid-19th century, Denmark also ruled over colonies in Africa and Asia, and until the early 20th century, in the Caribbean.⁴ However, with the demise of Norway at the latest, the dissolution of the formerly multinational and multilingual Danish Empire had begun. During the 19th and 20th centuries, Denmark was transformed into a small nation-state – for a while the smallest in Europe.⁵ In Norway today, the country's historical subordination and its past as a peripheral province are hardly an issue anymore, and even less so a problematical one. As Helgason suggests, this may partly be due to the prosperity of the country, generated by huge oil discoveries, but probably also to the fact that Norway was the first of the former Danish territories in the North Atlantic to gain independence – way back in 1905.

A common feature of the articles in this book is that they in one way or another deal with the complex aftermath of Denmark's sovereignty over its North Atlantic territories and address the multiple conflicts that result from this – some of which are apparent while others smolder out of

2 See e.g. THISTED: 2003 on the case of Greenland.

3 GLENTHØJ: 2012 provides a seminal study on Danish and Norwegian identity before and after 1814.

4 See IPSEN and FUR: 2009 for a brief overview of Scandinavian colonialism.

5 Since the loss of Schleswig-Holstein in 1864, Danish historiography as often confined itself to the shrunken area of the small nation state and disregarded historical events that took place outside the country's present borders, a phenomenon which OLWIG: 2003 calls »deglobalization«. The Danish historians BREGNSBO and JENSEN: 2005 have tried to revise this practice and therefore explicitly provided a history of the Danish Empire and its demise.

sight, just below the surface. This thematic priority directs the focus away from Norway and towards Iceland, Greenland and the Faroe Islands. In these countries, their common history with Denmark still has significant impact on political debates and social and cultural phenomena. Unless otherwise indicated, they are meant when the authors of this book speak about »the North Atlantic«.

However, the term North Atlantic in no way describes a fixed geographical entity. In international language use, it encompasses a much larger area, namely the parts of the Atlantic Ocean and the adjacent coastal areas that are located north of the equator. According to this definition, even the Caribbean Virgin Islands, which Denmark sold to the USA in 1917, would have been part of the North Atlantic. And, of course, NATO also contains the term »North Atlantic« in its name; here it stands for the ocean that connects the North American and European allies. The film scholar Jerry White, who, under the heading of »Cinema in the North Atlantic«, has undertaken comparative case studies on the cinemas of the Canadian provinces of Québec and Newfoundland, as well as of Ireland and the Faroe Islands, employs a geographically much narrower definition of the North Atlantic, while still describing it as a transcontinental region.⁶ Canada, Ireland (and Scotland), and Iceland, Greenland and the Faroe Islands have in common their respective history as former colonies or dependencies that are regarded as peripheral from the perspective of the European metropolises. White's inclusion of these areas in the North Atlantic region coincides with a point of view advocated by scholars from the Centre for Nordic Studies at the Orkney and Shetland campuses of the Scottish University of the Highlands and Islands. The imagined community of the »North Atlantic Rim« they posit is book-ended by the coastal areas of Norway at one extreme and Canada at the other and includes Scotland, Ireland, Iceland and Greenland, as well as the Orkney, Shetland and Faroe Islands.⁷ Seen from this point of view, what seems like a loosely scattered collection of peripheral outposts from a London or Copenhagen perspective is suddenly transformed into a coherent transatlantic world region,⁸ a *center* in its own right. Against the

6 WHITE: 2009.

7 Cf. Frost's chapter in this volume. For further reading on Scottish-Nordic connections see the contributions in JENNINGS and SANMARK: 2013.

8 Cf. REEPLÖG: 2012.

backdrop of the 2014 referendum on independence in Scotland, whose advocates are calling for closer cooperation between Scotland and the Scandinavian countries (frequently referring to medieval connections), the abstract concept of the »North Atlantic Rim« appears relevant and plausible.

Obviously, notions of a region associated with the term North Atlantic may turn out very differently in an international context. In the Danish language, however, the term almost exclusively covers Iceland, Greenland and the Faroe Islands, a designation that has also become prevalent in the region itself. In all the Scandinavian languages, *Vestnorden* (»West Nordic region«) is an alternative name for these countries, sometimes including Norway. The West Nordic Council, which was founded in 1985, is an official cooperation between the parliaments of Iceland, Greenland and the Faroe Islands. However, *Vestnorden* has a rather official sound and is thus rarely used in everyday speech.⁹ Even the international team of historians who wrote the first history of the region in 2012, chose the title *Naboer i Nordatlanten* (»Neighbors in the North Atlantic«) for their Danish-language book and only in the subtitle speak of *Vestnordens historie gennem 1000 år* (»1,000 years of West Nordic history«).¹⁰ The four seats in the Danish Parliament (the *folketing*) reserved for the representatives from Greenland and the Faroe Islands, are commonly referred to as *de Nordatlantiske mandater* (»the North Atlantic seats«), and the old warehouse of the Royal Greenland Trading Department in the Copenhagen neighborhood of Christianshavn is now called *Nordatlantens Brygge* (»North Atlantic Wharf«). Besides a cultural center – jointly operated by Denmark, Iceland, Greenland and the Faroe Islands – and the internationally renowned gourmet restaurant *Noma*, the building houses the permanent representations of Greenland and the Faroe Islands, as well as the Icelandic embassy. So it can be seen that *Nordatlantens Brygge* certainly plays an important part in ensuring that in Denmark, these three countries alone are associated with the term »North Atlantic«.¹¹

Of the three North Atlantic countries, only Iceland has an embassy in Copenhagen. In 1944, one year before the end of World War II – during

9 At least in Denmark this is the case, whereas the term seems to be more common in Norwegian.

10 THOR et al.: 2012.

11 See GREMAUD and THISTED: 2014, 100–105 on the history of *Nordatlantens Brygge*.

which Iceland was occupied by the USA – the country declared its independence from Denmark. A previous national referendum had received the support of the United States, and as early as 1918, Iceland was granted self-government, while still remaining under the Danish crown. Up to the present day, Danish is a compulsory foreign language for all Icelandic schoolchildren, and Copenhagen is still home to a large Icelandic diaspora. However, apart from these connections, the Danish-Icelandic history of dependence has hardly played a major role in the public debates of the postwar period; and very few Icelanders would consider their society to be in any way »postcolonial«. ¹² This way of looking at their own past is, however, gradually beginning to change. Since the 2008 financial crisis nearly plunged the once economically strong and at times adventurous Iceland into ruin, artists and scholars in particular have brought the country's short history as an independent nation back into focus. By applying postcolonial and eco-critical approaches, they are uncovering interesting correlations between the rapid rise and often-flamboyant performance of Icelandic businessmen in the years before the crisis and the collective experiences of oppression and humiliation under Danish rule. ¹³ It is now a widely held assumption that Iceland has tried to make up for its belated industrialization too quickly, driven by the desire to be on a par with the free and prosperous nations of Western and Northern Europe. Hallgrímur Helgason's portrait of the country as an immature teenager who sets out into the world much too early and recklessly crashes his car points in a similar direction.

Besides Denmark and Greenland, the 18 Faroe Islands with their 48,000 inhabitants make up the third part of the Commonwealth of the Danish Realm (*rígsfællesskabet*). Just like Iceland, the islands were settled by Norwegian seafarers in the Middle Ages and (like Iceland and Greenland) remained part of the Danish empire when Norway joined the union with Sweden in 1814. In the late 19th century a national movement

¹² See KJARTANSDÓTTIR and SCHRAM: 2013 on the Icelandic diaspora and the self-exoticizing of Icelanders abroad. HÁLFÐANARSON and RASTRICK: 2006 give an excellent overview of the perceptions of the »Icelandic« in the 19th and 20th centuries. ÍSLEIFSSON and CHARTIER: 2011 have thus far provided the most profound collection of articles on Iceland's cultural history, including interesting chapters on Icelandic auto- and hetero-images.

¹³ See Gremaud and Hennig's chapters in this volume, as well as LOFTSDÓTTIR: 2010, LOFTSDÓTTIR: 2011, GREMAUD: 2010, HENNIG: 2013, and, for a detailed account of the Icelandic financial crisis, BERGMANN: 2014.

developed on the islands. Its main objective was the preservation of the Faroese language, which is reminiscent of modern Icelandic and was under threat at the time due to the dominance of Danish as the official language of school and church. When the entire North Atlantic region was cut off from the »mother country« while Denmark was under German occupation during World War II (the Faroe Islands were occupied by Britain), a Faroese autonomy movement emerged. In 1946, a referendum resulted in a slim majority in favor of an independent Faroese state. However, the result was not recognized by Denmark, which sent a warship to Tórshavn and declared the local parliament deposed. Since 1948, the Faroe Islands have been a self-governing part of the Kingdom of Denmark, during which time the proponents of a Faroese republic have made up a large part of the islands' population, but never gained a majority. Icelanders at times deride the Faroese restraint in terms of disengagement. In Hallgrímur Helgason's family portrait, the Faroe Islands figure as a twixter, unable to move out of mother's house and lead an independent life. In her song »Declare Independence« (2007), Icelandic singer Björk calls for emancipation from »damn colonists«. The use of military jackets bearing the Faroese and Greenlandic flags in the video makes plain that the call for action is directed at Iceland's North Atlantic neighbors who still remain within the Danish Realm.¹⁴

The skepticism of many Faroe Islanders towards a sovereign island nation does not, however, mean that the relationship between the Faroe Islands and Denmark has always been harmonious and that the history of dependence has not affected the recent past.¹⁵ Gaining recognition of their language in particular has meant a long fight for the Faroe Islanders, with Faroese only becoming the language of education in 1937. Today, Faroese has almost entirely replaced Danish in everyday life. Still, all Faroe Islanders are at least bilingual. The at times purist linguistic policies reveal that language in the Faroe Islands can be both a touchy issue and a fundamental part of national identity. Danish loan words are avoided; instead new Faroese words are created.¹⁶ The two best-known Faroese

¹⁴ Cf. this book's cover showing a still from the video by Michel Gondry. »Declare Independence« is part of Björk's album *Volta* (2007).

¹⁵ See HOFF: 2012 on the Danish-Faroese relations between 1850 and 2010.

¹⁶ Cf. NAUERBY: 1996 and MITCHINSON: 2010. See on language use in the Faroe Islands also Mitchinson's chapter in this volume.

writers, William Heinesen (1900–1991) and Jørgen-Frantz Jacobsen (1900–1938) both wrote in Danish; it took a long time until their novels were generally regarded a part of Faroese national literature.¹⁷ The field of anthropology in particular has yielded some notable works on Faroese society, reflecting the country's history of dependence on Denmark. Some studies, for instance, address spatial order and social monitoring in the small and until recently nearly self-sufficient village communities.¹⁸ Anthropologist Christophe Pons has analyzed the remarkable influence of Evangelical Free Churches on Faroese society and recognizes in the exercise of religion outside the Danish state church an instrument of post-colonial resistance.¹⁹ In the years 2005 and 2006, a heated debate about the inclusion of homosexuality in the Faroese anti-discrimination law aroused international attention. An ingrained homophobia among the population and the substantial impact of the Free Churches, which partly represent fundamentalist positions, came clearly to light.²⁰ The Danish government, well known for its liberal policy in the field of rights for same-sex couples, suddenly found itself in a classical postcolonial dilemma: contrary to the practice of internal non-interference in Faroese matters, then Danish Prime Minister Anders Fogh Rasmussen finally decided to address a critical word.

After the at times negative headlines made by the Faroe Islands and Iceland respectively (the former because of their exclusionary minority policies and the latter because of the financial crisis caused by its own political and economic elite), media coverage of the two countries has calmed down considerably. Within the North Atlantic region, Greenland is currently receiving the largest amount of international attention. Climate change (whose effects are being experienced directly in the Arctic), hopes for the future exploitation of natural mineral resources and hitherto frozen waterways, and the implementation of self-rule in 2009 have moved Greenland into the international limelight.²¹ Compared to Iceland and the Faroe Islands, the relationship between Denmark and Greenland

¹⁷ See Marnersdóttir's chapter in this volume on Faroese translations of Heinesen's novels and Moberg's chapter on writing in Danish as a tool to become part of a canon of world literature; cf. also MOBERG: 2010 and MOBERG: 2014.

¹⁸ See for example GAFFIN: 1996 and GAINI: 2011.

¹⁹ PONS: 2011.

²⁰ Cf. VOLQUARDSEN: 2007.

²¹ See Thisted's chapter in this volume.

falls much more clearly under the heading of »postcolonial«.²² The main reason for this is that Greenlanders, in contrast to Icelanders and Faroe Islanders, are not descended from medieval Scandinavian settlers, but from an indigenous population. They had already inhabited the Arctic island for centuries when the Europeans (for the first time after some impermanent land acquisition efforts in the Middle Ages) set foot on Greenlandic soil in 1721. From then on, Greenland officially had the status of a Danish colony. In 1953 the country became a Danish province, and in 1979 it received home rule, with its own parliament and government.²³ The Self-Rule Act of 2009 has so far been the culmination of Greenland's emancipation process from the former colonial power. Given the ongoing nation building process, the increasingly self-confident appearance of Greenlandic agents on the international stage²⁴ and gradually changing Danish perspectives on the former colony²⁵, the question has been raised as to whether Greenland already has overcome the stage of postcolonial aftermaths.²⁶ However, recent political developments give the impression that such an assessment might be too optimistic. The general elections of 2013 can be said to have rather divided than united the young nation. Social conflicts that already were meant to be overcome are flaring up again, e.g. about ethnicity issues, about language policies, about the divide between hunters and fishermen from the villages and an urbanized elite, or about the Danish versus Greenlandic schism. It is too early yet to say what impact these conflicts will have on the nation building process that has taken up pace since the implementation of self-rule. Resource policies, too, involve conflicts and a classical dilemma: the fast and at times

22 See among others THISTED: 2005 for an account of the postcolonial relationship between Denmark and Greenland.

23 See THOMSEN: 1998 for an excellent overview of Denmark and Greenland's shared history.

24 See THISTED: 2011 on nation building and nation branding in self-governing Greenland, Just's chapter in this volume on the development of a National Theatre in Greenland and Körber's chapter on the use of the Greenlandic flag and map in the context of (re-)appropriation processes. See even POSSIBLE GREENLAND: 2012, the Danish-Greenlandic contribution to the Venice Architecture Biennial in 2012.

25 See Volquardsen's chapter in this volume on new trends in contemporary Danish literature addressing Greenland.

26 See Pedersen's chapter in this volume, as well as GAD: 2009 and KÖRBER: 2011 for approaches to post-postcolonial elements on the Greenlandic language debate and contemporary Greenlandic art respectively.

relentless development of new mines promises on the one hand those revenues that are the prerequisite for possible future independence; on the other hand, they jeopardize the unique Arctic ecosphere. Towards Denmark, the Greenlandic government is adopting an increasingly self-confident – some might say harsh – tone: A reconciliation commission has recently been established,²⁷ another indication that not all effects of colonialism are yet overcome in contemporary Greenland.

Is it – given the huge differences between Iceland, Greenland and the Faroe Islands, their diverse political statuses and their until recently rather sparse mutual contacts – appropriate to speak of a North Atlantic region, considering that region building always presupposes a kind of imagined community? The countries' intensified cooperation in the fields of culture, politics and academics suggests that it is. In 2015 the University of the Faroe Islands (Tórshavn), University of Greenland (Nuuk), University of Akureyri (Iceland), University of Iceland (Reykjavík) and University of Nordland (Bodø, Norway) will launch a joint masters program called »West Nordic Studies, Governance and Sustainable Management«. Even art projects such as the »Nordic Fashion Biennale« that since 2012 has showcased works of designers from Iceland, Greenland and the Faroe Islands, the portrait photo book *Nordatlantens Ansigter* (»North Atlantic Faces«; 2008)²⁸, or the exhibition *Inside – Outside* held in Akureyri, Tórshavn and Nuuk in 2003, where artists and school students from the three countries examined mutual stereotypes²⁹, have a region building effect.

However, there also is older evidence of a regional identity in the North Atlantic. In 1931, when Greenland was still a closed-off colony and contacts with its Icelandic and Faroese neighbors therefore almost nonexistent, later Greenlandic politician and member of the Danish *folketing* Augo Lynge wrote his only novel, *Trehundrede år efter ...* (»Three hundred years after ...«). The novel is set in the future and illustrates the tremendous societal and emancipatory progress that Greenland has made in the 90 years between Lynge's present (1931) and an imagined year 2021, when the fictitious Greenlandic capital Grønlandshavn celebrates the

27 Cf. HEINRICH: 2014.

28 SIMONSEN et al.: 2008. See also GREMAUD and THISTED: 2014.

29 SIGURÐSSON: 2003.

300th anniversary of Danish colonization.³⁰ In Lyngé's vision of the future, Greenland is a hypermodern and globally interconnected country as well as an equal partner within a North Atlantic community. The national soccer team wins against the Faroe Islands and almost defeats Denmark, young Greenlanders study at Icelandic universities, and Icelandic immigrants have repopulated those places on the west coast of Greenland where their ancestors founded settlements in the Middle Ages. Lyngé's novel is thus an early example of regional awareness.

The Icelandic students, who in 1905 protested against their country's inclusion into the Copenhagen colonial exhibition, had not yet developed such awareness. Their protest illustrates the internal hierarchies within the North Atlantic region, which even today are not completely overcome. The students did not mind that »Eskimos and Negroes« (from the Danish West Indies) were publicly exhibited in Tivoli; they wanted to prevent Icelanders being equated with them.³¹ From today's perspective, one might wish that the Icelanders had not just fought their battle against the colonial exhibition for their own sake, but also on behalf of their Greenlandic neighbors. But weren't the students, seen from a 1905 perspective, right in a way? Wasn't Greenland a classic colony, where enlightened Europeans had civilized and Christianized an indigenous population? And wasn't Iceland an admittedly remote province, but also the place where in the Middle Ages, a high culture thrived that had evolved into the epitome of the national heritage of the entire Danish state – see for example the Danish »Golden Age«-writers Adam Oehlenschläger and N.F.S. Grundtvig's works?³²

There is some truth in both assessments, and it is therefore legitimate to raise the question as to whether it is justified to designate the entire

30 LYNGE: 1989. See THISTED: 1990 and VOLQUARSEN: 2011, 112–137 for detailed readings of the novel.

31 Cf. Gremaud's chapter in this volume; see also GREMAUD and THISTED: 2014.

32 The concept of crypto-colonialism (coined by HERZFELD: 2002) has proved to be productive to describe the alleged paradox that Iceland on the one hand well into the 20th century figured as the cradle of Nordic culture due to its Saga literature, and that on the other hand, Icelanders often were depicted as dirty and uncivilized savages in Danish representations (cf. GREMAUD: 2010 and in this volume; KJARTANSDÓTTIR and SCHRAM: 2013, as well as several of the contributions in ÍSLEIFSSON and CHARTIER: 2011). Michael Herzfeld develops his theory on the example of Greece, which – once regarded as the birthplace of democracy and now the epitome of crisis – has experienced an imagological loss of status similar to Iceland's.

North Atlantic region as postcolonial. The absence of an indigenous population and the centuries-old affiliation with Norway are some strong arguments against speaking of colonialism when describing the historical Danish rule over Iceland and the Faroe Islands. Furthermore, it is a widely held position that doing so amounts to trivializing the fate of the colonized peoples who – for instance in the Belgian Congo – lost their limbs or even their lives under the European reign of terror. However, such an accusation ignores the fact that it is not the degree of bloodiness or brutality that decides whether a hegemonic relationship can be classified as colonial. What is more, the argument reproduces the widespread, yet well-led assumption of the existence of »Nordic Exceptionalism« in terms of European colonialism.³³

German historian Jürgen Osterhammel has provided a widely accepted and frequently quoted definition of colonialism. According to him, colonialism is

a relationship of domination between collectives, in which the fundamental decisions about the life of the colonized are (taking priority account of external interests) made and effectively carried through by a culturally different minority of colonizers that is hardly willing to adapt itself.³⁴

33 The concept of »Nordic Exceptionalism« refers to the idea of the Nordic countries' special position with regard to international political and cultural phenomena such as colonialism and postcolonialism, but also with regard to their alleged neutrality towards military and fascist regimes. It is connected to narratives of innocence and goodness and contributes to the construction of collective identities. Pan-Nordic self-conceptions of exceptionalism largely coincide with extrinsic hetero-images of the societies of the Nordic countries. See BROWNING: 2007; HENNINGSEN: 2010; VOLQUARSEN: 2011, 37–43, and VOLQUARSEN: 2014 on the concept itself and the phenomena subsumed to it. PALMBERG: 2009 and FUR: 2013 critically examine notions of exceptionalism with regard to the Nordic countries' role in European colonialism; so do many of the contributions in JENSEN et al.: 2010 and LOFTSDÓTTIR and JENSEN: 2012. KOEFOED and SIMONSEN: 2007 and WITOSZEK: 2011 pursue studies on exceptionalist narratives of goodness in respectively Danish and Norwegian national identity. HABEL: 2009 uncovers notions of exceptionalism in Swedish perceptions of whiteness, whereas SCHOUGH: 2008 recognizes an exceptionalist »hyperborean figure of thought« (ibid., 12–13) as the epitome of Sweden's cultural self-location.

34 »eine Herrschaftsbeziehung zwischen Kollektiven, bei welcher die fundamentalen Entscheidungen über die Lebensführung der Kolonisierten durch eine kulturell andersartige und kaum anpassungswillige Minderheit von Kolonialherren unter vorrangiger Berücksichtigung externer Interessen getroffen und tatsächlich durchgesetzt werden« (OSTERHAMMEL: 2006, 8). All translations from German by Ebbe Volquardsen. At this point, the official English edition (OSTERHAMMEL: 2005, 16–17) deviates considerably from the German original.

What Osterhammel writes all applies to Denmark's sovereignty over Greenland, Iceland and the Faroe Islands, if one only thinks of the royal trade monopoly, to which all residents of the North Atlantic region were subjected until the mid-19th century – and the Greenlanders even longer. Osterhammel continues: »In modern times, this usually is accompanied by self-justification based on an ideology of mission, a doctrine that depends on the colonial masters' conviction of their own cultural superiority.«³⁵ Such doctrines frequently turn up in historical texts written by Danes that address the country's rule over its North Atlantic territories.

The question as to whether the Danish rule over Iceland, Greenland and the Faroe Islands should be labeled as colonialism or rather as the administration of remote provinces or dependencies (sometimes supported by a colonial mentality) is not answered conclusively in this book. As Icelandic historian Guðmundur Hálfðanarson shows using the example of Iceland, the quest for an indisputable answer is a futile undertaking that also promises little acquisition of knowledge.³⁶ Therefore, when the title of this book puts forward the idea of a »postcolonial North Atlantic«, this does not mean that the authors and editors agree on definitions and applications of concepts of colonialism and postcolonialism. Moreover, the title does not imply an assumption of similarity in the dependency relations between Denmark and the three countries discussed. Differences are considerable, both within the region itself and in comparison with other regions that might be classified as postcolonial. Nevertheless, Iceland, Greenland and the Faroe Islands have in common their history as Danish dependencies within a historically and geographically coherent region. These connections alone make it seem fruitful to analyze similarities and differences from a comparative perspective.

Many of the contributions in this volume go back to a working group, initiated by Lill-Ann Körber and Ebbe Volquardsen at the 20th *Conference of German Scandinavian Studies* (ATDS) at the University of Vienna. The aim of the three-day workshop was to instigate a dialog between scholars from the humanities and social sciences who in one way or another are doing work on Iceland, Greenland and the Faroe Islands

35 »Damit verbinden sich in der Neuzeit in der Regel sendungsideologische Rechtfertigungsdoktrinen, die auf der Überzeugung der Kolonialherren von ihrer eigenen kulturellen Höherwertigkeit beruhen.« (OSTERHAMMEL: 2006, 8).

36 See Hálfðanarson's chapter in this volume.

and the aftermaths of the Danish rule over the islands. The perspective on the three countries as one region is relatively new, at least within Scandinavian Studies, but seems – especially in the wake of a growing interest in the circumpolar area of the Arctic – to be becoming gradually established. Since then, the network launched in Vienna has grown as other authors have joined the book project. Many of them are involved in the international research project *Denmark and the New North Atlantic*, which was founded at the University of Copenhagen in 2012 and is led by Kirsten Thisted.³⁷

Although the »postcolonial« region addressed in this book is constituted by a common (colonial) past within the Danish empire, the contributions in this volume are based on a broad understanding of postcoloniality. Iceland, Greenland and the Faroe Islands are thus not classified as postcolonial merely because they share a history of foreign rule and oppression, which in different ways affects their present societies. Postcoloniality today is a global phenomenon. Ulla Vuorela has pointed out that even countries without any formal colonial possessions have contributed to the production of orientalisms, exoticisms and notions of colonial »Others«, meaning that a »colonial complicity« can be attributed to them.³⁸ So even in countries like Norway and Finland (non-sovereign dependencies until the early 20th century), asymmetries of power and constructions of alterity generated during the period of colonialism and imperialism affect debates about immigration policy, for example. The same applies to Iceland, Greenland and the Faroe Islands: they appear both as (former) subjects as well as the producers of cultural hierarchizations.³⁹

When »Postcolonial Studies« became a research subject in the 1980s, the term »postcolonial« was still conceived literally as the timespan that follows the end of a colonial rule, especially in view of the emerging literatures of the British Commonwealth.⁴⁰ In the course of globalization and

37 See the project's homepage: www.thenewnorthatlantic.com [01.09.2014].

38 VUORELA: 2009. OXFELDT: 2005 provides a seminal study of a certain Nordic variant of orientalism. See also VOLQUARSEN: 2010 on representations of an oriental »Other«, especially in Danish literature.

39 See Loftsdóttir's chapter in this volume on the Icelandic case, and Kristjánssdóttir's chapter on the special history of the entanglement of Iceland with the Maghreb region in the 17th century.

40 When referring to its temporal meaning, the term »post-colonialism« is usually hyphenated; cf. HAUGE: 2007 and Pedersen's chapter in this volume, while the spelling

increasing entanglements, an alternative perception of postcolonial phenomena is gaining acceptance that is no longer linked to the dichotomous division of the world into former colonies and former colonial powers. Postcolonial critique as an academic discipline has evolved accordingly, including the study of manifold asymmetrical power relations.⁴¹ After all, the effects of colonialism and imperialism are experienced globally: in London, Paris and Copenhagen, as well as in Reykjavík, Ilulissat, or in Switzerland, where a team of authors recently published a volume on Swiss »colonialism without colonies«. ⁴² Coinciding with the social and cultural heterogenization of the societies of Northern Europe, which is accompanied by heated debates on immigration and integration, the interest in postcolonial issues is increasing even in Scandinavia. Since one, in contrast to Switzerland, cannot speak of a »colonialism without colonies« in the case of Scandinavia, many of the publications originating from this context⁴³ combine both aspects: the analysis of real colonial dependency relations in the North Atlantic, in Sápmi⁴⁴ or in the Global South, as well as of the effects that colonial hierarchies and knowledge orders have on current processes of minoritization and majorization as well as on mechanisms of social exclusion. With this book we would like to continue the debate that has now started.

The book is organized into three sections, dedicated to Iceland, the Faroe Islands and Greenland respectively. It starts, however, with an exception to this three-part division. In his chapter »The Concept of the North Atlantic Rim; or, Questioning the North«, William Frost (University of Sheffield) presents and discusses the potential of the already mentioned con-

without hyphen commonly refers to more general cultural phenomena and their (academic) critique.

41 See for instance RANDEIRA and RÖMHILD: 2013 on the manifold entanglements in a postcolonial Europe. ZIMMERER: 2013 provides a seminal study on the highly diverse aftermaths of and politics of remembrance about (an almost forgotten) German colonialism.

42 PURTSCHERT et al.: 2012.

43 See e.g. KESKINEN et al.: 2009, JENSEN: 2012, LOFTSDÓTTIR and JENSEN: 2012, NAUM and NORDIN: 2013.

44 Sápmi is the name of the transnational area inhabited by the Sami in Northern Norway, Sweden and Finland and on the Russian Kola Peninsula.

cept of the »North Atlantic Rim« as an analytical tool to describe ongoing regionalization processes in the North Atlantic. He invites us to participate in a mind game that is a reflection of recent political events and debates: What if we, on our mental maps, loosen the ties between the North Atlantic islands and their former or current rulers on the mainland? What if we allow the former periphery to gain center stage? What if regional affiliations and alliances replace the interpretational sovereignty of the nation state or the crown? Will we witness the birth of more independent nations and the blossoming of West Nordic cooperation? Will a post-postcolonial North Atlantic resemble the dimensions of the Viking realm of the beginning of the second millennium, rather than Europe since its colonial expansion?

Iceland

Is Iceland a postcolony at all? This question is at the core of debates about the relevance of postcolonial theoretical approaches to the study of Icelandic history and present-day Iceland. The authors represented in this volume would answer in the affirmative if asked about the relevance of such approaches, but would suggest a modification of their assumptions to match the specific Icelandic situation. Our contributors analyze identity constructions with regard to earlier and current power configurations and examine concepts of sovereignty and its effects. They propose and make use of terms and concepts such as crypto-colonialism, eco-criticism or ocean/Atlantic studies in order to delineate Iceland's position in this context, with the common goal of describing entanglements and alliances beyond a concentration on the relation to Denmark, but without losing the focus on power relations and relational nation building processes.

In »Iceland Perceived: Nordic, European or a Colonial Other?«, historian Guðmundur Hálfðanarson (University of Iceland) provides a historically informed overview of Iceland's situatedness vis-à-vis the Nordic countries, Europe and a global postcolonial fabric. Anthropologist Kristín Loftsdóttir (University of Iceland) discusses Icelandic identity construction processes from a social anthropological angle in her article »Icelandic Identities in a Postcolonial Context«. In »Iceland as Centre and Periphery. Postcolonial and Crypto-colonial Perspectives«, art historian and cultural critic Ann-Sofie Nielsen Gremaud (University of Copenhagen) introduces theoretical approaches to the study of the Icelandic situation,

thus continuing and specifying Frost's discussion of an ongoing shift of center and periphery in the North Atlantic with regard to Iceland. Based on a reading of Andri Snær Magnason's controversial best-selling book *Dreamland. A Self-Help Manual for a Frightened Nation* (*Draumlandið – sjálfshjálparhandbók handa hræddri þjóð*; 2006), Reinhard Hennig (Mid Sweden University) presents yet another theoretical concept – eco-criticism – which proves fruitful for the analysis of recent debates about the North Atlantic and Arctic countries' (geo-)political and economic sovereignty of their natural resources.

In »Searching for a Home, Searching for a Language«, Helga Birgisdóttir (University of Iceland) re-reads an Icelandic classic, Jón Sveinsson's well-known »Nonni« books, from a postcolonial perspective. She combines aspects of language, literary history and migration to illustrate the complexities of »Icelandicness« in the case of Jón Sveinsson and his series of children's books. In her article on Guðríður Símonardóttir and her role in the so-called Turkish Abductions and its literary representations, Dagný Kristjánsdóttir (University of Iceland) focuses on a curiosity in the history of colonialism and interregional entanglements. Her contribution on a historical link between Iceland and Northern Africa shows clearly that studies of postcoloniality must be extended beyond the traditional study of relations between the metropolitan centers of continental or mainland Europe and overseas »peripheries«. Such an extension allows us to grasp constructions of Self and Other beyond this conventional dualism and to prevent a re-centralizing of the centers that colonialism and postcolonialism paradoxically seem to have in common. Moreover, an angle on Atlantic or – more general – ocean studies, and hence on the history of seafaring, opens the way for perspectives on alternative routes of the movement of people, goods and ideas – which in this case connect 17th century Iceland and the Ottoman Empire.

Faroe Islands

Comparable to the section on Iceland, the focus of the section on the Faroe Islands is directed towards the specificity of the Faroese situation within a postcolonial framework. The Faroe Islands share with Greenland their status as a self-governed entity within the Danish Realm. They have in common current nation building processes and debates about moves towards independence. The main difference refers back to the re-

spective histories of settlement and their consequences for issues of language, ethnicity, culture, belonging and cohabitation. The kinship between Faroese and the Scandinavian languages is just one relic of the Viking settlers who came from today's Norway and populated the previously uninhabited islands; contrast this with the coexistence of an indigenous population and Northern European settlers in Greenland. Our authors raise the question of how the relationship with Denmark, and the position of the Faroe Islands towards Europe and a globalized world, is debated and negotiated with regard to language, literature and politics. What terms, concepts and contexts are at scholars' disposal to describe phenomena and processes that are specific to the Faroe Islands, but nevertheless comparable to those of their North Atlantic neighbors?

John K. Mitchinson (University College London) focuses on (de-)colonization from a linguo-historical and political perspective in his article »Othering the Other«. He examines the link between linguistic policies and nation building and associated attributions to Self and Other. Under the title »The Faroese Rest in the West«, literary scholar Bergur Rønne Moberg (University of Copenhagen) presents the concept of world literature and its relevance for a revision and positioning of Faroese literature. The question is how to describe Faroese literature's specific position in a situation marked by two interdependent factors: the underrepresentation of aesthetic as opposed to political considerations in the context of post-colonial studies, and the shortcomings of terms and concepts derived from European literary history. The following two contributions are examples of how such questions are applied to readings of concrete literary texts, both of them classics of the Faroese literature of the 20th and 21st centuries. Malan Marnersdóttir (University of the Faroe Islands) makes use of central findings of translation theory in her reading of William Heinesen's work from a postcolonial angle: translation always involves both linguistic and cultural transformations. Anne-Kari Skarðhamar (Oslo and Akershus University College) traces the literary reflection of the Faroese history of decolonization in Gunnar Hoydal's novel *Í hawsins hjarta* (»In the Heart of the Sea«; 2007), in which historical events are highlighted as national places of remembrance. In his article »Postcolonial Politics and the Debates on Membership of the European Communities in the Faroe Islands (1959–1974)«, political scientist Christian Rebhan (Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin/University of Iceland) examines the relevance of postcolonial perspectives not only for identity construction pro-

cesses, but even for the history of political and social institutions and cooperation. He raises the question of a political representation of the former Danish North Atlantic territories, of specific regional interests that potentially result in new alliances, while other cooperations or commitments are dismantled.

Greenland

Just like the Faroe Islands, Greenland is a self-governed part of the Danish Realm. Since the introduction of self-rule in 2009, Kalaallisut (Greenlandic) has gained official language status, and Greenland is autonomous in most political fields, with the exceptions of foreign and security policy. The ongoing nation building process can be seen, for example, in the constitution of national cultural institutions such as a National Theatre (2011) or a National Gallery (currently in the planning stage), or in the context of current debates about a Greenlandic constitution. Geographically, Greenland belongs to the North American continent, and its indigenous population links it closely to the entire circumpolar region. Thus, new questions arise with regard to Greenland's cultural, historical and political affiliations with the North Atlantic region and its European neighbors. New questions even arise concerning past and present relations of center and periphery: as an Arctic country presumably rich in natural resources, Greenland today finds itself in the center of Danish, European and international geopolitical and economic interests.

Discussing recent cultural phenomena, Birgit Kleist Pedersen (University of Greenland) asks whether postcolonialism is relevant at all, or if Greenland is already on a post-postcolonial course. She argues that a negotiation of Danish-Greenlandic power relations has long since been replaced by a global consciousness marked by complete flexibility with regard to belonging and affinity. In »A Short Story of the Greenlandic Theatre«, Christina Just (Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin) shows how Greenland's postcolonial history is reflected by the history of cultural institutions and art forms. She looks into exoticizing and ethnicizing tendencies in the reception of Greenlandic theatre, into the reflection of a multiple cultural heritage in today's theatre practices in Greenland, as well as into the effects of cultural policy on both institutional and aesthetic levels.

In her article »Politics, Oil and Rock 'n' roll«, Kirsten Thisted (University of Copenhagen) analyzes fictionalizations of the current scramble

for the Arctic and interconnected debates about indigenous rights. In which ways do such imaginations of Greenlandic/Arctic resources and residents influence current geopolitics? In her chapter »Mapping Greenland: The Greenlandic Flag and Critical Cartography in Literature, Art and Fashion«, Lill-Ann Körber (Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin) explores the history of the Greenlandic flag against the backdrop of decolonization and nation building. On the basis of projects between art, fashion and performance, she traces appropriation and re-appropriation practices connected to cartography and national symbols. Based on a reading of several Danish-Greenlandic migration novels, Ebbe Volquardsen (University of Giessen) focuses on the literary reflection of the relationship between Denmark and its former colony.

We are greatly indebted to our authors. It has been a pleasure to work with them and to have had first-hand access to their stimulating and valuable thinking. We would also like to express our gratitude to the editors of *Berliner Beiträge zur Skandinavistik* for their support. Special thanks go to Tomas Milosch at Nordeuropa-Institut, who supervised the entire publication process and who is our nominee for the world championship of proofreaders. Thanks to Michael Hale for a great job of English spell-checking and copyediting. Finally, thanks to Nina Bechtle for the cover design and to Paul Greiner for securing the image rights.

It is our hope that the journey to an utterly fascinating, dynamic and diverse region, its contemporary history, current events and academic exploration, will be as joyful for all our readers as it has been for us.

Berlin and Gießen, September 2014
Lill-Ann Körber and Ebbe Volquardsen

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WILLIAM FROST

The Concept of the North Atlantic Rim;
or, Questioning the North

The concept of the North Atlantic Rim has particular relevance to the countries that form the focus of this collection: the Faroe Islands, Greenland and Iceland. Offering more than a mere geographical description of their location, this short introduction to the term and its application invites the reader to explore these countries within the framework of a new understanding of the north: a north beyond a (post) colonial constellation of centres and peripheries.

›North Atlantic Rim‹ is a term used as a means of defining not only a geographical region, but for demarcating cultural and historical boundaries, equally of inclusion and exclusion; however, the term requires both definition and justification. In considering the historical and cultural perspectives of the North Atlantic Rim (hereafter, NAR), it is necessary to question its existence and to ask what, if anything, holds it together. The study of the NAR presupposes a projected – if not necessarily real – cultural symbiosis linking what might otherwise be viewed as a culturally and socially disparate region. This region includes those areas forming the northern arc of the North Atlantic, which includes (but, as will become clear, is not limited to): Canada, the Faroe Islands, Greenland, Iceland, Ireland, Norway and Scotland. While a geographical definition of space may seem an obvious one, it may turn out to be as imagined as the culture to be found therein. In changing the geographical, historical and cultural boundaries of investigation (i.e. in applying the term ›NAR‹), the focus is altered and former peripheries are centred, highlighting common traits where before there may have appeared to be an ocean of difference.

While it is not within the scope of these brief introductory comments to either define or justify the term NAR, it is hoped that the following preliminary thoughts on the development and application of the term will provide a point of departure for new explorations of the north within an NAR context: Can it define the indefinable or make real the imagined?

The North Atlantic Rim

Norwegian explorer Helge Ingstad's discovery in 1960 of evidence of Viking settlement at L'Anse aux Meadows in Newfoundland, Canada, provided archaeological evidence to back up thirteenth century literary sources, the »Saga of the Greenlanders« and the »Saga of Eric the Red« (known collectively as the »Vinland Sagas«), which tell the story of a Viking presence in North America. Ingstad's findings linked east and west, providing evidence of historical and cultural links at opposite ends of the NAR. This shared heritage in the NAR – establishing the Atlantic Ocean as a cultural superhighway rather than barrier – is at the heart of the study and application of the term ›NAR‹.¹ However, the NAR, with many of the countries and regions in it bordering seas rather than the Atlantic Ocean, is not a straightforward geographical or culturally defined zone, but an artificially constructed region, a concept rather than a fixed reality. It constantly begs questions of inclusion and exclusion: Where should Denmark, for example – geographically outside but for centuries culturally central to the NAR region – be placed? The NAR exists, perhaps, for no other reason than that »[b]elonging needs to be reimagined because the world has changed«.² If, then, the NAR is not the site of a conscious collaborative cultural community, maybe it can be defined »as a site of interplay between plural, converging, but also contradictory regions of identity, a site of continuous change but, most importantly, of human agency [and] intercultural dialogue«.³

The use and application of the term ›NAR‹ allows for the heritage of areas often assigned a peripheral status to be reassessed as not only distinctive from previously dominating cultural centres but also independent of them – in short, it stops the dominant centre from claiming the »periphery as its own«.⁴ In this sense, the culture of Greenland, for example, has become Greenlandic rather than Danish or even Nordic; it has moved away from the periphery – and the former dominant centre – to occupy a new egalitarian space: old colonial and postcolonial ties have been broken. The question is whether or not this break – or cultural and

1 See HEDDLE: 2006.

2 HALL: 2002, 53.

3 REEPLOEG: 2008, 3.

4 CRAIG: 2007, 13.

geographical dissection – is desirable or, indeed, possible. In affording this liberating uniqueness, it is necessary to question whether cultural bonds are transcended or eradicated. The potential for cultural isolation within the NAR, facilitated by this cultural and geographical dissection, is all the more problematic because the Atlantic link is by no means limited to the North; the Atlantic Ocean in its entirety creates »new alliances necessary to meet the challenges of the new century [...] based on shared democratic and even religious and cultural ideals«. ⁵ Furthermore, the North Atlantic is far from being the same as the north of the NAR. Peter Kresl of the Atlantic Rim Institute writes that »clearly the strongest and most extensive of the linkages [is] that of the North Atlantic«. ⁶ He is referring not to the cultural links of the NAR but to those between France and Canada – demonstrating that the NAR is only one part of the puzzle. Cultural and geopolitical borders within the NAR can easily overlook the cross currents that transcend both time and space: for the Atlantic *is* a multi-layered and postcolonial space, linked from its southernmost reaches to its northern rim.

Norse to Nordic to NAR

As shown above, links between geographical regions within the NAR can be traced to Scandinavia toward the end of the first millennium, while the connection in other areas is more strongly associated with nineteenth century westward immigration from Scandinavia, the United Kingdom and Ireland. ⁷ In both periods, the North Atlantic served as a maritime superhighway propelling or facilitating westward migration. However, it would be wrong to infer that this resulted in undisputed cultural or linguistic homogeneity; the NAR has never been wholly homogenous, but is rather an area populated by different peoples of different ethnic, cultural and linguistic backgrounds, far from all of whom share a common Nordic heritage – as evidenced by the cultural, linguistic and ethnic plurality of Norway in contrast to the relative cultural homogeneity of the Faroe Islands. The NAR is a region of ever-changing definition, or, rather, a region that has defied definition up to the present day. Nevertheless, it has

5 LLOYD: 2009, 337.

6 KRESL: n.d.

7 See HEDDLE: 2012 for a discussion of earlier connections in a Northern European context.

more often than not been attributed with the myth of homogeneity – a myth both internal and external in origin – where in reality there was more often than not division and plurality.⁸

While the region is disproportionately associated with an apparently homogenous Viking past – a past that is often re-imagined in the process of modern-day identity building – the plurality that is the reality of the region can in fact benefit from the realignment of the north that the NAR offers: a move away from the limitations and confines of the terms ›Scandinavia‹ (prior to the Second World War) and ›Nordic‹, towards a reimagining, a new construction, the creation of an imagined community that is – in the sense originally meant by Benedict Anderson in his seminal work *Imagined Communities* – created but not fake. The idea of reimagining in order to accommodate the cultural plurality of a region is not new in the Northern Hemisphere, with the idea of calling Britain an ›archipelago‹ or the ›North-West Islands‹ having been mooted, albeit academically, in the late 1990s.⁹ The NAR might be seen to represent a region with neither centre nor periphery – a ›third space‹ in which the hybridity of the region, rather than its homogeneity, is at the core. Potentially, the NAR provides a solution to the peripherality of the north as seen from within the confines of the Nordic region.¹⁰

However, the intended hybridity of creating the utopian NAR subaltern space may in fact be an act of cultural amputation. The NAR not only removes the centre/periphery divide – it potentially chops the centre out of the equation, establishing a new northern geography without Denmark, for example. In committing this geographical self-mutilation, the NAR denies the region its historical, cultural and geographical link to the former centre. And while Hans Jacob Debès, who – referring to the Scottishisation of the Northern Isles of Orkney and Shetland – »emphasises the importance of distance between central authorities and subordinate peripheries«,¹¹ suggests that the Faroes have fared better due to their geographical distance from Denmark, it is the distance that is vital: there is a link. So while the NAR offers an opportunity for cultural

8 HILSON: 2008 (In particular, see the introduction, »The Historical Meanings of Scandinavia«).

9 KEARNEY: 1997, 69.

10 THISTED: 2007, 201.

11 DEBÈS: 1996, 65.

emancipation by realigning the former periphery, it reopens a postcolonial debate in the space left by the geographical realignment.

Conclusion

It seems that as flawed as national culture can be, inclined to historical and geographical limitations that belie the ebb and flow of cultural influence, and flawed as regional definitions such as ›Scandinavian‹ or ›Nordic‹ are – with their tendency to leave people and countries peripheral or even divorced from their spheres of cultural influence – the study of the NAR, located ›beyond the cultures of either core or peripheral nations«,¹² falls short at present of facilitating a utopian, emancipatory vision of the north. The NAR *is* imagined – and it is a space that allows us to *reimagine* the former centre/periphery dialogue – but in this reimagining there is a risk of developing a selective memory that represses that which is so crucial to the region: the past. The lands of the NAR are peopled by memory,¹³ and memories cannot be eradicated overnight. The past that the NAR is at risk of amputating is a vital part of the cultural and historical identity of the region.¹⁴

In reimagining the culture of the north, the NAR risks making the ›third space‹ discussed above an impossible reality because while it may have shifted the centre and realigned the periphery, it could just as easily replace the centre/periphery dichotomy, exchanging nationalism for regionalism. And while this move away from culture as defined by nation states is potentially liberating for non-nation-based cultures, this viewpoint fails to take into account the growth of new nation states within the NAR.

In questioning the political, cultural, geographical, historical, linguistic and literary limits of the NAR, the intention is not to reject former geographical or cultural understanding of the north; nor is it to find any definitive definition of north or the culture(s) that exist there. Rather, the intention is to engage in discourse on the north in a search for cultural connection and discord, hybridity and homogeneity. And what we find is not *a* cultural space – but (imagined) cultural spaces ...

¹² THISTED: 2007, 201.

¹³ NUTTALL: 1992, 39.

¹⁴ See HEDDLE: 2012.

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Iceland

GUÐMUNDUR HÁLFÐANARSON

Iceland Perceived: Nordic, European or a Colonial Other?

In early January 1846, a young Icelandic literary scholar and future official in the Danish Foreign Service, Grímur Thomsen, gave a lecture at the so-called Scandinavian Society (*Det Skandinaviske Selskab*) in Copenhagen. As the title of his talk indicates (»On Iceland's relation to the rest of Scandinavia«¹), Thomsen's intention was to explain Iceland's place in the Nordic world, while he also pondered the country's relations to Europe and European culture.² This was not a simple task, as the island in the mid-North Atlantic seemed to fall between the conventional categories that Thomsen had at his disposal. »At its own expense, this volcanic island kindles flaming beacons at the fringes of Europe«, he said of his motherland, and thus »it stands as a nocturnal telegraph between the Old World and the New World, between civilisation and barbarianism.« Icelandic culture and the Icelanders' demeanour, he continued, reflected the country's intermediate location:

Its inhabitants stand, likewise, between the old and the new worlds; they possess enough spiritual culture, history and national maturity to be called civilised, but they have also, to this day, preserved their naivety and bluntness or, if I may say so, enough national innocence and ease of manner to be sometimes accused of barbarousness by the culturally deformed and greying Europe. Iceland is a geographic and historical Janus, who turns one of his faces towards the old and civilised Europe, the other towards the young, innocent America.

Thus Thomsen reckoned that Iceland was situated, both in cultural and geographic terms, somewhere between »the Old World« (Europe) and the »the new one« (America). At the same time he was very keen on underscoring that his country of origin was free from all Oriental influences, as he inferred that Iceland's »northern and western location assures that both the Occidental and Nordic principles are at home there; historically, this island has proven this, because it has always opposed Orientalism and its despotic tendencies.«³

1 Om Islands Stilling i det øvrige Skandinavien (THOMSEN: 1846).

2 Cf. JÓNSSON: 2012, 189–207.

3 »Selv tænder denne vulkaniske Ø, paa egen bekostning, flammende Bauner paa Europas Udkant, og staaer som en natlig Telegraph mellem den gamle og den nye Verden, mellem Civilisation og Barbari. Dens Indvaanere staae ligeledes mellem den

There is an unmistakable ambivalence in Thomsen's classificatory scheme, as he was rather unsure where to position Iceland in the cultural and geographic hierarchy of his time. This was a common theme in 19th-century discourses on the North Atlantic island, as political commentators and foreign travellers visiting the country struggled with defining the country's place in Europe and its relations with what they saw as the true European civilisation. One reason for this uncertainty was the pervasive tendency of foreign observers to approach »this remote and eerily intriguing island«,⁴ to quote the environmental historian William Cronon, as both far-off and alien. This perceived natural exoticness was then projected onto its inhabitants, whom these 19th-century observers often chose to view as the cultural »Other«. But this ambivalence can also be traced to ambiguities relating to Iceland's political and constitutional status in the past. Around the mid-19th century, when the various European powerhouses began to compete for colonies in Africa and Asia, the understanding of old subject relations between European centres and their peripheries began to change. This put Iceland's association with its metropole, Denmark, in a new light. Was Iceland to be classified as a Danish colony, similar to the new European colonies in Africa and Asia (or the old ones in the Caribbean region)? And, consequently, were the Icelanders to be regarded – just like the other subjects of European colonisation – as colonial »Others«, rather than as »proper« Europeans?

Iceland's constitutional status: province, colony or dependency?

The years around the mid-19th century were eventful in Danish political history. The absolute monarchy, established in the early 1660s, was abolished in 1848, leading to the passing of the first democratic constitution

gamle og den nye Verden, de have Aandskultur, Historie og Nationaludvikling nok, til at fortjene Navn af civiliserede, men have ogsaa til den Dag idag beholdt Naivetet og Ligeformhed, eller, om jeg saa maatte sige, National-uskuldighed og Naturlighed nok, til af det i Kulturens Misdannelse graanedes Europa stundum at beskyldes for Barbari. Island er saavel en geographisk, som en historisk Janus, der vender sit ene Aasyn mod det gamle civiliserede Europa, det andet mod det unge uskyldige Amerika. ... Dets baade nordlige og vestlige Beliggenhed er os endelig en Borgen for, at saavel Occidentalismens, som Nordiskhedens Princip der har hjemme; historisk har denne Ø godtgjort det, thi den har altid været Orientalismens og dens despotiske Tendenser modsat«. (THOMSEN: 1846, 5).

4 CRONON: 2011, vii.

for Denmark in June of the following year. Simultaneously, the Danes faced an open revolt by the German-speaking inhabitants of Schleswig-Holstein, challenging the duchies' association with Denmark.⁵ These events had a profound influence on Iceland's status within the monarchy, as it was not at all clear how to fit an old province of a »conglomerate state«, to use Harald Gustafsson's term,⁶ into a new state structure organised according to the modern rules of an integrated and democratic polity.⁷

In 1855, the eminent professor of law and rector of the University of Copenhagen, Johannes Ephraim Larsen, attempted to solve this dilemma in a short book he published in 1855 to celebrate King Frederik VII's 47th birthday. The essay was written as a response to growing demands in Iceland for increased autonomy, which he thought were based on serious misunderstanding of both the country's real rights and needs.⁸ Larsen's intention was to clarify Iceland's ambiguous position from legal and historical points of view, and thus to propose what he saw as the correct path for the island in the north – a path that would lead it out of its political limbo towards an appropriate place in the Danish constitutional monarchy. According to Larsen, Iceland's relation to the rest of the state was already defined by the island's unification with the Norwegian monarchy in the 13th century, after which, to quote his essay, »Iceland had to be, according to the union treaty, considered a country belonging and subject to the Norwegian Crown. It had definitely preserved certain privileges, but it could, all the same, already be regarded as a province of the accumulated Norwegian state.«⁹ This arrangement survived Iceland's transfer from Norway to Denmark, Larsen postulated, because the remote province had been subjected to exactly the same long and somewhat spasmodic development towards a modern polity as the rest of the monarchy. The main characteristics of this process were gradual homogenisation, where special privileges of the various provinces of the state were rescinded in order to form one, integrated unity. At the end of the process, Iceland had been reduced to the status of part of Denmark,

5 BJØRN: 1998.

6 GUSTAFSSON: 1998.

7 HÁLFÐANARSON: 2006.

8 LARSEN: 1855, 5.

9 »Island ifølge Foreningen maatte betragtes som et Norges Krone tilhørende og underkastet Land, der vistnok havde forbeholdt sig visse særegne Rettigheder, men dog vel allerede kunde betragtes som en Provinds af det samlede norske Rige«. (Ibid., 14).

Larsen contended, using the royal decree establishing the four Danish-German provincial estates (*Stænderforsamlinger*) in 1831 as proof; it »considers and treats Iceland as a part of ›Denmark‹«,¹⁰ he wrote, and thus the case was settled. Here he underscores the incompleteness of the earlier integration process by enclosing the name of the monarchy – »Denmark« – in quotation marks, thus subtly hinting that it was only with the passing of the June constitution of 1849 that Denmark had reached the final destination of its state-making process. Then – and only then – were the inverted commas, which had characterised the state structure of the absolute monarchy, been erased and »Denmark« transformed into Denmark.

It took only a few weeks for Jón Sigurðsson, the best-known advocate of Icelandic political nationalism at the time, to respond to Larsen's suppositions with a polemical tract of his own.¹¹ Sigurðsson's stated goal was to refute what he saw as the professor's failed attempt to define Iceland as »a region that has been integrated into the monarchy (or the province) of Denmark for a long period of time and that cannot make any legal claims to a special provincial independence«,¹² as Sigurðsson summed up Larsen's arguments. Iceland's official status in the state had always been unclear, Sigurðsson admitted, as the terminology used by the royal administration in various government documents and different legal contexts had constantly shifted throughout the centuries. Royal decrees, even those enacted in the same year, listed Iceland – often along with the neighbouring Faroe Islands and Greenland – interchangeably as a »province« (»Provinds«), a »dependency« (»Biland«), and a »colony« (»Colonie«), thus revealing both the imprecision of the government's taxonomy and, if Sigurðsson is to be believed, the Danish ministers' total ignorance of Iceland's proper relations to the state.¹³ Through a long and convoluted historical analysis, Sigurðsson sought to prove that all these designations were entirely false, at least as far as Iceland was concerned. Iceland had entered its union with Norway on the basis of a voluntary contract, he maintained, or as »a free, federated land« (»et frit Forbundsland«), rather

10 »... betragter og behandler Island som en Del af ›Danmark‹«. (Ibid., 34).

11 SIGURÐSSON: 1855.

12 »... en i Kongeriget (eller Provindsen) Danmark forlængst incorporeret Landsdeel, der ikke kan gjøre nogen retlig Fordring paa en særegen provindsiel Selvstændighed«. (Ibid., 3).

13 See *ibid.*, 77–80.

than through military conquest or forced submission. This had placed the country under the direct and personal rule of the Norwegian king,¹⁴ with no particular relation to the king's subjects in other parts of the realm – other than those that related to a common monarch. This contractual arrangement had never been abrogated, Sigurðsson claimed, and therefore it was still in force after almost six centuries of Norwegian and Danish rule in Iceland. For this reason, the new Danish constitution had no bearing on Icelandic affairs, a position which had been emphatically affirmed by an overwhelming majority of the representatives in a constituent assembly, convening in Reykjavík during the summer of 1851.¹⁵ Iceland was, therefore, neither a »colony« nor a »dependency«, according to his estimation, but an autonomous land in personal union with the Danish king – or, to use Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson's expression: Iceland was »a republic which slept for a few hundred years but has now awakened at the side of Denmark«.¹⁶

Although Larsen and Sigurðsson disagreed entirely on how to translate the muddled taxonomy of the old-regime Danish monarchy into the new language of the nation state, neither of these two gentlemen looked at Iceland as a Danish colony, at least not in the late 19th-century meaning of the term.¹⁷ According to Larsen's calculations, Iceland was simply to be integrated into the »modern« or »European« Danish nation state, not as an alien or subaltern entity but as an integral and ordinary part of a democratic constitutional monarchy. Sigurðsson, on the contrary, saw Iceland as a separate and, at least in a formal sense, equal partner in a monarchical union. Thus he thought that Iceland should follow the same modernising strategy as the rest of the monarchy – but on its own terms. In other words, Iceland was to evolve from being just one piece in a complex monarchical puzzle comprised of many different national communities and become an autonomous and sovereign European nation-state.

It was not all that clear to Sigurðsson or his fellow nationalists how a nation of less than 70,000 souls was to control its own affairs, but they all agreed on Iceland's constitutional rights in its relations with other parts

14 Ibid., 14.

15 KRISTJÁNSSON: 1993, 215–398.

16 »Það er lýðstjórnarríki (Republik), sem sofið hefir í nokkur hundruð ár, og nú hefir vaknað upp við hlið Danmerkr«. (N.N.: 1869, 138). This was an Icelandic translation of Bjørnson's article, which was originally published in *Norsk Folkeblad*, 24 April 1869.

17 On the changes in European colonialism, see FERRO: 1997.

of the monarchy. Since 1849, Iceland had been deprived of its rightful influence on »the general issues of the state«, Sigurðsson contended in an article he published in 1863, explaining Iceland's political relations to the Danish monarchy. Denmark and Schleswig »have no more legal right to rule over us than we have to rule over them«,¹⁸ he wrote, thus emphasising Iceland's parity with the core regions of the dispersed state, in spite of its poverty and underdevelopment. It cannot, therefore, be claimed that Jón Sigurðsson favoured »the term ›hjálanda‹ [dependency/*biland*]« when »describing Iceland's political position within the monarchy« or that he »promoted« this term as a part of his »deliberate strategy in the call for independence«, to quote two recent articles examining Iceland's purported colonial status in the past.¹⁹ In fact, Sigurðsson had equal contempt for both terms, calling the »biland« concept a recent Danish invention, used as »a collective expression for Iceland, the Faroe Islands and Greenland« in an attempt to deny his motherland what he regarded as its »rightful« place in the monarchy.²⁰

The Boreal in an Oriental perspective

It is instructive to see that one of the fundamental strands in Sigurðsson's arguments for Iceland's political autonomy was his opposition to the common practice of lumping the Danish North Atlantic islands together into one political and cultural category. This was an old practice, he contended, because as far back as the Middle Ages these three »western lands« (»vestlige Lande«) had all been termed as »tax provinces« (»Skatlande«) of the Norwegian king, »without any concern for their, from various points of view, diverse constitutional relations with Norway«. In the same manner, he continued, today people use »the expression ›dependency‹ equally for Iceland, the Faroe Islands as well as the colony of Greenland«. ²¹ There is a noticeable unease in his comment about Iceland's

18 »Enn fremur er alþíng alveg svipt því atkvæði sem það með réttu á í allsherjarmálum ríkisins og allsherjarþíngi ... vér vitum þó ekki til, að þessi lönd hafi í neinu meiri laga-rétt til umráða yfir oss, en vér yfir þeim«. (SIGURÐSSON: 1863, 2–3).

19 ELLENBERGER: 2009, 100; LUCAS and PARIGORIS: 2013, 90.

20 »Man opfandt iøvrigt ved denne Tid ... Ordet ›Biland‹, som et samlet Udtryk for Island, Færøerne og Grønland«. (SIGURÐSSON: 1855, 79).

21 »At Island benævnes Skatland var forsaavidt rigtigt, som deraf betaltes Skat til Kongen, men i dette Ord ligger forøvrigt intet fast politisk Begreb, hvilket tydeligst sees deraf, at alle de vestlige Lande, som stode i Forbindelse med Norge, kaldtes saaledes,

presence in the same category as »the *colony* of Greenland«, possibly because thereby Iceland was by implication classified with other colonies of his time. This was not an innocent act, of course, because increasingly the colonial label carried with it the stamp of inferiority, submission, uncivility, or »otherness«. To be a colony in the latter half of the 19th century meant to be outside of »Europe«, and thus to be excluded from the various privileges that came with membership of that exclusive club. This is what Partha Chatterjee means when he points out that for the British colonisers the supposedly universal rules of the West did not extend to their colonies. »The policy of responsible and democratic government«, he writes, quoting the early 20th-century British historian Vincent Smith,

supposed to be of universal application«, could not be applied to India because it went against »a deep stream of Indian tradition which has been flowing for thousands of years. ... The ordinary men and women of India do not understand impersonal government. ... They crave for government by a person to whom they can render loyal homage«. ²²

Through what Chatterjee calls a »rule of difference«, ²³ the colonies were divided from their European metropolises by impenetrable barriers, which by »the nature of things« gave the »West« the right – if not the duty – to reign over the »Rest«. »Europe« was the paragon, or the point of reference, to which the subalterns compared themselves but could never really emulate, as they were forced to linger on in a state of perpetual barbarianism – or »tradition«. The tendency is »to read Indian history in terms of a lack, an absence, or incompleteness that translates into ›inadequacy‹«, writes Dipesh Chakrabarty in his book *Provincialising Europe*, and thus the »Indians, Africans, and other ›rude‹ nations« are consigned »to an imaginary waiting room of history«. ²⁴ This was the crux of Orientalism, according to Edward Said, as in »19th-century Europe an imposing edifice of learning and culture was built ... in the face of actual outsiders (the colonies, the poor, the delinquent), whose role in culture was to give definition to what *they* were constitutionally unsuited for«. ²⁵

uagtet deres i flere Henseender forskjellige statsretlige Forhold til Norge, omtrent som man nu tildags bruger Udtrykket ›Biland‹ saavel om Island, som om Færøerne og Colnien Grönland«. (Ibid., 18).

22 CHATTERJEE: 1993, 16.

23 Ibid., 14–34.

24 CHAKRABARTY: 1999, 8 and 28.

25 SAID: 2003, 228.

It is not at all clear how to fit the North Atlantic into this Orientalist division of the world. In general, the labels »North« and »West« signified »modernity« and »civilisation« on the 19th-century Orientalist compass, while »South« and »East« denoted »tradition« and »backwardness«. In this spectral and hierarchical arrangement, Europe was to the north of Africa, and the Occident to the west of the Orient. But the geo-cultural spectrum did not automatically extend into the North Atlantic, as the terms »North« and »West« changed their social and cultural meanings when one sailed off from the coasts of continental Europe or Britain into the rough and open North Atlantic, or towards what is sometimes called *Vestnorden* – the »West Nordic region«. ²⁶ In some sense, this vast and sparsely populated space served as the symbolic edge of the industrialised corner of north-western Europe. In fact, to a growing number of 19th-century European travellers, the peculiar and varied geography of these three countries – the Faroe Islands, Greenland and Iceland – became a perfect confirmation of European normalcy, and the inhabitants of the exotic lands, mired in their »traditional lives« and ravished by their inhospitable environment, proved that »Europe« was indeed a privileged place in the world. In the light of this Boreal alterity, Europe was a natural *locus* for modernised civilisation and thus chosen to be the centre of power in an increasingly globalised economic system.

It has to be remembered, however, that these visitors always harboured a certain ambivalence towards the North Atlantic. First, one of the area's irresistible attractions in the eyes of 19th-century romantic tourists was the feeling that its sublime and mysterious nature served as a welcome antidote to bourgeois ennui. By visiting the »North«, the European felt that he or she had stepped out of society and entered nature, and thus come into contact with the Creator, or with his or her inner self, depending on how they visualised the counterpart to the alleged artificiality of modernity. To 19th-century tourists, the »North Atlantic« represented, therefore, not only the »rude«, or the »un-European«, but also the authentic and the sublime. Secondly, and this regards Iceland in particular, medieval manuscripts from this peripheral region, forming »a truly magnificent cultural heritage from the Old Norse period«, ²⁷ gave it a certain standing in the European intellectual hierarchy. The »Icelandic« (or

²⁶ Cf. THÓR et al.: 2012.

²⁷ LÖNNROTH: 1984, 120.

»Old Norse«) medieval literature played, in fact, a central role in the foundational myths of North European culture.²⁸ Thus Iceland was, in Adam Oehlenschläger's words »a holy island, memory's most magnificent temple«,²⁹ and for N. F. S. Grundtvig, medieval Iceland was, to quote one of his discourses on Nordic mythology, »a *spiritual Jomsborg*, founded in despair in order to preserve, if possible, the Old Norse vigour and freedom and to recall the past in all of its splendor ...«. ³⁰ These attitudes generated interest in many European circles for the cultural heritage of the North Atlantic, while they also created a strange enigma in the minds of the European tourists examining 19th-century Iceland: Why had the glorious civilisation, which had bequeathed the Eddas and the Sagas to posterity, deteriorated into its contemporary barbarian chaos?³¹

It is difficult to provide a general overview of these attitudes towards the North Atlantic societies, as no systemised body of knowledge existed about this region that was comparable with what had been developed about the Orient – meaning that the »North Atlantic« was not a clearly defined and distinctive »epistemological space«. ³² Thus there was no scientific or academic tradition of »Borealism« comparable to Said's Orientalism, with its canonical literature, intellectual persuasion, and acknowledged leading lights. We can, however, see certain discursive patterns in the descriptions of the North Atlantic societies in the extensive corpus of 19th-century European and American travel literature, which was produced to satisfy people's curiosity about the exotic and unknown.³³ Here I will use two examples to provide an idea of how 19th-century European travellers placed one of the North Atlantic islands, Iceland, into the cultural classificatory schemes of their time; or, in other words, to see how they fitted the inheritors of the Saga tradition into the prevailing 19th-century Orientalist and colonial world view.

28 Cf. HÁLF DANARSON: 2011a.

29 »Island! hellige Æe! Ihukommelsens vældigste Tempel!«. (OEHLenschläGER: 1805, 233).

30 »*Island*, seer Man nok, var egenlig et *aandeligt Jomsborg*, stiftet i Fortvivelse, for, om mueligt, at bevare den Old-Nordiske Kraft og Frihed, og tilbagekalde de svundne Tider i al deres Glands ...«. (GRUNDTVIG: 1852, 156).

31 This is a common theme in 19th-century descriptions of travels in Iceland; see, for example, BARING-GOULD: 1863, xlvi; cf. WAWN: 2000, 283–311.

32 Cf. COHN: 1996, 17–56.

33 The best surveys on this literature are THORODDSEN: 1892–1904, vols. 3–4 in particular, and ÍSLEIFSSON: 1996, 121–207; ÍSLEIFSSON: 2014; see also OSLUND: 2011.

Visit to Iceland

My first example is that of the Austrian globetrotter Ida Pfeiffer,³⁴ who published her *Reise nach dem skandinavischen Norden und der Insel Island im Jahre 1845* in 1846 (published in English as *Visit to Iceland and the Scandinavian North* in 1852).³⁵ The trip to Iceland was Pfeiffer's second major journey outside of her Central European comfort zone, as a few years earlier she had toured through the Middle East. The contrast between the Holy Land and Iceland could not be starker, but the fact that the North Atlantic island was the second destination in her short but illustrious career as a full-time explorer was not a total coincidence. She explains her choice of the latter in the prologue to her book:

I chose Iceland for my destination because I hoped there to find Nature in a garb such as she wears nowhere else. I feel so completely happy, so brought into communion with my Maker when I contemplate sublime natural phenomena that in my eyes no degree of toil or difficulty is too great a price at which to purchase such perfect enjoyment.³⁶

To judge from Pfeiffer's descriptions, Icelandic nature lived entirely up to her expectations. The weather was certainly harsher than what she had experienced on her Oriental tour – »I found the dreadful storms of wind,« she writes, »the piercing air, the frequent rain, and the cold much less endurable than the Oriental heat, which never gave me cracked lips or caused scales to appear on my face.«³⁷ But inclement weather did not offset, to quote, the »beautiful effect« of an Icelandic sunset, »seen in the sublime wildness of Icelandic scenery«. And similarly to so many travelers in Iceland, now and in the past, the open and destitute landscapes of this volcanic and barren island affected her immensely. »The most impressive feature of all is the profound silence and solitude; not a sound can be heard, not a living creature is to be seen; every thing [*sic*] appears dead. ... The eye wanders over the vast desert, and finds no one familiar object on which it can rest.«³⁸ Standing at the summit of the volcano Mount Hekla, which she climbed barely two months before it erupted for

34 On Pfeiffer's life and travels, see N.N.: 1879; JEHLE: 1989; HABINGER: 2004.

35 All quotations are taken from the 2nd edition of the English translation, published in 1853; the translator is unknown.

36 PFEIFFER: 1853, ix.

37 Ibid., 92.

38 Ibid., 122.

the first time in almost 80 years,³⁹ she »could see far into the uninhabited country, the picture of petrified creation, dead and motionless, and yet magnificent – a picture which once seen can never again fade from memory, and which alone amply compensates for all the previous troubles and dangers«. It is interesting to note that while she thanked her »Maker« for allowing her to experience »this chaos in his Creation«, she also »thanked him more heartily that he has placed me to dwell in regions where the sun does more than merely give light«. That is, the terrifying experience of standing at the top of an Icelandic volcano taught her to appreciate the sweet and fertile fields of her European home.⁴⁰

While Pfeiffer was riveted by Icelandic landscapes, she was less impressed by the people who lived on this desolate island. Preparing for her trip, she had learned from history books »that the first immigrants had emigrated thither from civilised states« and therefore she »expected to find Iceland a real Arcadia in regard to its inhabitants, and rejoiced at the anticipation of seeing such an Idyllic life realised«. ⁴¹ What she found, however, was a far cry from what she had expected. The »so-called higher classes«, she informed her readers, were both heartless and impolite,⁴² and the lower classes were even worse. According to her accounts, the Icelandic peasants were greedy, prone to drunkenness and »insuperably lazy«. ⁴³ »What nature voluntarily gives«, she postulates, »they are satisfied with, and it never occurs to them to force more from her. If a few German peasants were transported hither, what a different appearance the country would soon have!« ⁴⁴ According to Pfeiffer, the Icelandic peasants' worst vice was, however, their uncleanliness, which disgusted her greatly. They »seem to have no feeling for propriety«, she asserted, »and I must, in this respect, rank them as far inferior to the Bedouins and Arabs – even to the Greenlanders. I can, therefore, not conceive how this nation could once have been distinguished for wealth, bravery, and civilisation.« ⁴⁵

39 ÞÓRARINSSON: 1968, 119–145.

40 PFEIFFER: 1853, 166.

41 *Ibid.*, 174–175.

42 *Ibid.*, 175.

43 *Ibid.*, 179.

44 *Ibid.*, 180.

45 *Ibid.*, 153.

Pfeiffer's attitudes towards Icelandic society and customs are presented in a series of impressionistic remarks rather than through systemised or scientific observations, but one can discern from her text that she places the country and its inhabitants conclusively outside of what she considered to be »Europe« or »European«. To her, therefore, the Icelanders should be classified with what were generally seen as the »inferior peoples« of the Arctic North, such as »the Greenlanders, Esquimaux, or Laplanders«. ⁴⁶ Moreover, the Icelanders' reactions when they met a »civilised European« resembled the intrusive curiosity which is often thought to characterise »primitive« people. »I was, it appeared«, Pfeiffer writes of her encounters with rural Icelanders, »quite a novel phenomenon in the eyes of these good people, and they came one and all and stared at me. The women and children were, in particular, most unpleasantly familiar; they felt my dress, and the little ones laid their dirty countenances in my lap.« ⁴⁷ The reasons she gives for this behaviour are not racial, however, nor does she explain them with the Icelandic nation's alleged »biological essence«. Rather, she traces the Icelanders' backwardness and alleged barbarianism to the country's remoteness and its inhabitants' lack of communication with the »civilised« world. This was a certain revelation to Pfeiffer, who had, prior to her journey to Iceland, deemed the Icelanders' morality as:

sufficiently secured by their isolated position, and the poverty of the country. No large town there affords opportunity for pomp or gaiety, or for the commission of smaller or greater sins. Rarely does a foreigner enter the island, whose remoteness, severe climate, inhospitality, and poverty, are uninviting. ⁴⁸

But on closer inspection, the Icelandic »state of nature« proved to be rather unappealing, as the inhabitants in their »natural state« bore more resemblance to wild beasts than to noble savages. The fact was, she realised, that civilisation – as she understood the word – was an urban and European cultural phenomenon, and it could only be fostered in the periphery through the peoples' constant interaction with »Europe« and a systematic imitation of metropolitan conduct.

Interestingly, there are no direct references in Pfeiffer's text to the conventional colonial discourses of the 19th century – she seems, in fact,

⁴⁶ Ibid., 179.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 136.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 174–175.

to have been fairly unconcerned with Iceland's constitutional relations with Denmark. Coming from the archetypical European empire of the *ancien régime* type, and writing her account before the nationalist uprisings of 1848, Iceland's position as a Danish province must have appeared absolutely natural to her. She therefore arranged the people she met in Iceland according to their social class rather than their nationality, which was of limited interest to her. The reader is rarely informed if they were of Danish or Icelandic descent, although she mentions in passing that it was »a rare occurrence to find an Icelander who understands the Danish language«,⁴⁹ thus hinting at the potential ethnic difference between Icelanders and Danes.

It »was comparatively easy« to leave Iceland, writes Ida Pfeiffer of her last day in Reykjavík. »Although I had seen many wonderful views, many new and interesting natural phenomena, I yet longed for my accustomed fields, in which we do not find magnificent and overpowering scenes, but lovelier and more cheerful ones.«⁵⁰ Thus, after a sojourn of more than ten weeks, the sublime North had served its purpose of reconciling the bourgeois European with her tame and bountiful homeland; she was ready to leave wilderness for civilisation.

Poor Iceland!

The second traveller discussed here is the French writer Victor Meignan, who traversed Iceland sometime in the 1880s.⁵¹ The exact year of his trip is not known, but his book on the journey from Copenhagen to the Faroe Islands and Iceland was published in 1889 under the title of *Pauvre Islande!* (»Poor Iceland!«).⁵² This »passionate tourist, lover of the arts and local colour«, as he portrayed himself in his first travel account from 1873,⁵³ had already published three books on his excursions to diverse exotic lands; the first was a book on his trip to Egypt and Nubia (1873),

49 Ibid., 114.

50 Ibid., 182.

51 Not much is known about Victor Meignan's life other than that he was born in Paris in 1846 (N.N.: 1887, 252) and died in 1938, at 92 years of age. According to a short obituary in *Le Figaro*, Meignan was »un ancien zouave pontifical« and a knight of the papal order of St Sylvestre. (N.N.: 1938).

52 MEIGNAN: 1889.

53 »Touriste passionné, amant des arts et de la couleur locale ...«. MEIGNAN: 1873, iv.

the second described his journey from Paris to Beijing, through Siberia and Mongolia (1877), and in the third book he took the reader to the Antilles Islands in the Caribbean Sea (1878).

Pauvre Islande followed the same pattern as Meignan's other travel accounts, as an unknown contemporary reviewer pointed out in his assessment of the book in the French literary magazine *Le Livre*. The book's main function was to introduce to the French reading public, to quote the review, one of »the countries least visited and, consequently, among the most interesting, both because of how difficult it is to penetrate and for the strangeness of its unchangeable customs, without any contacts with our civilisation«. ⁵⁴ *Pauvre Islande* proved to be Meignan's last published travel account, which might indicate that he felt he had completed his »Oriental« grand tour by exploring the high north. After this trip, there was simply not much left for him to say or to describe.

Meignan's deliberate strategy seems, in fact, to have been to explore and unveil the subaltern for the French reading public. Early in his first book he explains, for example, why he omitted the cities of Alexandria and Cairo from his description of Egypt and Nubia; the first because it had become »almost European« (»presque européenne«), and thus of limited interest to readers, and the latter because it »is losing, day-by-day, its Oriental characteristics«. ⁵⁵ Moreover, his works were under the obvious influence of the imperialist spirit of his time. Thus, he dedicates a substantial part of his book on the Antilles to explain the alleged benefits of slavery – not only for the slave owners but also for the slaves themselves. ⁵⁶ Originally these unfortunate people had been freed from their »savage masters« in Africa and placed under a European (preferably French) »civilised master« in the »New World«. When, through their service for the white slave owners, »the negroes ... were gradually civilised, and even educated« and thus (partially at least) turned into human

54 »M. Victor Meignan voyage pour son plaisir, et son plaisir est de parcourir les contrées les moins fréquentées et par conséquent les plus intéressantes tant par la difficulté d'y pénétrer que par l'étrangeté des mœurs restées elles-mêmes, sans contact avec notre civilisation«. (N.N.: 1889).

55 »Caire aussi perd de jour en jour son aspect oriental«. (MEIGNAN: 1873, 4–5).

56 MEIGNAN: 1878, 31–48.

beings, Europeans finally »understood the necessity and the duty of abolishing slavery«. ⁵⁷

Meignan brought these preconceptions with him on his trip to the Faroe Islands and Iceland. As he sailed across the North Sea from Copenhagen, into the open North Atlantic, he left the comforts of civilisation behind and entered rude wilderness. »The Faroe Islands are definitely a most savage country, most abandoned, most dismal«, ⁵⁸ Meignan writes in describing his first impressions of the Faroese archipelago. This sensation became even starker as he reached Iceland and travelled across the island on horseback. Icelandic nature is alluring, he admits, but for all the wrong reasons. »It attracts«, he informed his readers, in the same way »as the empty, as suffering, as wickedness. It attracts in spite of its horror, in spite of its diabolic and infernal features caused by sulphurous odours and the colours of still warm volcanic slag.« ⁵⁹ His distaste for Icelandic scenery was clearly caused by its deviation from the norms he was brought up with – thus although Iceland certainly »possessed high mountains, numerous waterfalls, glaciers and lakes«, he states, or the typical landmarks of sublime landscapes, »one cannot say that any part of it has the slightest charm«. ⁶⁰ At the completion of his trip across the highlands, he contrasted the Icelandic vista to »our beautiful countries of Europe«. In »Europe«, the land rested during the night, he writes, »regaining new life for productive work, and new youth« at dawn. In contrast, the dark desserts around the farm of Kalmanstunga in western Iceland, surrounded by glaciers, suggested the endless night of the Icelandic winter – »this night turns these solitudes, already terrifying in the light of day, into appalling horror«. ⁶¹ Riding through sites like these, his mind could not but

57 »Plus tard, quand ces nègres, au contact de blancs, se furent peu à peu civilisés et même instruits, l'Europe tout entière comprit la nécessité, le devoir de l'abolition de l'esclavage«. (Ibid., x, 37).

58 »Les îles Féroë sont assurément les contrées les plus sauvages, les plus abandonnées, les plus lugubres ...«. (MEIGNAN: 1889, 4).

59 »Celle-ci attire comme le vide, comme la souffrance et comme le vice. Elle attire malgré son horreur, malgré l'aspect diabolique, infernal que lui donnent son odeur de soufre et les teintes de ses scories encore chaudes«. (Ibid., 26).

60 »Bien que l'Islande possède de hautes montagnes, de nombreuses cascades, des glaciers et des lacs, on ne peut dire d'aucune de ses parties qu'elle a du charme«. (Ibid., 98).

61 »Contrairement à la nature de nos belles contrées européennes, qui semblent en quelque sort se reposer pendant la nuit bienfaisante des utiles ardeurs du jour et reprendre pour le travail de la fécondité une nouvelle vie, et une nouvelle jeunesse, les

wander back home, to »the pleasant valleys of certain corners of France, with their rich pastures and abundant harvests«. ⁶²

It was not only unfamiliar landscapes which separated the Faroe Islands and Iceland from »Europe« in the eyes of Victor Meignan. Both places were Danish colonies, he repeatedly reminded his readers, a designation that implied both an indelible stigma of otherness and the inevitable destiny of submission. And all his experiences in Iceland confirmed these preconceptions. Icelandic manners and behaviour appeared childish, rude and uncivilised to him. Their food was disgusting, their houses were filthy, and their patriotism was absurd. »Although they are, in my opinion«, he writes of the Icelandic lower classes,

the most unfortunate people in the world, the most deprived when it comes to the endowments of nature and the things which are produced by human industry, they display almost scornful haughtiness, which manifests itself in a complete illusion when it comes to the subjects of their country and their own proper value. Also one could say of the Icelanders that they are poor without being picturesque, melancholic (because they never laugh) without being poetic, and that they suffer in a thousand ways without being interesting. ⁶³

The Icelandic upper crust, as Meignan described it, was not much better. The bishop's reputation was very suspect, he surmised, as he was told that it was a tradition for English tourists in Iceland »to get the Protestant bishop in Reykjavík drunk«. ⁶⁴ Moreover, the judges of the high court were absolutely useless; they »wore magnificent costumes and received rather fat salaries«, but »their only occupation is to study, whenever nature al-

plaines arides de Kalmanstunga, les Jokúlls neigeux qui les entourent, les glaciers inaccessibles qui les dominent, paraissaient plutôt épouvantés du voir la constante et épaisse nuit de l'hiver les envahir peu à peu; cette nuit qui doit faire de ces solitudes, déjà terribles pendant les clartés du jour, une épouvantable horreur«. (Ibid., 175).

62 »... les riantes vallées de certains coins de la France, pleines de gras pâturages et d'abondantes moissons«. (Ibid., 197).

63 »... bien qu'ils soient, à mon avis, les plus malheureuses gens du monde, les plus déshérités des dons de la nature et de ceux provenant de l'industrie humaine, ils affichent une fierté quasi dédaigneuse qui montre leur complète illusion au sujet de leur pays et de leur propre valeur. Aussi peut-on dire des Islandais qu'ils sont pauvres sans être pittoresques, mélancoliques, car ils ne rient jamais, sans être poétiques, et qu'ils souffrent de mille manières sans être intéressants«. (Ibid., 45-46).

64 »C'est une tradition ... en Angleterre, parmi ceux qui font le voyage d'Islande« he claims to have heard from an English tourist in Iceland; »on doit traverser un jokúll ou glacier, faire sauter un geyzer ... et puis griser l'évêque protestant de Reykjavik«. (Ibid., 162-163, 260).

lowed it, the aurora borealis.«⁶⁵ Finally the governor (*amtmand*) of the north-eastern district, whom he met on the ship on the way to Iceland, was a ridiculous simpleton – »un veritable enfant«. This district governor »was an Icelander«, Meignan adds, because »what European would indeed accept such an office?«⁶⁶ The only respite he found in this cultural and social desert was a French frigate, *L'Actif*, which was stationed in the harbour of the town of Akureyri in northern Iceland. Invited aboard, he finally felt at home:

On these French planks, I found again the true French cheerfulness, the French spirit and – something that should not be belittled – French wine and, above all, French bread. In this manner, one breathes in, from afar, the air of one's fatherland, by savouring the best it has to offer. This is, I would say, to walk on one's true native soil, because the deck of a French warship – *that* is France; in reality, one is in France at the same time as one's gaze can survey at one's pleasure the panorama of all the curiosities of the surrounding foreign country. This is certainly one of the sweetest things and the most complete enjoyment one can taste.⁶⁷

But to Meignan's great surprise, even the few people in Iceland he regarded as civilised and educated tended to love this »incomprehensible« country, in spite of »its barrenness, its darkness, its horrors«.⁶⁸ The thought of spending the winter in a place of constant darkness filled him with terror and the continuous daylight during the summer disrupted his sleep. Thus he heartily rejoiced when he entered the port of Edinburgh on his way back to France. »Never had Europe, not even after travelling the farthest and for the longest time, looked as hospitable and as charming to me«, he stated. Finally he was back on familiar ground: »The busy life of the big city, the action, the lights, the vehicles – which are totally

65 »Les juges actuels portent un magnifique costume et reçoivent d'assez gros appointements; mais leur unique occupation est de considérer, toutes les fois que la nature le leur permet, les aurores boréales«. (Ibid., 261).

66 »... il était Islandais, et, en effet, quel Européen accepterait de pareilles fonctions?«. (Ibid., II).

67 »Sur ces planches françaises, j'ai retrouvé la vraie gaieté française, l'esprit français et, ce qui n'est pas à dédaigner, des vins français et surtout du pain français. Respirer ainsi au loin un air de sa patrie, en savourer les meilleures choses, que dis-je, fouler le vrai sol natal, car le pont d'un vaisseau de guerre français, c'est la France; donc en réalité être en France, tandis que le regard peut se promener à son aise comme dans un panorama sur toutes les curiosités du pays étranger qui est à l'entour, c'est là certainement une des plus douces et des plus complètes jouissances que l'on puisse goûter«. (Ibid., 40).

68 Ibid., 277.

absent in Iceland because it has not a single road – were for me as the pleasure of meeting again old friends.«⁶⁹

Iceland as the Other

It is tempting to explain the strong sense of alterity which characterises Pfeiffer's and Meignan's descriptions of Iceland and Icelandic culture by the country's status as a subaltern subject of »Danish colonialism« or Danish »colonial rule«.⁷⁰ The problem with this approach is, however, the fact that Iceland's connections with Denmark bore limited resemblance to the imperialist relations between the 19th-century European metropolises and their African and Asian colonies. Here Iceland benefitted from the racial prejudices that inspired European imperialism, because whatever negative image people had of the Icelanders, they were definitely »white« and, at least to some Danes, historically Icelandic culture was intricately linked with Scandinavian cultural development. This sheltered Iceland from the colonial gaze because, to quote Georg Nørregaard's description of what was, according to him, »one of the proudest chapters in European later history«, colonialism was essentially about the »the expansion of the white race over the globe«.⁷¹ Iceland could not, for that reason, be peddled off to the highest bidder on the colonial market, which is what the Danish authorities did with their colonies in Africa, Asia, and the Caribbean in the 19th and early 20th centuries.⁷² In fact, from the beginning of the 1840s, the Danes had fully acknowledged the existence of an Icelandic nation, endowed with certain political rights and an inherent capacity to govern itself. Thus, the country's gradual development towards full sovereignty occurred via a protracted process of nego-

69 »Jamais l'Europe, même après des voyages plus lointains et plus prolongés, ne m'avait paru si hospitalière et si charmante ... cette vie active d'une grande ville, le mouvement, l'éclairage, les voitures dont l'Islande est absolument privée, puisqu'elle ne possède pas une route, étaient pour moi autant de vieux amis que je retrouvais avec plaisir.« Ibid., 280. In spite (or maybe because) of its rather bizarre descriptions of Iceland, Meignan's work affected French perceptions of the country in the late 19th century, as can be seen from a bulletin in *Le Petit Parisien* in 1893 on prospective massive emigration from Iceland to America (FROLLO: 1893).

70 PÁLSSON: 1995, 12–13.

71 »Et af de stolteste Kapitler i Europas nyere Historie handler om den hvide Races Udbredelse over vor Klode«. (NØRREGAARD: 1934, 335; cf. NØRREGAARD: 1967, 107–130).

72 LOFTSDÓTTIR: 2012a, 60; OSLUND: 2002.

tiations between Icelandic and Danish parliamentarians rather than by decisions dictated unilaterally from above – or forced through a colonial uprising.

This does not mean, however, that postcolonial critique cannot be used to explain how Iceland was discursively constructed in the 19th century, or how these constructions informed people's perceptions of the island and its people; that is, »colonial situations«, to use Frantz Fanon's term,⁷³ occurred not only in colonies.⁷⁴ Here it is useful to remember that the meaning of the concept of »colony« shifted through time, and therefore we have to be careful when comparing its use in different historical epochs.⁷⁵ The 13 colonies which founded the United States in 1770s and 1780s had, for example, very little in common with the Belgian Congo of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, except for the colonial label – and hence the United States' »postcolonial« status was quite different from the status of the former African colonies of today. In the same manner, when the Faroe Islands, Greenland and Iceland were called »Colonier« in 18th-century Danish royal decrees, the officials who wrote these legal documents had a very different phenomenon in mind to Victor Meignan when he described these places as »les colonies danoises«. Finally, it has to be taken into account that Orientalism, as defined by Edward Said, deals not exclusively with former colonies. Thus, Turkey is frequently subjected to Orientalist prejudices, in spite of the fact that what is now modern Turkey was for centuries the centre of a huge and complex empire and has never been ruled over by a European colonial power.⁷⁶

What concerns us here, therefore, is not so much if Iceland was a colony in the strict sense of the word or not, but rather to understand why European travellers perceived it as a subaltern Other. In Pfeiffer's and Meignan's texts we can see that they approached Iceland with a sharp and dichotomous vision of the world in their minds, where people were divided into »us« (»the Europeans«) and those who were not like »us«, but were »the Others«. To them Europe signified reason, progress, modernity, prosperity, civility, complex urban life and a cultivated and regulated countryside, and they found none of these markers of civilisation in

73 FANON: 1967, 85.

74 Cf. HERZFELD: 2002 and HERZFELD: 2010.

75 Cf. KLOR DE ALVA: 1995 and COOPER: 2005.

76 Cf. DERINGIL: 2003.

Iceland. Therefore they defined Iceland as »un-European« – or, at best, as »almost [but not quite] a European country«.77 This division was, of course, based on human perceptions rather than facts, as Europe does not exist as a fixed geographic place but only as a fleeting and contested »imaginary entity«.78 In this ideological order the »Other« was the negative image of that impression – that is, the »Other« was what »Europe« was not. These discursive constructions are immensely important, not only because they instil a sense of superiority in the minds of those in a position of power, but also because they determine, to a great degree, how the »Others« see themselves. This is the reason why Frantz Fanon claims that his intention with his influential book *Peau noire, masques blancs* (*Black Skin, White Masks*) was »the liberation of the man of colour from himself«.79 Like »any set of durable ideas«, writes Edward Said on the same issue, »Orientalist notions influenced the people who were called Orientals as well as those called Occidentals, European, or Western.«80 These ideas are, therefore, structuring structures, to use Pierre Bourdieu's clarification of the term *habitus*, or a system of ideas that is based on people's observations of the world at the same time as it forms how people observe the world.81

It is instructive, in this respect, to see how Icelandic commentators responded to their own alleged alterity, or to what we could call the »Borealist« visions of Iceland and Icelandic culture. They certainly rejected what they saw as the worst excesses in these descriptions,82 but rather than questioning the framework of these ideas or the premises on which they were based, they fought for Iceland's inclusion in the select group of »Europeans«. In order to do so, Icelandic opinion makers did what they could to differentiate themselves from their neighbouring »Others«, viz. the other peoples of the Nordic North Atlantic. One recurrent theme in

77 »... un pays presque européen« (MEIGNAN: 1889, 251) – which was incidentally the same grade as Victor Meignan gave the city of Alexandria a few years earlier, as mentioned above.

78 CHAKRABARTY: 2000, 43; cf. PAGDEN: 2002 and MALMBORG and STRÅTH: 2002.

79 FANON: 1967, 8.

80 SAID: 2003, 42.

81 *Habitus* are »structurées prédisposées à fonctionner comme structures structurantes«. (BOURDIEU: 1980, 87–109; quotation is from p. 88).

82 Cf. Jón Stefánsson's review of *Pauvre Islande!* in one of the Icelandic newspapers; STEFÁNSSON: 1890.

various Icelandic self-representations in the late 19th and early 20th centuries was, indeed, the fear of being classified as *skrælingjar* or *skrælings*, that is, as »savages« – or, more correctly, as Inuit.⁸³ One example of these attitudes can be found in the arguments of Sigurður Guðmundsson, better known as »Sigurður málari« (»Sigurður the Painter«) for founding a national museum in Reykjavík during the early 1860s. One of the main purposes of such an institution, Guðmundsson wrote in a newspaper article published in 1864, was to »free us from the opinions of foreigners, who think that we have always been *defenceless* weaklings who have never been able to feed ourselves, nor have had anything but *mud huts* to crawl into like barbarians [*skrælingjar*].«⁸⁴ Similar reasons were used to support the idea of establishing a university in Iceland in 1911. »The only thing other nations know about us now«, declared one of its main advocates in the parliament,

is that we are members of the so-called Society of the Atlantic Islands [*Foreningen De danske Atlanterhavsøer*], which we call the Society of Barbarians [*Skrælingjafélagið*]. Everyone knows that Eskimos live in Greenland, and they also know that Greenland is a member of the Society of Atlantic Islands. This association makes people believe that Eskimos live in Iceland. It has been impressed upon people for centuries that only barbarians live here because barbarians live in Greenland.⁸⁵

This was not a new complaint, as Icelandic commentators had for years vigorously protested the country's connection with what they called the »Skrælingjafélag«, where »the nation was permitted to be placed on a Danish cord, together with the Faroese, barbarians, and negroes, like one bead on a rosary«, to quote one newspaper article from 1904.⁸⁶ In order to counteract these foreign attitudes, Icelandic opinion makers attempted

83 On the origins and development of the term, see SEAVER: 2008.

84 »... að fría oss frá því áliti útlendra, að vér ætíð höfum verið *varnarlausir* aumingjar, sem ekkert höfum átt í oss og á, og ekkert nema *moldarkofa* að skriða inn í eins og skrælingjar ...«. (GUÐMUNDSSON: 1864, 45).

85 »Það helzta sem aðrar þjóðir vita um okkur nú er, að við erum í félagi, sem heitir Atlantshafseyjafélagið, sem við köllum Skrælingjafélag –. En allir vita, að í Grænlandi búa Eskimóar, og þeir vita líka, að Grænland er í Atlantshafseyjafélaginu, og einmitt þetta hugmyndasamband kemur því til leiðar, að menn halda að hér búi Eskimóar. Þessu hefir líka verið barið inn í þjóðirnar, að hér byggju ekki aðrir en skrælingjar, af því að skrælingjar búi í Grænlandi«. (*Alþingistíðindi*: 1911, 550; see also HÁLFÐANARSON: 2011b).

86 »... þeir hugsa til þess að þjóðin fær að vera á danskri seil með Færeilingum, skrælingjum og svertingjum eins og hnappur á talnabandi«. (ÞRÁNDUR: 1904; see also JÓHANNSON: 2003).

to move the Icelanders inside the walls of the privileged by disassociating the nation from other outsiders – that is, by orientalising the Faroese and the Inuit. In other words, for Icelanders to become »European«, they had to drive a wedge between themselves and their neighbours, and thus to reject the very notion of a unified Nordic North Atlantic socio-cultural, historical and political space.

Icelandic cultural politics during the first decades of the last century were, to a large degree, conceived as a response to what Icelandic authorities and intellectuals saw as the unfortunate and unfounded perceptions of themselves by Europeans. Through a combined strategy of exalting the Icelandic »cultural essence«, as it was manifested in Icelandic medieval literature (or the Old Norse literature transcribed in Icelandic manuscripts), and calling for thorough modernisation of Icelandic cultural life according to accepted European standards, Icelandic intellectuals attempted to cleanse the nation of the subaltern stigma.⁸⁷ In this way they wanted both to raise Iceland's status in the eyes of foreign visitors and to train their compatriots to behave in a »civilised« manner, to act like »real Europeans«. To them, the correct position of Iceland was neither to be an exotic Other, nor to play the role of a Janus, stuck between the old world and the new; Iceland deserved to be an integral part of the »modern« and »civilised« Europe.

Where and what is Iceland?

»So where and what is Iceland?« asks the historian Karin Oslund in her recent book, *Iceland Imagined: Nature, Culture and Storytelling in the North Atlantic*. »Is it part of ›Europe‹ or a technologically advanced and prosperous part of the ›third world‹? Or is it something in between?«⁸⁸; that is, to use Chakrabarty's terminology, should we consider Iceland as a part of the »imaginary entity« Europe, or is it stuck, with other »rude nations«, in the »imaginary waiting room of history«? There are no consistent or clear-cut answers to these questions, as we have seen from the examples examined above. Formally, Iceland went through the same transformation as many other comparable provinces of former European composite states in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, founding an in-

87 See a detailed analysis of Icelandic cultural politics in RASTRICK: 2013.

88 OSLUND: 2011, 6–7.

dependent nation state through a nationalist »awakening« and »a struggle for independence«. Moreover, with its membership in various international associations, Iceland has been officially recognised as both a Nordic and a European country, although Icelanders themselves have hesitated to take the ultimate step of joining the European Union. Economically and culturally Iceland has also followed a similar track to its neighbouring countries, occupying comparable ranks in most international statistical indices as the other Nordic countries. Thus the case should be closed, but still the question lingers – where and what is Iceland?

There are many reasons why people still doubt Iceland's »European-ness«. Firstly, »Europe« is not a God-given fact but is a culturally and politically constructed category, as Oslund correctly points out in her analysis. It is, therefore, always a choice – at least to a degree – where the geographic boundaries are drawn around Europe. That choice is not made once and for all, and will necessarily depend on subjective and personal assessments that are both debated and debatable. Secondly, from the beginning of the Icelandic state-making process in the mid-19th century, observers have questioned if the country could live up to its ambitions of becoming a »real« European state. This is the reason why J. E. Larsen thought it would be in Iceland's best interests to accept its integration into a democratic and modern Denmark, although most commentators agreed that culturally Iceland was a separate nation. Later, the well-known Danish critic Georg Brandes mocked Icelandic demands for autonomy by comparing it to the possible secession of the island of Amager: »Doesn't Christianshavn have more inhabitants than Reykjavík?« he asked in an ironic article titled »Amager's Secession« (»Amagers Løsrivelse«). »When the King goes to Reykjavík, a kind of a shack has to be built to house him; otherwise there would be no accommodation for him.«⁸⁹ Finally, visitors have generally found Icelandic nature to be exotic and alien, and this has often coloured their perceptions of the country and its inhabitants. The first impression that people have when they visit Iceland is »a sense of confusion, of disorientation bordering on illness«, Oslund writes on this subject, and thus the first impressions of 21st-centu-

89 »Naar Kongen drager til Reykjavik, maa dør bygges en Art Skur til Husly for ham; ellers var der ikke Plads«. (BRANDES: 1910, 376). Brandes wrote two articles in *Politiken* in December 1906 on this issue, »Amagers Løsrivelse« (16 December) and »Amagers Flag« (22 December) under the pseudonym Jens Piter Jespersen. They were later republished in his collected works (*ibid.*, 375–382).

ry travellers coming to Iceland are, she claims, not all that different from what their counterparts in the 18th or 19th centuries felt when they came to the country for the first time. »This confusion is one of the ways in which the traveller realises that he or she has arrived in the borderlands«, she continues, »a place that is just slightly off the edges of the map of the known world.«⁹⁰ In this sense, Iceland is not really »in between« an old and a new world, as Grímur Thomsen envisioned Iceland, but on the borders between Europe and nothingness. Using Fredrik Barth's observation that identities are constructed on the borders, Oslund therefore sees Iceland as a prism through which we can examine how Europe has been constructed: »By looking at the edges of Europe in the North Atlantic, we can understand what it means to be European by identifying which aspects of life on these borders that traveling Europeans found to be exotic, strange, and disconcerting.«⁹¹ The last point was obviously at play in Ida Pfeiffer's and Victor Meignan's descriptions of their travels in Iceland. Both reflected their identity as Europeans in Iceland's supposed alterity – that is, through othering Iceland, they normalised themselves.

Icelanders have always had ambivalent attitudes towards these perceptions of themselves. They struggled hard to be seen and to act as »normal Europeans«, and thus to counteract what they regarded as erroneous descriptions of themselves and their country. At the same time, in recent years the Icelandic tourist industry and cultural marketing agencies have branded Iceland as what Ann-Sofie Nielsen Gremaud calls a »European hetero-image«, or as the »natural« and »exotic« Other.⁹² The conclusion seems to be, therefore, that although we can dream of a utopian world where »there are only other human beings« and the category of »the Other« has been abandoned altogether, as Robert J.C. Young advises his readers in a recent appraisal of postcolonial critique,⁹³ the practice of othering is unlikely to disappear any time soon. In other words, as long as people continue to imagine themselves to be members of particular communities, they seem to need »the Other« to confirm that imagination.

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90 OSLUND: 2011, 169.

91 Ibid., 6–7.

92 GREMAUD: 2012; see also LOFTSDÓTTIR: 2012b.

93 YOUNG: 2012, 38–39.

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KRISTÍN LOFTSDÓTTIR

Icelandic Identities in a Postcolonial Context

Introduction

I was at a parents' day at my eight-year-old son's school, where the class had prepared a little play. My son, the narrator of the play, stood in front of his classmates and the parents and began to speak: »Once upon a time, Iceland was a colony and then ...« The play was about Jón Sigurðsson, who – as my son had explained to me the day before – was the hero who had brought »us« Icelanders independence. The plot of the story was strikingly similar to the history that I had learned myself in primary school, a history in which Iceland was an oppressed Danish colony that gained its independence in the mid-20th century.

Postcolonial perspectives can be seen as coming into being in different disciplines in various ways,¹ and as scholars have discussed, it is not fruitful to view postcolonialism as a condition that literally follows a period of colonialism; instead it is more helpful to focus on the »contestation of colonial domination and the legacies of colonialism«.² By employing this approach, postcolonial scholars have demonstrated that European identities have to be seen as the product of European relationships with the »outside« world and highlighted the importance of recognising colonialism as a key factor in shaping different European identities.³

My discussion here centres on the relevance of postcolonial insights in the exploration Icelandic identity in the past and the complexities of the postcolonial present. I benefit from the work of scholars who have pointed out that postcolonial perspectives need to provide more nuanced understandings of how colonial subjects were made and subjugated,⁴ as well as of the ways in which colonialism shaped the colonisers themselves, in order that we avoid the trap of drawing overly simplistic boundaries between colonised and colonisers.⁵ Many of these scholars have also stressed the importance of not overgeneralising a colonial expe-

1 LOOMBA et al.: 2005, 3.

2 Ibid., 12.

3 GILROY: 1993, 3.

4 Cf. DIRKS: 1992.

5 Cf. SMITH: 1994.

rience⁶ or constructing it as a totalising narrative.⁷ These insights thus point attention to the different ways in which colonialism as ideology and practice affected different parts of the world and how people were turned into subjects not only in the colonies themselves, but also in European countries – that continue to be shaped by colonial memories and structures.

I also see the contribution of feminist theories as essential to post-colonial perspectives, with their emphasis on the intersection of different identities (constructed around variables such as gender, class and skin-colour⁸) and the importance of – often contradictory – shifts in identification. Colonialism also shaped different European identities via its interaction with local histories, meaning that these histories and nationalist ideologies are located within a global context. As I will stress here, Icelanders participated and engaged with European colonial discourses in various ways. These discourses in Iceland can, furthermore, be contextualised within Iceland's particular position in 19th century Europe: a subjugated nation that had been under a foreign rule for centuries that was seeking independence while European countries were colonising whole chunks of the world at a rapid speed. It is the intersection of these two aspects that calls for a more nuanced understanding of the different ways in which colonialism has shaped the past and the present.

In the first part of the chapter, I will start by discussing postcolonial theory more closely in relation to Iceland and situate its relevance by providing background information about Icelandic nationalist ideas and aims for independence. I will then briefly outline a few examples to show its relevance, first by looking at Iceland's engagement with racist and colonial discussions in Europe, and then demonstrating how – by talking about »uncivilised savages« – Icelandic writers in the 19th century were able to position and imagine themselves as Europeans, who they regarded as more »civilised«.⁹ My discussion then focuses on the importance of a postcolonial perspective to understand the present, focusing on the recent economic crash in Iceland in 2008. Since the crash, Iceland has undergone a deep crisis – not simply an economic one but also in relation to

6 STOLER: 2008, 192.

7 HORNING: 2011, 68.

8 Cf. YUVAL-DAVIS: 2006; VALENTINE: 2007.

9 See also LOFTSDÓTTIR: 2008; LOFTSDÓTTIR: 2009.

its identity as a nation among nations. As I will demonstrate, postcolonial perspectives can play an important part in understanding some of the dynamics which came into play during the economic boom period.

Postcolonial insights and Iceland

Iceland came under Norwegian rule in 1260. This marked the end of the Icelandic Commonwealth or Icelandic Free State. When the Kalmar Union united the states of Norway, Denmark and Sweden in 1397, Iceland automatically became a part of this combined kingdom, and when the union was disbanded in 1536, Iceland came under the control of the Danish Crown.¹⁰ For roughly 400 years there was little dissatisfaction with Danish rule. But in the mid-19th century, Icelanders began to be influenced by the nationalist sentiments arising in Europe,¹¹ although they seem to have maintained a separate identity long prior to that time.¹² Scholars conducting research into Icelandic identity have generally focused on Icelandic nationalism in relation to the emergence of nationalist movements in Europe and less so on the development of Icelandic identity in relation to the formation of European colonial and imperialistic identities.¹³ Similarly, the other Nordic countries were also often exempted from colonialism in contemporary thought,¹⁴ with this exceptional status even forming a central component of their collective identity,¹⁵ which led to the Nordic countries being perceived as peace-loving, rational and conflict-resolution orientated.¹⁶ Within the Nordic countries, scholars have actively started to investigate how racist images and language have been present in the various Nordic countries and how racist practices in the present often seek justification within this imaginary racism-free past.¹⁷

I believe that postcolonial theory can play an important part in drawing attention to the fact that colonialism shaped Icelandic identity in a

10 OSLUND: 2011, 12.

11 Cf. HÁLFÐANARSON: 2000.

12 KARLSSON: 1995; OSLUND: 2002.

13 See still JAKOBSEN: 2005.

14 Cf. KESKINEN et al.: 2009.

15 Cf. LOFTSDÓTTIR and JENSEN: 2012.

16 Cf. DELONG: 2009, 368-369; BROWNING: 2007, 27-28.

17 Cf. RASTAS: 2005.

similar way to that in which it shaped the identity of the rest of Europe, thus writing against the notion of Nordic exceptionalism. Furthermore – and this is interlinked with my first point – postcolonial theory is important due to Iceland’s status as a Danish dependency that sought independence at a particular point in time. That is not to imply that Iceland was a colony in the same sense as African countries, which were brutally subjugated in the 19th century and its inhabitants cruelly dehumanised and even butchered. It is more a case of acknowledging the messiness of colonial categories and trying to account for why Iceland’s subjectification to Denmark came to be seen by Icelanders as problematic at a particular point in time. If, as Íris Ellenberger claims,¹⁸ most Icelandic historians have not really addressed Iceland’s history in relation to the colonial or postcolonial context, this would probably explain why they dismiss the idea of classifying Iceland as a colony.¹⁹

In my analysis of this relationship, I am also inspired by Lila Abu-Lughod’s suggestion (in her discussion of the relationships between power and resistance) that we can turn Foucault’s insight back-to-front, with »where there is power there is resistance,« becoming »where there is resistance there is power.«²⁰ Her inversion draws greater attention to Foucault’s own emphasis on using resistance to tease out the relationship of power in a more nuanced way.²¹ In relation to Iceland, her comments point to the importance to looking at the dynamics of power and popular memory – as reflected, for example, in my son’s perception of Iceland’s past as a Danish colony. How do his talk and other social discourses framing Iceland as a colony or subjugated nation draw our attention to the politics of power at play? Furthermore, as Ellenberger points out, scholars investigating colonialism in different contexts have emphasised the different political, economic and cultural aspects of colonial rule, so while Iceland was probably not a colony in political terms, it can possibly be said to have been one economically or culturally.²² The most interesting question to me is still not whether Iceland can be classified as colony

18 ELLENBERGER: 2009.

19 Ibid., 99-100.

20 ABU-LUGHOD: 1990, 42.

21 Ibid.

22 ELLENBERGER: 2009, 103.

or not, but more how the discussion itself unfolds – as well as in what ways Iceland is associated with or disassociated from colonies.

Looking more closely at the formation of Icelandic identity in the 19th century, it is interesting to note that in spite of being a financial burden on Denmark, Icelanders had to struggle for their independence for a whole century. Denmark's reluctance to give up Iceland might have been due to its perception of Iceland as a reflection of the old Nordic culture.²³ After its participation in the Napoleonic wars, the Danish state was close to bankruptcy and it sold its southern possessions in Africa and India to Great Britain; this was followed in 1917 by the sale of the Virgin Islands to the USA.²⁴ Karen Oslund stresses in this regard that it would have been rational from a purely economic standpoint to also sell Iceland, and she sees the fact that Denmark did not do this as a reflection of just how strong the cultural and literary discussions in the country were at that time.²⁵ The nationalist struggle for Iceland's independence emerged in the mid-19th century and was influenced by Icelandic scholars educated in Denmark, where they had become familiar with Danish nationalist discourses.²⁶ In 1850, the population of Iceland was only 60,000 and the majority of people lived in houses made of turf and stone; infant mortality was high, with one fourth of children born at that time not making it to their first birthday.²⁷ Iceland's economy was based on agriculture, animal husbandry and fishing; its inhabitants lived on small farms and towns were to a large extent non-existent. In 1860, agriculture was still the main occupation of 80 per cent of the population, while only three per cent worked in industry and trade.²⁸ As pointed out by historian Guðmundur Hálfðánarson, the Icelandic nationalists based their claims on the argument that the rule of Denmark over Iceland constituted an »unnatural« arrangement, whereby one nation ruled another. The 18th century elite in Iceland most likely viewed Iceland's progress as a result of the Danish king's guidance, whereas the 19th century nationalists regarded the Danish colonial government as the legacy of Iceland's decline from a glorious

23 Cf. KARLSSON: 1995.

24 OSLUND: 2002, 328.

25 Ibid.

26 EINARSSON: 1996, 221.

27 GARÐARSDÓTTIR: 2005.

28 KARLSSON: 1995.

historical past.²⁹ Hálfðánarson argues further that political development outside of Iceland was thus mainly influenced by the development of Icelandic national sentiment, while »native social practices« also have to be acknowledged, meaning that nationalism in Iceland had its own idiosyncratic features, despite its being shaped by ideological movements in Europe.³⁰ Medieval Icelandic literature and the Icelandic language became the most important factors in the establishment of an Icelandic national identity,³¹ creating continuity between the era of the Icelandic Commonwealth and the present. Nationalist discourses emphasised the purity of the Icelandic language (as a result of its isolation from foreign influence) and so the language and mediaeval manuscripts became central components of efforts to gain full independence.³² Iceland became a sovereign state under the Danish crown in 1918 and became fully independent in 1944, when Denmark was occupied by Germany.

Colonised spaces and Icelandic identity in the 19th century

In spite of Iceland's geographic isolation in the 19th century, it was intrinsically interconnected to the outside world, with images, texts and people moving back and forth between the two. Such interactions were nothing new, having taken place since Iceland's settlement,³³ but in my discussion here I will attempt to give a sense of some of the images of colonised people in the 19th and early 20th century (when Icelanders were seeking independence) and the context of these images in Iceland. The Icelandic Literary Society (*Íslenska Bókmenntafélagið*) was founded in 1816 and started publishing annual overviews. These were published in the journals *Íslensk sagnablöð* (publication stopped in 1826) and *Skírnir* from 1827 onwards. These two journals were extremely important at the time as sources of information about the outside world.³⁴ *Skírnir* is still published today, although its focus and format have changed. Both journals published articles about European colonisation, reproducing racist images

29 HÁLFÐÁNARSON: 2000, 91.

30 HÁLFÐÁNARSON: 1995, 767.

31 SIGURÐSSON: 1996, 42.

32 Cf. PÁLSSON and DURRENBERGER: 1992.

33 Cf. DURRENBERGER and PÁLSSON 1989

34 SIGURÐSSON: 1986, 22, 34.

popular in Europe at that time.³⁵ Although publication initially took place in Copenhagen, Iceland's intellectual centre at that time, this was moved to Reykjavík in 1880. Looking more closely at *Skírnir*, it was distributed free to Icelandic Literary Society members and thus not only to individuals but also to »reading societies« (*lestrarfélög*), which were inspired by the ideals of the Enlightenment and aimed to make information more easily accessible to the public in Iceland. Many of these reading societies later became the basis for public libraries.³⁶ The society's membership list from 1900 clearly indicates the extensive distribution of *Skírnir*, showing that it was sent out to over 250 individuals subscribers, as well as to about 40 reading societies spread across the country. The list includes priests, farmers, students and merchants.³⁷

The 19th century *Skírnir* texts that address issues relating to Africa focus generally on European settlers, or on the conquest of the continent by Europeans. These texts generally frame the encounters uncritically as a process of bringing civilisation to African societies, a process in which European males were instrumental.³⁸ These discursive constructs show a close engagement with contemporary European discourses about the interconnection of race and gender³⁹, in which the nation itself was even conceptualised as a community of men.⁴⁰ *Skírnir*'s discussion of Henry Morton Stanley's exhibitions in the late 19th century reflects quite clearly this intertwined emphasis, with Stanley being celebrated in the *Skírnir* text,⁴¹ even though he was seen as a controversial person in Europe at that time.⁴² The interplay of silence and criticism is clearly visible in references to the trade in African slaves. On the one hand, this is harshly criticised, while at the same time European participation in slavery is barely mentioned – the trade being presented instead as evidence of the savagery

35 See LOFTSDÓTTIR: 2008; LOFTSDÓTTIR: 2009.

36 SVERRISDÓTTIR: 2005.

37 *Skírnir*: 1900, 99–108.

38 Cf. LOFTSDÓTTIR: 2009.

39 Cf. STOLER: 1995.

40 Cf. PRATT: 1990.

41 LOFTSDÓTTIR: 2009.

42 DRIVER: 2001, 126.

of African people. The text focuses on how the British tried to stop it, thus further reinforcing their image as bringers of civilization and order.⁴³

Icelandic school geography textbooks published in the late 19th and early 20th centuries clearly demonstrate how familiar European classifications of racial categories were to Icelandic intellectuals at that time. Many of these books were partly translated from or were based on Danish educational material. Especially in geography books, racist categorizations of human diversity are reproduced uncritically, characterising people seen as »non-white« in degrading and dehumanising ways. These descriptions of different racial groups are gendered, often accompanied by pictures of men,⁴⁴ clearly reflecting how the »white« male body constituted the norm. Even though generally not addressing Iceland as such, world history books tended to locate Icelanders within the collective »us« – and thus as belonging to the key players of history.⁴⁵ In these texts – just as in the 19th century *Skírnir* – an emphasis is placed on the European explorer. Explorers are seen as the movers of the grand wheel of history, leading to the advancement of Europe and European history. Of primary importance in the books is how exploration and colonialism benefited Europeans, and how exploration changed European and thus world history. The subjugated countries are constructed more as reservoirs of raw material than as a part of an active creation of the »modern« world. The world history books position Icelanders thus within a collective history of »civilised«, progressive Europeans.

It is particularly interesting to see these images of self and others, represented in the schoolbooks and in *Skírnir*, within the context of Iceland as a subjugated nation that was seeking independence. I have in my own publications stressed that the images of Africa current in Iceland in the 19th and early 20th centuries have to be placed within this historical context, in which Iceland's position within Europe was in some sense a contradictory one. Iceland's nature had for a long time been seen as exotic by European travellers, and in addition, Iceland was often likened to »hell«, especially in the 15th and 16th century – an image that was reified in the late 17th century.⁴⁶ Travellers who visited Iceland often remarked upon the

43 LOFTSDÓTTIR: 2008, 280.

44 LOFTSDÓTTIR: 2008; LOFTSDÓTTIR: 2009; LOFTSDÓTTIR: 2010.

45 LOFTSDÓTTIR: 2010.

46 OSLUND: 2002, 318.

drinking, ignorance and general filthiness of Icelanders, but also observed that Icelanders were happy in their simple lives, hospitable and childlike. Similar views are reflected in some narratives of Icelandic immigrants to North America in the late 19th century.⁴⁷ More positive images of Icelanders certainly also existed, particularly in connection with rising nationalism in Europe, but within such concepts peasants became increasingly viewed as uncorrupted and as the pure essence of the nation. Under such influence, intellectuals took a growing interest in Germanic and Celtic history.⁴⁸ Even though they did not participate in colonialism as such, individual Icelanders still engaged in explorations in other parts of the world. An example of this is Gísli Pálsson's autobiographical analysis of the Canadian-Icelandic Vilhjálmur Stefánsson's expeditions to the Arctic in the early 20th century.⁴⁹ Pálsson's analysis of Stefánsson's diaries and social interactions shows that Stefánsson had a firm position within the empire. In this light, the reproduction of racialised images of African people and other colonised populations outside Europe become particularly interesting, indicating, as I have emphasised, the need of Icelandic intellectuals at that time to distinguish themselves clearly from the colonised »others« through narratives of civilization.⁵⁰

Prevailing nationalism and the postcolonial present

In various ways, the economic boom period and the crash of 2008 evoke a sense of a postcolonial present, where there is some engagement with Iceland's past as a Danish dependency, as well as with colonial and racist images from the colonial period. The so-called »Icelandic economic miracle« started during the 1990s, with the widespread deregulation of banks, including the liberalisation of capital flows in the wake of joining the European Economic Area.⁵¹ The simple subsistence economy that was based on fisheries in the early 20th century had, by the 2000s, been transformed into a miniature international finance capital, with banking now the chief source of revenue. Due to additional need for labour, the number of for-

47 See for example the discussion in ÞORSTEINSSON: 1940, 201.

48 ÍSLEIFSSON: 1996, 84–85; LOFTSDÓTTIR: 2008.

49 PÁLSSON: 2004; PÁLSSON: 2005.

50 LOFTSDÓTTIR: 2008; LOFTSDÓTTIR: 2009.

51 Cf. ÓLAFSSON 2008.

eign nationals in Iceland grew from 1.8 per cent of the national population in 1995 to 7.4 per cent in 2003.⁵² In October 2008, Iceland's three major commercial banks – which had only been privatised in 2003 – had to be bailed out by the government.⁵³

The issue of racism and prejudice has become especially acute in Iceland due to increased immigration to the country during the boom period. The majority of these immigrants in Iceland have sought work opportunities, many accepting low-skilled jobs in various industries.⁵⁴ There was a high demand for women in the service sector and – especially after 2004 – an intensified need for (mostly male) labour in the construction industry, including the building of an aluminium smelter and the construction of a large power plant.⁵⁵ People from Poland have been the largest group of people with foreign citizenship in Iceland⁵⁶ and there are also higher numbers of people from other geographical regions. The experiences of these immigrants obviously differ, but as Unnur Dís Skaptadóttir has shown in her work, many deal with negotiating ties with two countries, where people have families across geographical borders.⁵⁷ These increased transnational connections make it particularly acute to look at immigration policies and discourses in Iceland in a wider global and European context, where postcolonial perspectives can be valuable both in asking about Iceland's engagement with its past colonial images and inequalities and also in regard to the ways in which Iceland engages with wider European discourses embedded in global and historical relations between different parts of the world. As Marianne Gullestad has observed, immigration discourses tend to be similar across Europe, and this is certainly the case with the Icelandic media – which seem very much to engage with social discourses elsewhere in Europe.⁵⁸ Discourses about different issues such as Muslims in Iceland⁵⁹ and racism against

52 See discussion in SKAPTADÓTTIR: 2003.

53 SIGURJÓNSSON and MIXA: 2011.

54 SKAPTADÓTTIR and WOJTYNSKA: 2008.

55 SKAPTADÓTTIR: 2010, 38–39.

56 SKAPTADÓTTIR: 2004.

57 SKAPTADÓTTIR and WOJTYNSKA: 2008; SKAPTADÓTTIR: 2007.

58 GULLESTAD: 2002.

59 See LOFTSDÓTTIR: 2011a.

»black« people⁶⁰ often bear a striking resemblance to debates in other European countries that have a very different context and history of immigration. In some cases, Icelandic individuals use debates in Europe as a point of reference, while in other debates the issue is very much framed as distinctively Icelandic.

Postcolonial engagements in Iceland not only unfold in relation to social discourses addressing immigration. During the economic boom period, references to Iceland's past as a Danish dependency were regularly seen in various media. These were not necessarily coherent references, but tended to float within the discursive landscape, often surfacing in somewhat unexpected ways. During the economic boom period, the term *útrásarvíkingur* (»Business Vikings«) came into common usage. The word is a compound of the term »útrás« (expansion) – used in reference to economic expansion – and the word »Viking«. As such, this term forged ideological links with Icelandic nationalist rhetoric, evoking images of the presumed independent spirit of Iceland's first Viking settlers. Thus, economic expansion was framed very firmly within discourses of nationalism that were formed when Iceland was seeking independence.⁶¹ The term Business Viking was used as a celebratory term to describe Icelandic investors who invested in and sometimes took over overseas companies. Extensive consumption and association with international superstars was a part of the image of these Business Vikings, and these were dutifully reported on by the Icelandic media.⁶² Such associations were largely unknown in Iceland prior to that time, probably due to the strong emphasis on equality as a basic Icelandic characteristic. These discourses about the Business Vikings and economic expansion were just as highly gendered as the economic boom itself, the main players within the banks and the foreign investors all being males. As I pointed out in a critical evaluation of this term and its usage in an Icelandic article in 2007, this discourse of the Business Vikings relied strongly on a familiar theme, produced when Iceland was seeking independence: that of Icelanders uniqueness in being endowed with natural characteristics shaped by the rough habit of their country.⁶³

60 See LOFTSDÓTTIR: 2011b.

61 LOFTSDÓTTIR: 2010b.

62 Cf. *ibid.*

63 *Ibid.*

During 2006 and 2007, the relationship between Denmark and Iceland was brought up in relation to Iceland's image internationally. In autumn 2006, for example, the Danish newspaper *Ekstra Bladet* published a very negative discussion of Icelandic companies and businesses and in the early spring of that same year, the Danish Bank (*Danske Bank*) had warned about a possible financial crisis in Iceland. This criticism was widely perceived in Iceland as stemming from Danish jealousy about the Icelandic economic miracle, a perception that was clearly reflected in Icelandic business magazines in 2006.⁶⁴ The most striking example is probably a statement by the then acting Minister of Foreign Affairs in the business journal *Viðskiptablaðið* that there was something »unnatural about the Danish Bank's criticism« and that this was due to »scratches in Denmark's self-image in relation to Iceland« after »Icelanders started to invest to a great extent in Denmark«.⁶⁵

Conclusion

Postcolonial perspectives are diverse and not necessarily coherent, but call collectively for the need to look critically at an interconnected world embedded in the history of colonialism and postcolonial power relations. As I have stressed here, postcolonial perspectives in the Icelandic context call for attention to Iceland's participation in colonial discourses and racism, as well as an understanding of the dynamics of Icelandic identity, which was shaped to some extent by its subjectification under Denmark. Discussions about colonised people in other parts of the world at a time when Iceland was seeking independence from Denmark in the late 19th and early 20th centuries clearly show the engagement with current racist and imperialistic conceptualisations, an engagement that also has to be

64 I have focused especially on the discussion of other nationalities in two Icelandic weekly newspapers, *Viðskiptablaðið* and *Markaðurinn*, focusing on financial markets during the periods 2006 and 2007, although I am aware of other discussions that took place elsewhere about the same topic.

65 *Viðskiptablaðið*, March 26th, 2006. In Icelandic »sjálfssímynd Dana gagnvart íslendingum farinn að rispast [...] því miður finnst mér vera eitthvað óeðlilegt á ferðinni varðandi þá gagnrýni sem Danske bank sendi frá sér. [...] það var þessi sami banki sem koma af stað þeirri atburðarrás sem leiddi til bankahrunsins í Færeyjum á sínum tíma. Þannig að maður velti fyrir sér hvort þetta séu samkeppnissjónarmið sem ráða þeirra för eða hvort sjálfssímynd Dana hafi eitthvað rispast eftir að Íslendingar fóru að fjárfesta í stórum stíl í Danmörku«

contextualised within local Icelandic circumstances. Just like other countries, Iceland continues to engage with the postcolonial present and its own history. With their diverse history and power relations, Iceland and the Nordic countries also constitute an interesting platform for a further deepening of postcolonial theory, providing opportunities for viewing the construction of diverse European identities in more nuanced ways.

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ANN-SOFIE NIELSEN GREMAUD

Iceland as Centre and Periphery:
Postcolonial and Crypto-colonial Perspectives

To be or not to be postcolonial?

In an article on the philosophical dimensions of the concept of crisis, Icelandic philosopher Ólafur Páll Jónsson points to how an existential crisis compels the individual to fundamentally reconsider life.¹ Jónsson uses this comparison to illustrate the potential that the crisis represented for Icelandic society in 2009. He points out that the financial crisis has led to an existential crisis on a societal level. And if the crisis leads to the examination of what kind of life in a community is a good one, then the crisis is in itself good. In addition, one can view the situation as a momentum that holds potential for a revisiting of the perception of national history. In the 19th and 20th centuries, the period prior to 1262 (before Danish rule) served as a golden age in nationalist narratives. This understanding of history (which is a central element of nationalism), coupled with notions of cultural superiority, was reflected in the celebration of the *útrásarvíkingar* (‘business Vikings’) before the banking crisis of 2009. In Iceland the formation of national identity and the writing of history constitute – just like everywhere else – a process of navigation between selective memory and forgetting.

Iceland came under foreign rule in 1262, when an agreement was made to swear allegiance to the Norwegian king Hakon, thus making the country a part of the Norwegian – and later the Danish – realm. This ended the Sturlung Era of the 13th century, a period marked by battles between dominating clans. As a result of various political changes, Iceland remained a Danish dominion until it became an autonomous state under the Danish crown in 1918 and ultimately a sovereign nation in 1944. Over the course of the centuries, ideas of a national Icelandic identity were sustained to some extent by a number of factors, among them the Icelandic language, which did not undergo changes as drastic as those that took place in the Southern Scandinavian languages. Another factor that served to demarcate Icelandic society during its time as a part of the Danish realm was

1 Cf. JÓNSSON: 2009.

the country's distinct geographical delineation and remote location. However, the notion of a distinctive national culture did not materialise politically and the independence movement did not develop until the 19th century, when waves of romantic nationalism and general emancipation swept through Europe.

This long history of foreign rule and the close but uneven relationship with Denmark has not led to a tradition of postcolonial studies in Iceland – or in Denmark for that matter. From a postcolonial perspective there has been endless beating about the bush when it comes to a thorough discussion of the repercussions of Danish rule in most of its former dominions and colonies – apart from the work of a few persistent scholars and commentators.² During the last few decades, however, perspectives related to postcolonial theory have been reflected in critical scholarly discussions and analyses of the deeper historical structures of the crisis in Icelandic society. A few scholars and artists have pointed to the relevance of this perspective, but there seems to have been a general reluctance towards such an explicit focus and – not least – an understanding of historical relations that would place Iceland as a victim. To some extent the reluctance to take up a postcolonial optic has its obvious reasons. Iceland was not colonised by Denmark and the conditions of the relationship between the two countries do not have all the central characteristics of classic cases of postcolonial relations: there was no basis for racial discrimination, Iceland did not have a separate indigenous culture that was suppressed, and the Icelandic cultural heritage had a high status in Denmark and the rest of Europe. Anthropologist Michael Herzfeld's statement »the world is no longer made up of colonisers and colonised alone, nor was it ever so simply split«³ is important to the investigation of the relationship between Denmark and Iceland. None the less, the many centuries under Danish rule had immense consequences for the development of Icelandic society, as well as for the development of Danish and Icelandic perceptions of national identity.

My aim is to take part in clearing up the haze that surrounds Danish-Icelandic history, to open up a discussion on approaches that facilitate

2 Some of the leading voices in the discussions have been historian Lars Jensen, literary scholars Kirsten Thisted and Hans Hauge, and the curators Kuratorisk Aktion. Only recently have more scholars begun to explore the field.

3 HERZFELD: 2002, 922.

investigations into the continuous significance and influence of Iceland's long history as a dominion and thus offer an insight into the deeper layers of Icelandic culture. My focus is primarily on the importance of the shifting power relations that Iceland found itself subject to and the influence these relations had and still have on dominant narratives in Icelandic self-representation. I touch upon works of art as well as scholarly works, as discussions about how to interpret the meaning of the past in the present appear in both fields. I do this from an interdisciplinary point of departure through a combination of optics from cultural geography, visual cultural studies and crypto-colonial theory. In this way I include aspects drawn from geographical, cultural and other characteristics that have shaped understandings of Iceland as both periphery and centre. By describing various aspects of Icelandic culture and the Icelandic art scene, I thus wish to open up a discussion of fruitful theoretical approaches that can be used for revisiting notions about the past.

The article opens with a discussion of the *hrun* («crisis» or «collapse») as a fertile context for a critical review of the reception of national history. I then move on to present theoretical approaches for dealing with Iceland's unique cultural and political history, and argue why the Icelandic condition has crypto-colonial traits. I conclude with a) a presentation of schisms between socio-critical works of Icelandic art and the ways that Icelandic art and culture tend to be presented internationally; and b) an opening for a continued dialogue with crypto- and postcolonial theory in the research of Icelandic culture.

Nature has been a changing and sometimes problematic concept in Iceland, e.g. when one looks at the role it has played in questions and negotiations of the country's international political status. Generally, modern industrialisation processes, the Eurocentric schism of nature versus culture, and elements of a frontier movement have influenced this attitude. From a postcolonial perspective, Iceland's relationship with Denmark, the de facto colonial authority until 1944, is especially important. This complex relationship was characterised by inequality as well as mutual identification: Icelandic cultural history was used as a reservoir of shared heritage that was often referred to in the 19th century national romantic discourse in Denmark. At the core of the problematic associations of nature in Icelandic culture is the need for a pluralisation of the concept of the *Western cultural sphere*. Sociologist Jan Nederveen Pieterse describes this need in the following way:

Generalisations are inevitable and nuances are imperative. A basic precaution is to avoid the singular in favour of the plural. (...) This also applies to *Western culture*, a concept which is necessary and sufficient for a certain mode and level of analysis, but if we are to further the analysis, the plural may be required here also: *Western cultures*.⁴

In the case of Icelandic nation building, this plural form is significant and includes sensitivity to the finer structures of the location and movements of power within the larger cultural framework of the so-called West. Plurality is a central factor in the transitory phase of Icelandic-Danish relationships in the 19th and 20th centuries that enabled a variety of power relations within the framework.

Even though it has not been dominant in the academic or political agendas, questions of possible postcolonial perspectives in current and past Icelandic cultural history have been occurring to me ever since I began to explore Icelandic literature, art, political patterns and economic history. The discussions and perspectives that I wish to raise are relevant to both past and present conditions. The crisis of the past few years has offered itself as a space for introspection in Icelandic society and has allowed for the revisiting of certain strong narratives. These include the ideal of rapid progress, the historical continuity of collective identity and the spirit of independence. During recent decades there have been various examples of Icelandic art that deal with the relationship between economy, environment, history and power. These works of art, some of which I will discuss here, shed light on central problems, potential, taboos and traumas in current Icelandic society. Both the scholarly articles and works of art that I look at point to nature and history as two key points of dispute in modern Iceland.

The economic and political crisis as an opportunity for reflection

In the academic context, the crisis has also served as an invitation to critical analysis and introspection. There have been critical voices commenting on the need to reconsider dominant popular assumptions about the use of history in the formation of national identity from an imagologically

4 PIETERSE: 1991, 198.

inspired perspective.⁵ In 2009, the joint second and third issues of the journal *Ritið*, in which Ólafur Páll Jónsson's article was featured, bore the title *Eftir hrunið* (»After the Collapse«). Most of the articles in this joint issue addressed topics such as responsibility, the national power system, predominant attitudes towards natural resources, and persistent patterns in Icelandic self-perception. Here the roots and (future) routes of Icelandic society were reconsidered in an unapologetic manner.

In one of the articles, historian Helgi Þorláksson gives examples of rhetorical uses of national history.⁶ Þorláksson's focus is on the use and abuse of historical material in expressions of political opinion. He refers to a talk given by historian Guðmundur Hálfðanarson, who had pointed out the importance of clearing up misconceptions, simplification and deliberate anachronisms in current political use when reference was made to national history. He refers to Hálfðanarson's critique of the traditional negative understanding of external rule following the 1262 agreement with the Norwegian king.⁷ Such openness towards a critical »revisiting« of the nationalist understanding of history – a leftover from the independence movement – makes clear the potential for a fundamental audit of Iceland's national self-image. It also marks a pronounced difference between common understandings of events and concepts in the country's history and the critique posed by scholars when it comes to understandings of both past, present and future.

In his article in the 2009 edition of *Ritið*, Ólafur Páll Jónsson describes what he sees as an important inherent potential in the crisis. In the article, he focuses primarily on the element of momentum and the possibilities for action in the present, whereas the authors of the article »Guðfræði í pólitíkinni – pólitíkin í guðfræðinni« (»Theology in Politics – Politics in Theology«)⁸ view the crisis from a theological perspective, focusing on the crisis as a symptom of past sins committed against divine creation. Theology is put forward as a critical point of departure for ex-

5 Some of the prominent voices have been Guðmundur Hálfðanarson, Jón Yngvi Jóhannsson, Kristín Loftsdóttir, Kristinn Schram, Sumarliði Ísleifsson, Stefán Jón Hafstein, Thorbjörn Orri Tómasson and Katla Kjartansdóttir.

6 Cf. ÞORLÁKSSON: 2009.

7 This common understanding of foreign rule is governed by the romanticized and to some extent postcolonial narrative of the independence movement. This type of retrospective narrative was treated extensively by SCOTT: 2004.

8 GUÐMUNDSDOTTIR and HUGASON: 2009.

posing the arrogance reflected in abuse of power and resources. They cite the Christian ideal of leadership as service to God, nature and one's fellow man in their critique of the recent abuse of the allegedly God-given freedom to self-government.

The crisis as the result of hubris within one group in society and the cult of profit as a dangerous path of idolatry are also motifs that resonate in articles by social critic Stefán Jón Hafstein and journalist Íris Erlingsdóttir – however not as part of a Christian discourse. In the article »Changing Iceland's Culture« (2009), Erlingsdóttir directs harsh criticism against the country's rulers, pointing to a colonial mentality still existing in contemporary Icelandic society: »The passivity learned from the colonisers has prevented any meaningful action by the people.«⁹ As an element in her postcolonial diagnosis of Icelandic society, she points to a feature identified in Amílcar Cabral's famous analysis of colonial relationships *National Liberation and Culture* (1970), namely the fact that certain groups take over the roles of the colonial power once it leaves. She notes: »As Nobel Prize author Halldor Kiljan Laxness observed, the nationalities of Iceland's colonial overlords simply changed: from Danish to Icelandic.«¹⁰ A similar point was put forward in the article »Rányrkjubú« (»Exploitation of Common Property«) by Stefán Jón Hafstein in 2011. Here Hafstein argues that Iceland is one of the world's most affluent communities in terms of resources, but that this wealth has not been managed for the common good, even after Iceland gained independence.

In her analysis of the period following the economic collapse of 2008, Erlingsdóttir quotes U.S. politician Rahm Emanuel's dictum: »You should never waste a crisis«¹¹ and points to the potential for a critical re-examination of the political culture. Relations with foreign powers have added painful elements to modern Icelandic history. It is hard to understand recent developments – such as the adventures of the *útrásarvíkingar* (»business Vikings«) and the subsequent dispute about *Icesave* with the United Kingdom and the Netherlands – without connecting them with the Cod Wars of the 20th century. The current political climate in Iceland is still affected by a heritage from the rhetoric of the Cold War. In the wake of the crisis, the soil is being prepared for thorough investigations

9 ERLINGSDÓTTIR: 2009, 66–73.

10 Ibid, 70.

11 Ibid, 72..

of these and many other aspects of Icelandic history, as well as of the true implications of political and economic connections with Denmark, which lasted for more than 650 years.

The question remains as to whether the current crisis will in fact be used as a window that gives us a clearer view into the problematic anatomy of Icelandic society – including the scar tissue left behind by past relations with other nations – and as a platform for self-reflection, political revolution and reforms. As the articles in *Ritið* – which has contained some of the best analyses of the current Icelandic crisis – were published in Icelandic, these views and critiques are not accessible to non-Icelandic speakers. This contributes to the fact that certain important perspectives in the current political and scholarly debate, including some of the most disturbing aspects, are not included in the external impression of developments in Iceland.

Centre and periphery – crypto-colonial dynamics

Iceland's ambiguous position between centre and periphery – the two poles of an imperialist, Eurocentric world order – has coloured its cultural history generally and its relationship with Denmark in particular. Here, I will investigate the potential of using the crypto-colonial perspective in combination with Michel Foucault's theory of alternative places to shed light on the ongoing impact of Iceland's association with notions of centre and periphery, as well as the special dynamics that emerge from this oscillation.

Iceland's relationship with Denmark has always been an asymmetrical power relationship characterised by the complex dynamics of both identification and suppression. It is my view that postcolonial theory is neither sufficient nor precise enough to describe this particular relationship. Michael Herzfeld's theory of crypto-colonies has been introduced as a critical perspective on certain Eurocentric patterns in modern anthropology and focuses on reciprocal structures in the formation of national identity. In the case of Iceland, the unclarity surrounding the nature of Iceland's political relationship with Denmark and the past reluctance towards prioritising and emphasising the importance of this contributes to its obscure status in both written history and present day awareness in both countries. This general lack of clarity about the nature of the relationship and to what extent it has had lasting effects on Icelandic society calls for the crypto-colonial perspective.

The most important elements in an investigation of crypto-colonial aspects of Icelandic cultural history are conceptualisations of time, place and space.¹² Inherent in the concept of time are understandings of the past and ideas about the future. The past and the future as abstract concepts have generally been associated with both positive and negative ideas through the centuries and certain nations have been associated with or seen as representing these ideas as well. Here, geographer Doreen Massey's theory about the rigidity of modern teleological concepts of progress – which includes the notions of ›being ahead‹ or ›lagging behind‹ – is a fruitful perspective.¹³ The idea of a classification of societies into successive stages of development reduces the simultaneous coexistence of different cultures to teleology and thus establishes a hierarchy in this context. This hierarchy is inherently Eurocentric and powerful positions have traditionally been given to established Western nations.

Both temporal and geographical concepts have shaped Iceland's cultural history through ideas about Icelandic identity. The concepts of space and place also include ideas that have dominated external and internal characterisations and stereotyping of ›the Icelandic‹.¹⁴ Two concepts that have contributed to making Iceland a *real-and-imagined place*¹⁵ are utopia and dystopia. These are some of the oldest ideas associated with Iceland and have influenced perceptions of the country in the high north for centuries. Historian Sumarliði Ísleifsson has demonstrated the importance of the early oscillation between utopia and dystopia in his writings¹⁶ and remnants of these ideas still influence the ways in which Iceland is presented to foreigners in commercials and on tourist websites.

12 Cf. GREMAUD: 2012a.

13 Cf. MASSEY: 2005, 5.

14 Place has been a significant concept both in a regional and local perspective, e.g. when it comes to the importance of specific places in (Saga) literature and art. In addition, place has been a central issue in the debate about nation and territory. Although Iceland is a well-defined country geographically, the struggle for independence, recognition, and control over ocean territory were core issues in the 20th century. Concepts implicit in the category of space have influenced expressions of Icelandic self-perception, as well as in external characterisations. Inspired by Doreen Massey and Aleida Assmann, I identify space as being primarily associated with movement, but also with performativity: where something is acted out. The idea of colonisation is connected to space, whereas a notion such as centre versus periphery is connected to place.

15 Inspired by Edward Soja's term from the book *Thirdspace: Journeys to Los Angeles and Other Real-and-Imagined Places* (SOJA: 1996).

16 Cf. ÍSLEIFSSON: 2011b.

The remains of the two polar ideas of utopia and dystopia that still exist in today's representations of Iceland can be explained to some degree through Michel Foucault's theory of heterotopic spaces.¹⁷ Foucault's published lecture *Des Espace Autres* (1984) – published in English as *Of Other Spaces* in 1986 – describes some characteristics and dynamics of *hétérotopies* (»heterotopic spaces«), including their *hétérochroniques* (»heterochronic features«). Elements of this theory shed light on ideas of spatiality and temporality inherent in dominant representations of Iceland that are fundamental elements in Iceland's crypto-colonial condition. It is especially the typical roles Iceland has been granted and has assumed when represented in relation to other Western countries that make this theory of extra-normative spaces relevant.

According to Foucault, two spatial forms represent interesting counter-spaces: namely utopias and heterotopias.¹⁸ Both of these spatial forms are reflections of the surrounding normative space and the society in which they exist and are thus directly related to surrounding standards and conditions. The most fundamental difference is that while a utopia is not a tangible physical place, a heterotopia is characterised as being a real location that fulfils specific functions in the surrounding society or system. The concept of heterotopias opens up interpretations of Iceland as a place associated with otherness via a scaling of the concept to the international space for imagining identity, a space in which the whole country functions as one place. The sixth principle of Foucault's definition of heterotopias describes their relational function of being an alternative to normative spaces. According to the third and fourth principles, they have accumulative properties. Thus, a heterotopia can accumulate space and time, whereby it provides access to unique experiences, and also sheds light on the spatio-temporal aspects of normality. These characteristics have, as we shall see, been associated with Iceland.

Before the waves of romantic and political nationalism that swept through Europe in the 19th and 20th centuries, Iceland was associated with exoticised notions of both a barbaric and a utopian north (as defined by Ísleifsson).¹⁹ Today, Iceland is no longer considered to be a mystical and

17 Cf. FOUCAULT: 1986. Here space is understood in the sociological sense: a room for social activity.

18 Cf. *ibid.*

19 Cf. ÍSLEIFSSON: 2011a.

dystopian location on the rim of the mapped world, but aversion against the primitive and association with the radically different continue to be underlying currents in modern-day representations of the country. The important transition to later associations with a treasured Nordic cultural heritage took place in the 19th century, when this became an important asset for Denmark in its efforts to stand strong in the Nordic region and gain cultural vindication after the wars and crises of the period. In 19th century Denmark, the loss of Norway, national bankruptcy, and the wars with Prussia had left the nation in need of cultural elements to compensate for these depressing political developments. In the 18th century the Danish colonies and dependencies had been important sources of income, but later emphasis was also placed on their cultural resources. This led Denmark to draw Iceland closer in order to benefit from the positive connotations of its literary tradition and the strong narrative of ethnic continuity associated with Iceland. An example of the tendency to emphasise Icelandic culture as a rich resource for Denmark is seen in a text by politician Orla Lehmann from 1832:

But as though frozen between the distant icy mountains, where the storms of time never reached, it [ancient life] stayed in almost unaltered purity in Iceland, so that we can see there a living antiquity, a talking image of the life of the past – that is why the Icelandic people must be dear to any Scandinavian.²⁰

Here Iceland appears as a living archive and its contemporary society is absent. This concept is included in the title of Herzfeld's theory »Absent Presence: Discourses of Crypto-Colonialism« (2002). From an Icelandic perspective, this was an implicit denigration at a time when it was important to be associated with civilised progress. Lehmann's description expresses Iceland's status as what I call an international heterotopia: a place of otherness.

Otherness or alternativty is an aspect often associated with crypto-colonial countries on the European rim. This is an aspect that has lately been utilised strategically. In his article »The Wild Wild North: The Narrative Cultures of Image Construction in Media and Everyday Life«, ethnographer Kristinn Schram addresses the current tendency to make use

20 »Men ligesom indefrosset mellem hine fjerne Iisfjelde, hvorhen Tidens Storme ei Naaede, veligeholdt det sig i næsten uforandret Reenhed paa Island, saa at vi i det see en levende Oldtid, et Talende Billede af Fortidens Liv – derfor maa det islandske Folk være hver Skandinaver kjært (...)«. My translation from LEHMANN: 1832.

of associations with the primitive by giving examples of Icelandic self-representations that show Icelanders as »those who apparently have not fully crossed the threshold to modernity«. ²¹ Schram sees this as a strategy for gaining visibility, which positions the Icelandic ›nation brand‹ at the edge of the world, where it can stand out from the rest. Schram emphasises the strategic elements of agency by describing it as »a tactic«. ²²

As countless tourists get acquainted with Iceland each year, and visual and written representations have placed the country in international consciousness, Iceland has become more of a heterotopia than a utopia or dystopia. However, elements of radical otherness, the utopian and dystopian, can be found in Icelandic advertisements, such as those from the clothing company *66° Norður* (which Schram discusses in the article mentioned above), as well as in several of the pictures from the Frankfurt Book Fair of 2011²³, where Iceland was the guest of honour under the title *Sagenhaftes Island*. This mirroring, which is the core of both utopias and heterotopias that reflect characteristics of the surrounding community but are at the same time distinct from the reflected locations, can be seen in the material from the book fair. Depictions of Iceland show unfamiliar sites, which appear as heterotopias that reflect the norms of the surrounding Western societies. Thus, in the image of the other (Iceland), self-images are revealed and vice versa. From a heterotopic position inside the reflection, one can come back to oneself and one's position in the world.

Because a crypto-colonial community's international prestige is largely tied to the heritage of a golden past (a ›golden age‹, in the words of ethnographer Anthony D. Smith), the gap between past and present, or the focus on such a gap, is one of the aspects that make a society crypto-colonial. Contemporary Icelandic society is characterised by a lack of recognition or international influence – as per the title of the Herzfeld article. The contemporary condition makes invocation of the past an important part of achieving recognition and thus part of a reciprocal process of identity formation. At the same time this reaching back confirms the country's crypto-colonial status, as the past remains a primary value.

In Herzfeld's theory of crypto-colonies, the attitude of external parties or countries to the community is crucial, since there is an unequal power

²¹ SCHRAM: 2009, 257.

²² Ibid, 259.

²³ Cf. GREMAUD: 2012b.

balance as well as an internalisation of external ideas in the crypto-colony. Herzfeld's optics highlights spatio-temporal axes, which have often placed the crypto-colonies as peripheral buffer zones or geographic outposts on the border of the ›others‹ and associated them with a distant past, while the dominant countries were associated with progress and a geographical centre. Especially in the 19th and 20th centuries, Iceland's culture and self-image were very much influenced by a fundamental division between those associated with the civilised world and those associated with a peripheral position (e.g. as indigenous peoples) within the imperialist system and the need to navigate between these two extremes. The crypto-colonial approach also exposes what is referred to as Western culture as an entity characterised by inner mechanisms of exclusion and hierarchies.

The power system, which creates a structure where countries are given crypto-colonial status, is based on three simultaneous conceptions of temporality: firstly, a paradigm of progress, which establishes a hierarchy between the past and the present; secondly, the notion of certain societies that are frozen in time and in which the past has taken residence in the present; and thirdly, the high estimation of an ancient civilisation, highlighted internally and externally, which according to Herzfeld does not however result in a powerful position in the global community: »As such, their [ancient civilisation's] extension into modern times did not pose as great a potential threat to the self-constitution of ›Europe‹; they seemed unambiguously and emphatically not ›really modern‹.«²⁴

Throughout history, Iceland has been associated with naturalness in different ways. This naturalness has an implicit duality, since it has referred to nature as opposed to culture, and nature as the authentic and unspoiled. Herzfeld points out that as a crypto-colony Greece is a major source of cultural wealth while remaining a political and economic outsider in today's international society.²⁵ Similar things can be said about Iceland – especially after the recent economic breakdown. As a real-and-imagined place, or surface of external projections, Iceland has been a buffer zone between Europe and its others, whereby the country has served in a peripheral or intermediate position on multiple levels. In addition to this comes the fear of association with barbarians because of the

24 HERZFELD: 2002, 912.

25 Cf. *ibid.*, 903.

historical coupling of the natural with the uncivilised and the barbaric. Herzfeld uses Greece as an example of these dynamics, but the relevance of the Icelandic example is obvious: »Greece is certainly not the only country in which elites cultivated a deep fear among the citizenry of becoming too closely identified with some vague category of barbarians.«²⁶ But as I have mentioned before, a new, constructive approach to associations with the uncivilised can be seen in the ›experience economy‹, in which status as a space for projections of phantasies about the periphery is marketed and exploited for commercial ends. Sumarliði Ísleifsson has identified Iceland's positioning as a »Hellas of the north«²⁷ in previous centuries, and with Herzfeld's theory there is a rationale for continuing to compare the reception of Iceland and Greece – not least in the light of their positioning as economic outsiders during the recent developments in the financial world.

Generally, depictions and descriptions of Iceland from an external (Western) point of view have been characterised by a curious mixture of identification and exotification. Furthermore Iceland has been oscillating between what sociologist Bernhard Giesen has called the inside and outside of a collective²⁸ – here of the Western world. This shifting in positions has of course been related to minor changes in identifications and in power structures as well as changes in the different roles that Iceland has played in the dynamics of European identity formation – some of which I have briefly sketched above. Something that crypto-colonialism, imagology and Giesen's theory all have in common is a shared point of departure in Hegel's theory of self-consciousness as the mutual confirmation of existence between consciousnesses, vital to which is external recognition. This view is expressed in the chapter »Herrschaft und Knechtschaft« in *Phänomenologie des Geistes* (1807): »Self-consciousness exists in and for itself when, and by the fact that it so exists for another; that is, it exists only in being acknowledged.«²⁹ From this point of view, Iceland has inhabited a position similar to that of Greece as both centre and periphery in the construction of European – not least Danish – cultural history and self-perception.

26 Ibid, 902.

27 ÍSLEIFSSON: n.d.

28 Cf. GIESEN: 1999.

29 HEGEL: 1998, III.

The critical potential of Icelandic art

The status of nature within Icelandic society is still a key issue. Questions concerning the boundary between the acceptable use of natural resources and their abuse have been a central feature in the history of Icelandic industrialisation. During the past few centuries, Icelandic artists have participated in this discussion directly and indirectly – through overt criticism and subtle documentation – in works dealing with Icelandic nature. Danish-Icelandic history is a less popular theme, although examples can be found.

Cultural geographer Denis Cosgrove has presented a distinction between the concepts of *earth*, *globe* and *world*.³⁰ *Earth* refers to the immediate physicality of the human relationship to the planet – to dwelling on and using the ground; *globe* is the notion of abstract lines of connection across the planet's surface; whereas *world* refers to sense-making and ideological views on life on the planet. The environmental perspective seen in many recent Icelandic landscape depictions is linked to a planetary imagination that connects earth, on the physical and local level, with the political and ideological beliefs included in the concept of world, with the global environmental imagination forming a connecting structure between locations on the planet. This results in a global-and-local approach to landscape, while at the same time many of the works address questions at a national level.

In some cases one sees a metaphysical focus that has common features with the natural spiritualism that art historian John Russell Taylor identifies in early modern Icelandic art. The element detected in Symbolist art, which Taylor calls »an element of nature worship«³¹ has been seen on the Icelandic art scene in the last few decades. Herzfeld points out that in several of the crypto-colonies, a backlash against the process of incorporating Western materialism has expressed itself in the formation of new religious movements: »(...) it does at least suggest that one common reaction to crypto-colonialism may take the form of anti-materialist religious activity in places widely separated by geography and culture.«³² The current focus on nature as a spiritual resource, as seen for example in

30 Cf. COSGROVE: 2001.

31 TAYLOR: 1989, 93.

32 HERZFELD: 2002, 907.

the activities initiated by the artist Goddur, are often formulated as part of a counter movement against the materialist focus of today's neo-liberal and capitalist order. Elements of neo-shamanism and Norse paganism have been united in Goddur's works of art and in the construction of the sweat-lodges he builds. The musician Björk Guðmundsdóttir (Björk) has also used these elements, for example in the visual material for the album *Volta* (2007).

There are very few examples of postcolonial art that explicitly portray Iceland as a victim of mistreatment – and thus portray Denmark a perpetrator. However, Björk's famous song »Declare Independence« from *Volta* does exactly that. The lyrics: »Declare independence. Don't let them do that to you, damn colonists«, combined with the Greenlandic and Faeroese flags on Björk's uniform, places the song in a Danish context.³³ Ragnar Kjartansson's video *Colonisation* (2003) shows a performance where a Danish merchant is beating an Icelander, as well as images of tourist sites from Copenhagen covered in blood. Both of these works are rare examples of an explicit interpretation and critique of the relationship between Iceland and Denmark, a critique that can also be found in Íris Erlingsdóttir's comments about today's attitudes to nature (referred to as the country's wealth)³⁴ and the de facto acceptance of current power structures as indirect consequences of or a reaction to the centuries of foreign involvement.

Many artists and writers, however, pose a less direct critique of the historical relations, and the consequences of overspending and the utilisation of natural resources in Iceland. The two photos »Norðlingaholt« by Ingvar Högni Ragnarsson³⁵ are presented as part of the series called *Waiting*. This title creates a liminal temporality and refers to the mid-stream position of Icelandic society at the time. It seems that the site depicted is itself waiting for the construction to be finished. The contrast between the newly built luxury apartments and the remains scattered around the chaotic building site points to the schism between the ambitions of the period before the economic crash and the pain of its aftermath – as well as to the lack of closure. Since the images are all from the period 2007–2009, the element of waiting created by the title appears to be

33 Cf. the image on the cover of this book.

34 ERLINGSDÓTTIR: 2009, 68.

35 Published in *Ritid* 2–3, 2009.

the artist posing the question as to whether the activities that led to the financial crash will be resumed, or if there is an estate (in more than one sense) waiting to be completed – a past to be dealt with.

Ósk Vilhjálmsdóttir is one of the artists who are openly critical of political and environmental agendas in Iceland. Her documentation of the Kárahnjúkar Hydropower Plant initiative took place before its construction and consisted of performative and pictorial critiques of the project, such as the *Kárahnjúkar Project Hikes* of 2002–2006.³⁶ Vilhjálmsdóttir confronts dominant images of Iceland as a land of unspoiled nature and successful business life and she depicts leading figures and institutions in Icelandic society in a highly critical light. This critique was underlined when some of her images were shown at the exhibition *Bæ bæ Ísland* (»Bye Bye Iceland«) in 2008. Curator Hannes Sigurðsson has underlined the phonetic overlap between the Icelandic *bæ* (»goodbye«) and the English ›buy‹ and continues: »Therefore the title fits well with the contemporary privatised, globalised and greedy society.«³⁷ Earlier, Vilhjálmsdóttir openly criticised the German idealisation of Iceland in the work *Scheissland* (»Shitland«) from 2005, which consisted of red painted text on the exhibition wall: »The shit Germans love Shitland and they love the Shitlanders. In every Shitlander they see a shit elf or a shit troll.«³⁸ The work is both a bitter comment on the idealised German image of Icelanders nurtured by the cultural and travel industries and a sarcastic comment on the internal debate about Icelandic environmental policy. These works and activities place Vilhjálmsdóttir as one of the most outspoken critics of Icelandic self-image and of the potential hypocrisy connected to nature's role in the inwardly and outwardly directed messages that are enabling Icelandic branding strategists to depict the Icelandic landscape as an untouched utopia.

In recent years, official self-promotion of this sort has been well received internationally, e.g. in connection with the strategies employed at *Visit Iceland* and the presentation of Icelandic literature at the Frankfurt Book Fair. The association of Icelandic cultural products with the forces

36 See: <http://this.is/osk/page40/page31/page31.html> [03.07.2012].

37 »Því gengur titillinn vel upp í eikavæddu, alþjóðavæddu og gráðugu samfélagi nútímans; (...)«. <http://this.is/osk/page40/page29/page51/page51.html> [03.07.2012].

38 »Die Scheißdeutschen lieben Scheißland und sie lieben die Scheißländer. Sie sehen in jedem Scheißländer einen Scheißelfen oder Scheißtroll.« VILHJÁLMSDÓTTIR: 2005, <http://this.is/osk/page40/page14/page21/index.html> [03.02.2012].

of nature reflects old exoticist and vitalist notions of Iceland, which have been brought into favour and instrumentalised. This seems to testify to an Icelandic ambivalence in relation to being either consumed or forgotten by Europe. One example is the logo for *Sagenhaftes Island* (2012), which shows a book merging with a waterfall. In general, such representations draw on the ancient European tradition of viewing Iceland as a place associated with myths, otherness and explosive natural power. The position of being associated – even in an indirect manner – with indigenous or primitive peoples was famously rejected by the Icelandic Student's Association in their objection to Icelandic artefacts being exhibited next to those from Greenland and the West Indies at the colonial exhibition at the Tivoli Gardens in 1905.³⁹ Herzfeld puts forward a thesis about a recurrent feature in crypto-colonial communities that sheds light on a crypto-colonial aspect of the Tivoli dispute: »Yet perhaps one feature that all these countries share is the aggressive promotion of their claims to civilisational superiority or antiquity, claims that almost always appear disproportionate to their political influence.«⁴⁰ This illustrates how Iceland's crypto-colonial status influences the intellectual elite's insistence on a certain positioning, and it also points to a possible reason for the scornful response to the Icelandic appeal in the Danish media at the time of the Tivoli exhibition in 1905, namely the timidity of Iceland's actual power position. Today, however, ideas that were previously often regarded as hurtful misconceptions are being used to attract attention through recognition: stereotypes and phantasies are embraced rather than rejected.

In the Icelandic pavilion at the Frankfurt Book Fair the stage background was adorned with images of *Almannagjá* and the iconic Icelandic rock *stuðlaberg*, which is also a central theme in Icelandic architecture and art. The concatenation of nature and literature as a kind of escape from the temporal matrices via an emphasis on elements outside of historical time and place was captured in an article in the German newspaper *Die Welt*. Here, the writer creates an associative transfer of the traits of natural forces onto Icelandic literature: »Nicht nur die ebenfalls präsentierte grandiose Natur, die Gletscher und Geysire, ist ewig, auch die Literatur soll der Zeit und ihren Aufregungen enthoben sein.«⁴¹ In con-

39 Cf. JÓHANNSSON: 2003.

40 HERZFELD: 2002, 902.

41 KÄMMERLINGS: 2011.

tinuation of my thesis that there was a merging of natural forces and culture in the book fair's general presentation of Iceland, this becomes a metonymic slippage between elements that appear logically connected in this context. Being associated with the original and eternal perspective provides a unique opportunity for nation branding that works through a positive framing of the legacy of a cultural narrative: culture merges with and is conditioned by nature. This also does away with the binary opposition between the two concepts.

The alternative is the essence of the representation of Iceland in an article in the literature section of the German weekly newspaper *Die Zeit*, where magic is seen as a link between economy, culture and literature: »Die Zauberkraft der Elfen wurde durch die Zauberkraft der Märkte ersetzt.«⁴² Journalist Ijoma Mangold points to something central, namely that in Iceland the crisis has been used to support an eccentric image built around both cultural and natural phenomena, which has moved Iceland to the centre of international attention.⁴³ In line with Schram's thesis, Iceland once again ends on the edge of the familiar in the book fair representations – in this case even at the edge of the realm of magic, or as an alternative space. This strategy is known from tourist industry advertising campaigns directed at external parties. On the English edition of the official homepage www.icelandtouristboard.com there are several examples of Iceland being depicted as a heterotopia and as a contrast to known civilisation. One example is the image of tourists in a glacial landscape shrouded in fog with the caption: »It's an unearthly paradise in Iceland.«⁴⁴ Here the country is not only placed in a chronological logic as being pre-civilised, with the reference to paradise, but also remote from the world we know, as it is ›unearthly‹.

The art scene is one of the prominent forums of critical debate in Iceland. The number of thematisations of environmental politics, self-images and interpretations of national history far exceed the examples touched upon here. As I have outlined, both Icelandic art and scholarship of the present day hold a potential to lead the critical discussion of dominant narratives about the influence of past structures at this potent moment in

42 MANGOLD: 2011, 22.

43 Ibid, 23.

44 <http://www.icelandtouristboard.com> [31.12.2011].

history. However, as exemplified by the Frankfurt Book Fair, the commercial promotion of art is often filled with stereotypes.

Conclusion – a dialogue with Herzfeld to be continued

In light of the recent developments, discussions and self-scrutiny in Iceland, it must be clear to anyone that past relations and their continued influence on Icelandic politics and culture *do* matter. Artists and scholars are diving into some of the tender and unresolved questions about Iceland's past, present and future, while trying to hold the lid open that is revealing the raw national narratives and invite criticism before it closes again and business goes on as usual.

The crypto-colonial approach to Icelandic cultural history can help to identify obscured dimensions of the country's primary international relations and dominant cultural narratives. It helps us forward in the discussion of the implications of past power relations, e.g. within the Kingdom of Denmark. This perspective allows the dynamics between Iceland's positioning as spiritual and cultural source on the one hand and economic and political outsider on the other to stand out. Iceland is placed at an intersection between the core and the periphery. Its simultaneous position as core and periphery in relation to Europe is a condition of being a crypto-colony. Some of the dominant conditions in Icelandic history – such as the power of natural forces, the country's material defencelessness (turned into ideology)⁴⁵, and rapid industrialisation – have also been key issues that have contributed to its current position. The acceleration of industrialisation, the subsequent utilisation of natural resources, and the financial bubble have resulted in the current need for reflection.

At an immediate level, one can observe an embracing and appropriation of Iceland's position as something ›other‹, as defined by European standards. At this level opacity and mystery are used to create an image: reflecting and alluring. At the foundation of the present condition, however, lies a different kind of opacity: the complex and uncertain situation of having considerable human and natural resources in combination with underlying unresolved issues with the past, including the nature of its relationship with Denmark.

45 Cf. HÁLFDANARSON: 2001, 2.

What could be called a national existential doubt is touched upon by Erlingsdóttir: »Perhaps Iceland is simply too small to aspire to be a full-fledged liberal democracy (...)«⁴⁶ and Ísleifsson, who calls the general Icelandic self-promotion of the 20th and 21st centuries »an attempt to make the small visible, to call loud to be heard, and a clear sign of a deep sense of inferiority.«⁴⁷ These issues are deeply rooted challenges associated with the crypto-colonial condition. American anthropologist Andrew Nelson suggests the term post-crypto-colonial in his work on present day Nepal – a society that has never been colonised, but has been profoundly influenced by crypto-colonial relations.⁴⁸ Nelson quotes David Scott's *Conscripts of Modernity* (2004), where he argues for a change in the understanding of decolonisation (both in political and scholarly discourse) that moves from an association with the Romantic narrative of overcoming and redemption – which is known from the canonical writing of national history by, for example, Jón J. Aðils (1869–1920) – to that of tragedy:

According to Scott, the anti-colonial longing for total revolution and overcoming fits the discursive mode of vindicationist romanticism that is no longer relevant to the postcolonial present. Rather, he thinks postcolonial narratives should be written and imagined as tragedies that expose how states and societies endure the permanent legacy of the conditions established by colonial power structures.⁴⁹

Scott is critical of the standard narratives of the postcolonial when it comes to viewing history. He emphasises that within the narrative framework of tragedy the relation between past, present and future is »never a Romantic one in which history rides a triumphant and seamlessly progressive rhythm, but a broken series of paradoxes and reversals in which human action is ever open to unaccountable contingencies – and luck.«⁵⁰ Nelson uses this re-narration to shed light on crypto-colonialism. According to him, the crypto-colonial has in fact not been about overcoming, but about enduring a long-term conditioning force that makes certain logics possible for the national elite and has influenced the very foundation of the country's politics, self-understanding, economy, social

46 ERLINGSDÓTTIR: 2009, 72.

47 ÍSLEIFSSON: n.d.

48 Cf. NELSON: 2011.

49 Ibid.

50 SCOTT: 2004, 13.

structure, relationships with other states, national narratives, etc. Therefore he argues that in time, this condition is likely to develop into a post-crypto-colonial condition rather than a de-crypto-colonisation; implying that the condition, like neo-colonialism, is a long-term premise.

During the brief period since the middle of the 20th century, Iceland has moved – via a semi-peripheral position – from a peripheral economic position as a developing country, to a proactive position (around 2005), to its state during the crisis after 2008 as a fallen outsider in the economic system. The notion of an exceptional identity, which has given rise to the success of the ›financial mirage‹ both at home and abroad, has been built on the ideas of special natural conditions, a focus on the ›golden age‹ before 1262, and an alleged unique ethnic disposition. The question is how much effect the art scene's emerging critique of the great ideological narratives of nationalism, imperialism, and capitalist globalisation will have when the same narratives are simultaneously maintained and nurtured in industrial and commercial images in order to attract buyers and tourists.

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REINHARD HENNIG

Postcolonial Ecology: An Ecocritical Reading of
Andri Snær Magnason's *Dreamland: A Self-Help Manual
for a Frightened Nation* (2006)

Literature plays an important part in shaping environmental awareness and can contribute to solving ecological problems. This is the basic assumption of ecocriticism, a relatively new field of research within literary and cultural studies. There is, however, some disagreement about what exactly the roots of ecological problems are and how they should best be approached. Individual works of literature and the field of ecocriticism itself all draw on ideas from the environmental movement and from the science of ecology. These ideas are not always compatible with each other and are used in different ways within distinct national contexts. The literatures of postcolonial countries have until recently been almost completely neglected by ecocriticism. Therefore, in the following article I will attempt an ecocritical reading of the book *Dreamland: A Self-Help Manual for a Frightened Nation*, by the Icelandic writer Andri Snær Magnason. *Dreamland* is the most important work in the Icelandic language that deals with environmental questions. It protests against the devastation of the country's highlands through large-scale hydropower projects and at the same time presents a broad cultural criticism. I will read *Dreamland* against the background of a variety of ideas that have been prominent in the history of the environmental movement and within ecocriticism. Which of them are being used and which ones have been rejected? How are these ideas applied to the situation in a small postcolonial state such as present-day Iceland?

Ecology and the environmental movement

As the name itself shows, the term »ecocriticism« is deduced from the word »ecology«. Ecology as a distinct biological discipline emerged during the second half of the 19th century. Its focus is on the distribution and abundance of organisms and the interactions between organisms and their biotic and abiotic environment. As a science, ecology analyses the coherences in ecosystems, but is itself not directly normative. Many ecologists, however, have been politically involved and have thus contributed

to the popularity of ecological theories within the environmental movement.

The beginning of this alliance is often traced back to the book *Silent Spring* (1962) by the American biologist and writer Rachel Carson. Carson criticised the practice of large-scale pesticide spraying in agriculture. Pesticides such as DDT affected not only the targeted insects but other organisms as well. And not only animals suffered: DDT also entered the human body, harming internal organs and the nervous system, causing allergies, cancer and malformations in embryos. Carson called this unhesitating application of pesticides a »war against nature«.¹ In her opinion, it resulted from man's false perception that he stood above nature and was not himself a part of it. She suggested that we abandon the use of the most hazardous poisons altogether and develop less harmful and more efficient biological alternatives.

Other scientists went even further than Carson in linking ecology and politics. Barry Commoner (born 1917), once a presidential candidate in the USA, formulated some easily comprehensible »laws of ecology«, such as »everything is connected to everything else«.² Even small perturbations in an ecological system can have major and long-delayed effects. Environmental pollution disrupts ecological connections, simplifies the original complexity of the system and increases the probability of a collapse.

In contrast to the conventional natural sciences, which were – not least against the backdrop of the atomic bomb – regarded by many as mechanistic, reductionist and irresponsible, ecology seemed to offer a holistic perspective on life that regarded even far-reaching effects and long-term consequences. In a sense, ecology became the »leading science« of the environmental movement.³ Concepts such as connectedness, equilibrium and diversity as the prerequisites for stability remain very important, although in ecology itself doubts have arisen as to whether it really is possible to derive such generalising laws from nature. In any case, the strong reliance of the movement on ecology has not diminished. Historians such as Donald Worster and Joachim Radkau have even called

1 CARSON: 2002, 7.

2 COMMONER: 1971, 33.

3 Cf. TREPL: 1987, 13.

the time since around 1970 the »age of ecology«, meaning essentially not the science itself, but the political movement.⁴

Ecocriticism – an American discipline?

In the 1970s increasing public attention on environmental problems even influenced the sciences, resulting in the establishment of new sub-disciplines such as environmental engineering, environmental sociology and environmental history. Literary studies were much slower in taking up this new issue. In the 1970s, some scholars had already called for an ecologically inspired literary criticism; however, these interests were not bundled and institutionalised until the 1990s. In 1992, the Association for the Study of Literature and Environment (ASLE) was founded in the USA. Since then, similar networks have developed in India, Japan, Korea, Taiwan, Great Britain, Canada and Australia. The European Association for the Study of Literature, Culture and Environment (EASLCE) was founded in 2004.

The name »ecocriticism« has become widely accepted as an umbrella term for this diverse field of research. In 1996, an *Ecocriticism Reader* was published. It contained several essays that were intended as an introduction to the field. Cheryll Glotfelty defined ecocriticism in the reader as »the study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment«⁵ and drew parallels between it and feminist criticism. According to Glotfelty, ecocriticism would pass through similar stages of development to feminist criticism: first directing people's attention towards representations of nature in literature and thus contributing to heightened awareness, then rediscovering texts from the genre of nature writing and other environmentally conscious works, before finally concerning itself with theory construction.

Unfortunately, not only has this third stage been neglected by many scholars, it has been actively opposed by some. Their understanding of ecocriticism as a form of environmental activism has led them to reject postmodern theory, which they regard as lacking any connection with reality and therefore being part of the problem. Ecocriticism has thus tended to favour literary realism with a focus on aesthetically pleasing

4 Cf. WORSTER: 1994, xi; RADKAU: 2011, 29.

5 GLOTFELTY: 1996, xviii.

and exact representations of nature.⁶ A typical example for this position is Lawrence Buell's influential book *The Environmental Imagination: Thoreau, Nature Writing, and the Formation of American Culture* (1995). According to Buell, the basic cause of the environmental crisis is anthropocentrism. Literary texts could help us to find better ways of imaging nature, to develop an »environmental literacy«⁷ and finally to arrive at »a more ecocentric state of thinking«⁸. He considers postmodern theories to be bad because they stress »nature's function as an ideological theatre for acting out desires that have very little to do with bonding to nature as such and that subtly or not so subtly valorise its unrepresented opposite (complex society)«.⁹

The background to this attitude can be found in a branch of environmental philosophy called deep ecology. The term »deep ecology movement« was coined by the Norwegian philosopher Arne Næss in 1973. Næss distanced it from what he called the »shallow ecology movement«, which merely fights the symptoms of environmentally detrimental behaviour, such as pollution and resource depletion, but does not change the basic problem of anthropocentrism. According to Næss, deep ecology would, in contrast, advocate biospherical egalitarianism, meaning that all life forms have an equal right to live and blossom.¹⁰

Deep ecology was adopted most notably by a group of American environmentalists concerned with wilderness conservation. Ecocentrism, as opposed to anthropocentrism, implied for them a devaluation of human society, which had no right to claim superiority over nature. However, these views have been criticised by other sections of the environmental movement, who argue that the basic problem is not mankind's incorrect attitude towards nature, but power structures within human societies that lead to both injustice and environmental degradation. The Indian historian Ramachandra Guha regards deep ecology as a chauvinistic American movement that confines environmentalism to the protection of wilderness areas and ignores the actual causes of ecological problems, such as overconsumption, militarisation and global economic inequity. Solving

6 Cf. OPPERMAN: 2010.

7 BUELL: 1995, 110.

8 Ibid., 21.

9 Ibid., 35.

10 Cf. NÆSS: 1973, 95–96.

the environmental crisis does not require us to turn away from human society; on the contrary, it involves fighting for both social and environmental justice.¹¹

Despite this critique, the deep ecological definition of environmentalism forms the background to Buell's and other ecocritics' favouring of »realistic« texts that seem to describe nature unaffected by culturally induced constraints. This means first and foremost the typical American genre of nature writing, which is comprised of non-fiction texts about nature, most often about wilderness areas uninhabited by human beings. The godfather of American nature writing is Henry David Thoreau (1817–1862), who lived for two years in primitive conditions in a small cabin on the shore of Walden Pond, a lake on the outskirts of Concord, Massachusetts. Based on his experiences, he wrote the book *Walden; or, Life in the Woods* (1854). It has been shown, however, that the published text of *Walden* is the result of considerable literary revision, and doubts have been expressed as to whether the book really can be labelled as non-fiction.¹² *Walden* is nevertheless still regarded as »the locus classicus of the quest for reality in American environmental writing«,¹³ and Buell calls Thoreau an »environmental saint«.¹⁴

While Thoreau's text is quite complex and its descriptions of nature are interspersed with a great deal of cultural criticism, his successors in the 20th century often simply contrasted culture and nature and tried to abandon the former altogether. A prominent example of this is Edward Abbey's book *Desert Solitaire*, in which Abbey describes going off into the wilderness in order to free himself completely from the constraints of human culture, which he cordially despised.¹⁵

It is this kind of literature that American ecocriticism still praises most highly. But this creates several problems: If ecocritics limit themselves to reading »realistic« texts and judging them by their attention to detail in their descriptions of nature, they commit the fallacy of believing that literature can eliminate the cultural mediation of every contact with na-

11 Cf. GUHA: 1989.

12 Cf. MURPHY: 2000, 7.

13 SLOVIC: 2008, 165.

14 BUELL: 1995, 24.

15 Cf. ABBEY: 1968, 7.

ture.¹⁶ Thomas V. Reed directly criticises such ecocriticism for dismissing the social dimension from the discussion of ecological problems:

Where a certain type of ecocritic worries about »social issues« watering down ecological critique, mounting evidence makes clear that the opposite has been the case: that pretending to isolate the environment from its necessary interrelation with society and culture has severely limited the appeal of environmental thought, to the detriment of both the natural and social worlds.¹⁷

Another problem is that ecocriticism has for the most time been a thoroughly American discipline which has effectively ignored the literatures of other countries. The consequence has been an almost exclusive focus on American non-fiction nature writing. Patrick D. Murphy criticises this tendency and advocates the inclusion of a wide variety of fiction in ecocritical writing that extends to postmodern novels and science fiction.¹⁸ Beyond this, approaches inspired by postcolonial studies open up very different perspectives. They emphasise the connection between ecological and social problems in postcolonial states, which often originated in the colonial period, when the cultures of »primitive peoples« were usually equated with nature, femininity, irrationality and emotionality. This was the justification for »civilising« not only these peoples in the name of rationality and progress, but also their land, which was regarded as wild, empty and unused.¹⁹

Despite this identification of the relationship between environmental problems and the colonial oppression of native cultures, there have so far only been a few attempts to combine ecocriticism and postcolonial theory. Susie O'Brien puts this down to ecocriticism's prevailing interest in nonurban, »wild« areas. This is in contrast to the explicitly urban perspective of postcolonial studies, which tries to avoid supposedly »natural« affiliations, stressing that all relations to distinct places are culturally constructed. Postcolonialism uses poststructuralist approaches to deconstruct established views of nature that stem from the colonial era. This has led to a predominant interest in texts that can be used either to uncover naive conformity with colonial ideologies or – at the other end of the scale – to show postmodern self-reflection: an obvious contrast to the

16 Cf. PHILLIPS: 1999, 586.

17 REED: 2002, 146.

18 Cf. MURPHY: 2000.

19 Cf. PLUMWOOD: 2003, 52–53.

ecocritical preference for »realistic« non-fiction.²⁰ Rob Nixon adds that ecocritics are primarily interested in »purity«, »wilderness«, and the conservation of »unspoiled« places, whereas in postcolonialism, hybridity and interculturality are stressed. Ecocriticism praises literature about distinct places, while postcolonial literatures often highlight displacement. The nationally limited and often nationalistic American view of ecocriticism is necessarily opposed by postcolonial criticism. Finally, the ecocritical focus on nature writing often leads to the ignoring of the human pre-colonial past of landscapes in favour of a »myth of the empty lands« and the undisturbed community of the (white, male) individual with non-human nature. Postcolonial theory on the other hand is fully aware of the necessity to make the history of colonised, suppressed cultures visible or to establish new perspectives on it.²¹

As I have already shown, ecocriticism has been exposed to similar criticism as the deep ecology movement itself. This debate demonstrates that the way in which issues of nature, ecology and environmental protection are perceived and discussed is varied and subject to considerable influence by national cultural contexts. Ecocriticism is in urgent need of establishing points of view other than the prevalent American one. It is therefore worth taking a look at environmental literature in a country that is both a postcolonial state and renowned for its natural landscapes: Iceland.

Iceland as a colony and as a postcolonial state

Icelandic history is usually divided into three epochs. It began with the settlement of the island, which – officially at least – is considered to have started in 874. The Christianisation of the populace followed around about the turn of the millennium and a unique medieval literary culture developed – a culture which produced the Icelandic sagas and the *Poetic Edda* and Snorri Sturluson's *Prose Edda*, the most important accounts of Norse mythology. This »golden age« came to an end in 1262, when Iceland submitted to the king of Norway and later became a part of the Danish kingdom. The country's time as a colony is generally seen as period of cultural and material decline. Recovery began with the nationalist strug-

20 Cf. O'BRIEN: 2001, 143–144.

21 Cf. NIXON: 2005, 235.

gle for independence in the 19th century, which culminated in the Act of Union in 1918 and full independence in 1944.

One may wonder whether Iceland really was a colony comparable to those of the British Empire and whether it indeed suffered as much under Danish rule as was claimed by Icelandic nationalists. The Danes did not despise the Icelanders as primitive savages, but held their language and medieval literary tradition in high esteem, regarding the latter as an important source for the prehistory of all the Nordic peoples. Denmark even returned many of the most precious medieval manuscripts to Iceland after independence. Nevertheless, the prevailing perception in Iceland is still that Danish rule was to blame for the country's hardships, especially those of the 18th century, although these included natural catastrophes and epidemics as well as manmade problems.²²

In contrast to other colonies, Iceland did not provide substantial natural resources, so its nature remained largely undisturbed. The massive erosion problem, especially in the highlands, is a consequence of extensive sheep grazing and deforestation since settlement began. It is not a product of a mistreatment of the land through the colonial power. After gaining independence, Iceland managed surprisingly well to take control of the natural resource most important to the country's economy – fish. Between 1958 and 1975, Iceland gradually extended its exclusive fishery zone from three to 200 nautical miles in order to expel foreign fleets, which had been fishing off the country's coasts since the Middle Ages. This led to the so-called Cod Wars against Great Britain, which even sent warships to protect its trawlers against the Icelandic coast guard. In the end, Britain had to give in and leave Icelandic waters.

The most controversial issue within Iceland in regard to the natural environment has been the usage of the country's potential for hydropower and geothermal energy. Since around 1970, a considerable number of large hydropower plants have been built in the Icelandic highlands, in areas previously unspoiled by human activity. As these plants use height differences in streams and need a continuous supply of water, dams are raised and the land behind them is flooded. The ecological consequences extend far beyond the reservoir lakes themselves and include changed water temperatures, increased erosion and a decline in or extinction of migratory fish stocks. In Iceland, in contrast to many other countries,

22 Cf. OSKUND: 2011, 45.

there has been only one incidence of people having to be resettled to make way for a storage reservoir. Due to Iceland's serious erosion problem, however, power plants which threaten the few vegetated areas in the highlands are met with particularly vehement resistance. The Kárahnjúkar Hydropower Plant, which was built between 2002 and 2007 in the eastern highlands north of the Vatnajökull glacier, met with the greatest opposition so far. It includes a dam, which – with a height of 193 m and a length of 730 m – is Europe's largest of this type. Its reservoir lake covers 57 km². The electricity produced at the power station is used solely by a large aluminium smelter, built by the American company Alcoa in the town of Reyðarfjörður.²³

Dreamland: A Self-Help Manual for a Frightened Nation

The resistance against the Kárahnjúkar project was manifold, ranging from petitions and demonstrations to acts of civil disobedience at the construction site. Especially influential on those resisting the project was the book *Dreamland: A Self-Help Manual for a Frightened Nation*, published by the writer Andri Snær Magnason in 2006.²⁴ It soon became a bestseller in Iceland and earned its author the Icelandic Literary Prize (2006), the Icelandic Booksellers' Prize (2006) and the KAIROS Prize of the Alfred Toepfer Foundation (2010). An English translation was published in 2008 and a German one followed in 2011. *Dreamland* was also made into a film of the same name in 2009.

The book is written in essayistic prose but it also includes maps, drafts, photographs, transcripts of interviews, a long list of Icelandic farm names, self-designed advertising logos and many other unusual components. It contains a bibliography at the end, and the sources of statements are thoroughly quoted. The author himself has called it »political non-fiction«. ²⁵ Helga Birgisdóttir classifies *Dreamland* as being something between non-fiction and fiction and compares it to *Silent Spring*, as it similarly combines lyrical language and factual knowledge.²⁶

23 On the frequent connection between large hydropower projects and aluminium smelting, see McCULLY: 2001, 254–255.

24 The original title is *Draumalandið. Sjálfshjálparbók handa hræddri þjóð*.

25 MAGNASON: 2010, 6.

26 BIRGISDÓTTIR: 2007, 102 and 107.

Icelandic pyramids

Regarding its subject and its rhetoric, *Dreamland* indeed occasionally resembles Carson's book. It describes the harmful effects that hydropower projects – such as the Kárahnjúkar Hydropower Plant – and emissions from aluminium smelters have on animals, plants, and also on human beings. Large areas of ecologically sensitive land are submerged, threatening valuable vegetation and birds such as the pink-footed goose, which breeds almost exclusively in Iceland. Beneath the reservoirs, erosion and changes in the temperature and water quality of rivers and lakes are to be expected. Pollution of the air by sulphur dioxide from the aluminium factories can seriously affect the health of the population, especially that of children. In a similar way to Carson, Magnason shows that, since man is not separate from nature, environmental change has undesirable consequences even for human beings. Where Carson saw a »war against nature«, Magnason speaks of a »war against the land«, taking up the title of an essay by Halldór Laxness written in 1970, which was written in reaction to large hydropower plants that were planned at that time.²⁷

However, the description of ecological problems per se takes up relatively little space in *Dreamland*. In fact, the largest part of the book deals with Icelandic society. Magnason observes that public discourse is influenced very much by economic thinking. Everything is measured solely according to the profit it may yield, and not in relation to any other effects it might have. Magnason demonstrates this by using the example of the term economic growth (*hagvöxtur*). Almost no one can define what it means, although everybody regards it as desirable. Thus, economic growth can be used as a knockout argument, for example against nature conservation. Doubting the necessity of economic growth would mean that one is being romantic and unrealistic. What is not seen is that economic growth consists of a great variety of elements, some of which are highly problematic:

Economic growth measures only economical ratings, but takes no notice of consequences, long-term effects, value and quality of things. Economic growth does not measure the time that people spend together with their children or family. [...] Economic growth takes no notice of over-exploitation or war or whether coming generations will be burdened as a result of excessive debt and

27 Cf. LAXNESS: 1971.

pollution. War, the depletion of natural resources, natural catastrophes and the accumulation of debt can lead to economic growth.²⁸

There is no way to distinguish good economic growth from bad economic growth. Therefore it has to be doubted whether this term really is a suitable means of measuring a society's level of prosperity, when it can actually be harmful and even dangerous. If it was replaced by a number of more exact categories, people might be able to talk about economic growth without having to be for or against it.²⁹

Criticism of the usually unquestioned belief in infinite growth is not a new phenomenon. In 1972, the report *The Limits to Growth* was issued by a team of scientists from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Based on a complex computer model, they predicted that if the world's population, economy, consumption of non-renewable resources and environmental pollution continued to increase uninhibited, within less than 100 years the limits of nature would be reached and a disastrous collapse of the economy and the world's ecosystems would occur.³⁰ Ernst Friedrich Schumacher argued one year later in his book *Small is Beautiful: A Study of Economics As If People Mattered* in a very similar way to Magnason that economists confine themselves to quantification without considering qualitative differences. They measure prosperity according to GNP and claim that »growth of GNP must be a good thing, irrespective of what has grown and who, if anyone, has benefited«. ³¹ The possibility that growth can even be unsound and destructive is completely ignored. *Small is Beautiful* has been one of the most influential providers of ideas for the environmental movement, although it – like *Dreamland* – is not in the first place concerned with nature, but with human beings and the question of how society and the economy can flourish without transgressing the natural limits of the planet.

28 »Hagvöxtur mælir eingöngu efnahagsstærðir en leggur ekki mat á afleiðingar eða langtímaáhrif, gildi eða gæði hluta. Hagvöxtur mælir ekki tíma fólks með börnum eða fjölskyldu. [...] Hagvöxtur leggur ekki mat á rányrkju eða stríð eða hvort lagðar séu byrðar á komandi kynslóðir með óhóflegum lántökum eða mengun. Stríð, rányrkja, náttúruhamfarir og skuldásöfnun geta skilað hagvexti.« (MAGNASON: 2006, 75). All translations from Icelandic in this article are my own.

29 Cf. *ibid.*, 76.

30 Cf. MEADOWS et al.: 1972.

31 SCHUMACHER: 2010, 51.

Magnason elaborates further that the economic bias of thinking also affects language, which by now is full of metaphors derived from the field of economy. In Iceland, for example, the term heavy industry (*stóriðja*) has become interchangeable with everything on which people set their hopes, so that even educational institutions and national parks are labelled as being the heavy industry of a certain region.³² Education has similarly fallen prey to economic rationality. School children have to learn large amounts of prepared knowledge by heart, but get no chance to discover things for themselves; experimentation and the practical application of knowledge are lacking.³³ Education is regarded as a financial investment that has to yield an obvious and measurable profit: »What cannot be measured, efficiency discards as ›waste‹. Someone who has studied *Völuspá* and becomes an economist is like a dentist who has accidentally invested in an air hammer.«³⁴

Völuspá is the first poem in the manuscript containing the *Poetic Edda* and ranks among the most important texts from Iceland's literary tradition. The disregard of the nation's cultural heritage and environmental destruction are therefore consequences of the same one-sided mode of reasoning. A critique of this kind can also be found in *Small is Beautiful*. As a consequence of the dominance of economic thinking, the alleged uneconomicalness of an activity – which means too little profitability measurable in money – is sufficient to deny its legitimacy. »Anything that is found to be an impediment to economic growth is a shameful thing, and if people cling to it, they are thought of as either saboteurs or fools.«³⁵

According to Magnason, the reduction of education to economic profitability, the fragmentation of knowledge and the insufficiencies of contemporary language make it difficult for people to establish connections between different issues and ideas. The result is a dualistic mode of thinking exclusively in polar opposites: one has to be for or against electricity production, for or against economic growth; no nuances are permitted.

32 Cf. MAGNASON: 2006, 71.

33 Cf. *ibid.*, 97.

34 »Það sem ekki verður mælt afskrifar skilvirknin sem ›sóun‹. Sá sem lærir ›Völuspá‹ og verður viðskiptafræðingur er eins og tannlæknir sem hefur óvart fjárfest í loftpressu.« (*Ibid.*, 100).

35 SCHUMACHER: 2010, 44.

This leads also to a splitting up of society into clearly demarcated groups, whose members are not regarded as having individual opinions.³⁶

The politicians contrasted interests connected to peoples' holiest feelings and pretended that they were irreconcilable contradictions: the highlands or the home; nature or the inhabited land; work or life. This explains the hardness and the cold civil war which goes straight through kin and friendship.³⁷

Connections between nature and human culture as well as within society itself are broken. With regard to the economy as a whole, bureaucratic, complicated and incomprehensible rules prevent any innovation and the application of new ideas.³⁸ Instead, the government claims to be responsible for creating jobs and favours centrally controlled planning. It relies on big, one-sided solutions based on the exploitation of natural resources. The large-scale utilisation of hydropower and the establishing of heavy industry are presented as the only possible way to ensure prosperity. No alternatives are considered. Magnason compares the building of large dams to that of the Egyptian pyramids – an example of megalomaniac gigantism that went out of control. On the same page, a draft of a cross-section of the Kárahnjúkar dam is depicted, showing its obvious pyramidal shape.³⁹

The pyramids are quite often mentioned in ecologically motivated cultural criticism. Thoreau wrote:

As for the Pyramids, there is nothing to wonder at in them so much as the fact that so many men could be found degraded enough to spend their lives constructing a tomb for some ambitious booby, whom it would have been wiser and manlier to have drowned in the Nile, and then given his body to the dogs.⁴⁰

In Thoreau's opinion, it would be much better if nations endeavoured to become immortal through intellectual rather than material achievements. The historian Lewis Mumford saw the pyramids as an early manifestation of a technocratic, centralising and inhumane mega machine, the purpose

36 Cf. *ibid.*, 70–71.

37 »Stjórnsmálama menn stilltu upp hagsmunum sem tengjast helgustu tilfinningum manna og létu sem um ósamrýmanlegar andstæður væri að ræða. Hálendið eða heimilin. Náttúran eða byggðarlagið. Atvinnan eða lífið. Það skýrir hörkuna og kalt borgarastríð sem gengur þvert á bræðra- og vináttubönd.« (*Ibid.*, 244).

38 Cf. *ibid.*, 54.

39 Cf. *ibid.*, 146.

40 THOREAU: 1995, 37.

of which was to exploit surplus working power and to stabilise a regime with no interest in social justice.⁴¹ The direct comparison of pyramids to dams was probably first made, however, by the Egyptian president Gamal Abdel Nasser, who, concerning the ecologically highly questionable Aswan dam, remarked that »now we build pyramids for the living«.⁴²

According to Magnason, in Iceland everything is done to enforce the government's plans for heavy industry. Unwanted opinions and objections are suppressed, ridiculed or systematically denigrated. Magnason compares the all-encompassing centralisation to Stalinist five-year plans and to the totalitarian regimes in dystopian novels such as George Orwell's *1984* and Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*.⁴³ A climate of fear is generated by constantly drawing the nightmare scenario of the nation falling back into pre-independence poverty, symbolised by sheepskin shoes.⁴⁴ The result of this »psychological warfare«⁴⁵ is that people still believe every economy has to be based on the export of natural resources – a thinking that Magnason traces back to the colonial period, when the Danes wanted their colonies to supply them with cheap raw materials.⁴⁶ According to Magnason it is exactly the fear of economic declension that enables companies such as Alcoa to build up a kind of autocracy in Iceland and to treat the country in accordance with their colonialist thinking (*nýlendu hugsun*).⁴⁷ Magnason gives examples of other islands such as Jamaica, where mining and aluminium companies have informally replaced the former colonial rulers.⁴⁸

Schumacher, who reflects on how poverty in developing countries can be overcome, writes in a similar way that the primary cause of poverty is not a lack of natural resources, but deficiencies in education and organisation.⁴⁹ He also states that the focus on the export of raw materials is a consequence of the colonial powers' interest in supplies and prof-

41 Cf. MUMFORD: 1967, 205.

42 Cited in MCNEILL: 2000, 168–169.

43 Cf. MAGNASON: 2006, 87–90 and 172.

44 Cf. *ibid.*, 82.

45 *Ibid.*, 207.

46 Cf. *ibid.*, 55.

47 Cf. *ibid.*, 219.

48 Cf. *ibid.*, 228.

49 Cf. SCHUMACHER: 2010, 178.

its, which was opposed to the flourishing of internal, local markets.⁵⁰ This way of thinking is carried on in present-day development aid:

Poor countries slip – and are pushed – into production methods and consumption standards which destroy the possibilities of self-reliance and self-help. The results are unintentional neo-colonialism and hopelessness for the poor.⁵¹

Magnason connects the present exploitation of Iceland's natural resources to colonialism. References such as this were frequent during the Kárahnjúkar debate. For example, the statue of Jón Sigurðsson, the leader of the independence movement in the 19th century, was wrapped in aluminium foil as a sign of protest.⁵²

Retrieving connectedness

Dreamland does not limit itself to ecologically inspired cultural criticism. It also suggests a vision of how Icelandic society can flourish without abandoning the country's cultural and natural heritage. As an example for alternative economic activity, which is not as problematic as heavy industry, Magnason names traditional Icelandic sheep farming. In his opinion, this sector, which has often been pronounced dead, has great potential. The problem, however, is that customers in the supermarkets do not know where exactly their food comes from and that they therefore are not able to appreciate it appropriately:

When I buy roast saddle of lamb in a shop, I cannot buy the name of the farmer, the family, the farm; the district or the heath as a trademark. I cannot buy a 1,100-year-long tradition or 1,100 years of habitation in a particular place. I cannot buy round-ups, sheep gatherings in the autumn, or lambing. I cannot let my guests dine on the tracts of Njáls saga, the bloody battles of Knafahólar or Gunnarshólmur, nor on a lamb that gnawed the flowers beneath the mountains of Hraundrangar, where the poet walked with knapsack and hiking pole. I am not seized by the uncontrollable desire to read out *Ferðalok* by Jónas Hallgrímsson over the meat soup.⁵³

50 Cf. *ibid.*, 229.

51 *Ibid.*, 207.

52 Cf. KARLSDÓTTIR: 2010, 182–184.

53 »Þegar ég kaupi lambahrygg úti í búð get ég ekki keypt nafn bónda eða fjölskyldu, ekki bæjarnafn sem vörumerki, ekki hrepp eða heiði. Ég get ekki keypt 1100 ára hefð eða 1100 ára byggð á einhverjum stað, ekki göngur, réttir eða sauðburð. Ég get ekki leyft gestum mínum að borða Njálslóðir, blóðugan Knafahólabardagann eða Gunnarshólma og ekki heldur lamb sem nagaði blómin undir Hraundröngum þar sem skáldið gekk með

The alienation brought about by the uniform packaging of meat, dairy goods and other foods prevents consumers from mentally connecting these products to distinct places, to nature, history and literature. The medieval *Njáls saga* makes the slopes of Knafahólar the site of a heroic battle in which three men killed fourteen attackers. The reference to the romantic poet Jónas Hallgrímsson evokes his appreciation of the Icelandic landscape and at the same time the nation's struggle for independence, in which Jónas played an important part.

Better marketing of farming products, not impeded by bureaucratic rules, could re-establish these lost connections and create higher value, both in material and immaterial terms. If the farmers were allowed to self-market, their farms would, as a consequence, attract city dwellers seeking recreation and culinary pleasures, thus diminishing the separation between rural and urban areas. At the same time, farming would contribute to the conservation of cultural traditions and natural diversity.⁵⁴ There are countless other opportunities for creating jobs and income in rural areas and small towns, not only from tourism, but also through the new possibilities arising from the internet: computer programmers can work everywhere, even in small towns on Iceland's east coast, and enjoy the high quality of living there. Many opportunities have passed by unnoticed:

If the people had worked with courage and a long-term believe in the future, not with fear and despair, buildings would have risen, human life blossomed, companies been founded and people would have come to participate in society, and one would not need to thank any ministers or companies for it, but rather the many individuals and people who live on people who are the foundation pillars of the job market.⁵⁵

What Magnason is positing here is a completely decentralised, varied and small-scale economy, which does not need central planning, well-financed foreign companies or huge amounts of non-renewable resources. It is based on human creativity and entrepreneurial spirit. This vision is perfectly consistent with the message of *Small is Beautiful* – that in order

mal og prik. Ég verð ekki gripinn óstjórnlegri löngun til að lesa Ferðalok eftir Jónas Hallgrímsson yfir kjötsúpunni.» (MAGNASON: 2006, 49).

54 Cf. *ibid.*, 56.

55 »Hefðu menn unnið með kjarkinn og langtímatrú á framtíðina en ekki óttann og örvæntinguna hefðu byggingar risið, mannlífið blómstrað, fyrirtæki verið stofnuð og fólk komið til að taka þátt í samfélaginu og það hefði ekki verið neinum að þakka, engum ráðherra, engu fyrirtæki, heldur mörgum einstaklingum og fólki sem lifir á fólki sem eru stoðir atvinnulífssins.« (*Ibid.*, 256).

to raise the quality of life in rural areas and to stop the rural exodus in poor countries, it is not helpful to bring in industry from rich nations, which requires expensive and complicated technology and produces solely for export. Instead, development should build on what is already in place, and on what Schumacher calls an »intermediate technology«, which is not primitive, but small-scale and ecologically sound. »One can also call it self-help technology, or democratic or people's technology – a technology to which everybody can gain admittance and which is not reserved to those already rich and powerful«. ⁵⁶ Schumacher adds that »to redirect technology so that it serves man instead of destroying him requires primarily an effort of the imagination and an abandonment of fear«. ⁵⁷ It is maybe no coincidence that the subtitle of *Dreamland* is »a self-help book for a frightened nation«. Magnason is of course aware that he is writing about one of the wealthiest nations in the world, not about a developing country. But according to him many of his fellow countrymen have trouble believing that Iceland is no longer as poor and underdeveloped as it once was. ⁵⁸ Schumacher's proposals may therefore be well suited to Iceland's rural areas.

Both Schumacher and Magnason state that in order to make such a new economic system possible, it is necessary to encourage creativity in people when they are at school. As a positive example, Magnason names drama groups in secondary schools. In these drama groups, the pupils arrange everything themselves and have their own budget for hiring professionals as teachers and stage directors. When the plays are performed, the pupils come into closer contact with literature than would ever be possible in normal lessons. Moreover, they gain broad experience in self-organisation and in mastering complex tasks – a necessity in present-day companies – but without perceiving this as forced education. The model of the theatre groups could easily be transferred to other fields, for example the science-orientated subjects. ⁵⁹ The development of creativity requires unlimited diversity in education instead of being restricted to what seems to be economically profitable: »The future is built on too many people learning too long and too much about too many things that no-

56 SCHUMACHER; 2010, 163.

57 Ibid., 169.

58 Cf. MAGNASON; 2006, 101–102.

59 Cf. *ibid.*, 98–99.

body works with in this country. Only in this way can new jobs and possibilities emerge.«⁶⁰

Back to nature?

Magnason's vision of a complex and creative society conducting an infinite diversity of small-scale economic activities seems to be a counter-image not only to hydropower and heavy industry, but also to the simplicity, which Thoreau propagated, and to the back-to-nature approach of writers such as Abbey. Magnason actually mentions that he was compelled to discard such ideas:

We can try to turn back. Last summer I honestly attempted to subsist on fishing. I stood for four days on the banks of the river Laxá in Aðaldalur and came home with one sea trout. [...] I had to sell 150 books of poetry in order to pay for the fishing permit, which cost precisely as much as 200 kg of filleted had-dock.⁶¹

In a poem called *Emergency Plan*, which was originally published in 1996, Magnason had already expressed that he had, in the case of a sudden apocalypse, always intended to escape to the place in northern Iceland where his ancestors had lived for 1,000 years, and to subsist on what nature offered. But then he remembered that he would probably not survive long, as in his toolbox there were only some hex drivers that had come with IKEA furniture.⁶²

Dreamland therefore does not propagate a radical turn towards an ecocentrism in which human and (especially) urban culture is devalued. Magnason emphasises among other things that the region around Kárahnjúkar is very easily walkable, even for old people and children, and encourages these age groups to go hiking there – a sharp contrast to the elitist, male wilderness experience which Abbey praises. Moreover, the Icelandic landscape is not portrayed as an untouched wilderness, but as

60 »Framtíðin byggist á því að of margir læri of lengi og of mikið um of marga hluti sem enginn starfar við hér á landi. Aðeins þannig geta ný störf og nýir möguleikar orðið til.« (Ibid., 94).

61 »Við getum reynt að snúa aftur. Í sumar gerði ég heiðarlega tilraun til að veiða mér til matar. Ég stóð á bakka Laxár í Aðaldal í fjóra daga og kom heim með einn urriða. [...] Ég þurfti að selja 150 ljóðabækur til að greiða niður veiðileyfið sem kostaði jafn mikið og 200 kg af flakaðri ýsu.« (Ibid., 11).

62 Reprinted in MAGNASON: 2011, 52.

being deeply connected to history and culture. The appreciation of places is actually portrayed as being increased by the recognition of these relations. From a postcolonial perspective, Magnason deconstructs the »myth of the empty lands«, which are there to be used by those who have the power to do so. Iceland's landscapes are not at the disposal of technocrats and heavy industry, but are a common property that has to be conserved not only for today's, but also for future generations.

As to the question of genre, *Dreamland* is certainly a piece of non-fiction that is concerned with the protection of Iceland's natural environment. It does not, however, easily fit into the category of nature writing and certainly does not propagate »realism« in the form of detailed descriptions of nature. Actually, instead of being unambiguous and decisive about »reality«, *Dreamland* explicitly invites the reader to question traditional views:

It is excellent to dissolve reality regularly and to arrange it again and to prioritize it according to one's own will. In this way it is possible to have an influence on almost all fields of existence: eating habits, fashion, music, education, politics, the arts, architecture, one's home and one's own happiness. With a simple thought it is possible to fill worthless things with history, worth and meaning, and thus create value out of nothing.⁶³

This explicit commitment to the creative power of human imagination is certainly in strong contrast to the preference for realism in ecocriticism, but is programmatic for *Dreamland* itself. Whereas nature writing upholds a dualistic opposition of human culture and nonhuman nature, *Dreamland* questions the assumption that one has to decide between the two. Life is more than just raw materials. It is possible to support both protection of the environment and human economic and cultural activity. *Dreamland* demonstrates through its holistic approach that the question of nature conservation cannot be separated from social issues, education, language and ethics. Nature and culture are not dualistic opposites, but form a complex, unified whole. In this view, the distinction between anthropocentrism and ecocentrism becomes obsolete. Instead of turning back to nature, it is necessary to retrieve the lost connections

63 »Það er ágætt að leysa reglulega upp veruleikann og raða honum saman aftur og forgangsraða eftir eigin vilja. Þannig er hægt að hafa áhrif á nánast öll svið tilverunnar; matarvenjur, tísku, tónlist, menntun, stjórnmal, listir, byggingarlist, búsetu og eigin hamingju. Með einfaldri hugsun er hægt að fylla verðlausa hluti af sögu, gildi og merkingu og skapa þannig verðmæti úr engu.« (MAGNASON: 2006, 34).

within society, between production and consumption, history and place, and between culture and nature.

Dreamland takes up ecological ideas concerning the qualities of natural ecosystems and transfers them to society. Connections within ecosystems can be dissolved by pollution or environmental destruction. Connections in society are lost through uniformity, inflexibility and a lack of imagination, resulting in profound alienation. Whereas biological diversity emerges through evolutionary processes, diversity within society and within the economy requires human creativity. *Dreamland* in this way both contains and transgresses the message of *Silent Spring*. Through its outline of a decentralised, small-scale and diversified economy based on resource-sparing and humane technology, it is above all a *Small is Beautiful*, brought up to date and applied to the situation of a small, postcolonial state. Schumacher's belief that small countries, small economies and small companies are more successful than large ones – and also more compatible with human nature – is converted into a vision of Iceland's future.

Magnason's book is an outstanding example of literature's ability to influence the perception of the environment and society's relation to it. In the way that it encourages people to creativity and to the appreciation of nonmaterial values, *Dreamland* may be a self-help manual not only for the Icelandic nation.

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HELGA BIRGISDÓTTIR

Searching for a Home, Searching for a Language:
Jón Sveinsson, the Nonni Books and Identity Formation

At the end of the motion picture version of *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*, which was produced in 1939, Dorothy taps her heels together three times and repeats: »There's no place like home« and within the blink of an eye, she awakes in her bedroom in Kansas, where she promises never to run away again. The *Wizard of Oz* is certainly not the first or last children's story to deal with the concept of »home« and the search for such a place. The search for a home has been a potent literary subject for centuries, both in children's and adult literature.¹ Children's stories that deal with the concept of home often focus on the departure from, displacement of and/or the search for a home. They also depict the hero's adventure as a journey toward the self, a passage from innocence to experience and self-awareness that may lead to a better life.² Though there is no shortage of adult literature dealing with this concept, the home is an even stronger focal point in children's lives than in those of adults.³

While story settings in children's literature are varied and diverse, Perry Nodelman maintains in *The Pleasures of Children's Literature* that they can all be categorized in terms of the relationship of the main character to two places: »home« and »not home«. »Home« to a child is not merely a dwelling place but also an attitude. It is a place of comfort, security and acceptance – a place that meets both her physical and emotional needs. According to Nodelman, a child, or a childlike creature, is bored by home and seeks the excitement of adventure; but the excitement proves to be dangerous, so the child then seeks the safety of home – which is boring. Nodelman argues that this narrative and thematic pattern, which he calls the home-away-home-story is, in fact, the most important defining characteristic of children's literature as a genre.⁴

1 CHASTON: 1994 discusses the concept of »home« in Baum's Oz books and points out that in the novel Baum presents a much more ambivalent attitude towards home than is revealed in the movie.

2 CHANG: 2010, 133; SCOTT and DOYLE: 1993.

3 SCOTT and DOYLE: 1993.

4 NODELMAN: 1992b, 193.

Home is a central theme in the *Nonni* books (1913–1945), a series of boys' stories written by the Icelandic author and Jesuit-priest Jón Sveinsson (1857–1944)⁵ and based on his own childhood. Sveinsson was sent away from his native Iceland in 1870, at the age of twelve, as the death of his father had cast the family into great poverty. He spent the rest of his life among Catholics and Jesuits – from whom he received his education – in a number of different countries, converting to Catholicism at the age of thirteen and eventually becoming a Jesuit priest himself. In 1910, when he came to the end of his career as a teacher at a Danish school run by Jesuits, Sveinsson's family was scattered and he received the news that his mother, who had been living in Canada for many years, had died. This meant that Sveinsson's ties to Iceland were now completely severed. His sister had already died in Denmark in 1882, his younger siblings he hardly knew, and Manni, his beloved younger brother, had died in France in 1885. His death was a big shock to Nonni – the name by which Sveinsson is better known – and in an emotional epilogue to the book *Nonni und Manni* (1914), Sveinsson discusses how he felt utterly alone and without any worldly comfort, like a stranger among men, when the two people he loved most both passed away.⁶ At this milestone in his life, he started to write, and a year after his mother's passing, in 1911, the first of his books based on his childhood memories, *Nonni: Erlebnisse eines jungen Isländers von ihm selbst erzählt*, was published.

Nonni tells of a brave young boy's traumatic parting from his mother at the age of twelve and leaving his beloved homeland, but for two brief visits never to return. The reason for Nonni's leaving home was the offer of getting an education in France at a school run by Jesuits. The novel begins in Iceland in 1870 and tells of a hazardous voyage on a clipper to Denmark. Eleven books followed, containing stories about his childhood adventures as well as about his travels as an old man, when he gave lectures all over the world about himself – the boy from Iceland.

In his childhood memoirs Jón Sveinsson reinvents himself, mostly to come to terms with his life – a life marked by dislocation, separation and a sense of loss. Sveinsson always considered Iceland to be »home« and

5 Please note that in publications outside Iceland, Sveinsson is often referred to as *Sveinsson*. I use *Sveinsson* in the body of text but when appropriate I use *Svensson* in references.

6 SVENSSON: 1914, 86.

longed to return to his native land. The identity formation in the books is based on Jón Sveinsson's Icelandic nationality as he recreates himself as Nonni, the boy from Iceland. This identity formation is interesting from a postcolonial perspective because Jón Sveinsson belonged nowhere and his stories reflect a search for a home in this world. Sveinsson's roots in Iceland had been severed, both geographically and emotionally. He did not belong in Iceland, Denmark, France or Germany, although all of these places were his home in some sense. Iceland was at the time a Danish colony, not gaining independence until 1944, the year Sveinsson died. All of this makes the question of his nationality problematic. Was he one of the colonizers or one of the colonized?

Language further complicates the question of Sveinsson's identity and home. The Nonni stories were originally written in Danish and German, not Icelandic, and Sveinsson's diaries were also written in a code-mixed text of at least five languages. Did Jón Sveinsson use his native Icelandic to define himself as an Icelander? And if he did not, on what did he base his identity as an Icelander and his connection to »home«?

The child as other

In »Börn þurfa sögur og sögur þurfa börn« (»Children Need Stories and Stories Need Children«; 2005), Dagný Kristjánsdóttir discusses the concept of »children's literature« and points out that children's books are written by a group of people (adults) who have in almost every way total power over their intended readers, the children. According to Kristjánsdóttir, the situation of the child, who is dependent on others and is powerless, must surely put its mark on books for children.⁷

This lack of power is what first and foremost distinguishes children's literature from literature for adults. For Roderick McGillis, this is what makes children »the most colonized persons on the globe« and is apparent from the literature we label for them.⁸ To ratify his claim, McGillis quotes Jacqueline Rose, who asserted that, in addition to being impossible, children's literature is a way of colonizing children. McGillis also discusses Perry Nodelman's influential essay, »The Other: Orientalism, Colonialism, and Children's Literature« (1992) where he applies Edward

7 KRISTJÁNSDÓTTIR: 2005.

8 MCGILLIS: 1997, 7.

Said's notions of orientalism to the study of children and their literature and comes to the conclusion that just as orientalism is a study of what we call »the Other« – that which is opposite to the person doing the talking or thinking or studying – so is children's literature a study of the Other.⁹

If we conclude with Nodelman and Rose that both the writing about children's literature and the writing of it are colonialist, then we might have to say that no such thing as a postcolonial children's literature or a postcolonial criticism of it exists. In addition, we are never able to hear the voice of the child in children's literature:

If we assume that the term »postcolonial« designates a time after imperial powers have departed (in one way or another), and that the postcolonial voice is a voice speaking its own authority and identity in confidence of that authority and identity, then children only express a postcolonial voice after they have ceased to be children.¹⁰

Children then, as the Other, are not only without power but also without a voice. In the case of the Nonni books, the postcolonial voice that expressed itself and claimed to be an Icelandic boy was the voice of a man over fifty years old who had lived in Europe for decades. In addition, this was a voice that did not speak or write in Icelandic.

Here we must also take in account, as Clare Bradford does in her study of postcolonial children's literature, *Unsettling Narratives* (2007), that relations of colonial power were constructed through language and that language was, among other things, used to objectify and classify colonized people.¹¹ Language is deeply implicated in the production of human subjects, Bradford points out, as we see for instance in Lacan's theory of subjectivity, which is centered on the processes by which subjects are produced through language and shaped by systems of law, conventions and values – which are constructed by language.¹² In other words: We can never »escape« language, and colonized subjects are surrounded by the language of the colonizers.

Jón Sveinsson did by no means escape languages. He had been a teacher at a German school run by Jesuits in Ordrup in Denmark for about twenty years when he started writing the Nonni books. The stu-

9 NODELMAN: 1992a, 29.

10 MCGILLIS: 1997, 8.

11 BRADFORD: 2007, 19.

12 Ibid.

dents there came from all over the world, mainly from Denmark and Germany, and spoke many languages. Before that he had spent the majority of his time from the age of thirteen in France, interspersed with spells in Belgium, Holland and England, where he went as a part of his training as a Jesuit. In addition, Latin is the official language of the Catholic Church to which Jón Sveinsson belonged. It is safe to say that languages surrounded Jón Sveinsson – there was no escaping them – but the language furthest away from him was his native Icelandic.

Using the colonizers' language

Nonni was originally written in Danish, but in order to reach a larger audience, Jón Sveinsson tried to translate the story into German. What he wrote was not German, but rather French, Danish, Icelandic or even English – whichever language was closest to him at the time. However, rather than giving up, he spent months polishing up his German and practicing writing in the language before he continued with his translation of the story.¹³ Although he did make a lot of progress, he never became fully fluent. However, children's books were not the only things Jón Sveinsson wrote. He corresponded with many people in different languages and his diary was never out of reach. The diaries give an insight into the mind of Sveinsson the author, but what is interesting is that they are written in a code-switched mixture of German, French, Danish, English and Icelandic. No one language seems to dominate the other.

The earliest definition of the term code switching dates back to Uriel Weinreich (1953) who defined bilingual people as individuals that switch »from one language to the other according to appropriate changes in speech situation«. ¹⁴ There has been some variation in defining the term in comparison to code mixing and here, drawing upon recent scholarship, I refer to code mixing as the process of mixing of elements from two languages in one utterance, and code switching as the product of this mix.¹⁵ Here is an example of such a mix, which Jón Sveinsson wrote while still in France as a teenager. The Icelandic words are in italics but the rest of the text is mostly in French:

¹³ GUÐMUNDSSON: 2012, 293–295.

¹⁴ WEINREICH: 1979, 73.

¹⁵ NASEH: 1997, 202.

Un soir 2 hommes traverserun la foret noire très-peu sûre à cette epoques, car rempliede brigands. *Hræddir* – 2 chapelets pr. les âmes du purg. – Ils passent *án meins*. Brigands þeir peu après *seiga að þeir sáu þessa 2 menn, enn ekki hafa getað tue, því le riddarar fóru á undann*.¹⁶

There can be many reasons for code mixing and it does not automatically mean that people lack knowledge or skill in one language; people with very good language skills often mix languages in certain circumstances. Nevertheless, code mixing and code switching are common in post-colonial literature, especially literature written by a colonized subject. In such cases, code mixing is often used consciously, for example to emphasize the difference between the colonizer – whose language is more highly regarded – and the colonized subject. The concepts »we-code« and »they-code« in the literature of code mixing is used to differentiate between the formal, imperial language and the language of the colonized people. We-code and they-code refer respectively to the ethnic language of a bilingual community and the language of the wider society within which that community forms a minority. The opposition of »we«- versus »they«-codes thus presupposes a particular relationship between monolingual and bilingual communities, as well as particular types of social relationships within the minority group.¹⁷

Using the concepts we- and they-code is often problematic – as it is in the case of Jón Sveinsson. Danish was the language of the nation that colonized Iceland, but Jón Sveinsson spent many years among the French Jesuits from whom he received most of his education. Later he became a part of the German Jesuit order and published his books in German. One could say that he had been colonized by more than one nation and so that for him there was more than one they-code. Jón Sveinsson learned all of their languages and used them, and this could be seen as an example of the domination and power of the colonizers.

The issues of whether or not the colonized subjects are incapable of answering back and questioning colonial authority have been center stage in postcolonial studies since Said's *Orientalism*. In her seminal essay

¹⁶ One night two men went through a dark forest that was very dangerous at that time, because it was full of robbers. The two men were afraid and two times they said rosaries for the soles in purgatory. They passed the woods without harm. Shortly afterwards the robbers said that they had seen the two men but had been unable to do anything, because two knights rode before them. (GUÐMUNDSSON: 2012, 192).

¹⁷ SEBBA and WOOTON: 1998, 262.

»Can the Subaltern Speak«,¹⁸ Gayatri Spivak suggests that it is impossible for us to recover the voice of the »subaltern« or oppressed colonial subject. She turns to colonial debates on widow immolation in India to illustrate her point that any attempt from the outside to ameliorate their condition by granting them collective speech will invariably result in a logocentric assumption of cultural solidarity among a heterogeneous people, as well as a dependence upon Western intellectuals to »speak for« the subaltern subjects rather than allowing them to speak for themselves. Spivak's conclusion then is that by speaking out and reclaiming a collective cultural identity, subalterns will in fact re-inscribe their subordinate position in society. In other words: The subaltern cannot speak.

Clare Bradford's view is different from Spivak's and according to her, to write in the language of the colonizer does not necessarily mean that one is writing as a member of the dominant culture; it does not have to be an example of domination and power. She refers to Bill Ashcroft, who in *Post-Colonial Transformation* (2001) writes that »while ideology, discourse or language constrain subjects, they do not imprison them, nor are subjects immobilized by power«. ¹⁹ Following this train of thought it can be said that this is what Sveinsson does in his Nonni books. There, he speaks for the colonized Iceland but he does so in German. He used the they-code to speak for the other and formulate the other. He uses the they-code to introduce Iceland in a highly positive way and to introduce himself as an Icelander.

An unknown mystery

In the late 18th and 19th centuries, and even well into the 20th century, it was noticeable how Icelandic authors emphasized the similarities between Iceland and other European countries, and this normalization effort sometimes led to a complete denial of what set Iceland apart from other countries.²⁰ This is not the case in the Nonni books, where it is stated clearly that Nonni is the »Other« – different and foreign. Nonni's otherness is described in idealized terms and he is the cause of admiration and curiosity. A good example of this is in the book *Wie Nonni das*

18 SPIVAK: 1988.

19 ASHCROFT: 2001, 47.

20 SCHAER: 2009, 132.

Glück fand (1934), where his arrival at a Catholic school in Amiens in France is described. He soon becomes »everybody's favorite« and has a special impact on the people he meets, simply because he comes from so far away:

An Icelander! A genuine, living Icelander! That was a novelty no one had heard about before. Had I been an Eskimo or a Laplander, a Chinaman or someone from Tierra del Feugo, it would have been a cause of wonder. But that would not have been as unbelievable. After all, people talked about those nations now and again. But an Icelander! What could that be? That was an unknown mystery.²¹

Being an »unknown mystery« gave Sveinsson a lot of freedom for self-creation. It should be noted that Sveinsson not only benefitted from the fact that although the country was still alien to many, it enjoyed growing popularity in Europe and was in the process of a dramatic image change during the latter part of the 19th century.

For centuries the smallness of the Icelandic nation, its total lack of power, its distance from the Western European cultural and power center, as well as the location of the country in the far north, caused Iceland to be described either in utopian or dystopian terms.²² The utopian image of Iceland became more prominent from the late 19th century onwards. More attention was paid to Icelandic literature, and some even compared the lives of Icelanders during the time of the Sagas with the Golden Age of the Ancient Greeks and Romans – in regard to heroic actions as well as cultural achievements, but mostly in connection with the Icelandic Sagas.²³ Sveinsson took full advantage of Iceland's literary heritage in his descriptions of the nation and referred to his homeland as the Alexandria of the North. He was proud of his origins and the cultural legacy of his nation and in the Nonni books, a lot of emphasis is put on describing Icelandic homes as small cultural centers, how literate Icelanders were, and their ability to write and compose poetry. Nonni is described as an

21 Ein Isländer! Aber ein echter, leibhaftiger, wahrer und wirklicher kleiner Isländer! Das war etwas hier gänzlich Neues, etwas nie Dagewesenes. Wäre ich ein Eskimo oder ein Lappländer gewesen, ein Chinese oder ein Feuerländer: gewiß, selten genug; aber doch nicht so ganz unglaublich, denn solche Menschen wurden doch ab und zu genannt. – Aber ein Isländer! Was konnte das wohl sein? Das war das Geheimnisvolle und Unbekannte. (SVENSSON: 1914, 139).

22 ÍSLEIFSSON: 2009, 156.

23 Ibid., 150.

avid reader and Sveinsson believed himself to be a direct descendant of Nordic chieftains and that the blood of poets ran through his veins. He carried his family tree with him wherever he went and with it he wanted to prove his noble origins.²⁴

Although he talks about the literature of the Icelanders and makes it central to Nonni's identity, he hardly speaks about the Icelandic language, which comes as a surprise, given the cultural value of Icelandic – not least in the context of the Scandinavian languages. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, when it was decided how to categorize Icelanders and other nations that were »on the edge«, language was considered to be highly important as it provided fundamental information about the value of the culture of different nations. A mainstay of the nationalistic agenda of the late 19th century was the idea that Icelandic was the oldest and most distinguished of all Scandinavian languages – being the purest dialect of the Gothic language as well as the parent of Norwegian, Danish and Swedish.²⁵

Nonni's language skills

Language is a non-issue in the Nonni books; it is hardly spoken about and not recognized as an element of self-image. It is hardly ever admitted that Nonni has any trouble in communicating with people who speak languages other than Icelandic. No sooner has he stepped off the boat that carried him from Iceland to Denmark than he is engaged in conversation with a Danish boy – fluently and without hesitation. He also has no trouble speaking to other Danish children or to the German Jesuit he lives with for one year in Copenhagen. When he arrives at the Catholic school in Amiens after spending a year in Denmark, it is admitted that he does not speak French, but he still easily manages to make himself understood and learns the language very quickly. Apart from this, Nonni is fully capable of speaking and appears to be very articulate, whatever language he uses. It is stated that the boy has longed to be a writer and he seems to have every qualification to become one.

Reality was not this easy. According to Gunnar F. Guðmundsson, historian and Sveinsson's biographer, Sveinsson struggled with the French

24 GUÐMUNDSSON: 2012, 6–7.

25 ÍSLEIFSSON: 2007, 122–123.

language as well as German, and although Danish came easily to him, it gave way to all the other languages that surrounded Sveinsson in the last decades of his life.²⁶ Sveinsson was a popular lecturer and he enjoyed telling stories about his travels and his separation from his mother. But he had no self-confidence when it came to preaching; he hardly ever preached in Ordrup and did so even more rarely in other places.²⁷ He also did not enjoy talking about politics, philosophy or theology – nothing too difficult, nothing too complicated. Sveinsson was not an eloquent speaker according to Guðmundsson, who says that this was especially evident when he spoke in German. He had a tendency to produce sentences that were labored, were couched in plain language and contained many linguistic errors. In time, he also found it difficult to speak Icelandic and preferred to speak Danish when he met other Icelanders.²⁸

The road home

It is difficult to detect which was Jón Sveinsson's first language, if had one at all, and it is clear that although he was a writer, he struggled with words and suffered from feelings of inferiority when he compared himself to other successful Icelandic writers such as Halldór Laxness and Gunnar Gunnarsson, who were very popular in Europe. He did, however, admit to possessing a talent for writing for »the common people«²⁹ and almost everyone who has written about the style of the Nonni books admires them for their pure and naive style.³⁰

Gert Kreutzer, professor emeritus at the University of Cologne, believes that the Icelandic Sagas, which Nonni both read and listened to while still in Iceland and which he later wrote about, had an impact on his style and are the reason why the Nonni books are written in such a simple and elegant way.³¹ Writing about his friendship with Jón Sveinsson, Nobel laureate Halldór Laxness had this to say about Sveinsson's writing:

26 GUÐMUNDSSON: 2012, 248.

27 Ibid., 345–346.

28 Ibid., 385.

29 Ibid., 13.

30 KRISTJÁNSDÓTTIR: forthcoming.

31 KREUTZER: 1995.

He [Jón Sveinsson] seems to have been an author who used oddly few words, but that is because what he looked for each time was the most simple word or phrase to express his thought, and this he did both for moral reasons and because of practical reasons, with his special group of readers in mind.³²

I do not detect much influence from the Icelandic Sagas in Jón Sveinsson's books nor can I concur with Halldór Laxness that Jón Sveinsson was an author of »oddly few words«. The Icelandic translations are filled with metaphorical and figurative style as well as emotions, and although it can be said that the original German text is written in rather simple language, there is nothing simplistic about the books.³³ Sveinsson himself insisted on still having the heart and soul of a twelve-year-old boy and his writing reflected that.³⁴ I partly agree with this statement: In his books, Jón Sveinsson tries to recapture and reinvent his lost childhood and this happens to be the only way home, or access to home, possible to him.

The road home was not in Icelandic but in other languages, languages Sveinsson did not master and never would. This he never discusses in the books, and he never admits that language is a problem. In fact, he refrains from speaking about negative things altogether. Sveinsson states that his twelve years in the land of purple midnight sun and golden northern lights were the best years of his life, a time when nothing bad ever happened.³⁵ He offers his readers the »boy from Iceland«, who is equipped with all the good qualities of Iceland and the Icelanders. Iceland truly is the »Other«, but its otherness rests on the »fact« that the country and its inhabitants are in many aspects better and more advanced than other nations. He never speaks of Iceland being a Danish colony, of seven centuries of oppression under the Danes, or of the poverty that most Icelanders had to endure, himself included. Sveinsson also never talks about the teenager, young adult or grown man that he later became. The negative aspects of his childhood are also kept hidden – his father's illness and drug abuse, his parents' marital problems, the death of his siblings and the constant poverty the family endured. The death of his father

32 Hann virðist hafa verið einkennilega orðfár rithöfundur, en það er af því að hann leitaði hverju sinni að einfaldasta orði eða orðasambandi til að tjá hugsun sína, bæði af siðferðisástæðum og eins af hagkvæmnisskum vegna þess sérstaka lesendahóps sem hann hafði í huga. (LAXNESS: 1972, 165).

33 KRISTJÁNSDÓTTIR: forthcoming.

34 GUÐMUNDSSON: 2012, 29.

35 Cf. SVENSSON: 1935; SVENSSON: 1936.

is mentioned in one short sentence. He sometimes tried to write about these things in his diaries. In these we find broken sentences, a few words, and unfinished stories in a mixture of languages where no single tongue dominates the others. Jón Sveinsson does not seem to have possessed a language fit to talk about the things that weighed so heavily on his mind.

What does (not) define us

Perhaps a language cannot be admitted as a part of one's identity if one is unable to express oneself in it. This seems to be true both in the case of the fictional character Nonni and also in most definitions of what it means to be an Icelander. Since the Middle Ages the Icelandic language has been an important national symbol for defining Icelandic identity; knowing the language defines who belongs and who does not and it gives access to Icelandic culture and literature. Unnur Dís Skaptadóttir and Kristín Loftsdóttir discuss this in »Cultivating Culture? Images of Iceland, Globalization and Multicultural Society«, in which they analyze the nation state's view of multiculturalism through attitudes towards the Icelandic language and regulations that govern it. According to them, Iceland is still generally perceived to be a homogenous society, and the Icelandic language – with its uniqueness and purity – is still what defines Icelanders and separates them from »others«. Even today, the ability to express yourself in Icelandic is still a qualification for being able to say that you are an Icelander.³⁶

Very little research has been carried out into the attitudes of multilingual Icelandic-speaking children and young adults towards their identity and language ability. This is, however, the topic of a recent B.A. thesis from the University of Iceland called »Ég er fullorðin á ensku.« *Mál-taka, mál og sjálfsmynd þrítyngdrar stúlku* (»I am an adult in English: Language Acquisition, Language and Identity of a Trilingual Girl«). In the thesis, the language acquisition of a seventeen-year-old girl is analyzed. Although both her parents are Icelandic, the girl has lived in two countries, Iceland and Norway, and she speaks Icelandic, Norwegian and English. Icelandic is the language furthest away from her, since she has

36 SKAPTADÓTTIR and LOFTSDÓTTIR: 2009, 208–211.

lived there for the shortest amount of time. She describes herself as having been »a teenager in Norwegian« and »an adult in English«. ³⁷

The girl switches between languages both consciously and unconsciously, but she is quick to switch from Icelandic to English if the conversation gets complicated; she even avoids speaking to people that only speak Icelandic, including her father and paternal grandparents, and describes communication with them as »awkward« and »formal«. The girl's irritation at her lack of knowledge in Icelandic is obvious from examples given in the thesis and she states that she belongs to Iceland but wants to live in Norway and speak English. The conclusion of the research is very optimistic and it is stated that multilingual individuals have an ability to erase the borders between languages and countries and be »unique global citizens«. ³⁸ In the spirit of this conclusion one might say that Nonni is an early dream-child of globalization: the resilient, positive young boy-hero who belongs everywhere and nowhere, travels around the globe, never stays still, speaks many, many languages and is able to communicate with people from all over the world.

Elusive terms, elusive status

Jón Sveinsson's identity or status is in many ways similar to Iceland's position within the imaginary hierarchy of colonial ideology. Historian Íris Ellenberger has discussed how, when describing Iceland's position within the Danish Realm between 1383 and 1944, the term »colony« is seldom used, being replaced instead by the rather elusive term »dependency« (Icelandic *hjálenda*, Danish *biland*), which ignores and denies any similarities between Iceland and other colonies. ³⁹ Ellenberger goes on to discuss how Iceland was neither foreign nor completely familiar, occupying a place somewhere between the civilized and the uncivilized – displaying certain similarities to other colonies but still being different, e.g. in regards to gaining sovereignty in 1918 and sharing a cultural past with Denmark. Because of this, Iceland's status was constantly being negotiated and never fully established, and Ellenberger argues that because of this Iceland was »viewed as static, frozen in the past« and that although it

37 SVEINSDÓTTIR: 2011.

38 *Ibid.*, 24.

39 ELLENBERGER: 2009, 99–100.

was in many ways in the same category as some colonial subjects and not others, it belonged, in evolutionary terms, »to the past, while only the Western world could truly belong to the present«.⁴⁰

Jón Sveinsson's status was just as elusive as the position of Iceland. He was born in the Danish colony of Iceland but lived most of his life on the continent. At the same time, he constantly tried to establish himself as Icelandic – as opposed to European, German, French or any other nationality. Furthermore, his connection to Iceland was based on a glorified image of an idyllic and selectively remembered childhood as well as of the ancient cultural heritage of Iceland. Jón Sveinsson looked back to the past in an effort to be able to step forward into the present, and although his stories were very popular, the story of Nonni never ended in the way children's stories usually do according to the diagram by Perry Nodelman discussed in the introduction. Jón Sveinsson died on October 16, 1944 in an air raid shelter beneath the St. Franziskus hospital in Cologne. He had given over 4,000 lectures about Nonni and written twelve books about him that millions of readers enjoyed in more than 30 languages. He was loved by many but known by few – perhaps not even himself – and he never returned home, wherever and whatever that was or might have been.

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40 Ibid., 103.

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DAGNÝ KRISTJÁNSDÓTTIR

Guðríður Símonardóttir: The Suspect Victim of the Turkish Abductions in the 17th Century

The Turkish Abductions were a historical trauma that took place in Iceland in the 17th century. They were not a series of isolated events but were part of a comprehensive trade in white slaves conducted on behalf of the Turkish Ottoman Empire. This article will concern itself with the legendary Guðríður Símonardóttir, who was abducted from Iceland during the Turkish Abductions in 1627 and sold into slavery in the Maghreb (known at the time as Barbary), along with four hundred other Icelanders. She was one of the few abducted women who were able to return to Iceland. Rumours and legends about her recall the idea of the ›exotic Other‹ as a source of fetishisation, fear and desire.

History and postcolonialism

A significant amount of what has been written within the framework of postcolonialism concerns itself with earlier periods of colonialism or even pre-colonialism, going all the way back to the 16th century, the Age of Discovery. This line of critical enquiry is inspired by postcolonialism and new historicism and does not take it as given that one single narrative about this period – ›The History‹ – can lay claim to representing all layers of society.

Ania Loomba states that even though we can point to examples of ancient empires that subjugated other countries, these invaders were fundamentally different to the Western European colonialists who became active following the discovery of the Americas in the late 15th century. They were better armed, better organised and greedier than anything the world had previously seen; they settled in pre-capitalist societies and paved the way for colonialism as we now understand it.¹ One of history's most noted empires was the Turkish Ottoman Empire. It extended across several cultural zones, was home to innumerable languages, and was comprised of a number of nations and peoples known collectively in Icelandic tradition simply as ›Turks‹. This Turkish Empire stood for six cen-

1 LOOMBA: 1998, 8–10.

turies, reaching its pinnacle in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, when it controlled vast areas of territory in Eastern Europe, South-East Asia and North Africa.

Research into British, French and American imperialism has been dominant in theoretical publications on postcolonialism. In the minds of most people, the word ›slavery‹ is chiefly synonymous with the abduction by white men of the approximately ten to twelve million Africans sold into slavery between the 16th and 19th centuries, mostly to America. There has been less mention of the Turks' abduction of over one million white Christians, who were sold as slaves in markets around the Mediterranean – particularly in Algiers and Morocco. This slave trade peaked in the first half of the seventeenth century, the period when the trade in African slaves to America was gaining momentum. As Robert C. Davis has pointed out, there was a significant difference between these two instances of slavery. While the trade in black Africans to America was primarily fuelled by greed and run for profit, the trade in white slaves to North Africa was motivated by hatred. The Moors wanted revenge for being driven out of Spain by the Christians in the 1490s, and Arabic Muslims wanted to avenge the infamy visited on them by Christian crusaders two centuries earlier.² The Turks and North Africans regarded the abduction and sale of African slaves by Europeans as contemptible but put on parades to celebrate their own abduction of Christians, which they saw as a victory over the Infidel. Rightly or wrongly, this has been described as ideologically comparable to a jihad or Holy War.³

At the time, most Europeans were largely ignorant of the countries and culture of the Ottoman Empire in particular and Asia in general, but to compensate they harboured some very lively fantasies and prejudices. Edward Said has introduced the concept of ›Orientalism‹ to describe the West's notion of the East. Orientalism refers to Europeans assembling characteristics that describe the East as being in binary opposition to the West and thus to themselves.⁴ The Modern Age's resilient image of the East contained many of the stereotypes that ›Orientalism‹ is based on. Said has been criticised by Homi Bhabha, who points out that these opposites need not be so rigid or mutually exclusive when one takes into

2 DAVIS: 2003, xxv.

3 HELGASON: 2003, 79.

4 SAID: 1979.

account the phenomenon of the colonised mimicking the culture of the coloniser: »Under cover of camouflage, mimicry – like the fetish – is a partial object that radically revalues the normative knowledge of the priority of race, writing, history; for the fetish mimes the forms of authority at the point at which it deauthorises them.«⁵ The difference between the coloniser and the colonised becomes blurred; the colonised subject might mimic the coloniser's culture until he becomes »almost the same but not quite«. This »not quite« is a source of great anxiety, as it reveals the partial objects of presence and the inevitable split of the colonised and fetishised object.

In the case of Guðríður Símonardóttir, very little is known about her life in Algeria. However, it would seem that she worked her way up to a position of considerable esteem over the nine years she worked as a slave in the Maghreb. When Guðríður's mistress was approached by the Danish authorities, she initially refused to sell her, but she eventually gave in to repeated pressure and sold Guðríður for a high price. It turned out that Guðríður had means of her own, which was exceptional among the slave women, and as a consequence she was able to pay part of the ransom herself. Many of her fellow enslaved Icelanders had »turned Turk«, but Guðríður remained a Christian and she wanted to return to her homeland. She couldn't know that when she did finally make it home, she would be orientalised and fetishised, become an object for complex desires and disgust – a guilty victim of the Turkish Abductions.

The Turkish Abductions

In June 1627, a ship moored outside Grindavík on the southern coast of Iceland, at the time a Danish colony. A group of »Turks« rowed ashore and abducted a total of fifteen Icelandic farmers, sailors, women and children. The people of Grindavík were defenceless and those who could ran away, hiding in lava caves. The pirates then sailed their two ships around Reykjanes. By this time, the Danish governor, Rosenkranz, had sounded the alarm. He rounded up merchant ships in the small harbour of the Álfanes peninsula, erected shelters around his cannons and proceeded to fire on the Turks, who were so shocked by this that they beached one of their ships. The Danish governor and his »soldiers«

5 BHABHA: 1984, 130–131.

watched from on land while the Turks casually transferred their Icelandic prisoners and booty from the beached ship to another vessel. The governor did not wish to fire on the Turks and risk killing the hostages, but »his defence and courage were not applauded in this«⁶, according to Reverend Jón Halldórsson in *Hirðstjóraannál*.

Stories of the pirates' pillaging and plundering spread like wildfire, as did tales of their cruelty. Icelanders did not need to wait long for the next attack. Some time between the 5th and 13th of July that same year, a pirate frigate landed at Djúpivogur. The pirates hunted people down, killed the ones they did not abduct, attacked Berufjörður, and took a total of about a hundred and ten prisoners in the eastern fjords. From there they proceeded directly to the Westman Islands, landing on the south side of one of the islands and surprising the inhabitants with a night raid. The Danish merchants on the island had their people rowed to the mainland immediately and a bloodbath ensued in Heimaey, where the Turks killed about thirty people. Approximately two hundred escaped by scaling cliffs and hiding in caves and crevices, but two hundred and forty-two people were captured. In total, the Turks abducted around four hundred people and took them to Algiers. A ransom was paid for thirty people and twenty-seven returned to Iceland after nine years in exile.⁷

The captain of the pirates was a man named Murad Reis. He was originally a Dutch captain, Jan Jansoon van Harleem, who had denounced his faith and »turned Turk«. He was a wealthy man, the owner of some eighteen ships and was based in the city of Salé, where one of the main slave markets was located. The other main market was in Algiers. The ship was crewed not only by Turks but also by Europeans of many nationalities who had chosen the profitable life of piracy and slaving around the Mediterranean and up along the coast of Europe.⁸

The Turkish Abductions were obviously a trauma for those taken and for those who witnessed the attacks and bloodshed that accompanied them. But it can also be argued that the Turkish Abductions represent a trauma in Icelandic history. The few remaining survivors in the Westman Islands and those who escaped in Djúpivogur had not only lost their loved ones and their possessions; these people also lived in a constant

6 *Tyrkjaránið á Íslandi*, 1627: 1906, V.

7 *Heimaslóð – Tyrkjaránið, Vestmannaeyjabær*: 2005–2009.

8 ÞORKELSSON: 2008.

fear of further attacks. Jón Þorkelsson writes: »After the Turkish Abductions there was in our country a mix of fury and fear of the Turk, so that even the wisest and most cautious men could not even mention him without there following some profane language.«⁹

The moment the sails of the pirate ships disappeared over the horizon, people started telling and collecting stories that magnified their fear even further. Not surprisingly, the recently founded Lutheran church interpreted the raid as God's punishment for the Icelanders' sinful and un-Christian behaviour. If this was correct – and in view of the fact that the nation's behaviour didn't improve after the raid – anyone could deduce that the fierce Turk would soon return. The last tales of Turkish Abductions originate from the beginning of the 19th century.¹⁰ A large number of literary allusions can be found in stories about the Turkish Abductions and – just like in *The Book of Job* – people asked: Why me?

According to one story that was told in the aftermath of the raid, the grand pashas of Algiers had been discussing whether there were any goods or slaves to be had from a raid on Iceland and that one of their slaves, a captured Dane named Páll, had bought his freedom by telling them how to get to there.¹¹ Another story tells of an Icelandic prisoner named Þorsteinn, who was taken off an English boat near Eyjafjalla-jökull. He apparently told the Turks how they could land on the south side of Heimaey, where it was considered impossible to gain access to the island.¹² Páll and Þorsteinn thus compete for the role of Iceland's Judas. But in reality, no traitor was needed to tell the Turks how to find Iceland. By 1627, it had already been marked on maps of Europe for hundreds of years, as cartography had advanced greatly along with increased shipping and the need for new trade routes in medieval times. The Westman Islands had been a trading outpost for business with English merchants in the sixteenth century, a trade that blossomed until the Danish colonists banned it and imposed a monopoly at the beginning of the seventeenth century.

However, as Sverrir Kristjánsson shows in his introduction to *Reisubók séra Ólafs Egilssona* (»The Travelogue of Reverend Ólafur Egils-

9 *Tyrkjaránið á Íslandi, 1627*: 1906, XVIII.

10 *Ibid.*, XXVI–XXVII.

11 *Ibid.*, 221–222.

12 *Ibid.*, 78.

son«), first published in 1741, the Danish King's coast guard should have been in the area to protect Danish merchant ships from attacks by pirates and competitors in the Atlantic that summer. Such vessels were usually sent out by royal decree, but in the summer of 1627 the King's generals were so distraught by the defeats and humiliations they had suffered in their war against the Germans that a decree was not issued until 20 July, »a day after the Turks unfurled their sails and left the Westman Islands for Barbary«. ¹³

Cultural worlds

Contemporary witnesses' descriptions of how the Turks proceeded during the raid are very precise and testify to the fact that the pirates not only took prisoners but also terrorised the natives and displayed their power. This was a well-known method employed by pirates, who usually treated their victims very badly during the first attack – torturing and maiming them – but then ceased all cruelty once back on board their own ships. ¹⁴ Stories of the Turkish Abductions recount how the pirates killed two men by slicing the skin of their foreheads and rolling their eyebrows down over their eyes – a mixture of scalping and blinding them. Men and women were hewn down, and children and old people were burnt alive inside their huts and houses. Women were usually cut and violated simultaneously – their skirts raised above their heads to expose their genitalia for all to see. These descriptions are graphic, but Reverend Ólafur states that the cruellest ›Turks‹ were not the Turkish themselves but the converts: »The people that have been Christian and have abandoned their faith, those are the worst people.« ¹⁵

¹³ KRISTJÁNSSON: 1969, 29. Reverend Ólafur wrote his story soon after coming home, and it was published in Copenhagen in 1741 under the title: *En kort Beretning um De Tyrkiske Sø-Røveres onde Medfart og Omgang, da de kom til Island i Aaret 1627, og der bortogte over 300 Mennesker, ihjelsloge mange, og paa tyrannisk Maade ilde behandlede dem* [»A short narration on the turkish pirates evil behaviour and treatment when they came to Iceland in the year of 1627 and abducted over 300 people, killed many and in a tyrannical way maltreated them«]. Sammenskriven af præsten Oluf Eigelssen Fra Vest-Manøe, Som tillige blev ført derfra til Algier, og 1628 kom tilbage igen. Men nu af Islandsk oversat paa Dansk. Tryckt i dette Aar [1741].

¹⁴ DAVIS: 2003, 36–56.

¹⁵ *Reisubók Ólafs Egilssonar*: 1969, 63. This book will be cited with page references in parentheses within the text from now on.

Reverend Ólafur Egilsson dearly wants to tell the truth and nothing but the truth, and therefore he states explicitly that the pirates were not cruel to the people on board ship during the month-long voyage to North Africa, although conditions were terrible. Three older women died; a child was born and the pirates surrounded it, bearing gifts like the Three Wise Men – although their gifts were old shirts rather than gold, frankincense and myrrh. Ólafur Egilsson describes the appearance and dress of the crew precisely and emphasises that although the Europeans among them had kept their way of dressing, the Turks were uniform in appearance. However, the latter did not all look similar to each other but were large or small, dark or light, and not at all malicious in appearance.¹⁶

These simplistic observations reflect both the simultaneous establishment of an epistemology and an Orientalism that contradict each other. It's obvious that Ólafur is trying to make the pirates stereotypical, which is a prerequisite to being able to ›other‹ individuals and groups.¹⁷ Ólafur calls the Turks ›the servants of Satan‹ (54), ›villains‹ (61), and ›evildoers‹ (67), but at the time he wrote these descriptions, he was a prisoner on board one of their slave ships, completely at their mercy and utterly dependent on them. His hatred and anger are in many ways similar to the rage of the colonially oppressed, as everything that he, the Lutheran priest, could offer in order to increase his symbolic capital in the eyes of the ›infidels‹ was worthless. Ólafur, who was in his early seventies when abducted, immediately asked the captain of the ship for privileges for himself and his family, on the grounds that he was the Icelanders' spiritual leader. The captain responded by having him stripped and flogged to within an inch of his life. After having thus humiliated the priest in front of his congregation, the captain then afforded Ólafur marginally better conditions than the others, as the pirates had probably already decided at that point to make him an ambassador who would be allowed to return home and demand a ransom for the group.

Ólafur's descriptions of Algiers are pregnant with meaning. His accounts clearly display the chasm that opens up when the old language is not able to describe or recount the reality that the subject is experiencing and trying to catalogue. This is a common feature of a number of texts that describe people's experience of colonialism. »This gap occurs for

¹⁶ Ibid., 62–63.

¹⁷ HALL: 1997, 225.

those whose language seems inadequate to describe a new place, for those whose language is systematically destroyed by enslavement, and for those whose language has been rendered unprivileged by the imposition of the language of a colonising power.«¹⁸ This is simultaneously the most common and most unavoidable example of the alienation that follows when a person is torn by the roots out of their normal surroundings and shoved down into completely different cultural and linguistic soil. Ólafur struggles to describe to Icelandic readers some of the things he saw in Algiers because he simply had no visual and natural references at his disposal. He therefore tries to create pictures with words, trying for example to describe a camel to his readers by recounting its various parts:

In that town, I also saw five camels, which are strong and enormous animals. I could hardly reach up to their backs when they had their saddles on – which they usually do. It is my opinion that each of these animals can carry as much as four or five horses. They are all pale or fawn-coloured, with a dark stripe down their backs. In some ways they resemble cattle, especially about their legs and feet, which are cloven. Their spine is curved like the bowl of a smoking pipe; they have very long necks, and their smallish ears are almost like those of a horse. Their heads are very ugly and they have lips like a bull's. They also carry a feed basket of bread hung from their mouths. These animals are very slow. When they are whipped about their hind legs, they do not react in any way.¹⁹

This is Ólafur's description of a tremendously tall animal with the strength of four to five horses. He uses the colours of Icelandic horses to describe it – tan with dark feet and/or a stripe along the back – and the Icelandic readers would probably have extended this mental image by adorning this fantasy beast with a mane. Ólafur begins his description by likening the animal to a giant horse and then goes on to compare it with a bull. It has a hump like »the bowl of a smoking pipe« and a »very long neck«. And which animal found in Iceland has such a neck? A swan. The camel has

¹⁸ ASHCROFT, GRIFFITHS and TIFFIN: 1989, 9.

¹⁹ Item sá eg þar v kameldýr í þeim stað, hver að eru geysistór og sterk, svo eg gat sem naumast náð upp á þau, þá þau eru með sínum söðlum, sem eg meina jafnan muni á þeim sitja. Og það er mín meining, að hvert eitt muni bera við 4 eða 5 hesta. Þau dýr eru öll bleik að lit eða bleikálótt, og í suman máta vaxin sem naut til læranna og afturbeinanna, með klaufum sem naut, en ekki eru þær nema hár og ekki neðan undir, með svo kringdum hrygg sem hálfur pípubotn, með geysilöngum hálsi, ekki stórum eyrum, nær því sem hestur, en mjög ljótan haus, þó svo sem nautsgrönur, sem og bera fyrir þeim brauðkörfu og þessi dýr eru mjög seinfær, og þá þau eru keyrð, þá er slegið um þeirra afturbein, en þau akta það að engu. *Reisubók Ólafs Egilssonar*: 1969, 73–74.

ears like a horse and an ugly head that nevertheless resembles that of a bull. It is hard for modern readers to imagine what kind of animal an Icelandic reader in the first half of the seventeenth century would have visualised after reading this description.

Ólafur Egilsson describes the clothing, fixtures, food and drink, tools, and domestic animals of the Algerians in great detail. His descriptions are rife with what Homi Bhabha calls ›ambivalence‹. Ambivalence surfaces when Reverend Ólafur describes the beauty of the flowers, the sweetness of the fruit, and the incredibly delicate and beautiful clothing of the chieftains and their women. He has an eye for beauty and admires what he observes of Arab culture from afar, but he simultaneously describes it as an exotic Other – forbidden fruit, tainted with decadence and sickness. In his descriptions of Oriental houses, he uses negation as an overarching stylistic device. The houses in Algiers are beautiful but they lack various things that Icelanders feel should belong in a civilised household: tables, beds, chests, cutlery, chairs, and so on.²⁰ Ólafur seems to go out of his way to be objective and focuses especially on the similarities between Algerians and Icelanders. But the moment the two cultures seem to have too much in common, when opposites threaten to collapse, and the strange becomes too familiar or alluring, he stops making comparisons and reminds his readers of the cruelty and inhumanity of their heathen enemies.

Here it is worth reminding ourselves that Ólafur wrote his book for propaganda purposes, as he was collecting ransom money in order to obtain the release of Icelandic slaves, among whom were his wife and children. The Barbary pirates' abductions, hostage-taking, and ransom demands were part of their extensive trade with Europe. That big picture would not have been obvious to the common man from the far north and possibly not even to Ólafur, but he tries to ›translate‹ his own and his people's suffering by using known narratives. The Book of Job is like an internal text within his story, and every episode of his trials in the city of

20 »... colonial mimicry is the desire for a reformed, recognizable Other as a subject of a difference that is almost the same, but not quite. Which is to say that the discourse of mimicry is constructed around an ambivalence: in order to be effective, mimicry must continually produce its slippage, its excess, its difference. The authority of that mode of colonial discourse that I have called mimicry is therefore stricken by an indeterminacy: mimicry emerges as the representation of a difference that is itself a process of disavowal.« BHABHA: 1984, 126.

Algiers ends with an allusion to the Bible and a subsequent explanation that reads much like a sermon.

Ólafur Egilsson was only in Algiers for three months. After that he was sent off across Europe, penniless, and the story of his travels becomes both long and personal. The year was 1627 and the Thirty Years' War was raging in Europe. Catholics wanted to kill or drive Ólafur away because he was Lutheran and Lutherans abused him because they believed him to be Catholic. Half-starved robbers and murderers marauded everywhere and the old priest was worse off than ever. Still, he takes the time to note with wonder and amazement the beautiful attire of the chieftains in the north of Italy, as well as their lovely wives and their wealth. He admires a perfect mill in Holland and gazes at the technological innovations and culture of old Europe. He survived on alms and the kindness of strangers until he reached Copenhagen, which felt like being home in Iceland, or as he says: »On the 27th I came to Kronborg in Denmark, and then I felt I'd almost got home to Iceland.« (103).

Slaves

Two letters in particular written by Icelanders in Barbary offer a different view of Algerian culture than the ambiguous one presented by Ólafur. The viewpoint in the letters is that of the slaves – the oppressed who harbour no illusions about their position. Thus Jón Jónsson writes a long letter where he describes the hardship the slaves had to endure under evil masters. It is interesting to note that he says he only suffered direct violence for the first year or so, until he learned the language and thus gained humanity in the eyes of his master and his own voice, with which to »defend himself against the masters' accusations« (132).²¹ But that only increases the temptation to renounce one's faith and side with the enemy. The language spoken in the city of Algiers was Mediterranean *Lingua Franca*, a pidgin of Arabic, Spanish and Dutch.²² The Icelandic children learned this language quickly, which accelerated their adaptation into society. After they »turned Turk«, they were taken from their mothers and disappeared from the small Christian Icelandic community.

21 The letters of the Icelanders from Maghreb are published in the appendix of *Reisubók séra Ólafs Egilssonar* (1969) and will be cited with reference to that edition in the text in parentheses.

22 DAVIS: 2003, 114.

Jón describes the tortures and persecution the Christians had to endure if they refused to renounce their faith. He managed to resist the various temptations he was confronted with and found in religious resolve such strength and dignity that it kept him from harm whenever he was harassed by »wolves of evil, lions, devilish people and carnal demons« (132). The prisoners that did denounce their faith were given neither freedom nor equality, but if they converted to Islam they were spared the most arduous tasks, such as being oarsmen on galleys, which usually killed the slaves relatively quickly. The slaves could see other badly treated slaves, such as Einar Loftsson, whose crime it was to accidentally fetch water from a well, which was forbidden to Christians. He was cut on the nose and ears, and thus mutilated he was driven through the streets »with wailing and an awful racket« (28r). Atrocities such as these were not perpetrated by the Turks but rather by converts, often European ones.

The stories of people tortured to death on account of their faith take on the feel of legends or tales of martyrdom told with a learned air. Jón recounts that the Icelandic prisoners carefully observed the ones that were bought out of or escaped from slavery. His family was split up, his mother and one of his brothers were liberated, but he remained. In the letter he eagerly asks the recipient to petition for his release. His letter contains two themes that crop up in the narrative of slaves throughout the course of history: masters of varying degrees of evilness, and the amount of times he was bought and sold – five times in three years for an increasingly higher price. This increased his standing but diminished the chance that he would be bought back. He talks of the possibility of escape and clearly compares himself with other slaves; and one can see from the letter that after three years of slavery he was turning into an ›Other‹ in his own eyes.

This is even clearer in Guttormur Hallsson's letter, which was written a year later in 1631. This letter is even more desperate than Jón's. Like Jón, Guttormur speaks of different types of masters. He tells about the humiliating arrival in Algiers and how the Icelanders were herded into the market square like cattle – poor, suffering and ragged – but no-one wanted to buy them »for they thought us ignorant, pitiful and rare wretches compared to other people. In addition, we did not know any task or craft belonging to this land or custom.« (147). This describes not only the defencelessness and misery of the Icelandic prisoners but also the shame of

being merchandise that no-one wants to buy, neither the evil slavers nor one's own authorities – the King and local magistrates of Iceland.

Homi Bhabha, Daniel J. Vitkus, and others have criticised Said's theories on Orientalism for being too constrained to dualist models – although these are unavoidable in dialectical rhetoric and are useful for cultural analysis, particularly when ideological hegemony is being discussed. However, Vitkus points out that Said's theories refer to later centuries and one cannot automatically project imperialism's oppositional mindset of the East onto the centuries preceding it. The opposites are not steady because religious ideas and economic realities add contexts and priorities that complicate the use of the term ›Orientalism‹ in pre-modern times. This emerges in the Icelanders' letters, in which the white, Christian colonised try to elevate themselves up above their new pagan, ethnic colonial masters, who are much more advanced in every way and not a little arrogant about it.²³

Guttormur Hallsson goes further than Jón Jónsson in identifying with his colonial masters and explaining their reasons for not wanting to buy the Icelandic slaves. In his discourse, a kind of reversed Orientalism manifests itself, in which he reacts to his colonial masters' contempt and doubles it, as can be seen here: »They call us bestial, wild animals. But yet we know more than they do, thanks to our God.« (147). By responding to the Turks' accusation, its legitimacy is affirmed. The Turks de-humanise the Icelanders and call them animals, but still the ›animals‹ know more than those who think themselves men, for they have spiritual wisdom due to their faith. Their faith in God almighty gives them not only strength but is also their only hope of salvation, as ransoms were not paid for those slaves who had denounced their faith.

The silence – the trauma

All three men – Ólafur, Jón and Guttormur – speak of being tortured and pressured into denouncing their faith, and all three state explicitly that even though they were ill-treated, the women were persecuted twice as badly. Jón Jónsson tells of one girl: »She was bound and naked, and under her a fire had been lit, but in vain.«²⁴ Perhaps this account of the ill

23 VITKUS: 2003, 2–4; BERNADETTE: 2006, 232.

24 *Tyrkjaránið á Íslandi*, 1627: 1906, 376.

treatment of the women was an attempt to create more horror and sympathy in the Christian recipients of the letters than the men could expect to receive, but there may have been other reasons as well. Reverend Ólafur Egilsson says: »Christian men may not lie with Turkish women and Turkish men may not lie with Christian women, or it will cost them their lives.« (77). Yet it was an open secret that the owners of female slaves had sexual access to them whenever and wherever they desired. Though laws were passed that prohibited interracial sex, they were broken.²⁵ The younger women usually became their masters' concubines but were seen as unfit to become wives and take up a position in the harem until they had denounced their faith. The abductees neither could nor would speak of this in their letters, out of consideration for their families back home or for the women who returned to Iceland. According to the Grand Judgment of 1564, harsh punishment awaited women found guilty of adultery, even if they had been raped.

In *The Travelogue of Ólafur Egilsson*, Ólafur's wonder and amazement at the alien life of the Turks is overwhelming. He is tempted and revolted by their way of living and he often struggles to keep the opposites apart. We encounter more focused Orientalism in the first historical treatise on the Turkish Abductions, which was written by lawyer Björn Jónsson in 1643. Jónsson spares no expense in portraying the Turks as a paradoxical people: cruel, terrifying; incomprehensible. Using selected horror stories from the letters of the abducted Icelanders, he does not hesitate to recount tales of Icelandic women taken as concubines and describes in great detail how the Turks raped boys »which is custom in that land«, although the act was punishable by death. »It happened that a schoolmaster, who taught boys, forced himself upon one of them and shamed him as a sodomite«, Björn Jónsson writes. He adds that the man was discovered and impaled by the boy's parents (282). Jónsson employs the same principle of writing a tale of martyrdom and spicing it up with references to the alleged Turkish perversions mentioned above. On the other hand, according to Robert C. Davis, Ottoman military culture was very homoerotic. Communal slaves were piled together in huge buildings which the abducted Icelanders called ›banjo‹ (bagnio), where men were placed almost on top of one another. In the poor quarters near these prisons were taverns where the officially sanctioned prostitution of boys

25 BAEPLER: 1999, II. See also OMOLADE: 1995, 362–379.

took place.²⁶ Pashas were also known to buy young and pretty men into their harems, and the powerful, wealthy slave trader Ali Pegelin²⁷ had forty boys between the ages of nine and fifteen in his.²⁸ He used his privilege and right of first refusal to choose Reverend Ólafur Egilsson's eleven year old son, Egill, at the market where the first Icelanders were auctioned off (69).

Military societies that worshipped an idealised masculinity were nothing new, but nothing about this or any other sexually related experiences are mentioned in the Icelandic slaves' letters home.

Icelandic slave women

The only surviving letter from a female Icelandic slave in Barbary was written by Guðríður Símonardóttir, who wrote home to her husband Eyjólfur in the Westman Islands. The letter was probably written in 1631 or 1632 but was first heard of in Iceland in 1635. It describes a burning faith, doubt and desperation. It is full of elaborate religious phrases and prayers in which Guðríður prays for her husband and praises God.

Arnfríður Guðmundsdóttir has argued that the powerful faith emerging in Guðríður's letter is the theology of the cross which »... assumes that God will reveal his true nature in Christ, His pain and the Cross, but equally that the Christian individual will know God through his own suffering and by bearing his own cross.«²⁹ This faith draws its strength from solidarity with Jesus, who becomes a brother in suffering and the only one who sees and understands the grief of the individual, as no-one else can read his thoughts and know his heart. Arnfríður draws lines between the religious certainty in Guðríður's letter and the faith that emerges in the songs of enslaved black women in America, who believed in perseverance and waiting rather than liberation and victory.³⁰

Guðríður's letter says very little about her own situation and is in fact strangely impersonal. Sigurður Nordal doubted that Guðríður had written the letter with her own hand, but Sigurbjörn Einarsson agreed with

26 DAVIS: 2003, 127.

27 Ibid., 70–71.

28 Ibid., 126.

29 This is the content of many spirituals such as *Nobody Knows the Trouble I've Seen*. GUÐMUNDSDÓTTIR: 2001, 11–24.

30 Ibid., 13.

him that the content of the letter came from Guðríður. He added, however: »Guðríður was by no means of average ability and could well have surprised men in, amongst other things, knowing how to write.«³¹ On two occasions, it seems as if she is trying to break out of the appropriate religious discourse and mentions that she and Eyjólfur's son, aged ten, are in grave danger, and she thanks her husband for his faithfulness and love. She says:

But that which is worth telling about my sad life is the first: that I'm surviving, mostly by God's grace and provision, being here in Barbary and in a Turkish place called Arciel [Algiers], with a Turk, who bought me immediately along with my child, who I am made to cheer and aggrieve with my despairs. And under this, the Lord's suitably laid brushwood and the weight of the Cross, I am saddened and despair daily to know him in such distress and danger, as is our lot for our sins, but I rejoice in God and in it partly ...³²

The prisoners in Algiers received no news from home, and Guðríður did not know that by 1636 her husband had had four children with his new partner, Kristín Jónsdóttir.³³ As a consequence, he had been condemned to death for adultery under the law of the Grand Judgement, but as the magistrate sympathised with the spouses of the abductees, who were probably dead, they didn't hurry to carry out these sentences. Guðríður couldn't know that her letter would lead to her husband not being granted a divorce and leave to marry the mother of his children because her letter proof, in black and white, that she was alive and had not denounced her faith.³⁴

Guðríður was one of the thirty prisoners who were released in 1636. The group arrived in Copenhagen in the autumn of that year. A young student in Frúarskóli, Hallgrímur Pétursson, was brought in to re-educate the freed slaves, whose faith had grown a little rusty after nine years in

31 Ibid., x–xi. See also NORDAL: 1927, 125.

32 »En það, sem er að tala um mína aumu æfi er hið fyrsta, að eg hjari, einkum fyrir guðs náð og sérlega velgernainga, verandi hér í Barbaríe og í einum tyrkneskum stað, sem heitir Arciel [Algier], hjá einum Tyrkja, er mig keypti með það fyrsta og mína barnkind, hvað að mig gerði bæði að hryggja og gleðja í mínum hörmungum, og undir þessu drottins maklega álagða hrísi og krossins þunga hryggðist eg og særist daglega að vita hann í þvílíkri neyð og háska, sem oss er upp á lagt vegna vorra synda, en eg gleðst í guði og í því nokkurn part ...« *Tyrkjaránið á Íslandi, 1627*: 1906, 420–421. The letter is maintained in Gísli bishop Oddsson's book of letters as a partial copy. The original has not survived.

33 JOHNSON: 1942, 4.

34 HELGASON: 1983, 184.

North Africa. Guðríður became pregnant by him and thus both of them were found guilty of adultery when they returned to Iceland the following year.³⁵ She was sixteen years his senior. She was 29 years old at the time of her abduction and spent nine years in Barbary. Fortunately for her, Eyjólfur had drowned the previous year.

The legendary Turk-Gudda

The love affair between Guðríður and the much younger student of theology has been a source of speculation, legend, and literature ever since. People felt obliged to explain the age difference between them by pointing out that Guðríður was »very oriental«, »sensuous«, or even a witch who had supernatural power over the young man. In one of the stories she is said to have been so fair that the son of the Algerian Deyjan, her owner, had wanted to take her as a wife.³⁶

After suffering social humiliation, poverty, and child deaths – all of which naturally put a strain on the marriage – Hallgrímur became a wealthy priest and friend of the bishop. As well as becoming one of the greatest poets of the faith and one of the leading religious interpreters of Protestantism in Iceland, he was praised, admired, and loved during the latter half of his life. Guðríður's fate, however, was rather different. The idolization of Hallgrímur went hand in hand with hostility towards Guðríður. It is an old and new story that the women of great men are belittled to increase the stature of the great man.

Rumour and legend had it that she was of mixed faith and had not wanted to come back home,³⁷ which hardly squares with the fact that she had saved money and was able to pay twenty state coins of her own ransom.³⁸ Rumour also had it that Guðríður carried a graven image back

35 See JÓNSSON: 1989, 15. By having sex with a married woman, Hallgrímur became guilty of adultery even though he was unmarried. The first offence carried a fine of 8 state coins, which was a significant amount for destitute people. One can also learn that the third offence of adultery was punishable by death according to the Grand Judgment. Guðrún Ása Grímsdóttir has also written extensively of the social consequences of the Turkish Abductions. See GRÍMSDÓTTIR: 1995.

36 Ibid., 46.

37 NORDAL: 1927, 121–125. All accounts of Guðríður were chronicled long after she and Hallgrímur died, but they have survived through continued retelling and have probably been embellished as opposed to diminished in the hands of storytellers.

38 *Tyrkjaránið á Íslandi*, 1627: 1906, 438.

with her from Barbary, to which she made sacrifices in secret. Her husband, the poet of the psalms, is supposed to have surprised her during one such act of idolatry and burned the offending figure. In one of the first articles written in Guðríður Símonardóttir's defence, Sigurður Nordal points out how absurd this allegation is in the light of Islam's unsurpassed rejection of the worship of idols.³⁹

Further stories about Guðríður claim that she allowed people to work on holy days while the priest sang his mass, that she constantly fought with her husband, and that she burned the first two Psalms of the Passion in a fit of rage.⁴⁰ Jón Árnason quotes Reverend Vigfús Jónsson of Hítardalur, Hallgrímur Pétursson's biographer, as saying that Guðríður refused to give a tramp a hide with which to make shoes. The tramp is said to have cursed her, causing the hide to catch fire, but Guðríður is then supposed to have cast a counter-spell, which caused the farmhouse to catch fire that evening, burning the man alive inside it. Gísli Konráðsson says of Guðríður: »... she is rigid in temper as has been mentioned; stories say that most of those who were abducted are worse in temper than they used to be.«⁴¹ This short sentence tells a long story.

According to Sigurður Nordal, there were many willing to bear witness to how foul-tempered Gudda was. Jón frá Grunnavík writes: »She was a terrible hag and often acted against his [Hallgrímur's] will, much to his distress.« Gísli Konráðsson says: »People found her ill-tempered and often harsh, but at other times much too affectionate. Not far from Saurbær is a rock known as Hallgrímur's Rock. The story goes that Hallgrímur would seek shelter under that rock to write his poetry, as Gudda would not leave him in peace at the farm.«⁴²

The rumours surrounding Guðríður Símonardóttir show a strange inversion, because in them she is seen, not as a victim of the Turkish Abductions but as its representative or even its perpetrator. This can be seen in her nickname, ›Turk-Gudda‹, which stigmatised her for all time as being connected to the Turks or as even being one of them – which seem to add up to the same thing. The Orientalism of priests and lawyers – and

39 NORDAL: 1927, 123–124. Creating caricatures of the Prophet is considered punishable by death and nothing short of a *jihād* is good enough if he is portrayed – as the Danish newspaper *Jyllands-Posten* found out some years ago.

40 *Íslenzkar þjóðsögur og ævintýri*: 1954, 450–451.

41 KONRÁÐSSON: 1855, 77–78.

42 NORDAL: 1927, 123.

finally the trauma of the raid itself – was projected onto Guðríður. She became guilty of adultery, if not legally then morally, and her hold on her much younger psalm poet was clearly considered to be primarily sexual. In addition to this femme fatale image, she was portrayed as being a witch, a heathen in faith and in her moods: vicious, hard and vindictive – just like the Turk.

Turk-Gudda among us

The 20th century was captivated by Turk-Gudda Símonardóttir. She was the subject of two plays⁴³ and she features in everything ever written about Hallgrímur Pétursson. But the person who has really taken it upon herself to tell Turk-Gudda's story with seriousness and passion is author Steinunn Jóhannesdóttir. Her 2001 book *Reisubók Guðríðar Símonardóttur* («The Travelogue of Guðríður Símonardóttir») tells the story of Guðríður in the third person but uses her as the focal point. It describes the raid, the abductees' journey to Maghreb, the slave market, her work as a slave, and her son being torn away from her. It also recounts the payment of her ransom, her trek home across Europe, and finally her marriage to Hallgrímur. Jóhannesdóttir put a colossal amount of research into the book, and it is similar to the works of Þorsteinn Helgason in that its primary aim is to open up contexts that previous accounts of the Turkish Abductions have kept closed.

Steinunn's story is well written and evocative, but in the last part of the book the reader begins to sense an overwhelming identification between the narrator and the main character. Guðríður becomes ever more flawless, and her faith and resolve begin to seem heroic. The book ends where the revelation of adultery should accompany Guðríður and Hallgrímur's arrival in Iceland, but at this point much of Guðríður Símonardóttir's story remains untold, among others in the rewriting of the story of the nation and its poets.

In this article I have shown how complex and multi-layered circumstances are revealed to us in contemporary reports about the Turkish Abductions and how volatile positions situated between clear-cut opposites such as master and servant or self and other can prove to be. Edward

43 JÓNSSON: 1948 and JÓHANNESDÓTTIR: 1999.

44 JÓHANNESDÓTTIR: 2001.

Said's theory of Orientalism assumes the presence of logical oppositions but they are, according to him, rooted in subconscious fantasies. Homi Bhabha criticizes him for not taking into account imperialism's traumatic fear of »the return of the oppressed«, a fear that appears in terrifying stereotypes of the characteristics of sub-human ›Others‹, who are described as cannibals in thrall to animalistic urges, lust and anarchy. This disgusting element, which Westerners wish to avoid and distance themselves from at all costs, is the opposition of the alluring and ›exotic Other‹ that they actually desire. Bhabha suggests that the phenomenon of the ›fetish‹ is best served to describe the founding myth of Orientalism, i.e. the superiority of the white race over other races.⁴⁵ The fetish is a guarantee for the existence of the original, but the original is a fantasy, and perhaps it was Guðríður Símonardóttir's lot to become such a fetish in order for her countrymen to come to terms with their xenophobia.

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45 BHABHA: 1994, 71–72.

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Faroe Islands

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The Faroese Rest in the West:
Danish-Faroese World Literature between
Postcolonialism and Western Modernism

Faroese literature is not much more than 100 years old, but it carries with it a past, with authors continuing to write on place, nation, people and history. This makes Faroese literature the most important component of the cultural mapping and memory process on the Faroe Islands. Together with painting and popular historiography – which has given nearly every village its own local history – Faroese literature comprises a coherent ideational complex, the objective of which is to construct a modern Faroese identity. The strong local colour of Faroese poetry made its mark on the Faroese literary mentality all the way up to the advent of the new millennium. The multiple references to Faroese culture in Faroese literature can be viewed as a literary total topography and as a *raison d'être* for Faroese culture. In other words, the literature is an attempt to construct a common historical consciousness following the dissolution of the original Faroese oral memory community in the 1800s.¹

Faroese literature has become modern by working in the greater context of developing the nation and producing the place. Representing a non-metropolitan literary culture, modern Faroese literature constantly combines Faroese specificity with an international perspective, regionality with universality. The dialectics between place/nation and the world constitute the high point in Faroese poetry. In particular through Jørgen-Frantz Jacobsen's *Barbara* (1939) and William Heinesen's *De fortælle Spillemand* (1950), the Faroe Islands achieved its nationalized ambition to get a breakthrough abroad for Faroese literature and to produce works of equally high standard as in other European literatures.

1 In his book *In Place. Spatial and Social Order in a Faeroe Islands Community*, Dennis Gaffin says about placemaking in Faroese culture and literature: »Some say that the abundance of literary talent on the islands derives from the strong sense of belonging felt by members of a small nation and from the associated feeling of responsibility of those capable of such writing. Over and above the long-standing importance of oral traditions, the Faeroese sense of place and belonging function to promote written artistry.« (GAFFIN: 1996, 204).

Faroese literature has also succeeded in creating an international breakthrough for the national and placial perspective by further interpreting boundedness to place and nation, presenting this state of belonging as an open, contradictory structure.

Oscar Bandle describes the Faroese prerequisites for these kinds of contextual codings. In a survey of Faroese literature he mentions that this has rapidly undergone a process that took several centuries in other – older – national literatures. One of the consequences of this has been the simultaneous occurrence of different currents within ideas, literary style, etc.² This is a culture characterised by simultaneity and thus obliged to make a comprehensive translation over a short period of time. In response to a kind of cultural backlog in terms of the late arrival of modernity, the dynamics of translation became a privileged perspective, with a comprehensive translation project creating connections between modern and premodern elements. The necessity of translating and transplanting a minor literature like the Faroese is characterised by irregular and complex cultural processes that are constantly under the strong influence of tradition and the presence of nature.

Non-Western and non-metropolitan modernisms are marked by culture, history and geography to an extraordinary extent, compared with classical Euro-American modernism. Peripheral literature is characterised by irregular and complex cultural processes and is particularly forced to comprise and be translated, as it is a product of modernity and premodernity. The spread of the modern and modernism to geographical locations around the world thus creates alternative codifications of modernity and modernism, or simply a grounding of the global.

The following article is predominantly a theoretical discussion of fractures and overlaps between two adjacent discourses, these being postcolonialism and the field of world literature. The article considers a number of theoretical aspects of the relationship between postcolonialism and world literature with respect to the Dano-Faroese subcategory of Faroese literature, including major works of Faroese literature. The focus on Faroese literature as a ›Rest in the West‹ concerns both the expansion of the European sphere of influence and a history of the Faroese road to modernity. The article is organised as a discussion between postcolonialism and world literature and focuses on the postcolonial idea of de-westernization

2 BANDLE: 1982, 110.

and the hierarchical idea of the hypercanon and Western influence in world literature. In my reading, I focus on the field of world literature while at the same time acknowledging the re-routings of postcolonial studies. In this way I hope to draw different disciplines into a dialogue by highlighting the many effects of modernity and colonialism in the encounter between the Rest and the West.

Two related disciplines

My main argument stems from the field of world literature, which both overlaps with and differs from postcolonial studies. Postcolonial theory has undergone considerable changes since its breakthrough, and world literature and literary postcolonialism are today mutually connected discourses that conflict with and cross over into each other. World literature takes its point of departure in global or ›cosmopolitan‹ identities, which must be regarded as distinct from the socio-ethnic identity that has until recently been and to some extent still is the focus of postcolonial and cultural studies.³ On the other hand, world literature is distinct from the ›liberated individual identity that postmodernism tended to hypostasise‹.⁴ The principal question will be to what extent the new, expanding field of world literature research can be considered a corrective to the classic postcolonial discourse, which focuses on inverting power relations between coloniser and colonised. Fractures and overlaps between these two disciplines are highly relevant to literary studies today, while globalisation and postcolonialism themselves have questioned the perspective of ›post‹ in postcolonialism as being less relevant now, many decades after decolonisation. Postcolonialism has been around long enough to exist in multiple varieties. The article's world literature corrective to postcolonialism is thus intended in a general sense.

Following this discussion of theory, the article describes two Danish-Faroese authors – William Heinesen (1900–1991) and Jørgen-Frantz Jacobsen (1900–1938) – and discusses their writing in relation to world literature and classic power-thematised and interest-focused postcolonialism. Of particular interest are these authors' receptions of modernism and modernity, as well as their stances on European developmental logic. Is

3 ASHCROFT: 2010, 73.

4 SIMONSEN and STOUGAARD: 2008, 17.

Heinesen and Jacobsen's shared ›saga‹ of the Faroese road to modernity a particularistic study? Alternatively, does the Faroese *Sonderweg* in their writing represent an alternative modernity (not implying a hierarchy between the correct or original modernism and the alternatives to it) in terms of a particular interaction of similarities and differences relative to European influence?

Objectively, however, Faroese culture is still in a postcolonial position or perhaps in a kind of relapsing position connected with the unsuccessful struggle to become a sovereign nation-state. This struggle has been the master narrative of Faroese culture for over a hundred years. Faroese culture is thus divided between the discrepancy of – on the one hand – territorial, cultural, and literary independence and – on the other hand – lack of sovereignty. Faroese literature in general is thus rightfully described as a ›writing back‹ to the imperial experience.⁵ My own research into Faroese literature over the past years has considered perspectives that extend beyond ›the answer‹ to Denmark and the imperial experience, reaching into a broad experience of place that can be framed by world literature concepts. In order to explain the role of place in Faroese literature, fractures and overlaps between world literature and postcolonialism are of particular relevance, especially to the Danish-Faroese subcategory of Faroese literature, the hybridity of which cannot be fully explained within a classic postcolonial framework.

In his article »Geography of Modernism in a Globalizing World«, Andreas Huyssen asks for alternatives that »go beyond the clichés of colonial vs. postcolonial, modern vs. postmodern, Western vs. Eastern, centre vs. periphery, global vs. local, the West vs. the rest«. ⁶ Huyssen asks for de-Westernising strategies but admits that the »de-Westernization of modernism/modernity will remain limited because of the Western genealogy of the concepts themselves«. ⁷ The Western genealogy of these concepts certainly plays a role, but on the other hand, the global influence of the West over the past 200 years within literature, philosophy, etc. is a

5 It was originally Salman Rushdie who used the term »writing back« with regard to authors from former colonies who write back toward the imperial centre. Malan Marnersdóttir has transferred this extremely relevant hypothesis to Faroese literature by arguing that the entirety of Faroese literature may be regarded as a »combined imperial response« (MARNERSDÓTTIR: 2004, 341).

6 HUYSEN: 2005, 13.

7 Ibid.

matter of fact. Similarly, the European influence on Faroese literature is undeniable. The intense communication and translation activity between European literature and culture and Danish-Faroese literature also contains a critique of the supreme discipline in the Western tradition of idea, which consists of differentiating the premodern from the modern, the cultic from the cultural, culture from nature, human from inhuman, mythological from psychological. In contrast, world literature bridges these differences. Faroese literature in general represents in this context one of many overlapping geographically oriented modernisms in non-Western and non-metropolitan literatures that write back to the West and use European influences to write themselves ›home‹ to their magical, mythical roots. They challenge the West by allowing themselves to be challenged.

World literature studies and postcolonialism

World literature studies have been around for little more than a decade, but within that short period, it has developed into a global field of research within comparative literature studies. An open, interdisciplinary field, it possesses no fixed methodology and is therefore truly more of a field than a paradigm. Although the field of world literature studies is new and insufficiently theorised, it possesses sufficiently strong contours to allow comparison with other fields, including postcolonialism. A field in its formative phase, such as world literature, must first clarify its prerequisites before it can be spoken of as a discipline. World literature fulfils the four conditions that Wlad Godzich identifies as being necessary for the establishment of a new research discipline.⁸

Weltliteratur is an idealistic concept derived from the Romantics, with Goethe as a seminal figure who – via a number of wide-ranging statements that he made in 1827 – established the idea of uniting all national literatures into a synthesis. In the spirit of his time, Goethe regarded world literature as an evolutionary process in which the various national literatures would gradually unify into a synthesis as a result of long-term and persistent exchange. World literature as a superseder of national literature is not an idea that has made much of an impact in the more recent developments of the concept of world literature. Another signifi-

8 GODZICH: 1994, 275.

cant figure in the field is Erich Auerbach, who writes of world literature in his article »Philologie der Weltliteratur«, which sets out world literature as a »visionary concept that transcends national literatures without destroying their individuality«. ⁹

Furthermore, it is the interacting texts of globalisation (in which knowledge, products and people create a constant and enormous boundary-breaking torrent) that have given new life to the old concept of *Weltliteratur*. As far as literature is concerned, contemporary globalisation privileges comprehensive translation, distribution and reception in a world literature market that exists alongside national and regional markets. World literature studies is a means of reading literature in a context outside the national one, yet without suppressing local, national or regional contexts. The cosmopolitan gaze is well-suited to describing globalised experience and functions as an expansion of the national model. This gaze is common in geographic modernisms, which emerged in new states in the latter half of the 20th century, translating the breakthrough of European modernism into a situated response to cosmopolitan experience.

World literature studies is a field that interacts with adjacent discourses such as postcolonial studies, place studies, translation studies, migration studies, travel studies, etc. It has profiled itself with mediating terms and is »usually envisioned in spatial terms [...] typically the regional and the worldly, the national and the international, ›the West and the Rest‹ etc.« ¹⁰ The field expresses a desire to think transculturally, translocationally and interdisciplinarily, creating possibilities for new descriptive positions concerning the internationality of national literatures. It is important in this context to emphasise world literature's conception of cosmopolitanism, which combines roots and wings, place and globalisation. Damrosch defines world literature as a literature with local roots and thus as a refraction of national literature. ¹¹

Another influential world literature theorist, Franco Moretti, takes less of a historical perspective than does Damrosch and thus clearly distinguishes between world literature, which he feels suits those who see waves, and national literatures, which suits those who see the trees. ¹²

9 AUERBACH: 1952, 48.

10 ROSENDAHL THOMSEN: 2008, 26.

11 Cf. DAMROSCH: 2003, 281.

12 MORETTI: 2004, 161.

Moretti's system of world literature – based on the spread of the novel from the centre of Europe and out across the globe – nevertheless takes into account culturally specific receptions of the novelistic form. It can thus be generally stated that world literature takes into account both Europe's central role and the totality of writing back to the European context, doing so from different premises.

The point of departure for world literature is not a superficial global discourse, but rather the cosmopolitan identities that ground the global:

A new cosmopolitanism unites the local with the transnational [...] In other words, there is no true cosmopolitanism without a grounding in local cultures, since these local cultures in themselves and poetry in itself are what constitute the network of global circulation.¹³

More than ever before, people today belong to *cosmos* (the world) and *polis* (the local) – which means we are cosmopolitan. Cosmopolitanism, Beck claims, is defining a new epoch.¹⁴

World literature's understanding of cosmopolitanism is filtered through this notion of a new locally inflected cosmopolitanism. That this understanding is not reserved for the modern urban world is the core of David Damrosch's conception of world literature as an elliptical refraction of national literature. Damrosch stresses that »With the possible exception of a few irreducibly multinational works like *The Thousand and one Nights*, virtually all literary works are born within what we now call a national literature [...] Understanding the term ›national‹ broadly, we can say that works continue to bear marks of their national origin even after they circulate into world literature«. ¹⁵ Denationalisation (or the rumours concerning the death of the nation) has been greatly exaggerated. The idea of a national literature does not lose its individuality on the broad scale of world literature. On the contrary, the single work gains in translation, as traces of its national origin are »ever more sharply refracted as a work travels farther from home«. ¹⁶

Postcolonialism and world literature are linked by a geographical imperative, and both have made geography central to literary historiography. This is an expression of the contemporary tendency for fore-

¹³ SIMONSEN and STOUGAARD: 2008, 17.

¹⁴ Cf. BECK: 2004 and BECK: 2006.

¹⁵ DAMROSCH: 2003, 283.

¹⁶ Ibid.

grounding spatial dimensions rather than keeping them in the background. This is also the case in non-Western and non-metropolitan literature, which has strongly inspired world literature – including the breakthrough of the Latin American novel. According to Franco Moretti, the Latin American novel was the first combined world literary breakthrough, i.e. the first time that the results of the European literary influence themselves made a global impact. There is a strong interest in setting out a comprehensive geography among authors from countries to which modernity arrived late. What is decisive is not whether these states were ever colonies but the fact that modernity came late to them.¹⁷

Imperialism is certainly an act of geographical violence, and the »imagination was vital to liberating land from the restrictions of colonialism.«¹⁸ However, the placial imagination is not restricted to liberation in this narrow colonial sense, and even if most new states were former colonies, literature's new geographies are not limited to former European colonies but also exist in non-colonised and (partially) non-Western countries such as Turkey. The Turkish author Orhan Pamuk describes his authorial role in terms that emphasise geography as an experience of place in its broadest sense. For him, this involves a specific understanding of literary originality, which is differentiated from the Western avant-garde tradition:

[The author] needs not enter into obsessive contest with fathers or forerunners to find his own voice. For he is exploring new terrain, touching on subjects that have never been discussed in his culture, and often addressing distant and emergent readerships, never seen before in his country – this gives his writing its own sort of originality, its authenticity.¹⁹

Having a whole geography or new terrain to map means having more room and a more inclusive approach, without the classical postcolonial position of dichotomising the Western and the non-Western world. Pamuk belongs to a modern storytelling tradition that attaches itself to a whole geography and contains strong ties between cultural narratives, history, poetic nostalgia and communication of geographical knowledge – all of

¹⁷ Frantz Fanon expresses here the postcolonial view of place: »For a colonised people the most essential value, because the most concrete, is first and foremost the land: the land which will bring them bread and, above all, dignity.« (FANON: 2004, 9).

¹⁸ DELOUGHREY: 2011, 3.

¹⁹ PAMUK: 2007, 168–169.

these between the particular and the universal. Pamuk's vision of Turkey contains geography in much the same way as it occurs in the works of postcolonial writers. By recognising the spatial dimension's decisiveness, Pamuk – like so many postcolonial authors – breaks with narrowly defined Western conceptions of originality, which are understood in terms of style, experimentation and generational rebellion. Thus the special awareness of a new geography need not to be connected with the colonial experience in the narrow sense of imperialism; it is, rather, a more general, modernity-embracing conception of the world system's planned rationality in colonising or trying to control the ›lifeworld‹. Likewise, the strong self-awareness of non-Western and non-metropolitan cultures is far from being grounded in the imperial experience alone. The writing back of non-Western nations is not necessarily a postcolonial imperialist response to Europe. It can just as easily be ›geography‹ itself that is writing back. The geographical outlook is an expansion of the conception of writing back inasmuch as it is common currency in the West and challenges the clichés of the West versus the Rest and centre versus periphery. The relationship between the new and the old states is thus not eradicated via the imperial aspect. As far as the Faroe Islands are concerned, this relationship cannot be eradicated by a postcolonial reading. »Size is seldom just size«²⁰, as Franco Moretti notes, without thinking of a postcolonial writing back. Moretti here is thinking of ›the periphery's‹ interference-heavy, culturally specific reception of the global spread of the novelistic genre and of the influence of literary Europe. This is particularly relevant for the Faroe Islands, which is a little culture that due to belated influence has received both modernity and modernism in a way marked by interference that does not permit a normative distinction between the modern and the pre-modern. This is a demonstration of the interconnectiveness of size and structure.

This allows for the opening of the postcolonial experience to modernity's and globalisation's perspectives, which extend beyond those of the imperial. It draws the centre-periphery problem out from under the shadows of the ideologically weighted power schematisation, expanding it to include Western literature as well. Doreen Massey has theoretically formulated the spatial construction without focusing on the hegemonic notion of social construction: »It is not just that the spatial is socially

20 MORETTI: 1999, 147.

constructed; the social is spatially constructed too.«.²¹ In what follows, I will consider the overarching differences between postcolonialism and world literature.

Postcolonialism and world literature studies

Mads Rosendahl Thomsen has described world literature as a correction of and a supplement to postcolonialism. He divides the corrective aspect into three points, but emphasises that world literature studies represents a general critique rather than one focused on individual tendencies within the varied postcolonial paradigm.

1) Whereas world literature must be regarded literally as a perspective that makes it possible to read world literary elements into any type of literature whatsoever, postcolonial theory is primarily oriented toward a specific segment of world literature, i.e. that from the colonies:

Postcolonial literature is mostly attached to young nations that were in the process of establishing their own identities. That there has been, and still is, a national or local project connected to this, is only a logical consequence. However, in the globalising world, where the media penetrate local cultures more than ever, and people migrate in large numbers, mingling their cultures with others, taking part in building a national identity becomes a more complex project, especially when it is being communicated to a world engaged in discovering more and more cosmopolitan dimensions to life.²²

The cosmopolitan dimension reaches beyond the classic postcolonial focus on the national and the ethnic. Andreas Huyssen notes in this context that a comparative study of modernism's geographies is susceptible to reductive control by a strongly thematised and ethnographic focus, thereby degenerating into local case studies, which sacrifice both aesthetics and the study of modernism's methodological consistency.²³

2) The second corrective element is that of postcolonial theory, which dichotomises hybridity and authenticity, and therefore modernity and metaphysics:

Proponents of the ideology of the hybrid would write off the idea of authenticity as both platonic and romanticist, whereas those who argue for the authentic would claim that there is no metaphysics involved here, but a cluster of specific

21 MASSEY: 1984, 6.

22 ROSENDAHL THOMSEN: 2008, 24.

23 HUYSSSEN: 2005, 1.

events [...] attached to a people and a nation [...] whose sum is more unique than hybrid.²⁴

World literature takes on neither what Bruno Latour critically labels modernity's purification of hybrids between the modern and the unmodern²⁵ nor postcolonialism's ideologised dichotomies. The numerous mediating concepts in world literature do not originate primarily in an attempt to explain the shifts in coding that occur linguistically and culturally in the literary universe of transmission among hybrid authors. Dano-Faroese authors such as William Heinesen and Jørgen-Frantz Jacobsen transgress geographical, historical, aesthetic, linguistic, and consciousness-related boundaries not only in an attempt to map their geography. Because of modernity's late arrival, narrators from ›the periphery‹ must relate to the simultaneity of the modern and the pre-modern. Stated modernistically, this can both be regarded as a comprehensive meta-awareness and as a reaching out toward non-aesthetic discourses, whether these are existential metaphysical, anthropological, political, religious, journalistic, etc. Their multi-inclusive and multi-discursive world of experience functions as an artistic tool for a simultaneous reception of different discourses, ideas, traditions, logics, etc. The authors are at home operating in the translational zones between not just ›centre‹ and ›periphery‹ but also between nation and world, low literature and high literature, text and context, authenticity and hybridity.

The globalisation theorist Arjun Appadurai is critical of postcolonialism's lack of understanding of hybridity in terms of its tendency to de-Westernise modernity and modernism.²⁶ This hybridity, relative to the modernity discussion, is neither the West nor ›the Rest‹ but rather a world in between.

It is thus relevant to distinguish between interest-focused and cultural-artistic types of hybridity. Edouard Glissant, originally from Haiti, notes that decolonisation is a political issue, not a cultural or artistic one: to desire the landscape freed from colonial influence is to turn it into an oversimplified folklore.²⁷ A positive approach to artistic and cultural hybridity does not necessarily rule out conceptions of origins inasmuch as it

24 Ibid., 25.

25 BLOK and JENSEN: 2009, 213.

26 LAWRENCE-ZÚÑIGA: 2003, 28.

27 LARSEN: 2007, 10.

is sensitive to but not conditional upon considerations of origin. Margareta Petersson notes the one-sided but justified resistance to essentialism as one example of postcolonial research's reluctance to come to grips with the inner, spiritual world.²⁸ A fear of unitary conceptions characterises both modernism and postcolonialism, which – as far as modernism is concerned – appears to be an over-eager identification of all kind of conclusiveness with essentialist conviction. Here too we find a world caught between naive identification on the one hand and this identification's dissolution on the other. In a critique of the postmodern era, Barbara Herrnstein Smith notes that anxiety over something being substantiated and this being a major challenge to belief has also characterised the zeal for revelation within modernism's foundational thought:

All traditions are equally viable because all are equally suspect. Where conviction is seen as self-delusion and as all last words are lies, the only resolution may be in the affirmation of irresolution, and conclusiveness may be soon seen as not only less honest but less stable than inconclusiveness.²⁹

I take my point of departure in that which Andreas Huyssen labels modernity in general, which he defines as a negotiation: »Cross-national cultural forms that emerge from the negotiation of the modern with the indigenous, the colonial and the postcolonial in the ›non-Western‹ world«.³⁰

From the perspective of world literature, hybridity is thus regarded less as a specialised discourse that is distinguished from conceptions of authenticity than as modernity in general and as a key human phenomenon encompassing antipodal existences such as nearness and distance. The new cosmopolitanism and globalisation emphasise hybridity, the meeting of cultures, and contact zones as fundamentally communicative conditions. World literature provides the comprehensive conceptions of hybridity by taking a comparative approach via mediating concepts such as »globalisation« (David Damrosch, etc.), »specified globalisms« (Édouard Glissant), »cosmopolitan regionalisms« (Mads Rosendahl Thomsen), »contact zones« (Mary Louise Pratt), »translation«, »*Zwischenwelten*« (Ottmar Ette), »inter« and »trans« (Ottmar Ette, Sandra L. Bermann, etc.), »and-zone« (Sandra L. Bermann), »wickerwork« (Svend Erik Larsen), etc. These terms are not overly limiting in an attempt to explain the lin-

28 PETERSSON: 2008, 184.

29 SMITH: 1968, 145.

30 HUYSSSEN: 2005, 9.

guistic and thematic code shifts that take place in the writings of hybrid authors.

3) Rosendahl Thomsen's third general critique of the post-colonial paradigm is:

that it has not come up with particularly convincing ideas and methods for dealing with the literature of the traditional centres of literature, the old colonisers. The lack of interest in seeing post-colonial literature as part of the same system as the literature of the West, as well as literature from the West that could qualify as post-colonial literature, remains a problem, by creating an irrational divide between the objects of comparative literature and post-colonial studies. This has consequently also led prominent figures such as Gayatri Spivak to emphasize studies of world literature in a global context as a more viable way out of the Eurocentric comparative literature, while warning against the monolingual triumph of English.³¹

Rosendahl Thomsen touches on postcolonialism's self-imposed limitations, which reserve the postcolonial perspective for literature from former colonies that write back to the imperial centre. This has resulted in oversimplified understandings of writing back. Pascale Casanova describes the reason for this limitation when she states that postcolonialism »posits a direct link between literature and the history, one that is exclusively political«. ³² Casanova explains her critique of political reading by describing postcolonialism's stepmotherly treatment of aesthetic issues:

From this, it [postcolonialism] moves to an *external* criticism that runs the risk of reducing the literary to the political, imposing a series of annexations or short-circuits, and often passing in silence over the actual aesthetic, formal or stylistic characteristics that actually ›make‹ literature.³³

Dominant trends in postcolonialism have one-sidedly focused on breaks in culture and have thus overlooked the massive connections between the new non-Western states and the old European centre. An example of this is the obliteration of theosophy, the spiritualist movement that emerged in the late 19th and early 20th Centuries, which melded Western and Asian traditions. According to Margareta Petersson, theosophy functioned as »a link in a mutual influence between the colonies and their European motherlands, which eventually caused the boundaries between

31 ROSENDAHL THOMSEN: 2008, 25.

32 CASANOVA: 2005, 123.

33 Ibid., 123.

the colonial and the European worlds to begin to crumble«. ³⁴ World literature is oriented more toward the geographical understanding of aesthetic effects in itself than is postcolonialism, which has been most concerned with questions of power geometry. Like world literature, segments of postcolonialism have at times moderated the field's power thematisation. The current tendency to reroute postcolonialism distances itself from the idea that what Hans Hauge calls »the triumph of singularity« is the consequence of postcolonialism's critique of power: »It is the postcolonial movement that dissolves *Einheit* into little parts in a reverse homogenisation process and ends first in *Kleinstaaterei* and finally in the individual parts. Postcolonialism is singularity's triumph.« ³⁵ Postcolonialism went to the opposite extreme, spurning the cosmopolitan dimension in European tradition by replacing the concept of modernity with particular modernities. Karen-Margrethe Simonsen describes postcolonialism's one-sided investment strategy in relation to its understanding of modernity:

When one could no longer maintain European identity as a coherent and universal history and discovered other modernities outside Europe, one's understanding of modernity should have been revised. Instead, postcolonialists invented a number of supplementary modernities. ³⁶

In postcolonialism, each culture received its own modernity, explained primarily as self-development and thus differing from what Frederic Jameson calls a standardised, hegemonic Anglo-Saxon model. The notion of a general modernity represented a break from a subaltern position. This led to a Latin American modernity, an Indian modernity, an African modernity, a North Atlantic modernity, and so on. ³⁷

Postcolonial theory has undergone considerable changes since its breakthrough and is a discipline with which world literature is in constant dialogue. This overarching critique of postcolonialism should thus be regarded as a corrective that indicates continuity between postcolonialism itself and world literature. It would therefore be appropriate to conclude this comparison with a general consideration of postcolonialism's significance for modern literary studies. This significance is of a contextual character and consists of the »global dislocation in the relationship

34 PETERSSON: 2008, 185.

35 HAUGE: 2009, 38.

36 SIMONSEN: 2009, 70.

37 Ibid.

between centre and periphery, as the background of cultural historical research becomes more theoretically confident and the literature studies becomes more interested in context«. ³⁸ Zerlang's description of the characteristic relationship between centre and periphery as a prerequisite for literature studies' development over the course of many decades is an acknowledgement of the postcolonial perspective:

Eventually, however, closer analysis has shown that the centres' dominance is not synonymous with the periphery passively and restlessly seeking influence from the centres. It integrates them on its own premises. ›The modern breakthrough‹ is an obvious illustration of this. One could perhaps even forward the hypothesis that pattern-forming cultural breakthrough takes place in the confrontation between a periphery and a centre. We can say that, ever since the 1700s, the boundary between centre and periphery has been moving from the relationship between the metropolis and the provinces *in* England/France to the relationship between England/France and Germany, and further to these three states' relationships with Scandinavia and Russia on the one hand – in the 20th Century – the relationship between ›the West‹ and ›the Rest‹. ³⁹

Zerlang wrote this in 1988. Developments since that time have confirmed the centre-periphery problem as a decisive perspective in many fields. However, globalisation's contexts of interaction have made it more difficult to differentiate between coloniser and colonised, Western and non-Western. Within politics, philosophy and art, the world has become polycentric at the same time that place, state and region have become manifestly global entities. New fields, such as world literature, and reroutings within postcolonialism have presented an opportunity to soften dichotomised thought processes, thus creating a more communicative approach to the West and the Rest, centre and periphery, colonised and coloniser. The West is more than just a monolithic centre, and the Rest is more than just an unshapen mass.

World literature as geographic modernism

The spread of the modern and modernism to geographical locations around the world creates alternative codifications of modernity and modernism, which Andreas Huyssen calls *geomodernisms*⁴⁰ or *geogra-*

³⁸ ZERLANG: 1988, 280.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 279.

⁴⁰ The term »geomodernisms« indicates both continuity with and divergence from »commonly understood notions of modernism« (DOYLE and WINKIEL: 2007: 4).

phies of modernism.⁴¹ These modernisms are regarded as geographical writings back to the hegemonic, formal understanding of modernism located in a European context. Pascale Casanova refers to hegemonic modernism when she labels an influential kind of modernism as »pure« writing – writing that is freed from the obligation to help to develop a particular national identity and which has no social or political ›function«.⁴² As a vital part of the aesthetic development of new nations, the broad context also causes the categories to collapse.

Viewed relative to literature studies in general, it is possible to regard world literature as an attempt to establish a descriptive position between formal-technical and culturalised approaches. Both the anti-Western tendencies (which, viewed externally, are often justified) and a one-sided focus on the break with aesthetic norms within Western literature have, in their own ways, overshadowed the world literary connections between European literature and literature in new states the world over. Modernism's geographies involve a negotiation that – in part through postcolonialism's emphasis on external codes and in part through modernism's radical understanding of forms and individualism – challenges these by means of additional material and context.

The link between the West and ›the Rest« has remained intact over time inasmuch as the West's modernists developed an early interest in the myths and rituals of (predominantly) oral and non-Western cultures. This other world, which became known as ›the Third World« in the 1950s, functioned for a time primarily as raw material for Western aesthetic production. It was not until the countless ›writings back« of world and postcolonial literature, as well as the emergence of globalisation's contexts of interaction, that the Rest became more than just a shapeless other. The enormous response from the new states has influenced Western literature, making it more difficult to differentiate between Western and non-Western literature.⁴³

In the following section, I will briefly describe this position relative to hegemonic constructions of modernism. Regarded from a modern-geographical perspective, with room for additional domains of experience,

41 HUYSEN: 2008, 115–116.

42 CASANOVA: 2004, 200.

43 Danish examples of this influence are Henrik Stangerup, Suzanne Brøgger, and Carsten Jensen.

hegemonic constructions of modernity's formalistic artistic gaze suddenly seem one dimensional, hygienic and divested of context. World literature is a corrective to modernism's isolationist discourse and dichotomisations, as well as to modernity's planned rationality, cultural relativism and other intangible processes.

I argue that, by spatialising and localising modernism, we have opened it to additional contexts. Place, regarded as broad experience, is an opportunity to extend and soften any isolated and dichotomised thought processes in order to create a more communicative perspective between modern and premodern, life and literature. Authors from non-Western and non-metropolitan cultures go through a positioning process relative to modernism, with the whole of their cultural and geographical ballast stowed on-board. Pascale Casanova emphasises this broader modernistic perspective as a means of highlighting dichotomies such as nationalism and cosmopolitanism, modernism and realism, realism and fantasy, political conviction and aesthetics, religion and secularism. These categories and dichotomies »are cancelled in the periphery«. ⁴⁴ They are cancelled in the sense that they co-exist in the same local context, encompassing different logics, times, developments, etc. This is possible because space becomes available in the form of the periphery, which is less specialised than the metropolitan space. This occurs as a result of a characteristically non-coercive, encircling thinking, in which there is awareness that the artistic, religious, political, and scientific spheres of value are already fractured, though without the divisions between them being absolute. Heinesen and Jacobsen are examples of authors who regard the irreversible division of the key spheres of value and discourses such as geography, history, epic metaphysics and anthropology not just as fractures but also as doublings and simultaneities. Although the break with premodern content and older narrative forms represents a worldview and creates non-dichotomised discourses, this occurs through a modern awareness that these spheres – or value or truth processes – continue to be divided. Both authors communicate opposition to the making of the splits absolute.

World literature takes up a position between a cultural-break-focused postcolonialism and a formal-break-focused modernism. Instead of one-sidedly privileging the radically new on the basis of Western avant-garde

44 CASANOVA: 2000, 199.

patterns or just as one-sidedly privileging postcolonialism's ideological ambition for de-Westernisation, world literature is sensitive to both the West's cosmopolitan influence and postcolonialism's understanding of the empire that answers back.

The »holy trinity«⁴⁵ of world literature – Franco Moretti, David Damrosch, and Pascale Casanova – speak with one voice concerning modernism's and the avant-garde's exaggerated technical-formal orientation and narrow understanding of originality, which concentrates on pure form and the stylistically new.⁴⁶ Moretti juxtaposes the technical-formal orientation within European modernism with Latin American magical realism, which »naturalises« or »anthropologises« that which became technique in Europe.⁴⁷ Magical realism represents a new refraction and spatial multiplication of modernism. These are called geomodernisms or geographies of modernism and are becoming a sort of »alternative modernism [...], in which notions such as elite, tradition and popularity assume codings quite different«⁴⁸ from those in the avant-garde tradition. However, the concept of modernism »is still the standard to which we return«.⁴⁹ Likewise, from a world literary perspective, the concept of modernity cannot be replaced by particular modernities, and the concept of modernism cannot be replaced by particular modernisms. Franco Moretti explains why it is impossible to ignore the notion of a European centre when dealing with the spread of the novel:

What I know about European novels, for instance, suggests that hardly any forms ›of consequence‹ don't move at all; that movement from one periphery to another (without passing through the centre) is almost unheard of; that movement from the periphery to the centre is less rare, but still quite unusual, while that from the centre to the periphery is by far the most frequent. Do these facts imply that the West has a monopoly over the creation of the forms that count? Of course not [...] The model proposed in ›Conjectures‹ [Moretti's article »Conjectures on World Literature«] does not reserve invention to a few cultures and deny it to the others: it specifies *the condition under which it is more likely to occur*, and the forms it may take. Theories will never abolish inequality: they can only hope to explain it.⁵⁰

45 ALVSTAD: 2011, 2.

46 MORETTI: 1996, 234; DAMROSCH: 2003, 292; CASANOVA: 2004, 200.

47 MORETTI: 1996, 235.

48 HUYSSSEN: 2005, 15.

49 ROSENDAHL THOMSEN: 2008, 51.

50 MORETTI: 2003, 75–77.

Moretti's approach takes into account that the West's great influence makes it difficult to brush aside the Western genealogy of globalised concepts such as the West and the Rest, centre and periphery. The attempt to come to terms with globalisation through the idea of de-Westernisation is unsatisfactory while, as Emily Apter argues, the global »signifies not so much the conglomeration of world cultures arrayed side by side in their difference but, rather, a problem-based monocultural aesthetic agenda that elicits transnational engagement«.⁵¹

The concept of geomodernism is linked to an extended modernism in which the study of modernism is expected to cover an ever-larger geographical and historical area.⁵² Geomodernisms are to be understood as hybrid aesthetic phenomena that revise a particular hegemonic concept of modernism, which has been a self-occupied phenomenon in which historical context is ascribed a more or less peripheral status. The geomodernism revision of the general pureness of modernism makes it more than a depoliticised, deterritorialised and linguistically self-conscious text. Geomodernism thus cannot be lumped together with hegemonic tendencies within modernism. As Andreas Huyssen notes: »Rather than privilege the radically new in Western avant-gardist fashion, we want to focus on the complexity of repetition [...] and translation, thus expanding our understanding of innovation«.⁵³

Placemaking in Dano-Faroese literature

There is a risk that minor literatures will »always be considered national literatures and therefore condemned to obscurity, low readership and a lesser scholarly interest when compared to the literatures of the principal European languages«.⁵⁴ Writing in Danish, William Heinesen and Jørgen-Frantz Jacobsen offer their heterogeneous experiences of the Danish-Faroese environment in Tórshavn while at the same time breaking down the country's isolation. William Heinesen and Jørgen-Frantz Jacobsen must have gained this knowledge from their own lives, which contributed to their choice to write their works of fiction in Danish, thereby opening

51 APTER: 2006, 99.

52 HUYSSSEN: 2005, 6–19.

53 Ibid., 15.

54 SIMONSEN and STOUGAARD: 2008, 136.

a conversation with the Nordic public. They also played a role in communicating Faroese cultural matters to a Danish-Scandinavian public in particular. As writers from a peripheral region, they characteristically needed to be embraced by publishers and opinion makers in the ›centre‹ if they were to reach an international audience.⁵⁵ They succeeded in this and furthermore became part of the artistic environment in Copenhagen in the early 20th century.⁵⁶ Every single book by Heinesen and Jacobsen expresses in no uncertain terms a desire to keep the Faroe Islands abreast of European artistic culture. In other words, their writings can be seen as an ambitious project of translating European cultural capital into Faroese cultural capital, thereby creating Faroese ramifications for cosmopolitan European literature.

Heinesen and Jacobsen embroider their narrative universes with a constant clash between myth and modernity, older narratives and modern perspectives. Their reuse of narrative forms from the 18th century in particular (such as the picaresque novel, the historical novel and the epistolary novel) and ancient forms (such as the ring composition) opens up to not only the contemporary modern but also to the modern as a long-term historical structure. They also consciously transplant and translate what Ian Watt terms the myths of modern European individualism – Faust, Don Juan, Don Quixote, Hamlet, Robinson Crusoe, etc. – into ›Faroese‹. Orpheus, Dionysus and other figures from Greek mythology and the Western literary tradition also make significant guest appearances in their fiction. Heinesen and Jacobsen borrow these figures and recast them in contesting ways, turning these transplanted figures into translated figures.⁵⁷ Explicit connections between the Faroese microcosm and a global circulation of European motifs like these work as a ›literary contract‹ or ›literary transfer‹,⁵⁸ the purpose of which is to recode modernity and modernism.

Heinesen and Jacobsen grew up in a Dano-Faroese community in Tórshavn, and the core of their writing is a heterogeneous strand of experience derived from their mixed backgrounds. Both have been translated into around 20 languages, and for this reason we can today consider them

55 DAMROSCH: 2009, 106.

56 Heinesen published in the avant-gardist journal *Klingen*.

57 Cf. MOBERG: 2007 and MOBERG: 2010.

58 SCHÖNING: 2005, 195–196.

to be links between the Faroese periphery and the global world. In order to explain the world literary dimension of Heinesen's and Jacobsen's writing, I will link their geographical and the translational aspects.

Andreas Huyssen considers translation to be the core element in geomodernism: »Indeed, translation in its broadest linguistic and historical sense poses the major challenge to any reassessment of the geographies of modernism in a global sense.«⁵⁹

However, translation is more than a strictly linguistic process that transfers a text from one language to another. In a more general sense, translation is »denoting the dynamic of any intercultural exchange«.⁶⁰ Writers like Heinesen and Jacobsen, possessing a geographical and translational approach to modernity and modernism, take up a privileged position for opening this partnership, understood as complex transnational and translational processes. The excessive focus of many Western literary scholars on the break with tradition is poorly suited for reading aesthetic trends in the periphery, where a multifarious context holds other elements besides formalistic approaches to originality. According to Susan Bassnett, instead of serving as an open window, translation is a channel flowing sluggishly towards influence from the outside.⁶¹ Translation thus appears as a space for slowness. Paul Ricoeur notes something similar when he mentions the basic effects of geospace itself as a slow oscillation, which he even terms the basic level of civilisation.⁶²

Translation is particularly important in new states and non-metropolitan places. According to Itamar Even-Zohar, »A literature in the early stages of its development [...] is likely to translate far more than a literature that perceives itself to be solidly established and self-sufficient.«⁶³ Similarly, Franco Moretti claims that the eagerness to translate – meaning the transplantation of ideas and intercultural exchanges – often occurs in the periphery, which in this case first of all means the periphery of his

59 HUYSSSEN: 2005, 15.

60 SIMONSEN and STOUGAARD: 2008, 16.

61 BASSNETT: 1993, 159. Translation in itself thus appears as a space for slowness the effect of which is increased when related to space and place. Paul Ricoeur mentions the basic effects of space itself as »slower oscillations than those known by history« (RICOEUR: 2004, 153). Referring to Fernand Braudel, Ricoeur even underscores space as the basic level of civilization (ibid., 152).

62 Ibid., 153.

63 BASSNETT: 2011, 69–70.

world literary system.⁶⁴ This system describes the spread of the novel from the European centre to new states around the globe. Moretti terms the geomodernist translations in the periphery as »interference« and a »compromise« between Western influence and local material.⁶⁵ Descartes' maxim thus becomes a topos in overlapping geomodernisms.

In a society that, like the Faroe Islands, lacks a strong and stable literary high culture, it has been decisive as far as literature is concerned to have hybrid writers like William Heinesen and Jørgen-Frantz Jacobsen. Heinesen and Jacobsen master the dialogue of complex and comprehensive translation and confirm David Damrosch's expression of translation: »An excellent translation can be seen as an expansive transformation.«⁶⁶ Heinesen and Jacobsen represent the best Faroese examples of expansive translation, bridging the gap between continental Europe and the North Atlantic and between various aesthetic and philosophical affiliations that go beyond the imperial experience: Baroque, social, and mythical realism; modernism (surrealism and expressionism); existential philosophy, etc. In all of their works, Heinesen and Jacobsen connect with powerful trends in European literature, stretching from Plato to Camus. Translation almost seems to demonstrate its own presence in Dano-Faroese literature. The reader gets the impression of the whole of European culture waiting backstage to be rewritten, translated and accommodated. More than anything else, the writings of these twin pillars of Faroese literature are poetic, open, transformative, and imbued with the conviction that dichotomies block understanding of modernity's cultural processes. Their cross-generic experiences from a Danish environment in the Faroese capital of Tórshavn reach into their works as an aesthetic strategy.

Heinesen and Jacobsen both write about previous centuries and thus give priority to a reflection on the modern not only as a break but also as a slowly evolving structure. It is a ›writing back‹ to a narrow conception of modernity that is seen as a rational control that lacks contact with nature and oral culture and with culture in general. In Heinesen's *Laterna Magica* (1985), the Western philosophical statement ›cogito, ergo sum‹ is used for the purpose of recasting and contesting the core of European

64 MORETTI: 2004, 150.

65 MORETTI: 2003, 3.

66 DAMROSCH: 2009, 66.

thought. Heinesen transforms it to »I sneeze, therefore I am!«⁶⁷ By reusing this maxim, which was originally proposed by Descartes, Heinesen follows magical realists like the Guatemalan writer Miguel Angel Asturias in claiming »I dance, therefore I am.«⁶⁸ Another Miguel – the Spanish writer Miguel de Unamuno, who paved the way for magical realism – plays the same game when literally inverting Descartes: »Sum ergo, cogito«,⁶⁹ meaning »I am, therefore I think.« In all three cases, the original European maxim is inverted, as the idea of spontaneity, feeling and bodily movement becomes primary. One way or another, all of these maxims may be regarded as attempts to challenge Descartes' notion of ratio in particular and binarisms in Western thought in general: elite versus popular, form versus meaning, subjective reality versus external reality, proximity versus distance, nature versus culture.

Alongside Plato, Aristotle and Kant, Descartes is, according to Edward S. Casey, among the four most archetypal Western thinkers, all of whom privileged the hegemonic rational gaze.⁷⁰ Casey characterises the gaze as a double mixture. The first reason for this is that it drowns everything in its intellect and becomes hegemonic, thereby suppressing context and removing different kinds of cultural and existential themes. The second reason is that it makes blind those who see. The gaze, says Casey, crowds out the clouds of enlightenment:

In the West, there has been a very high valorisation placed upon certain sorts of sight at the expense of others: Steady scrutiny, disciplined contemplation, eidetic insight, the ›natural light‹: all of these have received the lion's share of attention [...] each in its own way strives to attain ›determinate presence‹ (*Anwesenheit* in Heidegger's word). Such presence in turn reflects prevailing hegemonies of political, social, and academic power.⁷¹

Casey calls this hegemony »metaphysical rigidity into which Western ways of conceiving Being have been cast since Plato«.⁷² This rigidity is linked with the decisive prestige-granting factor, namely the hierarchical contrasts that structured Western thought. Casey mentions the glimpse as

67 HEINESEN: 1987, 130.

68 ZERLANG: 2001, 24.

69 UNAMUNO: 2001, 23.

70 CASEY: 2007, 155.

71 *Ibid.*, 15–16.

72 *Ibid.*, 142.

the contrast to the gaze. The glimpse challenges in its discretely subversive way »dominant models of perception in Western philosophy«.73 Casey describes the glimpse as a kind of ›writing back‹ to the hegemonic gaze while it »manages to precede and pervade« the gaze: »In this double action lies its uncelebrated victory over the gaze.«74 The otherness of the glimpse can be used as a way of explaining the ›writings back‹ in the reinterpretations of Descartes's maxim.

Conclusion

The main point in this article has been the cosmopolitan dimension in world literature, as seen as a correction to classic modernism and classic postcolonialism. According to Ulrich Beck, cosmopolitanism in itself defines a new epoch.⁷⁵ Beck distinguishes between a normative philosophical cosmopolitanism (Kant) and cosmopolitanism as a basic condition of globalised life today. Cosmopolitanism can be seen as a further expansion of the concept of world literature, understood as dialectic between *cosmos* and *polis*, place and the world in a still more multipolar world.

The focus has been on the cosmopolitan dimension within the frames of world literature, which in its Eurocentric point of departure contains the dialectics of local experiences and the global circulation of different modes and motifs. Although world literature is a more or less Eurocentric field (Pascale Casanova and Franco Moretti in particular), it is at the same time defined against the narrow Eurocentric focus in classic comparative studies.

My reading of Danish-Faroese literature moves toward a geographical discourse intended to soften the dichotomy between Western conceptions and postcolonialism. Heinesen's and Jacobsen's artistic approach to their heterogenic experiences represents a celebration of the encounter between centre and periphery and the simultaneity between different roads to modernity. The strong placial consciousness in their writings is a significant cosmopolitan response to globality. Their transformative searching and multifaceted path into modernism and modernity cannot be pinned down by claims that Faroese stands for a singularistic Faroese

73 Ibid., 4.

74 Ibid., 164.

75 Cf. BECK: 2004 and BECK: 2006.

road to modernity. My reading does not fit into the dichotomic vocabulary of postcolonial discourse of power related contrasts between coloniser and colonised. The focus on the theme of power in classic postcolonialism is predominantly based upon an external, culturalised approach to literature. World literature, on the other hand, frequently links external and internal approaches to literature. At the same time, my reading distances itself from an isolated discourse of formal modernism, focusing instead on language in a non-contextual way. Along Pascale Casanova's lines, my reading formulates alternatives to these approaches as a mediation of text and context, internally and externally oriented literary criticism. Casanova calls the special space in which this position unfolds »the literary space«⁷⁶, in which »struggle of all sorts – political, social, national, gender, ethnic – comes to be refracted, diluted, deformed or transformed according to a literary logic, and in literary forms«.⁷⁷ Heinesen's literary space in particular not only concerns cosmopolitan influenced concepts such as contact zones, hybridity, inbetweenness, and-zones etc., but is also a critique of European culture and capitalism that challenges the Eurocentric idea of progress. Still, first and foremost, European culture means a massive influence and inspiration, representing Heinesen's ambition of juxtaposing Faroese literature and culture to the modern world. Heinesen and Jacobsen invert symbolic figures of European individualism in a highly communicative ›writing back‹. They challenge the often too readily accepted notion that European modernism is the one and only modernism. Western modernism certainly radiates its influence all over the world, but at the same time it is transcended by geomodernism, which is becoming a multipolar, global perspective which recognises that modernism has been generated by various sources and emerged from various corners of the world. Modernism in this context appears as cultural globalisation. The cultural aspects of the geography of modernism is enlarged and confirmed by a certain (anthropological) understanding of culture as preventing the creation of ethnic walls: »The tension between the common and the unique, which is implied in the concept of culture«.⁷⁸

76 CASANOVA: 2005, 123.

77 Ibid.

78 HASTRUP: 1999, 74.

The geography lesson has continued in the whole of Faroese literature, which can be seen as a continual attempt to localise the Faroe Islands in the new world of modernity and modernism. No doubt, the strong sense of place in Faroese literature represents a deprived culture without any established literary and cultural publicity. The literary and cultural struggle for autonomy – the discord concerning political status relative to Denmark – contributes to the strong placial consciousness in Faroese literature. Postcolonialism is well-suited for describing this. However my focus on placemaking and locality building in (Danish) Faroese literature reaches beyond narrow nation building and the notion of ›writing back‹ from the empire. Eager to embrace Western influence, Danish Faroese literature in particular transcends the imperial experience and ›writes back‹ as a Rest in the West, i.e. as a non-metropolitan culture with European origins, which negotiates the massive influence of the Continent's urbanised civilisation. Re-routings within postcolonialism have placed a still greater focus on the relationship between literature's empire and empire's literature⁷⁹, making it more difficult to sharply distinguish between postcolonialism and world literature. The conception of place in Faroese literature in general is thus far from being legitimised on the basis of conceptions of de-colonised liberation. Place's meaningfulness in Faroese literature expands out into a geographical context that cannot be fully explained by classic postcolonial dichotomies. By the same token, my approach to the works of Heinesen and Jacobsen is to some extent in line with critical postcolonial discourse concerning the blind reproduction of Western culture in terms of a progressive developmental logic.⁸⁰

At the end of the article, I depicted the productive marginality of Danish-Faroese geomodernist world writing as a ›writing back‹ to formal modernism. Heinesen and Jacobsen's heterogenic aesthetic affiliations in particular and the inclusiveness of geomodernism in general frame a heterogeneous mode of expression capable of quasi-anthropological self-studies into one's own geography – entertaining, promoting knowledge, describing maturation and processes of formation, highlighting cultural

79 SELNES: 2010, 46.

80 The strong theme of simultaneity between modern and pre-modern in Heinesen and Jacobsen's writings is a break with a common-sense in occidental culture represented by »Western scholars [that] have largely been victims of a Eurocentric view of history as something linear and continuous.« (HASTRUP: 1998, 173).

narratives, connecting the particular and the universal, etc.⁸¹ The co-existence of a variety of discourses in geographical modernism operates in the margin of the old modernism, while its contextual and spacious poetics is more open to the dialogue between the Western cultural tradition and the rest of the world and in general tuned in for venturing into the outside world. The goal of this article has been to argue that world literature's focus on modernity and modernism has created opportunities for thinking about strategies of writing back, somewhere between the postcolonial writing back and the aesthetic formalism of modernism.

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81 Cf. ANDERSEN: 2010, 89.

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MALAN MARNERSDÓTTIR

Translations of William Heinesen –
a Post-colonial Experience

The argument of this article is that the Faroese translations of works by the Faroese Danish-language author William Heinesen (1900–1991) show post-colonial characteristics due to the role of the translations in the construction of a Faroese national literature. Furthermore, the article points out some conceptual overlaps between post-colonial study and literary research.¹ Heinesen is the internationally best-known Faroese author of the 20th century. He published several volumes of poems, novels and short stories in Denmark, as well as translations of novels and short stories in many countries. The Faroese translations of his work form the core of this article, which discusses how translations of literature contribute to the creation of national culture. What interests me is how certain literary devices in Heinesen’s works tend to alter through translation. In order to do this, I study how translations deal with literary devices such as *effet de réel* and metonymic gaps, and how concepts like double articulation and multilingualism contribute to broadening our understanding of the consequences of translation strategies. In addition to interlingual translation, intralingual translation is also at play, and the latter affects the literariness of Heinesen’s work, its narratology, characters and cultural setting.

Apart from short stays in Denmark and various other trips abroad, Heinesen spent the whole of his life in Tórshavn on the Faroe Islands. His father’s first language was Faroese and his mother’s was Danish. The family spoke Danish at home, as was often the case in Tórshavn in those days. Faroese is a West Scandinavian language that is spoken and written today by the almost 50,000 inhabitants of the Faroes, a self-governing part of Denmark, according to the Danish Parliament’s Home Rule Act of 1948. At the beginning of the 20th century, the overriding ideological and cultural issue in the islands was that of language. The notion that Danish was the language that had to be used in all official matters and as the language of instruction was challenged by the fact that Faroese was the spoken language and the language of the common people, and that it had been for centuries.

1 A version of the article without the discussion about literary terms was published in KNUDSEN: 2012.

The Faroese national movement began in the middle of the 19th century.² It became more outspoken among Faroese students in Copenhagen in 1876 when they began to write songs in Faroese (praising the Faroese landscape) and founded the first Faroese association.³ The movement was introduced at a meeting in Tórshavn on Boxing Day, 1888, and this led to the founding of *Føringafelag*, the Faroese Association, in January 1889. The common aim was to put the Faroese language, and particularly the written language, on the agenda. A student of theology, V. U. Hammershaimb, created the written language in 1846. Writing in Faroese was for many years chiefly used for recording the oral poetry and storytelling tradition, but towards the end of the century, written Faroese also came to be used to discuss the topics and problems of the time in literary journals and newspapers. Faroese was strongly influenced by Danish, and as a result of the language purism that developed from the nationalist movement of the 19th century, it was considered important to separate Faroese from Danish as much as possible. This was achieved, for example, via the removal or translation of Danish and English loanwords. Since the end of the 20th century and into the beginning of the 21st, there has been something of a shift in attitudes and nowadays more loanwords are accepted. This is evident in the foreign language dictionaries published in the 1990s.⁴

As for the development of the Faroese nationalist movement, at the very beginning of the 20th century the discussions about Faroese language and culture led to the establishment of the first political parties. The very names of the first political parties show that the main issue was the country's relationship to Denmark: *Sambandsflokkur*, the Unionist Party, was founded in 1906, and *Sjálvstýrisflokkur*, the Self-Government Party, started its activities the same year. In the following decades, until the outbreak of the Second World War, the establishment of a literature in Faroese was a central issue, despite the fact that Faroese was not a full subject on the school curriculum and therefore most people did not write Faroese. However, the first authors to write in Faroese emerged in the 1870s, and from the end of the 19th century, people started to publish texts in Faroese. Some of the first Faroese-language authors had attended

2 WEST: 1972.

3 JOENSEN: 1987.

4 *Ensk-føroysk orðabók*: 1992, *Donsk-føroysk orðabók*: 1995, *Donsk-føroysk orðabók*: 1998, *Føroysk Orðabók*: 1998.

Føroya Fólkaháskúla, which was established in 1899 and was the first institution to teach Faroese reading and writing. In 1938, Faroese was allowed in the schools and it was included in the school curriculum. The Home Rule Act of 1948 states that Faroese is the main language in the country alongside Danish, which has to be taught thoroughly.

The author

William Heinesen was one of the two great Danish-language Faroese authors in the first part of the 20th century. The other was Jørgen-Frantz Jacobsen (1900–1938), who posthumously published the beloved historical novel, *Barbara* (1939), which experienced something of a renaissance following Danish film director Niels Malmros' 1997 film. In contrast to Jacobsen, who died prematurely, William Heinesen was fortunately able to create a broad body of work. Public recognition of this work in the Faroes, however, came late. On the one hand, some people would not read his writings because they were written in Danish. Further, Heinesen's books were not included in the teaching of literature in schools: the Faroese teachers felt that as the works were in Danish, they should form part of the Danish syllabus, whereas the Danish teachers felt that as Heinesen was a Faroese author, his works belonged to that subject. In her investigation into the author's position in education, sixth-form teacher Ann Ellefsen concludes that Heinesen did not appear on the curriculum for Faroese lessons until after 1980. Just prior to this, six of his novels and one collection of short stories were published in Faroese to mark Heinesen's 75th birthday and he was made a freeman of the city of Tórshavn.⁵

Translation concepts

In the translations of Heinesen's novels and short stories, which are the subject of this article, not only interlingual, but also intralingual and cultural translation are at work. Intralingual translation is a concept put forward by Roman Jakobson that describes the interpretation of verbal signs by means of other signs in the same language.⁶ An example of similar phenomenon to what takes place in translations of Heinesen's novels can be found in literary works written in Québec French; here, English

5 ELLEFSEN: 1994, 153–163.

6 JAKOBSON: 2006, 331.

words and sentences appearing within the French text are translated into English in a way that makes the bilingual character of the source text disappear.⁷ Intralingual translation corresponds to a certain extent to what anthropologists call »cultural translation«: it is what happens alongside linguistic translation when one describes the behaviour and thoughts of foreigners to people in one's own culture and does this by means of comparisons and allusions to that culture.⁸ In the Faroese translations of Heinesen's works that appeared in the 1970s, intralingual as well as cultural translation are both at play. Some of the translators' choices seem to have been based upon implicit evaluations of the potential readers' cultural backgrounds; other translation choices seem to be connected with language politics and thus led to the production of translations that corresponded to the dominant ideas of linguistic purity that were part of the nationalist ideology of the time.

The function of multilingualism in Heinesen's texts is often an *effet de réel* (»effect of reality«), a concept originated by Roland Barthes. The concept concerns, as he argues:

notations which are left out of structural analysis, either because its inventory omits all details that are »superfluous« (in relation to structure) or because these same details are treated as »filling« (catalyses), assigned an indirect functional value insofar as, cumulatively, they constitute some index of character or atmosphere and so can ultimately be recuperated by structure.⁹

This article will show how the translators' choices sometimes take away the effect of reality and sometimes affect the characterology and the narratology of Heinesen's novels.

Post-colonial study concepts

The Faroese language in William Heinesen's texts is evident even in his earliest writings. In the poem »Det glade Træ« (»The Happy Tree«), from the 1924 volume *Højbjergning ved Havet* (»Harvesting by the Sea«), the word *Grovejrs-Nat* is a compound of the Faroese word *gróðrarveður* (»growing weather«) and the Danish word *nat* (»night«):

7 MEZEL: 1988, 18.

8 LIENHARDT: 1953. Here from ASAD: 1986, 142: »the problem of describing to others how members of a remote tribe think [...] begins to appear largely as one of translation, of making the coherence primitive thought has in the languages it really lives in, as clear as possible in our own«.

9 BARTHES: 1968, 84. English translation: BARTHES: 2006, 230.

Vi gaar omkring I den lysnende Vaar,
 vi ser dig straale, du glade Træ,
 vi ved jo, du skære Grovejrs-Nat,
 at du har lindring for hver en Kval.¹⁰

We are walking about in the brightening spring/we see how you beam, you
 happy tree/we know, you gleaming growing weather night/that you relieve
 every agony.¹¹

In the context of the poem, the »growing weather night«, *Grovejrs-Nat*, designates the quality of a specific type of weather. However, the first part of the Danish word works as a metonymy – it is a Faroese-looking word instead of a Danish word. This opens up into a broader Faroese cultural and linguistic context. In Danish, *grovejr* is hardly a common concept, whereas *grødevejr* is listed in dictionaries and covers the same phenomena.¹² W. D. Ashcroft has coined the term »metonomic gap« for this kind of double articulation.¹³ In the gap between the Faroese concept of »growing weather« and the Danish word in the poem with no immediate parallel, a set of oppositions emerges between Faroese and Danish that refers to the relationship between the Faroes and Denmark in terms of language, culture and politics. The uncommon but completely understandable Danish term *Grovejr* in a poem in Danish by an author who speaks and writes in Faroese and Danish might tease Danish readers. At the same time, Faroese readers might be delighted about finding a Faroese-looking word in a Danish context – it is very similar to what Homi Bhabha says about double articulation and mimicry.¹⁴

Heinesen's novel *Det gode håb* (»The Good Hope«) especially contains plenty of metonymic gaps and thus demonstrates the hybrid language of the author; it is also the only novel by Heinesen that is not translated into Faroese. *Det gode håb* is set in the 17th century and is written in a fictitious »departmental« style of Danish¹⁵ that includes Faroese place names rendered in Danish. Moreover, there are several examples of Faroese words and wordings rendered as they are without explanation.¹⁶ The

10 HEINESEN: 1984, 134.

11 Word-by-word translation by Malan Marnersdóttir.

12 *Ordbog over det danske Sprog*: 1859–1938.

13 ASHCROFT: 1989.

14 BHABHA 2004: 122.

15 MADSEN: 1985.

16 MARNERSDÓTTIR: 2004.

metonymic gaps and double articulations in Heinesen's poems and prose are effects of his poetic use of language, which also function as a reference to the linguistic hegemony of Danish on the Faroe Islands and in Faroese culture. The metonymic gaps demonstrate the creative power of the Faroese language in a Danish context.

The linguistic impurity of novels

The presence in a text of more than one language challenges the traditional preconception that a good text is written in one single language. The first question is, of course, if there is such a thing as one single language in a work of literature, especially in novels. Historically, the preconception that texts should be written in only one language is repudiated by the fact that in medieval literature texts written in the vernacular were interspersed with Latin words and sentences. Mikhail Bakhtin writes about heteroglossia in novels, which he links with the novel's lack of a generic.¹⁷ In translation studies, the phenomenon of multiple languages being present in a text is labelled multilingualism, whereas Ashcroft's metonymic gap and Bhabha's double articulation are terms used in post-colonial studies. The double articulations and metonymic gaps in Heinesen's works emerge from compound or hybrid language. Instead of the rather downbeat expression »hybrid«, John Mitchinson has proposed a more productive term: compound language shows the synergy of two languages at play – in this case, Faroese and Danish.¹⁸ In contrast to »hybrid«, which indicates some kind of defect, »synergy« indicates that the languages in question work together to produce results greater than the sum of the effects of each language on its own. This is exactly what is at play in Heinesen's texts – they show how Faroese and Danish work together to create a surplus of meaning. Furthermore, it is worth noting that the Canadian poet and translator E. D. Blodgett suggests that the otherness and alienation created by multilingualism should be preserved through translation.¹⁹

Therefore, it is interesting to look at how such multilingual texts are translated. The translation scholar Rainier Grutman states that »minority

17 BAKHTIN: 1981.

18 MITCHINSON: 2011, 222.

19 MEZEL: 1988, 12.

writers also resort to multilingualism in order to convey the linguistic heterogeneity of their speech communities (...) [underlining] their dependence on the culture(s) that surround them«.20 For most of Heinesen's lifetime, the surrounding culture was the Danish culture – the great opponent in the struggle to create and promote a Faroese culture. During this period, Faroese was transformed from an unofficial language that was hardly ever written to the official spoken and written language of the islands. In fact, by the end of the 20th century Faroese literature had become monolingual.²¹

The translation of the novel *Noatun*

Heinesen's novel, *Noatun*, which was published by Gyldendal in Copenhagen in 1938, appeared in a Faroese translation by Áshild Olsen in 1975. In the early 20th century, Faroese place names on maps were rendered in Danish.²² Place names which appear in the novel – such as Urefjeld, Kvanfjeldskleven and Kyrrevig are »taken back« to their Faroese forms: Urðarfjall (»Scree Mountain«), Hvannadalskleivin (»Angelica Valley Cleft«), Kyrruvík (»Calm Bay«). These are not real place names, but *hvannadalur*, *kleiv* and *kyrr* occur in several Faroese place names. The names of the characters, however, follow the age-old Danish naming customs that were still observed in the Faroes at the time the novel was written. The novel's characters have names like Niels Peter, Ole Ørnberg and Frederik; these are not translated into the dominant forms of these male names used on the Faroe Islands today: Pætur, Óli and Fríðrikur.

The leitmotif of the novel, the folk song »Jernvågen« (about a ship called »The Iron Bay«), which is sung and danced to on several occasions throughout the course of the novel, is retained in Danish in the Faroese edition. Some of the more modern songs that the characters sing and to which they refer stay in Danish in the translation, such as Frederik's song »Farvel, Farvel« (»Goodbye, Goodbye«).²³ Other songs are translated into Faroese, like Ole Ørnberg's song, »Når våren kommer« (»When Spring Comes«), which is translated into »Tá várið kemur við treysti«.24

20 GRUTMAN: 2001, 159.

21 MARNERSDÓTTIR: forthcoming.

22 WEYHE: 2012.

23 HEINESEN: 1951, 50, and HEINESEN: 1975a, 62.

24 HEINESEN: 1951, 56, and HEINESEN: 1975a, 68.

The translation of popular songs takes away a potential reality effect. Reproduced in Danish in the Faroese translation of the book, the mere language of the song would have rendered the realism of the novel. In the novel there is a newspaper called *Budstikken* (»fiery cross«; »message«), which is rendered with the name of a real contemporary Faroese newspaper, *Tingakrossur*.²⁵ The Faroese translation happens to be the literal translation of the Danish word. The *Noatun* translation also has a very rare Danicism among the Heinesen translations: the word *forbandet* (»damned«) is translated as *forbiðið*.²⁶ Faroese language purism actively sought to erase Danish words with a German prefix like this from the language.

To sum up, the translation of *Noatun* has retained some of Heinesen's compound language and in doing so it sets itself apart from the other translations of his works. In the Faroese translation, the text »Jernvågen« points to fact that an important part of the old ballad and dance tradition is in Danish. The ballad text quoted in the novel is a piece of genuine Faroese folklore. However, it is not quite the same after all. The difference is the meaning the quotations create. What is not a metonymic gap in the source text, where it is just another song, is a genuine metonymic gap in the target text – a gap between the linear text and the meaning that emerges out of the code switch from Faroese to Danish. Other metonymic gaps and the double articulations, such as place names and ballad text in Faroese, however, have changed into single articulations in pure Faroese and thus lost their additional significance.

The translation of the novel *Blæsende gry*

The Faroese translation of *Noatun* is an example how to maintain a hint of double articulation in the translation into the language that creates the multilingualism in the source text. The second and revised edition of Heinesen's novel *Blæsende gry* was translated into Faroese as *Degningsvindar* (»Winds of Dawn«) by professor of the Faroese language and poet, Dr Christian Matras.²⁷ Matras did not keep hymns and poems quot-

25 HEINESEN: 1951, 56, and HEINESEN: 1975a, 69.

26 HEINESEN: 1951, 56, and HEINESEN: 1975a, 68.

27 HEINESEN: 2009 is the translation of the first edition of *Blæsende Gry*, HEINESEN: 1934.

ed in the novel in Danish but translated them all. The novel is written in keeping with realist aesthetics while containing a touch of folklore. It is set in the 1920s, when Danish was still both the official language on the islands and the language of faith in the Lutheran Church. Therefore, the texts of the church – as hymns, Bible and rituals – were in Danish. At one point in the novel, the churchgoers sing Thomas Kingo's »Vågn op og slå på dine strenge« (»Awake and Strike the Strings«).²⁸ In the Faroese translation of the novel, the hymn is translated into »O vakna, trív í streingjatólið«.²⁹ Here the translation misses an opportunity to create a reality effect in the source text. By maintaining the hymn in Danish, a moment of double articulation would have been represented. Matras' translation of *Blæsende gry* is similar to what Kathy Mezei in a Québec context calls:

a subtle subversion of Quebec culture in that the use of English in speech acts, phrases, words, dialogue in French-language poems, plays, or novels is rarely acknowledged in the target or receptor text. Yet for the author of the original text, this English usage was intended as a highly symbolic signifier.³⁰

In Heinesen's text, the quotes in Danish are highly symbolic signifiers which the translation does not acknowledge, thus depriving the Faroese text of significance. The Faroese translations transform Heinesen's works into acts of interlingual translation. Christian Matras translated several of Thomas Kingo's hymns. He translated »Sorríg og glæde« (»Sorrow and Joy«) in 1921 and »Far, Verden, far vel« (»Fare, World, Farewell«) in 1929, both of which were included in the Faroese hymn book in 1960. Christian Matras' translation of »Vågn op og slå på dine Strenge« is not listed in his bibliography. Probably Matras translated the hymn during the work on *Blæsende gry*.³¹

In *Blæsende gry* the refrain of a folk song about Charlemagne's battle in Roncesvalles in the year 778 is sung. This features in a whole cycle of ballads about him. In the source text the refrain is in Danish with unmistakable Faroese elements, for instance the place name *Runseval*, for Roncesvalles: »They ride out of France with/the dear maid in the saddle/ blow the horn of Olivant/in Roncesvalles.«³² In the target text the refrain

28 HEINESEN: 1934, 33.

29 HEINESEN: 2009, 42.

30 MEZEI: 1988: 13.

31 MATRAS: 1975, 202–243 and MATRAS: 2004, 198–227.

32 »Ride de ud af Frankerland med/dyren mø i sadel,/blæs i hornet Olivant/i Runseval« (HEINESEN: 1961, 34). Translation by Malan Marnersdóttir.

is, naturally, if I may say so, translated back into Faroese.³³ We could say that the refrain's »otherness« – potentially evident in the source text – has been domesticated in the translation.

Christian Matras was one of the authorities in the language debate from the middle of the 20th century. The author Hanus Andreassen (Hanus Kamban) characterised him as a translator thus:

As a translator, Christian Matras often chose not to use common European loanwords, but instead created new words. (...) Through his translations he passed on part of his immeasurable knowledge about Faroese; knowledge that we otherwise would have missed.³⁴

This is in keeping with the characteristic purist language policy of the period.³⁵

Attacks on characterology

The tendency to eliminate double articulation, metonymic gaps and multilingualism is intensified in the translation of the mythical novel, *Moder Syvstjerne* (»Mother Pleiade«). It was the realist author, Heðin Brú (1901–1987), known for his particularly fine use of written Faroese, who translated the novel in 1975. The translation of *Moder Syvstjerne* transfers the text into an »uncontaminated« Faroese that is characterised by large omissions that particularly involve allusions to Central European culture, mythology and history. The Greek prophetesses, the Sibyls, are replaced by Norse *völur* (Danish *vølver*), seeresses. The foreign word, *dityrambisk* (»dithyrambic«), used to describe the rapturous chattering of the main character, Antonia, to her little son, is translated with *ovurkæti* – delight. In itself, the translation is correct, but Heinesen wrote *dityrambiske tilstande*³⁶ (»dithyrambic conditions«) and not, for example, *henrykte tilstande* (»delighted conditions«). Following this, a long passage containing what Antonia says to her son is omitted in the translation. The

33 »Ríða teir út av Fraklandi,/dýrum drós í saðl',/blæs í hornið Ólivant/í Runsival« (HEINESEN: 1976, 46).

34 »Sum umsetari hevur CM sum oftast valt ikki at brúka felagseuropeisk fremmand-orð, men í staðin fyri at bróta upp úr nýggjum málsliga. (...) Niður í sínar týðingar hevur hann felt ein part av sínum ómetaliga stóra kunnleika til føroyskt, sum vit annars helst høvdu noyðst at veri fyruttan.« (ANDREASSEN: 1980).

35 ÞRÁINSSON et al.: 2004, 452–458.

36 HEINESEN: 1952, II.

omitted piece of text is characterised by geometric and mathematic concepts, foreign place names, fantastic metaphors, names from art history and the Bible. However, this piece of text has been translated into a number of other languages – for instance into English:

You are my loveliest tangent, you are my square, you are the hypotenuse that's the sum of the squares on all the right-angled sides! You are my Lucidarius, my old book of knowledge, my Copernicus and Newton! Yes, you are my Isaac Newton, my beloved Isaac Newton, for I've always loved Newton and will always love both Kepler and Newton as well as Galileo. Oh, you, my Leaning Tower of Pisa, if only you need never collapse and go through the realm of death and rise again and sing your song to the lamb and the throne. (...)

Ah, you my press, my wine press, my tear press. Then press, my Persian press, drink of the white juice of the press, drink of the Persian sea. Yes, turn and twist your way through life with those tiny hands that are like sweet-smelling rosebuds, like love-struck lettuce and sprouts, or like Michelangelo Buonarroti! You, you, my Buonarroti, my angel of life, you crazy thing, you gift from Moses and Pharaoh and Potiphar's wife and the heavenly king Jesus Christ! You chirrup, up, up.³⁷

In the novel, the narrator makes a point of explaining how it came to be that Antonia is capable of delivering such a learned passage: »From her exquisite linguistic ability, it is clear from her exquisite use of language that she has gone through school and knows geometric formulae.«³⁸

Both the English and the Faroese translation omit the concrete level of her qualifications. Actually, in the original she has passed the final school exam, which the term *realeksamen* makes clear.³⁹ This exam was the highest educational qualification available at the Faroese school at

37 HEINESEN: 20II: 17–18. The original: »Du min alleryndigste tangent, du min kvadrat, du hypotenuse, der er summen af alle kvadraters kvadrater! Du min Lucidarius, mit maveøje, min Kopernicus og Newton! Ja, du min Isak Newton, min elskede Isak Newton, thi altid har jeg elsket Newton og altid skal jeg elske både Kepler og Newton såvel som Galilei! Å, du mit skæve tårn i Pisa, måtte du aldrig nedstyre og gå gennem dødsriget og påny kvadre din sang for lammet og tronen! (...) Ak, du min perse, min vinperse, min tåre-perse. Så pers, min persiske perse, drik af den hvide perleperse, drik af det persiske hav! Ja, sno og spræl dig gennem livet med dine små hænder, der er som duftende rosenknopper, som forelskede salater og rosenkål, ja, som Michelangelo og Buonarroti! Å du min Buonarroti, min livsens engel, du tossede, du gave fra Moses og Farao og Potifars hustru og himmelkongen Jesus Kristus! Du kvirrevit, ja vit, ja vit.« (HEINESEN: 1952, 13).

38 HEINESEN: 20II, 17. The original: »(...) det fremgår af hendes exquisite sprogbrug at hun har realeksamen og er fortrolig med geometriske former.« (HEINESEN: 1952, 12).

39 »tað skilst av orðalagnum at hon hefur nýtt sína skúlatíð væl og er bóklíga vitandi« (HEINESEN: 1952, 11).

the beginning of the 20th century, when the novel is set. The English translation does, however, let Antonia have her geometric knowledge – something that is omitted in the Faroese translation. Firstly, the Faroese translation removes the speech itself, with its many scholarly expressions. Secondly, the translation hides the fact that Antonia has passed her final school exams. At the beginning of the 20th century it was unusual for girls to reach that level of education. Therefore, the translation does not just lower the level of Antonia's education, it also denies her a feminist position and, with the omission of the long and educated speech, renders her a clever, but rather uneducated girl. This act of degrading translation corresponds to the reduction of the setting and the gallery of characters to a lower register in the translation of French-language plays in Québec in Canada.⁴⁰

Attacks on the narrative discourse

The final example also deals with an omission. It is from the translation of the novel *Tårnet ved verdens ende* (»The Tower at the Edge of the World«), which was published simultaneously with the original version in 1976. The translator was Hans Thomsen, who received a literary prize for translating this work by Heinesen, along with books by other authors. The example is from the chapter, »The Words«:

Words come drifting along. Or they come falling gently. Or they settle on the window-panes like raindrops or ice-flowers.

Words are like flower bulbs in glasses, covered by brown paper cones. One day the paper cones are removed and the sweet-smelling hyacinths and tulips are on their way.

Hyacinth and Tulip are the most beautiful of words. You cannot get tired of saying them and playing with them. Tulip-Hyacinth-Tulicinch-Cinphilip-Tulihy.⁴¹

The source text is highly poetic. It describes the fascinating character of words. The boy sees them as things in space, creates similes, and ends by playing with the sound of the words by interchanging the syllables, which

40 BRISSET: 2004.

41 HEINESEN: 1981, II. The original: »Ordene kommer flygende. Eller kommer stille dalende. Eller sætter sig på ruden som regndråber eller isblomster. Ordene står som blomsterløg i glas, dækket af grå kræmmerhuse. Så en dag er kræmmerhusene væk, og så er de duftende hyacinter og tulipaner på vej. Hyacint og Tulipan er de dejligste ord. Du kan ikke blive træt af at nævne dem og lege med dem. Tulipan-Hyacint-Tulicint-Sintipan-Tulihy«. (HEINESEN: 1976a, II).

creates new nonsense words. The text is beautifully translated up until the last section, which leaves the text deprived of showing what the boy and the novel actually do with language.⁴² Hyacinths and tulips are imported flowers and imported words that have maintained their original names in Faroese. This, however, is not such a straightforward business. In the 1998 edition of the Faroese dictionary, *Føroysk orðabók*, tulip (Far. *tulipán*) is listed as both a feminine and masculine noun. The translator selected the masculine form (*tulipánur*, sg.; *tulipanarnir*, pl.) over the more widespread feminine form (*tulipán*, sg.; *tulipánir*, pl.). Perhaps this is why the speech at the end of the quotation is omitted. The masculine »ur« ending would have worked poorly, while the feminine form would have fitted excellently into the pattern: Tulipán-Hyasint-Tulisint-Sintipán-Tulihy!

As in *Moder Svøstjerne*, a whole speech is omitted – here one containing sound-play with flower names. The translation has removed the novel's »showing«, so that only the »telling« remains – i.e. the translation attacks the novel's narrative discourse just as it did with Antonia's characterology.

The reception of Heinesen's translated works

One should suspect that the literary event of publishing seven of Heinesen's works would have resulted in lots of reviews. This was not the case. One Faroese newspaper mentioned the event and two critical comments appeared in Faroese magazines published in Denmark. Both magazines, *Oyggjaskoggi* and *Framin*, were a kind of diaspora journal published by more-or-less left-wing students in Copenhagen. In *Oyggjaskoggi* (»Islander«), the psychology student, singer and songwriter Kári Petersen was not pleased with the translations:

For one, they have lost much of his [Heinesen's] personal character and humorous style with their solemn language. It ought to have been a requirement that the translator understands the basic elements of the author's symbolism: the theme from »Now the bridge is falling down« is of fundamental importance for the understanding of Heinesen's novel, *Den sorte gryde* (with its title's reference to »he who comes last, i.e. the social losers«).⁴³ The Faroese title is *Í sortanum* [»In the Black«], a name which means nothing. I must therefore ask

42 HEINESEN: 1976b, 9.

43 The title, *Den sorte gryde* (»The Black Cauldron«), comes from the last line of the children's song »Now the Bridge is Falling Down«: »He who comes the last of all/Ends in the deep black cauldron« (HEINESEN: 1992, 248); Marnersdóttir's comment.

whether Heinesen had as little to say as Camus about the fact that *L'étranger* (which symbolically refers to someone who is alienated in the existential sense) was incorrectly translated as *Fremmandamaðurin* («The Foreigner»).⁴⁴

In the radical left-wing magazine, *Framin* («For the Benefit»), sociology student and later Social Democrat member of the Faroese parliament and social minister, Hans Pauli Strøm, wrote ironically about the translations.⁴⁵ Strøm's argument was that the translations would allow a Faroese audience to know Heinesen's foreign points of views in his novels. Petersen and Strøm's comments appeared in reviews of a book by Henrik Ljungberg about Heinesen's novels.⁴⁶ These argumentative evaluations of the translations were met with a very positive one in the nationalist republican newspaper, *14. september*. The teacher and author, Ólavur Michelsen, writing about the translation of *Tårnet ved verdens ende* («The Tower at the End of the World»), commented that the translator »not only demonstrates an understanding of the language, but also of Heinesen's style. William Heinesen loses nothing in Hans Thomsen's translation.«⁴⁷ It is obvious that the evaluation is not based on a comparison of the original and the translated texts. Two years later Hans Thomsen won Tórshavn City Council's literature prize for his many translations, and *The Tower at the End of the World* was specifically named in the reasoning for the award.

New translations

The grand translation project to mark Heinesen's 75th birthday in 1975 produced seven works by six translators. The work on the project began two years before Heinesen's birthday, initiated by the late enterprising

44 »Eg veit ikki um tað eru fleiri enn eg, sum halda, at tað bæði er upp á gott og ilt, at bókur Williams eru umsettar, so sum tær eru. Eitt er, at tær hava mist nógv av hansara persónliga dámi og skemtiliga stíli við tí hátíðarliga málburðinum; men tað átti at verið eitt krav, at ein umsetari átti at skilt tað mest einfalda í symbolikki høvundans: temaið í »bro, bro, brille« er grundleggjandi í »Den sorte gryde« (den, der kommer allersidst, tvs. sosialu tapararnir) – men bókin er umsett til »Í sortanum«, eitt einkisigandi heiti. Eg má tí spyrja, um William sjálvur hevur havt eins lítið at siga, sum Camus hevði, tá »L'étranger« (sum symbolskt merkir hin »fremmandgjörði« í eksistentalistiskum týðningi) varð umsett til tað misfataða »Fremmandamaðurin« (tvs. útendingurin).« (PETERSEN: 1976).

45 LJUNGBERG: 1976.

46 STRØM: 1976.

47 »[Hans Thomsen] hevur ikki bert ans fyri málinum, men eisini fyri stílinum. William missir einki í týðingini hjá Hans Thomsen.« (MICHELSEN: 1976).

businessman, Emil Thomsen (1915–2012). The marketing of the books was extensive. In the sales literature, two of the translators, Christian Matras and Heðin Brú, together with other established authors and artists, put forward their reasons why it was important to provide Faroese readers with Heinesen's works in their own language.⁴⁸ There was, however, no thorough editing of the translations beyond the usual corrections.⁴⁹ Without a doubt, the translations display a fine and beautiful use of purist Faroese. Nevertheless, it is clear that they leave much to be desired in terms of their level of artistry and the integrity of the texts. As shown in this article, several translations of the novels attack Heinesen's narratology and characterology. The texts' intellectual and cultural dimensions often disappear. However, *Noatun* is the exception; the creation of the Faroese »other« in the source texts corresponds in *Noatun* with the inclusion of Danish passages and individual Danish words.

As a whole, the Heinesen translations are characterised by the fact that they were part of a post-colonial translation project, which transformed the Faroese-Danish lingual synergy into pure Faroese. By consequence, allusions to ancient Greek mythology and European scientific history had no part to play. The deletion of the multilingualism and suppressing of original metonymic gaps make the texts simpler, less ambiguous and thus significantly poorer. The target text loses important signifying dimensions. There is, therefore, a need for new translations of Heinesen's novels and for these to be undertaken with a less purist and domesticating post-colonial approach that respects the text as »Other«.

48 Cf. *Bókatíðindi* 1 (1975).

49 According to information from Áshild Olsen, the translator of *Noatun* and the wife of the publisher, 20.9.2010.

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CHRISTIAN REBHAN

Postcolonial Politics and the Debates on Membership in the European Communities in the Faroe Islands (1959–1974)

The Faroe Islands are a part of the Danish Realm (*rigsfællesskabet*). However, they have enjoyed far-reaching autonomy from Denmark since the Home Rule Act of 1948. The Act established a Faroese Home Rule government (*Landsstýri*), led by a prime minister (*Løgmaður*), and granted the Faroese parliament (*Løgting*) decision-making power in a wide range of policy areas.¹ The »take-over law« (*overtagelsesloven*) of 2005 further extended this range. Since then, the *Løgting* can – if it so requests – obtain control over all policy areas except for constitutional matters, citizenship, the highest jurisdiction, foreign and security policy, currency and monetary policy, which remain under the authority of the Danish parliament.²

Despite this introduction of large-scale autonomy, Faroese politics has continued to be affected by the legacy of colonial rule. Even today, political parties in the Faroe Islands are still divided into those who support the continuance of the current Home Rule model and the Union with Denmark (unionists) and those who support increased or total independence (secessionists). Both unionists and secessionists have repeatedly accused each other of allowing their decision-making in the devolved policy areas to be influenced by their positions on the Union with Denmark instead of focusing on more substantial policy concerns. Thus, despite the end of colonial rule in 1948, it still has an important legacy in Faroese politics. In this article, I refer to politics – based on the legacy of colonial rule, even after the introduction of Home Rule – as »postcolonial politics«.³

The aim of this article is to explore the extent to which postcolonial politics affected the position of the political parties in the Faroe Islands in

1 Statsministeriet [Danish Prime Minister's Office]: 1948.

2 The Home Rule institutions can still overtake the following matters from Danish control: Legal activities; church matters; (industrial) property law; probation law; aviation; passports; private, family and inheritance law; police; justice matters; penal law; immigration and border control. All other matters are already subject to Faroese control (Statsministeriet [Danish Prime Minister's Office]: 2005).

3 This definition is based on CONRAD and RANDERIA: 2002, 24.

the two debates about possible membership of the European Communities (EC)⁴ which were conducted from 1959 until 1963 and from 1970 until 1974. Contrary to Denmark, the Faroe Islands eventually decided in 1974 to remain outside of the EC. So far, the influence of postcolonial politics on the position of the Faroese political parties regarding European integration has only been marginally explored. Existing research has emphasised and documented the decisive role of fisheries interests for Faroese European policy.⁵ Nevertheless, there are two reasons why one can assume that particularly the first two European policy debates in the Faroe Islands might have at least been partly influenced by or maybe even subordinated to postcolonial politics.

Firstly, the climax of the polarisation between unionists and secessionists was only one decade away when the first EC membership debate began in 1959.⁶ It was very likely that the EC debate would revive the struggle between unionists and secessionists again, as EC membership would clearly affect the constitutional status of the Faroe Islands – both if the Faroes joined the EC as a part of Denmark and if they remained outside of it as a part of Denmark. Secondly, EC membership was first and foremost a Danish matter. Denmark decided to (co-)found the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) in 1959 and already applied for EC membership in 1961. Although Denmark left it to the Faroese Home Rule authorities to decide whether they wanted the Faroe Islands to join the EC (and EFTA) as well, it was the constitutional bonds to Denmark through the Danish Realm that made it necessary for the Faroe Islands to deal with EC membership in the first place.⁷

4 In fact, Denmark applied for and later became a member in three European institutions, the European Economic Community (EEC), the European Atomic Energy Community (EURATOM) and the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC), which were referred to as the European Communities (EC) after the Brussels Treaty of 1965, when their political institutions merged. With a view to simplification, this article refers to membership in the EC also before 1965.

5 Cf. HOYDAL: 1972; EC Commission: 1976; NEYSTABØ: 1984; TOFTUM: 1990; MØRKHØRE: 1993; JÓANSDÓTTIR: 2007.

6 In a referendum in 1946, a small majority of the people on the Faroe Islands voted for Faroese secession. This led the Danish King to dissolve the *Løgting*. New elections brought a majority for the unionist parties, which then negotiated the terms of the Home Rule Act of 1948. Cf. GOODLAD: 1987; DEBES: 1995.

7 Although foreign policy formally remained under the authority of the Danish parliament after the introduction of Home Rule in the Faroe Islands, the Danish government gave the Faroese Home Rule institutions some leeway to handle foreign policy

Thus, the research questions of this article are as follows: Did those political parties in favour of the Union with Denmark – the Unionist Party (*Sambandsflokkurin*) and the Social Democratic Party (*Javnaðarflokkurin*) – support EC membership primarily for the sake of preserving the Union, or were other arguments more relevant for their positions? The same question is put forward with regard to the secessionists: Did those political parties in favour of increased independence – the Republican Party (*Tjóðveldisflokkurin*) and the People's Party (*Fólkaflokkurin*) – reject EC membership in order to weaken the Union with Denmark and avoid the transfer of Faroese sovereignty to Brussels (and also to Copenhagen), or were other arguments more relevant for their positions? If both questions can be answered affirmatively, the first Faroese European policy decisions would have to be seen in a new light. They would no longer just have been about making a decision for or against EC membership, but also about making a decision for or against the Union with Denmark. Faroese European policy would thus provide strong evidence for the continued legacy of colonial rule in the Faroe Islands even after its formal end.

This article first introduces the four above-mentioned major political parties on the Faroe Islands and then traces their positions on EC membership throughout the membership debates from 1959 until 1963, and from 1970 until 1974. It also covers in part the positions of two smaller parties, the Self-Rule Party (*Sjálvstýrisflokkurin*) and the Faroese Progressive Party (*Føroya Framburðsflokkur*), which were represented in the *Løgting* during that time. The investigation is based on the documentation of the EC membership debates in the parliamentary papers of the *Løgting* (*Løgtingstíðindi*), and in the existing party newspapers at the time: *14. September* (Republican Party), *Dagblaðið* (People's Party), *Dimmalætting* (Unionist Party), *Sosialurin* (Social Democratic Party) and *Tingakrossur* (Self-Rule Party).

matters themselves, although these were restricted to economic matters, in particular to trade and fisheries with close neighbours. As it considered membership in EFTA and the EC to be an economic matter, the Danish government left the decision about Faroese membership of these institutions to the Home Rule institutions. It can be reasonably argued that the Faroe Islands would not have been granted similar co-determination rights if Denmark had been aware of the future development of European integration. (Cf. LYCK: 1997).

The political parties in the Faroe Islands

Unlike most European and Nordic states, the cleavage between unionism on the one hand and secessionism on the other has interfered with the traditional left-right demarcation line in the Faroe Islands, thus establishing a system with two dichotomies in which the four major parties represent the four opposing corners.⁸ The Unionist Party (UP), established in 1906, is the party with the strongest emphasis on the continuance of the Union with Denmark. But the party also has a liberal-conservative profile in economic terms (unionist/rightist). The Social Democratic Party (SDP), established in 1925, is also in favour of the Union, but with a stronger focus on the economic dichotomy, emphasising the interests of the working class (leftist/unionist). The Republican Party (RP), established in 1948, centres on the objective to secede from Denmark and to establish a Faroese Republic. It follows a (democratic-)socialist policy in economic terms (separatist/leftist). The other secessionist party, the People's Party (PP), established in 1940, also supports increased sovereignty from Denmark, but focuses more on its liberal-conservative economic profile (rightist/separatist). From the 1950s onward, these four parties have traditionally shared between 20 and 25 per cent of the vote. The rest of the vote has gone to smaller parties, which have occupied the centre ground in the Faroese party system, where the dichotomies overlap each other. This system of two dichotomies has enabled these smaller parties, in particular the Self-Rule Party (SRP), to punch way above their weight because they were often able to tip the scales of Faroese politics in favour of unionist, secessionist, left-wing or a right-wing governments respectively.

If postcolonial politics indeed provided the main incentives for the European policy decisions of the Faroese parties, one can make the following hypotheses:

1. The UP should have been strongly in favour of Faroese membership of the EC and it should have been primarily in favour of this in order to preserve the Union with Denmark in an unchanged form.
2. The SDP should have been principally in favour of Faroese membership of the EC, with the extent of its support, however, depending on whether the party perceived membership as being helpful or damaging to the economic interests of the Faroe Islands.

8 Cf. for the following paragraph MØRKØRE: 1991.

3. The PP should have been principally opposed to Faroese membership of the EC, with the extent of its opposition, however, depending on whether the party perceived membership as being helpful or damaging to the economic interests of the Faroe Islands.

4. The RP should have been strongly opposed to Faroese membership of the EC and primarily so in order to weaken the Union with Denmark and to avoid the transfer of Faroese sovereignty to Brussels (and also to Copenhagen) as a first step towards the establishment of an independent Faroese nation.

The first debate on EC membership from 1959–1963

The first debate on EC membership in the Faroe Islands began with Denmark's decision to found EFTA together with seven other European states in 1959. It intensified with Denmark's application for EC membership in 1961 and ended when French President De Gaulle vetoed British membership of the EC in January 1963. Denmark subsequently adjourned its membership application.

Debate on EFTA/EC membership (1959–1961)

From 1959 until 1963, a unionist *Landsstýri*, consisting of UP, SDP and SRP, governed the Faroe Islands. The two secessionist parties, the PP and the RP, were in opposition, together with one Member of Parliament (MP) of the Faroese Progressive Party (FPP).⁹ Denmark's EFTA membership posed three alternatives for the Faroe Islands. The Faroes could either follow Denmark into EFTA or join the EC instead – or remain outside of both organisations. In October 1959, the political parties in the *Løgting* agreed to establish a parliamentary committee to investigate each of the three alternatives.¹⁰

On 15 February 1961, *Løgmaður* (prime minister) Petur Mohr Dam (SDP) proposed to the *Løgting* that the Faroe Islands should join EFTA.¹¹ The unionist *Landsstýri* believed that remaining outside of both organisations would be the worst of the three alternatives, while the benefits from EFTA and EC membership would be comparable. However, under EC

9 For statistics on Faroese elections and governments cf. WANG: 1989.

10 *Løgtingstíðindi*: 1959, 68.

11 See for the following paragraph *Løgtingstíðindi*: 1960, 185–187.

membership, countries such as Germany, France and Italy would exercise unrestricted fishing rights in Faroese waters, which would contradict the establishment of an exclusive fishing limit of twelve miles around the Faroe Islands after 1963. Moreover, the *Landsstýri* also believed that it would be a disadvantage if people from other EC member states were able, in accordance with to the Treaty of Rome, to move to and work freely in the Faroe Islands. But the *Landsstýri* also explicitly referred to the constitutional status of the Faroe Islands as a reason against EC membership:

Irrespective of whether or not the Faroese people will have benefits from this membership, it is more than doubtful that one part of the Union will be legally able to join if the Union doesn't join as a whole, and it is also very doubtful that the EC countries will allow the Faroe Islands to become a member under such circumstances.¹²

Løgmaður Dam made the relevance of the Union in the *Landsstýri's* approach towards EFTA and EC membership even more explicit. In his state of the nation address in 1960, he stated that the choice was between the constitutional union with Denmark, which linked the Faroe Islands to EFTA, and the Faroes' most important trading partners in Europe for salt- and klipfish, who were members of or might become associated to the EC.¹³ Thus, the unionist *Landsstýri* admitted that the relationship to Denmark played a major role in its decision. What would have been a difficult choice between two trade organisations with comparable economic benefits became a much easier one if the Union with Denmark was taken into account.

For the opposition parties, the proposal to join EFTA therefore revealed the *Landsstýri's* real intention »to blindly follow Denmark«, irrespective of whether Faroese membership in EFTA was economically beneficial for the Faroe Islands or not.¹⁴ RP chairman Erlendur Patursson claimed that the *Landsstýri* had overestimated the costs of EC member-

12 »Men uttan mun til, um føroyingar koma at hava fyrimumir ella ikki við hesum limaskapi, er tað vist meira enn ivingarsamt, um ein partur av ríkinum lógliga sæð yfirhóvur kundi gjörst limur, tá ið ikki alt ríkið var limur, og tað er eisini ógvuliga ivingarsamt, um C.E.E. londini vildu loyvt Føroyum at gjörst limur hjá teimum undir tilfíkum umstóðum.« (Ibid., 186).

13 Ibid., 18.

14 N.N.: 1960, 1-2; N.N.: 1961a, 1.

ship and underestimated the costs of remaining outside the EC.¹⁵ Both PP and RP therefore demanded that it should first of all investigate whether the Faroe Islands could not join the EC instead.¹⁶ They demanded a wait-and-see policy until at least the end of 1961 and were not ready to support the proposal. After the first *Løgting* debate on the proposal in February 1961, it was referred to the market committee for further discussion. However, it was never voted upon, as the conditions for Faroese membership of EFTA radically changed when Denmark applied for EC membership in July 1961.

Debate on EC membership (1961-63)

After Denmark's application for EC membership, the situation turned around completely. Suddenly, the unionist *Landsstýri* supported Faroese membership of the EC, which it had rejected only seven months earlier.¹⁷ On 3 November 1961, *Løgmaður* Dam proposed that the *Løgting* should approve in principle

that Faroese interests under the changed circumstances that will result from Denmark and possibly the other Nordic countries and the UK becoming members of the EC or associating themselves with it in one or the other way, can best be preserved within this community.¹⁸

However, Dam also stated that this principal support for EC membership should be subject to numerous reservations. In negotiations with the EC, the Faroe Islands should put the greatest emphasis on the Faroes' economic dependency on the fisheries sector and its special situation in general – »nationally, historically and constitutionally«. The Faroes should also attain the right to delegate representatives to the European institutions. Moreover, the proposal reaffirmed that an exclusive fishing limit of twelve miles around the Faroe Islands would come into effect in the Faroe Islands from 27 April 1963.

¹⁵ N.N.: 1961b, 2, 4.

¹⁶ N.N.: 1961c, 2; N.N.: 1961d, 1; N.N.: 1961b, 2, 4.

¹⁷ See for the following paragraph: *Løgtingstíðindi*: 1961, 81.

¹⁸ [Løgtingið ynskir sum sína principiellu stöðu at úttala,] »at Føroya áhugamál undir broyttu viðurskiftunum, sum fara at standast av, um so verður, at Danmark og kanska hini norðurlondini eins og Stóra Bretland fara uppi sum limir ella á annan hátt knýttast til tann europeiska vinnuliga felagsskapin, best verða varðveitt innanfyri henda felagsskapin.«

The *Landsstýri* argued that the membership applications of Denmark and the UK had created an increased economic need for Faroese fisheries exporters to gain access to the European market.¹⁹ UP MP Trygvi Samuelssen emphasised that EFTA membership would no longer be a realistic option, if the large core of European countries, to which the Faroes sold fish, became members of the EC.²⁰ Therefore, the UP paper *Dimmalætting* claimed that one could not speak of blindly following Denmark, as the situation had changed fundamentally.²¹ EFTA membership without Denmark, Ireland, Norway and the UK was as unattractive as remaining outside of both trade organisations.

Although these were substantial reasons for membership, nothing had changed with regard to the fact that EC membership might give the citizens of EC member states the right to move to and work freely in the Faroe Islands. Moreover, concerns with regard to the protection of the fishing limit were suddenly no longer strong enough to prevent the *Landsstýri* from approving Faroese membership of the EC in principle. But was the change in economic circumstances brought about by Denmark's and the UK's EC membership applications actually so important that the *Landsstýri* completely changed its view about the protection of the Faroese workforce and the fishing limit? It is obvious that postcolonial politics must also have been a driving force behind the proposal to join the EC. Also, the proposal for membership hinted at the fact that the *Landsstýri* would have already opted for EC membership earlier in 1961 if it hadn't been for the Union with Denmark:

The [EFTA] was not the market for salt- and klipfish, but rather the [EEC]. [...] But the problem in the constitutional relationship between Denmark and the Faroe Islands was that the Faroes could not become a member [of the EEC], if Denmark was a member [of the EFTA] and it would have been another question whether the [EEC] would have accepted the Faroe Islands as a member alone [without Denmark].²²

19 *Løgtingstíðindi*: 1961, 82.

20 N.N.: 1961e, 1.

21 N.N.: 1961f, 1.

22 »Saltfiska- og klippfiskamarknaðurin var ikki hjá teimum 7, men heldur hjá teimum 6; [...] Tey ríkisrættarligu viðurskiptini Danmark-Føroyar eru tó so, at Føroyar kundi ikki gerast limur, tá Danmark var limur í hinum felagsskapinum, og er tað eisini ein spurningur, um tey 6 vildu tikið við Føroyum sum lim einsamallar.« (*Løgtingstíðindi*: 1961, 82).

Also the position of the RP raises the suspicion that postcolonial politics played a major role in the first European policy debate. The RP was now firmly opposed to EC membership, although it had demanded a more thorough investigation of this option seven months earlier. In the *Løgting* debate, RP MP Hanus við Høgadalsá named a number of economic reasons for rejecting EC membership.²³ He considered there was no chance of the Faroe Islands being granted meaningful exemptions from EC regulations, that the islands would have to give away a part of their sovereignty to the EC, that the protection of the Faroese economy would no longer be possible, that foreign fishermen would possibly attain the same right as Faroese fishermen to fish in Faroese waters and foreign workers the same right as Faroese employees to work in Faroese companies, and that the price increases resulting from membership would not be outweighed by the removal of tariffs on Faroese exports.

However, the RP paper 14. *September* also stressed that the Faroe Islands could not join the EC as long as they remained a part of the Danish Realm.²⁴ Thus, the Faroes would only be represented in the EC through Danish representatives and »disappear as a people – culturally as well as economically«. ²⁵ The EC would also pose a threat to the possibility of secession in the future, as the Treaty of Rome seemed to be irrevocable.²⁶ This was the most important reason for the RP to reject EC membership. This is clear because 14. *September* emphasised only a few weeks before the *Løgting* debate on EC membership that the RP would support Faroese membership of the EC if the Faroes were a sovereign state:

If the Faroe Islands free themselves [from Denmark] and join the EC directly, [...] the whole RP will support Faroese membership. [...] We would have many advantages if we joined the EC as a sovereign country. [...] In short: We do not want to join the EC as a part of the Danish Realm, but we have nothing against joining as a sovereign state.²⁷

23 See for the following paragraph *Løgtingstíðindi*: 1960, 84–89.

24 N.N.: 1961g, 3; N.N.: 1961h, 3; N.N.: 1961i, 3.

25 N.N.: 1961j, 1.

26 *Løgtingstíðindi*: 1961, 84.

27 »Um Føroyar fáa eina frælsa støðu og gerast beinleiðis limur í felagsmarknaðinum, [...] tá man tjóðveldisflokkurin sum heild taka undir við føroyskum limaskapi. [...] [V]it hava mangar fyrimunir í at koma upp í felagsmarknaðin sum eitt sjálvstøðugt land. [...] Í stuttum sagt: Vit vilja ikki fara upp í felagsmarknaðin sum danskur landslutur, men hava einki ímóti at fara upp sum eitt sjálvstøðugt land.« (N.N.: 1961i, 3).

The fact that the RP was prepared to join the EC as a sovereign state disguised the fact that the numerous other arguments it had brought against EC membership at the end of 1961 were arbitrary and had been chosen tactically to further its struggle for secession. At the beginning of 1961, the RP had hoped that Denmark joining EFTA and the Faroe Islands joining the EC would represent a first step towards secession. When Denmark applied for EC membership later in the year the RP rejected EC membership, as it believed that joint Danish-Faroese membership would cement the Union with Denmark. Consequently, the RP twice supported the European policy for the Faroe Islands that would provide the strongest challenge to the constitutional link with Denmark. Thus, the RP's stance on EC membership was the exact opposite to the *Landsstýri's* position on membership, based on its diametrically opposed position on the desirability of the Union. All parties heavily criticised the RP for its position, while 14. *September* blamed all the other parties of doing »nothing else but to follow Denmark, irrespective of whether [the Faroe Islands] benefit from this or not.«²⁸

Surprisingly, the PP supported the *Landsstýri's* proposal and thus stated that it was principally in favour of EC membership. Its support was quite surprising from a postcolonial perspective, as the PP supported increased sovereignty for the Faroe Islands and should have welcomed the weakening of the Union with Denmark that would occur if both parts of the Realm chose separate paths. The party based its support for EC membership on economic reasons – first and foremost on the possibility of attracting foreign investment.²⁹ Yet the PP also felt that it had to position itself in relation to the postcolonial debate on EC membership by trying to demarcate its own approach from those of the other parties. Thus, it strengthened the argument that postcolonial politics was in fact the determining factor in the first European policy debate:

There may be different opinions on what is the most correct thing to do in the Faroe Islands. But we are afraid that [...] the question about EC [membership] will not be about how much of the national right to self-determination should be transferred to the [EC], like in other countries, but [...] on whether our bonds with Denmark should be tightened or fought against.³⁰

28 [Hin »føroyski« handilspolitikkur er jú her sum altíð] »ikki annar enn tann, at fylgja Danmörkini – annað hvørt hetta gagnar okkum ella ikki.« (N.N.: 1961k, 1–2).

29 DANIELSEN: 1961, I.

30 »Tað kunnu vera fleiri meiningar um, hvat rættast er at gera hjá Føroyum, men vit óttast, at [...] ikki sum hjá øðrum londum verður spurningurin um hvussu nóg av tjóð-

The PP maintained that the unionist parties supported EC membership because Denmark did and that the RP rejected EC membership because Denmark didn't.³¹ From the PP's point of view, both would be equally wrong; it believed the decision should be taken both from a Faroese and from an economic point of view. Although attacked by the RP as a traitor to the secessionist cause, the PP did not consider EC membership to be against its secessionist principles. It would not be »worse for a Faroese to be European than to be Danish«. ³² On the contrary, EC membership could be seen as a chance »to escape the chains the Danish capital market had created on the Faroe Islands«. ³³ In the end, a majority consisting of the parties in the *Landsstýri* (UP, SDP, SRP) and the PP supported EC membership in principle, but with the reservations mentioned above. ³⁴ Only five RP MPs voted against the proposal. One RP MP abstained, as did the FPP. A final position on membership, however, did not become necessary as De Gaulle prevented Denmark's membership with his veto to the UK's application in 1963.

The second debate on EC membership from 1970–1974

After De Gaulle vetoed enlargement of the EC, EFTA membership returned to the political agenda of the Faroe Islands again. On 1 January 1968, the Faroe Islands joined EFTA. However, the decision for EFTA membership proved only short-lived. Denmark re-applied for EC membership in 1967, which became a more realistic prospect after the resignation of De Gaulle as President of France in 1969. On 30 June 1970, the EC opened accession negotiations with Denmark and the three other applicant states: Ireland, Norway and the UK. The Danish application con-

skaparlígam avgerðarrætti skal verða latið til stóra felagið, men [...] hvussu bondini til Danmarkar skulu strykjast og tottast.« (N.N.: 1961l, 2).

31 DANIELSEN: 1961, 1; N.N.: 1961m, 2.

32 N.N.: 1961n, 2.

33 Danish businessmen continued to dominate Faroese trade, as they had a monopoly in the Union. EC membership could provide an end to such preferential treatment of Danish imports. Thus, certain goods, which the Faroes were buying at a higher cost from Denmark so far, might become cheaper. – [Tað er ein møguleiki við felagsmarknaðinum á tann hátt] »at sleppa undan tí bandi, sum danski kapitalmarknaðurin hevur á Føroyum.« (N.N.: 1961o, 2).

34 *Løgtingstíðindi*: 1961, 90–91.

fronted the Faroese parties once again with the question as to whether they should join the EC together with Denmark or remain outside of it.

Negotiations on membership (1971)

In comparison to the membership debate of 1959 to 1963, one circumstance clearly changed the nature of the second debate. On 30 June 1970, the same day that accession negotiations started with Denmark and the other applicant states, the EC adopted a Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) based on the principle of equal access of all EC member states to the fishing grounds of other member states.³⁵ Equal access meant that the Faroe Islands would have to grant EC fishermen access to the fishing grounds inside its exclusive limit. This was completely opposed to the international trend towards an extension of exclusive fishing limits.

In August 1970, another unionist *Landsstýri*, consisting once again of SDP, UP and SRP, established a committee made up of three Danish and three Faroese officials that was given the task of gathering information about the costs and benefits of potential Faroese membership of the EC.³⁶ In December, the Danish-Faroese Committee submitted its report, in which it stated that the preservation of the twelve-mile fishing limit for Faroese fishermen was »paramount«. ³⁷ As a consequence of the extension of the fishing limit to twelve miles in 1959 and 1963, the home fishing sector had nearly doubled in size. It was significant for the further development of the fishing industry, as it provided the raw material for the industrial development of the fish-processing sector. The fish-processing sector had even tripled in size since the extension of the fishing limit. Due to the vital role of both sectors for the Faroese economy, the Committee emphasised that the Faroes were »forced« to negotiate an exemption from the CFP.

All parties in the Faroe Islands endorsed the Committee's view. In their campaigns for the *Løgting* elections 1970, they emphasised that they would reject EC membership if access to the twelve-mile fishing limit of the Faroe Islands was no longer restricted to Faroese fishermen. The UP emphasised that it would »not yield one inch on the current fishing limit

35 WISE: 1984, 99–103.

36 *Løgtingstíðindi*: 1970, 105; N.N.: 1970a, 1.

37 See for the following paragraph *Løgtingstíðindi*: 1970, Doc. 4, 7–42.

of twelve miles around the Faroe Islands«.38 For the SDP, it was essential that the Faroe Islands would preserve the twelve-mile fishing limit and that this preservation would also include restrictions to the right of free establishment, so that foreign fishermen would not be able to take advantage of these regulations in order to fish within Faroese waters.³⁹ The SRP emphasised that the Faroe Islands had secured the fishing limit after a long struggle and would not let it slip out of its hands again.⁴⁰ Knút Wang, editor-in-chief of the PP paper *Dagblaðið*, commented that the Faroe Islands would »have nothing to do in the EC« if the CFP was implemented in its present form.⁴¹ RP chairman Patursson emphasised that »if we join the EC, there will be nothing which can be called a Faroese fishing limit anymore«.42 Consequently, *Dimmalætting* was able to point out that it would be

self-evident that [no] political party on the Faroe Islands will be able to raise a majority for a voluntary accession to the Community if the price is unlimited fishing by foreigners. [...] No responsible Faroese politician, irrespective of which political party he belongs to in the end, will be in favour of joining the EC under such conditions.⁴³

However, the unionist parties were torn between the need to preserve the exclusive fishing limit and the significance of EC membership for Faroese exports. *Løgmaður* Kristian Djurhuus (UP) emphasised in 1970 »that our existence is tied to exports and rises and falls with our export possibilities and that it doesn't matter what our fishermen catch if we cannot export their catches at a profitable price«.44 Also the report of the Danish-

38 [Sambandsflokkurin í Føroyum] »er ikki til sinns at lata ein tamma burtur av núverandi tólvmílamarkinum um Føroyar.« (N.N.: 1970b, 1).

39 N.N.: 1970c, 1.

40 N.N.: 1970d, 1; N.N.: 1971a, 3.

41 [Verður tann fiskivinnupolitikkur fylgdur, sum EEC nú hevur lagt upp til,] »hava Føroyar einki at gera í felagsmarknaðinum.« (WANG: 1970, 1).

42 »Fara vit upp í felagsmarknaðin, verður móttvegis londunum har einki sum eitur føyoykt fiskimark longur.« (PATURSSON: 1970a, 4).

43 [Det er imidlertid] »givet, at [ikke] noget politisk parti paa Færøerne vil kunne mønstre et flertal for frivillig tilsluttelse til Fællesmarkedet, hvis prisen er ubegrænset fremmedfiskeri. [...] Ingen ansvarlig færøsk politiker, uanset hvilket politisk parti han end tilhører, vil under saadanne forhold tiltræde indmeldelse i Fællesmarkedet.« (N.N.: 1970e, 1).

44 [Tað má samstundis ásannast,] »at okkara tilvera er bundin til export, ja, stendur og fellur við okkum exportmøguleikum, og at tað nyttar lítið, hvat okkara fiskimenn veiða, um vit ikki fáa exporterað hesa veiðu til rentablan prís.« (*Løgtingstíðindi*: 1970, 6).

Faroese Committee concluded that access to the EC market, the market components of the CFP, access to foreign capital and increased industrial development would speak for membership.⁴⁵ Therefore, the authors recommended negotiations with the EC about the conditions for Faroese membership, in order to negotiate a compromise somewhere between full compliance with the CFP as a member of the EC and the lack of access to the European export market as a third state. The re-elected unionist *Landsstýri* of SDP, UP and SRP consequently asked the *Løgting* in December 1970 to approve the start of negotiations between the Danish government and the *Landsstýri* on the one hand and the EC on the other »about the conditions under which the Faroe Islands could possibly participate or cooperate with the Community«.⁴⁶ On 9 February 1971, the 14 MPs of the parties in the unionist *Landsstýri* approved negotiations with the EC. The MPs of the PP and the FPP abstained, while the six RP MPs voted against the proposal. Formal negotiations on Faroese membership of the EC started in March 1971.

The position of the PP on the start of negotiations was double-edged.⁴⁷ In his minority proposal, PP chairman Hákun Djurhuus supported negotiations, but they should be merely about an »association« (*tilknýti*) of the Faroe Islands with the EC and not about full membership. The party was not only afraid of losing the exclusive fishing limit, but also that membership would put an end to »the little bit of sovereignty« the Faroe Islands had received through the Home Rule Act. The RP rejected both EC membership and an association with the EC.⁴⁸ The party still believed that membership of the EC would »destroy us as a people – politically, economically and nationally«.⁴⁹ It emphasised the essential need to protect the exclusive fishing limit of twelve miles and to preserve the sovereign right to make decisions on fisheries policy in general.⁵⁰ But the RP's secessionist struggle also played a major role.⁵¹ According to the

45 Ibid., Doc. 4b, 39–40.

46 [Løgtingið góðkennir, at ríkisstýrið saman við umboð fyrir landsstýrið nú fer undir samráðingar við Europeiska Felagsskapin um,] »undir hvørjum treytum Føroyar kunnu luttaka ella samarbeiða við Felagsskapin.« See for the following paragraph *ibid.*, 105–115.

47 Ibid., 108–113; N.N.: 1972a, 2.

48 See for the following *ibid.*, 108–113.

49 N.N.: 1970f, 7.

50 PATURSSON: 1970a, 4; N.N.: 1970g, 1.

51 See for the following paragraph *Løgtingstíðindi*: 1970, 108–113.

RP, Faroese membership of the EC would mean that – in future – its right to self-determination would not be transferred from Copenhagen to Tórshavn, but from Copenhagen to Brussels. Once the Faroes joined the EC, the RP believed that it would never be able to change its constitutional position again:

Our entire struggle for freedom will be enchained in the future. This is something all our freedom-loving freedom-wanting people should think of today – also those who don't support us today, because nobody can know what the people will want in the next generations. It would be wrong of us living today to close this door forever for all generations.⁵²

RP MP Jógvan Djurhuus therefore stated that the RP would not only oppose membership because of the fishing limit, but also because it impaired the possibility of Faroese secession.⁵³

So did postcolonial politics only play a role for the RP? Officially this was the case, but *Dimmalætting* suspected that the hope »that if Denmark join[ed] while the Faroe Islands [did] not, then the Union between Denmark and the Faroe Islands [would] split and the Faroes become an independent country« did not only explain the outright rejection of negotiations on EC membership by the RP, but also of parts of the PP.⁵⁴ On the contrary, PP and RP also doubted that the unionist parties would actually risk loosening the Union with Denmark in order to preserve and extend the Faroes' fishing limit.⁵⁵ But – for the unionist parties – controversy over the constitutional question was eased to a large extent on 29 January 1971, when the members of the *Løgting's* market committee met with the Danish Prime Minister, Hilmar Baunsgaard, and with the Danish Economic Minister, Paul Nyboe Andersen.⁵⁶ They wanted to know whether the Faroe Islands could actually remain outside the EC if Den-

52 [Fara vit so ella so upp í henda felagsskap,] »so er læst og bundið fyrri alt okkara frælsisstríð í framtíðini. Hetta er vert at umhugsa hjá øllum frælsishugsandi og frælsisviljandi fólki okkara í dag, men eisini hjá teimum, sum ikki eru tað í dag, tí eingin kann vita, hvørji ynski tjóðarinnar verða í komandi ættarliðum. Tað er skeivt hjá okkum, sum nú liva, at steingja hesar dyr um allar ævir.« (Ibid., 109).

53 DJURHUUS: 1971, 1–2.

54 [T]jóðveldisflokkurin og partvíst eisini fólkaflokkurin hópa undan møguleikanum fyrri at leita upp í Felagsmarknaðin fyrst og fremst tí, at teir vóna,] »at fer Danmark upp í, meðan Føroyar ikki gera tað, so fer sambandið millum Danmark og Føroya av um tvøra, og Føroyar vera sjálvstøðugt land.« (N.N.: 1971b, 1).

55 N.N.: 1970h, 1; MICHELSEN: 1970, 5; ÍSAKSON: 1970, 1; N.N.: 1971c, 2.

56 See for the following paragraph *Løgtingstíðindi*: 1970, 107; N.N.: 1971d, 1.

mark joined, despite its constitutional link with Denmark. Moreover, they wanted to know whether this decision would have any consequences for the Union. Both ministers stated that EC membership would not affect the constitutional relationship between Denmark and the Faroe Islands. The Union would hold as long as the Faroes were in favour of it, irrespective of which decision both parts of the Union would take with regard to EC membership. One can argue that this reassurance opened the possibility for the unionist *Landsstýri* in the first place to focus on the economic costs and benefits of membership. The *Landsstýri* subsequently trusted the Danish government to ensure that Denmark's EC membership would not have any damaging consequences for the Union.

Consideration time (1972–1974)

Without a doubt, this reassurance made it easier for the *Landsstýri* to reject the result of the negotiations, once it was disclosed at the end of 1971. Thus, for the first time, the paths of the Faroe Islands and Denmark diverged from each other on a matter of European policy, despite there being a unionist *Landsstýri* in power.

The two main reasons for this rejection were related to the CFP.⁵⁷ Although the Faroe Islands were granted special permission to keep their exclusive fishing limit of twelve miles, this permission was only temporary and would be subject to re-evaluation after a period of ten years. For a region in which fisheries were the only possibility of employment, this was not enough – even if the EC tried to reassure the Faroe Islands that there was hardly any doubt that the twelve-mile exception would continue after ten years. Moreover, the EC also rejected the request of the Faroe Islands for permission to extend its exclusive fishing limit and exclude other EC member states from it, if the proposed Third United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS III) opted for extended fishing limits. The Faroe Islands perceived such an extension as vital because it risked losing long-distance catching rights for its fishermen in the future – for example in Icelandic waters. Iceland had announced the unilateral extension of its exclusive fisheries zone to 50 miles for 1972. *Løgmaður* Atli Dam (SDP) clearly stated that it would restrict the possibilities for economic progress »if Faroese fishermen were cut off from their tradi-

57 See for the following paragraph *Løgtingstíðindi*: 1971, Doc. 10, 1–16.

tional fishing grounds at the same time as the fisheries zones of other nations were extended«.58 But the EC stuck firmly to its principle of non-discrimination, which did not allow any EC member state to create one set of regulations for its own citizens and another for the citizens of other member states.

Nevertheless, the *Landsstýri* did not reject the result of the negotiations, but agreed on a consideration period of three years, from 1 January 1973 until 31 December 1975.⁵⁹ Until that day, the Faroes Islands would still be able to join the EC as part of the Danish membership, if it so requested, but it would be excluded from Denmark's membership for the present if the people of Denmark approved the Treaty of Accession in a referendum in October 1972. This was assured by an amendment and a special protocol on the Faroe Islands in the Treaty of Accession, which laid down the special regulations during this period of consideration. On 18 January 1972, the 15 MPs of SDP, UP, SRP and FPP approved the *Landsstýri*'s proposal for a consideration period in the *Løgting*, while the eleven MPs of PP and RP abstained.

There were sound reasons for the parties in favour of a consideration period.⁶⁰ Firstly, it was uncertain whether Iceland would adhere to its plan to unilaterally extend its exclusive fishing limit to 50 miles. Moreover, it was unclear which direction the future management of international fisheries would take after UNCLOS III, which was supposed to take place before the end of the consideration period in 1975. On the one hand, the *Landsstýri* expected that a rejection of the extension of fishing limits by UN member states would make it easier for the Faroe Islands to accept the conditions of EC membership. Then, the Faroes would face less pressure to extend their fishing limit, as they would not lose their long-distance catching rights in the territorial waters of other states. On the other hand, an approval of the extension of fishing limits by the UN member states could also provide the impetus for a change of the CFP that would bring it closer to the Faroese position. Furthermore, the consideration period would make it possible for the Faroe Islands to wait

58 [Vít meta tað sum eitt stórt vandamál, um møguleikarnir fyri fígjarligari framgongd í Føroyum verða munandi skerdir,] »um so er at føroyskir fiskimenn verða útihýstir frá teirra vanligu fiskiøkjum, við tað at fiskimarkið hjá øðrum tjóðum verður víðkað.« (*Løgtingstíðindi*: 1971, Doc. 10, 24).

59 See for the following paragraph *ibid.*, Doc. 10, 5–6.

60 See for the following paragraph *ibid.*, Doc. 10, 5, 24–27; N.N.: 1972b, 7.

and see whether Denmark, Greenland and Norway would actually become members of the EC. In addition, it would be clear how they would cope with the CFP if they joined. And it would also be possible to see what kind of association arrangements they and other states such as Iceland or Sweden would be able to negotiate if they did not join.

However, if the unionist *Landsstýri* should have hoped that the clarification of a number of facts during the consideration period would lead to greater support for Faroese membership of the EC, these hopes were clearly disappointed.⁶¹ Iceland's unilateral extension of its exclusive fishing limit to 50 sea miles in September 1972 and the increasing extensions of fishing limits elsewhere made it increasingly necessary for the Faroe Islands to follow suit. The narrow rejection of EC membership by the Norwegian people on 25 September 1972 meant that there was less economic pressure for the Faroe Islands to join the EC, as Norwegian fishermen would not gain favourable market access to the EC for their fisheries exports. Moreover, all EFTA countries eventually succeeded in negotiating favourable bilateral trade agreements with the EC.

Consequently, *Løgmaður* Dam concluded in March 1973 that, on the basis of the result of the negotiations, membership of the Faroe Islands in the EC, »especially with regard to fisheries rights«, could not be recommended.⁶² But, yet again, the *Landsstýri* was hesitant to reject EC membership completely at this stage. On 13 March 1973, Dam introduced a proposal to the *Løgting* that would authorise the *Landsstýri* »to do all in its power to bring about a change to the CFP so that it would better correspond to the needs of regions and states where fisheries were of the utmost importance and other employment possibilities limited«.⁶³ The proposal was passed on 4 April 1973.

PP and RP strongly doubted the benefits of this consideration period. Neither of them saw any logic in waiting for the decision of UNCLOS III.⁶⁴ Even if UNCLOS III supported an extension of fishing limits, the Faroe Islands would not benefit from this extension as an EC member, as it would not be able to exclude EC fishermen from Faroese waters. They

61 See for the following paragraph *Løgtingstíðindi*: 1972, 255–266.

62 *Ibid.*, Vol. A, 255, 260.

63 [Landsstýrinum verður álagt] »at gera sítt til, at EF's reglur um fiskirættindi verða broyttar, so tær betri samsvara tórvinum hjá økjum og londum, har fiskivinnan er av avgernadi týðningi og aðrir vinnumøguleikar avmarkaðir.« (*Ibid.*, Vol. A, 255).

64 N.N.: 1972c, 2.

also believed that it would be irresponsible with regard to the Faroese economy to keep the membership question open for three further years. The PP believed that the conditions of the negotiations would not change a lot during this period.⁶⁵ If it wasn't possible to approve them now, it wouldn't be possible to approve them in three years either. PP MP Jógvan Sundstein stressed, on the contrary, that if the Faroes joined the EC after three years, it would already have lost out in the competition with Norway with regard to fisheries exports to the EC.⁶⁶ But if the final solution was a free trade agreement with the EC, the Faroes would also be handicapped, as all other states outside the EC would have negotiated such agreements far earlier.

In September 1972, a poll showed that a large majority of the Faroese people supported the European policy of the opposition parties.⁶⁷ 61.0 per cent of the Faroese people believed that the Faroes should reject EC membership, although Denmark joined. Only 19.5 per cent were in favour of membership and 19.5 per cent had no position. Also, 75.5 per cent supported a unilateral extension of the fishing limit. Only 6.9 per cent opposed it and 17.6 per cent had no position. A growing number of people began to support the People's Movement against the EEC (*Fólkafylkingin móti EEC*), which had been founded in 1971 and condemned the consideration period as deceitful.⁶⁸ Thus, RP MP Høgadalsá could rightfully claim that the Faroese people neither supported the negotiation result nor a consideration period.⁶⁹

Consequently, the opposition parties wondered why the *Landsstýri* continued to wait with a final decision against membership: maybe to find a »rat run«, which would make it possible for the Faroes to join through the backdoor, as *Dagblaðið*'s editor-in-chief, Wang, provocatively asked?⁷⁰ For the PP, it was clear »that a tactic [was] implemented, whose objective [was] that we slide into the EC all by ourselves.«⁷¹ The

65 N.N.: 1972d, 2.

66 SUNDSTEIN: 1972, 2.

67 N.N.: 1972e, 1.

68 See the claims of the People's Movement against the EEC and the response of *Løgmaður* Dam (DAM: 1971, 1, 8).

69 *Løgtingstíðindi*: 1971, Vol. A, 213.

70 WANG: 1972, 1.

71 [Tað er týðiligt,] »at ein taktikkur er knæsettur, ið hevur til stavnhalð, at vit skulu glíða innum felagsmarknaðarmarkið av okkum sjálvum.« (*Løgtingstíðindi*: 1972, Vol. A, 129).

Landsstýri's support for a consideration period confirmed the PP in its scepticism that the unionist parties still preferred joining the EC (because of Denmark's membership) to preserving and extending the Faroes' fishing limit. *Dagblaðið* claimed in January 1972:

There is no doubt that today's government would prefer the Faroe Islands to join the EC together with Denmark, probably for the most part in order not to affect the present relationship with Denmark.⁷²

Thus, the *Landsstýri* increasingly had to defend itself against claims that it wanted to get the Faroe Islands into the EC for the sake of preserving the Union. In March 1973, *Løgmaður* Dam rejected any claims that his postponement of a final decision on membership would be an expression of his support for EC membership.⁷³ *Dimmalætting* emphasised that the unionist parties were willing to investigate the conditions for membership before taking a final position, while – for the secessionist parties – it would be decisive only that the Faroe Islands should not take part in a market association, which Denmark joined, irrespective of the advantages membership might bring for the Faroe Islands.⁷⁴ But the longer the unionist *Landsstýri* made use of the consideration period – although all circumstances pointed towards a rejection of membership – the more doubtful it was whether the opposition parties were not right and that postcolonial politics was playing an important role after all.

Final rejection of membership

On 22 January 1974, the *Landsstýri* ultimately came to the conclusion that it could not recommend Faroese membership of the EC.⁷⁵ Instead, it proposed to take up negotiations with Denmark and the EC about the future relationship between the EC and the Faroe Islands. In his proposal to reject membership, *Løgmaður* Dam believed that there was no reason to wait any longer about taking a final position on membership.⁷⁶ The EC

72 »Tað er einki ivamál, at tann landsstýrismeiriluti, sum situr í dag, helst vildi at Føroyar gerast limur í EF (EEC) saman við Danmark – hetta kanska eina mest fyrri ikki at ørkymla galdandi viðurskifti við Danmark.« (N.N.: 1972a, 2).

73 N.N.: 1973a, 3.

74 N.N.: 1973b, 1.

75 *Løgtingstíðindi*: 1973, Vol. A, 184.

76 See for the following paragraph *ibid.*, Vol. A, 190; DAM: 1973, 4–5.

had declared not to change its fisheries policy before UNCLOS III, but the conference was unlikely to take place before the end of the consideration period. It would be impossible for the Faroe Islands to join the EC before the end of UNCLOS III, as its participants might possibly agree on an extended fishing limit for each UN member state. The Faroes would only benefit from this decision if they remained outside the EC. On January 25, 1974, the MPs of all six parties represented in the *Løgting* unanimously rejected Faroese EC membership and supported negotiations for a bilateral trade agreement with the EC instead; this was signed in August 1974.⁷⁷

Once again, the reluctance of the *Landsstýri* to give up on EC membership was obvious. *Løgmaður* Dam stressed that the decision against EC membership »would not close the doors for all time«. ⁷⁸ *Dimmalætting* also hoped that the Faroe Islands would be able to join the EC at a later point in time.⁷⁹ On the one hand, this reluctance made clear that the CFP was the only reason for the *Landsstýri* to reject membership. On the other hand, it also hinted at the continued legacy of colonial rule. It signalled the continued fear of the unionist parties about what would come next, now that the Faroe Islands and Denmark had gone separate ways with regard to European integration.

Conclusion

Postcolonial politics clearly influenced both debates on membership of the European Communities (EC) from 1959 until 1963 and from 1970 until 1974. It definitely interfered with the decisions in favour of both EFTA membership and EC membership throughout the debate from 1959 until 1963. The fear of the unionist parties that taking a different European policy decision than Denmark would threaten the Union might explain why the unionist *Landsstýri* first preferred EFTA to EC membership. It could also explain why the *Landsstýri* changed its position on EC membership very quickly from rejection to approval. As soon as Denmark applied for EC membership, the Faroe Islands could also become members without compromising the Union.

⁷⁷ *Løgtingstíðindi*: 1973, Vol. A, 194; *Løgtingstíðindi*: 1974, Vol. A, 42–50.

⁷⁸ DAM: 1973, 4–5.

⁷⁹ N.N.: 1974, 1.

The influence of its secessionist struggle was even more evident in the case of the RP in 1961. It twice supported the European policy for the Faroe Islands that would provide the biggest challenge to the constitutional link with Denmark. Its primary argument against EC membership was its rejection of the Union with Denmark, which it believed would be consolidated forever if the Faroe Islands joined the EC. The PP was the only party to have verifiably judged membership on economic terms and supported EC membership despite its secessionist principles. But their perceived need to position themselves within the postcolonial debate affirms the significance of postcolonial politics for explaining the first European policy decision of the Faroe Islands.

The adoption of the CFP clearly changed the situation in the second debate on membership. None of the Faroese parties supported membership from the outset if it meant having to accept EC member states fishing in the Faroe's exclusive fisheries limit of twelve miles. In addition, no party was willing to surrender Faroese claims on a possible extension of this limit, if made necessary by international developments in fisheries management. In this position, all parties were unanimous, irrespective of their unionist or secessionist preferences. Thus, postcolonial politics played a lesser role in the second debate than they did in the first one.

The reduced importance of postcolonial politics was not least a consequence of Denmark reassuring the unionist parties that their decision on EC membership would not affect the Union with Denmark. For the opposition parties, postcolonial politics were still more important. But even for the RP, the CFP was the most relevant reason for rejecting EC membership. This is clear from a statement made by RP chairman Patursson.⁸⁰ Confronted with his willingness to investigate EC membership in 1961, he unveiled that the RP's support for EC membership »as a sovereign state« had been based on the misunderstanding that fishermen from EC member countries would not be allowed to catch in each other's territorial waters. Now, the RP would neither support membership as a sovereign state nor as a part of Denmark. Consequently, their common rejection of the CFP brought the political parties closer and bridged the postcolonial divide. In a way, the ultimate rejection of EC membership can therefore be interpreted as an emancipation of Faroese politics from the position of Denmark, at least in European policy.

80 PATURSSON: 1970b, 1.

Yet, even if postcolonial politics played a minor role in the second debate, it is obvious that it was the main impetus behind the unionist parties' greater willingness to investigate the possible conditions of membership. It is quite striking that the extent to which the political parties were willing to consider EC membership differed exactly according to their support or rejection of the Union with Denmark. The RP campaigned against EC membership from the outset, the PP from the beginning of 1971 onward, the SRP in the *Landsstýri* pressured for a final solution from October 1972 onward,⁸¹ while the SDP and the UP were still considering full membership at the end of 1973.

It is questionable whether the unionist *Landsstýri* would also have rejected EC membership if the Danish government had argued in 1971 that this decision would threaten the Union. Although the CFP provided a very strong economic argument against membership, would it have been so strong that the unionist parties would have given up on its core values? Judging from the *Landsstýri*'s position in 1961, a lot suggests that the rejection of the CFP would not have translated so easily into a rejection of EC membership if the constitutional question had not been settled at the beginning of the debate. One can reasonably argue that if it hadn't been for the fish, the Faroe Islands would have been split on EC membership along the postcolonial divide. SDP, UP and SRP in the *Landsstýri* would have supported membership, while the PP might have and the RP would have opposed it.

In order to answer the four hypotheses above, one can therefore state the following result:

1. As expected, the UP was most sympathetic to Faroese membership of the EC. It supported it in principle in 1961 and went a long way in the negotiations in order to make full membership possible. However, in 1974 it could not support membership because of the CFP, even if the rejection of EC membership would affect the Union with Denmark.

2. As expected, the SDP also supported EC membership in principle in 1961 and went a long way in the negotiations to make full membership possible. However, in 1974 it rejected membership because of the CFP, even if the rejection of EC membership would affect the Union with Denmark.

3. Unexpectedly, the PP supported EC membership in principle in 1961. However, it rejected EC membership from 1971 onward, based to a

81 N.N.: 1972f, 2; N.N.: 1972g, 4.

large extent on the CFP, but also on its wish to avoid the transfer of Faroese sovereignty to Brussels.

4. As expected, the RP was strongly opposed to EC membership, primarily so in order to weaken the Union with Denmark and to avoid the transfer of Faroese sovereignty to Brussels (and also to Copenhagen), as a first step towards the possibility of an independent Faroe Islands.

Thus, the first two European policy debates in the Faroe Islands provide a strong example for the continued legacy of the Faroe Islands' colonial history. Although all parties agreed to investigate the question of EC membership solely on Faroese conditions, they could never fully free themselves from the reality of postcolonial politics. This could be witnessed in their continued accusations against each other of making European policy merely on behalf of their unionist or secessionist concerns. Postcolonial politics always played a role, whether as a tool for accusing other parties or as a substantial reason to prefer one policy option to the other. Thus, the article shows that examining postcolonial politics is a fruitful undertaking that can help us to study and fully understand the integration preferences of former colonies such as the Faroe Islands – in particular, shortly after the end of colonial rule. Without the study of postcolonial politics, this important dimension in Faroese politics would be missed.

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- N.N.: »Tað ið umræður« [What is debated]. In: *Dimmalætting*, 21 January 1971b, 1.
- N.N.: »Dimmalætting vil treytaleysan limaskap í EEC« [Dimmalætting wants unconditional membership in the EC]. In: *Dagblaðið*, 16 January 1971c, 2.
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- N.N.: »Rættarreglur á havinum« [Law of the Sea]. In: *Dagblaðið*, 26 January 1972c, 2.
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JOHN K. MITCHINSON

Othering the Other:
Language Decolonisation in the Faroe Islands

Over the past decade it has become increasingly common to consider Iceland, Greenland and the Faroe Islands from a postcolonial perspective. This chapter focuses on linguistic decolonisation on the Faroe Islands. Whereas colonisation of the islands was somewhat unorthodox in terms of the relationship between the coloniser and the colonised, I suggest that Faroese decolonisation, and particularly decolonisation of the language situation, resembles the process elsewhere to a much greater extent. This chapter first attempts to give Faroese decolonisation a place within a global context. Following this, various concrete examples from the Faroes will be given to demonstrate some of the methods through which decolonisation can be seen to have taken/be taking place. The analysis introduces and utilises a new concept, language othering, which is the process through which the power of the coloniser can be dismantled or diminished.

This chapter focuses on the linguistic decolonisation of the Faroe Islands, a self-governing part of the Kingdom of Denmark since the Home Rule Act of 1948. The material is largely drawn from fieldwork undertaken in the Faroe Islands between 2008 and 2010. In particular, frequent reference will be made to a postal survey I carried out in Tórshavn in 2009 (with 297 respondents out of 499 posted questionnaires) and a survey of four Faroese secondary schools between April 2009 and April 2010. These schools were the three Faroese *studentaskúlar* (the equivalent of a sixth-form college in the United Kingdom) in Tórshavn (Streymoy, 192 pupils out of 632 took part), Kambsdalur (Eysturoy, 161 pupils out of 250) and Hov (Suðuroy, 92 pupils out of 110), and *Handilsskúlin* (the 'business school') in Tórshavn (190 pupils out of 320). In total 635 school pupils took part in the survey.¹

1 It is envisaged that the full results of the surveys will be published in due course.

Othering and ›Saming‹

In a previous article², I argued that the Faroes constitute a somewhat unusual colonial society and that the close relationship between the coloniser and the colonised necessitates special models of postcolonial analysis. In that article, I established the idea of ›saming‹, based upon Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's ›othering‹.³ Othering reinforces the fact that the colonised, the other, is different from the self, yet it is, by definition, a twofold process whereby the separate identities of the coloniser and the colonised are established simultaneously. Spivak takes one of her examples of this process from a letter written by Captain Geoffrey Birch, an assistant agent of the Governor of India, to Charles Metcalfe, the Resident at Delhi, at the end of 1815. He has taken a journey across the Indo-Gangetic plains to the Governor's Secretary in Calcutta »to acquaint the people who they are subject to, for as I suspected they were not properly informed of it and seem only to have heard of our existence from conquering the Goorkah and from having seen a few Europeans passing through the country.«⁴ Spivak writes that Birch »sees himself as a representative image«:

By his sight and utterance rumour is being replaced by information, the figure of the European on the hills is being reinscribed from stranger to Master, to the sovereign as Subject with a capital S, even as the native shrinks into the consolidating subjected subject in the lower case. The truth value of the stranger is being established as the reference point for the true (insertion into) history of these wild regions.⁵

By presenting himself to the local population in this way, Birch is establishing the distance between the coloniser and the colonised, and their separate identities: he as ›the Other‹, the masterful coloniser, and they as ›the other‹, the colonised subject. This action ousts any ideas the colonised previously had about their place in the world order.

In the Faroe Islands, however, a fundamentally different process took place. The binary distinctions between ›them‹ and ›us‹ could not be created: the two parties were European, indistinguishable in appearance, and they shared a common religious and linguistic tradition. In terms of the

2 MITCHINSON: 2010.

3 Cf. SPIVAK: 1985.

4 Birch quoted in *ibid.*

5 *Ibid.*, 133.

linguistic situation, the Danish colonisers were able to ignore the Faroese language entirely, treating it as – and later labelling it – a deviant offshoot of their *own* language. This phenomenon could be termed ›saming‹; a form of othering, but one which others by incorporating, accommodating and emphasising sameness. Saming would be unthinkable in ›traditional‹ postcolonial societies, such as in Africa and South-East Asia, where the cultures of the coloniser and of the colonised differed so widely.

The idea of the coloniser creating a colonised other in his own image is far from novel. Huddart even observes that » [e]ssentially, colonial discourse wants the colonised to be extremely like the coloniser.«⁶ Homi Bhabha's oft-mentioned colonial concept of ›mimicry‹, for example, which Ashcroft *et al.* describe as an »increasingly important term in post-colonial theory«⁷, could appear useful in the Faroese context. Bhabha explains mimicry as the »desire for a reformed recognizable Other, *as a subject of difference that is almost the same, but not quite*«. ⁸ He uses Lord Macaulay's 1835 *Minute to Parliament* to exemplify his ideas. Macaulay advocates the creation of an Indian ›class of interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern – a class of persons Indian in blood and colour, but English in tastes, in opinions, in morals and in intellect.«⁹ This extract, however, does not represent the promotion of saming: these interpreters will be *almost* the same, »but not quite«. Being Anglicized is not the same as becoming English.¹⁰ The issue of race is of utmost importance in Bhabha's conceptualisation of mimicry: whatever these Indians achieve, they will never physically resemble the British colonisers. This fact becomes explicit when Bhabha later reworks his phrasing as »almost the same but not white«. ¹¹ In the Faroese context, however, race plays no role: the coloniser and the colonised were indistinguishable in appearance. Therefore, as far as the Danes were concerned, full Danicisation, or saming, in the Faroes could indeed facilitate the creation of authentic ›Danes‹.

6 HUDDART: 2006, 59.

7 ASHCROFT, GRIFFITHS and TIFFIN: 2007, 124.

8 BHABHA: 1994, 122.

9 *Ibid.*, 124–125.

10 *Ibid.*, 125.

11 *Ibid.*, 128.

Decolonisation

Simon During describes the postcolonial ›desire‹ as »the desire of decolonized communities for an identity«. ¹² In order to understand the implications of the Faroese desire for an identity, more emphasis needs to be placed on the processes of Faroese decolonisation than has been the case thus far. To understand how Faroese decolonisation is much more orthodox than the colonisation of the islands, a global context is also necessary.

Ashcroft *et al.* define decolonisation as »the process of revealing and dismantling colonialist power in all its forms«. ¹³ Here I will examine this ›dismantling‹ in the Faroese language context. Much postcolonial literary analysis focuses on decolonisation precisely because many commentators interpret ›postcolonial‹ as »after-colonialism«. ¹⁴ and decolonisation often follows the colonial period. In this chapter, I will suggest that the language developments that have occurred since the Faroese began to take responsibility for their own affairs – such as purism and the desire by some to view Danish as a foreign language – can largely be seen within a traditional postcolonial framework as resistance to colonial power. That is, whereas the colonisation of the Faroes was unusual due to the close relationship between the colonising and colonised parties, decolonisation within the same Faroese society is less so.

In order to place Faroese decolonisation within an international context, it is useful to refer to the three waves of global decolonisation identified by McLeod. ¹⁵ The first of these was the loss of the British colonies in North America and their subsequent union and declaration of independence in the late eighteenth century. McLeod's second wave is marked by the ›creation of the dominions‹, the granting of political autonomy to the British settler colonies of Canada, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa between 1867 and 1909. ¹⁶ Ashcroft *et al.* think that these nations have been »far less successful than other kinds of colonies«. ¹⁷ in carrying

12 DURING: 1987, 43.

13 ASHCROFT, GRIFFITHS and TIFFIN: 2007, 56.

14 ASHCROFT, GRIFFITHS and TIFFIN: 2006, 1.

15 MCLEOD: 2000, 9.

16 Ibid.

17 ASHCROFT, GRIFFITHS and TIFFIN: 2007, 59.

out social and cultural decolonisation, due in part to their ›filiative‹ relationship with Britain as »sons and daughters of the Empire«.¹⁸

McLeod describes the third category of nations thus:

Unlike the self-governing settler dominions, the colonised lands in South Asia, Africa and the Caribbean did not become sites of mass European migration, and tended to feature larger dispossessed populations settled by small British colonial elites. The achievement of independence in these locations occurred mainly after the Second World War, often as a consequence of indigenous anti-colonial nationalism and military struggle.¹⁹

Decolonisation in the Faroes most closely resembles this third wave: although the achievement of autonomy did not involve military struggle, neither did it in, for example, the Caribbean or Malta. Faroese autonomy, however, did stem from anti-colonial nationalism and did occur after the Second World War. Furthermore, the Faroes did not experience large-scale colonial migration, but were ruled by a small Danish elite. Although there is a common heritage between the Danes and the Faroese – as there is between the British and the dominions they established – the relationship in this case is not filiative (i.e. unlike Australia, which was predominantly settled by the British, the Faroes were settled by Norwegians, rather than Danes), and so the context of subsequent developments is quite different.

Of course, the Faroes are not an independent state but part of the Danish Kingdom. I regard this as largely inconsequential: political independence and the cessation of colonial influence often have little to do with each other.²⁰ Since the Home Rule Act of 1948, the Faroese have had considerable influence over the internal running of their country. As regards language, continued political affiliation with Denmark does ensure a place for Danish within Faroese society and Danish remains a joint official language with Faroese, but, as the Greenlanders demonstrated with their 2009 referendum and the subsequent Self-Rule Act of 2009, membership of *Rigsfællesskabet* (›the Commonwealth of the Realm‹) does not prevent change to official language status.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ McLEOD: 2000, 9.

²⁰ In any case, McLeod argued that the creation of the dominions (1867–1909) constituted the second period of global decolonisation, even though these did not achieve full legislative power until they adopted the 1951 Statute of Westminster.

Danish in the Faroe Islands today

The legal position of Danish remains unchanged from that accorded it in 1948: it is a co-official language together with Faroese. Nevertheless, from a practical perspective, great changes have taken place since the Act was passed.

In the 1970s and 1980s several commentators on the Faroese language situation pointed out that Danish functioned as a vehicle for contact with the outside world: Hagström calls Danish »ett fönster mot världen« (»a window on the world«)²¹ and Haugen refers to Danish as »the language of outside contact«.²² In translation between Faroese and other languages, this intermediary function was particularly salient as the Faroese needed to use Danish-medium dictionaries. When J.H.W. Poulsen saw Danish functioning as a »mellemlid« (»connecting link«) in 1977, he noted that there were still only Danish-Faroese and Faroese-Danish dictionaries.²³ In the past 25 years, however, this situation has changed dramatically with the advent of dictionaries between Faroese and other languages: English,²⁴ Norwegian (Nynorsk),²⁵ Italian,²⁶ Icelandic,²⁷ and Spanish.²⁸ *Sprotin*, at the time of writing a particularly prolific Faroese publisher, has also created an online two-way dictionary between Faroese and English and one-way Faroese-Spanish, Danish-Faroese, Faroese-Italian and, for the first time, German-Faroese dictionaries. It has additionally announced plans for online Russian-Faroese, Spanish-Faroese and French-Faroese dictionaries.²⁹ Consequently, the »mellemlid« role of Danish in translation has greatly decreased.

The vast majority of adult literature is still read in Danish. Traditionally, only classics have been published in Faroese translation, such as works by Shakespeare, Halldór Laxness and J.R.R. Tolkien. Although

21 HAGSTRÖM: 1986, 18.

22 HAUGEN: 1980, 109.

23 POULSEN: 1977, 97.

24 SKARÐI: 1984; YOUNG and CLEWER: 1985; SKÁLA, MIKKELSEN and WANG: 1992; SKÁLA and MIKKELSEN: 2007a; SKÁLA and MIKKELSEN: 2007b.

25 LEHMANN: 1987.

26 CONTRI 2004.

27 MAGNÚSSON: 2005.

28 MEITIL and REMMEL 2009.

29 <http://www.sprotin.fo/?sida=hald> [25.08.2011].

some non-classic titles are now appearing in Faroese, such as – during the research period – the Norwegian author Johan Harstad's *Buzz Aldrin, hvor ble det av deg i alt mylderet?* (Faroese: *Buzz Aldrin, hvar bleivst tú av í ruðuleikanum?*; Eksil 2009), the Swedish author Mikael Niemi's *Populärmusik från Vittula* (Faroese: *Popptónleikur úr Vittula*; Sprotin 2009), and the Icelandic crime writer Arnaldur Indriðason's *Mýrin* (Faroese: *Mýrin*; Sprotin 2010), this is a recent phenomenon.³⁰ The situation for children's literature is, however, quite different. I would argue that Faroese-language publishing for children has now reached a juncture where it would be theoretically possible for a Faroese child to reach adolescence without ever needing to read a Danish book. This would have been unimaginable a decade ago.

Danish continues to play an important role in two other key areas: education and the media.³¹ Faroese enjoys virtually a monopoly as the spoken medium of education at all levels – including the university – but, as my surveys indicated, a considerable number of teaching materials are in Danish only. Danish is very prominent when it comes to television and films. Jógvan í Lon Jacobsen reports that, during any week in July 2001, only between 17 and 28 per cent of programming was Faroese-produced (and therefore in Faroese) or adapted for Faroese viewers (with dubbing or subtitles) – everything else was in Danish or had Danish subtitles.³² He notes that *Sjónvarp Føroya*, the Faroese public TV, aimed to have all

30 While non-classic translations have appeared previously, such as one of Swedish author Henning Mankell's ›Wallander‹ crime novels in 1998 (Swedish: *Mördare utan ansikte*, Faroese: *Skortleysir manndráparar*; Sprotin), these were rare.

31 A third area, the law, ought to be mentioned. Dealings with the legal system invariably involve direct contact with Danish, as judicial authority and the police remain areas of Danish jurisdiction. Sentencing, for example, is carried out in Danish. The majority of police prosecutors are Danish and for that reason cross-examinations are generally conducted in Danish, but the Faroese are usually able to answer in Faroese. If a police prosecutor is Faroese, the defendant is Faroese and the judge understands Faroese, cross-examinations can be carried out in Faroese. Some police officers write reports in Danish and some in Faroese. All officers are trained in Denmark. While the subject of the law is interesting, as it provides an otherwise rare example of a contemporary situation in which two Faroese people may be required to converse in Danish, I will not focus on this domain for two reasons. Firstly, as this area remains under Denmark, language choice does not depend on attitudes or what resources permit, but is frequently dictated. Secondly, while those Faroese whose jobs concern the law will come into regular contact with Danish, most Faroese will not enter this domain on a daily basis.

32 JACOBSEN: 2002, 121.

foreign material subtitled in Faroese by 1 January 2003.³³ As of 2012 this has not yet happened. All children's programming, however, is either originally Faroese or dubbed into Faroese. Some programmes aimed at young adults have Faroese subtitles. At the cinema, all international films are subtitled in Danish and all children's films are dubbed into Danish. Only these Danish versions of films are on sale on the islands. As regards print media, all domestic newspapers are in Faroese.

An ability to understand Danish remains necessary in the Faroe Islands. While my surveys indicated that most Faroese do not consider this to be the case, it is perhaps useful to consider the views of an ›outsider‹. H.P. Petersen tells of a Polish woman who reported in the Faroese newspaper *Dimmalætting* (dated 19 September 2007) that it is not possible to manage everyday life on the Faroes without knowing Danish.³⁴ While a small Danish community does exist on the islands, most people who have been there for any considerable period of time understand Faroese. As a result of this, it is not unusual to hear bilingual conversations, with Danes and the Faroese each using their own language.³⁵ One respondent to a postal survey I undertook described this as »pura (*sic*) vanligt« (›completely usual‹). It is, however, a relatively recent phenomenon that was only starting to emerge at the time Birgit Hartmann Jacobsen wrote her dissertation in 1984.³⁶ Previously, conversations between Danes and islanders would have taken place in Danish.

Language Othering

Through my concept of language othering, this section considers how ›Danish‹ has been ›rethought‹ within Faroese society as an act of resistance against the hegemony of the Danish language. In the Faroese context, this language othering must work within two spheres: in relation to the Danish language and to Danish words in Faroese. My fieldwork in the Faroe Islands indicated that the label ›Danish‹ (*danskt*) is commonly used to discuss both entities.

33 Ibid. See also »Udredning om sprogpoltiske initiativer og domænetab i færøsk«, <http://www.sprakforsvaret.se/sf/index.php?id=647> [07.07.2011].

34 PETERSEN: 2010, 41. My own experience suggests that knowledge of Danish is taken for granted. On several occasions during the research period I was addressed in fluent Danish by a resident Dane who assumed I would understand.

35 Ibid., 12.

36 Cf. JACOBSEN: 1984, 12.

Language othering is the process whereby the position of the colonial language is redefined. For political, practical or ideological reasons, the colonial language cannot always be removed from the colonial society altogether, but it can be ›rethought‹ so that the colonised no longer feel subjectified by its use. As with Spivak's othering, separate new identities for the colonised and the coloniser are created and the colonised population's notion of its place in the world is re-assessed. A key difference is that language othering here is an element of decolonisation, rather than colonisation – the colonised are the ›otherers‹ – but this is no great deviation from Spivak's concept, as othering can only be carried out by someone in a position to do so. One of the interesting features of Spivak's analysis is her view that othering is not just performed by the political leaders of a territory, but also by »unimportant folk«.³⁷

I will argue for four methods of language othering on the islands, all of which seem to have emerged since the Second World War: reclassification (in two separate contexts, 1a and 1b below), paratextuality, temporary translation, and separation. These methods are symptomatic of traditional postcolonial resistance to the dominating power and, I suggest, attempt to render Danish acceptable to the formerly colonised Faroese population. Macro concepts are illustrated by concrete micro examples.

I. Reclassification

Louis Althusser's writings on ideology emphasise the importance of labelling for the creation and maintenance of power in society. His ideas can be – and have been – applied successfully to colonial situations. Althusser's interpellation is defined by Ashcroft *et al.* as »call[ing] people forth as subjects, and ... provid[ing] the conditions by which, and the contexts in which, they obtain subjectivity«.³⁸ The Danish colonisers were largely able to ›same‹ the Danish and Faroese languages in the Faroes by labelling the two varieties as ›the same‹. Thus Faroese could be subjectified and an environment created in which the two varieties effectively *were* the same. Naming is an important part of colonial practice, particularly as regards place names: as Ashcroft *et al.* explain, »naming or, in almost all

37 »What I am trying to insist on here is that the agents of this cartographic transformation in the narrow sense are not only great names like Vincent van Gogh, but small unimportant folk like Geoffrey Birch, as well as the policy makers.« (SPIVAK 1985: 133).

38 ASHCROFT, GRIFFITHS and TIFFIN: 2007, 203.

cases, renaming spaces [is] a symbolic and literal act of mastery and control.«³⁹ As colonisers discovered ›new‹ territories, they named them, mapped them and reinforced their control over both the land and its inhabitants. Consequently, after the start of decolonisation, many places were renamed either with new, local alternatives or original forms as the colonised attempted to reaffirm their identity and control over the land: Salisbury in Rhodesia became Harare in Zimbabwe in 1982⁴⁰; in India, Bombay became Mumbai in 1995, etc. Similarly, I suggest specific usage of the former colonial language can be popularly renamed, or rather, reclassified, as an act of resistance to its hegemony. The language itself can also be ›rethought‹, i.e. given a new identity. Examples of these can be found in relation to both meanings of the word ›Danish‹ on the Faroes:

ra Danish words in Faroese

Direct evidence of the reclassification of words of Danish origin used in Faroese can be found in the questionnaire responses to the survey I undertook in four Faroese secondary schools. I asked the students whether the Danicisms *snakka* (›to speak‹) and *forstanda* (›to understand‹) were as Faroese as the recommended terms *tosa* and *skilja* respectively. The Danicisms were labelled by various pupils as ›talumál‹ (›spoken language‹), ›eldri orð‹ (›older words‹) and ›suðuroyarmál‹ (›Suðuroy dialect‹), even though, elsewhere in the survey, these Danicisms were a) *written* b) *written by school pupils* and c) *came from around the country*.⁴¹ It is, therefore, difficult to think of them as belonging purely to spoken language, as being old words or being restricted to the island of Suðuroy.⁴² Nevertheless, these labels continue to be used as euphemisms for ›Danicism‹.⁴³ Through their use, it is possible to mark certain words out as ›other‹, yet to do so without referring to the colonial power. Ex-

39 Ibid., 28.

40 Rhodesia became Zimbabwe in 1980 upon its (*de jure*) independence.

41 In the postal survey, one respondent reclassified *snakka* and *forstanda*, in English, as ›informal language‹. This can be seen as synonymous with the ›talumál‹ label.

42 Although Danicisms *are* more likely to be used by older speakers (cf. POULSEN: 1977, 100), less likely to be written (cf. BARNES: 2005, 1585; HAGSTRÖM: 2005, 1758) and more widespread on Suðuroy, the school survey indicates that the situation is not straightforward.

43 Of course there are words in each category that are not Danicisms.

amples of these labels abound. In a newspaper review of his fourth crime novel, *Adventus Domini* (2007), Jógvan Isaksen was criticised for over-use of ›talumál‹ in his prose. Instead of his »... følir [stingir í kroppinum]« (›feels [stabbing pains in his body]«, Danish: *føler* [...]), »støvsúgvaranum« (›vacuum cleaner«, Danish: *støvsuger*) and »jólamusikkur« (›Christmas music«, Danish: *julemusik*), the reviewer suggested »... kennir [stingir í kroppinum]«, »dustsúgvaranum« and »jólatónleikur« respectively.⁴⁴ Each example of ›talumál‹ here is, of course, a Danicism. During my fieldwork, I heard an additional label for a Danicism at a choir rehearsal in Tórshavn: one singer queried the prepositional phrase ›for meg‹ in an old gospel song (›for me‹, cf. Danish: *for mig*, standard Faroese: *fyrí meg*), to which another responded that this was simply an example of ›yrkingarmál‹ (›poetic language‹).

The use and success of these labels vary: the most common, by far, is ›talumál‹ (or ›talað mál‹ in *Føroysk orðabók*⁴⁵). By ›success‹ I mean that the term ›talumál/talað‹ has become a widespread euphemism for Danicism. My surveys showed that the majority of people wish to keep a distinction between ›spoken language‹ (where Danicisms are more likely to be accepted) and ›written language‹ (where they are not). Most Danicisms which make it into one of the Faroese dictionaries – and few do – are marked with the (*tlm.*) designation.

Of the other three labels discussed here, only ›suðuroyarmál‹ (*Suð.*) is used in *Føroysk orðabók*, and only sparingly, e.g. for the two Suðuroy pronominal forms that are not Danicisms, *okur* (›we‹, standard Faroese: *vit*) and *tykur* (›you‹ (pl.), standard Faroese: *tit*), and for a restricted number of Danicisms, such as *jeg* (›I‹, standard Faroese: *eg*), *ónsdagur* and *tórsdagur*.⁴⁶ Presumably, this reluctance to label words *suðuroyarmál* is caused by the fact that many Danicisms are widely used and because increased use of the label would suggest acceptance of these, even if only in one region of the country. The widespread ›talumál‹ label, however, coupled with the industrious production of purist terms to oust the controversial Danicisms, has led to the emergence of what can be

44 OLSEN: 2007.

45 POULSEN et al.: 1998.

46 It is also used of several dialectal words that are not Danicisms, such as *óniri* (›shy or poor sheep‹, standard Faroese: *ónæra*). English translation from SKÁLA and MIKKELSEN: 2007a.

considered a diglossic situation in the Faroes today, with ›pure‹ (often Icelandic-influenced) Faroese as the High language – used in education, publishing, public or religious ceremonies, etc. – and a variety of Faroese that includes many Danish loanwords as the Low language, commonly used in informal conversation.

1b The Danish language on the Faroes

As Fasold notes, when selecting a national language in most postcolonial societies, »the old colonial language is usually a terrible choice on nationalist grounds«. ⁴⁷ He adds that »[f]or a nationality which has just acquired its own geographical territory, the last language it would want as a national symbol would be the language of the state that had denied it territorial control«. ⁴⁸ While this may be the case in many postcolonial territories, the thesis has shown that the situation is not quite so straightforward in the Faroes: for various reasons, Danish remains a co-official language. However, as this section shows, attempts can be made to reclassify (›to other‹) a language in order to demonstrate resistance to the hegemony of the coloniser/coloniser's culture.

I argue that the most salient expression of language othering on the Faroes is the attempted redefinition of Danish as a foreign language on the islands. That Danish on the islands now constitutes a foreign language is the general consensus amongst academics writing about Danish in the Faroes today. This can be seen for example in the introduction to the recent English-language Faroese textbook *Faroese, A Language Course for Beginners*: »Today, Faroese is defined as the national language of the Faroe Islanders with Danish being considered a foreign language (although it remains an obligatory subject in schools).« ⁴⁹

For centuries Danish was effectively the Faroese written language. Until only a few decades ago it would have been unthinkable to write even a love letter in anything but Danish. ⁵⁰ This would be inconceivable for the Faroese today. It is perfectly understandable that, in an attempt to

⁴⁷ FASOLD: 1987, 5.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ ADAMS and PETERSEN: 2009, vii. A similar sentiment has been echoed by, for example, POULSEN: 2004b, 255; HAGSTRÖM: 1984, 180; VOSS: 1982, 80 and, most emphatically, NAUERBY: 1996, 130, 136, 140.

⁵⁰ Cf. POULSEN: 1993, III.

summarise these considerable changes in one sentence for (presumably) an overseas readership, the foreign language designation seems useful as a way of describing what Danish has become. This need to sum up changes that have taken place for a foreign audience ties in with Malan Marnersdóttir's observation: »that colonies and former colonies often have to define their position in the world in order to attract the world's attention is a widely-held postcolonial attitude.«⁵¹ Despite the ubiquitous nature of the foreign language designation – to my knowledge, my research is the first to challenge it directly – this reclassification does not seem to concur with the opinions of most young Faroese.

The majority of pupils in the school survey, and the majority of respondents in the youngest (under 40 years of age) of the three bands in the postal survey in Tórshavn rejected the idea of Danish as a foreign language. Respondents in the middle bracket (40 to 60 years of age) marginally agreed that it is a foreign language (49.0 per cent for; 37.7 per cent against), while the opinions of those in the oldest bracket (over 60) were evenly divided. So the ›success‹ of this reclassification, while considerable in academic discourse, has been more mixed among the Faroese population.

Wylie observed in 1981 that there is a tendency on the islands to think of Danish as »a variety of pan-Scandinavian«.⁵² This too is an example of reclassification. The surveys confirmed the importance of Danish as a medium of communication for the Faroese across Scandinavia: in the postal survey, this was given as the most important reason for learning Danish in the Over 60 and 40 to 60 brackets, and as second in the Under 40 bracket; in the school survey, this was the second most important reason for learning Danish at the sixth-form colleges in Tórshavn and Kambsdalur, and third at Hov and the Business School in Tórshavn. Pan-Scandinavian communication is clearly significant for the Faroese: as they are unable to use their own language to this end⁵³, Danish must be used.

The context of this reclassification is particularly significant from a postcolonial theoretical perspective. There is a common trend amongst postcolonial nations to seek to (re-)connect with ›brethren‹, peoples/na-

51 MARNERSDÓTTIR: 2007, 154.

52 WYLIE: 1981, 82.

53 POULSEN: 2004a, 125.

tions with similar heritage or culture. Examples abound, such as Greenland's membership of the Inuit Circumpolar Council (ICC), an organisation which aims to protect the interests of Inuit across Greenland, Canada, the United States and Russia. By definition, these brethren are traditionally unlike the coloniser. In the Faroes, however, the situation is very different. The brethren, i.e. the people with whom the Faroese feel natural affinity (other Scandinavians) are also of the same heritage as the coloniser, and communication with them can only (practicably) take place through the colonial language. While the proceedings of the ICC take place in English – a colonial language as far as Canadian and American Inuit are concerned – use of this language differs from Danish in the Faroes in two key ways. Firstly, English is the medium of global communication among colonised and non-colonised peoples. This has arguably bestowed a character of neutrality upon it in international communication. Secondly, English is not part of what connects the Inuit: its use is therefore auxiliary rather than symbolic.

Conversely, ›Scandinavian‹ is, as Vikør notes, regarded by many Scandinavians »as a substantial part of the *raison d'être* of the Nordic community«.54 An inability to communicate with this community in a mainland Scandinavian medium would alienate the Faroese from this – as far as Faroese identity is concerned – most crucial of groups.55 By reclassifying Danish as merely a language of pan-Scandinavian contact, interaction with Scandinavian partners can continue, but in a way that is in accordance with the core ideal of decolonisation, which is to demonstrate resistance.

2. Paratextuality

Within literary studies Gérard Genette defines paratexts as »a certain number of verbal or other productions, such as an author's name, a title, a preface, illustrations [which] surround [the text] and extend it, precisely in order to *present* it«.56 I suggest that within postcolonial analysis, paratexts – conceptualised as ›paratextuality‹ – can also be considered part of

54 VIKØR: 2001, 134.

55 This internal diglossia is much closer to Ferguson's original definition (FERGUSON: 1959, 25). Only in 1967 did Fishman expand the designation to cover two separate languages operating within H and L spheres (FISHMAN: 1967).

56 GENETTE: 1997, 1.

the process of language othering: added text which surrounds the colonial language to present it as ›other‹.

In the school survey eight pupils felt that proverbs and metaphors constitute areas where Danish »works better than Faroese«. Two examples of such sayings were given: »Stop mens legen er god« (»Stop while the going is good«) and »Den tid, den sorg« (»Don't cross your bridges before you come to them«).⁵⁷ While there is a direct and codified Faroese equivalent of the first saying, *Gevast, meðan leikur er góður*⁵⁸, for the second I have heard *Tann tíð, tann sorg* used, although it is not to be found in reference works.⁵⁹ Nevertheless, these pupils presumably feel that the Danish-language and Faroese-language versions are not fully equivalent⁶⁰ – or, as 13 pupils put it in the survey, sometimes Danish words come to mind first.⁶¹ Set Danish phrases are often written in the Faroes, although rarely without some modifying phrase, or paratext, to make them more acceptable. One common example is *sum danir siga* (»as the Danes say«). In a recent Faroese-language pamphlet produced by the Nólsoy Island Tourist Information Centre about Ove Joensen, the Faroese rower who successfully rowed from the Faroes to Copenhagen in 1986, the following can be found:

Men ›tredje gang er lykkens gang‹, *sum danir siga*, og 11. august kundi Ove kyssa kendu havfrúnna á Langelinie eftir væleydnaðari ferð um Atlantshav.⁶²

But ›tredje gang er lykkens gang‹ (›third time lucky‹), *as the Danes say* and on 11 August, Ove was able to kiss the famous Little Mermaid on Langelinie after a successful journey across the Atlantic.

57 The importance of Danish in this context was stressed by the Faroese priest and linguist, Jákup Dahl, as early as 1903 (cf. THOMASSEN 1985, 24).

58 SKÁLA and MIKKELSEN: 2007b.

59 Lit. ›Stop while the game is good‹ and ›That time, that grief‹. The non-literal English translation of the latter comes from AXELSEN: 2005, 784.

60 *Tann tíð, tann sorg* is also used in an article by Ólavur í Beiti (5 May 2010) at *Vágaportalurin*, the news service for Vágar island, <http://new.vagaportal.fo/pages/posts/jorgen-niclasen-er-nokkso-stuttligur-1251.php?p=8> [29.06.2011].

61 Within translation studies, Nida distinguishes between formal and dynamic equivalence (NIDA: 1964, 159). While the Faroese translation may be the formal equivalent of the Danish saying, in that it says the same in the same form, it may not be dynamically equivalent, i.e. it does not have the same effect on the reader.

62 Nólsoy Information Centre 2009, emphasis added.

The phrase *sum danir siga* does not form part of the content of the text, but it frames the Danish it follows and creates distance between it and the author. From a postcolonial perspective this distance represents the space between the Faroese and Danish cultures.⁶³ A similar example can be found in an online article from 2009 about whether to ›thaw‹ the annual subsidy the Faroes receive from Denmark. Johan Petersen, from *Sambandsflokkurin* (The Union Party), observes that *Fólkaflokkurin* (The People's Party) and *Javnaðarflokkurin* (The Social Democrats) »eru snøgt sagt *sum danir siga tað* uden for pedagogisk [*sic*] rækkevidde« (›are frankly *as the Danes say* ›uden for pedagogisk rækkevidde‹ [beyond teaching]«).⁶⁴ The Danish saying carries the meaning Petersen wishes to convey, but blatant use of Danish words cannot go ›unchecked‹. Similar examples abound, such as »Spøg til side *sum danir siga* [...]« (›Joking apart, *as the Danes say* [...]«), found on an online discussion page from 2006.⁶⁵

An early, and quite different, example of a paratext – and one much closer to the traditional meaning of the word – can be found in the 1965 re-publication of Jørgen Landt's *Forsøg til en Beskrivelse af Færøerne* (›Attempt at a Description of the Faroes«, 1800). Unlike the first version, which was (naturally) published in Copenhagen, the re-publication was produced in Tórshavn. The front cover preserves the title of the original, but includes the Faroese words »Við myndum« (›with pictures‹). These words set the context for the Danish text, frame it and establish distance between the Faroese and Danish cultures. »Við myndum«, I would argue, makes the publication of a Danish book in the Faroes more acceptable. The existence of Faroese words on the cover of a book from the begin-

63 One example is: ›Tað er vihvørt [*sic*] man sigur okkurt á donskum, tá man ikki fer [*sic*] tað føroyska orðið framm [*sic*]‹ (›Sometimes you say something in Danish when the Faroese word doesn't come to you‹).

64 <http://www.samband.fo/sambandfo/Default.asp?cid=1&pg=76&id=2039> [29.06.2011]. This alludes to the concept of the metonymic gap within postcolonial studies, defined by Ashcroft *et al.* as »the cultural gap formed when appropriations of a colonial language insert un glossed words, phrases or passages from a first language, or concepts, allusions or references that may be unknown to the reader« (ASHCROFT, GRIFFITHS and TIFFIN: 2007, 122–123). Here, however, the writer does not seek to create otherness in the mind of a reader from the colonising territory, but of a reader from the colonised territory. See MARNERSDÓTTIR: 2004; MARNERSDÓTTIR: 2005 on the gap in William Heinesen's *Det gode håb*.

65 The Faroese equivalent is *Skemt til viks* (SKÁLA and MIKKELSEN: 2007a).

ning of the nineteenth century – some 46 years before the creation of the Faroese written language – also stresses the historical nature of Danish on the islands: a sentiment that could perhaps be summarised as »Danish is part of our past, whereas Faroese is our current reality.«

3. Temporary translation

A phenomenon I have labelled ›temporary translation‹ could also be interpreted as an element of language othering within the postcolonial language situation. Temporary translation refers to the translation of book titles, programme titles, etc. into the colonised language, even though the product will be consumed in the language of the coloniser. This practice thus suggests the existence of a domestic-language product which is not to be found. The illusion is always temporary as it must disappear at the point of consumption.

For example, a book review of Stieg Larsson's bestselling novel, *Luftslottet som sprängdes* (Norstedts 2007)⁶⁶, displayed at the *Rit og Rák* bookshop in Tórshavn in May 2009, began: »Triði og seinasti partur í Millenniumtrilogiini tekur um endan har *Gentan, ið spældi við eldin* endaði.« (»The third and final part of the Millennium Trilogy begins where [Faroese] *Gentan, ið spældi við eldin* [›The Girl Who Played with Fire‹] ended.«). The reader of the review would, however, be hard-pressed to find a book bearing this title: the only widely-available version of it on the islands (and in *Rit og Rák*) is the Danish *Pigen, der legede med ilden* (Modtryk 2008).⁶⁷ By translating the title into Faroese, an illusion is created whereby the reader can effectively ›forget‹ that the book will ultimately be read in Danish. It remains the case that the reader will consume the book in Danish, but the degree to which the colonial language is seen/read is restricted. This can be seen as postcolonial resistance.

Larsson's trilogy proves fertile ground for further examples of temporary translation. In February 2009, Tórshavn municipality advertised a showing of the film based upon Larsson's first book, *Män som hatar kvinnor* (Norstedts 2005)⁶⁸, under the synonymous Faroese title *Menn, ið*

66 Lit. »The Castle in the Air that was Blown Up« (2007).

67 Swedish original (Norstedts 2006) as *Flickan som lekte med elden* (»The Girl Who Played with Fire«).

68 Lit. »Men Who Hate Women«.

hata kvinnur, even though this Swedish film was to be shown with Danish subtitles.⁶⁹ The second and third instalments were shown later that year, advertised as the literally-translated *Gentan, ið spældi við eld* and *Kastellið, sum fór í luftina* («The Castle that Exploded») respectively.⁷⁰ The slight variation on the title of the second film in relation to the book mentioned in the review at *Rit og Rák (eld* »fire« [acc.] as opposed to *eldin* »the fire« [acc.]) – as well as the fact that the newspaper *Sosialurin* advertised the showing of the third film under the title *Sprongda luftkastellið* («The Exploded Air Castle»)⁷¹ – illustrates a logical side-effect of temporary translation: individuals can translate however they see fit, as the version of the product being discussed does not exist.

Temporary translation is based upon a telling assumption: that the reader/viewer is bilingual. In order for the consumer to enjoy the cultural good being advertised, s/he must understand both Faroese and Danish and this is clearly assumed. Such translation is also an example of synergy: the advertising and the product create a synergetic ›package‹, which by definition has to cross the cultural boundaries. Temporary translation reflects the inherent interdependence of synergetic products: without the Faroese translation the text is arguably less acceptable, yet a Danish original is clearly needed for there to be a Faroese translation of the title. While a Faroese title could, of course, be translated from any language, there is little point in having a Faroese-language book review of a book that would not be accessible to the population at large: for now, the only language other than Faroese that it can be assumed all Faroese people will understand is Danish.

The postcolonial nature of temporary translation in the Faroes is further emphasised by the fact that it appears to be much more directed towards Danish than English. With book titles this is to be expected as Danish is much more in evidence than English, but it does seem that English is more likely to go ›unchecked‹. The public TV *Sjónvarp Føroya*, translates almost all film/programme titles into Faroese, but sometimes some English ones are left in the original language (such as

69 <http://www.torshavn.fo/Default.aspx?pageid=615&EventsShow=1&EventsFirstDate=2-27-2009> [02.07.2011].

70 <http://www.torshavn.fo/Default.aspx?pageid=609&NewsItemId=1707> and <http://www.torshavn.fo/Default.aspx?pageid=609&NewsItemId=1716> [02.07.2011].

71 http://www.wap.fo/news_2.php?grein=59786 [02.07.2011].

the regularly-broadcast *The Daily Show*). Similarly, on the programme for the 2009 *Mentanarnátt* («Night of Culture») in Tórshavn were four English-language film screenings: two of these kept their English titles (*Terminator Salvation* and *State of Play*), while two were translated into Faroese (*Einglar og illir Andar* [*Angels and Demons*] and *Nátt á Fornminnisavnninum* [*Night at the Museum*]).⁷² Both films that acquired Faroese titles were marketed under Danish titles in Denmark (respectively *Engle og Dæmoner* and *Nat på museet*). Again we see evidence of dependence – the creation of a Faroese title is dependent on the creation of a Danish one; if a film is distributed in Denmark under an English name, it is probable that this will also be the case in the Faroes.

4. Separation

Separation is perhaps the most straightforward of the four methods of language othering discussed in this chapter, in that it entails keeping the two languages as far apart as possible. This practice is clear from the almost complete lack of dual-language books on the islands, in contrast to the situation in Greenland. Those multilingual titles that do exist are primarily aimed at tourists/foreigners. However, publications that may be of interest to Danish readers, such as books about Faroese art, increasingly appear in separate editions – such as, during the research period, *Livandi list/Levende kunst*⁷³ and *Myndir í myndum/Skal vi se på billeder?*⁷⁴ Again, an illusion is created here: the reader can forget the existence of the book in the other language, whereas a bilingual edition constantly reminds the reader of its synergetic nature.

Conclusion

For practical, ideological, political and historical reasons, the Danish language is guaranteed a position in the Faroes for the foreseeable future. The complete removal of Danish, although desired by some, cannot reasonably take place at the present time. Based on evidence from the Faroes, I have argued, however, that various steps can be taken in former

72 The programme for 2009's *Mentanarnátt* is available at: <http://www.torshavn.fo/Default.aspx?pageid=609&NewsItemID=1473> [02.07.2011].

73 SØRENSEN: 2008.

74 BUGGE and DIDRIKSEN: 2009.

colonies to ›other‹ the coloniser's language: to re-think and adapt its use according to the colonised's desire for an independent identity. This ›language othering‹ is based on Spivak's concept of othering. I have argued for the existence of four methods of language othering: reclassification, paratextuality, temporary translation, and separation. In the Faroes, these four methods function within the areas of society where Danish still plays a prominent role. Clearly, the most extreme expression of ›othering‹ is to remove Danish from those domains in which it is no longer required, and, where possible, the Faroese have done this.

It ought to be stressed that, although Danish still plays a key role in certain spheres of Faroese life, most notably the media and education, its position is not static. Over the past ten years, for example, we can confidently assume that there has been a reduction in the use of Danish as an intermediary language in translation, with the advent of dictionaries between Faroese and other European languages. As the beginning of the chapter identified, the close relationship between the coloniser and the colonised meant that colonisation operated differently in the Faroes from elsewhere: the traditional postcolonial distinction between the Other and the other was much harder to determine. Therefore, the distinction could be, and was, blurred. As regards Faroese decolonisation, however, there are clear parallels between the situation on the islands and other, more conventional, postcolonial societies. Many of the linguistic developments that have occurred since the Faroese took control of their own affairs can be seen as symptomatic of the traditional postcolonial desire for an identity.⁷⁵

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75 Cf. DURING 1987, 43.

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To Be or Not to Be a Nation:
Representations of Decolonisation and
Faroese Nation Building in Gunnar Hoydal's
novel *Í havsins hjarta* (2007)

Introduction

In his article »What is a nation?«, originally published in 1882, Ernest Renan discusses a definition of a nation and concludes: »A nation is a soul, a spiritual principle.« According to Renan, two elements constitute a nation: one lies in the past and is a rich common legacy of memories, a history of griefs and triumphs; the other is present-day consent, the wish to live together and perpetuate the heritage one has received: »A heroic past, great men, glory (...), that is the social capital upon which one bases a national idea. (...) A large aggregate of men, healthy in mind and warm of heart, creates the kind of moral conscience which we call a nation.«¹ The reference to Renan's definition of a nation may be of relevance for the interpretation of a novel in which the question is whether or not the inhabitants want their land to be or not to be a nation.

The aim of this article is to explore how decolonisation of the Faroe Islands is represented in Gunnar Hoydal's novel *Í havsins hjarta* (»In the Heart of the Ocean«; 2007) during three important periods of recent history: the first three years after the Second World War, which culminated in the achievement of home rule in 1948; the second half of the 1950s, when a NATO base was established on the islands without Faroese consent; and finally, the economic crises of the 1990s, including the general election in 1998 and negotiations with Denmark about Faroese independence.

In the novel, the situation in 1948 is described from the perspective of the protagonist narrator, who is as a child at the time. In the late 1960s he is a student in Denmark, and in the 1990s he is a politically committed adult who argues in favour of Faroese autonomy. However, this character can easily be identified as the author Gunnar Hoydal, whose auto-fictitious novel represents an argument in the current debate about the relationship between the Faroe Islands and Denmark.

1 RENAN: 1990, 19–20.

The Faroe Islands

The Faroe Islands are situated in the Atlantic Ocean on the submarine ridge between Scotland and Greenland, in or near the ›pump of the ocean‹ or ›heart of the ocean‹ – a term coined by oceanographers to describe the exchange of water between the surface and the ocean floor, between cold and warm currents in the North Atlantic. The title of Gunnar Hoydal's novel *Í havsins hjarta* implies that the novel is about a land at the very centre of the world.

Faroe² is the smallest of the Nordic countries, with approximately 50,000 inhabitants. It has its own language, literature and culture, as well as a Faroese parliament, but still retains its membership of the Kingdom of Denmark. The application of the term ›colonialism‹ may be controversial as regards the relationship between Denmark and the Faroe Islands, although a fundamental aspect of ›colonialism‹ is the extension of a country's territory beyond its original boundaries. The Faroe Islands were once one of several Danish colonies in the north. The islands were seceded to Denmark by Norway in 1814 after the Napoleonic Wars, as one of the conditions of the Treaty of Kiel. However, they were not referred to as a colony but as a dependency.³ The old Faroese parliament was part of a democratic system which defended the rights of the Faroese within the Danish colonial empire and strengthened the Faroese conception of nationhood, until the parliament was abolished by the Danish authorities in 1816 and the Faroe Islands became a county with a Danish governor based in Tórshavn.⁴

The Faroese struggle for decolonisation and nationhood started among Faroese students in Copenhagen in the 1870s. These young people wrote patriotic songs and poems which described the beauty and the power of Faroese nature, and they used literature in their native language to construct a common national understanding. The students ›invented an *original* identity which could legitimize their otherness and demands for freedom‹.⁵ In 1881 the Faroese union⁶ was founded in Copenhagen.

2 In Faroese: Føroyar. ›Faroe‹ is used here as a synonym for ›the Faroe Islands‹.

3 ›bilande«. (PETERSEN: 1995, 2).

4 DEBES: 1982, 28.

5 ØSTERGAARD: 1992, 3.

6 *Føringafelagið í Keypmannahavn* was founded in Copenhagen on 26 January, 1881.

Eight years later, in December 1888, there was a meeting in Tórshavn with the purpose of »discussing how to defend the Faroese language and Faroese customs«.7 The immediate outcome of the meeting of the national movement in Tórshavn was the establishment of the Faroese Union in January 1889, the aims of which were to bring the Faroese language into all areas of Faroese society, and to work for the unity, progress and self-sufficiency of the Faroese people.

During the Second World War, the islands had been isolated from Denmark, as British troops were in charge of Faroe and Denmark was occupied by the Germans. In the chapter of *Í havsins hjarta* entitled »Landið« (»The Land«) – just as in real life – the idea of the Faroe Islands as a nation was explicitly declared by the people who returned there from Denmark after five years without any communication with their homeland. The project of liberating and decolonising the islands and building a Faroese nation was boosted by young idealistic men who were determined to take responsibility and use their education in the service of their country. Karsten Hoydal, Gunnar Hoydal's father, was one of them.⁸

In 1946, a referendum on Faroese national independence was held, and the majority of votes proved that the people wanted their country to be an independent nation. Nevertheless, following political negotiations with Denmark, in 1948 the Faroe Islands achieved home rule within the Danish Kingdom. However, there was and still is a strong national movement in the Faroe Islands and an ongoing discussion about whether or not Faroe should become an independent nation. The project of decolonisation and nation building is the main theme of Gunnar Hoydal's novel *Í havsins hjarta*. In the novel, Hoydal highlights the question of solidarity and liberty: How much is the individual willing to risk or sacrifice in order to benefit the community in an independent nation?

Gunnar Hoydal, his work and its reception

The Faroese author Gunnar Hoydal (b. 1941) is a novelist, a writer of short stories, a poet and an essayist. By profession he is an architect and has been awarded several prizes for his architectural projects and achievements. Furthermore, he is a dedicated participant in the Faroese debate

7 DEBES: 1982, 149, 155; ØSTERGAARD: 1992, 15.

8 SKARÐHAMAR: 2009, 312.

on literature and culture and has written a great number of articles in newspapers and journals, both in Denmark and the Faroe Islands. The majority of his essays are social analyses which he presents with humour and surprising metaphors such as ›the navel of the world‹. A main point in several of Gunnar Hoydal's essays is that the self-insight of the Faroese people is closely bound to their culture. This also applies to the relationship between Faroe and Denmark. The ties to Denmark and the sense of fellowship with Danish literature and culture have been strong and positive. However, the bank crises of the 1990s proved that the Danes did not give priority to strengthening their cultural ties to the Faroe Islands, as they first and foremost wanted to defend the economic actions of the Danish authorities. It was a relief for the Faroese people when the Danes admitted their responsibility for the crises. Gunnar Hoydal insists that what matters in the future are moral attitudes and culture. Culture is social action and of vital importance to the community, and the Faroese people must become active contributors to their culture rather than merely passive recipients. Accordingly, their point of departure has to be their own conditions and resources. Behind all serious action there lie questions of content, reflection and emotion – and then hard work.⁹ This struggle is represented and reflected in Gunnar Hoydal's novels.

Gunnar Hoydal's first novel, *Undir suðurstjørnan*, was published in Faroese in 1991. It was published in Danish as *Stjernerne over Andes* in 1996 and in English as *Under Southern Stars* in 2003. It was received positively. In his review of the novel, Faroese author Carl Jóhan Jensen characterized it as a travelogue on three levels – »a journey in space, in time, and within oneself«¹⁰ – and described it as opening the door to new perspectives in Faroese literature.¹¹ In a Danish review, Erik Skyum-Nielsen described the novel as extremely complex, a conglomeration of genres ranging from epic action to essayistic philosophizing in which an image can give rise to associations that cause the reader to experience a simultaneously confused and pleasant feeling of the contemporariness and proximity of everything.¹² On its publication in English, the novel was

9 HOYDAL: 2001, 168; SKARÐHAMAR: 2006, 42.

10 JENSEN: 1991.

11 Cf. SKARÐHAMAR: 2005, 66.

12 SKYUM-NIELSEN: 1993.

praised by the author Fay Weldon as »a major work of literature – magic, realism, wit and grace, all here in generous abundance«. ¹³

Gunnar Hoydal's second novel *Dalurin fagri* («The Beautiful Valley») was published in Faroese in 1999 and in Danish translation in 2008 under the title *Dalen* («The Valley»). It may be described as a novel with many levels and qualities as regards style, psychology, poetic and humorous passages, criticism of power relations, and descriptions of life and death. The combination of these qualities, and especially the expressionistic descriptions from the perspective of the child protagonist, represents a great leap forward for Faroese literature. ¹⁴ In *Undir suðurstjørnan* as well as in *Dalurin fagri*, power relations are recurrent motifs and are highly significant for a thematic interpretation. In Gunnar Hoydal's first novel most of the action takes place in South America, and Hoydal creates a stark contrast between those in power and the others – a contrast that is also apparent on a smaller scale in references to the homeland of the protagonist, who is also the narrator.

Gunnar Hoydal's novel *Í havsins hjarta* (2007) may be characterised as a post-modern national narrative of the Faroese struggle for political autonomy. The narrative covers more than one hundred years of political, social, cultural and individual history and describes aspects of contrasting attitudes between »the land that wanted to be a land« and »the land that claimed it owned this land«. The novel has a kaleidoscopic composition, where past and present and fragments of the attitudes and experiences of several generations produce changing patterns. Key episodes connected by associations and analogies are developed and interwoven throughout the novel, and political arguments alternate with descriptions of individuals and everyday realism. Situations in the life of the three main characters demonstrate visions, illusions and reality about independence and liberty.

At the end of the 19th century, the oldest generation – a young Danish vicar and his wife, the great grandparents of the narrator of the novel – move from their homeland to a small island country in the ocean. They experience a vast contrast to the academic and liberated culture among the students at the University in Copenhagen, where the vicar's wife – who was also an academic – had attended the lectures of Georg Brandes,

¹³ WELDON: 2003; see also SKARÐHAMAR: 2005.

¹⁴ SKARÐHAMAR: 2006, 83.

and the vicar had become familiar with the Faroese National Movement. The next couple are a young, well-educated fishery expert and his Danish wife. They are the narrator's parents, and they move to Faroe with their children just after the Second World War. The narrator's father is eager to serve his country in his profession as well as in politics, and he is involved in political activities advocating autonomy for the Faroe Islands. The third main character of the novel is the narrator himself, whose position changes from an external to an internal one. He studies architecture and returns from Denmark with his Danish wife and their children at the end of the 1960s. Like his father, he is eager to serve his country with his education as well as on the political front, where he advocates national autonomy for the Faroe Islands.

A Faroese reviewer called the novel a family chronicle, and the novel was regarded as a *roman á clef*, as several of the characters were based on real people who could easily be identified by readers familiar with Faroese culture – past and present. Key episodes connected by associations and analogies are developed and interwoven throughout the novel, and political arguments alternate with descriptions of individuals and everyday realism. Three men and their families from three generations represent the issue of colonialism and the struggle for independence during a hundred-year period that begins in 1889. In rendering the nation anonymous and calling attention to the relationship between individual and collective history in the creation of the nation, *Í havsins hjarta* may be read as a post-modern national narrative. The book has so far not been published in English; therefore the translations of passages from the novel quoted in this article are my own.

The situation in 1945–1948

Faroese citizens who had been living in Denmark during the war returned home in the autumn of 1945. Many of them had great expectations for the future of their country, and on 14 September 1946, a referendum on Faroese independence was held. The majority voted for national autonomy. Ernest Renan's answer to the question ›What is a nation?‹ illustrates the attitude and the courage of the majority of the Faroese population in 1946: »the wish to live together and perpetuate the heritage that one has received« and »a large aggregate of men, healthy in mind and

warm of heart, creates the kind of moral conscience which we call a nation«. ¹⁵

However, after the referendum a commission from the Faroese parliament went to Copenhagen to negotiate independence. They came home with an unexpected result: home rule, which took effect in 1948. Gunnar Hoydal described home rule in the article »Danmark – et stort land« (»Denmark – A big country«), which appeared in the Danish newspaper *Politiken* on 6 April 2000. The article was later published in Faroese in Gunnar Hoydal's collection of articles and essays *Land í sjónum* (»Land in the Sea/Visions of a Land«; 2001): »Home rule means that some authority is in Faroe; however, the highest authority still remains in the Danish parliament and with the Danish government.« ¹⁶

In the novel *Í havsins hjarta* the issue of national autonomy is described partly from a child's perspective. The child's apprehensions are expressed in the opening chapter, during the journey home after the end of the war: »They have been on the ocean for a long time, on their way to somewhere his father calls home.« ¹⁷ In the third chapter, the boy describes the anticipation of the adults and treats the country as if it were a person:

A land was also waiting. A land far out in the ocean. It was waiting for people (...) the land became more and more impatient. Won't my people come home soon? It asked. Please, hurry up, there is so much to be done here, it said, and now our land will also be free. ¹⁸

The little boy tells us about his father's assertions, expectations and thoughts about the relationship between the colonial power and the colony: »But the land had managed well, even if there was no one above them to tell them what to do, do this, do that. The land had managed on its own.« ¹⁹

¹⁵ RENAN: 1990, 19–20.

¹⁶ »Heimastýrið merkir, at ein myndugleiki er í Føroyum, men hægsti myndugleikin er framvegis í fólkatinginum og hjá donsku stjórnini.« (HOYDAL: 2001, 194).

¹⁷ »Tey hava verið leingi í sjónum, tey skulu til eitt, sum papin nevnr heim.« (HOYDAL: 2007, 14)

¹⁸ »Eitt land bíðaði eisini. Eitt land langt burturi í sjónum. Tað bíðaði eftir fólki (...) men landið ótolnaðist meira og meira. Koma fólkin hjá mær ikki heimaftur nú? spurdi tað. Skundið tykkum, her er so nógv at gera, segði tað, og nú skal eisini okkara land verða frítt.« (Ibid., 32).

¹⁹ »Men landið var væl sloppið, sjálvt um eingin hevði staðið uppi yvir tí og sagt við tað, hvat tað skuldi gera, ger so og ger so. Tað hevði landið sjálvst dugað.« (Ibid.).

One of the passengers on board the ship from Denmark demonstrates a contrast to the father's enthusiasm for nation building when he furiously cries out: »There is no land, there is just disagreement between the villages and all sorts of trouble, and those who want to sell the land will always win! But he had come to see the mountains and the light again, and people could do as they liked and imagine they were a land.«²⁰ The man calls the others slaves. His outburst comes just after men have danced the traditional Faroese chain dance, which may be regarded as a national narrative and a symbol performed to reinforce the consciousness of nationality. As John McLeod points out: »A sense of mutual, national belonging is manufactured by the performance of various *narratives, rituals and symbols* that stimulate an individual's sense of being a member of a select group.«²¹ McLeod further refers to Homi K. Bhabha, who argues that »nationalist discourses are also performative and must be continually rehearsed in order to keep secure the sense of deep, horizontal comradeship.«²²

The boy continues to describe the country as if it were a person: »The land has come to welcome us. Welcome home, the land says.«²³ In the chapter »Landið«, which recounts their arrival home and the child's first impressions of the country, the perspectives of the adult narrator and the child he once was merge to humorous effect: »and neither on board nor on land could all the words be found. They were stuck in the throat, people forced the words out, ›God bless our land‹, and we were standing under their Adam's apples, which went up and down ... We had come home.«²⁴

The novel describes the political work of the father. Men gather in the family's house and talk about the country. They also frequently talk about the Faroese parliament, which they do not think much of. The boy does

20 »Har var einki land, tað var bara bygdaklandur og møsn, og teir sum vilja selja landið fóru altíð at vinna. (...) Men hann var komin at síggja fjøllini aftur og ljósið, so kundu fólkinu gera, sum tey vildu og halda seg vera land.« (Ibid., 33, 34).

21 MCLEOD: 2000, 69.

22 Ibid., 118.

23 »Landið er komið út ímóti okkum. Væl komin heim, sigur landið (...) Vit vóru komin til landið.« (HOYDAL: 2007, 48).

24 »og hvørki á skipinum ella í landið fingu tey øll orðini fram. Tey settu seg í hálsin, fólk klíggjaðu, *Gud signe mítt føðiland*, og vit stóðu undir barbakýlum, sum gingu upp og niður. (...) Vit vóru komin til landið.« (Ibid., 56–57).

not understand what parliament is and believes it is a kind of machine that has been thrown into the ocean: »But then parliament popped up again, and nobody knew what it had been doing down there in the ocean. Now the land had to say whether or not it wanted to be a land.«²⁵ The men all agreed that »no man in his right mind could possibly say that the land wasn't a land.«²⁶ The children experience a contrast to their father's point of view when their neighbours speak contemptuously about agitators and ideas of autonomy. Adults as well as children in the neighbourhood stand against each other. »Breaking the bonds would be the same as pulling one's trousers down and being naked.«²⁷ The boy notices disagreement about the situation of the country. The newspapers declare that everything is all right and make jokes about ideas of independence. The father and his friends want to travel around the country »to every corner and say what the newspapers don't say«²⁸. When the result of the referendum is announced, the father rushes in enthusiastically: »The land is free, he shouted. The land wants to be a land!«²⁹

The descriptions from the boy's perspective are sometimes humorous, as both the adult narrator and the reader understand what lies behind his naive conceptions and metaphors. However, his childish descriptions reflect the adult narrator's serious political criticism and his use of irony and caricature: »Home rule lived upstairs. The land was not allowed to be a land, but it had been given a few offices, where leading men sat and signed letters put on their desks by a friendly office manager.«³⁰ The father, who always cycles to his government job, uses bicycle metaphors to describe the colonial power's need for control: »The ties to the big wheel upstairs had to be tightened all the time, and the chains had to be used to tie the land down, he said.«³¹

25 »men so var tingið komið uppáftur, og eingin visti, hvat tað hevði gjørt har niðri í sjónum. Men nú mátti landið siga, um tað vildi vera land ella ikki.« (Ibid., 63.)

26 »einki menniskja við skili kundi halda, at landið ikki var land.« (Ibid.).

27 »Loysing var at loysa sær buksurnar og lata seg úr teimum og standa í ongum.« Ibid.

28 »í hvønn krók og siga tað, sum bløðini ikki søgdu.« (Ibid., 64).

29 »Landið er frítt, rópti hann. Landet vil vera land!« (Ibid., 65)

30 »Uppiá var heimabeitið. Landið slapp ikki at vera land, men hevði fingið nakrar stovur afturfyri, har teir hægstu sótu og skrivaðu undir brøv, sum ein lagaligur stjóri legði fyri teir.« (Ibid., 154).

31 »Bondini til tað stóra hjólið uppi á hæddini omanfyri skuldu táttast í heilum, og returnar skuldu binda landið niður, segði hann.« (Ibid.).

The adult narrator's voice sounds highly critical in the chapter »Í kjallaranum« (»In the Basement«), when he describes the Danish authorities' reaction to the referendum. The Danish king, who – according to the narrator – had done little during the war but ride his horse through the main streets, dissolved the Faroese parliament and summoned the Faroese representatives to Copenhagen to make clear »what they would prefer rather than what the people had decided«. ³² The Danish government claimed that »the people had let themselves be led astray by irresponsible trouble-makers«, ³³ and that now it was important to reverse their opinion. One part of the Danish strategy to keep power over the Faroe Islands was to honour selected important Faroese men with medals. This applied not only to convinced members of the party that wished to preserve the status quo, but also those who had doubts about Faroe's membership of the Danish Kingdom. The narrator refers to the political-psychological arguments used by the Secretary of State, who points out that the old colonial empires had understood the importance of

increasing the attachment of the leading men of their colonies by such methods. It guaranteed that when such men obtained a distinction from the King, it increased not only the respect for the Kingdom in the islands, but also the desire of those thus distinguished to maintain a natural goodwill towards the authority that has honoured them. ³⁴

The title of the chapter »In the Basement« refers to the place where the supporters of independence held their meetings, and has connotations to the work of political resistance. The chapter is extreme in its explicit expression of ideology: »The strong, who claimed they represented all human rights and liberty, had been unmasked as thieves and robbers; they no longer kept power alone, and perhaps there now was a hope for pure freedom and real power to the people.« ³⁵ In this chapter the principle of composition is a broken chronology held together by a unifying theme.

32 »hvat teir heldur vildu hava enn tað sum fólkið hevði samtykt.« (Ibid., 79).

33 »Fólkið hevði latið seg misnýta av ábyrgdarleysum øsarum.« (Ibid.).

34 »knýtt teir leiðandi menninar í sínum undirlondum at sær, men eyðsæd er, at fær tilíkur maður eina viðurkenning frá kongi, tá fer tað ikki einans at skapa virðing fyri ríkiseindini víða um í oyggjunum, men eisini eitt ynski hjá teimum heiðraðu um í sínum komandi verki at varðveita eina vælvild móti tí myndugleika, sum á henda hátt hevir heiðrað teir.« (Ibid., 80).

35 »tey sterku, sum søgdu seg umboða alt heimsins fólkaræði og frælsi, vóru avdúkað sum tjóvar og ránsmenn, tey ráddu ikki longur einsamøll, og kanska var nú vón fyri veruligum frælsi og sonnum mannaræði.« (Ibid., 83–84).

The descriptions of situations and the shifts of scenes occur vertically and horizontally, in time as well as space.

The situation in the second half of the 1950s with the establishment of a NATO radar station

The narrator's parents and their children set out into the world in the mid-1950s because the father is going to do work for the UN in a faraway country. The colonial perspective and the idea of national autonomy are expressed once more when the boy finds a parallel in power relations between the country they have come to and their home country: »Maybe here was another land which claimed to own this land, but now they thought it was enough, now the land wanted to be a land.«³⁶ In the description of the second half of the 1950s, the child's perspective has been replaced by a young man's perspective marked by growing critical reflection. The adult narrator still controls the narration and draws parallels between the exercise of power by other colonial empires and the Faroese struggle for autonomy. Decolonisation and nation building in the relationship between Denmark and the Faroe Islands are illuminated by parallels to the power relations between strong and weak countries. The experiences of the narrator as a child in South America and as a student in Copenhagen are fused with the adult narrator's perspective and his political commitment. Relations between Denmark and Faroe gain an additional perspective during the Cold War. There is a new sort of colonialism when the little country becomes a pawn in the game of the great powers, when an American military presence is established on the islands and the USA exploits the land in the ocean as a buffer against attacks from other great powers. After a couple of years in South America, the children are sent to boarding school in Denmark. However, they spend their school holidays in Faroe, where they observe surveillance, various forms of monitoring, and other effects of the Cold War. After 1947 the Faroe Islands were of great military importance for the Western security policy, and in 1959 it was decided to build a NATO radar station in the mountains above Tórshavn. This was greeted with large-scale protest demonstrations. The decision to build the radar station was not made by the Faro-

36 »Kanska var eisini her hjá teimum eitt annað land, sum helt seg eiga hetta landið, men nú hildu tey tað vera nóg mikið, nú vildi landið sjálvt vera land.« (Ibid., 203).

ese parliament but by the Danish authorities. According to the law governing home rule, Denmark still had full responsibility for foreign affairs and defence policy within the Danish Kingdom.³⁷

The Danish strategy of ›smiling goodwill‹ helped to weaken the critical attitude of the Faroese towards foreign domination, so that they tacitly let themselves be fettered: »Rather than making progress, the land went backwards, as it tacitly let itself be pinioned by a new secret superior force, which was much bigger than the one the land had been accustomed to for centuries.«³⁸

The schoolboy reflects on what the adult narrator sees as the newspaper representation of the common people's naive acceptance of being overridden, for instance by

the new sea defences, which all of a sudden appeared to protect our country, as there was so incredibly much ocean to protect, according to the newspapers. And it was a good thing, the authorities claimed, for skips could easily get into distress... And then they were also supposed to look out for illegal fishing boats, which constantly fished within the three-mile limit and ruined the fishing banks. If they were chased away, our own fishermen could come home and fish here themselves.³⁹

This representation has an undertone of irony, with its references to arguments that turn everything upside down (naval ships are good for the coastal fisheries, etc.) and the irony continues in the boy's argument for the significance of the Danish authorities: »They represented something which was bigger, not only the country they came from, but reason and justice and freedom in all countries.«⁴⁰

Decolonisation and liberty are the unifying motifs in the chapter »In the Basement«, where fragments of narrative leap from 1948 to 1968,

37 SØLVARÁ: 2002, 322.

38 »Heldur enn at taka seg fram gekk landið aftur eftir hæli og varð spakuliga niðurbundið av einum nýggjum loynivaldi, ið var nógv størri enn tað, landið hevði vitað um og vant seg við gjøgnum öldir.« (HOYDAL: 2007, 86).

39 »nýggjari sjóverju, sum knappliga varð skipað at ansa eftir landi okkara, tí her var so óføra nógvur sjógvur at ansa eftir, stóð at lesa í bløðunum. Tað kom eisini ógvuliga væl við, søgdu myndugleikarnir, tí at skip kundu lættliga koma í havsneyð (...) Og so skuldu teir eisini ansa eftir veiðitjóvum, sum í heilum logu innan fyri teir trýggjar fjórðingar úr landi og grópaðu grunnarnar upp. Vóru teir ríknir burtur, kundu okkara fiskimenn koma heimaftur og veiða fiskin sjálvir.« (Ibid., 300).

40 »Tey umbodaðu tað, sum størri var, ikki bara landið, haðandi tey vóru, men skil og rættvísi og frælsi í øllum londum.« (Ibid., 301).

though no dates are mentioned explicitly. The narrator reads political underground papers about »colonies that with much difficulty gained autonomy and about the old empires' attempts to drive in a wedge and keep economic power; about the arms race in the world, about popular resistance to the threat of mass destruction, about peace movements and solidarity across borders.«⁴¹ The basement is the real meeting place for the leaders of the students' political movement in Copenhagen, and it is a metaphor for the contemporary political situation, which the narrator regards as darkness: »The present was a basement with hardly any light.«⁴² The novel's time lapses have at the end of the chapter reached the beginning of the student riots (which culminated in 1968) with »cries at the universities«.⁴³

The narrator ironically describes how »all attempts at making the land into a land seemed to end in words that achieved nothing more than smiling goodwill from the real authorities.«⁴⁴ The latter invited leading Faroese people to parties, where the Danish commissioner led the Faroese chain dance and sang Faroese national songs, arranged royal visits, and gave the country a new church as well as half a bishop.⁴⁵ Once again, the narrator demonstrates the Danish colonialists' strategy of employing flattery in order to soften up and impress the Faroese and hamper the independence movement. The outgoing leader of parliament gave a speech to Faroese students in Copenhagen. He argued for the continued economic dependence of Faroe on Denmark, supporting this with the claim that »nothing of this would have been possible without good cooperation with the brother party and the brother country. How would it otherwise be possible to afford such things in a small and poor country such as ours?«⁴⁶

41 »hjáland, sum við stríði vunu sjálvræði. Um royndirnar hjá teimum gomlu veldunum at seta kilar í og varðveita fíggjarliga ræðið, um vápnadubbingina í heiminum, um fólksligu mótstøði móti hótandi hópoyðingum, um fríðarrørslur og samanhand tvørtur um landamark«. (Ibid., 86).

42 «Nútiðin var ein kjallari við næstan ongum ljósi.» (Ibid.).

43 »Rópini á lærustovnum«. (Ibid.).

44 »royndir at gera landið til land tyktust at enda í orðum, sum ikki komu longur enn til eina smílandi vælvild hjá tí veruliga valdinum.« (Ibid., 85).

45 Ibid., 85, 87.

46 »einki av hesum hevði verið gjørligt uttan í góðari samvinnu við bróðirflokkinn og bróðurlandið, tí hvussu skulu ráðini annars verið í einum lítlum og fátøkum landi sum okkara?« (Ibid., 88).

The representation of unconscious and naive attitudes is strongly critical. Farmers take work building and running the NATO station for the sake of profit and good income for themselves: »and then it was of less importance who was behind it. Had it not always in one way or another been men from abroad who were behind everything in this country, he asked.«⁴⁷ When the narrator later on as a student again is faced with the argument of distress at sea as a justification for the NATO base, he is annoyed: »Did they think we were all that naive? (...) Always the same question about who owned the land or not. Instead one should ask who owned the world.«⁴⁸

The narrator is ironic in his criticism of the Danish exploitation of The Faroe Islands as »an eye«, as an observation post, weapon store and defence policy buffer in the arms' race between East and West.

It was all a question of threatening with fire, attack or perhaps destruction, so that everyone at home in the big land could have peace and sleep safely at night (...) And of course, if a mistake should occur, if for instance the other party succeeded in blinding this eye, at least it was better that it happened far away from civilised and densely populated countries.⁴⁹

The political criticism of the narrator targets the Danish authorities' treatment of the Faroes. The Danish parliament had decided that foreign military forces in times of peace are illegal in Denmark. However, this did not apply to the Faroe Islands. The decision was taken not by »the people who lived in the country but by others, even if it was about their land and their life or death. Everything was in the hands of a greater power far away in another part of the world.«⁵⁰ People ask who sold the land and »left it to foreigners to decide over«.

47 »og tá hevði tað minni at siga, hvør stóð aftanfyrri. Høvdu ikki altíð fremmandir menn, so ella so, staðið aftanfyrri alt í hesum landi, spurdi hann.« (Ibid., 306).

48 »Um teir hildu okkum vera skítbýtt øll somul?« (...) Altíð hesin sami spurningurin, hvør átti landið ella ikki. Teir máttu heldur spurt, hvør átti verðina.» (Ibid., 360–361).

49 »Tað var alt samalt ein spurningur um at hótta við eldi og yvirgangi ella kanska heldur við undirgangi, so at øll heima í tí stóra landinum kundu fáa frið og sova trygt um náttina (...) sjálvandi, skuldi nakað mistak hent, sum til dømis at tað eydnaðist hinum partinum at blinda hetta eygað, so var í øllum føri betri, at tað hendi langt frá framkomnum og fólkaríkum londum.« (Ibid., 307).

50 »tey menniskjuni, sum livdu í hesum landinum, sjálvt um talan var um teirra land og teirra lív ella deyða. Tað lá alt í hondunum á størri valdi langt burturi og í øðrum heimspørtum.« (Ibid., 308).

The description of the homecoming of the leader of the Faroese parliament after meetings in Copenhagen in 1957 provides a parallel to the homecoming of the Faroese representatives in 1947. The leader of parliament returns with a paper he has been given by »the foreign power«⁵¹ and is represented as a naive lackey when he reassures people that the land will be given free roads and employment.⁵² Danish supremacy over the Faroe Islands is connected to the dominance of the colonial powers and their resistance to decolonisation in other places in the world: »The black and the yellow countries. It was very hard to loosen old ties (...). The old colonial empires would not give away what they held to be theirs. Possessions, the countries we possess, they said.«⁵³

The situation in 1992–98:

From bank crisis to general election and negotiations

In the article »Danmark – et stort land«, Gunnar Hoydal describes how Danish economic support of Faroe became a block grant so that the Faroese themselves could decide how the money was to be spent. Too many overlarge bank loans were given for investments, and this eventually caused problems in the economy of the Faroe Islands. The consequences were that the Danish authorities placed the Faroese government under their administration despite home rule in the Faroes.⁵⁴ The strategy of The Danish Bank proved that in the Danish administration there were more important interests than those of the Danish Kingdom. However, Gunnar Hoydal rejects the claim of Danish media that the Faroese thought the Danes alone were to blame, and says that in the final analysis, »the irresponsibility was our own«. Gunnar Hoydal writes that Gallup polls showed that about three quarters of the Faroese population thought that the Faroes ought to have full responsibility for their own country. The question was how long the stage of transition should be. Further, there is the issue of being part of the Danish Kingdom. Faroe had never been asked to accept the Danish kingdom or the Danish constitution. Hoydal

51 »útlenska yvirvaldinum«. (Ibid.).

52 Ibid., 311, 312, 314.

53 »Tey svørtu londini og tey gulu. Tað var ringt at sleppa burtur úr gomlum hafti (...). Tey gomlu veldini vildu ikki lata tað frá sær, sum tey hildu seg eiga. Hjalondini, londini hjá okkum, søgdu tey.« (Ibid., 363).

54 HOYDAL: 2001, 196–199.

highlights the fact that there still exists no basic agreement between Denmark and the Faroe Islands, but it is time to establish one that both parties can approve⁵⁵.

In the novel's description of the bank crises in the 1990s, the narrator's criticism targets the Danish authorities as well as the Faroese themselves. The discourse of the novel sometimes approaches the discourse of essays and articles with its informative and argumentative descriptions of changes in the economy, investments and rent rates. The mentality of the people is described partly as opportunistic and profiteering, partly as cautious, partly as credulous: »Nobody was able to tell precisely how things were, and most people would rather not ask too much, as questions might lead to doubt and uncertainty, then it would not last long until confidence was gone. Everything was based on confidence.«⁵⁶

The novel also targets Faroese attitudes and actions, criticising politicians and other leaders who let themselves be persuaded and flattered. The skipper in the chapter »Undir bergi« (»Below the Cliffs«) passes judgment on his fellow citizens, who want to secure their own economy by belonging to Denmark: »Slaves (...), bought and sold the whole gang. This is not a land, for here is no nation, and cheers for all the money we got for being nice and obedient.«⁵⁷

In the last chapter of the novel, »Tinden« (»The Peak«), several generations' anticipations and experience of coming home are woven into the narration of a political hike to the peak of the highest mountain in the country in which hundreds of people participate. Still no dates are mentioned, but it must in connection with the election in 1998, where the independence parties wanted to form a coalition in order to work for sovereignty for the Faroe Islands. Accordingly the election served like a new referendum about sovereignty. If the majority voted for independence, people would finally have come home to their own land and their own right to rule their own country. The novel ends before the defeat of the independence parties is a fact, and the land has not yet demonstrated that it does not want to be a land.

55 Ibid.

56 »Eingin dugdi at siga akkurát, hvussu vorðið var, og tey flestu hildu vera best ikki at spyrja ov nær, tí at spurningar kundu skapa iva og mistreysti, og tá var tað so skjótt at álitið kundi vikna. Alt bygdí á álit.« (HOYDAL: 2007, 394).

57 »Trælir (...) keyptir trælir heila lortíð, her var einki land, tí her einki fólk, og skál fyri øllum pengunum, sum vit fingi fyri at halda kjaft og vera fit.« (Ibid., 124).

Conclusion

In *Í havsins hjarta* the relationship between Denmark and The Faroe Islands is represented as ambivalent. The feeling of belonging to the Kingdom of Denmark is contradicted by the Faroese urge for freedom, and the same is the case with the contradiction between economic convenience and responsibility. The novel highlights the question of solidarity and autonomy. How much is the individual willing to risk or sacrifice in order to benefit the advantages of the community in an independent nation? The opening sentence of the novel states that the country itself is dancing on the edge between pride and shame. The implicit criticism in the novel concerns the lack of will of the Faroese citizens to risk some of their individual comfort in order to build their own nation. The novel is above all a story of a land that wants to be a nation, but fails because of the population's lack of courage, vision and will to make (in Renan's words): »the sacrifices which demand the abdication of the individual to the advantage of the community«.58

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Greenland

BIRGIT KLEIST PEDERSEN

Greenlandic Images and the Post-colonial:
Is it such a Big Deal after all?

Born in Greenland to a Greenlandic mother and a Danish father, three years after the Danish constitutional amendment that ratified Greenland as an equal part of the national community, I was raised in the post-colonial era and have lived in Greenland for more than half of my life. During this time, I have found myself in the midst of a number of shifting and contradictory discourses reflecting various law reforms and political currents. These included *danification* in the 1960s, *greenlandisation* in the 1970s and 1980s, and a period of increasing self-reflection from the late 1990s onwards. Thus, the interpretations I offer in this context are inevitably colored by my specific Greenlandic-Danish cultural background. Obviously, my background is specific, as a »reciprocal fusion culture« (I am deliberately avoiding the post-colonial buzz word »hybrid«)¹ is far from being identifiable in any clear-cut way. Although remaining aware of the pitfalls of over-communicating and under-communicating,² the selected aspects in this article are subject to my general experiences and perhaps expressing reductionist, essentialist, conflicting or ambivalent viewpoints. I will in the following present some tendencies in Greenland in relation to the question of post-colonialism, which here is understood as the era after 1953, when Greenland's constitutional status changed from being a Danish colony to becoming a Danish administrative county.

What kind of post(-)colonialism?

I lean on the definition of post-colonialism provided by literary scholar Hans Hauge, who has edited an anthology containing Danish translations of a selected sample of key articles by some of the most relevant post-colonial critics³ since the rise of the concept in a literary context.⁴

1 Cf. FRELLO: 2005, 88ff.

2 Cf. ERIKSEN: 2010.

3 In *The Empire Writes Back* (1989), the Australian professors of English Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin focus on post-colonial literatures mainly from the British Commonwealth countries and from a postmodernist angle; South African

Providing a short cut to post-colonialism, the pedagogical introduction by Hauge gives a historic overview, and it expounds two main tendencies of post-colonialism. One tendency is to hyphenate the term: Post-colonialism thus refers to the time after the actual (constitutional) end of colonialism. According to Hauge, Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin's book *The Empire Writes Back* (1989) is the landmark publication of this tendency, which is also referred to as the »Commonwealth line« or »Australian line«. This line focuses on post-colonial fictional literatures and on the reception of these, as well as on literary critics.⁵

The other tendency, the »American line«, does not hyphenate post-colonialism, which thus almost becomes synonymous with neocolonialism in Gayatri Spivak's meaning of the term, i.e. the continuation of colonialism in spite of it having come to a constitutional end.⁶ Within this line, the landmark publication is considered to be *Orientalism* (1978) by Edward Said, which focuses on philosophical aspects and theory, whereas the focus on literature is scaled down.⁷

As to the definition of post-colonialism, Hauge argues that post-colonialism is not a theory or a method in itself: »Post-colonialism is an overall designation of a wide range of different and often contradictory theories«. ⁸ A post-colonial reading of any text thus focusses on the marginalized, the peripherized, and the »absence of the imperial imprint«. ⁹

professor of English Benita Parry (1996) uses Frantz Fanon's ideas of resistance theory and theorizing resistance; the American professors of English Abdul JanMohamed and David Lloyd (1987) base their theory on »minority intellectuals«, minority discourses (i.e. the marginalized intellectuals, who in their view are seen and treated as »bastards«); Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (1985) bases her ideas on deconstruction, classic Marxism and the subaltern/marginalized, with a focus on women's critic of imperialism; Chandra Talpad Mohanty (1988) focuses on feminism, race and globalization; Robert J. C. Young (2000) pays tribute to the French philosopher Jacques Derrida and focuses on fissures within literary texts; being an anti-Marxist, Homi K. Bhabha (1994) bases his ideas on psychoanalysis and deconstruction, supporting Fanon's ideas to some degree – his focus is on the marginalized and the excluded (cf. HAUGE: 2007).

4 According to Hauge, Canadian literary critic, John Moss was the first to use the word »postcolonial« in a literary context in 1975. Generally the concept of post(-)colonialism throve from the 1990s onward (ibid., 8).

5 Ibid., 9ff.

6 Ibid., 7.

7 Ibid., 15ff.

8 Ibid., 17.

9 Ibid., 20.

Moreover, it focusses on everything that is excluded and at the same time constituted – the *something* that forms »The Constitutive Other«. ¹⁰

Originally, post-colonial literature meant »literature written in English in the countries colonized by British emigrants«, ¹¹ an idea that can be transferred to any literature from former colonized countries, Greenland included. Quoting Elleke Boehmer's definition, post-colonial literature is: »[...] literature which critically examines the colonial circumstances«. ¹² Post-colonial literatures – or images in a broad sense – thus cover both: texts written by representatives of former colonized countries as well as literature that expresses a critical approach to colonialism. This means that the inhabitants of former colonies now living abroad and representatives of former colonizing countries are included too, as long as they take a critical stance to the issue of colonial imperialism in primary texts, as well as in secondary or theoretical texts.

Decolonization again and again

As generally known from former colonized countries, a change of constitutional status brings along a vast range of implications and complications that for decades are felt on both the individual and the collective level, affecting a country's culture, economics, education and politics, as well as its mental and psychological makeup. In the context of Greenland, these post-colonial implications have been described for more than fifty years, mostly by non-Greenlandic journalists, documentary filmmakers, musicians, artists, writers, and scholars, and they have been the subject of students' degree theses, dissertations etc. However, they have to a lesser extent been described by Greenlanders themselves. Ironically, all this has happened at such a pace and implies such a quantity of knowledge about critical post-colonial texts that Greenlanders are hardly able to contribute with their own reflections – at the same pace and on their own terms. At times, it even seems impossible to reflect on whether the texts produced by non-Greenlanders are relevant for them or not. The Norwegian-Danish author Kim Leine's latest novel *Profeterne i Evigheds-*

¹⁰ Ibid., 21.

¹¹ Ibid., 7.

¹² Ibid., 8.

fjorden (2012)¹³ has been met with positive reviews by almost all Danish critics.¹⁴ Following the publication of the novel, a number of media focused on Greenland and colonialism for almost one month. In an interview with the Danish daily newspaper *Information*, Kim Leine raised the question of Greenlanders' alleged anger towards the Danes:

[...] it has been important for me that people understand the anger Greenlanders feel towards the Danes [...]. Greenlanders feel embarrassed and ashamed of being written about by Danes. I have been told that people who have not even read *Kalak* [Leine's first novel], hate it; they basically take a strong aversion to it. But they are so well mannered that they do not confront you. [...] This aversion has its origins in the way Danish media represent Greenland [...]: documentaries exposing ugly blocks of flats, neglected children, alcohol and nepotism [...]. [Greenland is] just as corrupt as North Korea, it has been said. Greenland is described as being stuck in between beauty and decay.¹⁵

In another article from *Information's* series on Greenland, a number of people were confronted with Leine's remarks on Greenlanders' alleged anger towards Denmark, among them yours truly and Kirsten Thisted, who has been a productive post-colonial critic related to Greenlandic literature and media. Thisted replied – in line with my own view expressed in the article:

Greenlanders are actually in a completely different situation today than many Danes think. The young generation is actually not at all concerned with the question of whether anything is Danish or Greenlandic. As far as they are concerned, it is a question of finding themselves in relation to their parents and their own understanding of what it is to be a Greenlander. Just like in the rest of the world, the individual – much more than a common sense of belonging – is placed in the center. [...] Their parents stirred up the colonial rebellion, now the young are rebelling against them. It is a rebellion against the perception of Greenlanders as indigenous people – as people of nature – because this has nothing to do with reality any longer. The confrontation is thus not directed toward the Danes, but toward their parents' imagined idea of Greenlandic identity. [...] The colonial rebellion with Denmark happened over 30 years ago and was a theme dealt with by a number of writers. These include Moses Olsen, who began writing short stories on the subject in the 1970s, and Aqaluk

13 The title refers to the historic Greenlandic couple Håbakuk (1755–1798) and Maria Magdalena (1755–1802), the self-proclaimed prophets of Kangerlussuaq Fjord near Maniitsoq in the 1780s. After the tragic death of their child, Maria Magdalena received different revelations, which laid the foundation of a local religious fanaticism lasting for a few years (cf. LIDEGAARD: 1986).

14 HORNBAEK: 2012.

15 SYBERG: 2012, 4. All translations from Greenlandic and Danish by Birgit Kleist Pedersen.

Lynge, who published poems about it in the 1980s. Today, the question is more about finding oneself as a person in a global reality.¹⁶

Regarding the underlying discussion of who – in line with Said's *Orientalism* – has the right to represent, Danish post-colonial critic and journalist Bolette Blaagaard argues in the same article that Danes now should listen to what Greenlanders have to say, despite the good intentions of non-Greenlanders such as Kim Leine. However by the same token, Blaagaard herself arrogates the right to argue on behalf of Greenlanders, who, according to her, have grown tired of Danes telling them who they are and what they ought to do. She argues:

The interesting thing is just to be aware about what is on Greenlanders' minds, be it about colonialism or not. The point is to be able to listen. Is it possible to keep silent for five minutes and listen to what is being said, instead of coming with one's own theories all the time? [...] We need to take over as they cannot speak their own case, is what the whole idea of the colonial era and the white man's burden has been about. Even though Leine's project seems sympathetic, he still is not a Greenlander. Maybe we should listen to them for once. Actually, they are perfectly able to both write and speak.¹⁷

One of the Greenlanders who are perfectly »able to write and speak« is Sara Olsvig, anthropologist and one of the two Greenlandic members of the Danish parliament, elected for the *Inuit Ataqatigiit* Party (IA). Olsvig sums up the question of decolonization related to the art scene in few, but clear words:

[...] the process of decolonization takes time and it costs energy and mental effort – much more than one might expect. What you have been inclined to forget is that even the thought of decolonization itself contributes to adhering to this process.¹⁸

In line with Olsvig's viewpoint, my main argument is that even the circulation and repetitive application of the term »post(-)colonialism« is part of a (post-)colonialist discourse applied at the expense of the former colonized, who are struggling to find their place in the globalized world – freed from the straitjacket of post-colonial discourse with all its connotations and layers of hegemony and misunderstood good intentions. Greenlanders can represent themselves, *when* and *where* they choose to do so. However, this does not mean that non-Greenlanders ought to »shut up«

16 RELSTER: 2012, 4.

17 Ibid.

18 OL SVIG: 2010, 14.

about what is going on in Greenland, as Blaagaard seems to suggest. Interesting and slightly entertaining in this case is that one non-Greenlander with good intentions is being told by another non-Greenlander with similarly good intentions what to do and what to let be on behalf of Greenlanders!

It seems from my point of view as if the discourses in Greenland have now reached a turning point where they – as if by centrifugal force¹⁹ – are moving away from the narrative of being a former colony with strong nationalistic under- and overtones, a discourse which for a long time has been dominant in the public as well as in the private sphere. However, along with the centrifugal tendencies (i.e. increasing diversity) and the influence of global reality – especially within creative fields such as fashion, literature, music, dance, theatre and art – a simultaneous centripetal force seems to be at work, consisting of observable key symbols and key scenarios²⁰ In a paper titled »Culture isn't something you put on on Sundays«,²¹ I offered – inspired by anthropologist Sherry B. Ortner's *Key Symbols* (1973) – ways of analyzing culture in terms of »cultural key symbols« and »cultural key scenarios« that are publicly accessible and therefore observable in a Greenlandic context.

Cultural key symbols and key scenarios can be identified partly by their continual recurrence, partly by their »sacredness«. These »summarizing symbols« cannot easily be contested without creating a backlash against the value-laden symbols that people get very emotional about, symbols such as language, the flag, the national anthem and the national costume.²² Besides »summarizing symbols«, Ortner suggests the category »elaborating symbols«, which cover the recurrent events in any society – key scenarios – which structure and provide ways of how one is expected to behave efficiently in social contexts.

As a third category the paper suggests »renewing symbols«, which cover the forces that question or challenge the summarizing and the elaborating symbols and try to reinterpret the same symbols while Greenland simultaneously with ever increasing intensity interacts with the rest

19 The term centrifugal force is inspired by the Finn Breinholt Larsen's use of this term in his master's thesis on conflict-solving strategies in pre-colonial Greenland (LARSEN: 1982).

20 PEDERSEN: 2011/2012.

21 »Kultur er ikke noget man tager på om søndagen!« (Ibid.).

22 Cf. KLEIVAN: 1991; PEDERSEN: 2011; PETERSEN: 1985.

of the world. Renewing symbols are thus not new symbols, and their emergence does not mean that Greenlandic cultural and identity markers, the key symbols, are being rejected. However, the key symbols and key scenarios are subject to negotiation and analysis. Especially during the last few decades, a growing number of talented artists (in the broad sense of the word) and musicians have been experimenting with re-interpretations of key symbols.

There is no such thing as *a* Greenlandic culture; there are many cultures at play – constantly, every day. Culture is currently subject to negotiation and as such is changing according to historical interests and to interaction with the rest of the world. Culture will always reflect a community in which a specific *ethnie*²³ acts and expresses itself according to the symbols that make sense to it – that is to say, the symbols that are worth maintaining, worth developing and worth re-interpreting. In this context I have chosen to focus on images or texts in the broad sense, such as they are used in Greenlandic society by Greenlandic protagonists and much less so on the meanings produced by Greenlanders living abroad, as they represent another sub-narrative – almost being part of Greenland, but not quite, to put it in Homi Bhabha's words.²⁴

Self-government and post-colonialism

The issue of Greenland being a victim of an oppressive colonial power to me seems to be an act of exotic self-worship and the cultivation of the concept of being colonized – in the non-hyphenated postcolonial sense. This sentiment has been expressed by many people, including Anda Uldum, an up-and-coming politician born in 1979, the year in which the Greenlandic parliament was established. Uldum ran for election on 2 June 2009 – and was elected into parliament for the Democratic Party²⁵: »I was just in time to taste the colonial era, and it did not taste good!« he said.²⁶

23 Cf. SMITH: 1994.

24 BHABHA: 1994.

25 The social-liberal Democratic Party (*Demokraatit*) was founded in 2002. The party is skeptical towards Greenlandic independence. Together with the socialist *Inuit Ataqatigiit* (IA) and moderately conservative *Kattusseqatigiit Partiiat* it formed a coalition government between 2009 and 2013.

26 KRISTENSEN: 2009, 40–41; PEDERSEN: 2011, 141.

However, most of the young generation, who have been brought up with the home rule government, have no passionate feelings about the traumatic post-colonial Greenland-Denmark issue, a view expressed by Malik Kleist²⁷, the lead singer of the popular rock band Chilly Friday²⁸ from Nuuk:

We don't write nationalistically. You know, now the sun is shining, nature is beautiful and »Look, a nice seal!«. It has become a facade behind which you hide. Our texts are more personal and much stronger. Deeper, isn't that what you call it? They are about suicide, drunkenness and children being left on the streets, or children playing outside in the middle of the night because they don't dare to go home. So far, a lot of people have hidden behind the excuse that the Danes destroyed our hunting culture. That became an excuse for drinking and wallowing in self-pity, but in modern Greenland we have to move on. Greenlandic youth wishes to live a proud and a good life instead of being pathetic. We don't want to use our parents' bad excuses.²⁹

It was also the band Chilly Friday that, in their music video *Sialuit* (»Rain«),³⁰ shifted the focus from sympathizing with suicides (in line with the predominant excuse of being victimized by the colonizers) to rejecting the suicides' selfish action. The video was produced on the initiative of PAARISA, the Greenlandic Office of Health and Preventive Measures. Its distinct message to potential suicides is »stop the pathetic self-pitying – respect your life and the people who care about you«. When teaching youngsters how to make video productions at a youth club in Nuuk, another member of the band Chilly Friday, Alex Andersen, met three teenage boys who would later form the rap/hip-hop³¹ band Prussic. They released their first CD, *Misiliineq Siulleq* (»First Try«), in 2003, selling 4,000

27 Malik Kleist turned to film production in 1999 (short films, documentaries, music videos) and has been working at the Greenland Broadcasting Corporation since 2000 as a photographer, technical editor, sound editor and technical coordinator and was involved in most of the youth programs from 2004 to 2009. He also directed and wrote the screenplay for the first Greenlandic horror movie *Qaqqat Alanngui* (»The Shadows of the Mountains«; 2011). The movie was produced by Tunit Productions, which Kleist is also involved in. See www.tunit.gl.

28 Two of Chilly Friday's albums have sold 8,000 copies, which means that every eighth person in Greenland had bought one of the band's records by the summer of 2002.

29 Cited in SØRENSEN: 2002, 8

30 Chilly Friday's lyrics are predominantly in Greenlandic, but some are also in English. Watch the music video »Sialuit« on Chilly Friday's homepage: www.chillyfriday.gl.

31 The very first Greenlandic hip hop/rap group Nuuk Posse released its first album in 1992, the lyrics being partly in Greenlandic, partly in Danish.

copies within the first year and thus being awarded a silver disc³². The lyrics, which are in Greenlandic only, created a stir all over Greenland because of the harsh and very direct wordings. Moreover, the lyrics reflected the boys' own experiences and backgrounds. This was made clear to the audiences through a variety of youth programs on TV, interviews in local and Danish newspapers, and presentations of the band on a variety of websites.³³ The lyrics criticize Greenlandic society for still being in an embryonic state and hiding from its »true« problems, and Greenlanders who keep complaining, but are not able to pull themselves together.³⁴ According to Prussic's lyrics, the post(-)colonial issue provides a poor excuse for not facing reality.

However, it seems as if the hip-hoppers and rappers from the 1990s and the first decade of the millennium³⁵ have more or less disappeared from the air. *Atlantic Music*, a record store and label based in Nuuk, has, according to its owners, stopped recording this genre as it does not sell anymore – the texts are too negative, they say.³⁶ Instead, the old bands from the 1980s become more popular again – which becomes obvious from the number of concerts going on all over Greenland, where »singable« nationalistic songs from the time around the establishment of home rule are performed. Now and then I ask my students why these bands are so popular; they answer that they feel there is much more power in the lyrics, that one can scream along and feel united with the band and with the rest of the audience. Referring to Michael McNeill's theory, Iben Andersen and Andreas Otte have in their joint master's dissertation on popular music in Nuuk called this phenomenon *muscular bonding*³⁷. Muscular bonding has to do with the universal appeal of collectively moving, singing and feeling joy – and through this kind of collective ritual obtain-

32 In Greenland, 3,000 sold copies mean a silver disc, while 5,000 sold copies mean a gold disc.

33 For example www.atlanticmusicshop.gl; www.redbarnet.dk (a Danish organization called »Save the Child«, where some of the lyrics are presented, also in Danish translations).

34 PEDERSEN: 2008, 91–105.

35 For example Nuuk Posse from 1992, Peand-El from 2005; Maasi and Prussic from 2006; Don Maliko from 2007 and TuuMotz from 2007.

36 ROSSEN: 2011.

37 ANDERSEN and OTTE: 2010, 113. Andreas Otte is an active member of the Greenlandic rock band Nanook and has recently finished a PhD project about the underground music scene in Nuuk.

ing a kind of momentary euphoria. American psychologist Wray Herbert points out:

Anthropologists and cultural historians have offered up a variety of theories about synchrony over the years, mostly having to do with group coherence. One theory, for example, holds that various communities benefit from the actual physical synchrony – or »muscular bonding« – which builds group cohesiveness. Another idea is that synchronous activities lead to »collective effervescence« – positive emotions that break down the boundaries between self and group.³⁸

In my view the popularity of the bands from the 1980s is more a question of nostalgia and »collective effervescence« than an expression of rebelliousness towards the former colonizers, a phenomenon, which, I believe, can also be witnessed in other parts of the world. Along with the nostalgia wave, an alternative »movement« of Greenlandic underground musicians has arisen in form of festivals in recent years. In 2001, the musicians Kunuk Flügge and Miki Hegelund organized the first Nuuk Underground Festival, which took place in a small club house used by folk dancers (N.A.I.P), close to the colonial harbor. Flügge and Hegelund said in an interview with Greenlandic newspaper *Sermitsiaq*:

We got the idea [for the festival] when we realized that there was no respect for bands who haven't released a CD yet. The big music venues can't hire the smaller [less known] bands as they cannot attract a larger audience. This also applies to bands who play alternative music and who can't attract as many fans as they would like to because you find very little understanding for the new kind of music genres here in Greenland.³⁹

The marginalized manifest themselves. In line with the above, Lu Berthelsen, one of the organizers of the subsequent festival in 2011, in an interview with *KNR* (Greenland Broadcasting Corporation), addressed a general lack of small clubs where anything but mainstream music is played:

There are many experimental bands in Greenland that are never given a chance to perform at Katuaq or Godthåb Hallen, [...] the underground bands have [in contrast to the mainstream bands] a lot of emotional depth, wildness and joy, and this is transmitted to the audience [...].⁴⁰

Increasing criticism has been targeted at the promotion of mainstream music by *Atlantic Music*, as well as at one-sided music reviews. The edi-

38 HERBERT: 2009, I.

39 FLÜGGE and HEGELUND: 2010.

40 HUSSAIN: 2011.

tor of the music magazine *Fuzzi*, Inunnguaq Petrussen, questions whether releases from *Atlantic Music* actually reflect the music scene in Greenland – in his opinion the studio has gained too much influence on the music market.⁴¹ His point is as follows:

Every time Atlantic Music releases a CD, the media is on the spot with interviews and it gets played on the radio. Other recording studios ought to have same possibilities. [...] The Koda Awards are given almost exclusively to »artists« affiliated to Atlantic Music! The music on [overseas] flights is dictated by Atlantic Music! Musicians from Atlantic Music get all the media attention! The Akisuanerit Festival is Atlantic Music's festival; no other musicians are welcome. Pilersuisoq⁴² deals exclusively with Atlantic Music.⁴³

After a heated debate about the above statement, Petrussen later pointed out that his critique had mostly been targeted at the lack of media coverage received by independent bands. In spite of being involved with *Atlantic Music* himself, Petrussen still questions the fairness of the selection of bands at the prestigious Akisuanerit Festival organized by the music label. His aim is to encourage inclusion of hitherto marginalized bands.⁴⁴

However, one underground band, Small Time Giants⁴⁵ from Qaqortoq, have managed to achieve success even outside Greenland. The musicians have left their underground position and now play concerts all over Greenland and perform at prestigious venues such as the Tivoli in Copenhagen and the world famous Roskilde Festival. The band was listed as no. 1 on *iTunes Denmark* right after the digital release of their album *Six Shades of Heart*; their music has been described as »[...] oblique handmade post-rock, [...] romantic and about unhappy souls [...]!«⁴⁶

Summing up the above, one could argue that in terms of music, the power relationship has shifted from the post-colonial Denmark-Greenland aspect towards internal power struggles and the question of who has got the right to represent whom on behalf of the actually very diverse music scene. In general, the young seem to have moved away from the »abrogation process«, i.e. the fiery seriousness of back-to-the-Inuit-roots strategy,

41 PETRUSSEN: 2011a.

42 *Pilersuisoq* is Greenland's largest trade chain operating all over Greenland.

43 Ibid.

44 PETRUSSEN: 2011b.

45 See <http://www.smalltimegiants.com>.

46 NORDATLANTENS BRYGGJE: 2012.

in Fanon's sense⁴⁷, towards a »hybrid cultural appropriation practice«⁴⁸, which means that one mixes one's own intellectual property with anything useful found in the world, thereby making new creative compositions, influenced by global media.⁴⁹ Fanon's theory of the third phase of decolonization, calling for liberation and emancipation through armed rebellion has thus never been an option in Greenland; instead a peaceful strategy of ethno-politics – externally as well as internally – has been appropriated in dialogue with the surrounding world.

Theatre

On 1 January 2011 Greenland eventually got a theatre law, and against the rules enthusiastic applause was heard from the parliament hall balcony, which was crowded with local artists. As a consequence of the law, the National Theatre was established on 31 March 2011, opening with a production of *Robinson Crusoe*⁵⁰, a Danish-Greenlandic version of the classic performed by two Greenlandic actors, dark-complexioned Mike Fencker Thomsen as the indigenous Friday and fair-complexioned Axel Raahauge as the shipwrecked white man Crusoe. The play was directed by the Norwegian head of the National Theatre, Svenn Syrin and his Greenlandic wife, Makka Kleist, who has been a prominent actress since the 1970s.⁵¹

47 Cf. FANON: 1963. Frantz Fanon (1925–1961), Martiniquean philosopher, psychiatrist and revolutionary author, one of the most influential thinkers in the field of post-colonial studies. In *The Wretched of the Earth* (1963, orig. 1961: *Les damnés de la terre*) he sketched out three stages within the decolonization process: 1) Assimilation: At this stage, the colonized intellectual tries to become like the colonizer; 2) Abrogation is the stage where the colonized try to recover their lost cultural »roots« by submerging themselves in the pre-colonial past. The intellectual wishes to withdraw from the Western culture, as he feels he is being swallowed up by it and is losing himself. This stage is characterized by denigrating and rejecting the colonizers' values; 3) Appropriation (cf. JØRHOLT: 2004) is characterized by a prosperous, rebellious literature, revolutionary literature, and (authentic) national literature. An increasing number of men and women engage in social action, appealing to their countrymen and urging them to work directly toward a new reality (cf. PEDERSEN: 2011).

48 JØRHOLT: 2004.

49 Cf. *ibid.*; THISTED: 2011.

50 www.taseralik.gl. See also Just's chapter in this volume.

51 The original play is titled *Crusoe*, written by British dramatist Keith Johnstone and performed for the first time in London in 1969.

Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* from 1719 was the first novel ever to be translated into Greenlandic. From 1862, the translation was published as a serial novel in Greenland's first national newspaper, *Atuagagdliutit*. As Karen Langgård, specialist⁵² in the earliest Greenlandic newspapers, points out, the choice of *Crusoe* »is interesting [...] because the translation is followed by a short review by the missionary J. Kjær, who writes that the novel is intended to help the Greenlandic population become wiser.«⁵³

The decision to translate a piece of foreign literature was generally made from the point of view that it should first of all be devotional and morally and ethically useful, and secondly entertaining⁵⁴. The same strategy was, by the way, implemented in the selection of the movies sent for circulation in Greenland until 1971.⁵⁵

Approximately 150 years after the publication of *Robinson Crusoe* in *Atuagagdliutit*, the criteria have been turned upside down. The play *Robinson Crusoe* is a humoristic and satiric dramatization of Defoe's novel in which all the moral under- and overtones are gone and only the entertaining aspect is left. British dramatist Keith Johnstone, who originally wrote the play »focuses on the British's omnipresent urge to subjugate other peoples and their natural resources – under the pretext of redemption and civilizing the heathens.«⁵⁶ In his version, the roles of Crusoe and Friday are deconstructed. The native, Friday, is far from being naïve and grateful, as depicted by Defoe. On the contrary, as he is on his own turf, he is the one with the pungent wit and local knowledge. And Robinson Crusoe, far from being Defoe's enlightened European, is shown as ignorant and tactless, lacking *Fingerspitzengefühl*, a depiction which sharpens the focus on the generally imagined (dichotomized) cultural differences between those in power and the rest who do not have it. The head of the National Theatre, Svenn Syrin, said:

The one who decides which language is to be spoken is the one in power, and the colonial empires have always understood how to use language as an effective instrument to oppress the colonies. However, in the modern version,

52 See LANGGÅRD: 2011.

53 LANGGÅRD: 2003, 268 (referring to *Atuagagdliutit*: 1864).

54 Ibid.; LANGGÅRD: 2008.

55 PEDERSEN: 2003.

56 www.taseralik.gl.

Friday rises against Robinson Crusoe, and he starts speaking his own language. As if by magic, the balance of power is dislocated and the previous ruler has to pull out all the stops in order to express himself in a foreign language.⁵⁷

The theme of the play is the mental and physical struggle for power between indigenes and colonizers – and refers to the on-going shift of focus: Today, the Greenlanders are in majority; they are the ones with proper knowledge and have the power to decide on their own affairs. It seems as if the time has come for the »Others« to acknowledge the reversed situation.

Interestingly, the new National Theatre continues to incorporate international plays in its program – for example *Macbeth*, inspired by William Shakespeare's play from 1606; *Anaanat A/S* (»Mothers Inc.«) inspired by the Argentine writer Diana Raznovich's play *Casa Matriz* (1991); and *Academymut Nalunaarut* (»A Report to an Academy«) inspired by Franz Kafka's short story »Ein Bericht für eine Akademie« from 1917. As the themes are universal, they are easily recognizable for a Greenlandic audience, too, and the mix of humor and seriousness with a touch of Greenlandicness seems to have a great appeal to the audience.

Literature

The theme of power balance between the previous colonizers and the colonized is also touched upon in Greenlandic writer Hans Anthon Lynge's (b. 1945)⁵⁸ novel *Umiarsuup tikinngilaattaanni* (»Just before the Arrival of the Ship«), which I find representative in a post-colonial literary sense.

The novel can be categorized as a horizontal collective novel, since the characters are described as a group of individuals who are principally equal. One could argue that the novel employs social realism to express

⁵⁷ www.dinby.dk/kobenhavn-k/robinson-crusoe-gronlands-nationalteater; www.knr.gl/kl/node/92774 [21.05.2011].

⁵⁸ Hans Anthon Lynge is one of the most prominent post-colonial Greenlandic writers. Since 1970 he has written a long list of novels, short stories, poems and a film screenplay (*Qaamarngup uummataa*/»Heart of Light«; 1997). Most of his publications are – contrary to custom – translated into Danish, e.g. the novels *Seqajuk* (1976, in Danish 1979); *Umiarsuup tikinngilaattaanni* (1982, Danish: *Lige før der kommer skib*; 1997) and *Allaqqitat* (1997, Danish: *Bekendelser*; 1998); the collection of poems *Nunanni avani* (1990, Danish: *I nord hvor jeg bor*; 1991). Lynge has also translated a range of Nordic literary works into Greenlandic.

criticism towards Greenlandic society. What is more, the waiting for the ship's arrival can be interpreted as a metaphor for the situation surrounding the introduction of home rule in 1979, a symbol of waiting for something new to happen. The story, which – according to the dialect used – is set in a small town somewhere in Northern Greenland, covers a time period from between seven o'clock in the morning to five minutes before one o'clock in the afternoon, on 8 June in an undisclosed year in the 1970s, when Boney M, the Danish pop group Shu-bi-dua, and the cassette recorder – known in Greenland as *ruulit* – were making their marks on popular culture.⁵⁹

Allow me to make a short digression and examine the term *ruulit* and what it represents. Derived from the Danish word *rulle*, its literal meaning is something that reels, as for example a cassette tape. It thus is a greenlandized Danish word. Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin have discussed the simultaneous abrogation and appropriation of the colonizers' language within post-colonial literature using the example of Salman Rushdie's works. Rushdie inserts non-translated words of his mother tongue into his English texts evoking a dislocation, a metonymic gap for the excluded reader. This kind of »post-colonial English« is described as metonymic, whereas British English is metaphoric, representing the universalizing language of the »Centre«.⁶⁰

However, in Lyngé's novel (as in other Greenlandic texts), the situation is reversed. Here we find »danisms« and Danish words and passages inserted in a Greenlandic text, a practice that does not produce metonymic gaps, as the target group is not excluded. For the included reader, the written passages in Danish are actually both metonymic and metaphoric: Metonymic in the sense that the nuances of the deliberately broken Danish in the text reveal a self-ironical reference to the way in which many Greenlanders actually speak Danish. An excluded reader would not be able to understand this irony, as she could not detect if the broken Danish is applied deliberately or not. On the metaphorical level, Danish written passages within a Greenlandic text often refer to issues affecting the colonial liaison between the two *ethnies*.

Quite unusual in a Greenlandic literary context, the novel is dramatically composed with scenic shifts that are reminiscent of a filmic nar-

59 LYNGE: 2005, 95.

60 ASHCROFT et al.: 2002; cf. HAUGE: 2007, II–12.

rative style.⁶¹ Shifts of point of view are made from character to character; in between, the reader is only supplied with sparse information.

Throughout the entire novel, a number of Greenlanders pass by a beach section, wondering what an apparently unknown Dane is doing in his small boat all day long. The weather is fine, but nevertheless, the Dane's outboard motor is hanging right up in the air. The Greenlanders speculate that he might be waiting for the tide to reach his motor, a grotesque description that is not without a touch of malicious pleasure at the expense of Danes. Even though they occupy all the essential positions in society, they still do not know anything at all about outdoor life – this is the ironic subtext of this scene. As readers we observe what is going on via the bits of information that are revealed through the dialogues between the characters while they are all waiting for the Atlantic supply ship to arrive. The novel revolves around at least five main themes:

1. The Dane in the boat, who is observed by all the Greenlandic characters, who seem to have their own explanations for his strange behavior. The Dane represents the theme »us« versus »the others«, the Greenlanders versus the Danes, who according to the novel »all look the same«⁶².

2. A crime of passion, which escalates into a dramatic murder on the forecourt of the grocery store – a scene which generates associations with Sergio Leone's »spaghetti« western *The Good, the Bad and the Ugly* from 1966, in which the good guys die and the cruel survive.

3. The marginalized and subalterns (represented by the orphan Ern-ersiaq, the misunderstood artist Eqqumiitsuliortoq, and the henpecked husband Essikiarsi) eventually develop into heroes – with clear references to the collective *mythomoteur*⁶³ such as the old Greenlandic legends about orphans (e.g. Kaassassuk, Kunuk). The artist Eqqumiitsuliortoq is in opposition to any kind of materialism. When he is given 1000 kroner, he and his friend Essikiarsi shoot the banknote into pieces with a gun. The two elderly men represent the remainder of »authentic« Greenlandic spirituality, whereas the gun represents murder, suicide, materialism and, in the end, the consequences of colonialism.

61 Lyngé later wrote the manuscript for the film *Qaamarngup Uummataa*/»Heart of Light« (1997); for an analysis see RYGAARD and PEDERSEN: 2003 and RYGAARD and PEDERSEN: 2004.

62 LYNGE: 2005, 133.

63 Cf. SMITH: 1994.

4. Moreover, the novel revolves around dichotomies such as traditionalism versus modernism, young versus old, Christianity versus paganism, materialism versus spirituality. Clearly, the discourse of the characters is that materialism and modernism are connected to Danish life style, whereas spirituality and tradition belong to an alleged genuine Greenlandicness. As a consequence of unconscious assimilation, the Danish lifestyle transforms the young into lazy and refined individuals, unable to withstand »Danish« temptations such as alcohol and cigarettes. According to the elderly female characters, who are depicted as »a flock of screeching sea gulls«, Denmark is the epitome of depravation. The ambivalence within the universe of the novel consists of the mixture of abrogation (rejection) and appropriation (incorporation) of Danish lifestyle *and* tradition at the same time.

5. Finally, selfish and materialistically orientated characters such as Juuserfi, the village policeman, and Andariarsi, the murderer, represent mimesis, as described by Homi Bhabha.⁶⁴ Both characters try to adopt the Danish lifestyle without being able to develop their own spirituality. Behaving as if gathering material goods were the only purpose of life, they represent superficial imitation.

The Danish characters in the novel are depicted as absolutely ignorant when it comes to boats and hunting. Even a Greenlandic child would be superior to a Dane in these matters. As to hunting, the Danes seem greedy and not at all concerned with sustainability:

There are indeed some Danes who [come to this country] only in order to shoot wildly at the game. They shoot at everything that moves, as if there was something they [need to] obtain. And they are so eager to catch something that I don't doubt they would include the mosquitoes, if they could.⁶⁵

The narrator plays on a tacit knowledge of behavior, life style and imagined common values, which are challenged in situations of crisis and thus subsequently re-confirmed, as well as on the myth of a common ethnic origin and consanguinity. In this view the Danes – unlike »us, the Greenlanders« – appear as greedy, money-grubbing and tight-fisted.⁶⁶ Through

64 Cf. BHABHA: 1994.

65 LYNGE: 2005, 33

66 Cf. TRÓNDHEIM: 2002. The paper focuses on the mutual stereotypes among Greenlanders and Danish (and other) immigrants. Tróndheim questions the minority/majority-

a dialogue among dock workers we learn that the Danes are so stingy that they even use earth closets at their work place to save the expenses of installing drains. These Danes, we read, would do anything for money. If they could earn five kroner by licking a floor, they would do it. The negative characterization of Danes within the novel corresponds with those of the Greenlanders who mimic them, Juuserfi and the selfish and materialistic Andariarsi, who, as mentioned above, are also presented as figures of ridicule.

Kirsten Thisted has transferred Homi Bhabha's concepts of mimesis and mimicry to a Greenlandic literary context.⁶⁷ According to Bhabha, the practice of mimicry produces »a subject of difference that is almost the same, but not quite [...] white«,⁶⁸ meaning that the colonized may incorporate the colonizers' culture and life style, but only to a certain degree. It is here that the power relationship between colonizer and colonized becomes evident. However, as Bhabha argues, mimicry does also contain an element of »mockery«, as it at times becomes unclear whether the colonized are imitating or mocking the colonizers. Thus, mimicry is also about »menace«. As they assimilate the colonizers' designs of power and fill them with their own agendas, the colonized pick up the colonizers' tricks and use them against them like a boomerang.

Whereas mimicry thus contains a subversive level, mimesis is only about pure imitation. Thisted compares mimesis with the monkey's talent for imitation – acting like someone you are not.⁶⁹ The Greenlandic word *aapakoorneq* (acting like a monkey) has actually been used commonly in Greenlandic literature as well as in public debates since the rise of the newspapers in the 1860s. Karen Langgård points out that, historically speaking, mimic persons were those who imitated the Danes by acting and behaving like them: buying imported goods or – from the 1930s onwards – trying to speak Danish, though lacking the linguistic competence.⁷⁰

It is mimesis rather than mimicry that can be ascribed to some of the Greenlandic characters in Lyngé's novel. Policeman Juuserfi and self-centered Andariarsi, who is only interested in tangible goods from abroad,

aspect, as, in the case of Greenland, Danes somehow represent both a majority and a minority.

67 THISTED: 2005.

68 BHABHA: 1994, 86, 89.

69 THISTED: 2005, 29ff.

70 LANGGÅRD: 2003, 270.

are imitating – miming – the Danish lifestyle. Greenlandic society has made material progress but fallen into spiritual retrogression is what Lynge's message seems to be. He criticizes Greenlandic society for not being able to solve its own social problems (such as alcohol abuse), for lacking a sense of responsibility, and for the irresponsible act of giving birth to more children than people can manage. Moreover, he also criticizes an alleged lack of respect towards the values of the past. The characters brush these values aside; they regard them as heathenism or paganism and as something worthless, as we see from local adults' rejection of Essikiarsi, the only character in the novel who represents the »authentic« Greenlandic culture and is actually the only character who knows anything about the past.

As to Christianity, the novel casts those who practice it superficially in the most negative light – namely the local catechist and the priest's wife, who is depicted as a hypocrite. She is the one who forbids the young to visit Essikiarsi, fearing that he might turn them into heathens. Provoked by the ban, the young people, however, agree to visit him secretly while their parents are partying. When the priest's wife discovers this, she gathers all the mothers, who rush like »a flock of screeching sea gulls« to fetch their children.

Despite the novel's underlying message about Greenlanders' loss of spirituality, there nevertheless seems to be a glimmer of hope for the future at the end, when the young locals keep visiting the excluded person secretly. This reminds the well-informed reader of the pre-colonial initiation rites for would-be shamans. The contenders trained their physical and psychic strength in secret until they were ready to appear in public, using their abilities for the benefit of the community. In the imagery of Lynge's novel, written in 1982, this would mean for the benefit of the home rule government, which had been established just three years before.

Music lyrics and post-colonialism in the realm of self-government

As mentioned earlier, Greenlandic rock bands founded in the 1970s and 1980s still enjoy enormous popularity, even among a younger audience. During the campaign in favor of the implementation of self-government in November 2008, the left-wing political party *Inuit Ataqatigiit* (IA), which eventually came to power after the general election in June 2009,

invited three of those bands to hold a six-hour-long concert under the slogan »Ice Cool«, which was broadcast by national television *KNR* the night before the plebiscite. The argument for inviting the bands (Inne-ruulat, Inuit and Piitsukkut – mark 6) to take part in the event was that through their music they had been »supporting the Kalaallit people’s rights to self-government during the last 30 years«, as it says on the party’s website.⁷¹

Piitsukkut – mark 6, formerly known as Piitsukkut, was Greenland’s first punk band. They released their only record in 1980, titled *Inuiaat naqisimaneqartugut kattutta!* (»Oppressed People of our Nation, Let Us Unite«). The message of the title and some of the lyrics is that Greenlanders are one people and should stay one people, and hence avoid mixing blood with Danes. Otherwise they would disappear as an authentic people, as it says in the lyrics of the song »Palasi«:

/ we have heard that this person who speaks a language which is not ours /
spreads his hands waiting for our hands / we have noticed that his skin is
much paler than ours / we notice how much fairer his hair is than ours / we
understand that we could never live together with him / we question whether
we should take his hands / his friendly face has confused us / his soft voice se-
duced us / we completely forget that he studies us all the way round / it is as if
we see nothing but the pale observer / we don’t question if the shaman should
tell us that this man is a liar / if you take his hands, our country will decline /
you don’t see how his brain is working behind his friendly face / [...]

/ In the name of God, the master colonizes the people of the land / hoisting
the colors of his flag / making the people turn into Danes / their brains will be
filled with their customs / our descendants will be polluted with their blood /
as individuals, unable to become independent / [...] what we have inherited
the Danes will take / the people of our country will eventually disappear /
don’t take his hands / let’s get rid of him /⁷²

Inneruulat, another popular band from the beginning of the 1980s, was veritably lionized during the run up to the referendum in favor of self-government in 2008 and after the general elections in 2009. Most of the band’s texts can be described as pep talks directed towards their fellow countrymen, their message being: Make an effort to stay together as one people with equality and without a class system. They stress how wonderful it is to be an Inuk, how brilliant and resourceful the Greenlanders’ own technology is compared to the Europeans’ (dog sledge versus train),

71 <http://arkiv.ia.gl/index.php?id=407> [13.07.2013].

72 PIITSUKKUT: 1980.

and the lyrics are meant to be a wakeup call for the »bewildered«, for those who just give in and unconsciously watch what is going on, like humiliated servants. The Greenlandic lyrics and their Danish translations are presented in the finest handwriting in the liner notes. In a song from the 1981 album *Inneruulatut naajorarpugut* (»We scatter Like Phosphorescence«) the band sings:

Naqisimannittoq sinnassaasarami	The oppressor makes you sleepy
Sinikkaangatalu iluanaalertortaqaq	while we sleep quick money is made
Sakkoqarpoq puiorsaatinik	he's got the means to make you forget
Aningaasanik inatsisinik	money and rules
Qunusarpoq paasinnittunut	he's afraid of those who understand
Akiuuttunut	of those who protest
Ikinnerugamik	because he is in the minority
[...]	
Kiffaasugut amerlaneruvugut	as servants we are the majority
Paasigutsigu nakuussalluta	if we understand that we need to fight
Naligiinneq ornitsigu	if we go for equality
Anguniartigu	let us go for it
Sulilluta ila	let us work for it – come on ⁷³

In these lyrics we recognize the call for one's compatriots to wake up from their lethargy, and a call for revolution like in the third phase of decolonization as described by Frantz Fanon in *The Wretched of the Earth*.⁷⁴ Back in 1985, another band, Naneruaq, in one of their songs addressed the question of exploiting oil and mineral resources, a hotly disputed topic to the present day.⁷⁵ In the lyrics it says:

Kalaallip Nunaa	The Land of Kalaallit
Uillusi takusiuk nuna kusanaq	open your eyes and see the beautiful land
Tassa illit nammineq nunat	This is your own country
Kalaallit Nunaat	Greenland

73 INNERUULAT: 1981. A band member from Inneruulat told the audience in a TV program before the election in 2009 that the polysemic word »inneruulat« refers to phosphorescence, while most people had associated it with dandelions, which have a symbolic meaning in a post-colonial sense, especially in lyrics from the 1970s. Dandelions – weeds in European gardens – represent the colonized, the marginalized, and the suppressed.

74 Cf. FANON: 1963.

75 Cf. BJØRST: 2011 and BJØRST: 2012.

Tigujumaneqaqisut pisuussutai	continually the object of desire to be taken
Pigijumaneqaqisut pisuussutai	continually the object of desire to be possessed ⁷⁶

As it says in the liner notes of the album, the song is

a song of praise to Greenland, the land with rich resources that are pursued by other nations. But whom does the country belong to? Who was born here? It is the land of the Greenlanders! Other countries misuse their resources. Greenland – don't you ever be[come] one of them, just keep your peace eternally.⁷⁷

As indicated previously, I am convinced that the reasons for the popularity of these bands today has more to do with the feelings of nostalgia they evoke than with any actual desire for a rebellion. However, lyrics like the ones quoted have become attached to current ongoing debates, such as the one about the utilization of the potentially rich resources beneath Greenland, and therefore have the potential for revival as a kind of political manifesto.

Arts and politics

An alternative approach to the de-colonization project has been performed in the realm of art. Greenlandic photographer Julie Edel Hardenberg's trilingual book *Den Stille Mangfoldighed / Nipaatsumik assiginnigisitaarneq / The Quiet Diversity*⁷⁸ from 2005 is an attempt to focus on and to question ethnicity and cultural identity through photography. By showing pictures that run counter to the stereotypical image of Greenlanders as a homogeneous group who share a common history, culture and language, Hardenberg addresses the highly disputed question about what it means to be a Greenlander. She pins down the otherness and stereotypes related to the idea of the »genuine« Greenlander by portraying all kinds of people affiliated to Greenland, challenging questions of inclusion and exclusion as well as both the intra-ethnic self-ascriptions and the inter-ethnic ascriptions made by others.⁷⁹ Most of the people por-

76 NANERUAQ: 1985.

77 Ibid.

78 HARDENBERG: 2005. For a more detailed analysis of Hardenberg's work see PEDERSEN: 2009 and KÖRBER: 2011.

79 Cf. BARTH: 1996.

trayed in the book are of mixed ethnic and cultural descent. Furthermore, portraits of immigrants from Japan and Brazil are included in the book, thus keeping the title's promise to focus on and exhibit the actual diversity in contemporary Greenland.⁸⁰

Another project that posed questions about post-colonialism was the exhibition *Rethinking Nordic Colonialism: A Postcolonial Exhibition Project in Five Acts*, which involved Greenlandic artists such as Hardenberg and Inuk Silis Høegh. The exhibition toured venues across the North Atlantic and mainland Scandinavia in 2006 and included works by artists from Iceland, Greenland, the Faroe Islands, the Finnish part of Sápmi, as well as Denmark, Norway and Sweden. The project focused on the colonial history of the Nordic region and according to the curators its purpose can partly be described as the reactivation of this particular part of collective memory in the countries of the North. In the exhibition catalogue it says:

The colonial history of the Nordic region is absent from the collective memory of the once-colonizing countries. It is being forgotten, denied, or repressed – or, on a more cognizant note, being romanticized or otherwise transformed to justify the colonial event. As we see it, there is a direct line between the colonial past and present-day phobias about the »Other« and the hierarchies they foster. If this is true, then it is necessary to revisit the past and the historical institutionalization of inequality. Otherwise, we will not be able to understand the current sentiments of intolerance, xenophobia, and nationalism that manifest themselves strongly in the Nordic region and elsewhere.⁸¹

One could argue that the project represents a dislocated »writing back from the Centre«. In 2010, *Rethinking Nordic Colonialism* was followed up by another project, *Tupilakosaurus*, which was based on the work of Danish-Greenlandic artist Pia Arke (1958–2007). Her art dealt with issues such as ethno-aesthetics, ethnicity and colonialism.⁸² In the same year, Iben Mondrup and Julie Edel Hardenberg curated the exhibition *Kuuk – Art in the Neighborhood of Greenland*, which was shown consecutively in Copenhagen and Nuuk. In a similar fashion to the aforementioned art projects, *Kuuk* was an attempt to deconstruct stereotypical notions about

80 Hardenberg continually challenges different aspects of contemporary Greenland in her very diverse and experimenting kind of projects, revolving around a very personal approach to the universe of Greenland in a global perspective. See www.hardenberg.dk for more information.

81 HANSEN and NIELSEN: 2006.

82 Cf. ARKE: 2010.

the relationship between Danes and Greenlanders. All the artists involved in the project have some kind of affiliation to Greenland – across borders and ethnicity. As Sara Olsvig sums up in the catalogue of *Kuuk*, the idea behind the project was to encourage people to re-define what Greenlandic art is. Making a reference to Magritte's *Ceci n'est pas une pipe*, she argues that visitors are forced to reflect upon whether the artists are Greenlanders or not and which factors determine whether a piece of art can be defined Greenlandic or not.⁸⁵ The whole idea behind these kinds of exhibitions is to celebrate diversity and ambivalence and to dislocate fixed and hegemonic ideas.⁸⁴

The issues raised by Greenlandic artists seem to go hand in hand with some of the political aims of the first Greenlandic coalition government after the implementation of self-rule, which had agreed to »encourage cultural diversity in Greenland«,⁸⁵ but was voted out of office in 2013. Quite contrary to this, previous coalition agreements⁸⁶ had explicitly focused on strengthening the position of »the specific character of the Inuit in an international context and our own identity as Greenlanders«,⁸⁷ or claimed that the spiritual and the popular development towards self-government must be based on »the specific character of the Inuit in the Arctic world and on our identity as Greenlandic People«. ⁸⁸ We can thus observe a tendency towards the applauding of diversity, both in the realms of culture and politics. In this context, the mayor of Nuuk, Asii Chemnitz Narup (IA), shall have the last word. In connection with setting up an arts council in 2009⁸⁹ with the clearly expressed aim to support innovative cultural initiatives, she said:

85 Cf. OLSVIG: 2010, 13.

84 See also TRONDHJEM: 2008.

85 <http://dk.nanoq.gl/Emner/Landsstyre/Koalition.aspx> [14.07.2012].

86 Negotiated between *Siumut* and *Inuit Ataqatigiit* (2003–2005) and between *Siumut* and *Atassut* (2005–2009).

87 http://dk.nanoq.gl/Emner/Landsstyre/Koalition/~/_media/0372804536BE4096A7AA976DE02DE1CD.ashx [18.11.2010].

88 http://dk.nanoq.gl/Emner/Landsstyre/Koalition/~/_media/6A061AADA20D48C4AD1E59C9F306C54A.ashx [18.11.2010].

89 From 2012 on named *Sermeq Foundation*. (In Greenlandic: *Aningaasaateqarfik Sermeq – kulturi nutaanik eqqarsalersitsisarmat*, in Danish: *Sermeq Fonden – fordi kultur skaber fornyelse*).

Art has a fantastically broad spectrum of idioms – literature and music, theatre and movies, architecture, visual arts, sculpture and dance [...] with the one thing in common: that they touch us emotionally, our senses and our ideas; from aesthetic pleasure to joy, to indignation, to sorrow, to loathing, to laughter – and they give us new insights. [...] The diversity of idioms must be accessible for all: in culture halls, in museums, in schools, in the streets – also in our urban spaces and residential areas [...] in order for us to create life, experience and coherence.⁹⁰

Conclusion

The short answer to the question whether the post-colonial still is a big issue in contemporary Greenlandic images must be: yes and no! The key word is diversity – which also means a diversity of discourses.

It seems that the generations who were young in the period leading up to home rule are the ones who are most concerned with the post-colonial issue. However, those who have been raised since the establishment of home rule have usually no personal relation to the memories of colonialism. For them, the memories of those who were born in the years before and right after 1953, the memories of grandparents and great-grandparents, seem at times like exotic narratives from an alien universe, at other times as self-pitying stories that frustrate the young, who have moved on. At least privileged Greenlanders seem to be confident enough to welcome global influences. In different arenas such as sports, arts and politics, they are becoming increasingly active on an international level, providing the global arena with a »Greenlandic touch«.

Sara Olsvig writes that »[...] the process of decolonization takes time and it costs energy and mental effort – much more than one might expect. What we have been inclined to forget is that even the thought of decolonization itself contributes to retarding this process«.⁹¹ This, I believe, is true. As long as the repetitive intra-ethnic self-ascriptions and the inter-ethnic ascriptions made by others are used, it will be difficult for Greenlanders – or any other former colonized peoples – to free themselves from being stigmatized in a fixed position as colonial victims. It is high time that we move on!

90 NARUP: 2012, 17, 19.

91 OLSVIG: 2010, 14.

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CHRISTINA JUST

A Short Story of the Greenlandic Theatre:
From Fjaltring, Jutland, to the National Theatre
in Nuuk, Greenland

Greenland's struggle for greater independence was poli constituted with the implementation of *hjemmestyre* (home rule) in 1979 and *selvstyre* (self-rule) in 2009. The country has had to establish itself as an independent nation on various levels during the last decades, and culture has played an important part in this development, along with politics, education and the economy. Greenlandic culture and arts help to create the image of a self-confident and powerful nation and this may be a reason why both politics and the cultural sector are working towards the institutionalisation of the arts.

In this article I will trace the beginnings of Greenlandic theatre to a small group of Greenlanders in the village of Fjaltring in Northwest Jutland and outline its development into the National Theatre of Greenland, located in the Greenlandic capital, Nuuk. I will try to explain why Greenland needs and wants such an institution, and what makes theatre important in a process of nation building. In addition to giving a historical overview from 1975 until today, I will analyse the programmes and production methods of Greenlandic theatre. I will outline its peculiarities and put the efforts made to create the institution of the National Theatre into a cultural and political context. Furthermore, I will focus on the polarity between aesthetics/form and content, both with regard to performances and to production conditions.

Tuukkaq Theatre in Fjaltring and Silamiut Theatre in Nuuk

»Go ahead! Found a Greenlandic theatre school!«¹ With these words, the former Danish Minister of Culture, Niels Matthiassen, is said to have ended his meeting with Reidar Nilsson, the later founder of Tuukkaq

1 »Værs'go'! Grundlæg en grønlandsk teateruddannelse!« (DISSING: 1994, 25). Nilsson remembers Matthiassen's quote from 1975 when interviewed by Dissing in 1994. Unless otherwise indicated, all quotes have been translated by Christina Just.

Theatre² in 1975. Shortly afterwards, Nilsson, a Norwegian dancer and actor,³ founded the first theatre school for Greenlandic actors in Fjaltring, Northwest Jutland. The school was given financial support in the form of SU (*Statens Uddannelsesstøtte*), a system of public grants and loans for Danish students, and was run in collaboration with *Grønlanderhuset* (The Greenlanders' House) in the nearby town of Holstebro.⁴ Under Nilsson's direction, a team from *Grønlanderhuset* developed Tuukkaq Theatre's first production. *Festens gave* (translated as *The Eagle's Gift*) is a dramatisation of an Alaskan legend that was recorded by Knud Rasmussen during his fifth Thule expedition in 1924.⁵ The premiere of the play *Inuit*⁶ took place in 1976 and went on numerous international tours. With this performance, Tuukkaq Theatre (providing training for Greenlandic and Sami actors) became an internationally recognised organisation. The combination of traditional Greenlandic songs and dances with modern performance elements proved successful. The interpretation of the East Greenlandic mask dance *uaajerneq* in particular was assigned great importance. Tuukkaq Theatre put on different performances of *uaajerneq*, and thus played a crucial role in transforming the old Greenlandic culture by employing contemporary aesthetics from outside of Greenland.⁷

In 1984, Silamiut Theatre was founded in Nuuk; it was Greenland's first and only professional theatre.⁸ From 1993, it was supposed to take over the training of Greenlandic actors. This, however, did not happen, mainly due to financial reasons. Nevertheless, the Greenlandic actors Makka Kleist, Benedikte »Bendo« Schmidt (as co-educator) and Agga Olsen, as well as a number of other people, subjects and ideas, moved from Tuukkaq Theatre in Jutland to Silamiut Theatre in Nuuk.⁹ Apart

2 *Tuukkaq* is Greenlandic for harpoon tip. The different spellings of some Greenlandic titles are due to a spelling reform. Here I employ the new Greenlandic spelling rules, whereas some of the texts cited are in the old spelling.

3 DISSING: 1994, 25.

4 NILSSON: 2009, 20.

5 KLEIVAN: 1996, 141.

6 NILSSON and TÛKAK' THEATER ENSEMBLE: 1992, 53–66. The Danish original version was never published.

7 Cf. KLEIVAN: 1996, 141–142.

8 NILSSON: 2009, 20.

9 VEBÆK: 1990, 270–272.

from staging adult dramas, Silamiut Theatre also produced plays for children and young people.¹⁰ The theatre's aim was to promote Greenland's own cultural production at a time when the country had recently acquired home rule. Due to the 1997 opening of *Katuaq*, a major cultural centre in Nuuk, the theatre can now perform to audiences of up to 500 people. Already in the first year, most of Silamiut Theatre's productions held at *Katuaq* were almost completely sold out.¹¹ In addition, Silamiut Theatre has in its own building a studio stage with about 40 seats.

Nunatta Isiginnaartitsisarfia – the National Theatre of Greenland

Before gaining the status of National Theatre in January 2011, Silamiut Theatre's productions and tours were single projects supported by public funds.¹² The theatre had to apply for the funding of each project individually. Only the salaries for the few permanent employees and the rent of the premises were fixed and guaranteed. In 2010, the idea of passing a theatre law that would guarantee funding and secure Silamiut Theatre the status of National Theatre was discussed. Since Silamiut Theatre was funded by the state, it was commissioned to produce four to five productions each year; these included one children's play and one touring play. As the only professional theatre in Greenland, Silamiut Theatre travelled to other Greenlandic towns and settlements, just as the National Theatre does today. Many of the touring plays were based on Greenlandic myths and legends. Among them were adults' and children's plays, choreographic works, but also translations of classical or internationally known dramas and novels.

The play *Eskimo-Tales/Eskimohistorier* contains a text collage of writings by the well-known Greenlandic authors Ole Korneliussen and Mariane Petersen. The production was originally in Greenlandic, but has since been staged in English (in Canada) and Norwegian. The work was thus addressed to an international audience and exported Greenlandic theatre and culture and the history of the Inuit to the outside world.

10 NILSSON: 2009, 20.

11 LYBERTH: 1999, 80–81.

12 www.silamiut.gl/OmSilamiut/Vedtaegter [13.09.2010].

In 2007, Shakespeare's *Macbeth* was staged as a one-person-play, starring the Greenlandic actress Makka Kleist. In an interview she gave for Ivalo Frank's documentary film *Faith, Hope and Greenland* (2009), Kleist describes her experiences with a Danish host family in the 1960s. The Danes had then, because of Kleist's non-European physical appearance, rejected the idea of a Greenlandic actress playing classical roles.¹³ Simon Løvstrøm, the former head of Silamiut Theatre, is quoted in a similar way by Inge Kleivan in one of her articles. Here, Løvstrøm rhetorically asks:

Can you imagine a small, short-legged, black-haired Greenlander performing Shakespeare? No! It would never work well. Greenlandic theatre must therefore deal with something that is specific to us, something unique, and we have plenty of that in our rich composite heritage.¹⁴

Works that deal with the question of what it means to be Greenlandic make up a large part of the National Theatre's programme. The repertoire includes both works that belong to the canon of world theatre and Greenlandic dramas or dramatisations.

The greatest success of recent Greenlandic theatre history was Silamiut Theatre's touring production of the children's play *Karius og Baktus*, based on the Norwegian classic by Thorbjørn Egner. According to Silamiut Theatre's Facebook page, more than 9,000 theatregoers have seen the play, a remarkable number given Greenland's population of just 56,000 and the play's limited target group: three- to seven-year-olds and their families. The numbers of visitors posted on the social network during the tour were sensational, especially in the small towns and settlements. In some cases, more than half of the entire population came to the performances. If the eruption of the Icelandic volcano Eyjafjallajökull had not enforced the cancellation of a number of performances (the two actors and the technicians had to be transported through the country by helicopter), the highly symbolic mark of 10,000 spectators would easily have been exceeded.¹⁵ In the summer of 2010, the volcanic eruption temporarily paralysed all air traffic in Greenland.

¹³ FRANK: 2009.

¹⁴ »Kan du forestille dig en lille kortbenet sorthåret grønlander spille Shakespeare? Nej, vel! Det ville aldrig gå godt. Grønlandsk teater skal derfor beskæftige sig med noget vi er alene om. Noget unikt, og det har vi masser af i vores rige sammensatte kulturarv.« (KLEIVAN: 1996, 146).

¹⁵ www.facebook.com/silamiut [13.09.2010].

Logistics play a crucial role during the theatre tours through Greenland, as chartered helicopter flights and hotel accommodation are very expensive. However, the number of theatregoers justifies the expenditure, as most Greenlanders living outside of Nuuk attend Silamiut Theatre's touring productions. Between August and November 2013 the National Theatre successfully carried on the idea of travelling theatre: the touring production of *Rosa Marie-p tiguartikkaluarnera* (When Rosa Marie's heart was captured), a play for adults, took the actress Else Danielsen and the theatre team to a number of towns and settlements, including Qeqertarsuaq, Maniitsoq, and, of course, Nuuk.¹⁶

With the performance of British writer Sarah Kane's last play *4.48 Psychosis*¹⁷, which addresses the topic of suicide, a discussion of a social problem highly relevant in Greenland found its way to Silamiut Theatre. The play was performed just three times on the theatre's small stage in 2010 and was Silamiut Theatre's first production in Danish. The small 40-seat venue and the limited number of performances suggest that even in a bilingual city like Nuuk not many theatregoers were expected to watch a Danish-language production about this particular subject.¹⁸ Like a number of other pieces staged by Silamiut Theatre, the production of Kane's play, which was originally written for three actors, was a one-person version. The minimal cast reflected the reality of running a project-by-project theatre that had to engage its actors separately for each production. Putting on plays with a large cast was – for financial reasons – hardly possible. However, using a small cast strengthens the role of narrator figures that take over the parts of some of the other characters and keep up the artistic exploration of storytelling. Being epic rather than dramatic, these productions thus employ traditional Greenlandic theatre aesthetics.

Silamiut Theatre's international cooperation includes a co-production with the German theatre group »Das letzte Kleinod« in 2010. The play *The Lost Sons*¹⁹ tells the story of two whalers from the German island of Spiekeroog in the North Sea who are said to have lived among the Inuit in Greenland for several years. The play is based on traditional stories told by the inhabitants of the island and has since been staged with Ger-

16 www.nuis.gl [28.11.2013].

17 KANE: 2001.

18 See GAD: 2005 on the dominance of the Danish language in urban Greenland.

19 German title: *Die verlorenen Söhne*.

man and Greenlandic actors. The play premiered on Spiekeroog before visiting a number of German and Greenlandic port towns.²⁰ Involved in the project were the Greenlandic actresses Makka Kleist and Vivi Sørensen, named in the German programme booklet as members of the Silamiut Theatre ensemble.²¹ The bilingual production also included a Greenlandic mask dance, which was performed by Kleist.²²

Since attaining its status as National Theatre in 2011, Silamiut Theatre has been able to work with a larger, fixed budget and can thus hire more employees.²³ Under the direction of Makka Kleist, Greenland's first training school for actors opened its doors in 2012. The first four students recently completed the two-year full-time SU-supported course and received their diplomas during a festive ceremony at *Katuaq*. The theatre's website emphasises the cultural history of the Inuit as an important field of study:

[T]he school must provide good Greenlandic as well as English language skills so that they [the students] are able to communicate, share ideas and collaborate with our kinsmen in Canada, Alaska and Siberia, as well as with many other indigenous peoples around the world. In addition to the mandatory subjects common to acting schools all around the world, we will provide our students with a thorough introduction to the Greenlandic language and its history, to Greenland's cultural history and its storytelling tradition.²⁴

In its guidelines, the drama school places an explicit emphasis on its rootedness in the Greenlandic Inuit tradition. Techniques such as mask dance and drum dance therefore have their share in the training. From the beginning, the drama students are involved in the productions of the

20 DAS LETZTE KLEINOD: 2010, 3–4.

21 Ibid., 3 and 16–17.

22 I had the chance to see *Die verlorenen Söhne*, directed by Jens-Erwin Siemssen, in Bremerhaven, 27 May 2010.

23 In 2013, the new Greenlandic government cut back the subsidies for the National Theatre. The debate can be followed on the website of the Greenlandic newspaper *Sermitsiaq*: www.sermitsiaq.ag/search/node/nationalteater [29.11.2013].

24 »I tillæg skal skolen give gode grønlandske såvel som engelske sproglige færdigheder, således at de er i stand til at kommunikere, udveksle ideer og samarbejde med vore stammefrænder i Canada, Alaska og Sibirien i tillæg til mange andre urbefolkninger rundt omkring i verden. Foruden de obligatoriske fag, som de fleste skuespilleruddannelser i verden har, får vores studerende en grundig indføring i grønlandsk sprog og sproghistorie, grønlandsk kulturhistorie og fortællertradition.« (www.nuis.gl/da/node/96 [28.11.2013]).

National Theatre, such as the Christmas story *Pequsiortoq Andersen nissimaarlu* (Cabinetmaker Andersen and Santa Claus).

In 2013 another Christmas tale, written and performed by the students themselves, was shown, enriching their theatre training with new skills. Yet another rendering of the topic of suicide, *Mikiseq*, is planned for 2014. This time the performance will be in Greenlandic and combine dance and text. The starting point for the play is the story of a Greenlandic family in which several suicides have occurred. In addition, a large circus project will premiere in the autumn of 2014, which will be financed and organised as an international co-production.²⁵

A public subsidy granted by Greenland's self-rule government makes theatre affordable. A tour, during which the artists and technicians travel by helicopter, could hardly be financed through ticket sales alone. The aim of Greenlandic cultural policy is to ensure that theatre remains affordable for the majority of the population. In 2013, the price for a theatre ticket was 100 Danish kroner (13.40 euros), with concessions available at half the price, giving most Greenlanders the opportunity to watch theatre plays.

The aesthetics of Greenlandic theatre

Ever since the early days of Tuukkaq Theatre and Silamiut Theatre, the question as to whether one may speak of specific Greenlandic theatre aesthetics has been the subject of a heated debate. Mask dance in particular is often regarded as a genuinely Greenlandic form of stagecraft, but is also at times disparaged as »folklore«. Artist Bendo Schmidt puts this issue in a nutshell when stating: »We should dance the mask dance to spread energy, not just for the tourists.«²⁶ Even today, Greenlandic artists are – (not only) outside Greenland – often expected to provide an exotic »Otherness« in relation to European and North American culture. Audiences seem to long for an allegedly authentic »Greenlandicness«, a desire which the members of Tuukkaq Theatre were often confronted with during their international tours. When they were invited abroad, the theatre (which was based in Denmark at that time) was often supposed to act as

²⁵ The website www.nuis.gl/da/forestillinger [28.11.2013] displays both older and forthcoming productions of the National Theatre.

²⁶ »Vi skal danse maskedans for at give energier, ikke kun for turisterne.« (KLEIVAN: 1996, 142).

»Greenlandicly« as possible, in a way in which theatre audiences and curators imagined – and exoticised – Greenland.

In return, an artist like Bendo Schmidt is confronted with internal criticism that at times reduces mask dance to being an ethno-cliché sold on the international art market. With her advocacy of an artistic and aesthetic appreciation of mask dance, Schmidt speaks up for the continued appreciation of traditional Greenlandic theatre aesthetics at the National Theatre. Reminiscent of the tradition of the Tuukkaq Theatre School, historical performances here function as the basis for contemporary transformations of the mask dance. At least in West Greenland, mask dance has not had a historical continuity, since it was restricted by the Danish colonial administration and the Christian missionaries, and finally even declared illegal.²⁷ The revival of old traditions that took place in the 1970s, the time of the introduction of home rule, developed new mask dance aesthetics based on both historical elements and new choreographies created by artists from Tuukkaq Theatre. This revival has to be seen in the light of Greenland's aspirations towards autonomy at that time.

Popular Greenlandic performances, such as Tuukkaq Theatre's *Inuit*²⁸, take advantage of the globally well-known mask dance and its specific expressions. Masks were and are not only known on Greenlandic stages; on the contrary, in many places around the world, they serve in different forms as tools to create distance between the audience and the performers.²⁹ In West Greenland, the tradition of mask dance and drum dance has been interrupted by 250 years of Danish colonial rule and Christian mission.³⁰ However, as the performances of Tuukkaq Theatre and the Silamiut Theatre have demonstrated, mask dance and drum dance still function as tools to mark a theatre production as typically Greenlandic. The traditions of storytelling and mask dance thus fulfil some significant functions in Greenlandic theatre, which by transforming, rediscovering and referring to earlier Greenlandic artworks lays claim to keeping up the Inuit traditions. However, not least due to the protagonists' international education and work experience, European influences, of course, play an important role in the performances, too.

27 HØJLUND: 1971, 316.

28 NILSSON and TÛKAK' THEATER ENSEMBLE: 1992.

29 LEHMANN: 1991, 36.

30 HØJLUND: 1971, 320.

The Greenlandic National Theatre is organised as a subsidised cultural institution along European lines. It transfers the European institution of the city theatre – *Stadttheater* in German – to Greenland. Many of the plays and performances deal with Greenlandic culture and traditional stories and most of them are staged in the Greenlandic language. This does not necessarily create an original, specifically Greenlandic form of expression, but it has led to the emergence of an institutionalised Greenlandic art establishment. Drawing a strict line between contemporary Greenlandic art and contemporary art in Europe and America, between historicising, storytelling and »ethnic« crafts, appears to be not only a questionable, but also a pointless endeavour.

As talks and discussions during the *Greenland Eyes International Film Festival* (held in Berlin in April 2012) have shown, young Greenlandic artists are at an increasing rate producing art without worrying about its degree of »Greenlandicness«. ³¹ Artists such as film producer Áka Hansen tell their stories in Greenlandic without feeling the need to address either colonial history or the traditional Inuit culture. Popular works, such as the horror movie *Qaqqat Alanngui* (Shadows in the Mountains; 2011) produced by Hansen and directed by Malik Kleist, portray an urban Greenlandic youth culture. During the discussion after the film screening in Berlin, Hansen, born in 1987, underlined that she wanted her film to reflect her own generation's position. According to her, younger Greenlanders no longer regard the conflicts between Greenland and Denmark as an issue of their own everyday lives and realities. For them, taking part in global pop and youth culture seems to be of much greater interest. The great success of *Qaqqat Alanngui* and similar contemporary art projects seems to confirm Hansen's assessment. However, in the works of older artists, who were actively involved in the independence movement of the 1970s, topics such as colonial history, discrimination and the alleged loss of Inuit culture still play a substantial role. What is more, it is almost exclusively traditional art making reference to the old Inuit culture that succeeds in being recognized internationally.

In her essay *Ethnoæstetik/Ethno-Aesthetics*, Pia Arke points to the dilemma that the quest for a genuinely Greenlandic art form often leads

³¹ The workshop »Greenlandic Film in Context« was held during the festival at Nord-europa-Institut, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, on 27 April 2012. Áka Hansen participated in the panel discussion.

to.³² Being both an artist and a theorist, Arke positions herself between two worlds: on the one hand she critically reflects about Western intellectuals' views on Greenland (including her own); on the other hand she does not feel at home within the Danish or Western art scene either.³³ Arke concludes:

Creating a third space for us, who belong neither within the ethnographic object, nor the ethnographic subject, thus becomes more than just an intellectual opportunity. There is a sense of urgent necessity about our playing with the pieces of different worlds.³⁴

With the concept of the »third space«, postcolonial theorist Homi K. Bhabha has coined a term that describes a space beyond colonial binaries.³⁵ It can be understood as an intellectual space for artists, who in a postcolonial context both work with and within colonial binaries and simultaneously criticise them. Not only Pia Arke seems to long for such a third space, where entangled traditions, memories, hopes, experiences and problems can be formulated from an artistic position. Even a number of the Greenlandic theatre projects reflect a desire for harmony between the present and the remembered history. Silamiut Theatre chose to draw on and further develop traditional Greenlandic art forms. Being a European form of cultural institution in itself, by taking up elements from the traditional Inuit culture, the National Theatre is attempting to constitute a (third) space of new ideas, aesthetics and modes of production. In addition to presenting stories, legends and episodes from Greenland's past, the theatre addresses contemporary social problems, such as family neglect or environmental protection. Thus, different eras of Greenlandic history are aestheticised in versatile forms of theatre. In order to give an example how this is done, I will in the remainder of this chapter introduce the play *Gi mi tiggum*, laying particular emphasis on its historical context.

32 ARKE: 2010. Pia Arke's (1958–2007) essay was first published in Danish in 1995.

33 Ibid., 78–79.

34 Ibid., 28.

35 BHABHA: 1994.

Gi mi tiggum – a Greenlandic musical

*Gi mi tiggum*³⁶ is a musical and tells the love story of Kristiane, a young Greenlandic woman, and Cookie, a soldier of the US army that occupied Greenland during the Second World War. After the war, Cookie leaves both Greenland and his pregnant girlfriend. The narrator of the story is an old woman who talks about her own youth: she is Kristiane who back then fell in love with the American soldier.³⁷

Here, an attempt is made to present Greenland's history in an entertaining way, via music and theatre. The historical contacts between Greenlanders and Americans during the war serve as the backdrop for a love story. Old Kristiane reflects, ironises and comments on young Kristiane's actions. The isolation of Greenland and its people's lack of education are presented in a humorous way, for example in the scene when the title of the play is explained: »*Voice-over, old Kristiane*: I thought American people had a charming language, although I did not understand much more American than ›Gi mi tiggum‹.«³⁸

The chewing gum (›Gi mi tiggum‹ means »Gimme chewing gum«) introduced by the American soldiers serves as an ironic metaphor for a cultural revolution that took place in Greenland during the 1940s. Jens Boel and Søren T. Thuesen describe the Second World War and the American occupation as a major change for Greenlanders' everyday life: »During the Second World War, Greenland was really put on the world map, and the great world moved closer to the lives of the population of Greenland.«³⁹ The United States supplied the country during the war; in return they established strategically important air bases in Greenland.

The musical *Gi mi tiggum* addresses a time that was crucial for the development of Greenlanders' global consciousness. Boel and Thuesen regard the influence of American goods and the soldiers' presence as cru-

36 The play was written and directed by Sverre Syrén. It premiered at Silamiut Theatre in May 2008.

37 SYRÉN: 2008. The script I worked with is in Norwegian, although the musical was performed in Greenlandic, interspersed with American songs in English.

38 »Jeg syntes amerikanerne hadde et flott språk, selv om jeg ikke forsto så mye annet amerikansk enn ›Gi mi tiggum‹.« (SYRÉN: 2008, 2).

39 »Under 2. verdenskrig blev Grønland for alvor placeret på verdenskortet, og den store verden rykkede tættere ind på livet af den grønlandske befolkning.« (BOEL and THUESEN: 1993, 34).

cial for historical change. According to them, Danish paternalism came to an end because of this American involvement⁴⁰; Greenland's separation from Denmark during the war led to a strengthening of Greenlandic nationalism.⁴¹

Although young Kristiane is left behind with the child she is expecting, the Greenlandic-American encounter and the communication difficulties between Greenlanders and Americans are presented positively in the musical:

Voice-over: Cookie held me tight for a long time. Churchill carried on talking about that the war was over and that we should now think ahead. And this was not completely avoidable in my condition. Cookie said farewell and climbed on board. That same evening the *Nanok* left the quay for the last time. (*The Nanok sounds its horn*) Did I think he would come back? *Kristiane:* Next time, maybe.⁴²

The ship puts out to sea and Kristiane remains on land. In retrospective, the storyteller – old Kristiane – portrays her younger ego as a confident Greenlandic woman. She symbolically stands for a society that opens up outwardly and that wins a new self-confidence. This focus may be one reason why the musical became a success in Greenland in 2008.

Theatre as an institution

Once it is available, Greenlanders show a greater interest in theatre than for example Danes or Germans. This is understandable, given the limited choice of cultural entertainment. Of course, theatre attracts more public attention in a town like Nuuk, the country's cultural centre, than in a place like Qaanaaq in the far North of Greenland, where professional art is only presented when the theatre is on tour. In contrast to Greenland, in European cities cultural institutions have to compete for the audience's attention and performing in other cities requires neither great logistical effort nor expense. But even when taking Greenland's exceptional condi-

⁴⁰ Ibid., 46.

⁴¹ Ibid., 34.

⁴² »*Voice over:* Cookie holdt om meg lenge. Churchill bare fortsatte og fortsatte med å snakke om at krigen var over og nu skulle vi tenke fremover. Og det var ikke helt til å unngå i min tilstand. Cookie tok farvell og steg om bord i sin lille. Samme aften la Nanok fra kai for siste gang. (*Nanok fløyter*) Om jeg trodde han ville komme tilbake? *Kristiane:* Neste gang, kanskje.« (SYRIN: 2008, 18–19).

tions into account, the acceptance of the National Theatre by the Greenlandic population appears remarkably high. In Europe, people's attitudes towards theatre are more controversial. Public funding is often seen critically, as theatre not always manages to appeal to society in general but rather to a small educated elite. The establishment of the National Theatre in Greenland was not opposed by such discussions, as projects such as Silamiut Theatre had already gained a high profile and broad acceptance among the population. In Greenland, theatre is regarded as a tool for strengthening the (cultural) nation; its institutionalisation is thus broadly appreciated for societal reasons, an assessment that was finally confirmed by the Greenlandic parliament in 2010.

Greenland's National Theatre is largely financed by the public. Its repertoire includes classic European dramas, the theatre director is the Norwegian artist Svern Syrin, and most actors received their training in Denmark. Many of them attended Tuukkaq Theatre's drama school, which was organised as a training centre for Greenlandic actors; the training, however, was mostly carried out by Scandinavian theatre staff. Seen in this light, Greenland's National Theatre appears as an internationally orientated institution, even if the new drama school emphasises its rootedness in the traditional Inuit culture and – in its training – places value on the strengthening of an indigenous identity.

In addition to its own productions, which are mostly based on Greenlandic myths and legends, the repertoire of the National Theatre includes, for example, adaptations of William Shakespeare and Franz Kafka. Music, dance, rhythm and masks are important features of many of the performances. For the audience, the National Theatre is the only place where it is possible to watch professional theatre in Greenland – and in Greenlandic. Therefore, the theatre works as a national cultural institution. In an interview that he gave in 1992, Reidar Nilsson, the founder of Tuukkaq Theatre, explains the political dimension of Greenlandic theatre: »You see, I don't train Inuit, Native American or Sami – that is, native – actors; I train actors.«⁴⁵ This statement underlines the self-confidence felt about Greenlandic theatre and emphasises the importance of art within the Greenlandic independence process. Greenlandic theatre refuses to be assigned an exotic outsider status within European cultural production. At the same time, it manages to strengthen traditional Inuit

45 BRASK: 1992, 112.

culture in contemporary Greenlandic society – and is still open towards modernisation.

Conclusion

Theatre as a national institution has the potential to promote the process of cultural nation building. Being the only professional theatre in the country, the National Theatre has to satisfy a nationwide demand for entertainment and also carries out an educational mission. Greenlandic theatre aims at appealing to large parts of the population, an intent that is conveyed by its programme, which combines elements of folklore, socially relevant topics, and Greenlandic and international dramas. Forms and modes of production are reminiscent of European theatre institutions, whereas aesthetics also refer to traditional Inuit art and culture.

Strictly speaking, the idea of establishing a National Theatre does not stand in the tradition of projects like the Tuukkaq Theatre of the 1970s, which rather falls into line with the performance art and avant-garde movements of that time. What is more, the institutional turn that Greenlandic theatre has taken reflects the development of the political status of the country. By maintaining aesthetic continuity, the National Theatre of Greenland has managed to be politically and socially accepted and respected as a national institution of culture. Time will show how persistent this appreciation is. It will presumably be challenged in the future – not least in the recurring public debates about how much culture should be allowed to cost.

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KIRSTEN THISTED

Politics, Oil and Rock ‘n’ Roll.
Fictionalising the International Power Game about
Indigenous People’s Rights and the Fight over
Natural Resources and Financial Gain in the Arctic

Rarely, despite the increasing interest in the Arctic, does the political complexity of the region find visual representation as a contested arena of aspirations – a fragile set of ecosystems that are simultaneously a storehouse of resources, both renewable and non-renewable, a transport zone and a theatre for military operations, as well as homelands to dozens of different indigenous groups.¹

With the success of his novel *Smilla’s Sense of Snow* (*Frøken Smillas fornemmelse for sne*; 1992) Peter Høeg put Greenland on the international literary map. Høeg was certainly not the first Danish author to criticise the asymmetrical power relations between Danes and Greenlanders, but he was the first to call attention to the secretive regimes of science, politics and economy which prevail beneath the official narrative of the entirely altruistic intentions of the Danish state towards its former colony.² Høeg’s novel is generally regarded as the first post-colonial Danish novel. However, Høeg’s description of Greenland as a place divided between the paradise lost of the old hunting culture and a dystopia of modernity and transnational financial speculation, with the Greenlanders as the powerless victims of the intruding Western culture, is highly debatable. Apart from the enterprising protagonist, who is characterised as being so inflicted by the West that she has become a stranger to her Inuit mother’s people, the Greenlanders in Høeg’s novel seem unable to respond to their own situation by any other means than self-destruction and suicide.³ Both in Denmark and Greenland, this was the prevailing discourse of the 1970s and 1980s.⁴ However, this discourse ignored the active involvement of Greenlanders in the modernisation process – not as victims but as pro-

1 TRISCOTT: 2012, 25.

2 E.g. PODDAR and MEALOR: 2000; NEWMAN: 2004; HAUGE: 2004; GAUSTAD: 2005.

3 THISTED: 1996 and THISTED: 2002.

4 THISTED: 1992a and THISTED: 2003.

ducers of modernity. Likewise, the agency expressed in the politics, literature, art, music and theatre of the time clearly contradicted the discourse of the silently suffering Greenlander.

The short, short version of Greenlandic history goes like this: In 1721, Greenland is colonised by the Danish-Norwegian state; in 1953, Danish colonialism officially ends when Greenland becomes an equal part of Denmark as its northernmost county; in 1979, in response to the »almost but not quite« condition of Greenland's equality within the realm, Home Rule is implemented; in 2009, Self-Government, an expansion of Home Rule, is implemented. Parallel to the political process, history writing has been undergoing considerable change and a one-sided focus on Danish or European sources is being replaced by a growing awareness of Greenlandic voices and their importance in the political process. This change is not least due to the establishment of Greenlandic scientific and cultural institutions such as the University of Greenland (1987) and the Greenland National Museum (mid-1960s), and to the education of new generations of academics with competence in the Greenlandic language. A more detailed study of this turn in scientific history writing would be an obvious topic in the investigation of post-colonial Greenland. However, this article will deal with literary narratives, as literature and art are among the most important sources of people's reflections on history and social change. Likewise, the literary format makes it possible to speak of the otherwise unspeakable.

Excellent descriptions have been written by Greenlandic authors in Greenlandic about the colonial/post-colonial years from 1721 to 1979. However, we are still awaiting the Greenlandic novel that will deal with the politics of Home Rule. In the meantime, two books written in Danish by Hans Jakob Helms are worth studying: *Dansen i Geneve, Fortællinger fra Verden* (»The Dance in Geneva, Stories from the World«; 2007), and *Hvis du fløjter efter nordlyset* (»If You Whistle at the Northern Lights«; 2011). The central topic of these books is the interface between the tripod of 1) political and military agreements, 2) concessions and commercial contracts and 3) autonomy movements. The scene is set on an international level, and thus the books open up the claustrophobic Danish-Greenlandic relationship, which usually frames the discussion. In

Dansen i Geneve it is demonstrated how the Nordic North Atlantic⁵ comes into play in international politics, and how the issue of indigenous rights has challenged the concept of »Nordic exceptionalism« – the idea that the Nordic countries put inequality and injustice behind them long ago and therefore occupy higher moral ground than the rest of the world.⁶ In *Hvis du fløjter efter nordlyset*, the perspective is on the relations between the Greenlanders and the other Inuit in the ICC (Inuit Circumpolar Council). The novel investigates why this organisation has not been able to fully realise its potential as an international political player in accordance with the visions that guided its creation. Not least in view of current developments in the Arctic, the issues raised by these books are of the highest relevance.

With a bear as part of his soul

In *Dansen i Geneve* the readers are invited backstage into the world of international politics. As our »guide« into this otherwise closed world of international convention buildings, meeting rooms and lobbying, we have a narrator who is at home here. This narrator borrows his authority from the author, who has a CV that is strikingly similar to his own.

Hans Jakob Helms was born in 1949 in Ammassalik, where his parents worked as medical doctors. His mother, Sara Helms (1911–1999), is a well-known figure in Greenland due to her assistance to the Danish nurse during an influenza epidemic in remote East Greenland in the 1930s⁷. The family thus belongs to the so called »Danish-Greenlanders«: Danish families whose ties to Greenland go back a long way. Helms only spent a few years in East Greenland before the family moved to West Greenland. During his childhood, the family moved back and forth between Greenland and Denmark several times, but they spent most of their time in

5 In an international context the term »North Atlantic« generally means the Atlantic Ocean north of the equator. In a Nordic context, the »North Atlantic« is used in a more specific and much narrower sense, sometimes including only Greenland and the Faroe Islands, but usually also Iceland and sometimes even coastal Norway from Svalbard and Finnmark in the north to Rogaland in the south. In the Scandinavian languages this region is also known as *Vestnorden*.

6 BROWNING: 2007.

7 East Greenland is situated behind the polar sea ice and was therefore not accessible to the whalers or early colonisers. The Ammassalik/Tasiilaq area was not colonised until the late 19th century, and before a regular air service was established, it was very isolated.

eastern Jutland. However, Greenland was always present in the family's life; the family had many Greenlandic friends, and young Helm's identity was shaped especially by East Greenland and the stories about his first years of life.

In 1977 he graduated with a degree in Danish Literature and Ethnography from Aarhus University, and soon after graduation he returned to Greenland. Since 1979 he has worked for Arctic NGO's and for the Greenlandic Home Rule/Self-Government. He began his career in the modest position of assistant to the president of *The Inuit Circumpolar Conference* (ICC), before becoming director of the Greenlandic Home Rule's representational office in Denmark (1990–1994), director of foreign affairs (1995–1996), director of the Directorate for Tourism, Transport, Trade and Communications (1996–1999). He has also worked in various other positions within the administration and representation of Greenland. From 2001 to 2011 he worked for the »North Atlantic Group«, consisting of the two Greenlandic and one of the two Faroese members of the Danish Parliament.⁸ Helms has married into Greenlandic society, and his children define themselves as Greenlanders.

The author clearly stages his narrator as an alter ego, yet through the literary genre he makes use of poetic license to perhaps make a good story even better and to share information that it would otherwise be difficult for a man in the author's position to speak about openly. At some point, a Sami healer reads the narrator's hand: »I see a hunter«, she whispered. »I do not know where he has come from, but I feel him inside you as I watch him walking across the boundless ice in search of the white bears.«⁹

Later, the narrator reveals how a woman came and visited his mother when she had just given birth to him back in East Greenland. The visitor's husband, a famous bear hunter, had passed away, and his name was taboo until the name had found a new person to live inside. In Green-

8 The group was formed after the general election on 20 November 2001, when the Greenland Self-Government wing won both of Greenland's seats in the Danish parliament, and the Faroese autonomy wing won one of the Faroese seats. The cooperation ended after the general election on 15 September 2011.

9 »Jeg ser en jæger«, hviskede hun. »Jeg ved ikke, hvor han er kommet fra, men jeg mærker ham i dig, mens jeg ser ham vandre over den uendelige is på jagt efter de hvide bjørne.« (HELMS: 2004, 209). This and all subsequent quotations were translated by the author of this article.

land, names traditionally played a very important role, since the dead were thought to live on in the next generations by power of their names. Translated into a European language, this phenomenon is described as »name souls«. His mother agrees to name her child after the deceased hunter, and the narrator thus has both the hunter and the bear as part of his own soul.¹⁰ In interviews, the author readily explains that the narrative is part of the Helms family's collective memory.¹¹

Furthermore, Einar Mikkelsen is the godfather both of the narrator of *Dansen i Geneve* and the author.¹² Mikkelsen (1880–1971) was an Arctic explorer and adventurer who also planned and carried out the establishment of Scoresbysund (Ittoqqortoormiit) in Northeast Greenland in 1924–1925 – a rather dubious enterprise. The argument was that it was all for the sake of the Greenlanders, as the colony of Ammassalik had become »overpopulated«. In fact, it was more for the sake of claiming Danish sovereignty over Northeast Greenland, which was threatened by Norway at the time.¹³ The Danes needed a settlement there to claim their authority in the area north of Ammassalik, and therefore 87 Greenlanders were moved 1000 kilometres to the north.¹⁴ Thus, the narrator's name is imbued with a dual legacy: the soul of both the Greenlandic hunter and the Danish coloniser. This duality forms the narrator's unique vantage point: never completely at home – neither among the indigenous peoples that he represents, nor among the »white« people that he belongs to genetically and culturally. However, this in-between position makes him a perfect observer. It also makes his own story parallel to the stories of the persons

10 Ibid., 248.

11 The meeting with the Sami healer, however, is fiction. Cf. PEDERSEN: 2004.

12 Actually, we never hear the name Einar Mikkelsen in the book, but there are enough hints that any reader who is familiar with the history of Greenland will make the connection.

13 According to the terms of the Treaty of Kiel in 1814, Denmark lost Norway, but kept Greenland, Iceland and the Faroe Islands. After the union with Sweden, Norway gained independence in 1905. Norway and Norwegians had played a leading role in the colonisation of Greenland, but the Treaty of Kiel left them no rights over the island. Denmark clearly had the sovereignty over West Greenland, but the Norwegians saw Northeast Greenland as a terra nullius, since the area was uninhabited, except by Norwegian hunters. When in 1921 Denmark declared its sovereignty over all of Greenland, the Norwegians promptly registered their dissent. The dispute culminated in the early 1930s, when the Norwegians planted the Norwegian flag in Northeast Greenland. In 1933 the International Court of Justice in The Hague ended the dispute in favour of Denmark.

14 ARKE: 2010.

of mixed origin who constantly attract his attention. Thus, the narrator's own position as a sort of cultural hybrid is carefully framed by the text, but at the same time it is also constantly negated and refuted. This only heightens the reader's interest in this character, who appears far removed from the template style that too often characterises the political novel.

In *Hvis du fløjter efter nordlyset* the distance between the author and the narrator seems wider, since much of the action is clearly inconsistent with the author's own life story. First and foremost, a large part of the action takes place in Alaska, where the narrator lives for almost two decades and works as a journalist at a local radio station. Before that, he even works for a short while for the CIA. The following text is placed after the colophon: »All environments and relations in this novel are inspired by reality; yet they are but fantasies in the mind of the author. Therefore, any similarities with persons from the factual world are purely coincidental.«¹⁵

However, parallel to the release of the novel Helms went public with a story about how he had found his own name in the archives of the Danish Security and Intelligence Service – a story that is very similar to what happens to the narrator-protagonist in the novel. In this way, both books become part of the kind of self-writing and playing with the boundary between fiction and reality that form such an important part of 21st-century Scandinavian fiction.¹⁶

Learning to read the score

Dansen i Geneve opens with a prologue, set in 2001, where the narrator visits Þingvellir¹⁷ in Iceland together with an Icelandic woman whose name we never hear, and of whom we only get a brief glimpse from behind. It seems to be here, at this mythical place where the continents are drifting apart, and where the Icelanders created »a system that would one day bring together people of East and West«, that the narrator receives

15 »Alle miljøer og forhold i denne roman er inspireret af virkeligheden; men dog rene fantasier i forfatterens hoved. Eventuelle ligheder med personer fra den virkelige verden er derfor helt tilfældige.« (HELMS: 2007, 4).

16 See for instance HAARDER: 2010, LENEMARK: 2009, MELDBERG: 2007, and Volquardsen's chapter in this volume.

17 The first Icelandic parliament or *Alþingi* was established at Þingvellir in 930 and remained there until 1789.

his poetic inspiration.¹⁸ When the narrator states, »I would like to tell you a story«, both the Icelandic *völva* (mythological figure, female poet and teller of prophecies) and the Danish author Karen Blixen, who called herself a »storyteller«, come to mind. The book consists of six stories, all connected by the narrator, who gathers friends, foes, experiences and insights as he criss-crosses the world to take part in international meetings representing ICC and the Greenlandic Home Rule government. The stories can be read independently, but there is a progression and a connection between them, and thus the book could in fact be read as a novel of the late modern kind, where we have to satisfy ourselves with looking into the protagonist's life through fragments or a certain aspect of his life.

When the first story opens in 1980, the narrator is a complete novice in the political game. It is an Icelander, Ásmundur, who teaches him his first lessons in political strategy: »Learn to read the score«, he said, »because you are now in the land of the hidden agendas.«¹⁹ Far from being one with his official suit, Ásmundur is also an opera singer, and he is friends with the Spanish dancers who own the basement restaurant *La Danse* in Geneva. First and foremost, he sincerely believes in what he does, and he therefore becomes a role model for the narrator, reminding him that even though the democratic process is based on plotting and intrigue, and lots of time and taxpayers' money are spent in bars and restaurants (and on prostitutes), democracy is still worth believing in. Thus, the title of the book alludes both to the strange choreography by which the delegates, their civil servants and interested parties circle each other and to the ecstasy when something you believe in and have worked for has been achieved. Other associations connected with dance, such as the Dance of Death, are completely avoided in the book.

At the beginning of the book, it is a little difficult to determine whether the indigenous peoples themselves actually care for the political process. The Greenlanders seem to have other things to do – rarely showing up for meetings and sending the narrator in their place. In the second story, »Fuglen over Limpopo« (»The Bird over Limpopo«), we are at a CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of

18 »For mere end tusinde år siden forsamlede hendes forfædre sig netop der, og uden at de selv vidste det, stod de på en af klodens største brudflader, mens de skabte et system, der en dag skulle samle menneskene i øst og vest.« (HELMS: 2004, 10).

19 »Lær at læse partituret«, sagde han, »for du er nu i de skjulte dagsordeners land.« (Ibid., 20).

Wild Fauna and Flora) meeting held in Gaborone, Botswana in 1983. The delegation of indigenous Canadians seems only too well to live up to the negative stereotypes of the easy-going, always partying »natives«, and one might get the impression that these people *do* in fact need a white man to fight their battles. However, they are very aware that they have only been included as token members of the delegation in order to make the Canadian policies towards indigenous peoples look progressive. They obviously know how to read the score.

So do the natives in the third story called »The Danish Nation«. ²⁰ The time is now 1985, and the narrator is accompanying the president and the vice-president of the Inuit organization ICC – the former from Greenland, the latter from Alaska – on a visit to a Native American village somewhere in southern Alaska. They have been informed that the Native Americans have an important message, which will be passed on to them by the elders. At their arrival, all three visitors are both somewhat amazed and embarrassed by the primitive conditions in the village. Likewise, they are annoyed by the old-fashioned or »traditional« ways of the Native Americans. No alcohol, because the elders have forbidden it, ²¹ no photos because the spirits do not like it, ²² and so on. The narrator is sure that he is experiencing something very authentic – although right from the start there seems to be something fishy about the whole affair. The Native Americans do not exactly seem friendly, neither towards the two Inuit nor towards the Dane, and as it turns out, none of the elders are at home and have left the negotiations to the younger people in the village. Perhaps this important message is not so important after all? The Alaskan vice-president is much more familiar with the culture of the Native Americans than the Greenlander, to whom the concept of »elders« makes little sense. ²³ Thus, it is also the vice-president who picks up a comment that the setting of traps is a talent that runs in the family of their Native Amer-

20 The English title is the original.

21 Ibid., 108.

22 Ibid., 109.

23 While the concept of »the elders« has been an important marker of difference between white Americans and the indigenous populations, no such distinction has been made in Greenland, where nationalism in the European sense has prevailed, see SEJERSEN: 2004. Greenland is different from Canada and the USA in that the territory is clearly limited, since Greenland is an island and did not attract settlers. Greenlanders were always the primary producers, and Danes have always had the status as guests.

ican host.²⁴ Still, the Alaskan falls into the trap just as unwittingly as the other two visitors.

The message is that the tribe wants to be incorporated into the Danish nation! The two Inuit are flabbergasted, while the narrator feels his heart swell with patriotic pride: »I thought of my godfather and all the other Danes who had fought to help the Greenlanders. The Home Rule agreement gave it the finishing touch. If this reputation had reached as far as this village, our lives had not been in vain.«²⁵

The next day, while he is alone with the Native American, the narrator thanks the other man deeply for the honour that he and his people are showing the Danish nation with their request. The response is somewhat surprising:

»Idiot«, he said and looked me up and down. »Who the hell do you think we are? Illiterates? ... We know all there is to know about your Denmark. If you think we want an agreement with the whites, where we are denied ownership of our land, have our natural resources stolen and ourselves turned into economic slaves, while we are used in some national security game where we aren't even allowed to know what our own country is used for – if you think that's what we want, you are seriously mistaken. We do not need your model. We are not that backward.«²⁶

The whole affair turns out to be a stunt in the game they are playing with their own government. The event receives considerable attention in the press, which was in fact the whole idea. The narrator is too embarrassed to tell the two Inuit delegates about his private conversation with the Native American. However, the Alaskan vice-president tells the two others that the Native American had told him that while he was in Vietnam he was wounded and hospitalised. In the hospital, his neighbour in the next bed was an old pilot who explained how he had helped unload nuclear bombs in Thule, Greenland. As if speaking with one mouth, the two oth-

24 HELMS: 2004, III.

25 »Jeg tænkte på min gudfar og alle de andre danskere, der havde kæmpet for at hjælpe Grønland. Hjemmestyreordningen var prikken over i'et. Hvis det ry nu var nået helt herud, havde vi ikke levet forgæves.« (Ibid., II).

26 »»Idiot«, sagde han og så op og ned ad mig. »Hvad fanden tror du vi er? Analfabeter? (...) Vi ved alt om dit Danmark. Hvis du tror, vi er interesserede i at få en ordning med de hvide, hvor man nægter os ejendomsretten til vores land, stjæler vores råstoffer og gør os til økonomiske slaver, mens man bruger os i et sikkerhedspolitisk spil, hvor vi ikke engang må få at vide, hvad vores eget land bliver brugt til, så tager du fejl. Vi har aldeles ikke brug for jeres model. Så tilbagestående er vi heller ikke.« (Ibid., 125).

ers assure him that the Native American was lying: »Nuclear weapons are not permitted on Danish territory. The Danish nation stands absolutely firm on that matter. Our governments would never agree to that.«²⁷

However, in this one regard the readers will be better informed than the ICC politicians and the narrator. Mixed in with the story about the visit to Alaska in 1985 is another story, set at The Foreign Minister's office and the State Department's archive in Copenhagen in 1995. This story is told in the third person, with a keeper of the archives as the main protagonist and the topic being a hotly debated affair in Danish cold war politics. In a memorandum written by the Prime and Foreign Minister H.C. Hansen to the Danish U.S. Ambassador to Denmark, dated 18 November 1957, the minister indirectly accepted that the USA could place nuclear weapons in Greenland. This was in total contradiction of Denmark's official policies, and neither the Danish government nor the Foreign Policy Committee was informed. The public did not learn of the memorandum until 1995.²⁸

Thus, the notion that Denmark is more true to democracy than other nations and has always ruled with the Greenlanders' full consent²⁹ is dismantled in the story. In the office of the director of the Danish archives there is a painting of the Danish fortress in the Danish West Indies. It looks exotic and idyllic – but the reality revolved around the slave trade. This point is never made explicitly but left to the reader to conclude – just as the reader is left to once again reflect upon the narrator's naive remark about his colonialist godfather in the opening of the story: »He meant well«, I muttered. ›Yeah«, the vice president said. ›Your Denmark always means well, isn't that so? It is not like our USA. They do it out of pure malice.‹ They both shrieked with laughter.«³⁰

27 »Der må ikke være atomvåben på dansk jord. Der står den danske nation fast. Det ville vores regeringer aldrig gå med til.« (Ibid., 128).

28 DUPI: 1995.

29 See e.g. THISTED: 2009; THISTED: 2012.

30 »Han gjorde det jo i en god mening«, mumlede jeg. ›Yeah«, sagde vicepræsidenten. ›Jeres Danmark gør jo alting i en god mening ikke? Det er ikke som vores USA. De gør det af ren ondskab.‹ De skreg af grin begge to.« (HELMS: 2004, 98).

Traduttore, traditore – translator, traitor

In the next two stories, »Den dobbelte bank« (»The Double Bank«) and »Stjernerne i Rio« (»The Stars in Rio«), the narrator learns how to read another kind of score: the unofficial, underground worlds of Argentina and Brazil. These are lessons of cultural translation, which also open doors to new areas of the narrator's own personality, some of them more pleasant and pleasurable than others. In the last story, »The Sami Air Force«,³¹ translation in the literal, linguistic meaning of the word comes into play, as translation from Swedish into English is built into the plot of the story.

In the previous stories the topics were issues relevant to indigenous peoples: the Law of the Sea, nautical borders, conservation of marine mammals. In this story the topic is the negotiation of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. This declaration was more than 25 years in the making and the 1989 version was an important stepping stone towards the most recent declaration from 2007. The central issue concerns the question of whether people should be *people* or *peoples*. In the first case, *people* merely means a plurality of individuals within a given state. In this case, indigenous people are in the position of an ethnic minority within the state. With the term *peoples*, however, they qualify as a *people* in accordance with the ILO/UN Universal Declaration of the Rights of Peoples.³² As a consequence, indigenous peoples would have the acknowledged right to self-determination – which is not in the interest of the state who has declared sovereignty over the territory in question. In »The Sami Air Force« a Sami delegate explains it as follows:

The problem with the concept of peoples is that it is tied to UN international law. According to the UN, all peoples have the right to freedom, independence and their own country – and to exploit their own resources. All the member countries signed this, back when it was a benefit for their own security. Now they fear that we will get the same rights to use against them.³³

31 The English title is the original.

32 Dated Algiers, 4 July 1976, see http://www.algerie-tpp.org/tpp/en/declaration_algiers.htm.

33 »[P]roblemet med begrebet »folk« er, at det er bundet op til FN's folkeret. Ifølge FN har ethvert folk ret til frihed, selvstændighed og eget land. Og til at udnytte sine egne ressourcer. Det har alle medlemsstaterne skrevet under på, dengang det var godt for deres egen sikkerhed. Nu frygter de, at vi får de samme rettigheder i forhold til dem selv.« (Ibid., 207).

In the story »The Danish Nation« discussed above, the points and punch lines arise from the fractures between the two seemingly unconnected but intersected stories. »The Sami Air Force« is like a puzzle where piece after piece falls into place. The story starts in 2003 in Tórshavn in the Faroe Islands, at a conference concerning a future Faroese constitution.³⁴ After a lecture on the continued colonial situation of the Faroese people, regardless of Home Rule, the participants embark on an excursion to Kirkjubøur, site of the ruins of the Magnus Cathedral, which was built around 1300. During the Middle Ages, Kirkjubøur was the spiritual centre of Faroese society, and today the location is the country's most important historical site and a central symbol of the Faroese nation. Seated in the old wooden farmhouse next door to the church (a 900-year-old building!), the narrator chats with the observer for the Swedish government, who expresses his support for the Faroese people. Of course the Faroese people have the right to their own identity and their own constitution, he claims.³⁵ If that is so, asks the narrator, then why has it been so difficult for the Swedish government to ratify the ILO convention about the rights of indigenous peoples? And how come Sweden suddenly agreed to the term peoples after all? The following story relates the narrator's version of how it came about that the word *peoples* entered the convention instead of the word *population*, which the states had initially preferred, the Scandinavian states included.

ILO, the International Labour Organisation, is a tripartite UN agency with government, employer and worker representatives. The goal is to jointly shape policies and programmes promoting »decent work« for all. It was the ILO that first showed concern for indigenous people. In 1957 it promulgated ILO Convention 107 on living and working conditions of »indigenous and tribal populations«. This document was later criticised for reflecting the view of the settler societies and for promoting the absorption of indigenous populations into settler societies. At the 234 Session of the »governing body« (the executive council of the ILO, which meets three times a year in Geneva) in November 1986, a partial revision of the convention was placed on the agenda for the 75th session of the

34 The Faroe Islands became an integral part of the Danish Realm from their first constitution in 1849. Home Rule was established in 1948, and in 2005 the so-called »Takeover Act« expanded Faroese Home Rule into Self-Government, as it happened for Greenland four years later.

35 HELMS: 2004, 202.

International Labour Conference (which meets once a year in Geneva) in 1988. A new report was issued for the 76th International Labour Conference in 1989, resulting in the Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention 169.³⁶

The novel is set around these meetings and the plotting in between, which take the narrator to Copenhagen, Sápmi (the land of the Sami People, in northern Scandinavia), Oslo and Stockholm. Seen from the perspective of indigenous peoples, the convention had to be framed in such a way that it left open the possibility of negotiating separate land rights regimes within the context of the national legal systems. However, it was clear to the drafters of the convention that governments would not ratify the convention if it would require them to change their constitutions.³⁷ At the 1988 meeting in Geneva, the narrator is appointed »rapporteur« due to the fact that he is the only representative of an indigenous »government«. He is very unsure of his role, however, and for good reason. The Greenlandic *Landsstyre* did not have the status of an actual government, since the Home Rule Act only gave the Greenlanders the right to self-determination as far as internal affairs were concerned. The Act used the phrase *folkesamfund*, which translates as *population* rather than *people*, and Greenland was described as a sort of minority region within the realm: a region that »nationally, culturally and geographically« held an »exceptional position«. On the other hand, it has always been important for the Danish state to uphold the national narrative of Denmark as a nation that has solved its issues with its former colonies and national minorities, and in the short story the narrator knows how to play this card at the right moments. His role as »rapporteur« gives the narrator both power and visibility, and he strikes a deal with the Canadian president for the Inuit organisation: If she can make sure that Canada accepts the word *peoples*, the narrator will make sure that all the Scandinavian countries do the same.

Together with the Sami people the narrator sets up a plot to sneak the word *peoples* into the text. Since the word *folk* in the Scandinavian languages carries both meanings: *people* and *peoples*, this word in a text written in one of the Scandinavian languages could be used as a kind of Trojan horse. The Swedes pose the main problem in the Scandinavian

36 SWEPSTONE: 1990.

37 LILE: 2006, 13.

group. The Swedes have no intention of accepting the word *peoples*, as that might cause problems with the Sami people and their claim to the territory on which they live. The other Scandinavian nations in principle agree, but for a variety of reasons it is easier for the Sami and the Greenlandic representatives to deal with Norway, Finland and Denmark. However, the Nordic ministers for the environment are working on a new plan of action for the environment. It has come as far as the third and final draft prior to the ministers' approval. The narrator instructs his colleagues to convince their ministers that a passage about the Samis' and the Greenlanders' efforts to improve the environment should be mentioned in the document. At the ministers' meeting everything works according to plan. The narrator manages to include a passage in the preamble that mentions the word *oprindelige folk* (indigenous peoples) twice. At this stage, the text is in Danish/Swedish, but the narrator asks them to speed up the translation into English, since he wants to show the text to his Alaskan and Canadian colleagues in order to use it as a source of »inspiration« in the Inuit organisations.³⁸

As long as the text is in one of the Scandinavian languages, no one pays attention to the little word *folk*, and since this is a different ministry, the text goes directly to the government for approval – without the attention of the Ministry of Justice. When, at the final meeting among the Scandinavian negotiators preparing for the 76th International Labour Conference, the Swedish negotiator stands firm on the word *populations*, the narrator calls his attention to the fact that the Swedish government already uses the term *indigenous peoples* in their international papers. The English version of the Nordic Plan of Action for the Environment is passed around. Luckily, the translator has used the term *peoples*. Using the word in one context while renouncing it in another would be an obvious case of »double standards«,³⁹ and eventually the Nordic countries unanimously agree to the text that uses the term *peoples*. The process evokes the Italian proverb *Traduttore, traditore*: translation as an act of deceit.⁴⁰

38 HELMS: 2004, 253.

39 *Ibid.*, 257.

40 In translation theory the proverb stands as a metaphor for the general problem of untranslatability: that transferring a meaning from one language to another is far from as simple as it may sound. However, the proverb probably expresses popular culture's distrust of those who use unfamiliar language as an instrument of power. In Italy this has

But that was far from being the last word in the matter. Before the text saw the light of day, a passage that began as a footnote entered the actual text stating that: »The use of the term *peoples* in this Convention shall not be construed as having any implications as regards the rights which may attach to the term under international law.«⁴¹ And for the narrator it was a very embarrassing fact that Denmark took so long – not until 1996 – to ratify the convention. At the end of the story, on the bus back from Kirkjubœur to Tórshavn, we learn why: it was an act of revenge. The officials in the Swedish Department of Justice knew the officials in the Danish Department of Justice. The Swedish observer laughs: »»This«, he bel- lowed, »is how you slap mosquitoes!«⁴² However, the Swedish observer does not know as much about mosquitoes as the narrator does. During his visit to Sápmi, the narrator learns why mosquitoes are called »the Sami Air Force«: Without the mosquitoes, the Scandinavians might have settled in the Sápmi long ago.⁴³ It might be possible to slap some of them, but to exterminate them completely is quite simply impossible! The political process works the same way – the indigenous peoples will always keep coming.

Thus, the whole book can be seen as a declaration of faith in democ- racy. In the epilogue we are back in Iceland, this time in Reykjavik in 2004. Again, the narrator is walking with an Icelandic woman, as if they are simply continuing their conversation from the prologue. This time we see the woman's eyes, but we still do not hear her name. She could be anybody, but in fact she could also be the renowned Vigdís Finnbogadóttir.⁴⁴ Just as she took the narrator to visit the old parliament site at Thingvellir in the prologue, she now takes him to the Höfði building, the site of the 1986 Reykjavik Summit meeting between Presidents Ronald Reagan and Mikhail Gorbachev:

referred, historically, to those who used Latin to reinforce the mystique of their profes- sion: priests, lawyers, doctors. Mark Davie on translating Galileo, see: <http://blog.oup.com/2012/09/traduttore-traditore-translator-traitor-translation/>.

41 ILO C169 Indigenous and tribal Peoples Convention 1989, Part One, Article One/3.

42 »»Sáðan«, brølede han, »klasker man myg.« (HELMS: 2004, 265).

43 Ibid., 239.

44 In the 1960s and 1970s, Vigdís Finnbogadóttir participated in numerous rallies pro- testing against the U.S. military presence in Iceland. In 1980 she became the first woman in the world to be elected as head of state in a democratic election. She was the presi- dent of Iceland until 1996.

»Art, faith and power«, she said. (...) »If these forces battle, people lose, but when they dance together life moves in the right direction.« (...) »Some understood it«, she said. Then she pointed to the small white castle situated so lonely on the islet in the sea and said: »Right there, the cold war ended«⁴⁵

Thus, the prologue and the epilogue add an almost mythological frame to the whole narration. Even if democracy is challenged and put to the test in the six stories, it appears to prevail in the end. *Dansen i Geneve* argues that – contrary to general belief – it *is* in fact possible to navigate through the immense bureaucracy within the institutions of international politics. *Hvis du fløjter efter nordlyset* may seem slightly less optimistic, at least as concerns the integrity of resistance movements when those who were once suppressed come to power.

... they will carry you off!

Like the author, the narrator in *Hvis du fløjter efter nordlyset* also has roots in eastern Jutland and his name is Bjørn, which means »bear« in Danish. In this way a connection to the narrator of *Dansen i Geneve* is discreetly established. Bjørn arrives in Greenland fresh out of journalism school around 1980 and is attracted to the euphoric mood among young Greenlanders on the political left. Home Rule has recently been implemented, the ICC has been founded, and there is pervasive spirit of Inuit solidarity. Bjørn becomes embroiled in the political game where the Greenlanders manoeuvre between their »fellow tribesmen« in the ICC on the one hand and Danish business interests and the Danish administration on the other. In the ICC, the Alaskans, with their oil deposits, are known as »brothers with money«, while the Greenlanders with their new Home Rule Act are »brothers with political power«. At the time, before Nunavut, Nunavik and various other special regional agreements, the Canadian Inuit are »brothers with none of the two«.⁴⁶ Either way, everyone has their own agenda in terms of both community and private interests, which often prove to be closely interwoven. Young, naïve Bjørn is merely a pawn in this game, and from the beginning of the book we sense

45 »Kunsten«, sagde hun, »troen og magten. (...) Strides de kræfter, taber menneskene, men når de danser sammen, går livet den rigtige vej.« Så pegede hun ud mod den lille hvide borg, der lå så alene derude på holmen i havet, og sagde: »Der sluttede den kolde krig.« (Ibid., 270).

46 HELMS: 2011, 20.

that this has led him to have more than a few secrets and at least one skeleton in the closet.

The novel unfolds along two timelines: 2002, which is the present time of the novel, where the first-person narrator is working on completing a manuscript for a story that is set in 1982. The name of this manuscript is »Rock and Oil«, and in the novel's time capsule, the narrator is translating it from Danish into English for the benefit of his 18-year-old daughter, who defines herself as »just as much Inuk, Dad, as I'm white«.47 Only towards the end of the novel does the father finally write the closing chapter in his manuscript, where the daughter learns the full story about her parents and the way they met. »Rock and Oil« begins in Greenland and takes Bjørn to Alaska, while the 2002 storyline, which dominates the story more and more, begins in Barrow and takes Bjørn back to Nuuk and his own beginnings in Jutland, Denmark. Here, the story comes full circle. *Hvis du fløjter efter nordlyset* is the title of the manuscript that the father leaves behind after his death in 2004, but that is up to the reader to guess, since the daughter cannot read the Danish words or grasp the meaning of all the new pages that have been inserted between the pages of the old manuscript, which the father had read to her two years earlier. The reader knows that the new pages have to address the 2002 story, which is set in italics in the print version of the book.

»If you whistle at the Northern Lights« is in fact the first half of a Greenlandic proverb, which goes on to say, »... they will carry you off!« The title refers to multiple layers of meaning in the narrative of the book. Naturally, it refers to the spell that Bjørn falls under in the Arctic, not least in the form of an Inuit woman who is just as beautiful as the northern lights themselves. It is also a metaphor for the exuberant over-confidence that characterised the hippies in the Summer of Love – an over-confidence that proved so costly (also on a personal level), but which also unleashed many dreams and a huge amount of energy, and paved the way for new constellations in the political universe. And in relation to Bjørn's personal life, the title also refers to the political involvement that pulled him out of his own environment and gave him a unique relationship with Greenland and a number of Greenlanders, who almost consider him »one of their own«.

47 »Jeg er lige så meget inuk, far, som jeg er hvid (...) og det er jeg faktisk ret stolt af.« (Ibid., 15).

Thus, like *Dansen i Genevø, Hvis du fløjter efter nordlyset* is constructed as a set of Chinese boxes with frame stories and stories-within-stories. *Hvis du fløjter efter nordlyset*, however, focuses on the personal story and revolves around the cultural encounter and Bjørn's entry into – and to some extent departure from – the Arctic universe. In particular, his relationship with his daughter, whose mother tongue Bjørn does not speak and barely understands, is described with a profound sense of sympathy and understanding. It is, however, not this aspect of the book that is the object of analysis here⁴⁸ but rather the political dimension, which is interwoven with the personal.

Male characters, friendship and politics

The feature that makes Helms' work stand out most from previous Danish fiction about Greenland is its portrayal of Greenlandic men. Over the years, the relationship white man/Inuit woman is clearly the one that male Danish writers have been best equipped to manifest in literary form, although there are exceptions to this rule. In their time, Knud Rasmussen (1879–1933) and Peter Freuchen (1886–1957) had much closer relationships with men because they travelled and hunted with them. Both these polar heroes, however, focused on portraying the »original« culture in Thule, Canada and Alaska. Hence, Danish literature is rich in credible close-ups of Eskimo hunters, but it is deplorably poor in similarly credible portraits of modern Greenlandic men, and successful Greenlandic men are virtually absent from recent Danish literature.⁴⁹ The fascination with the hunter and the kayaker as a reflection of the »authentic« Greenlandic⁵⁰ has led to the notion of the educated Greenlandic man as a torn and alienated character. The Greenlanders immediately saw through this concept as a strategy for keeping them in a position as colonised, although they later embraced it to some extent in the culturally oriented discourse of the 1970s and 80s.⁵¹ In Helms' novel, however, the powerful Greenlandic politicians are stepping into character.

48 For a more in-depth interpretation also of these aspects of the novel, see THISTED: 2013a.

49 THISTED: 2011b.

50 SØRENSEN: 1994; THOMSEN: 1998.

51 THISTED: 1992b and THISTED: 2005.

Thus, in Helms' novel, relationships with a number of significant men appear as crucial as the relationships with the women. The first example is Bjørn's Greenlandic friend from journalism school, Svend. Svend is the one who draws Bjørn to Greenland to enlist his help with the campaign against the EEC. The fact that Greenland turned down membership of the EEC yet was still dragged into it because Denmark voted yes was one of the »ethnodramas«⁵² that led to Home Rule,⁵³ and indeed, Greenland's first act after the implementation of Home Rule was to leave the EEC. The most crucial factor, however, proves to be Bjørn's friendship with Amaroq. Amaroq is from Alaska, his mother is Inuit, but his father is from Rocky River, Ohio. He managed the weather station in Barrow, and unlike so many of the white men he did not simply leave but stayed and was a father to his children. His ambition was to get his children into university, and indeed, Amaroq has a degree from the University of Alaska in Fairbanks. Amaroq has grand and, in a sense, visionary plans for how the Inuit can benefit financially from their country's natural resources and strategic geopolitical position if they stand united. Amaroq means wolf, and the man matches his name, just as Bjørn matches his. While Bjørn is large and heavy and easily winded, Amaroq is constantly on the scent of something new. He is the one who comes up with good ideas and snatches the prey, although unfortunately it eludes him once stronger players move in and grab it from him.

Another key male figure in Bjørn's life is the Greenlandic cabinet minister for industry and labour. He is never introduced by name, but anyone with just a little knowledge of Greenlandic politics will know who this figure might be based on, although, as mentioned above, the author states in the colophon that any links between fiction and real life are purely coincidental. The cabinet minister plays a key role in the plot along with Bjørn and Amaroq, but he never becomes a close friend of Bjørn's. Gradually, Bjørn realises that the minister is simply using him and his »fellow tribesman« Amaroq for his own purposes.

Finally there is Doug, who is white, but who has spent most of his life working for Makivik, a Canadian Inuit organisation headquartered in Montreal. Thus, in a sense, Doug is a colleague of Bjørn's. It is Doug who

52 PAINE: 1985.

53 DAHL: 2005.

opens Bjørn's eyes to the limitations in the actual political powers of Greenlandic Home Rule:

»Where I come from«, he said, »we usually define a Greenlandic politician as a short guy with black hair holding a tall white guy's hand.«

»What do you mean?« I said.

»All the Greenlandic politicians who come over, both to us and to Alaska, have a white civil servant on their ass. And as far as I know, most of them used to work in the Danish Ministry for Greenlandic affairs.«⁵⁴

As part of the Home Rule agreement, the Home Rule administration took over as many employees as possible from the former Danish ministry to prevent them losing their jobs, but most of these employees did not want to relocate to Greenland – and they did not have to, because the Home Rule administration established the Denmark Office in Denmark. Thus, in principle, all these civil servants were now working for a new employer, but Doug doubts that their interests had actually changed when it came to money, military agreements and oil.

His suspicion is borne out by the storyline, where the Danish civil servants are clearly pursuing Danish interests. The rationale is that Danish interests are ultimately identical with Greenlandic interests by virtue of the block grant⁵⁵ and the old narrative that Denmark has always acted selflessly and in the best interest of the Greenlanders. This policy keeps the Greenlanders in their place in the colonial power relationship, which is clearly in conflict with the intention in the Home Rule Act of giving the Greenlanders greater independence. The narrative about Danish selflessness is also contradicted by the director of the Denmark Office, who is constantly encouraging Bjørn to feel and act as a Dane: »»We Danes have to stick together««⁵⁶; »»Goddamn, you're still a Dane, aren't you?««⁵⁷ Initially, Bjørn actually embraces this narrative,⁵⁸ and Doug and the Inuit he works with are in fact wise to take a closer look at Bjørn and educate him

54 »»Ovre hos os«, sagde han, »plejer vi at definere en grønlandsk politiker som en lille, sorthåret mand med en stor, hvid mand i hånden.« »Hvad mener du?« sagde jeg. »Alle de grønlandske politikere, der kommer, både til os og til Alaska, har en hvid embedsmand i røven. Og så vidt jeg ved, er de fleste af dem tidligere ansatte fra det danske ministerium for Grønland.« (Ibid., 146–147).

55 A yearly economic transfer from Denmark to Greenland.

56 »»Vi danskere må holde sammen.« (Ibid., 47).

57 »»Du er vel for helvede stadigvæk dansker?« (Ibid., 145).

58 Ibid., 24.

a little before involving him for real and confiding in him. When Doug lectures him on the problems with the Danish civil servants, Bjørn objects:

»What about you then... you're just as bloody white as I am.«

»Yeah«, he said, »but the thing is, they prefer hippies like us. We rebelled against our own system back in the sixties. They trust us exactly because our own system doesn't. We are their nigger lovers, man. It's the suits that scare them.«⁵⁹

»Hippies« and »nigger lovers« are the derogatory terms that others use about these politically engaged whites who elect to show solidarity across borders in a world where solidarity is expected to run along racial and ethnic lines. Although he uses the terms in an ironic tone, Doug does seem to have embraced them to some degree – in part because he knows that this is probably also how he is viewed by the people with whom he has chosen to align himself. The conversation opens Bjørn's eyes to his own relationships both with Amaroq and with the Greenlandic cabinet minister, but it also brings about a different realization: that the Inuit ultimately trust these white men more than they trust each other. Not because of any inferiority complex but simply because they have more faith in the genuine nature of these white men's dedication – precisely because they have »crossed over« and placed themselves outside mainstream society. For that reason, Bjørn advises Amaroq to let Thomas, who is also white, and who works for the Inuit organisations from his base in London, to do the talking in the negotiations with the Greenlandic cabinet minister: »»Why?« he said and looked confused. »It's an Inuit brother. Surely, it's better if I do it myself.« »Why do you think he picked me for this job«, I said, »and not an Inuit brother?«⁶⁰

59 »»Hvad med dig selv ... du er jo lige så skide hvid som mig.« »Year«, sagde han, »men de kan nu engang bedst lide freaks som os. Vi gjorde oprør mod vores eget system allerede i tresserne. De stoler på os, præcis fordi vores eget system ikke gør det. Vi er deres niggerlovers, mand. Det er gutterne i jakkesæt og slips, de er bange for.« (Ibid., 147–148).

60 »»Hvorfor det?« sagde han og så forvirret ud. »Det er en inuitbroder. Det er da bedre, jeg gør det selv.« »Hvorfor tror du, han valgte mig til den her opgave«, sagde jeg, »og ikke en inuitbroder?« (Ibid., 173).

Culture, finances and the imagined community of all Inuit

As Amaroq points out, at the time the Home Rule Act is implemented, Greenland is full of educated people, but most of them are priests or teachers, while the Danes are still in charge of economic and business affairs.⁶¹ In the early days of the colonial era a myth was established that Greenlanders had difficulty with numbers.⁶² Consequently, the Danes had to manage the Greenlanders' interests, and thus the myth was used to keep the Greenlanders in their place within the colonial system.⁶³ In fact, political power is empty if it is coupled with economic dependence, and according to Amaroq, empty power is all that Greenland has achieved with the Home Rule agreement, which did not give Greenland ownership of the subsoil or the right to enter into independent foreign policy agreements – including agreements concerning the military, whose presence in Greenland generates huge earnings in the form of service contracts and economic compensation. On this point, the Greenlandic cabinet minister agrees completely with Amaroq, but he argues that Home Rule was the best deal they were able to achieve at the time. It does not necessarily represent what they wanted, but, as he explains, »If you can't have everything you want in one go, it may be wise to accept part of it now and then go for the rest later.«⁶⁴ On the other hand, one should be careful not to wait too long, lest one face the same fate as the rabbit in the story about the rabbit and the snake:

»Don't worry«, said the rabbit about the snake, »I'll eat him up from the inside once he has swallowed me«, he [the cabinet minister] said.
 »Right«, I said, »and then what happened?«
 »Since then no one has heard from the rabbit«, he laughed.⁶⁵

Thus, the Danish civil servants underestimate the Greenlandic politicians, even the Greenlandic premier, who the civil servants think they can get to sign anything, as long as they »soften him up« first with sufficient

61 Ibid., 22.

62 See e.g. SCHULTZ-LORENTZEN: 1951, 86–87.

63 PETERSEN: 1928, analysed in THISTED: 2012.

64 »Hvis man ikke kan få alt det, man ønsker sig på én gang, kan det være klogt at nøjes med en del af det først og så gå efter resten senere.« (HELMS: 2011, 186).

65 »Bare rolig, sagde kaninen om slangen, jeg spiser den op indefra, når den først har ædt mig«, fortalte han [landsstyremedlemmet]. »Ja«, sagde jeg, »og hvad så?« »Siden er der ikke nogen, der har hørt noget fra kaninen, grinede han.« Ibid., 285.

amounts of alcohol.⁶⁶ The political storyline illustrates the savvy of the Greenlandic politicians but also the degree of cynicism that is required to avoid suffering the same fate as the rabbit in the political game. This ultimately takes a heavy toll on some, including Amaroq, who has not, however, been completely above board about everything, and who is too naive in the way he involves the large corporations in his efforts to get the Danes out of Greenland. In connection with this effort, Bjørn visits the palatial headquarters of one of these corporations in London, and even if this is not exactly a »whited sepulchre«, the visit still evokes literary images of the young Marlow's visit to »the Company« before he sets out for the Belgian Congo in Joseph Conrad's famous *Heart of Darkness*.⁶⁷ Inuit in Canada and Alaska are at least as dependent on their respective nation states as the Greenlanders. This is not least true of Canada, where the Brits and the Commonwealth still pull the strings. In that game, the Greenlanders prefer the Danes:

»The Danes are neither better nor worse than all the other foreigners«, he [the cabinet minister] then said. »But the Danes we can manage. We're taking their power away from them, bit by bit. And we love 'em at the same time. That's the odd thing. But the English!« he almost spat out the word, »they have to be the worst colonists in the world.«

»Nope«, I said, »that'll be the French.«

»Okay«, he laughed, »well, let's steer clear of them too, then.«⁶⁸

Thus, the narrative of Danish exceptionalism is both renounced and preserved.

Råstoffervaltningen (the Raw Materials Administration, today the Greenland Government Bureau of Minerals and Petroleum) was the office that handled all permits for oil and mineral extraction in Greenland; during the first years of Home Rule it was part of the Danish Ministry of Energy. It was the civil servants in the Raw Materials Administration who were responsible for negotiating with various corporations on the conditions for their activities in Greenland. But before the contracts could be

66 Ibid., 45–47; 192.

67 CONRAD: 1988, 13.

68 »Danskerne er hverken værre eller bedre end alle andre udlændinge«, sagde han [landsstyremedlemmet] så. »Men danskerne har vi styr på. Dem tager vi magten fra bid efter bid. Og vi elsker dem samtidig. Det er det mærkelige ved det. Men englænderne!« han nærmest spyttede ordet ud, »det er da de værste koloniherrer i verden.« »Næh«, sagde jeg, »det er franskmændene.« »Ok«, grinede han, »så lad os holde os fra dem også.« (Ibid., 220).

signed, they had to be approved by the *Fællesrådet* (Joint Council), which was comprised of an equal number of Danish and Greenlandic parliamentarians. As part of the Home Rule agreement, however, the Greenlanders had the right of veto, and that becomes the keystone of the novel's political plot. Amaroq has plans of pulling off a coup for all the service agreements in Greenland, not only with regard to the oil company carrying out test drilling in Jameson Land (Nerlerit Inaat) in East Greenland at the time, but also the contracts with the defence and the military bases, first among them the Thule Air Base. His plan involves the Inuit standing together, as prescribed by the rhetoric of the ICC. The plan will undermine Danish interests in Greenland, and Bjørn works actively to promote it.

At the same time, however, he also works for the Greenlandic cabinet minister, and right from the beginning it is clear that he is sceptical of the grand visions of Inuit solidarity. For the cabinet minister »drum dancing and romantic notions of kinship« are a thing of the past,⁶⁹ and overall he views the ICC as a »drum dancing pipe dream«.⁷⁰ The differences of opinion concerning the ICC among the characters in the novel reflect differences in Greenlandic domestic politics. While to an outside observer the ICC may seem to be a common effort that enjoys the support of all Greenlanders, the issue looks a great deal more complicated when examined closely. The ICC and the concept of indigenous peoples were core issues for the left-wing party *Inuit Ataqatigiit* (IA), but support was more ambivalent from *Siumut*, the large social-democratic party that was in power throughout the Home Rule period, while the right-wing party *Atassut* openly distanced itself from the ICC.⁷¹

69 »For ham hørte trommedans og frænderomantik fortiden til.« (Ibid., 19).

70 »Skæve trommedanserideer« (ibid., 31). »Glem ICC«, sagde landsstyremedlemmet. »Det her er forretning, ikke trommedans.« (Ibid., 186).

71 *Atassut* means »the mutually connected«, referring to Greenland and Denmark. *Siumut* means »forward« and *Inuit Ataqatigiit* means »people/Inuit standing together«. Also in connection with the negotiations about the Self Government Act it was essential for the Greenlandic negotiators to keep the terms »Inuit« and »indigenous peoples« out of the language of the law and instead rely on recognition of the Greenlanders as a »separate people under International Law«. Otherwise, the Greenlanders would have remained a minority within the Danish Realm (see JOHANSEN: 2008). For the same reason, Johansen also argues that the Greenlanders should now abandon support for the category of indigenous peoples, as the Self Government Act has »elevated« them to the category of actual peoples. See also THISTED: 2013b.

The novel offers numerous examples that Inuit solidarity is a shaky concept in practice. In comparison with the strong economic interests at stake, the issue of whaling is mostly symbolic in character, and in the political plot of the book the cooperation on whaling is merely a cloak for the actual plan. Even on the issue of whaling, however, the various Inuit groups are competitors at least as much as they are partners with a joint cause. Bjørn learns this from his first Inuit girlfriend, Rose, who tells him that ICC lobbyists from Washington have asked the Alaskan Inuit to distance themselves from Greenland in the International Whaling Commission, because their whaling methods are more old-fashioned. If they can convince the rest of the world that Greenland has industrialised whaling, the Greenlanders will bear the brunt if hunting quotas are reduced.⁷² Rose has no illusions about the character of the cooperation: »The ICC«, she said, »is mainly a charade, designed to fool ourselves and the world around us. In the real world, we are competitors, not lovers.«⁷³

Thus, the cabinet minister double-crosses Amaroq and turns the corporation that Amaroq has worked for into a corporation that is owned purely by the Greenlandic Home Rule administration. Thus, the interests of the Inuit community are sacrificed in favour of narrower national interests. So far, the snake is coming out ahead. For even if *Råstofforvaltningen* is moved to Nuuk, the contracts and the profits still go to Denmark.⁷⁴

Has Self Government lost its way?

In the long term, the Greenlanders fail in keeping out large outside corporations. When Bjørn returns to Greenland in 2002, the situation is in many ways similar to 1982. In both cases contracts are being negotiated, and in both cases foreigners are scoring big on opportunities that ought to have benefited Greenlandic society at large. In 1982 the negotiators are Danish, in 2002 they are Canadian.

Bjørn's reason for returning to Nuuk in 2002 is to prepare a report on the so-called Nuna Corporation, which was founded instead of Amaroq's

72 HELMS: 20II, 88.

73 »ICC«, sagde hun, »er jo først og fremmest en paradeopstilling for os selv og verden omkring os. Når det gælder den virkelige verden, er vi konkurrenter, ikke kæresten.« (Ibid.).

74 Ibid., 285.

Inuit Corporation.⁷⁵ The purpose of the analysis is to uncover and chart the hidden Danish network and to topple the board of directors that allows Danish civil servants to »act as a shadow government« in the regulation of raw materials in Greenland.⁷⁶ The cabinet minister wants to reclaim the rights to the subsoil and the raw materials for Greenland, as it has been his long-term plan all along. Now, this is where the reader would expect the novel to end with a success story, because in a sense, this goal was indeed achieved with the Self Government Act, which was already in the making at the time when the novel takes place.⁷⁷ In an interview about the novel the author speaks in very positive terms about the Self Government Act.⁷⁸ The novel expresses a far more ambivalent point of view.

Bjørn completes his report, but after his death the existence of the report is suddenly refuted. Bjørn's daughter knows that someone is lying, as she has a print copy of the entire document. She chooses to tear the copy to pieces and scatter the bits in a river in western Jutland as she sits on the bank, remembering her departed father. This image may be interpreted as her scattering the ashes of her idealist father.⁷⁹ Between 1982 and 2002 Inuit politicians underwent a real transformation. When the narrator originally makes friends with various Inuit politicians, their friendship is very much about partying and rock 'n' roll – cf. the title of Bjørn's first draft for a novel. The same theme is addressed in *Dansen i Geneve*, where the narrator and the two high-ranking Inuit politicians are already »flying high« before they ever board the plane to visit the Native Americans in the story »The Danish Nation«. The massive consumption of liquor and hash is one of the reasons why their thinking is not always that clear, and the Native Americans in the story, who shun the use of these types of stimulants, are clearly seen to have an advantage in terms of political savvy and strategy. In 2002, however, a new generation of politicians has moved into the mayor's office in Barrow. Now the politicians no longer smoke or drink their brains out – instead they have become

75 *Nuna* means land, the implicit reference being Greenland, and in the real world too there have been companies with names including the term, for example *Nuna Oil*.

76 *Ibid.*, 285, 293.

77 The first working group to prepare Self Government was founded around the turn of the millennium.

78 THISTED: 2011a.

79 BJØRNVIG: 2011.

part of the establishment and are just as corrupt as everybody else. A similar development appears to be underway in Greenland: By 2002 the Greenlandic cabinet minister is completely dry – and appears to have lost his sense of integrity. As mentioned above, in 2002 he commissions a report which he then refutes in 2004. In the meantime he has become a consultant to one of the outside corporations that are keen to enter the Greenlandic oil market.⁸⁰ It is therefore not hard to figure out what happened to the electronic version of the report that was on the computer in Bjørn's office. In a sense, both Bjørn and the reader have been forewarned: while Amaroq has consistently been described in positive terms, despite his personal interests, throughout the book there is a certain distance to the cabinet minister, who at some point even appears to Bjørn to resemble »a chameleon«.⁸¹

Thus, the novel may be intended not only as a sort of summary of the Home Rule years but also as a warning about what may be in store under Self Government – and about the dangers that lurk if idealism is thrown out the window. To an uninitiated reader the intricate plot may be difficult to follow.⁸² Read in a Greenlandic context, there is little doubt about the message, but it is delivered in a way that provides more openings than closure. Home Rule has definitely not been in vain. At the beginning of the novel, in the 1982 story, the Danish director of the Denmark Office visits Nuuk. He brings along two Danish negotiators. Towards the end of the novel, in the 2002 story, the Greenlandic director of the Denmark Office visits Nuuk. He brings along two Canadian negotiators, and, as already mentioned, the point in both cases is that they are going to sign contracts that are not necessarily ideal for Greenland. The scenes are virtually identical, but there is one small but significant difference: in 1982, in the departure lounge at Nuuk Airport, the director pushes his guests to the front of the boarding queue with the Danish flight attendant. This goes completely unnoticed, because the inequality is taken for granted.⁸³ In 2002, the director similarly pushes his guests to the front of the queue, but this time they are held back by the Greenlandic flight attendant who

80 HELMS: 20II, 298.

81 Ibid., 193.

82 The Danish critics and commentators complained that the novel did not make enough of the political issues that the topic contains – probably because the plot was found to be too challenging to follow, see BJØRNVIG: 20II; KJÆLDGAARD: 20II.

83 HELMS: 20II, 37.

walks up holding two children by the hand. After her come a couple of families with children, who similarly push in front of the director.⁸⁴ Thus, the novel demonstrates how the equality that is codified in the subsequent Self Government Act with terms such as »equality« and »mutual respect« between the parties in the Danish Realm has begun to be enacted in everyday practices already during the Home Rule era. Thus, the book is not without optimism; as the final words point out: »There are always new waves coming in.«⁸⁵

Conclusion

Hans Jakob Helms' two books on cultural encounters and Arctic politics bring to Danish-Greenlandic literature the full palette of political complexity that Nicola Triscott calls for.⁸⁶ In a sense, Helms' novel can be read as an attempt to »update« Peter Høeg's political thriller in that it subjects not only the involvement of Danish capitalists in Greenland but also the involvement of well-intended Danish intellectuals to critical analysis. In addition, it shifts the focus from the cultural to the political context. Thus, it challenges the illusion of the Inuit as a mythical race comprised of unspoiled humanity: the mythology that was established thirty years ago, when the Inuit were the bearers of a Western fantasy about a utopian society free of power relations and in harmony with nature – a fantasy that the Inuit also readily embraced, in part out of conviction and in part as a political strategy.

In the books the author draws routes and connections across the imaginary map that defines Greenland in philosophical and political terms. A solid line connects Greenland and Denmark and reaches further into Europe and the rest of the Western world. To the Danish narrator/negotiator, the Nordic region is a sort of innermost circle that envelops his native country. In the universe of the novel, the Scandinavians continue to have a sense of community that they can draw on and hold each other to, and which has an impact on Greenland, too. Another crucial factor, however, are the circles that link Greenland and the Sami in northern Scandinavia and, even more so, the other Inuit in Canada and

84 Ibid., 295.

85 »Der er altid nye bølger på vej.« (Ibid., 301).

86 Cf. the quote that is used as a preamble to this article.

Alaska by virtue of Greenland's inclusion in the category of *indigenous peoples*. These links add new perspectives to the relationship between Nordic and global perspectives, and they challenge the narrative of Nordic exceptionalism – or at least put it to the test. In this universe, Iceland stands out in its familiar position as a mythical primordial democracy, the Nordic parallel to Europe's Greece, seconded by the Faroese, with Norse traditions that are almost equally old and proud.

In light of recent developments in the Arctic, where global warming is going to place some of the world's main shipping lanes along the coasts of Greenland and Norway, where outside corporations struggle for economic supremacy in Greenland, and where China is knocking on the door to the suddenly lionised Arctic Council, the books offer food for thought. What does the outlined mental/political landscape look like in the real world? Who enters into alliances with whom? What impact do the narratives that are constructed and deconstructed here have on real life? What new narratives are taking shape right now? What possibilities are suggested for Danish-Greenlandic relations? And what possibilities and potentials do we see for the North Atlantic based on the political and historical contexts that are outlined in these books?

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LILL-ANN KÖRBER
Mapping Greenland:
The Greenlandic Flag and Critical Cartography
in Literature, Art and Fashion

Flags and maps can be described as »means of locating one's place in relationship to the world«.¹ In this article, I will explore the relationship between territory and collective identity, symbolized and negotiated by flags and maps of Greenland.²

In the first section, I will sketch the history of the Greenlandic flag and the debates surrounding its implementation and design. Those debates center on the question of symbolic affiliation and independence, and touch upon the role of the Danish flag, the *Dannebrog*, in Greenlandic history and literature. I will then move on to some considerations regarding maps and flags in the context of postcolonialism, and sketch the potential of critical cartography, both as academic discipline and artistic practice, in the framework of decolonization and nation building. In the article's last section, I will explore the use of the Greenlandic flag and map in selected examples of contemporary art and fashion. The first example is *Melting Barricades*, a multipartite exhibition and performance project developed by Inuk Silis Høegh (*1972) and Asmund Havsteen-Mikkelsen (*1977) on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of Greenlandic home rule in 2004, and re-arranged in 2006 by Inuk Silis Høegh as part of the touring exhibition *Re-thinking Nordic Colonialism*.³ I will conclude by discussing examples from the past years' collections by fashion designer and brand BIBI CHEMNITZ.⁴

How do writers, politicians, artists and designers locate and negotiate Greenland's place in relationship to the rest of the world via flags and maps? I will discuss whether the use of Greenlandic flags and maps can

1 D'IGNAZIO: 2009, 191.

2 Thanks to Christina Just, Mads Pihl, Tanny Por, Rosannuaq Rossen and Sørine Steenholdt.

3 <http://www.rethinking-nordic-colonialism.org> [5.9.2014].

4 Another artist that would definitely be worth including in this context is Julie Edel Hardenberg (*1971) who has been working with the Greenlandic flag and its implications for nation building and postcolonialism for many years. Cf. my discussion of Hardenberg's work: KÖRBER: 2011.

be interpreted in the context of post- or decolonial re-appropriation and re-territorialization movements. Furthermore, I will raise the question whether the differences in the use of maps and flags give some indication of a transition between a postcolonial era in Greenland, with its focus on the relationship to the former »motherland« Denmark, and what could tentatively be called a post-postcolonial era in which Greenland occupies a more independent place in the globalized world.

Greenland and its flag

The Greenlandic flag, a design by Greenlandic teacher, artist and politician Thue Christiansen, was introduced in 1985, six years after the implementation of home rule. The new autonomy status was celebrated in 1979 with, as eskimologist Inge Kleivan puts it, »an ardent display of the Dannebrog«⁵, the Danish flag, which had been used in Greenland since colonization in the 18th century. In her article »The creation of Greenland's new national symbol: the flag«, published three years after the official acceptance of the new flag, Kleivan gives a very detailed and insightful description of its history. Before the beginning of the 1970s, when the idea about a separate flag was put forward for the first time in the context of debates about home rule, the *Dannebrog* had been used in Greenland to a wider extent than even in Denmark.⁶ It was widely accepted as a symbol of unity between Denmark and Greenland, especially during and after the Second World War, when contact and communication had been suspended due to Denmark's occupation by Germany. Poems and songs were written in praise of the *Dannebrog*, »witness of the love which binds Denmark and Greenland together«.⁷ The Greenlandic word for the *Dannebrog* was *erfalasorput*, »our flag«, the same name that the new Greenlandic flag bears today.

At first, the debate about a separate flag was primarily held in the form of letters to the editor and a subsequent design competition in the newspaper *A/G (Atuagagdliutit/Grønlandsposten)* in 1974. Eleven designs, including the *Dannebrog*, were published, of which all but one

5 KLEIVAN: 1988, 33.

6 Ibid., 34.

7 From a radio talk by Greenlandic politician Frederik Lynge in 1943. Cited in *ibid.*, translation by Kleivan.

were versions of the so-called Nordic cross, common for Nordic countries and regions.⁸ The *Dannebrog* won with 107 out of 440 votes, and most other popular proposals included the colors red and white; alternatives to the Nordic cross did apparently not seem desirable at the time.⁹

The *Dannebrog* and (anti-)colonialism

A critical stance on the *Dannebrog*'s dominant position was first taken in the form of caricatures and poems by intellectuals who at the time were based in Copenhagen. An outstanding figure in these circles is Aqqaluk Lyngé, who trained to be a social worker at the time and was one of the founders of the party *Inuit Ataqatigiit* (IA), which was founded in the context of the left-wing separationist movements of the 1970s. Aqqaluk Lyngé was voted into the *Landsting*, the Greenlandic parliament under home rule, in 1983. Since then he has been an influential politician (and writer) – as member and chair of the *Inuit Circumpolar Council* (ICC),¹⁰ and as a member of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII). His anti-colonial poetry that deals most explicitly with the flag issue was first part of an exhibition of Greenlandic and Danish art in Copenhagen and published in 1982 in his bilingual collection of poems *Tupigusullutik angalapput/Til hæder og ære. Taalliat/Grønlandsdigte*.

It is worth quoting Lyngé's poem »Fra himlen er du faldet ...« (From heaven you have fallen ...)»¹¹ in its full length in order to grasp the interwovenness of the debate about the flag as a national symbol with the Greenlandic anti- and de-colonial movement of the 1970s and a more general – and recent – evaluation of Danish colonial history.

8 For a full, if slightly outdated, overview over the Nordic cross flags cf. ANDERSSON: 1992 and ANDERSSON: 1994.

9 KLEIVAN: 1988, 38.

10 The Inuit Circumpolar Council (formerly Inuit Circumpolar Conference) was established in 1977 as a multinational non-governmental organization representing the Inuit of Greenland, Alaska, Canada and Chukotka/Russia (some, most notably the Yupik of Alaska, however prefer »Eskimo« to »Inuit« as a self-designation).

11 My own translation. To my knowledge, it has not been translated into English before, at least not published in English. It is not included in the translation and edition of a collection of Aqqaluk Lyngé's poetry, edited and translated by Marianne Stenbæk and Ken Norris (LYNGE: 2008).

Fra himlen er du faldet ... Stolt har du viftet på Codans bølge Guldkysten, Vestindien Ja, sågar Østasien.	From Heaven you have fallen ... Proudly you have flown on the shores of Codanus sinus ¹³ The Gold Coast ¹⁴ , the West Indies Yes, even East Asia.
Fredelig har du nogenlunde været af en kolonimagt at være menneskehandel er din fortid. Men spidsfindighed er dit varemærke det er det, der gør forskel.	Fairly peaceful you have been coming from a colonial power slave trade is your past. But subtlety is your trademark this is what makes the difference.
Og, Grønland fandt du endelig faldt over os som dengang du ved ...	And eventually you found Greenland fell upon us like back in the days, you know ...
Konge- og dronningebesøg er dit humane ansigt høj anseelse nyder du overalt ærbødighed er dit krav.	Visits of kings and queens are your humane face a high reputation you enjoy everywhere deference is your demand.
Fra himlen er du faldet, Dannebrog? Tænk, hvis du bare var faldet i vandet eller sådan noget ... ¹²	From the sky you have fallen, Dannebrog? Imagine you had fallen into the water or something like that ...

Aqqaluk Lyngé refers to the legend, according to which the *Dannebrog* fell from the sky during the battle of Lyndanisse in 1219 during the Northern Crusades, saving Danish king Valdemar II from a sure defeat against the Estonians. It would self-evidently be worthwhile to follow up in more detail on Lyngé's contextualization of the Danish colonization of Greenland with the history of the so-called tropical colonies: Denmark-Norway's dependencies in West Africa, the Caribbean, and today's India. His mentioning of the history of the transatlantic triangular and slave trade is most interesting, as well as his discussion of the Danish self-image as a humane colonial power and Danish narratives of a comparatively clean record in comparison with the atrocities of colonization and imperialism elsewhere. From the position of the postcolony, Lyngé problematizes the pride and glory connected to Danish seafaring and imperialism. The first line of his poem is a quote from the title of Danish national romanticist writer and poet Bernhard Severin Ingemann's (1789–1862) poem about the

¹² LYNGE: 1982, 41.

¹³ Latin name for the coast of the Baltic Sea and Kattegat.

¹⁴ Today's Ghana.

Dannebrog, »Til Dannebroget. Vift stolt på Kodans bølge« (To Dannebrog. Fly Proudly on Codanus' Shore) from 1819:¹⁵

Vaj stolt ved Danmarks strande!	Fly proudly on Denmark's shores!
Vaj stolt ved indisk kyst!	Fly proudly on the Indian coast!
Og ved barbarens lande	And in the land of the barbarians,
Lyt stolt til bølgens røst!	Listen proudly to the voice of the wave!
[...]	[...]
Upletet skal du svinge	Untainted thou shalt sway
Dig over verdens sø,	over the world's seas,
til Nordens brynjer springe –	until the chains of the North break –
og Danmarks hjerter dø!	and Denmark's hearts die!

What is most important in the context of this article and with regard to the intertextuality between the two poems is Lynges explicit use of the *Dannebrog* as a symbol for the colonizer. In doing so, he follows the rhetorical and visual tradition of using the flag as metonym for the nation. Just like all other nations expanding their sphere of influence, Denmark-Norway marked its sovereignty over its territory and dependencies by setting up the *Dannebrog* and representing the hoisted flag over and over again, in images and texts. A reference to Danish geographer, educator and author of numerous travelogues Sophie Petersen (1885–1965) can serve as another example for the use of the *Dannebrog* as metonym for the proud nation. In her arguably most important book *Danmarks gamle tropekolonier* (Denmark's old tropical colonies; 1946), Petersen describes the greatness of, as a Dane, traveling to the old tropical colonies, »where generation after generation of Danes have worked, and where once the Dannebrog waved for more than 200 years«.¹⁶

Aqqaluk Lynges punch line is now, at the end of his poem, the heaved sigh: if only the *Dannebrog* had not reached the shores of Kalaallit Nunaat¹⁷, if only it had fallen into the deep waters of the polar seas of the North Atlantic during yet another Danish expedition of conquest. Via his poetry, by entering into a dialogue with the Danish literary canon, Lynges can be said to represent the Empire, or the »barbarian«, »writing back«.¹⁸ Representing the perspective of the postcolony, he casts a new light on

15 My own translation.

16 PETERSEN: 1946, 407. Cf. THISTED: 2009.

17 Kalaallit Nunaat is the Kalaallisut (Greenlandic) word for Greenland, »the land of the Kalaallit«.

18 Cf. a classic of postcolonial theory: ASHCROFT, GRIFFITHS and TIFFIN: 1989.

national romanticism and the Danish *Guldalder*, the so-called Golden Age of the first half of the 19th century. In contrast to Golden Age literature itself (like, for example, Ingemann's), literary-historical accounts seldom mention the connection to colonial history.¹⁹ What Lynge highlights in his poem is the rarely heard effects that the celebration of the nation had on the shores where the *Dannebrog* was planted.²⁰

The introduction of home rule and the Greenlandic flag

Back to Greenlandic politics and the flag question at the beginning of the 1980s. After it was decided, in the wake of the introduction of home rule, that Greenland should have its own flag, several politicians spoke in favor of a referendum on the issue, a proposal that was later narrowed down to a referendum about two designs: one with, and one without a cross. The question came down to party politics: the members of Denmark-friendly *Atassut* spoke, and later voted, in favor of the proposal drawn by Danish heraldic expert Tito Achen, which was a white cross on a green background, »in order to emphasize the association with Denmark and the other Nordic countries« and to display a connection to the Christian faith. In contrast, members of *Siumut* and *Inuit Ataqatigiit* (IA) favored »a flag without a cross, in order to emphasize the national and culturally distinctive character of the Greenlanders and their association with Inuit society.«²¹

The opponents of the cross proposal argued, moreover, that the color green only appears in the word for Greenland in other languages, not in the Greenlandic *Kalaallit Nunaat*, and was as such a part of extrinsic – not of self-determined – imaginations and representations of Greenland. Given the growing demand for the introduction of a Greenlandic flag – at the very latest after the referendum on withdrawal from the European Communities – the *Landsting* was pressed to take action. It decided against a referendum, basing its decision on the argument that this might

19 Cf. HAUGE: 2009 and THISTED: 2009.

20 It may seem ironic, in view of Aqqaluk Lynge's critique of Danish imperialism symbolized by the *Dannebrog*, that he received the »Order of the Dannebrog« in 2004 (Ridder af 1. Grad/Knight 1st Class). The »Order of the Dannebrog« is awarded by the Queen of Denmark for civil or military services in the interest of the Kingdom of Denmark, to – among others – longstanding politicians and diplomats.

21 KLEIVAN: 1988, 44–45.

intensify the rift in the population that had already been caused by the whole flag controversy. The secret ballot resulted in 14 votes for Thue Christiansen's design of two semi-circles on a red and white background, and eleven votes for the proposal with the white cross on a green background, probably mirroring the division of parliamentary seats between *Atassut* (eleven members) on the one side and *Inuit Ataqatigiit* (IA) and *Siumut* (three and eleven seats respectively) on the other side. The decision was followed by loud protests, directed against the decision-making process itself and against the loss of the cross and the *Dannebrog*. Nonetheless, 21 June 1985 was the first National Day when the new Greenlandic flag was flown.

Inge Kleivan summarizes: »It would be tempting to see the flag as a clear expression of a choice between an association with the Nordic countries and an association with the Inuit in Canada, Alaska and Siberia«, but she reaches the conclusion that the »appearance of the Greenlandic flag might [...] be seen, not as much as a reaction towards closer connections with the Inuit societies, against Denmark and the Nordic countries, but rather as a demonstration of independence.«²² The purpose had been to create, to invent, a new national symbol, writes Kleivan, without denying a historical tradition. The new flag refers to the *Dannebrog* in terms of colors and proportions, but symbolizes the transfer »into the new political era«.²³

Greenland, the Nordic cross and alternative affiliations

The interpretation of the new Greenlandic flag as a demonstration of independence has also been noted abroad. Per Andersson, a Swedish educator, author and private scholar in the fields of genealogy, local history and heraldry, gives a broad overview of the history and use of the Nordic cross flags in two small publications from the early 1990s.²⁴ Andersson speaks of »samhörighet«, an affiliation or shared identity of »den nordiska kulturkretsen«, a Nordic cultural sphere, with its 800 years of uninterrupted tradition. He thus appears as an advocate of far-reaching unity

22 Ibid., 51–52.

23 Ibid., 53.

24 ANDERSSON: 1992 and ANDERSSON: 1994.

among the Nordic countries.²⁵ He sounds disappointed when he notes that the Greenlandic and Sámi flags deviate from the approved pattern, but hurries to say that on different occasions, »a region in Norden has experimented with other types of flags before adopting a cross flag«. ²⁶ He seems unsure himself if he should count Greenlanders and the Sámi as Nordics.²⁷ In Andersson's view, bearing a cross flag

does not imply that one is declaring obedience towards a colonial power in Norden. Instead – in a spirit characterized by democracy, freedom and peace – it is a symbol of commitment to an associated kinship with other equal sister peoples in the region; all cross flags in Norden after Denmark's and Sweden's came into existence as markers against the central power and as symbols of independence.²⁸

Andersson expresses the hope – dampened in the second publication two years later – that Greenland and Sápmi would change their minds and follow this example.

As mentioned above, Inge Kleivan already concluded shortly after the introduction of the Greenlandic flag that its design emphasizes Greenland's uniqueness and independence. This feature is recognized by the outside world as well. For instance on the *Tumblr* blog »Cunning Use of Flags«, a graphic shows nine »Nordic« flags. The Greenlandic flag is the odd man out compared to the eight Nordic flags, which all bear the cross.

25 He even suggests a marriage between Swedish crown princess Victoria and Norwegian crown prince Håkon, to eventually re-unite the region under one crown. Cf. ANDERSSON: 1994, 34–35.

26 »att ett område i Norden experimenterat med en annan flaggtyp innan de stannat för en korsflagga.« (ANDERSSON: 1992, 24).

27 *Ibid.*, 8.

28 »Att föra en sådan innebär inte att man deklarerar sin lydnad till någon kolonialmakt i Norden utan snarare att man i en anda präglad av demokrati, frihet och fred bekänner sin sidoordnade frändskap med andra jämbördiga broderfolk i sin närhet; alla korsflaggor i Norden efter Danmarks och Sveriges har tillkommit som en markering mot centralmakten och för självständighet.« (*Ibid.*, 24). Andersson's characterization of the Nordic region as a voluntary union based on common values and principles, and not on subordination, could be interpreted as an example for imaginings of a »Nordic Exceptionalism«. »Nordic Exceptionalism« as a powerful aspect of auto and hetero images is characterized by narratives of goodness and innocence and is as such often interlinked with »colonial amnesia«, a non-recognition of colonial and, more general, asymmetrical power relations within and beyond the region. In the context of a debate of Nordic cross flags for Greenland and Sápmi, the effect of »Nordic Exceptionalism« is a disavowal of asymmetrical, even oppressive, relations between the Nordic nation states and indigenous peoples in the region.

The graphic is accompanied by the comment »Oh Greenland, you Hipster«. Other comments read »Greenland's got some balls«, or »This is totally part of the reason that Greenland is my favorite flag.«²⁹ The commenters recognize Greenland's independence on a symbolic level and attest to the Greenlandic flag both a modern aesthetic value and the courage to manifest the nation's individuality. Both aspects can be said to be requirements for the iconicity of a sign. I will later show how the fashion brand BIBI CHEMNITZ makes use of, and promotes, the potential iconicity and recognizability of the flag (and the Greenlandic map for that matter), and in doing so contributes to negotiating the location of Greenland in the world by flag- and mapmaking practices.

The two semi-circles on the flag are widely read as the rising or setting sun over the polar sea, or the duality of polar summer and winter. If one wants to take the symbolic value of the Greenlandic flag seriously, one could interpret the two semi-circles not only as a demonstration of independence but also of alternative affiliations. Besides the flags of Japan, South Korea and Malawi, for example, the sun is a recurring feature on non-official flags stemming from areas around the world marked by the aftermaths of European expansion and the ensuing struggles for independence and acknowledgement – see for instance the yellow half sun of the flag of Biafra,³⁰ the flags of many First Nations of North America, or the Australian Aboriginal flag. What is more, a circle recurs in many flags and logos of Arctic circumpolar territories and institutions – many of them younger than the Greenlandic flag, which is why this visual connection should be taken with a grain of salt. In these contexts, for instance the flag of Sápmi or the logo of the Inuit Circumpolar Council (ICC), the circle refers to indigenous cultural practices and mythologies, such as the mythological meaning of sun and moon, or of a drum. The circular form of the logo of the Arctic Council includes both a polar fox and the circumpolar latitudinal lines, and thus refers to specific features of the Arctic circumpolar region, such as its flora and fauna and geographical specificities.

29 <http://cunning-use-of-flags.tumblr.com/post/27037543403/thewalrus95-oh-greenland-you-hipster-well> [5.9.2014].

30 The Republic of Biafra was announced after secession from Nigeria in 1967. After a bloody war and a famine due to cut supply chains, Biafra was forcefully reintegrated into Nigeria in 1970.

Intended or not, the design of the Greenlandic flag points both to Greenland's uniqueness and global connectivity – and the latter to its multiple affiliations with the Nordic countries, with indigenous peoples and their struggles worldwide, and with a circumpolar Arctic. The Greenlandic flag contains several symbolic nods, on the level of color (the red and white of the *Dannebrog*), form (the proportions of the Nordic cross flags) and motif. Those nods point to, if one wants to take the interpretation thus far, Greenland's multiple options of self-positioning in a globalized world, and its link to historical and contemporary territorial negotiations and claims for land and resources.

Critical postcolonial cartography

From flags to maps. As I will show in the following section, a shift of meaning from colonial practices to decolonial and nation building practices can also be observed not only with respect to flags, but also to maps and mapping. Both flags and maps symbolize the spatial organization of the world; they are linked to practices of territorial appropriation in the context of the history of European expansion, including the export of the concept of the nation state – and this is where their potential for re-appropriation lies. Maps and flags, mapping and flagging, can serve as symbols and rituals to invent and express communities, through which a negotiation of affiliation, of a sense of belonging and the self can take place. In an article on the complicity of cartography and colonialism, Graham Huggan describes the power of mapping as a »reinscription, enclosure and hierarchization of space, which provide an analogue for the acquisition, management and reinforcement of colonial power.«³¹ However, what Huggan (in the tradition of a Foucauldian notion of power and Deleuze and Guattari's concept of rhizomatic openness) focuses on is the map as a »shifting ground«.³² In this understanding, the order of the map does not foreclose, but invites the exploration of »new spaces«.³³ The way forward, in the de- or postcolonial sense he sees represented in Canadian and Australian literature, is thus a shift »from de- to recon-

31 HUGGAN: 1989, 115.

32 Ibid., 125.

33 Ibid.

struction, from map breaking to mapmaking«,³⁴ in order to produce »the momentum for a projection and exploration of ›new territories‹«. ³⁵

Geographers Jeremy Crampton and John Krygier acknowledge, too, the link of »geographic knowledge to power«. ³⁶ What Huggan describes as the »desystematization of a narrowly defined and demarcated ›cartographic‹ space«³⁷ has in the meantime been labeled as »Critical Cartography«. In their introduction of this critical – academic as well as artistic – practice, Crampton and Krygier stress, just like Huggan, the double meaning of the power of the map: »Maps are active; they actively construct knowledge, they exercise power and they can be a powerful means of promoting social change.«³⁸ One of the assumptions of critical cartography is thus »that maps *make* reality as much as they represent it.«³⁹ Accordingly, maps are a tool for control, but also for resistance.

Important for my line of argument – and the understanding of maps and flags in the context of Greenlandic art, literature and fashion – is Crampton and Krygier's notion of »post-disciplinary mappings«. According to them, both academic critique and artistic or activist practices have contributed to an »undisciplined cartography«. ⁴⁰ What are at stake in the context of the projects I will be turning to in the remainder of this article are post-disciplinary mappings in two senses of the word. Firstly, the utilization of maps in a sense that explores and criticizes cartography's complicity with colonialism, implicitly referring to the development of the academic discipline in the context of an imperialist measuring and naming of the world. This understanding of a critical post-disciplinary cartography would correspond with the understanding of postcolonialism both in the sense of temporal succession (often marked by a hyphen: post-colonial) and in the sense of critical analysis: after and against the discipline. Secondly, mapping (and flagging for that matter) is un-disciplined in the sense of a vernacular, do-it-yourself or bricolage production and utilization of maps and flags. As we will see, both aspects are often combined in a double resistance strategy against the order of things.

34 Ibid.

35 Ibid., 127.

36 CRAMPTON and KRYGIER: 2006, II.

37 HUGGAN: 1989, 127.

38 CRAMPTON and KRYGIER: 2006, 15.

39 Ibid.

40 Ibid., 12.

Catherine D'Ignazio (a.k.a. kanarinka) explores artistic mapping practices in more detail. She locates them in the context of a »contemporary »spatial turn« in the arts«,⁴¹ more relevant than ever perhaps, she argues, in the age of globalization. Very applicable to my selection of people and projects is her category of »agents and actors: artists who make maps or engage *in situ*, locational activities in order to challenge the *status quo* or change the world.«⁴² Inuk Silis Høegh/Asmund Havsteen-Mikkelsen and BIBI CHEMNITZ engage with existing territories, maps and flags, namely of Greenland, Denmark, the USA, and the world. According to D'Ignazio, »national boundaries alone« have, at least since the avant-garde movements of the 20th century (such as Surrealism and Dada), provided »rich iconic sources for artistic interrogation.«⁴³ Political and – in the case of an island like Greenland – geographical boundaries have become »iconic shapes, legible visual markers of identity and belonging«. ⁴⁴ The same holds true for flags and their metonymic meaning, such as the »Stars and Stripes« for the USA. How do Greenland's contemporary »agents and actors« make use of maps and flags, of icons and metonyms in the process of establishing the country as a nation? Is the shape of Greenland and is its flag ubiquitous and easily recognizable? Are they already a brand? And if so, in which contexts? In which sense are flag and map used »to challenge the *status quo* or to change the world«?

Melting Barricades

»Something Frozen in the State of Denmark«⁴⁵ is the title of Frank Jacob's entry on his blog *Strange Maps*,⁴⁶ referring to a map of Denmark covered by an icecap. The map was part of Inuk Silis Høegh and Asmund Havsteen-Mikkelsen's performance project *Melting Barricades* (2004–2006), developed and conducted on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of home

41 D'IGNAZIO: 2009, 190.

42 Ibid., 191.

43 Ibid.

44 Ibid.

45 The wordplay refers to a famous quote from Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, in which Marcellus attests Denmark moral and political corruption: »Something is rotten in the state of Denmark.«

46 <http://bigthink.com/strange-maps/525-something-frozen-in-the-state-of-denmark> [blog entry, 2.8.2011]. Earlier blog entries have been published in JACOBS: 2009.

rule in 2004. As is apparent from the title, the project's purpose was to examine the conditions of a peaceful coexistence of social groups, ethnicities and language groups in Greenland,⁴⁷ and of Greenland with Denmark and the rest of the world. Another aspect addressed by the project and its title is the question of Greenland's place in and contribution to the globalized world, symbolized by the most obvious of all representations of Greenland, the (melting) ice.

The project started in May and June 2004 with the founding of a fictitious Greenlandic army. In August 2004, a Greenlandic invasion of Copenhagen was staged, the headquarters being the cultural center and site of the official representations of Greenland, Iceland and the Faroe Islands, *Nordatlantens Brygge* on the former North Atlantic Wharf. In 2006, a new version of *Melting Barricades* – the installation of a recruitment center for the Greenlandic army – became part of the large-scale touring exhibition and critical enquiry project *Re-thinking Nordic Colonialism*.⁴⁸ In the framework of the »global Greenlandization« happening in the universe of *Melting Barricades*, different mapping and flagging strategies come to use. I will now take a closer look at the map of frozen Denmark, a part of the Copenhagen performance, at maps and flags in the video of the invasion of *Nordatlantens Brygge*, and at cartography and acts of land seizure in another video, a recruitment film for the »Greenlandic Armed Forces«.

Something frozen in the state of Denmark/Qallunaat Nunaat

The map of Denmark as shown on the exhibition poster of *Melting Barricades* depicts Denmark as it presents itself after the »Greenlandization of the world«.⁴⁹ Practices and traditions of the cartographic representa-

47 A central aspect of debates in the context of Greenlandic nation building in the past years has been the question of who is a Greenlander, and the criteria for being Greenlandic. Differentiations take place between urban and village life and connected lifestyles, between the more densely populated south and more remote northern and eastern Greenland, between Danes and Greenlanders, between Danish and Greenlandic speaking Greenlanders, and – a more recent development – between Greenlanders and migrants.

48 <http://www.rethinking-nordic-colonialism.org/files/grid/ar.htm#INUKSILISHOEGH> [5.9.2014].

49 The map is published, in high resolution, on the *Rethinking Nordic Colonialism* website: <http://www.rethinking-nordic-colonialism.org/files/imagesc/act1/actexhib/HOEGH.2.jpg> [5.9.2014].

tion of Greenland, as well as other stereotypes and ascriptions, are directly projected onto the Danish map. *Qallunaat Nunaat*, meaning the »land of the Danes« in Kalaallisut,⁵⁰ is covered by an ice sheet, only leaving the coasts inhabitable. As in Greenland, there are no roads, only several airports along the coast. Even scales are translated: Copenhagen is the only city with over 5,000 inhabitants. Sheep farms, hunting grounds and abandoned settlements are indicated on the map. Two strategies of naming are combined: mimicking the naming of Greenlandic landscapes and settlements, and imaginations of Greenlandic places on Danish mental maps. In the wake of the cartographic description of Greenland, the shores, plateaus and settlements traditionally received the names of members of the Royal family, of explorers and founders of colonies, clearly transporting a claim for political and representational sovereignty. The Danish name of the city of Aasiaat is for example Egedesminde; the colony was founded by Niels Egede and named in remembrance of his father Hans Egede, the first missionary in Greenland, with whose arrival the colonization started in 1721. The town of Qaqortoq was founded as a trading post and named Julianehåb after the Danish queen Juliane Marie.

On the *Melting Barricades* map of *Qallunaat Nunaat*, islands, bays, mountains and plateaus are named after Greenlandic politicians, writers, musicians or corporations. What they all have in common is that they represent Greenland, Greenlandic politics and Greenlandic culture in its own right. South Jutland, for instance, received the name of the first Prime Minister of Greenland, Jonathan Motzfeldt, and the island of Funen is named after Finn Lyngge, who represented Greenland in the European Parliament from 1979 to 1984, before Greenland left the European Communities. The northwestern tip of Jutland is »Augo Lyngge Land«, after the writer and politician who was one of the first two Greenlandic members of the Danish parliament, the *Folketing*, after Greenland changed status from being a colony to being a Danish county and thus formally an equal part of the Kingdom of Denmark. Popular representatives for Greenlandic music and art found on the map are for instance Rasmus Lyberth and Aka Høegh. The chosen names make clear the manifold meanings of political, artistic and cartographic representation in the context of factual and mental mapping of Greenland. Simultaneously, the map contrasts this proud history of national Greenlandic culture and pol-

50 More common in everyday speech is the loan word *Danmarki* for Denmark.

itics with Danish stereotypes: »Nunap Utsussua«, the fictitious name for Copenhagen, literally means The Country's Big Cunt, Eastern Zealand is called »Arnap Pinnersup Nulua«, Beautiful Woman's Buttocks, and the new name of Aarhus is »Aqagutaartut Illoqarfiat«, City of Hangovers. The map thus plays with persistent Danish imaginations of Greenland as a place full of promiscuous women and drunkards; it is projecting this Danish mental map of Greenland back to Denmark – in a language hardly any Dane will be able to grasp.

The map is an exquisite example of critical artistic mapping. It mimics the naming, measuring, »discovery« and representation practices, as well as imaginations and stereotypes, that link cartographic with colonial endeavors. When turned upside down and translated to a different country or region, place names appear completely arbitrary and literally out-of-place. To indicate hunting grounds and sheep farms on a map might seem ridiculous in the context of a Western cartographic tradition, but might be crucial for Greenlandic mental maps. Thus the map makes obvious that cartographic traditions mostly base on a consensus about what explorers might regard as important in terms of development and economic exploitation of the land, and on the dominance of two-dimensional representations in word and image, rather than on a mimetic representation of reality or the function of the land in everyday life. Not surprisingly, naming practices appear, from the perspective of the postcolony, as a reflection of political and cultural imperialism. There is no inherent link between place and name, and no inherent necessity to name and allocate landscapes. Obviously, the naming practice reflected by the *Qallulaat Nunaat* map is a comment to the on-going re-naming process in Greenland, where airport codes and old names in parentheses will soon be the last remnants of Danish names. What is more, the map re-appropriates traditional Danish representations and imaginations of Greenland by countering with a proud history of national culture, language and politics.

What is specific for the representation of Greenland and the Arctic on maps is the use of the color white. One aspect of critical cartography in the Arctic context, whether academic or artistic, must be the interrogation of the widely accepted mimetic quality of color conventions in mapping. Why would, for example, Denmark be depicted in green when its forests were cleared centuries ago? Attention needs to be drawn to the metaphorical quality of »white«, and to the effects of this representational tradition. Obviously, the cartographical white has its correspondence

in imaginations of »blank spots on the map« that are part of a colonial logic and world order, or of a blank white canvas. If the Greenlandic ice cap (and on less detailed maps the entire island including the coastal regions) is represented as homogeneously white, a chain of associations is triggered to outside beholders that suggests desolation, danger, and opportunity for discovery – from adventure to exploitation, from Fridtjof Nansen’s crossing of the icecap to today’s resource extraction and environmental campaigning. It is this entire set of Greenland- and Arctic-related mental mapping and imaginary geography that is unfolded in the process of the Greenlandization of the world à la *Melting Barricades*. As in most cases of map art, the aim of the *Qallunaat Nunaat* map is not to replace an existing map with a more correct version, but to problematize cartography’s claim to represent reality, to highlight power relations involved in map making practices and to performatively turn upside down center and periphery.

The occupation of Nunap Utsussua

Naming and mapping practices are an important feature of the *Melting Barricades* occupation performance and the corresponding video, too.⁵¹ In the carnivalesque universe of the performance and exhibition, the Greenlandic Forces occupy Nunap Utsussua (formerly Copenhagen), turn Denmark into a colony and open their headquarters at *Nordatlantens Brygge*. The location is important of course: it was here that Denmark’s monopolistic trade with Greenland, administered by *Den Kongelige Grønlandske Handel*, the Royal Greenlandic Trading Company, took place. The event of the occupation was »documented« in a four minutes long video in the style of a news report. The video mimics, with regard to aesthetics, language, and contents an *ugerevy*. These cinema newsreels reached their heyday in Denmark during the 1930s and 1940s. In the 2004 *ugerevy*, the inhabitants of (former) Copenhagen, addressed as *nygrønlandere*, New Greenlanders, are informed about the occupation by the Greenlandic army and receive the good news that Greenland has »invaded the world to bring everybody peace, progress, and cold temperatures«. ⁵² By using

51 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MIHzRLMs_BE [5.9.2014].

52 »I dag har Grønland invaderet verden for at bringe fred, fremgang og kolde temperaturer til alle.« Cf. MISFELDT: 2004.

the term *nygrønlandere*, the video mimics both the earlier Danish practice of referring to Greenlanders as *norddanskere* (North Danes), a practice in line with the Danish postwar policy often referred to as »Danification«, as well as today's term *nydanskere* (New Danes) for immigrants. In the carnivalesque universe of *Melting Barricades*, it is the Greenlanders who are the bearers of modernization and progress, both of which had, under the name G-50 and G-60, been the explicit goal of Danish postwar Greenland policies. In the context of *Melting Barricades*, these programs are understood as imperialistic endeavors.

The invasion of Denmark follows well-known rituals and ceremonies. The new flag is raised and, according to the newscaster, replaces »our beautiful Dannebrog«. The Greenlandic Armed Forces arrive with navy (kayaks), air force (models of helicopters) and mobile forts (icebergs). Greenlandic flags are planted both inside and outside the headquarters and also on maps of Copenhagen and the world; it is the conquest of Europe and the world that is next. Interestingly, the world map used by the Greenlandic Forces to mark the next targets is not a European map but an American one that places the Americas and (in the north) Greenland at the center of the world. It here becomes apparent that Greenland belongs geographically to the North American continent and thus has a choice of affiliation.

Because of its geographical location relatively close to the pole, Greenland is distortedly represented on the cylindrical Mercator projection of the world; on other maps it is even left out. There is, however, certainly a power aspect related to the conventional cartographical representation of Greenland that adds to its representation as remote and peripheral: even on the mental maps of many people outside of Greenland, the country is imagined as uninhabited and uninhabitable, and its correct representation seems less important. On the American map chosen to depict the fictitious strategic power games of *Melting Barricades*, Greenland is moved from the periphery to the center, and to the top of the world. What is more, in the universe of *Melting Barricades*, Greenland aligns itself with what is generally accepted as the world's super powers and empires and their habitus as represented both in historical military strategic power games and their popular cultural representations. The orientation towards and identification with America that is visualized by the world map used for *Melting Barricades* is a geographical fact, but also has an additional symbolic meaning that appears in many places in

contemporary Greenlandic art with a cartographical dimension: America (the United States) is in this context an influential superpower and the epitome of globalization. I will get back to this aspect of a performative globalization of Greenland via identification with America in my discussion of the designs of BIBI CHEMNITZ.

In the context of *Melting Barricades*, maps and flags are used in their function as symbolic claims of domination in the seizure of territories. The postcolony not only re-claims its own territory, but reverses the power relations between the »motherland« and the dependency. The performance is a simultaneously funny and piercing comment on the specific Greenlandic-Danish situation. Right up to the present day, Greenland is represented by Denmark in the fields of foreign and security policy. *Melting Barricades* was explicitly presented as a comment to the 25th anniversary of home rule, at a time when negotiations about the next stage of autonomy had already begun – the self-rule law that was accepted by a referendum in 2008 and eventually implemented in 2009. While Greenland's government is now in charge of all fields of domestic politics, Greenland still does not have its own army; the Greenlandic Forces only exist in the fictional universe of *Melting Barricades*. Everybody who would see the exhibition and performances in Nuuk and Copenhagen would be aware of that, and also about the fact that 56,000 Greenlanders are simply not enough to rule over Copenhagen, let alone Denmark or the world. As a consequence, the Greenlandic Forces in *Melting Barricades* have to content themselves with a navy of kayaks and operate with makeshift flags, uniforms and tanks.

Another dimension of the link between Greenland and military forces put forward by *Melting Barricades* is that Greenland was actually never invaded and occupied by military force. This fact is one argument why Danish colonialism in Greenland has been perceived to be exceptionally humane. However, whereas tanks with the Danish flag on them may never have been driven through the streets of Nuuk, the *Dannebrog* has waved on the shores of Greenland for centuries: Danish institutions and administration were established, re-namings took place, and with respect to rhetoric, practices and symbolism the Danish empire followed the example of all expanding European powers. Moreover, there is a long history of military presence in Greenland. While Denmark was occupied by Germany during World War II, the United States took over the supply of Greenland and during the Cold War erected radar stations and airbases

in Greenland, making use of its strategically relevant geographical position. So from a Greenlandic perspective there is a historical dimension to the understanding of the United States as the epitome of internationalization and globalization. The American military presence brought with it highly ambivalent effects: a connection to the world beyond the link to Denmark, but also the traumatic displacement of villages to make way for air bases, and not least pollution.⁵³

Why we fight

The latter aspects are reflected in yet another part of *Melting Barricades*, the five-minute-long short film *Sooq Akersuuttugut – Why We Fight*, a propaganda film for the non-existent Greenlandic Armed Forces.⁵⁴ Against the background of Greenland's invasion by the world and the subsequent threat to Greenlandic culture and values, the armed forces are promoted through a collage of war and military films and examples from the history of filmic representations of Greenland. However, what is presented in *Why We Fight* as authentic Greenlandic culture and values is in fact cobbled and stitched together from extrinsic representations and imaginations – using the same amateur aesthetics that characterize the entire project. One prominent example that supplies several iconic images for *Why We Fight* is Knud Rasmussen's film *The Wedding of Palo (Palos Brudedefærd; 1934)*. *The Wedding of Palo* is an interesting intertext, because the film itself conveys a claim for authenticity that is not met: instead of conveying an authentic picture of life in eastern Greenland in the 1930s, it portrays the lifestyle, habits and rituals of an Inuit community at the time before the encounter with the Europeans at the turn of the century and thus can be said to reproduce those imaginations of the »pure primitive« that Ann Fienup-Riordan sees represented in the tradition of films about »eskimos«.⁵⁵

What is at stake here is a discussion of sovereignty in two senses: sovereignty over political representation and sovereignty over medial and

53 One example is the construction and expansion of the Thule airbase in the 1950s and the subsequent resettlement of all inhabitants of the village of Pittufik to Qaanaaq, 100 kilometers north. Another example is the construction of the airbase and DYE station near Kulusuk in eastern Greenland, the consequences of which for land and people are depicted in the film *ECHOES* (Ivalo Frank, 2010).

54 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XQQJ7EAi9MQ> [5.9.2014].

55 FIENUP-RIORDAN: 1995. Cf. also VOLQUARDSEN: 2014.

artistic representation. The fictitious installation of Greenlandic Forces, whose task is to defend the territory from foreign powers and to »Greenlandize« the world, is directly linked to the question of imaginations of Greenland that have shaped a tradition of films about Greenland and the Arctic and its inhabitants. The struggle of *Melting Barricades* is a struggle for sovereignty of representation and interpretation. It is in this context that I understand the cartographic intervention of *Melting Barricades*: at the project's core lies an understanding of mapping as a symbolic act of land seizure, as expression and a practical and representative function of colonialism and imperialism. *Melting Barricades* is thus an explicit post- (or better) anti-colonial work of art. It takes part in what Crampton and Krygier describe as an un-disciplining of cartography. For one thing, the performances and videos point to and reveal cartography as an arena where knowledge production and power are linked and fantasies of control, completeness and accuracy are played out. The one who owns the map is in charge; to steal and mimic the map is to parody its desire to discipline. And for another thing, *Melting Barricades*, by its explicit use of amateur aesthetics, un-disciplines cartography. In the aesthetics of *Melting Barricades* – just like in Julie Edel Hardenberg's *Erfalasarput*, a flag project on the occasion of the implementation of self-rule in 2009 – Greenland and its national symbols, the flag and the map, are cobbled and stitched together; they appear as untidy and as second-hand products.⁵⁶ On one level, the amateur aesthetics of *Melting Barricades* points to the Danish imagination and construction of Greenland as generally in need of help, guidance and development. On another level, »do it yourself« can easily be understood as a call for action within processes of decolonization and nation building.

BIBI CHEMNITZ

This fashion label, named after Greenland-born designer Bibi Chemnitz, was launched in 2006 and its popularity is growing. The collections are sold internationally, but primarily in the brand's store in Copenhagen and in boutiques in Greenland, for example *Nønne* in the *Nuuk Center* shopping mall. The target group for the label's street wear is young people, and its brand identity is formulated around the idea of combining a number of

⁵⁶ Cf. Körber: 2011, 196–198.

elements: the local – namely Greenland – and the global, wilderness and urbanity, past and present, traditional culture and an international contemporary culture. The portrait of the label on the website thus conveys a concept of hybridity – with consumer goods such as fashion being the link between two poles:

Swept away from the cold dark plains of Greenland onto the cobbled streets of Copenhagen, BIBI CHEMNITZ continues to dabble in both universes. The brand originally set out to develop crisp garments for aware global dwellers. The sporty silhouette embraces past and present and enables wearers to tackle each day willfully. Small town Nuuk and the ancient Inuit culture are mashed with modern urban cityscapes, to create innovative garments that withstand any test of time. [...] The line is now stocked globally by likeminded forward thinking boutiques, thus spreading the word of its special characteristic duality.⁵⁷

The use of dualisms, and synonyms for duality, is prominent, and is not least emphasized by clichés. According to the press text, it is the combination of the poles that turns wearers of all backgrounds and locations into the desirable figure of the »forward thinking« and »aware global dweller«. The label implements this idea in a smart, successful and surprising way. The design seems to suggest that the ubiquitous hoodie derives directly from the Inuit anorak, a garment traditionally made from sealskin, and still used as part of men's national costume – and (besides »kayak«) one of the few words from the group of Eskimo-Aleut languages that is used internationally. And why not introduce sealskin as an alternative ethno-pattern, just like snake or leopardskin, which in contemporary fashion are just as ubiquitous as the hoodie? Both as print pattern on cotton jersey and in the original material, fur, BIBI CHEMNITZ' »Inuit Hoodie«, a design alluding to the traditional sealskin anorak, does hit a nerve in different senses and in contexts of political correctness and political statements. The jersey version could appeal to cosmopolitan vegan youth. The design, especially the fur version, fits well with those Arctic residents who, in the spring of 2014, protested with »sealfies« against an international ban on the export of seal products that, in the name of animal welfare, deprives them of their existence.⁵⁸ It is not unthinkable that Greenlandic Prime Minister Aleqa Hammond's seal fur handbag, which

57 <http://www.bibichemnitz.com/?section=about> [5.9.2014].

58 The »sealfies«, self-portraits with sealskin fashion, and the Twitter hashtag #sealfie were a reaction to US moderator Ellen DeGeneres' »selfie« from the 2014 Oscars, and her campaigning against the seal hunt.

she opened for *The Wall Street Journal*,⁵⁹ or the images of Hammond with Danish Prime Minister Helle Thorning-Schmidt and Secretary-General of the United Nations Ban Ki-moon in sealskin gear on a trip to Ilulissat and Uummanaq have set a new trend.⁶⁰

What is interesting in the context of this article is the way in which Greenland's location in the world is negotiated by and through the BIBI CHEMNITZ design. In an interview with *Greenland Today*, the designer said: »It is primarily the Nordic style I find inspiration in, but there is more focus in my design on the interaction between Greenland and the rest of the world.«⁶¹ It is a notable strategy for Greenlandic or Greenland-related designers to develop their brands and designs beyond the label of Scandinavian fashion, for example by teaming up with Icelandic and Faroese colleagues under the *Nordic Fashion Biennale* umbrella, where BIBI CHEMNITZ has participated on two occasions.⁶² If there is a regional affiliation at all, it is a North Atlantic or West Nordic one, or the self-evident, because biographical, link to Denmark. However, other than that, Greenlandic (brand) identity is put forward as simultaneously distinct, locally anchored, and globalized. In this understanding, Greenland does not need a mediator or door opener; it interacts with the rest of the world on its own terms. In a recent article on Greenlandic »sovereignty games«, political scientist Ulrik Pram Gad gives an example for this tendency from a different context, namely Greenland's representation in Brussels – the picture can serve as a link back to the flag and map topic: »the Greenland Representation has four full-time employees – and visitors no longer have to pass Danish flags to talk to them: a separate entrance flanked by Greenlandic insignia has been established.«⁶³ According to Gad, this is but one instance where »Denmark is photoshopped out of the picture«.⁶⁴ »Independent visibility seems to have paid off«, writes

59 <http://live.wsj.com/video/great-greenland-inside-aleqa-hammond-luxe-bag/4CA4EA48-7EBF-473D-B7C6-8970F2096006.html#!4CA4EA48-7EBF-473D-B7C6-8970F2096006> [5.9.2014].

60 Cf. BOMSDORF: 2014. Secretary-General of the UN Ban Ki-moon visited Greenland on 25–27 March 2014.

61 <http://greenlandtoday.com/gb/category/bibi-chemnitz-470> [5.9.2014].

62 <http://www.norraenahusid.is/nfb> [5.9.2014].

63 GAD: 2014, 108.

64 *Ibid.*, III.

Gad and refers to Greenlandic officials, »there is a higher awareness that Greenland exists.«⁶⁵

Besides the patterns and shapes already mentioned, BIBI CHEMNITZ to a large extent uses national »Greenlandic insignia«. In two cases, there have been larger debates about the designs and their implications for an understanding of the representation of Greenland and its place in the world. The debates have taken place in social media, namely on the Facebook page of *Nønne Nuuk*, BIBI CHEMNITZ's biggest retailer in Greenland, and reflected by blogs such as *The Forth Continent*⁶⁶ and the official tourism site *Visit Greenland*.⁶⁷ The design with the most heated reactions was the motif of a large black-and-white vertical Greenlandic flag in a hand-drawn look, printed on t-shirts, tank tops and sweaters, new for the Spring/Summer 2012 collection. Going by the number of likes for photos with the design posted on *Nønne*'s page, this is BIBI CHEMNITZ' most popular design in Greenland so far, and probably one of *Nønne*'s biggest sales successes.

A discussion (mainly in Danish, with some comments in Greenlandic)⁶⁸ broke loose when one commentator, replying to a post of two photos with the flag shirts, asked if they were available in the »original colors«, too.⁶⁹ She doubted that one could simply change the colors of a flag, suspected it to be illegal, but, most importantly, considered that this would ridicule the flag, and thus the nation and all nationally-minded Greenlanders:

Is this in harmony with what many in Greenland struggle for, to show that one stands united, also with respect to the Greenlandic flag, which is red and white? The other is too gloomy and black [...] and is not in harmony with the population's feeling about coming from Greenland!

It became apparent in the course of the discussion that the commentator lives in Copenhagen (where she flies a small flag every day on her balco-

65 Ibid., 108.

66 <http://thefourthcontinent.com/2014/04/14/fashion-statement-bibichemnitz-greenland-sealfies> [5.9.2014]. The Forth Continent is Tanny Por's blog, currently International Coordinator at Ilisimatusarfik, the University of Greenland.

67 The interview with Bibi Chemnitz is not available online anymore, I received a copy from Visit Greenland.

68 Translations in the following are mine.

69 <https://www.facebook.com/Noenne.net?fref=ts> [5.9.2014].

ny) and is older than the target group.⁷⁰ Most other commentators (the post received 175 likes and 105 comments in all) were of a different opinion and took the outcry more or less seriously.

However, although many argued that »it's just fashion«, the discussion remained political and revolved around the question of representations of the nation. *Nønne* should make sure to order a couple of boxes of the shirt in time for National Day on June 21st, one commentator suggested: »Yay, on 21/6 we ALL go in those! Would be rad to see such a movement.« Another commentator expressed the hope that »many will wear the shirt irrespective of which country they are staying in, in order to represent Greenland«. It should not be interpreted as a direct homage to Greenland to change the colors of »Erfalasorput« (using the Greenlandic word for »our flag«), but »rather as an attempt to make the flag ›hipper‹, in order to promote it in everyday life, and even in other countries (should the wearer travel abroad)«. According to the commentator, not all flags lend themselves to hipness: »just look at Dannebrog, which is just a cross«. It is not only the cross that is un-hip, but even the colors: many commentators agree on the distinction vis-à-vis designs from souvenir shops: »in red and white you become a first class tourist with white socks and sandals :)«. Here, hipness is clearly connected to change, progress and cosmopolitanism: »Why are people so afraid of change in Greenland with respect to fashion and design ...? We are oceans of time behind all other countries!« It becomes clear that the debate is a question of generations when one commentator suspects that »80 per cent of those who think the black/white version is cool are for sure under 18 and don't have a scrap of national spirit!«

One basic but nonetheless remarkable aspect of the discussion is that within 30 years the Greenlandic flag has become unequivocally accepted as a symbol of the nation. It has been »banalized« in the sense of Michael Billig's concept of »banal nationalism«,⁷¹ to the degree that people do not

70 The discussion, however, is in line with an experience made by the curators of the 2014 *Nordic Fashion Biennale*, Sarah Cooper and Nina Gorfer. When accompanying Bibi Chemnitz during the shooting of an outfit inspired by the national costume in front of an apartment block in Nuuk, »suddenly [...] two elderly women begin shouting at us from their balcony. Agitated and angry, they even give us the middle finger – a peculiar sight. ›You cannot do this with the national costume! We'll call the police!‹, they shout.« (COOPER and GORFER: 2014, 187). People I have talked with say that this kind of comments stem from »the typical ethnoessentialist camp«.

71 BILLIG: 1995.

seem to remember times without the *Erfalasorput* anymore; they take its existence for granted. When the designer is accused, by the originator of the debate, of ridiculing her ancestors, it is forgotten that the ancestors did not live to see the 1985 design. Yet another interesting aspect of the discussion touches upon the issue of the relation of nation building and nation branding that Kirsten Thisted has described with respect to the victory of Greenlandic singer and actor Julie Berthelsen's choir in the Danish TV show *AllStars*.⁷² The t-shirt debate seems to point to the threshold between hot and banal nationalism, between nation building and nation branding, a threshold that simultaneously seems to be one between two generations.

Some discussants ascribe an almost sacred quality to the flag, precious perhaps because of the struggle leading to its existence. They invoke the quality of the flag to create unity and a national sentiment, a quality that Billig would classify as belonging to a phase of »hot nationalism«. From this perspective, a distortion of the flag, and its commodification, must resemble iconoclasm. What tourists and foreigners do and think is irrelevant; it is the historical dimension that counts. For most of *Nønne's* customers, however, fun, hipness and pride have replaced struggle and seriousness. They celebrate National Day, for sure, but with style, please. »In our prints we are showing both respect to the symbols but also giving them an urban twist«,⁷³ is Bibi Chemnitz' own comment on her at times controversial use of national icons. While the debate's initiator explicates that she doesn't care what people in other countries think, the other commentators constantly include an international dimension of cultural encounters, at home and abroad. Greenland is, again explicitly, put on the world map of a movement of people, goods and ideas – the hallmarks of globalization. The hand-drawn flag on expensive shirts by an internationally operating label identifying with a dual position of Greenlandicness and cosmopolitanism, is *nation branding* in a nutshell: it has identification and unification potential within the country – at least among the self-rule generation, and contributes to a recognition of the »Greenlandic insignia« elsewhere: a recognition of easily readable visual icons, and simultaneously, of the fact »that Greenland exists«.

72 Cf. THISTED: 2011 and THISTED: 2012.

73 CHEMNITZ: 2014, 189.

In a second controversial BIBI CHEMNITZ design, from the Spring/Summer 2013 collection, the shape of Greenland is filled with the American »Stars and Stripes«. The design again appears on sweaters and tank tops. The motif could be interpreted as a meeting of established and aspiring iconicity of national insignia. Again, the design became very popular and became the focus of a series of photographs by Mads Pihl for *Visit Greenland*.⁷⁴ Among the models were the owner of *Nønne*, Morten Nordahl, and writer Sørine Steenholdt. The main critical reactions, as can be reconstructed from the Facebook pages of *Nønne* and *Anuni*, a boutique in Aasiaat and Sisimiut, were twofold. The design was criticized for the fact that the shape of Greenland was filled with anything but the Greenlandic flag and for the fact that it was the American flag. On the BIBI CHEMNITZ Facebook page, a photo with the tank top was published on April 9 2013, bearing the title »Greenland, the New Super Power«. In interviews for *Visit Greenland* and the *The Forth Continent* blog, the explanations of the designer and her partner are not entirely consistent and reach from »It didn't necessarily have to be the American flag« to saying that the aesthetics of map and flag worked well together, to saying that they chose the flag of a superpower to state, or emphasize, that in times of a bonanza for Arctic resources, the fate of Greenland was in its own hand.⁷⁵ In the *Visit Greenland* press text, Bibi Chemnitz and partner David Røgild are quoted as saying that the US flag was chosen as inspiration for Greenland in the sense of a symbol for a free and diverse society, for power and a strong economy.

Of course, no other flag could have conveyed the same associations; no other flag arguably bears the same iconicity. It is not surprising that the design sparked off a controversy and a heated discussion, bearing the same ambivalence as the associations attached to the idea of an American superpower itself. Greenland filled with the »Stars and Stripes« – a new role model, or a new colonizer? Or an old one, for that matter, regarding the history and consequences of American military presence in Greenland? The designers have obviously understood the principle of the iconicity of national insignia, and have chosen to play with the combination of the most powerful of them all, and the ones of an emerging nation

74 <https://www.flickr.com/photos/madsogtrine/12524925585/in/photostream> [5.9.2014].

75 <http://thefourthcontinent.com/2014/04/14/fashion-statement-bibichemnitz-greenland-sealfies> [5.9.2014].

that still has to gain recognition in the world. On a different layer of meanings, the United States clearly represents an alternative affiliation for Greenland, beyond its postcolonial attachment to Denmark. To use Ulrik Pram Gad's above-cited words, the *Dannebrog* is here completely »photoshopped«, erased from the picture. Geographically, Greenland belongs to the North American continent. Why not explore these ties in other contexts, if only symbolically? Here, one could follow Kirsten Thisted's estimation that Greenlanders' identification with the United States, or the English-speaking world in general, can be understood as the post-2009 generation's orientation towards cosmopolitanism and towards globalization.

Serving as an introduction to her discussion of Julie Berthelsen's *All-Stars'* performance and victory in the context of contemporary Greenlandic nation building and nation branding, Thisted conducts a reading of the art project *Nuuk York Nuuk York* that was exhibited as part of *Re-Thinking Nordic Colonialism* in 2006, just like the later version of *Melting Barricades*. In the video installation *Nuuk York Nuuk York*, Greenland's capital Nuuk has morphed into a metropolis of skyscrapers and busy businesspeople that unmistakably resembles New York City, but in a Greenlandic – and Greenlandic-speaking – version. What distinguished this particular project from the setup of the series of exhibitions and debates, which, according to Thisted, built on »anger and indignation« as an impetus for postcolonial evaluation, was that its young producers

wanted to talk about globalization rather than about colonization. The global is an opportunity to escape from the old ties between Denmark and Greenland and try out new relationships, where one might not stand entirely free, but in a way more open position with regard to the negotiation of identity positions compared to the relation to the old colonial power.⁷⁶

New York in the context of the art project, and the American flag in the context of the design of BIBI CHEMNITZ, can thus be read as

an image of a mental landscape which is entirely contemporary. [...] The contemporary world is not comprised of isolated locations, but of networks of in-

76 »... de hellere ville tale om globalisering end om kolonialisering. Det globale er en mulighed for at bryde ud af den gamle binding mellem Danmark og Grønland og afprøve nye relationer, hvor man står om ikke ganske frit, så dog i en langt mere åben position i forhold til forhandlingen af identitetspositioner end i forholdet til den gamle kolonimagt.« (THISTED: 2011, 602).

terlinked places, and New York feels present and familiar like a milestone one – not least in a big city like Nuuk – orients oneself towards. In that sense, Greenlanders already live in »Nuuk York«!⁷⁷

Maps and flags in Greenland today: Concluding remarks

What can we conclude from these art and design projects and the connected debates? First, the fluid transitions between art forms, and between (high) culture and commerce, might not be surprising for those familiar with Greenlandic contemporary culture, but are nevertheless striking. The most recent development in this context is the print and sale of t-shirts with the *Melting Barricades* map of »The Frozen State of Denmark« – at *Nønne*. The boutique and its Facebook page is where the circle of this article closes; they stand out as an arena for the negotiation and representation of Greenland's national insignia as metonyms for the *status quo* of Greenlandic nation building and nation branding processes. Second, fashion is political, because it is *per se* performative: BIBI CHEM-NITZ' flag shirts can be worn to celebrate National Day in Nuuk, or to represent the nation abroad. Third, acts of mapping and flagging in the sense of artistic cartography, both affirmative or critical, are part of nation building and nation branding processes: they serve the function of an internal understanding, or at least discussion, of what nation and national identity are all about, and help to create a brand for the promotion and representation of the nation in international contexts.

Inge Kleivan's estimation three years after the introduction of the Greenlandic flag has proved to be true: the flag has developed into a powerful symbol and tool with respect to the process towards greater independence. The new *Erfalasorput* has almost entirely replaced the *Dannebrog*, while the Greenlandic use of the flag is reminiscent of the use of the *Dannebrog* in Denmark. If possible, *Erfalasorput* is hipper than the *Dannebrog* has ever been, the latter being »just a cross« that will perhaps never manage the transition from souvenir shop to high fashion. In contrast to flag expert Per Andersson's hopes, it seems unlikely that Greenland will introduce a flag with a Nordic cross any time soon. At

77 »... et billede på et mentalt landskab, som er helt og aldeles samtidigt. [...] Den senmoderne verden udgøres ikke af isolerede lokaliteter, men af netværk af indbyrdes relaterede steder, og New York føles nærværende og bekendt som et pejlemærke, man – ikke mindst i en storby som Nuuk – orienterer sig imod. In den forstand lever grønlænderne allerede i »Nuuk York«! (Ibid., 600).

Nønne, the map and flag of Denmark are represented merely in their frozen state. Greenland's position looks dynamic, poly-oriented and self-confident. In contrast to the title of BIBI CHEMNITZ' Spring/Summer 2015 line, neither Greenlanders nor tourists nor negotiators in Brussels will be »Lost in Navigation«.

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EBBE VOLQUARSEN

Pathological Escapists, Passing and the Perpetual Ice:
Old and New Trends in
Danish-Greenlandic Migration Literature

In an interview with *Al Jazeera English*, British filmmaker Sarah Gavron explains her motivation for shooting the documentary *Village at the End of the World* (2013), a Danish production filmed in Greenland: »Other films of Greenland have mostly focused on nature, or the social issues of the cities. We wanted to tell the story of the people we met in the settlement, revealing their resilience, wit and determination.«¹ Being the director of the film adaptation of Monica Ali's novel *Brick Lane*², Gavron is familiar with the postcolonial subject. With her statement, she disassociates herself from two prevalent modes of representing contemporary Greenland. The first depicts the country as a breathtaking natural landscape in which humans hardly ever appear. When they do, they are portrayed either as traditional hunters or – in most cases – as an exogenous threat to an allegedly unspoiled and unpopulated ecosphere. The second focuses on social problems in the towns, showing Greenland as a dysfunctional society ravaged by alcoholism, violence, child abuse and corruption, unable to meet the challenges that have accompanied gradual emancipation from former colonial power Denmark. The latter perspective (widely held in the Danish media) has, however, lost significance in recent years, especially in the wake of the controversial debate surrounding the 2007 Danish documentary *Flugten fra Grønland* (»The Escape from Greenland«).³

In *Village at the End of the World*, the protagonists speak for themselves. Over a period of several years, Gavron and her Danish co-director David Katznelson accompanied the inhabitants of the village of Niaqornat, who narrate the story of their community in a number of interviews. At the beginning of the film, Niaqornat's existence is under threat. Since

1 GAVRON: 2013.

2 Monica Ali's debut novel *Brick Lane* (2003), named after a street in East London, is set in the milieu of Bangladeshi immigrants and was made into film by Gavron in 2007.

3 Cf. GANT: 2009 for a critical analysis of the film and the debate it provoked within the Greenlandic public.

the government-owned company *Royal Greenland* closed the local fish factory, the population has been in danger of dropping below 50. If this trend continues, all subsidies – such as the helicopter connection with the outside world and supplies to the small grocery store – will be cut, forcing the villagers to move to the next town. However, the strong-willed people of Niaqornat succeed in reviving the factory as a cooperative project, and are thus able to avert the death of their community.

Although the documentary does without an explanatory narrator, in one scene the cutting technique can be interpreted as a commenting intervention by the filmmakers. This is also the only moment in the film where a person not belonging to the village community gets the chance to speak.⁴ A cruise ship has landed in Niaqornat and the villagers slip into their costumes in order to give the tourists an authentic picture of the traditional Inuit life they expect to see. The travel company pays: Anyone who shows up in the traditional costume or in sealskin clothing, or who invites tourists home for coffee and cookies, is given a small amount of money. Even in remote Niaqornat, tourism is beginning to develop into an industry. When a Danish cruise tourist expresses his enthusiasm about the lifestyle of the Inuit – which, according to him, has not changed for centuries and hopefully will not be affected by external influences in the future either – Gavron and Katznelson's camera zooms in on a girl wearing a colorful costume and sealskin boots; she is sitting on a stoop operating her laptop. Even before the Dane has finished his statement, it has already been refuted; his remarks are revealed to be the unreflecting reproduction of an essentialist image of Greenland that has its roots in among others polar explorer Fridtjof Nansen's critique of civilization expressed in his writings from the late 19th century. Ever since, such perspectives have had a significant share in European representations of the now former Danish colony.⁵

The scene illustrates two things. Firstly, it is symptomatic of a recent paradigm shift within Danish and European depictions of Greenland. According to this, the established perspectives of the metropolis on the periphery – powerful since colonial times – are especially in film, literature and the arts being challenged by new ways of thinking that subject

4 Interestingly enough, the scene is missing in the shortened 45 minutes TV version, which was shown on Danish public television, DR 2, in March 2013.

5 Cf. THISTED: 2003, 33–35.

both the historical and the contemporary relationship of dependency between Greenland and Denmark to a critical renegotiation and do not accept without comment a mere perpetuation of the narratives generated in colonial discourse. Whereas the filmmakers' camera maintains a neutral position during the interviews with the Greenlandic villagers, the tourist is ruthlessly exposed as a culturalist and proponent of ethno-aesthetics. With this term, Greenlandic visual artist and postcolonial theorist Pia Arke⁶ criticizes the incapacitation of Greenlanders by a »commandment of exoticism«,⁷ enacted by a Western cultural elite that, by requesting authentic Greenlandic cultural products, denies the locals the prerogative of interpretation over their own cultural identification. Secondly, the scene prevents the romanticization of an »unspoiled« Inuit culture, a practice that in the film is ironized via the encounter between the tech-savvy villagers and European cruise tourists longing for pre-modern authenticity. A coherent portrait of a local Greenlandic community in 2013 should avoid reproducing the image of a population isolated from the outside world. Even in a place like Niaqornat, which is very different from the rest of (mostly urbanized) Greenland, an infrastructure that complies with Western standards and contact with travelers from all over the world are now a part of everyday life.

Danish labor migrants and performative biographism

»When you've seen the world, there's always Greenland«, is a saw that once circulated among well-traveled seafarers, illustrating the peripheral location of the island. Indeed, Greenland's advancement into an increasingly popular tourist destination must be regarded as a phenomenon of recent times.⁸ Climate change (whose effects are being experienced directly in the Arctic), the hope for a future utilization of raw materials and hitherto frozen waterways, and the implementation of self-rule in 2009 have moved Greenland into the international limelight. Images of political leaders concerned about global warming in front of the Ilulissat ice fjord were followed by numerous reports on public television and not least by offers from travel companies affordable for a wider public. The growing relevance of Greenland for political challenges of global signifi-

6 ARKE: 2010.

7 Cf. VOLQUARSEN: 2011, 139–145.

8 See TOMMASINI: 2012 on tourism in the Arctic.

cance has apparently helped to reduce the perceived distance between the Arctic island and the centers of Europe and America.

In Denmark particularly, where for years the media have been paying considerable attention to political and geopolitical developments in Greenland, this trend also involves cultural production, especially literature. »The writers love to write about Greenland«⁹, reported the Greenlandic broadcasting company *KNR* on the occasion of the Copenhagen Book Fair in the fall of 2013. Anyone following new publications on the Danish book market will have noticed that Greenland as a literary setting has experienced increased significance in recent years. This development is on the one hand due to the general increase in attention for Greenland-related topics, and on the other hand following an international trend that has led to a boom in literature addressing the societies of former European colonies, as Elisabeth Oxfeldt has illustrated on the basis of the latest Nobel laureates in literature.¹⁰

Starting with Bernhard Severin Ingemann's novella *Kunnuk og Naja* from 1847, the list of Danish literature set in Greenland is long and includes many prominent names, such as Henrik Pontoppidan, Knud Sønderby, Jacob Bech Nygaard, Sven Holm and Peter Høeg.¹¹ Hence, Denmark looks back on a long tradition of literary engagement in Greenland, and many of the modes of representation that were introduced to literary discourse in colonial times still possess a remarkable tenacity, not least due to their intertextual aftermath. However, the latest examples of Danish Greenland literature mark a caesura. With authors like Lotte Inuk, Kim Leine and Iben Mondrup – all born in the 1960s – a new generation of writers is entering the arena. They have witnessed themselves how the Danish province became a largely self-governing region in 1979. With the country's political change of status, new forms of travel between Denmark and Greenland came along. Today, some 30 years after the implementation of home rule, they find their literary expression in the topos of Danish migration to postcolonial Greenland, an issue that lies at the core of Inuk, Leine and Mondrup's recent literary writings.

9 »Forfatterne elsker at skrive om Grønland« (KREBS: 2013).

10 Cf. OXFELDT: 2012, 30–31.

11 THISTED: 2003 provides an excellent overview of the history of Danish literature set in Greenland. However, the latest wave of Danish Greenland literature is not discussed due to the age of the article.

Until 1953, Greenland was a closed-off colony that could only be entered by colonial administration employees, expedition travelers and holders of special permits. Then, in the 1960s and 1970s, large numbers of Danish craftsmen temporarily moved to Greenland. They were involved in large-scale infrastructure projects, the core of the »modernization policy« by which the Copenhagen government wanted to shape the standard of living and lifestyle of the Greenlanders to conform with the example of the Danish welfare state. When home rule was established, the Danish workforce was no longer sent out (*udsendt*), but sent for (*tilkaldt*). Given a shortage of trained Greenlandic manpower, Danes, despite the anti-colonial political climate of these years, soon found themselves in all imaginable positions of Greenland's labor market.

The authors Kim Leine, Lotte Inuk and Iben Mondrup belong to these Danish labor migrants of the first or second generation. They have spent their youth or parts of their adult life in Greenland – an experience that they share with the protagonists of their novels. Therefore, a strong autobiographical character is a common feature of their texts, which thus fall into line with an emerging tendency in contemporary Scandinavian literature that Mads Bunch aptly regards as the »perhaps most important new paradigm within prose and poetry in the Nordic countries throughout the 2000s«¹² and which Danish literary scholar Jon Helt Haarder calls »performative biographism«.¹³ What Haarder means by this is a form of literary self-exposition: The authors mix elements from autobiography and fiction and thus calculatedly play with the reactions of the readers and the general public that are evoked by the application of such strategies of authentication. In Lotte Inuk's *Sultekunstnerinde* (2004) and Kim Leine's *Kalak* (2007) (which exhibits the genre hybrid »memory novel« –

12 »det måske vigtigste nye paradigme inden for både prosa og lyrik i hele Norden op gennem 2000'erne« (BUNCH: 2013, 42). All translations from Danish by Ebbe Volquardsen, unless otherwise indicated.

13 »performativ biografisme« (cf. HAARDER: 2010 and HAARDER: 2014). Prominent examples of the practice of performative biographism in contemporary Scandinavian literature beyond the Greenland sujet are e.g. Jonas Hassen Khemiri's novel *Ett öga rött* (»One Eye Red«; 2003), Jørgen Leth's *Det uperfekte menneske* (»The Imperfect Human«; 2005), Knud Romer's *Den som blinker er bange for døden* (»Those who wink are afraid of death«; 2006), Karl Ove Knausgård's six-volume novel project *Min Kamp* (»My Struggle«; 2009–2011), multiple projects by Danish transmedia artist Claus Beck-Nielsen (artistic alias: Das Beckwerk), and most recently Yahya Hassan's poetry collection *Yahya Hassan* (2013).

erindringsroman – as a paratext on its cover) author, narrator and protagonist seem to be identical. These texts thus classify as »autofiction« or even »autonarration«¹⁴, whereas Iben Mondrup's novel *Store Malene* (2013) may to some extent be characterized as autobiographically inspired. The challenging of the line between fact and fiction gives the texts authority, as they are understood as estheticized narrations of reality. The practice is well received by the readers. »It seems as if people do not want to read fiction anymore«¹⁵, writes literary scholar Hans Hauge. »They ask for real stories about real people.«¹⁶ Hence, the practice of »performative biographism« satisfies a demand for authentic portrayals, especially of milieus that on the one hand are regarded as socio-politically relevant, but on the other hand remain closed to large segments of the readership, be it due to social barriers or geographical distance.

Elisabeth Oxfeldt writes that the Nordic countries lack oppression, rebellion, war, poverty or other forms of turmoil, which are the prerequisites for regarding their contemporary literatures as interesting and relevant enough to include them in a canon of world literature as defined by David Damrosch.¹⁷ Oxfeldt and Hauge's reflections still ring true when applied on the national Danish book market. Ever since institutionalized boredom in the Danish welfare society reached its boiling point as a recurring literary subject in Helle Helle's novel *Rødby–Puttgarden* (2005), a series of minimalistic everyday studies based around the eponymous ferry line, bestselling Danish authors have been moving the settings of their texts at an increasing rate to more exciting locations that often lie outside

14 According to BEHRENDT: 2011, writers of »autofictional« texts take the liberty of adding (invented) fictional elements to their (own) stories, whereas the term »autonarration« (a new phenomenon in Scandinavian literature) stands for a mere description of »real« events and life journeys that makes use of the aesthetics of fictional genres. However, »autofiction« and »autonarration« have in common the coincidence of author, protagonist and narrator.

15 »Det lader til, at folk ikke orker at læse fiktioner længere.« (HAUGE: 2003, 221).

16 »De vil have virkelige historier om virkelige mennesker.« (Ibid.).

17 Cf. OXFELDT: 2012, 30. David DAMROSCH: 2003, 4 defines world literature as the body of all literary texts that circulate and are received outside their culture of origin, be it in the original version or in translation. In his later writings, Damrosch coins the term »airport novels« (DAMROSCH: 2014, 6), by which he means the global canon of literature that – mostly in English translation – is sold at international airports all over the world and consumed by a privileged and cosmopolitically oriented readership. The »non-place« of the airport (cf. AUGÉ: 2009) highlights the disentanglement of these texts from the context of the national literatures of their respective countries of origin.

the country's borders. The remarkable posthumous success of author Jakob Ejersbo is not least due to the setting of his trilogy of novels in East Africa, a region that Danes imagine as comparatively rich in turmoil.¹⁸ The readers, who, according to Hauge, do not read literature as fiction any longer,¹⁹ regard Ejersbo as competent to write about that part of the world, as the author spent his childhood and youth in Tanzania. Within the borders of the Danish realm, popular discourse most likely associates Greenland and the migrant-dominated suburbs of the cities with rebellion, poverty and turmoil. At the same time, these environments are highly inaccessible for the average reader. This is why 18-year-old Yahya Hassan succeeded in selling more than 100,000 copies of his first collection of poems within only a few weeks in the fall of 2013.²⁰ Due to their autobiographical character, the poems satisfied the long-felt demand for an authentic voice from the infamous Muslim parallel societies in the suburbs. The young Dane of Palestinian descent was thus transformed into a highly sought-after media personality within a short space of time. The same applies to Kim Leine and Iben Mondrup. Since the Danish public has been discussing Greenland's turn in the fields of raw material and independence policies (especially around the time of the Greenlandic general elections in the spring of 2013) both of them – Leine, however, more than Mondrup – have repeatedly been welcome guests on talk shows and in the opinions pages of the newspapers. The authors' expertise derives from their own biographies and the exhibition of them in highly regarded literary texts.

Taking up Doris Bachmann-Medick's reflections on the great turns in cultural theory, one may speak of a *biographical turn* given the increasing importance of author's biographies for Scandinavian literature and its reception.²¹ The trend leads to a strengthening of literature, as the authors are increasingly heard in public debates against the backdrop of their literary work, and their texts are thus given authority. »Autofictional« and

18 Jakob Ejersbo's so called »Africa trilogy« (2009) consists of the novels *Eksil* and *Liberty* and the novella collection *Revolution*. See KÖRBER: 2011 and THISTED: 2012a for analyses of the trilogy from a postcolonial perspective.

19 HAUGE: 2003, 204.

20 HASSAN: 2013. However, Hassan's success is mainly due to the fact that his autobiographical poems reaffirm the Danish majority society's common prejudices directed against Muslims.

21 Cf. BACHMANN-MEDICK: 2006.

autobiographically inspired novels therefore become important for the reevaluation of the relationship between Denmark and Greenland, a process that has gained pace since the implementation of self-rule. Like Sarah Gavron in the documentary film I discussed at the beginning, Kim Leine, Lotte Inuk and Iben Mondrup pick up on traditional narratives, stereotypes and modes of representation of Greenland, which in their texts are alienated, turned around or generally subjected to a critical debate. It is therefore fruitful to read the examples of Danish-Greenlandic migration literature that are presented in the remainder of this chapter against the backdrop of older texts that address different kinds of journeys between the Danish center and the Greenlandic periphery. First, I will analyze the role that Henrik Pontoppidan's 1887 novel *Isbjørnen* (»The Polar Bear«) plays as an intertext in Kim Leine's *Kalak* (2007).²² I will then relate Lotte Inuk's novel *Sultekunstnerinde* (»Hunger Artist«; 2004), which describes the challenges of a Danish teenager growing up in postcolonial Greenland, to texts by Greenlandic author Mâliâraq Vebæk that deal with migration from Greenland to Copenhagen. In the outlook there will be space for some reflections on Iben Mondrup's *Store Malene* (2013)²³ and Kim Leine's *Profeterne i Evighedsfjorden* (»The Prophets of Eternity Fjord«; 2012).

Henrik Pontoppidan and Kim Leine

In *Hamskifte* (»Molting«; 1936), the middle part of his three-volume memoirs, Nobel literature laureate Henrik Pontoppidan (1857–1943)²⁴ describes his years of study in Copenhagen, during which, as referred to in the title,

22 The term intertextuality was introduced to literary theory by Julia KRISTEVA: 1986. Following Michail Bakhtin, she assumes a dialogic relation between all texts, with the result that »any text is constructed as a mosaic of quotations« (ibid., 37) and thus is the »the absorption and transformation of another [text]« (ibid.). Gérard GENETTE: 1982, who under the umbrella term of transtextuality has developed a differentiated typology of intertextual relations, conceives only the practice of quoting an intertext, whereas the abstract nexus of all texts described by Kristeva in Genette's terminology falls into the category of architextuality. In relation to Kim Leine's *Kalak*, Henrik Pontoppidan's short novel *Isbjørnen* serves as a hypertext, by which Genette means the transformation of a text in terms of adaption, parody or pastiche.

23 *Store Malene* is a geographical term and therefore untranslatable. It is the name of a mountain outside of Nuuk.

24 Pontoppidan shared the Nobel Prize with his nowadays little-known countryman Karl Gjellerup in 1917.

his conversion from being an engineer in the making to becoming a literary writer takes place. Pontoppidan gives a detailed account of his encounter with geologist Knud Steenstrup during a study trip to Bornholm. The prospect of being taken on one of Steenstrup's geological expeditions to Greenland motivates the young student, who prepares for this adventure by reading the extensive writings of then Danish colonial inspector in Greenland, Hinrich Rink. At the end, however, it is the frustration over another candidate making the grade that provokes the epiphanic key moment that causes Pontoppidan to quit his academic career and become an artist. Ever since its secularization through James Joyce in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1916), the idea of epiphany – originally a theological concept – has been a recurring feature of the (often autobiographically inspired) *Künstlerroman*. It describes the moment when the formation of the artist begins.

»Dejected like a spurned wooer on the wedding day of his beloved, I followed in thought the ship's way through the sound and further north«²⁵, Pontoppidan writes when describing the »molting« of the engineer and the birth of the author. Without Pontoppidan explicitly naming it, one may consider his early short novel *Isbjørnen* a fruit of his coping with the disappointment. First printed as a feuilleton in the newspaper *Morgenbladet*, the novel only received moderate reviews when published as a book in 1887. Ironically, the circumstance that Pontoppidan had never been to Greenland himself came in for criticism by the reviewers.²⁶ Asking writers of fiction only to write about their own experiences is a strange demand, especially at a time more than 120 years before the emergence of literary self-exposition as a new tendency in Scandinavian literature. Here, the historical dimension of the claim for authenticity aimed at the Danish Greenland novel becomes apparent.

Despite the negative contemporary critiques, *Isbjørnen* has had an impressive impact on literary history and should be seen as canonical today. Of particular importance for its intertextual aftermath are the functions that the novel attributes to Greenland. In *Isbjørnen*, the country appears as a »retreat for maladjusted characters«,²⁷ as a voluntary or in-

25 »Nedtrykt som en forsmaaet Bejler paa den Elskedes Bryllupsdag fulgte jeg i Tankerne Skibet paa Vej gennem Sundet og videre nordpaa.« (PONTOPPIDAN: 1936, 71).

26 Cf. ROSDAHL: 2007.

27 »tilflugtssted for utilpassede eksistenser« (THISTED: 2003, 38).

voluntary exile for individuals incapable of withstanding Danish society's normativity pressures, and as a place of yearning for escapists striving for catharsis. Ever since their establishment through Pontoppidan, such perspectives on Greenland have had a considerable influence on Western representations of the Arctic island. Even Kim Leine in his debut novel *Kalak* (2007) draws on a notion of Greenland as a place of mental purification and, at the same time, contributes to its deconstruction. Both the titles of Pontoppidan and Leine's novels make recourse to the result of the transformation processes undergone by their respective protagonists, the setting for which is Greenland. Both authors' main characters assimilate in appearance, character and habit with the local population, or rather with the stereotype of Greenlanders that was predominant at the respective times their novels were published. In Pontoppidan's case, the character is Thorkild Müller, a hapless priest who has been sent to Greenland, and in Leine's case it is his alter ego, the nurse Kim. Karina, one of the countless Greenlandic women with whom Leine's protagonist has brief love affairs, declares Kim a *kalak*, a dyed-in-the-wool Greenlandic – with all the positive and negative features associated with the expression.²⁸ *Kalak* Kim enjoys raw seal liver, a dish that even traditional Greenlanders often refrain from, and hangs out at Nuuk's drinking holes, an environment normally out of bounds to Danes, to which Kim, however, finds access through his local female company. Whereas Leine's protagonist transforms into a stereotypical Greenlandic drunkard and raw meat eater,²⁹ on his return from Arctic climes, Thorkild Müller is seen as an animalistic barbarian by the people in his Jutland parish. In their view, he has turned into *isbjørnen* – the polar bear.

Learning the Greenlandic language, enjoying traditional Greenlandic food and socializing with members of the Greenlandic underclass: the social practices that promote Kim's metamorphosis into a *kalak* are initially self-chosen. They are the tools he employs to distance himself from his Danish past, which was hallmarked by sexual abuse at the hands of his father. In contrast to this, Thorkild Müller's transformation into the polar bear takes place involuntarily. He is guided by an unbridled desire

28 LEINE: 2007, 100.

29 For a long time it was assumed that the term »Eskimo« was derived from the language of the North American Chippewa and meant »raw meat eater«. Although this linguistic assessment is now considered to have been disproved, it is still reproduced in popular literature.

for the authentic life of the alleged savages in his mission district in northern Greenland, a lifestyle that author Pontoppidan exoticizes and romanticizes. Even if Thorkild becomes a contented man, valued and respected by his parish, a change of narrative after the return of the aged priest makes clear that in late 19th century Denmark is no place for a preacher who has mutated into a savage. Upon realizing this Thorkild sets off for his Greenlandic exile again – this time of his own accord.

In *Eskimo Essays*, her groundbreaking study on Western representations of the Alaskan Yup'ik, Ann Fienup-Riordan notes:

Though the concept of degeneration remained a powerful explanatory tool for human diversity into the nineteenth century, the Age of Enlightenment produced alternate possibilities. One was articulated by Jean Jacques Rousseau in his *Social Contract* of 1762. Whereas Rousseau's predecessors, among them Thomas Hobbes, depicted »natural man« as brutish and self-centered, [...] Rousseau eloquently defended the image of people as pure in a state of nature and subsequently corrupted by civilization. Although the Hobbesian viewpoint is reflected in Western thought to this day, so also is the image derived from Rousseau of the »noble savage«. Time and context determine which view is in the foreground, but its opposite is never far away.³⁰

The ambivalence that, according to Fienup-Riordan, characterizes white Americans' views on the indigenous population of Alaska applies to the Greenlandic situation as well. Henrik Pontoppidan's novel *Isbjørnen*, with its ever-changing narrative perspectives, illustrates the wide panorama of contemporary Danish perceptions of the Arctic colony. In his book, Greenland figures alternately as a deadly ice desert and as a livable idyll, and he initially depicts Thorkild Müller, marked by life far away from Western civilization, as an animalistic barbarian, before having him become the only member of the Danish clergy in the story to represent true philanthropy and charity. Jon Helt Haarder has therefore aptly referred to the novel as a »montage of discourses«.³¹ In the first chapter, Thorkild is already an old man. With his unkempt appearance, strong smell and roaring laughter, he rather resembles a wild animal than an employee of the Danish state church, and Thorkild's parsonage does not awake memories of those idyllic whitewashed half-timbered houses, which we are familiar with from the novels of Pontoppidan's contemporary Morten Korch. The house is described as a cave devoid of the slight-

30 FIENUP-RIORDAN: 2003, 14.

31 »diskursmontage« (HAARDER: 2006, 33).

est trace of comfort and order. The priest does not place value on such virtues, as »his home was« – as would befit a bear – »the whole area«. ³² Yet by the end of the chapter, the reader begins to doubt whether Thorkild, who makes the life of his lodger (upstart vicar and philistine Ruggaard) a living hell, really is an unsympathetic misanthropist. When the priest leaves his house late one stormy night to give a dying man his last blessing, we learn that although Thorkild may use unorthodox methods in the execution of his office, he remains conscientious and close to the people. Whereas Ruggaard and the institutions of the Danish state embody the artificiality and stiltedness of culture, Thorkild stands for undistorted human kindness, a virtue that he has acquired during his time in Greenland.

Following a change of narrative perspective, we accompany Thorkild back to his time as a student. For the untalented and gloomy theologian in the making, riddled with self-hate and haunted by suicidal thoughts, Greenland means both a last resort and the epitome of death and lifelessness. Thorkild is financed by a royal grant, upon receipt of which he binds himself to working as a missionary in Greenland for an indefinite period of time. Although he does his best not to pass the final exam, Thorkild is nevertheless sent to a mission district in the far north of Greenland. However, after a period spent struggling with his affinity for the primitive lifestyle of the Greenlanders in his parish, he manages – against all the odds – to lead a fulfilled life. »He had become a new man – a re-created man«, ³³ it says in the novel. The topos of restart, often combined with biblical allusions, is a classic component of colonial settler narratives. ³⁴ Similar to the mysterious processes far away in the mountains, through which – according to the myths and legends – Greenlandic shamans gain their supernatural powers, Thorkild's metamorphosis into *isbjørnen* takes place during a summer hunting trip. It is here that instinctual drives overwhelm morality and reason and the alleged cathartic power of life in the wild can take full effect. However, Thorkild's ability to overcome his sad past is firmly linked to the Greenlandic environment; only there is he able to lead a decent life. Back in Denmark, aged Thorkild soon realizes his alienation from his countrymen and returns to Greenland after a short while. Even though this episode mainly serves the

32 »hans hjem var hele egnen« (PONTOPPIDAN: 1978, II).

33 »Han var blevet et nyt – et genskabt menneske.« (Ibid., 31).

34 Cf. EGLINGER and HEITMANN: 2010.

Grundtvigian-inspired critique of the »black schools« of the Danish bureaucratic state, it also contributes to the constitution of a powerful discourse in which Greenland figures as a place of purity and primitiveness.

The first 80 pages of Kim Leine's autofictional »memory novel« give a description of the protagonist's escape from the confinement of a Norwegian Jehovah's Witness congregation to Copenhagen, where his youth is overshadowed by his father's sexual abuse. Suddenly and with no forewarning, we meet Kim with his wife and children on a flight to Greenland. »This is new air«³⁵, is one of the protagonist's first utterances after their arrival in Nuuk, where he takes a job as a nurse at the country's largest hospital. By this point, the reader already knows that in the year 2007 the cathartic and healing effects on mental suffering hoped for from a move to Greenland must fail to appear. As the conclusion of Leine's novel – just like in Pontoppidan's *Isbjørnen* – is anticipated at the beginning, we know that after his conversion into a *kalak*, Kim will end up as a medication-dependent drug addict collapsing at his place of work – which fortunately for him is the local hospital.

»When I speak Greenlandic, I become another human being«³⁶, the first-person-narrator explains, a finding that falls into line with the discourses about new beginnings and reincarnation myths established in *Isbjørnen*. For Pontoppidan's protagonist, Greenland's cathartic effect comes as an unforeseen surprise. For Leine's main character, however, it is from the beginning part of a pathological illusion that feeds on his hope of being able to leave the emotional mess of the Copenhagen years behind once he has left the metropolis. Kim's metamorphosis into a *kalak* initially takes place on a self-chosen and allegedly controlled level. »The food and the language; these are the tools for my integration, the means to distance myself from my countrymen«³⁷, he says, revealing some striking parallels to Pontoppidan's Thorkild Müller, for whom the imitation of Greenlanders' seal hunting techniques is a similar means to get over with his unhappy past in Denmark. In Thorkild's case, however, this practice has to take place clandestinely, because of his shame about his »unfortunate passions«.³⁸

35 »Det er ny luft.« (LEINE: 2007, 79).

36 »Jeg bliver et andet menneske, når jeg taler grønlandsk.« (Ibid., 88).

37 »Maden og sproget. De er redskaberne i min integration, midlerne til at distancere mig fra mine landsmænd.« (Ibid., 101).

38 »ulykkelige lidenskaber« (PONTOPPIDAN: 1978, 28).

Kim's adaption of Greenlandic conventions can be described as a project of inverted mimicry. In copying Western behavior, postcolonial theorist Homi Bhabha perceives a subversive empowerment strategy of (formerly) colonized societies, which serves the generation of agency in a situation characterized by power asymmetries.³⁹ Through the inversion of this practice, Kim Leine's alter ego hopes to enter a »third space« beyond the colonial dichotomy, where he – the migrant who has moved from the former center of the Danish colonial realm to the postcolonial periphery – is able to renounce his own past. Kim openly ponders his role as a white male in the formerly colonized society. Yet the novel is free from the collective guilt complexes that characterized anti-colonial Danish Greenland literature of the 1970s.⁴⁰ Abuse, domestic violence and alcoholism are everyday realities in Kim Leine's postcolonial Greenland. However, the quest for a culprit has become an obsolete endeavor. The controversial Danish documentary *Flugten fra Grønland* (2007) highlighted incestuous sexual abuse of children as a major problem of Greenlandic society.⁴¹ By making the Danish protagonist's difficult struggle with his own incest story the main subject of the novel, Leine emphasizes that the former colony – contrary to common prejudices – by no means preserves a monopoly on such family tragedies.⁴²

Although being aware of his own privileged position and despite his good intentions, Kim does not succeed in resisting the charm of the Greenlandic women, who, in accordance with a powerful stereotype, are depicted as relentlessly promiscuous. Eventually the reader stops counting Kim's brief love affairs (at the very latest when his escapist desire for a place of purity leads him to remote eastern Greenland), realizing that the protagonist's polyamorous lifestyle and downright physical craving for rough sexual intercourse are yet further facets of his complex addiction. The maltreated bodies of the haggard and toothless women whom Kim at an increasing rate prefers as sexual partners constitute a medium of abjection, a term that, according to Julia Kristeva, describes a process of transgression and the destruction of system and order,⁴³ which for Kim, driven

39 BHABHA: 2009.

40 Cf. THISTED: 2005.

41 Cf. GANT: 2009.

42 THISTED: 2011b, 267.

43 KRISTEVA: 1982, 4.

by his own experience of abuse, appears as an adequate means to discard his own identity – another symptom of his pathological escapism.

Kim ends up traveling back and forth between the new family home on the Danish island of Langeland and sporadic stays in Greenland, during which he works as a substitute nurse. Right to the end, Kim misunderstands that his repeated escapes to Greenland neither help him come to terms with the past nor lead to self-purification; they are instead symptomatic of his mental illness. During his stays in Denmark, Kim is restless and depressed, and the intervals of happiness become shorter after each return to Greenland. Only when a psychologist in Copenhagen draws Kim's attention to the pathological features of his affinity for Greenland does the protagonist accept that he has been cherishing an illusion. At the end of the novel, we meet a man who is far from being cured, but who seems to have understood that the only cure is to distance himself from his father and declare the Greenland chapter of his life completed. Here, the notion of Greenland as a place of catharsis and restart, established in Pontoppidan's novel, undergoes its deconstruction.

Mâliâraq Vebæk and Lotte Inuk

At the beginning of the 1990s, anthropologist Bo Wagner Sørensen noted that the tenacious aftermath of colonial power asymmetries brings about different attributions of meaning to the processes of migration from Denmark to Greenland and vice versa. A Greenlander's migration to Denmark would thus be perceived as unnatural and therefore require explanation and legitimization. Whereas migrations of Greenlanders to Denmark were rumored to cause emotional problems, longing and homesickness, Danish migrations to Greenland would be associated with strategic consideration and material benefit. In other words, only Danish migration is controlled by the individual.⁴⁴ Aside from the fact that the discourse outlined by Sørensen reproduces the familiar epistemological dichotomy (identified by Edward Said) between an enlightened and rational West and an Other paralyzed by emotionality,⁴⁵ it also leaves a major group of Danish migrants in postcolonial Greenland unaccounted for: those who did not come to the country for professional reasons or as a

44 SØRENSEN: 1993, 31.

45 SAID: 2003.

result of careful consideration, but who were born or raised in Greenland, thus belonging to the second generation of migrants. In her autobiographical novel *Sultekunstnerinde* («Hunger Artist»; 2004), Danish author Lotte Inuk breaks new ground in describing the difficult situation of an adolescent Dane in postcolonial Greenland.⁴⁶ Kim Leine and Lotte Inuk's protagonists have in common that they share names with their creators; both novels classify as »autofiction« or even as »autonarration«.⁴⁷ Charlotta, who prefers the gender-neutral nickname Charlie, comes to Greenland together with her mother, who takes a job as a press photographer in Nuuk. The year is 1976. Charlotta experiences Greenland in the politically turbulent years before the implementation of home rule. Lotte Inuk, whose real name is Charlotte Christine Hoff Hansen, has perpetuated her biographical connection to Greenland in her artist's name; *inuk* is the Greenlandic word for human.⁴⁸

On the content level, *Kalak* and *Sultekunstnerinde* share the course of their respective Danish protagonists' diseases, which in both cases form the center of the plot. As the title implies, Charlotta is suffering from anorexia. In contrast to Kim, whose repeated flight to Greenland is a symptom of his mental illness, Charlotta's suffering is caused by the experience of migration. Like Franz Kafka's hunger artist, who, after initially being admired by the audience, soon sees his skill rejected in the face of new, seemingly more modern attractions, Charlie quickly comes to feel that a girl from the country that had served as a role model worthy of imitation since colonial times is out of place in a postcolonial Greenland characterized by burgeoning nationalism and growing ethnic self-confidence. Kafka's short story *Ein Hungerkünstler* («A Hunger Artist»; 1922), whose title Inuk adopts for her novel, serves as an intertext.⁴⁹ Contrary to Leine's *Kalak*, the cathartic effect – which Eurocentric discourses

46 A central chapter of Inuk's novel is under the title »The Revolution« available in English translation by Thomas E. Kennedy (INUK: 2008).

47 Cf. BEHRENDT: 2011, 294–298.

48 The plural of *inuk* is *inuit*, the common self-designation of the indigenous Arctic peoples in Greenland and Canada. The term *kalaaleq* (pl. *kalaallit*) means »Greenlander« and is in its semantics today less often tied to the actual ethnic origin of the individual person.

49 See ELF: 2009, 79–96 for an analysis of the references to Kafka in Inuk's *Sultekunstnerinde* and in South African author J.M. Coetzee's novel *Life & Times of Michael K* (1983), where anorexia plays a central role as well.

often ascribe to processes of migration into the (post)colonial periphery – does not even exist in the imagination of the protagonist in Inuk’s novel. Here, Greenland is the arena for the mental and physical collapse of the girl, who, as literary scholar Moritz Schramm notes, »as a reaction against the social pressure for assimilation, [...] attempts to escape from those normative regimes by reducing the body that is the place in which the inscription of norms and values is situated«. ⁵⁰ By letting her emotionally troubled Danish protagonist collapse in Greenland, Inuk challenges a long-lasting and powerful discourse, which, as Sørensen has shown, usually associates psychological problems and failure with the migration of Greenlanders to Denmark.

The sad story of a young Greenlandic woman going to rack and ruin in Copenhagen lies at the core of the novel *Historien om Katrine* (»Catherine’s Story«; 1982) by Greenlandic author Måliaraq Vebæk (1917–2012). ⁵¹ Against the background of the narratives and practices negotiated in *Sultekunstnerinde*, it is worthwhile to take a look at Vebæk’s older text, which focuses on the reverse situation of migration.

The arrival of immigrants from the (former) colonies in the auspicious metropolis of the empire and their subsequent experience of racist mechanisms of exclusion are recurring topoi of the postcolonial novel. These are for example prominently addressed in *The Final Passage* (1985), the debut of St. Kittsian author Caryl Phillips, whose plot is astonishingly reminiscent of Vebæk’s. Some years before Phillips told the sad and indignant story of the arrival of a young woman from the Caribbean in late 1950s London, the Greenlandic author living in Copenhagen wrote *Historien om Katrine* as an attempt to provide some understanding for those Greenlanders at the bottom of society, who from the 1970s onward became more visible on Copenhagen’s streets and squares. At least this intention may be discerned from one of Vebæk’s non-fictional texts, »Husk, når du ser de unge grønlandere« (»Remember when you see the young Greenlanders«), which was published in the Danish broadsheet newspaper *Politiken* at about the same time as the book came out. ⁵² The article features some striking parallels with the story told in the book. The

50 SCHRAMM: 2010, 144–145.

51 Vebæk’s novel was published in Greenlandic in 1981 under the title *Búsime nâpinek* (»Meeting on a Bus«). One year later, the author herself translated the novel into Danish.

52 VEBÆK: 1982b.

novel's protagonist is Greenlander Katrine, who, in the heyday of »modernization politics«, falls in love with a Danish construction worker and without being asked follows him to Copenhagen. Soon she learns that Erik by no means is the wealthy man he had purported to be during his stay in Greenland. He is living in his mother's cramped apartment in the then still poor neighborhood of Nørrebro. Although Katrine and Erik get married and Katrine gives birth to a daughter, it is impossible for the young Greenlander to integrate into Danish society. Being both a woman and a Greenlander, Katrine has to face intersectional discrimination in the rough working-class environment. As a reaction to this, she frequently socializes with fellow countrymen who share her fate and she becomes a serious alcoholic. Katrine gets divorced from Erik, is refused custody of their daughter Emilie and finally commits suicide, jumping into the harbor basin at Nyhavn.

What makes Vebæk's novel worth reading even 30 years after its publication is less the stereotyped and thus predictable fate of the protagonist, but rather her encounter with the assimilated Greenlander Louise, which the Greenlandic title of the novel, *Búsime nâpinek* (»Meeting on a Bus«), declares to be the core of the story.⁵³ Louise is also married to a Dane and leads an inconspicuous middle-class life in a detached house in Brønshøj. One day she meets Katrine, who seems sad and distant, on a city bus. Pleased to meet someone she can talk to in her mother tongue, she gives Katrine her address, but then forgets about the encounter after Katrine fails to get in touch. In her darkest hour – after she has lost her husband, daughter and home, Katrine also loses all the money she has on her – she finds Louise's address and decides to visit her in the hope of obtaining some kind of help. Over coffee in Louise's living room, Katrine tells her hostess – and the readers – her sad story.

For a Greenlandic storyteller in the heyday of the oral narrative tradition, it was the greatest honor if the audience gradually fell asleep during the recitation. Mâliâraq Vebæk utilizes this reminiscence of pre-modern traditions to develop the novel's plot. Louise falls asleep while Katrine is telling her story, and when she wakes up, her visitor has gone. Only when she reads about Katrine's suicide in the newspaper does it become clear to Louise that the visit had not been a dream. Suffering from a guilty conscience over not having helped when she was needed, Louise is racked by

53 See also the readings by KLEIVAN: 1997 and THISTED: 2010.

self-doubt and recalls another countryman's attempts to get in touch with her. Out of fear of her Danish neighbors' possible reactions, Louise had then refused to invite the man – who was clearly an alcoholic – home, only to hear about his death a short while afterwards.

Louise's strategy to resist the mechanisms of exclusion applied by the Danish majority society to Greenlanders can be described with the concept of »passing«, a social practice by which one's ethnic identity is concealed towards others and the acting person is thus freed from the expectations associated with it. In the petty bourgeois neighborhood of Brønshøj, Louise, who tries to avoid any social contact or practice that might mark her as Greenlandic, passes as an ethnic Dane. The potentially fatal consequences of »passing« were addressed by another female author with connections to the Danish colonial empire in her novel of the same name – *Passing* from 1929. African-American writer Nella Larsen (1891–1964) was the child of a Danish mother who had immigrated to the United States and an Afro-Caribbean father, a descendant of African slaves from the Danish West Indies, which Denmark sold to the USA in 1917. Larsen became a prominent representative of the »Harlem Renaissance«. ⁵⁴ Whereas in *Passing* colored Clare Kendry's efforts to align herself with the hegemonical superior white class in terms of appearance and lifestyle leads to her death in Larsen's New York of the 1920s, the integrated Greenlandic's encounter with stereotypical Katrine in Vebæk's Copenhagen of the 1980s merely causes a grueling reflection about the price of assimilation and the renunciation of all ties with one's culture of origin. In her second novel *Tretten år efter* (»Thirteen Years After«; 1997), which can be read as a sequel to *Historien om Katrine*, Måliâraq Vebæk extends the topic. ⁵⁵ Here, it is the conflict of identity suffered by Katrine's daughter Emilie that makes up the core of the plot. Due to the early death of the mother, the teenager has no connection with Greenland at all and struggles with her foreign appearance. After an encounter with her successful

54 Nella Larsen's novel *Passing* tells the story of African-American Clare Kendry, who due to her light skin initially succeeds in passing as white and socializing in white social environments. When her cover is blown, Clare falls out of a window, and it remains unclear if her fall is accidental or suicidal. See LÖBBERMANN: 2000, 131–144 on Larsen's role in the »Harlem Renaissance« and for a reading of the novel from a gender-related perspective.

55 Vebæk's second novel was published in Greenlandic in 1992 under the title *Ukiut 13-t qaangiimmata* and was translated into Danish by the author in 1997.

Greenlandic uncle, who embodies the opposite of what Emilie had been told about her mother, the girl radically changes her attitude towards her Greenlandic roots and clandestinely plans to emigrate to her mother's country of origin. However, when Emilie realizes that her plan is doomed to failure, she finally develops a healthy self-confidence and appreciates both sides of her origin.

Whereas in Lotte Inuk's *Sultekunstnerinde* the detailed account of Charlie's mental illness (caused by her experience of migration) features some parallels to Katrine's mental and physical collapse in Copenhagen, the ending of the novel is rather reminiscent of Emilie's development, who – just like Charlie – belongs to the second generation of immigrants. After a long stay at Nuuk's hospital, to which she is admitted as Greenland's first anorexia patient, Charlie finally meets a doctor she is able to trust. After having struggled with her own whiteness and simultaneously feeling a homoerotic affection for her school friend Malou, it seems in the end as if Charlie is able to appreciate the fact that she neither lives up to the ethnic-Greenlandic identity norm nor to the common heteronormative gender roles. Even before Charlie had realized that

the bastards are the most beautiful, here and everywhere else: that black hair, those light eyes, or the other way round. Those long, powerful limbs. That warm complexion. All the best salvaged from both fallen worlds, a new beginning, a Phoenix rising from the ashes, a whole new breed of human being.⁵⁶

Ethnicity plays a crucial role in Lotte Inuk's portrait of postcolonial Greenland. In the heyday of burgeoning nationalism before the implementation of home rule, the Danish children in the country »suddenly stand on the wrong side of a struggle for freedom«,⁵⁷ their un-Greenlandic appearance marking them as belonging to the opposite side. In order to describe the processes of exclusion in postcolonial Greenland, anthropologist Terje Olsen has developed the term »ethnic capital«⁵⁸ and thus expanded Pierre Bourdieu's model of different types of capital. Bourdieu only differentiates between economic, social and cultural capital, which, according to him, are social mechanisms of distinction be-

56 INUK: 2008, 17.

57 »[...] det har været hård kost for danske børn pludselig at befinde sig på den forkerte side af en frihedskamp.« (THISTED: 2005, 24).

58 OLSEN: 1997.

tween hierarchically organized strata of society.⁵⁹ Hardly any personal descriptions, which in Inuk's novel are given from the perspective of the first-person-narrator, go without a detailed account of the Greenlanders' dark hair and brownish skin. Blonde and fair-skinned Charlie, who is equally drawn to Greenlandic boys and girls, is convinced that she possesses far too little »ethnic capital«: »We are unwanted, especially someone like me. With my scrubby almost white hair and my caricatural rosy skin, I have the looks that incarnate the pure age-old enemy. I am fully aware of that, wherever I walk.«⁶⁰

Although Charlie knows about her divergence from the Greenlandic norm and the sheer impossibility of ever fulfilling it, she and her Danish friend Malou try as hard as they can to assimilate with their environment and to obliterate their obvious differences from the Greenlandic adolescents. By trying to resemble the majority, Malou and Charlie turn Homi Bhabha's concept of mimicry upside down, a strategy that also is applied by Kim Leine's protagonist. The foreign body needs to camouflage itself in order to obtain the ability to wield transformative influence on the dominant culture and language. In the novel it says:

Anyway, in winter my hair gets darker and Malou and I eagerly compare color, count the black strands among the lighter ones and feel that it is going in the right direction, and we go without washing our hair for as long as possible because it seems darker then, and we practice the slang the girls in our class use as well as the unusual way they pronounce certain Danish words.⁶¹

The inversion of what Homi Bhabha calls mimicry can in the case of the Danish girls in postcolonial Greenland also be described as an attempt at »passing«. By adopting the Greenlandic slang and having darker hair and tanned skin, Malou and Charlie hope to pass as Greenlanders within their social environment, or at least as the daughters of mixed parents. Their endeavor fails, of course, and just as with Kim Leine's *kalak*, Nella Larsen's Clare Kendry and Louise and Emilie from *Mâliâraq* Vebæk's novels, their attempt to disguise or discard their own (ethnic) identity leads to problems – in Charlie's case to a serious anorexic disorder. By

59 BOURDIEU: 2010.

60 »Vi er ikke ønskede og især en som jeg; med mit stride næsten hvide hår og min karikaturisk lyserøde hud er jeg i besiddelse af udseendet der inkarnerer selveste den pure, urgamle Fjende (sic!); jeg er mig det bevidst hvor jeg går og står.« (INUK: 2004, 165).

61 INUK: 2008, 16.

letting her Danish protagonist experience those identity and integration problems, which – as Bo Wagner Sørensen has shown – are usually associated with Greenlandic migration to Denmark, Lotte Inuk challenges the common Danish discourses on immigration and integration, and, just like Kim Leine, contributes to a long overdue rethinking and reevaluation of some long-held approaches to the Danish-Greenlandic relations that have been powerful since colonial times.

Conclusion

Since the mid-19th century, Greenland has been a frequent setting and the country's colonial relationship with Denmark a recurring topos of Danish literature. What is more, since the publication of Henrik Pontoppidan's *Isbjørnen*, Danish fictional characters have consistently traveled to Arctic climes. However, a relatively new phenomenon is the accumulation of literary texts that draw on the authors' own experiences of migration and thus are written from the perspective of the contact zone. Based on the authors' biographies, Kim Leine's *Kalak* and Lotte Inuk's *Sultekunstnerinde* address the experience of suddenly finding oneself in the minority position, which due to an internalized Eurocentric worldview is still an uncommon and disconcerting situation for Europeans. As we know from numerous postcolonial texts by British Commonwealth writers and from Málíaraq Vebæk's novels, such an experience can bring about the desire to adapt to the dominant culture. Drawing on Jon Helt Haarder's reflections on »performative biographism« and Hans Hauge's remarks on a declining interest in fiction, in the first part of this chapter I analyzed the present success of »autofictional« and autobiographically inspired Greenland novels and the increasing audience that the authors of the texts are now receiving in political debates. As Greenland (in the wake of climate change and the ongoing debates about raw materials and the political status of the country) is currently attracting a lot of attention among the Danish public, an increasing demand for authentic voices that know the country first-hand is simultaneously emerging. Some of the authors discussed in this chapter satisfy this demand. Their texts thus have the opportunity to act on the increasingly heated discussions about Denmark's colonial legacy in Greenland and its aftermath. By pathologizing the notion of Greenland as a place of restart and catharsis, Kim Leine deciphers a powerful discourse as part of colonial iconography. Lotte Inuk holds up

a mirror to the striking Danish debates on migration and the integration of immigrants, when in her novel she turns the usual processes of minorization and majorization upside down.

It would be worthwhile to consult other contemporary Danish novels set in Greenland, analyze how they address migration from the center to the periphery, and see in which way they contribute to the ongoing debates on Danish colonialism and postcoloniality. Iben Mondrup's novel *Store Malene* (2013) is also about Danes who travel to Greenland. However, it is not a piece of »autofictional« writing. The main character is the photographer Justine, whose origins are never revealed to the reader. Yet the name suggests a connection to Greenland. Longing for solitude, Justine travels from Copenhagen to Nuuk, where she rents the house of a nurse who is out of town for a couple of weeks. In Nuuk she meets the taxi driver Joorut, for whom she develops an erotic obsession after finding nude photographs of him in her landlady's bedroom. A Danish couple, Jesper and Mette, have also traveled to Nuuk, and they repeatedly cross Justine's path. The three of them develop an ambivalent friendship. They spend a lot of time together, and finally the couple moves into Justine's house. Justine perceives Mette's dominance in particular on a physical level – at one point, the corpulent Dane is described as a »mountain of meat«. ⁶² »Not even here can one be in peace; all places can be invaded«, ⁶³ the protagonist complains at another point. Due to the unsettling omnipresence of her new acquaintances, Justine spends less and less time in her house and instead entrenches herself in the abandoned Block P. Formerly housing 500 inhabitants and 200 meters of length, the building, which was demolished in 2012, once epitomized the dubious Danish »modernization policies« of the 1960s. Justine's displacement and the topos of invasion, embodied by the naïve tourist Mette, suggest an interpretation of *Store Malene* as an allegory on Danish colonization and Danish dominance within the debates on the future of the country, the latter often being criticized by Greenlanders. ⁶⁴

With his historical novel *Profeterne i Evighedsfjorden* (»The Prophets of Eternity Fjord«; 2012) meant to make up the first part of a trilogy,

62 »kødbjerg« (MONDRUP: 2013, 56).

63 »Heller ikke her er der fred; alle steder kan invaderes« (ibid., 92).

64 Cf. e.g. former Greenlandic member of the Danish parliament Lars-Emil Johansen's statements in the documentary *Flugten fra Grønland* (2007). See also GANT: 2009.

Kim Leine could live up to his earlier success and even substantially expand on it. The novel won virtually all the major literary awards in Denmark and has already been translated into German, Spanish and Dutch. The plot is partly based on a true story that took place in the 18th century.⁶⁵ Yet the novel may also be interpreted as a transferal of Kim Leine's own story of migration into the past. The parallels between the protagonist in *Kalak*, Leine's alter ego, and missionary Morten Falck, the main character in *Profeterne i Evighedsfjorden*, are striking.

With an article in the Danish weekly newspaper *Weekendavisen*, Thorkild Kjærgaard, Danish professor of history at the University of Greenland, provoked a lively debate on the legitimacy of literary adaptations of authentic history and the nature of Denmark's colonial legacy in Greenland.⁶⁶ In his vehement attack on Leine, he accuses the author of an inaccurate depiction of history. With his position that Denmark's rule over Greenland cannot be classified as colonialism, Kjærgaard certainly stands more or less alone, even among historians. Indeed, his reproach to Leine's allegedly overly negative depiction of the Danish presence in Greenland could also be discussed at length. However, what seems to be more interesting is the question as to why a seasoned scholar like Kjærgaard feels obliged to check the work of a literary author for its truth content and then publish a scrupulously compiled list of all those passages in the text where Leine's fiction allegedly deviates from the facts. »It reeks of envy«⁶⁷, writes literary critic Johan Rosdahl in his reply to Kjærgaard's remarks. The professor's jealousy of the writer not only reveals the short-tempered climate that currently characterizes the debates about Greenland, what is more, it illustrates the strong impact on the shaping of public opinion in Denmark that the authors of the new Greenland novel have gained. The achievement of this position is not least due to their calculated challenging of the line between fact and fiction.

65 Cf. LIDEGAARD: 1986.

66 KJÆRGAARD: 2014.

67 »Det lugter af misundelse« (ROSDAHL: 2014, 15).

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Iceland, Greenland and the Faroe Islands have in common their history as Danish dependencies within a historically and geographically coherent region. The complex aftermaths of Denmark's sovereignty over its North Atlantic territories and their ongoing nation building processes lie at the core of this book. Today, we are witnessing region building processes beyond bilateral links to Denmark. How do the countries position themselves, individually and collectively, vis-à-vis the European metropolitan centres, a larger transcontinental North Atlantic region, the »hot« Arctic, and global histories of colonialism and decolonisation? By examining the region from cultural, literary, historical, political, anthropological and linguistic perspectives, the articles in this book shed light on Nordic colonialism and its understanding as »exceptional«, and challenge and modify established notions of postcolonialism. Iceland, Greenland and the Faroe Islands are shown to be both the (former) subjects as well as the producers of cultural hierarchisations in an entangled world.

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