EDITORS *Kirsten Thisted and Ann-Sofie N. Gremaud*

VOLUME 1

Denmark and The New North Atlantic

Narratives and Memories in a Former Empire

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Foreword

Throughout the North, the 21st century has been a time of radical change. Global warming has led to an increased focus on Arctic and Subarctic areas. As the ice melts, the white Arctic is turning blue, thus becoming a key geographic space in the climate debate and a symbol of looming environmental disaster. Other voices, however, choose to emphasize the opportunities for Arctic societies represented by environmental changes: The old image of the Arctic as a frozen, isolated, barren and desolate space is being replaced by a new vision, where the open sea enables communication, connection, utilization and new alliances.

This may well recall imperialist frontier narratives of the past. However, the conditions for seeking and pushing frontiers in the High North have changed. The old power relations between center and periphery are being destabilized; new centers are being established *in* the Arctic, and the perspective is shifting. Hence, the vantage point is increasingly positioned in the North, looking south towards Europe, rather than the other way around. Consequently, identities are being renegotiated on the basis of demands for self-determination and a new awareness of the region's geopolitical significance. In the wake of this, new alliances are being created and old relationships and interdependencies terminated or redefined.

The present book investigates how this new scenario is playing out in the area that was once part of a Danish empire, including Denmark proper, Norway, Iceland, the Faroe Islands and Greenland. This shared history forms the background of political institutions, such as the West Nordic Council. Within Denmark, Greenland and the Faroe Islands, which are still connected under the Danish Constitution in the Community of the Realm (*Rigsfællesskabet*), the area is known as *Nordatlanten*, the North Atlantic. As the idea of an Arctic region has gained momentum, a stronger collaboration has begun to emerge in various fields between partners that have not previously had a very close relationship owing to the structure of the empire, where all parts referred directly to the administrative center. In the wake of climatic and economical changes, new political visions are taking shape and new relations being formed.

The three island nations of Iceland, the Faroe Islands and Greenland have strong connections to Scandinavia. However, Greenland also has close relations to the American Arctic and its indigenous peoples, both for geographic reasons and due to the common descent of the Greenlandic, Canadian and Alaskan Inuit. Through indigenous peoples' organizations, Greenland also has connections to

the Sámi in northern Scandinavia. Both the Sámi and the Greenlandic Inuit identify themselves as indigenous peoples. The Nordic cooperation organizations also promote cooperation with the 'western neighbors', including Scotland and the Northern Isles (Shetland and Orkney). Thus, the outline of *Nordatlanten* is fluid, and it is too early to judge whether we are witnessing the becoming of a new North Atlantic Arctic region, or whether other constellations will prove more relevant in the future. In any case, the situation calls for an in-depth understanding of the histories and cultures of the North Atlantic countries, which share a common experience with the Danish Empire – albeit, as we shall see, with significant individual variations.

We have approached the field through the metaphor of an iceberg, where only a fraction of the whole is visible. Phenomena in the present, whether straightforward or puzzling, often constitute elements of a much larger story – the tip of an iceberg. One example of a complex phenomenon that requires insight into numerous elements of its prehistory is the strain of ambivalence that runs through descriptions of the relationship between the North Atlantic countries. We have tried to shed light on why shifting claims position them either as cultures that are basically alien to one another, or as one natural community with shared experiences. In this multi-disciplinary effort, we have delved under the surface to explore the reasons for this duality – the hidden ninety percent of the iceberg. This approach has determined the book's focus on the imprints the past has left on the present and the complex history underlying today's narratives. We have asked the following questions when addressing our material: What narratives do we carry with us from the past – perhaps without even realizing it? How and under what circumstances were these narratives formed? How are historical relations and narratives reinterpreted today? What new identity positions are becoming possible and why?

In the first section of the book, we take a close look at some of the recent initiatives that have highlighted regional collaboration and relations, from institutions to publications and political networks. We also consider historical cases that illuminate the inequalities and stereotypes that continue to show up in current narratives. This section also introduces the theoretical foundation of the book. In the following sections, we explore the historical background of the current relations further, as well as the renegotiation of heritage and traditions that is taking place in contemporary life and politics. We do this from the vantage points of six major themes: the history of an empire; imagined geographies; narratives of purity and authenticity; gender and racial perspectives; cultural heritage; and constitutions and natural resources. Three of the central theories that we apply in our analyses and discussions (Herzfeld 2002 on 'crypto-colonialism'; Scott 2004 on the need to redirect postcolonialism; and Schulz-Forberg 2013 on the concepts of 'zero hour' and 'uchronotopia') are used to tease out ideas about the past, the present and the future in the narratives that have been used to describe relations and identity positions within the region. Furthermore, our analysis is inspired by

affect theory, as developed within cultural studies (Ahmed 2004) and discourse psychology (Wetherell 2012). By applying this theory, we draw attention to the ambivalent emotions that still seem to thrive between partners who were previously entrenched in a system built on hierarchy and subordination. Affect theory also highlights the influence of emotional 'scripts' on nationalist discourses in the North Atlantic.

In studying a former empire, we have been inspired by post-colonial theory. However, the complexity of Scandinavian North Atlantic relations cannot be properly illuminated through concepts such as 'colonizer' and 'colonized'. In political debates, the word 'colony' appears as a signifier that can be used strategically. Whether a nation or people wishes to identify as previously colonized depends on context and has varied over time. The fact that the relationship between the center of the empire and its subordinates rested on (varying degrees of) asymmetric power relations is, however, beyond discussion. Thus, insight into these power dynamics and discourses of empire is necessary for understanding the connections between the history of the North Atlantic countries and present-day relations, as well as the visions formulated for the future. Investigating such issues, we cannot avoid addressing tender points, such as mutual stereotyping that reflects racialized discourses of the past. This is in contrast to the official rhetoric, where the 'good neighbors' metaphor prevails. It is our conviction, however, that only by addressing these darker sides of the cultural heritage can we put an end to the situation where they work "through concealment", as Sara Ahmed puts it (Ahmed 2004, p. 13). With this book we hope to contribute to locking these outdated discourses firmly in the past, where they belong.

Inspired by historian David Scott, we have tried to find alternatives to the teleological narrative of nation-building and independence which dominates recent history writing. Or to use a term derived from social theory, we have tried to avoid 'methodological nationalism' (Wimmer and Schiller 2002). Our purpose is neither to promote nor to discourage secession, or indeed take it for granted; instead we set out to study the effects of elevating the nation state to the end goal of history that determines the way in which it is possible to envision the future and interpret the past.

This book is the result of the research project 'Denmark and the new North Atlantic – Identity Positions, Natural Resources and Cultural Heritage', funded by the Carlsberg Foundation. Thirteen scholars, based in Greenland, Iceland, the Faroe Islands, Norway and Denmark, have worked closely together across the disciplines of history, literary studies, musicology, art history and anthropology. We wanted to make this a collective and interdisciplinary research project that truly lived up to its name. The structure of the book has come about through a series of working seminars, where we decided on the topics we considered important to include in a study of present trends and historical conditions in what we choose to call 'the New North Atlantic'. A coordinator – in some cases two or three coordinators – was put in charge of each section of the study, which was

then written by several authors jointly, working across professional disciplines and geographical specializations. The reader should not, therefore, expect to find a comprehensive presentation of the history of the Faroe Islands, Greenland's literary history, Iceland's art history and so forth. Such presentations are available elsewhere. Instead, we have sought to identify focal points where relations between the countries become visible, and comparison possible. The book is structured as a continuous whole, but it is also possible to skip between the individual sections or sub-chapters. To facilitate this method of reading the book, we have strived to make elaborate cross-references between sections.

We want to thank the following persons for invaluable sparring and input during the preparation of this book: Professor Emeritus Uffe Østergaard, Copenhagen Business School; Professor Kristín Loftsdóttir, University of Iceland; Professor Anna Steenport, Georgia Institute of Technology; Professor Lill-Ann Körber, Aarhus University; Curator Martin Appelt, National Museum of Denmark; Special Consultant Jens Heinrich, Greenlandic Representation in Denmark; and Associate Professor Frank Sejersen, University of Copenhagen. We also thank Assistant Professor Ebbe Voldquardsen, University of Greenland, and Associate Professor Ketil Zachariassen, both of whom have at some point been active members of the research team but were elsewhere engaged before its completion. The responsibility for the content of this book is, of course, ours alone. Finally, we are grateful to Dorte Herholdt Silver, Todd Ambelang and Mia Gaudern for their valuable assistance with language editing. The work has been published with support from the Carlsberg Foundation and the Jón Sigurðsson professorship at the University of Iceland.

On behalf of the authors
Kirsten Thisted and Ann-Sofie N. Gremaud

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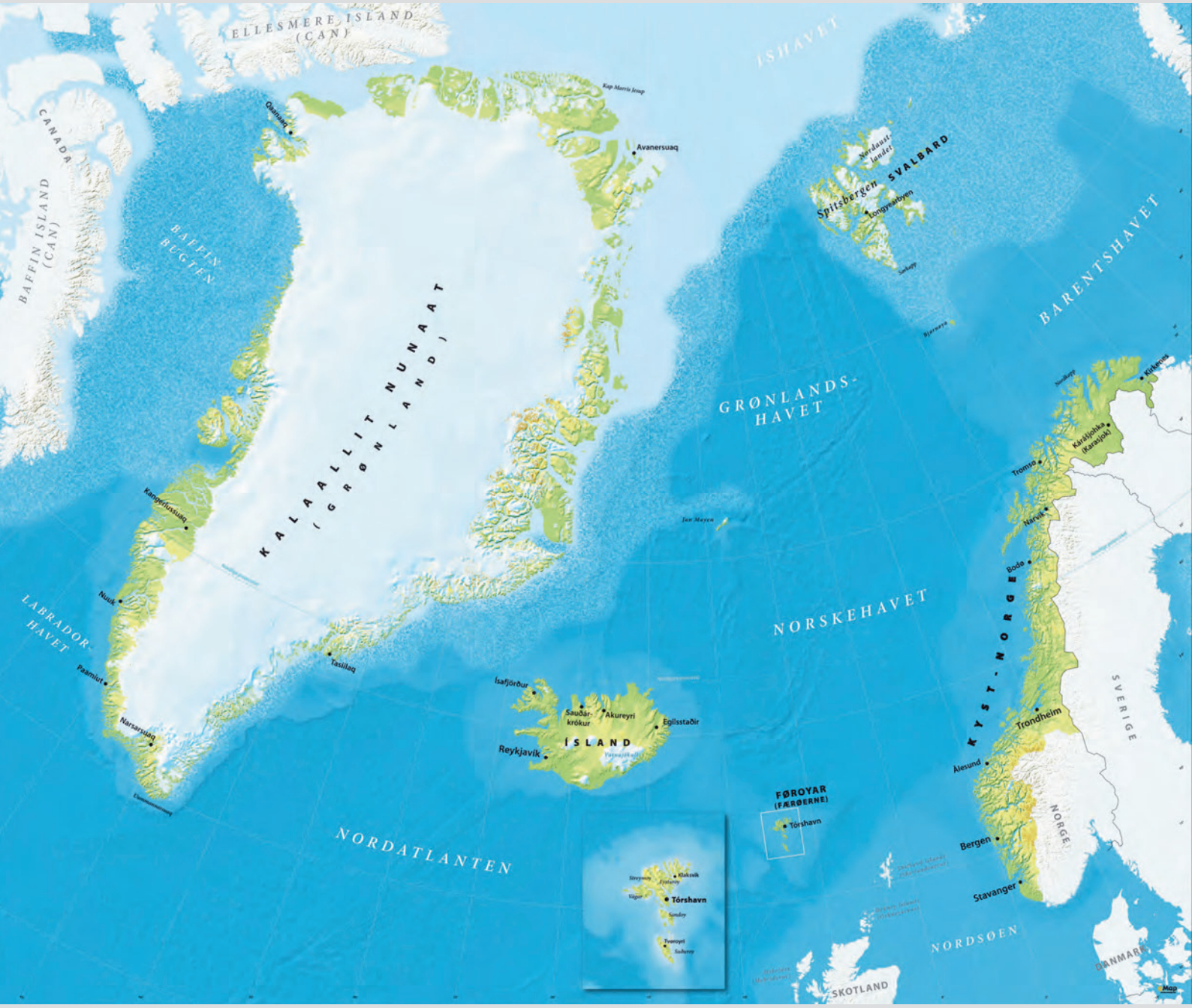
SECTION 1



The North Atlantic as depicted by NORA (Nordic Atlantic Cooperation).

Envisioning the North Atlantic: Current Narratives and Official Discourses

Kirsten Thisted and Ann-Sofie N. Gremaud

1.0 What's in a name

> Through the ages, the North Atlantic countries have not had a strong tradition for [sic] close communication, neither culturally nor politically, and there are many areas in which the countries can rediscover each other – and rebuild their cultural ties.[1]

Some years ago, these were the words that met visitors on the homepage of the North Atlantic House in Copenhagen (*Nordatlantens Brygge*): a center for Greenlandic, Icelandic and Faroese culture, furnished in an old warehouse, which once was the center of trade and transport to and from the North Atlantic countries. In addition to the cultural center, the warehouse is the seat of the Icelandic Embassy and the Greenlandic and Faroese representations. The words came as a surprise – usually when introducing oneself as a unit, commonality would be stressed, not the opposite. Furthermore, the text is strangely contradictory – how can one *rediscover* and *rebuild* something that never existed in the first place?

However, the text obviously takes the existence of the North Atlantic region as a unit for granted. Being part of the North Atlantic seems to be what defines each of the three countries, and it therefore seems reasonable to assume that they must have a lot in common. What prevents this lack of commonality is the lack of communication. One important purpose of the North Atlantic House therefore is to help facilitate communication, in order to strengthen the ties between the North Atlantic countries.[2]

A certain commonality between the countries is indicated in the fact that they all seem to be included in the term 'the North Atlantic'; no further explanation is needed. Outside the Nordic countries, or outside Scandinavia – or even outside the *western* part of Scandinavia – this term means something completely different.[3] A quick search on the internet will reveal that the term 'North Atlantic' is generally used as a designation for the entire Atlantic Ocean north of the equator.

Nordatlantens Brygge in Copenhagen, a center for Greenlandic, Icelandic and Faroese culture and the seat of the Icelandic Embassy and the Greenlandic and Faroese representations. It was inaugurated in 2003. *Photo: Johannes Jansson/norden.org.*

In Sweden and Finland, not even the helpful extension of 'Scandinavian North Atlantic' or 'Nordic North Atlantic' seems to have the specific significance discussed here.

The term 'North Atlantic' is particularly used within the Danish Realm (*Rigsfællesskabet*, that is, Denmark, Greenland and the Faroe Islands)[4] as a common denominator for Greenland and the Faroe Islands. The Faroe Islands and Greenland have home rule/self-government, but they are still part of the Danish Kingdom. Before becoming a republic in 1944 Iceland also belonged within this constellation of islands, which once were part of Norway and the Danish-Norwegian empire. At the Treaty of Kiel in 1814, which ended the hostilities of the Napoleonic Wars, Denmark agreed to cede Norway to Sweden – but kept Greenland, Iceland and the Faroe Islands. Therefore Iceland, and in some cases even Norway, are still included in the 'North Atlantic', as for instance in NAMMCO, The North Atlantic Marine Mammal Commission, and NORA, the Nordic Atlantic Cooperation. NAMMCO is an agreement between the member governments, Greenland, Iceland, the Faroe Islands and Norway.[5] NORA is an intergovernmental organization under the Nordic Council of Ministers, supporting businesses and research and development organizations in the region, which is defined as the Faroe Islands, Greenland, Iceland and Coastal Norway (the 9 coastal counties of Norway, from Finnmark in the North to Rogaland in the South).[6] NORA is also working to develop cooperation with the so-called "western neighbors", defined on its homepage as "especially Canada and Scotland".[7] Other co-operations like NATA, the North Atlantic Tourism Organization, does not include Norway. NATA defines the region as the "Three Astonishing Countries: The Faroe Islands, Iceland and Greenland".[8]

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Currently 'West Nordic' is used synonymously with 'North Atlantic' in the discourse of the countries in question. 'West Nordic' was mainly used in Norway as a common denominator for the languages spoken in Iceland, the Faroe Islands and Norway (as opposed to Danish and Swedish).[9] In politics, the term was consolidated with the establishment of The West Nordic Council (originally The West Nordic Parliamentarian Council of Cooperation) in Nuuk in 1985. The members are Iceland, Greenland and the Faroe Islands, and the council was created following political discussions of the three countries during the early 1980s, after home rule was introduced in Greenland in 1979.[10] The rationale was "to cooperate on common problems and to conduct positive and constructive cooperation regarding West Nordic, or North Atlantic, issues with the Nordic Council as well as other organisations".[11] The text oscillates between the two terms 'West Nordic' and 'North Atlantic', as does the present homepage of the council. The homepage lists the following as its main objectives:

- Promote the common interests of the West Nordics.
- Preserve the natural resources and culture of the North Atlantic in collaboration with the West Nordic governments.
- Strengthen cooperation between the West Nordic governments.
- Promote West Nordic interests within Nordic cooperation.
- Strengthen cooperation with and between other West Nordic organizations.
- Strengthen cooperation with other parliamentary organizations, including the Conference of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region and the European Parliament.[12]

These countries obviously felt that they needed a forum to focus on particular issues relevant to the North Atlantic. For Greenland and the Faroe Islands, the West Nordic Council has the advantage that in it they get to represent themselves, free of their usual subordination to Denmark.[13]

Recently, 'West Nordic' has been used in a brand new combination with 'Arctic', as when the Faroe Islands defined themselves as "an island nation in the West Nordic region of the Arctic".[14] This notion turns the perspective 180 degrees. Usually, the North Atlantic countries are seen from a southern perspective, reducing them to a periphery. By establishing the Arctic as the point from which the viewing angle is determined, and by defining themselves as Arctic, the Faroe Islands become the center. Likewise, in defining themselves as part of the Arctic, the North Atlantic countries are strategically inscribing themselves within another region, which in recent decades has gained an immense momentum. So, while the ice is moving further and further north due to global warming, the 'Arctic' as a politically defined concept is moving further and further south.

Before, the Scandinavian countries did not identify with the widespread image of the frozen, barren and inhospitable Arctic. Throughout history, a divide has been established between the white 'Polar Regions', denominating the areas

closest to the poles or frozen to a degree where sledges became the most obvious means of transportation, and the blue 'North Atlantic', which was a Scandinavian term for the body of waters that enabled traffic by ship between Norway, Denmark, the Faroe Islands, Iceland, the Shetlands and Scotland and the West Coast of Greenland. In Norway the term 'Polar' usually refers to the Svalbard archipelago, the island of Jan Mayen and the two poles – remote areas where only polar heroes and scientific researchers go.[15] Presumably, an important reason for the Faroe Islands, Iceland and Norway suddenly identifying with the term 'Arctic', is that the concept is currently undergoing a process of 'oceanization' or 'blueification', due to global warming. The Arctic that these nations identify with is not the white, but the blue Arctic, as is formulated in Norway's 2017 Arctic strategy: "Here [in the Norwegian Arctic], people are not divided by the ice, but rather joined by the ocean."[16] While the white Arctic is seen as vulnerable, the blue Arctic carries other connotations of industry, technology, utilization and innovation.[17] However, both versions of the Arctic are at play and are being negotiated within the North Atlantic countries' individual strategies and within the international efforts to create a new, strong and dynamic region.

We have decided to use the term 'North Atlantic' in this book because it recalls the countries' past as part of the Danish-Norwegian empire (*Nordatlanten* is still widely used). As the analyses within this book will demonstrate, this is a past that is in many ways still present, and of which it is helpful to be aware – especially in a time when relations in the area are being redefined. This applies not only to the relations between the former imperial center and its periphery, but more significantly to those between the North Atlantic countries in a time when they are taking part in the establishment of new geopolitical centers.

1.1 Between 'the Nordic' and 'the Arctic'

Just like a nation, a region does not simply awaken to an understanding of its identity or its destiny. A region needs to be built. Like a nation, a region must build a strong narrative to support its existence. This involves a process of selecting features that are specific to it. Certain historical events, geographical features, special products and so on are given preference in this process. A web of meaning is created, as these elements are put in relation to one another, and further embedded into a causal *emplotment*, with one incident leading neatly to the other. This creates a meaningful and coherent line of events that gives the present meaning and perspective, and, not least, offers a vision of the future. Temporality, relationality, selective appropriation and causal emplotment: these are the constitutive features of narrativity, according to Somers and Gibson.[18] Their theory of narrative as an ontological condition of social life is widely used within the social sciences. In sociology 'narrative' is used interchangeably with 'story' – as opposed to literary studies, for example, where narrative is a genre and thus an optional

mode amongst other modes. Hence, "narratives are the stories we tell ourselves and others about the world(s) in which we live, and it is our belief in these stories that guides our actions in the real world".[19]

People construct identities (personal and collective) in order to locate themselves in time and space, and, again, narratives do the work. Thus, imagined communities like the nation (according to Benedict Anderson's definition)[20] and the region are dependent on peoples' willingness to share, expand and perform the stories that tie them together. In this book, we will look at the North Atlantic as a discursive field and explore the multiplicity of stories available within and about this field. We aim to analyze which of these stories are being selected in contemporary narratives, and which are being omitted and concealed. As is evident from the quotation from the North Atlantic House's homepage above, the peoples of the North Atlantic do not yet constitute any strong narrative as a community. But, as is also evident, efforts are being made to change this.

Once, the North Atlantic islands were part of an empire. At some point that empire even included Orkney and the Shetland Islands. Today, the empires of the past may not be fully dissolved, but they are radically changed, not least due to independence processes and decentralization. This is a global trend, in social sciences named *devolution*. Everywhere empires are splintering, and provinces and cities seek autonomy in their financial and diplomatic affairs.[21] However, this mechanism is countered by another trend: *aggregation*. The smaller the political units get, the more they must fuse into larger commonwealths in order to survive.[22] Since what matters in the new global order seems to be *connectivity* – being connected – it is strategically desirable to be active on as many platforms as possible. Therefore, it is logical that the countries in the North Atlantic want to form their own region, in which they are the center, *and* also still be part of the Nordic Cooperation, *and* uphold close connections with other co-operations, like the EU, *and* keep options open for new co-operations, for instance with their western 'neighbors'.

It is also understandable why the Arctic, as a new and powerful regional construction, must seem an important new focal point, seen from a North Atlantic or West Nordic perspective. The idea of the Arctic as a region is of a fairly recent date, according to professor of political science Carina Keskitalo.[23] In the days of heroic exploration, the Arctic gained a reputation as an inhospitable wilderness, sublime but desolate, and only possible to reach with the greatest expenditure of effort.[24] From a southern perspective, the Arctic was a frontier, rich in both renewable and non-renewable resources, but not fit for human occupation.[25] After World War II the Arctic's new position as a strategic frontier did not change the perception of the area. However, during the late 1970s and early 1980s environmental and indigenous movements expanded the areas traditionally considered 'Arctic' and put an emphasis on human action. This sparked a process of region-building where in particular the Arctic Council, established in 1996, has been active, trying to turn the Arctic from an area of conflict into a region for cooperation.[26] Since, accord-

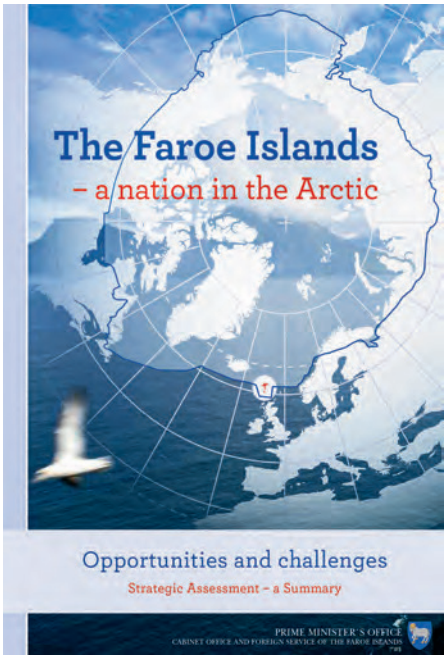
ing to Keskitalo, the Arctic does not yet exist, but is still under construction as a region, Keskitalo consistently puts the concept in inverted commas.[27]

Thus, the Arctic is now being politically, rather than geographically defined. The Arctic Council originally consisted of the so-called 'Arctic Five': the 'Arctic Rim' states with borders on the Arctic Ocean – Russia, the USA (with Alaska), Canada, Denmark (because of Greenland) and Norway. Due to the successful branding of the Nordic countries as a unity, Iceland, Sweden and Finland were later included. Environmental protection (discussions on an agreement for the protection of polar bears) was the issue that first brought about the idea of an Arctic Council, and it has remained a dominant focus.[28] However, the ICC (Inuit Circumpolar Council) has also played a central role in the Canadian engagement in the Arctic Council. Canada was the initiator of the council and has been a driving force ever since. First and foremost, the ICC has been keen on encouraging the Arctic Council to focus on the human dimension (instead of the Arctic as a wasteland), in particular the indigenous populations, and on sustainability instead of conservation. [29]

It was the Brundtland report, published 1987, which sparked the discourse on sustainability, arguing that environmental protection and development were not opposites, but interdependent terms: "Development cannot subsist on a deteriorating environmental base, the environment cannot be protected when growth leaves out of account the costs of environmental protection."[30] However, tradition (in the sense of traditional hunting, or traditional knowledge) has always been significant in the argument for an 'Arctic' arena.[31] This, of course, has to do with indigenous peoples and the general understanding of these peoples – as in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples from 2007.[32] It may also have to do with the Canadian influence in the Arctic Council and the role 'tradition' and 'elders' play within the voice of the Canadian Inuit. From early on, discussion papers formulated by Canada emphasized the vulnerability of the Arctic, not only as environment was concerned, but also regarding the social situation (loss of cultural traditions, unemployment, alcohol and drug abuse, self-destructive behavior, suicide). The Arctic soon became associated with the word *crises*.[33] Obviously, such a negative brand could create stereotyping and problems for new states, who want to be taken seriously as equal members of the world community – like for example Greenland, an active member in the ICC.[34]

Earlier definitions of the Arctic were primarily formulated by the natural sciences. However, this does not mean that it has ever been possible to find an exact definition of what the 'Arctic' means, or where its boundaries lie. The definitions seem to stem from the old desire to define the Arctic as different: barren, cold and dominated by snow and ice.[35] The most common definitions are: The *tree line* definition (the Artic is where trees cannot grow); different *temperature* definitions (one of them claiming that the mean temperature for all months of the year must be below 10 degrees, and at least one month must have a mean temperature below freezing); the *permafrost* definition (soil which is permanently frozen year-

round); and a number of different *latitude* definitions, one of them the Arctic Circle at 66°33'46.3" north, above which line the sun is not visible for at least one day at midwinter, and the sun does not totally disappear below the horizon for at least one night during midsummer. The problem is that many factors in combination determine climate. Places at the same latitude will have a different climate depending on whether they are inland or coastal, and a place where the Gulf Stream passes, like Norway or South Greenland, will have quite a different climate from some other place at the same latitude where it does not pass, such as Canada or Russia. The domestic Canadian definition places the limit of the Arctic at 60° northern latitude, mirroring the Antarctic delineation of 60° southern latitude. In Scandinavia, this would include not only Iceland and the Faroe Islands, but Norway just north of Oslo, Sweden north of Stockholm and all of Finland. Many programs therefore use the 60° for America and the Arctic Circle definition for Europe.



From the front cover of *The Faroe Islands – a Nation in the Arctic* (2013).

According to the Arctic Circle definition, the Faroe Islands do not qualify, and neither does Iceland, except Grimsey, a very small island belonging to Iceland. The strategic assessment report *The Faroe Islands – a Nation in the Arctic: Opportunities and Challenges*[36] therefore advocates the political definition:

> The Arctic can be defined in a number of different ways. In strictly scientific terms, the definition has often been limited to the area north of the Arctic Circle, or from the border line that marks the beginning of permafrost, or the area in which the average daily temperature in the summer does not exceed 10°C . In the context of international politics, however, the most commonly accepted definition of the Arctic is that characterised by political cooperation between the states and nations whose people live in the Circumpolar North, and this definition includes the Faroe Islands.[37]

The term the 'Circumpolar North' has previously been introduced in Arctic discourse as a convenient abbreviation for the Arctic and sub-Arctic,[38] and here it serves to build a bridge between the two in order to support the view that the Faroe Islands have "a key position" in the Arctic region.[39] The report further argues that the Faroe Islands share key socio-economic features with the recognized "High-Northern" territories, and it claims that "The Faroe Islands have the knowledge and experience necessary for the further development of fisheries, shipping and research, as well as the conservation and management of natural resources."[40]

Being closer to the Arctic Circle, Iceland prefers to claim its rights as an Arctic nation with reference also to the geographical arguments. As of the adoption of the Arctic resolution, *A Parliamentary Resolution on Iceland's Arctic Policy*,[41] the parliament of Iceland entrusts the government to carry out a policy:

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[s]ecuring Iceland's position as a coastal State within the Arctic region as regards influencing its development as well as international decisions on regional issues on the basis of legal, economic, ecological and geographical arguments. This will among other things be based on the fact that since the northern part of the Icelandic Exclusive Economic Zone falls within the Arctic and extends to the Greenland Sea adjoining the Arctic Ocean, Iceland has both territory and rights to sea areas north of the Arctic Circle.[42]

Still, the intent is to be inclusive and also promote:

[u]nderstanding of the fact that the Arctic region extends both to the North Pole area proper and the part of the North Atlantic Ocean which is closely connected to it. The Arctic should not be limited to a narrow geographical definition but rather be viewed as an extensive area when it comes to ecological, economic, political and security matters.[43]

However, the connotations, which stick to the white Arctic are still active, and seem to result in a certain discomfort with the term. In Norway the city of Tromsø, which is situated far above the Arctic Circle at almost 70°, is commonly referred to as the 'Gateway to the Arctic' – an expression which is also used by both Iceland and the Faroe Islands, indicating that these places are not actually part of the Arctic, but positioned on the border, where the Arctic begins. Something similar was suggested by the Icelandic budget airline WOW air in an online article, where the company tried to answer the frequently asked question: "Is Iceland in the Arctic or not?"

The locals too will talk freely about the harsh north, surviving in the Arctic and suchlike to tourists, because it sells! But really most people think of their country as being more like Scotland, central Norway and Canada than as being like Greenland, Lapland or Svalbard. There really is no comparison. Despite its high north location, Iceland benefits from the Gulf Stream, which means that while nature goes Arctic-quiet in the long winter and even the grass turns brown, the snow is not a permanent feature of city streets. The currents also mean that when the spring arrives, plants and animals can make full use of the constant daylight and gardeners and farmers are able to grow all sorts of unexpected things, like sunflowers, wheat, peas and oak trees. That doesn't sound at all Arctic, does it? (…).

On the other hand (…) thanks to our glaciers, Arctic lovers can find snow all year round. So once again, the land of contrasts, the land of fire and ice, the land where nothing is quite as it seems, lives up to expectations. Iceland is both a fertile, temperate, European country like any other…and it is also a barren, frozen Arctic wasteland…all at the same time. Awesome![44]

Upholding the dichotomy between the Arctic and Europe, as well as the hegemonic discourse about the Arctic as barren and frozen, the text tries to position

Front cover of Nordatlantens Ansigter (North Atlantic Faces), NORA 2008.

Iceland as a kind of borderland between the two – cf. the text's own argument that it sells. This is one example of a far more undecided position than that of the official statement of the Government of Iceland, defining Iceland as "a coastal State within the Arctic region".[45]

Thus, in the process of region building, old and new narratives are being tried out, and no final, unified story of the new Arctic – and the North Atlantic countries' position in relation to it – has yet found its form.

1.1.1 North Atlantic Faces

With the intention of paving the way for a sense of shared identity between the North Atlantic countries, which is considered necessary for the strengthening of a North Atlantic region, the various coordinating institutions have launched a number of initiatives: project support, networking initiatives, conferences, festivals, book prizes and so on. An initiative that is worth paying attention to is the book *Nordatlantens Ansigter* (North Atlantic Faces).[46] At the time of its publication in 2008, this was very different from the usual initiatives to describe the

North, first and foremost because it is written 'from within', by people living in the North, and for a Northern audience. We will give a detailed reading of this publication, because it is one of the only sources that tries to investigate which factors might actually constitute a shared identity. At the same time, it also clearly demonstrates a number of the conflicts and fractures that counteract the sense of a shared identity.

Right from the start the publication admits that the region NORA is trying to envision is indeed no more than a *vision* of a community: "NORA is based on a vision that Greenland, Iceland, the Faroe Islands and Coastal Norway together form a region."[47] With a point of departure in the Faroese saying *Gløgt er gestins eyga* ('observant is the guest's eye'), four North Atlantic journalists were each sent to one of the other countries in the area: Greenlandic Mariia Simonsen to Iceland, Norwegian Magne Kveseth to Greenland, Faroese Høgni Djuurhus to Coastal Norway and Icelandic Björg Eva Erlendsdóttir to the Faroe Islands. From here they write about their impressions of the country, as well as their meetings with selected key persons. It is emphasized in the preface that their intention is not to identify 'the North Atlantic region's soul' (*den nordatlantiske regions sjæl*) or 'the core of regional identity' (*kernen i den regionale identitet*). Nevertheless, they dare talk about "some common features that make up a kind of common identity".[48] The journalists were thus asked to look not only for diversity, but also for commonalities between their country and the country they were visiting, to identify "common features that can help define the countries as a region".[49] It is of course the intention that this region-building process should propagate to the readers: "Perhaps the reports also give readers some thoughts about Greenland, Iceland, the Faroe Islands and Coastal Norway as a region."[50] Ideally, the journalists' representation of their experiences would thus become part of the creation of the region.

The four chapters are structured so that – apart from in the chapter about Greenland – it is the feeling of being at home that dominates the description of the journalists' travels around the North Atlantic. First and foremost, this homely feeling is created by numerous references to the coastal culture that NORA has proclaimed to be the decisive common feature of the region. The coast is always in sight and there is a smell of sea, seaweed or tar. The journalists also mediate the taste of the ocean with all the local delicacies they enjoy on the way. By seasoning their descriptions with words and references both from within the place visited and from their own homelands, the travelers convey an experience of one, shared culture, although different countries may have different words for the same thing. Finally, immigrants with a background in completely different cultures have been granted a lot of space in the publication. This serves the purpose of depicting the North Atlantic as a modern, dynamic and multicultural region with room for all and open to the globalization of which the immigrants are the symbol. The immigrants' adaptability also makes them role models for the North Atlantic countries' native residents. Likewise, the well-integrated immigrants demonstrate

that a common identity can be built on elements other than a common history. Thus, identity is depicted as something that can be created if the project is strong enough for people to back it up. It would be obvious to conclude that this rule also applies to a common North Atlantic identity.

It is therefore not a coincidence that the book's first case from the visit to **Iceland** starts with the Palestinian-born, now Icelandic woman and mother of six, Amai Tamimi. With her story, the dominant tale of monocultural Iceland, whose inhabitants all originate from tall, blonde vikings, becomes more nuanced and contemporary. In this respect, Tamimi represents the future of Iceland, as more and more people come from the outside, both because of the need for labor and because people flee there to escape bad conditions elsewhere. The latter applies to Tamimi, who has fled from an abusive husband and a society that did not provide her with protection. Thus, although Tamimi reports discrimination as a problem in Icelandic society, Iceland appears as a land of opportunity where the individual can experience personal development and gain influence in society through participation in the democratic process. Tamimi's inclusion in Icelandic society is underscored by her fluent Icelandic – which simultaneously excludes the traveling Greenlandic journalist, because neither Danish nor 'Scandinavian' will do here. Although Icelandic is a Germanic language, it is, in principle, as exclusive as the journalist's own Greenlandic mother tongue. It is therefore increasingly necessary to make use of common foreign languages if the North Atlantic citizens are to be able to understand each other. In the interviews featured in the book, that common language is primarily Danish. In other contexts, it is English.

From Tamimi in Hafnarfjörður close to Reykjavik, we are taken to the family farm of Bjarnarhöfn on the Snæfellsnæs peninsula. Here, fermented shark meat is produced according to old family traditions, and the current generation on the farm has established a museum of the Icelandic peasant culture that has roots extending back to the famous Icelandic sagas. The visit illustrates the sense of tradition and history that Tamimi emphasizes that she respects and appreciates. And this leads us to the chapter's final Icelandic face, the author Einar Már Guðmundsson. The choice of an author as a key person is linked to Iceland's brand as the 'saga island', which today, too, produces an impressive number of internationally acclaimed writers. The interview confirms this narrative, as Guðmundsson points to the tradition of the Icelanders to travel widely to gain inspiration, which they bring back to enrich their own culture.[51] The Greenlandic journalist also talks to the Icelandic author about how a small population deals with the process of secession and the challenges of globalization – topics that are of the greatest relevance in her own society. She signals that she is a bit uneasy about asking these questions because she knows that Icelanders do not like to be considered a small nation.[52] Guðmundsson confirms this view: "we [Icelanders] somehow always end up in the past: next to the blue-eyed Vikings, court poets and kings, and that makes us a little bit arrogant, but frees us from various varieties of feelings of inferiority". [53] Contrary to the general opinion that Iceland was never colonized,

although subject to Denmark until 1918, Guðmundsson talks about Iceland as a former colony. And he thinks Iceland was lucky that it was Denmark that colonized the country:

> If Danes had not colonized us, we would have lost our language. It is that simple! In the Middle Ages nations were either colonial powers or colonized. The English colonized the Shetland Islands and took their language and culture from them. (…) It is naturally a post-rationale to 'exculpate' Denmark as a colonial power. During the fight for independence it was said that all bad came from Denmark, and for that reason the relationship between Denmark and Iceland was considered very negative. But now historians are beginning to revise history in that area. They say that we, under all circumstances, would have been colonized by one or another colonial power, so of all the bad colonial powers, Denmark was the best for us. But we were also lucky that the Danes did not want to live in Iceland; they had a good home in Denmark, and did not want to move here. But the Germans would have wanted to settle here, if they had colonized us.[54]

This description confirms a Danish discourse of Denmark as a mild and benign colonial power, compared with other far more powerful and brutal colonial regimes. Such a tale of harmonious relationships in the past is of course appropriate when attempting to secure future relations between Iceland and Denmark. Likewise, the general image of Scandinavia is maintained as consisting of democratic welfare states, based on peace and equality. Iceland is embedded in this particular community, while a status as previously colonized provides the basis for a sense of solidarity between Iceland and the rest of the North Atlantic. Thus, the interview touches upon fundamental issues connected to questions of Iceland's shifting position within the colonial and neo-colonial world order. Ethnographer Kristín Loftsdóttir has pointed to the way in which Icelandic officials have used the country's past status as subordinated to Denmark as a way of positioning contemporary Iceland as a former colony that possesses the empathy, goodwill and potential to be a role model, which makes it a constructive contributor to the UN Security Council and provider of development aid.[55] This connection between a post-colonial condition and empathy may be supported by Tamimi's statement that the Icelanders, especially the elderly who have themselves experienced difficulties in the past, are good at empathizing with others' problems.[56]

Finally, globalization is being propelled as a power that at least to a certain extent overrides national borders.[57] Innovation and talent are today a country's most important resource, and it is therefore upon small nations to create conditions where people can realize their potential. The text suggests that these conditions are present in Iceland.

A completely different note is struck in the following chapter on **Greenland**, where the almost dystopian mood that hits the journalist upon arrival in Nuuk, Greenland's capital, raises doubts about the dreams of economic recovery and independence expressed by politicians:

The eye experiences a mixture of Murmansk, which has similar dilapidated housing blocks to those in Nuuk from the 60s, which are now being demolished; of Hammerfest, because they have an airport, which can only handle small aircraft, and lies between fjord and mountain; and also of Kautokeino, a folkloric gathering place for old *kofter* [the Sami national costume] – closer to a North Cape version.[58]

Guovdageaidnu (Kautokeino in Norwegian) lies in the interior of Finnmark and is often described as Norway's Sámi capital. The city hosts a number of central Sámi institutions, for example *Samedigge*, the Sámi Parliament, *Sámi allaskuvla*, the Sámi University, and *NRK Sápmi*, the national channels for Norwegian-Sámi radio and TV. Designating this place " a folkloric gathering place for old *kofter*" demonstrates strong opposition between ethnic groups in Norwegian society, which through the comparison with Nuuk is applied to parallel groups in Greenland. The people the journalist meets in Nuuk's streets makes him think of "indigenous peoples from other inhospitable places".[59] Posters with warnings about tuberculosis, huffing, and AIDS keep catching the journalist's eye – and he reports that it is as if the whole city has planned to get drunk and go crazy this weekend. Certainly, Nuuk is not much of a big city, but according to the Norwegian journalist, it does have all the problems of one. "Inevitably I ask myself what happens to people who have been forced to move from a village to the city."[60] Thus, the chapter on Nuuk is informed by a dominant discourse on indigenous people as vulnerable to effects of change: a kind of 'lost in translation' between tradition and modernity.[61] This is an international discourse, which the journalist seems to have applied to Greenland even before landing there.

In the old days, one had plenty of time to prepare for encountering Greenland on the days-long voyage over the Atlantic. Experienced travelers to Greenland introduced the inexperienced to the new conditions, and because of that, many impressions and opinions were established before people set foot in the country. Today everything goes faster, but the principle is the same. On the flight, the journalist asks the person sitting in the seat next to him – who is obviously not a Greenlander – what ten things one thinks of when asked about Greenland. The list reads as follows: ice, cold, sealskins, Eskimos, hunting culture, cultural expression in music, literature and visual arts, big families, 'the survivors', the food culture, developmental features (modernity), colonization. [62] So unfortunately, in the case of Greenland, as usual the foreign description becomes the norm. This also applies to the title of the chapter, derived from an article in *The Times*: 'Greenland Can Become a New Superpower – The Pendulum Swings across the Arctic'.

The Greenland Ice Sheet could melt; climate researchers warn of this every day. Melting ice causes the sea to rise to dangerous levels, and Copenhagen is expected to be underwater in a hundred years. At the same time, mineral resources and oil are exposed. *The Times* writes that Greenland can become a new superpower.[63]

Crisis and adventure, creation and destruction. The story of Greenland is often heavily dramatized, and built upon opposites. In addition to this, the visit took place right before the referendum on the Act on Greenland Self-Government in 2008. However, the discussion in the Norwegian journalist's account goes well beyond the context of the referendum. Everyone is concerned about whether Greenland can free itself entirely from Denmark and form an independent state. Two of the politicians think it can: Aleqa Hammond, who at that time belonged to the Social Democratic Party, Siumut, which governed throughout the home rule period (1979–2009), and Johan Lund Olsen from the left-wing IA. However, the bishop, Sofie Petersen, believes it is too early because Greenland does not have enough educated people and is not ready or "mature" (*modent*) enough for independence.[64] The metaphor draws on an old colonial discourse, whereby the Greenlanders were treated like children who needed an understanding mother (the colonial power), under whose protection the child could grow up and learn to stand on its own two feet. The question is, of course, who has the right to decide *when* this maturity occurs.[65] As it appears from Sofie Petersen's remark, this discourse has been taken over by the Greenlanders themselves.[66]

Historically, the conception of Greenlanders as children is linked to the discourse about race and racial mixing. The idea was that the Inuit, then called 'Eskimo', race was primitive, but when mixed with the white race, it rose, and unlike the 'pure Eskimos', persons of mixed race became able to enter into modern society.[67] The interview with the bishop turns to this topic because the journalist cannot help but ask the usual question, of whether it is true that in the past Inuit women were loaned out to other men.[68] The bishop explains that it was all about countering the risk of inbreeding, which is still a problem in small towns. Petersen at the same time emphasizes that it is hardly possible to call anybody 'full-blooded' (*fuldblods*) today.[69] Petersen herself is descended from Danes – and from the Norwegian pastor Hans Egede, who brought Christianity to Greenland. For this reason, the Greenlanders of today are genetically enrolled in the Nordic family. The close relationship with the Nordic is also supported in the following interview with politician Johan Lund Olsen, who believes that Greenland must have its own constitution and form its own state, but that it must remain a member of the Nordic family "with an orderly relation to Denmark, in the same way as Iceland".[70]

However, in the journalist's understanding, the non-Nordic origins of Greenlandic culture become the explanation of all that makes Nuuk strange and inhospitable – as he compares it with all that he experiences as foreign and inhospitable (that is, Sámi) at home in Norway. The irony is clear in that throughout the entire text, the journalist responds negatively to the Danes' continued presence in Greenland, which is depicted as a form of neo-colonialism, but only in the bishop's office, where the light of the candles shines in such a cozy way on the Danish newspaper, does he experience a little bit of the feeling of familiarity, which is so characteristic of the other chapters of the book.[71]

The Sámi also play an important role in the chapter on Coastal Norway – even

if we never meet a single Sámi person. The Faroese journalist has gone to Tromsø and even further north to Vadsø in order to encounter "the world north of Oslo". While for the Faroe Islands and Greenland the distinction between North and South draws a border between countries, since South is usually equated with Denmark, Norway has the opposition between North and South embedded within the framework of the nation state itself. The chapter opens with an anecdote, in which a man describes his father-in-law from Oslo. In the father-in-law's consciousness, there is nothing north of Oslo: absolutely nothing. Finally, however, he is persuaded to come north for a visit. Faced with the most beautiful views in the entire municipality, he keeps silent for a long time. Then he mumbles: "It must be infrequent that it is so beautiful here!"[72]

Even for a Faroe Islander, nature is overwhelming so far north. This applies in particular to the polar night, which causes the journalist to shudder at the mere thought.[73] Here too, however, attachment to the sea is recognizable. "I am a sea-person. I have to live close to the sea. I will never live in the countryside", says archaeologist Ragnhild Myrstad, who spends all her free time keeping up the old handicrafts relating to wooden ships and their equipment.[74] The sea, however, attracts others, and far from everyone who lives in Northern Norway was born there. This applies to both the Norwegians themselves and immigrants from other countries. Tromsø appears as a cosmopolitan gathering place, where people are not equally happy about all new residents. The Russian fishermen and the Eastern European workers are looked upon skeptically. An exhibition about Russian fishermen aims at breaking down the prejudices. Similarly, the journalist notes that the Norwegian flag and the Sámi flag at the town hall are at equal mast. "That was forbidden the last time I was in Tromsø."[75] This signifies that there are problems – but also that they are being taken care of.

The mention of the two flags creates a transition to the interview with the Japanese migrant, Kurage Ohhashi. He is a musician and initially moved to Finland, because of the Moomin trolls.[76] He finds Norway rather similar to Japan with the long stretches of coastline, and in both countries one eats fish and whale meat.[77] In his homeland, he studied the indigenous people, whom he compares to the Sámi.[78] It was in Helsinki where he first heard about the Sámi, and so he went north from there to Inari in Finnish Sápmi,[79] and then further north to Karasjok on the Norwegian side. He is in Tromsø studying Sámi at the university. He reports that most of his friends are Sámi, but all we hear is that "they are nice if you speak Sámi with them".[80] Norwegians are more difficult to come into contact with, Ohhashi believes: "They do not speak with strangers."[81] If this is true, then the Faroese journalist is not a "stranger", as everybody likes to talk to him. The following interviews mostly focus on the energy and motivations of the interviewees, which draws a picture of Northern Norway as attracting people with will and passion: people who dream of creating something themselves. This fits well, of course, with NORA's goals to promote initiative and business in the region. The most striking thing about this chapter is that the Sámi themselves have no voice,

but are represented only through the Japanese migrant. Thus, the chapter reinforces the image of the Sámi as both voiceless and not really belonging to Coastal Norway, since their culture is (mistakenly believed to be) located only in the interior. For this reason, the Sámi can be written out of the North Atlantic region's common identity. Nevertheless their presence is felt through the words of others, and through the shared community with the Greenlanders as indigenous peoples.

Although just one Icelandic journalist is credited in the chapter on the journey to the **Faroe Islands**, the narrator is actually a 'we': "two Icelandic storytellers – two female journalists".[82] In her biography, the journalist mentions that she lives with Þóra Kristín Ásgeirsdóttir,[83] which leads the reader to imagine that she may have taken her partner with her to the Faroe Islands. The fact that the writer lives with another woman gives an extra edge to the chapter's main theme: The Faroe Islands have 2000 fewer women than men. The Faroe Islands are a male-dominated society, and while Iceland has a reputation as a front-runner on gender equality and LGBT+ rights, the Faroe Islands have for decades been notoriously known as a homophobic community in the rest of the Nordic region (see Section 5.4.2). The chapter's initial visits to the couple Páll and Laura, who run a traditional sheep farm, and the old sea dog Bjór, who now sits in a shed and sells tickets for helicopter rides, give an understanding of how the present male-dominated society has grown out of the traditional sharp gender divisions in the work sector. However, this is followed by a series of interviews with women in non-traditional professions – the director of a brewery, the nation's Minister of Business and the head of the national theatre – which documents that gender roles are changing. The women travel abroad to get an education and stay away because it offers them better opportunities – but with the country's new and more favorable conditions for women, more will probably return home.[84] Even the homophobia has allegedly been exaggerated in the foreign media: "We were hurt by the way they talked about us, we are not how we were described", said Bjørt Samuelsen, the then Minister of Business.[85] However, she acknowledges that the discussion was needed and that the struggle for gender equality in a number of areas, which is self-evident in Iceland, still needs work in the Faroe Islands.

The chapter presents the Faroe Islands as a community divided into two, concerning both religion and relations with Denmark, where half want total independence, and half want to remain in the commonwealth with Denmark. Greenland is not mentioned in this context, which underlines the fact that while Greenland and the Faroe Islands have thoroughgoing relationships with Denmark, they have had little to do with each other. The Icelandic journalists appear in favor of the former, as they report that the Faroe Islands resemble Iceland:

> After a day on the islands, we have become acclimatized and begin to feel a certain jealousy towards other foreigners who claim that they have something in common with Faroe Islanders. This is only true for Icelanders, in our opinion, and for that reason, we

believe that the Danish flag is unbefitting to the landscape, which is so much more similar to Iceland than to Denmark![86]

The Faroe Islands are the only place outside Iceland where an Icelander may be understood when speaking Icelandic.[87] In an interview with a sheep-farming couple we hear about the close contact between the two nations and the sense of community, for example when natural catastrophes in the form of large avalanches have struck.[88] Elsewhere in the text, Norway is named as "a good compromise for a Dane and a Faroe Islander".[89] This is said by the aforementioned Bjørt Samuelsen, who is married to a Dane and lived in Norway for a number of years. Her language use consists of a mixture of Faroese, Danish and Norwegian, which she describes as "North Atlantic".[90] Thus, the text refers to a common understanding between Icelandic, Faroese and Norwegian, as an alternative to Danish or English as a language of communication – which, however, excludes the Greenlanders, as illustrated in the previous chapter on the visit of a Greenlandic journalist to Iceland.

In the chapter on the Faroe Islands, then, a strong regional identity is established. At the same time, however, the contours of an internal hierarchy between the nations (re-)emerge. The Faroe Islands may not be located far away from Iceland, especially when there are direct flights available, but they are perceived to be far away temporally: "To come to the Faroe Islands is like coming home to Iceland on a solemn occasion after having been away for years. It is like visiting one's youth in an Icelandic village thirty/forty years ago."[91]

According to the chapter about the Faroe Islands, respect for tradition, history and nature is greater here than in Iceland, and the Icelanders can supposedly learn from the Faroe Islanders, but as for the things that make a modern society work, the opposite is true. A similar hierarchy appears in the other chapters, where the Greenlanders point to Iceland as a guide for Greenland regarding globalization and independence (p. 33), and to the Norwegian model with an oil fund as a possible solution for a future Greenland (p. 66). While the Greenlanders can see themselves mirrored in other North Atlantic nations, it remains more difficult the other way around. When the Faroe Islanders refer to the Danish Realm, they think of Danes, not Greenlanders.

It is clear that Denmark plays a rather important role in all the texts, even though it does not have a voice and is situated outside the frame of the hand-drawn maps that mark the beginning of each chapter. In the empire Copenhagen was the center, to which all the different parts of the empire related. Today, seen from *Nordatlanten*, Copenhagen is reduced to a location in the periphery. It still retains significance – but from outside the region itself. The tables have turned, and the countries of the North Atlantic have become the center in their own story. However, they seem to have maintained some of the discourses that legitimated the empire. In the following we will go back in history in order to investigate the

roots of the hierarchical structures that continue as a subtext beneath the official narrative of neighborly relations and equality.

1.1.2 Among "Negroes and Eskimos": The Tivoli Dispute

An emblematic case that sheds light on the complex relationship and perceived hierarchy between the countries in the 20th century can be found in the controversy surrounding the 1905 colonial exhibition at the Tivoli Gardens in Copenhagen. The debates during the preparations and the exhibition itself give a good impression of the ideological undercurrents that can still be traced in many current initiatives. The discussion in the media leading up to the exhibition reflected deeper layers of the negotiations between Denmark and the dependencies about where to draw the boundaries between the civilized world of the colonizers and the uncivilized world of the colonized. The discussion was fired by the Icelandic Students' Society's protest during the preparations for the exhibition. In the proposal, the exhibition was entitled: "Exhibition from the Monarchy's Dependencies and Colonies: Iceland, Greenland, The Faroe Islands, and the West Indies Islands" (*Udstilling fra Monarkiets Bilande og Kolonier Island, Grønland, Færøerne og de Vestindiske Øer*). The primary points of concern were the term "*colonial* exhibition" and the question of whether Icelandic products were to be shown in a Danish (imperial) setting. There were heated debates – especially between Icelanders in Denmark – and before the exhibition, the Icelandic Students' Society published the following statement in the Danish newspaper *Politiken*:

> It is known to us that on this location primarily primitive peoples of different kinds are exhibited; peoples which in one or more respects differ from normal cultural nations. This time Negros and Eskimos are to be exhibited alongside us. We regard this as being degrading to our culture and to our nationality.[92]

The debate caused a stir and resulted in a number of discussions about the hierarchical relations between the peoples of the Danish Kingdom. According to the newspaper reports from the debates,[93] the objections resulted in a change of the exhibition's name to 'Danish Colonial Exhibition and Exhibition from Iceland and The Faroe Islands'; in this way a clear distinction was made between Greenland and the West Indies on the one hand and Iceland and the Faroe Islands on the other. This demonstrates that Iceland had a voice, and a position that meant this voice was heard. Apparently, the organizers did not want to offend the Icelanders.

The Icelandic disassociation from Greenland expressed in the statement from the students' association has at least two meanings. Firstly, the Icelandic intellectuals who formed the majority in the students' association did not wish Iceland to be characterized as a colony. Secondly, race was a central question in the context of finding one's place in the hierarchy of the so-called "civilized peoples". Literary scholar Jón Yngvi Jóhannsson has claimed that the self-image expressed by the

Danish Colonial Exhibition (Greenland and Danish West Indies) and Exhibition from Iceland and the Faroe Islands. Exhibition entrance. *Photo: National Museum of Denmark.*

Icelandic statement reflected an influence from nationalism and colonialism, as well as a widespread attitude towards other countries in the period of the exhibition.[94] He concludes that it expressed a worldview where Icelanders "Sat on the bench of cultured European nations from where we [Icelanders] could look at the others".[95]

The Icelandic students' protest about the exhibition was printed in the Faroese paper *Tingakrossur* (21 December 1904), and prompted several comments. [96] One pointed out that as the Faroes were a Danish county, the Faroese part of the exhibition should be held in a context of Danish counties.[97] Several argued that if Iceland were to withdraw its engagement, the Faroese should follow their example or at least demand that the Faroese part of the exhibition be held not in Tivoli but somewhere else. Tivoli was known as a place that showcased foreign, exotic people: in 1878 a Nubian caravan, in 1902 a Chinese village, and in 1903 various peoples from South India. In *Tingakrossur* an anonymous writer warned his fellow countrymen that the prospect of the dissatisfied Icelanders withdrawing from the exhibition altogether would position the Faroese somewhere "even worse – alone on the bench with Eskimos and Negros!"[98]

However, this was in January 1905, and at this point, a compromise had been found and the crises called off. In a comment published by *Berlingske Tidend*e on 26 November 1904 (discussed in the Icelandic paper *Austri* on 9 January 1905 and

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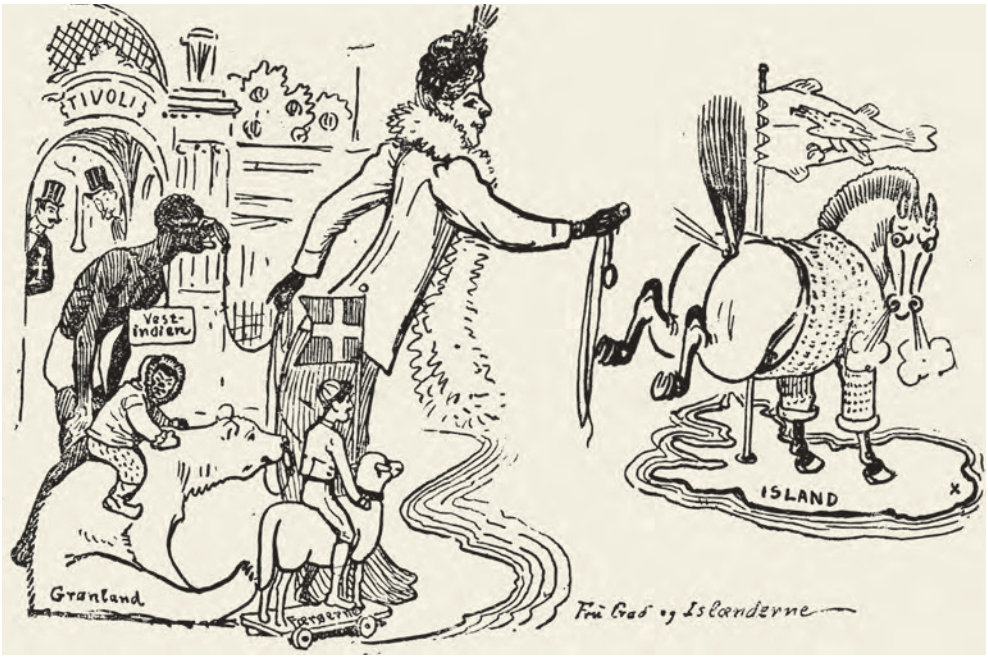

Caricature. From the newspaper *Politiken* 9 February 1905.

in the Faroese paper *Dimmalætting* on 4 March 1905), Danish historian Edvard Holm highlighted the fact that it was an unfavorable point of departure for the Danes to stir a conflict with the Faroese and Icelanders by using the misleading expression *bilande* ('dependencies'), which was not the correct term for the two countries' position within the Realm.[99] After the discussions in the press, including the professor's critique and the objections from the Icelandic Students' Society, from December 1904 the title was effectively "Danish Colonial Exhibition (Greenland and Danish West Indies) and Exhibition from Iceland and the Faroe Islands" (*Dansk Koloniudstilling (Grønland og dansk Vestindien) samt Udstilling fra Island og Færøerne*).

The criticism was not thus silenced. On 11 February the farmer and patriotic poet Jóannes Patursson, who was a member of the Danish parliament elected on the Faroes, was interviewed by the Danish newspaper *Politiken* about his view of the upcoming exhibition. His message was clear: "The majority of the Faroese population do not believe that this exhibition will provide the right conditions for showing Faroese culture and industry in a true light to the Danish general public."[100] In the paper *Tingakrossur* the controversy leading up to the exhibition was summed up with reference to a satirical drawing that had recently been published in *Politiken*. In a gleeful tone the Faroese writer described the way the drawing showed the initiator Emma Gad holding three figures symbolizing (stereotyping) the Faroes, Greenland and the West Indies on a leash:

> Mrs. Admiral Gad and her rather unsuccessful 'Colony Exhibition' have become the subject of a very funny caricature in *Politiken*. The picture shows Mrs. Admiral – the Motherland – pulling the three 'Colonies' on a leash: The Faroe Islands – a well-known compatriot on an Easter lamb with wheels, Greenland – an Eskimo on a Polar Bear, and

the Danish West Indies – a huge Negro with a ring in his nose – while in vain she tries to lure the angry Iceland – an Icelandic horse in a sailor's sweater, kicking and bucking and turning its backside to Mrs. Admiral in a most naughty way.[101]

Another sarcastic comment on Emma Gad and her exhibition was expressed in the Christmas poem published in the Icelandic journal *Nýja Ísland* (New Iceland) on 1 December 1904:

One foolish crone is Emma Gad,
that is becoming clear,
she places us amongst the *Skrælings*,
but we are ashamed of the poor and humble.
None the less, we will be so pleased
if the fine lady shows up with her children,
and Drackmann will recite a new poem,
it will be so jolly in the Tivoli.
At Christmas, at Christmas,
The Danes will burrow themselves into Greenland's ice.
At Christmas, at Christmas,
In the Greenlandic paradise. [102]

This last verse of the (longer) poem expresses resentment about the Icelanders' association with the Inuit (*Skrælingjar* is an old Icelandic term for 'Eskimos'), but is also a mockery of the Danish preoccupation with Greenland.

The exhibition was an enterprise of the Danish Arts and Crafts Association, Dansk Kunstflidsforening, under the protection of the Crown Princess Louise of Denmark. The aim was to "promote the interest of the large population at home [in Denmark] with the lands annexed by Denmark".[103] The use made of the exhibition's profits is interesting, as it is reminiscent of British education in colonized India: "Any surplus will be used for the benefit of the Danish Arts and Crafts Association's national schools, with particular reference to an annual four-months free course for young *girls from Iceland and the Faroe Islands, Southern Jutland* and the West Indies" (emphasis in the original).[104] In this way the Danish Arts and Crafts Association contributed to the general Danish endeavor to mould the population on the Faroe Islands, Iceland and West Indian Islands in a way similar to the British efforts in India following Macaulay's 1835 strategy to form "a class of persons, Indian in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals and in intellect".[105] Through education, the Icelandic, Faroese and West Indian women should acquire Danish tastes, opinions and so on. However, it is also interesting that young women from Southern Jutland and the West Indies are treated on equal terms as members of the empire, with no regard to race. Likewise, it is remarkable that Greenlandic women are not even mentioned in this context.[106]

There was obviously great confusion about the actual status of Iceland and the Faroe Islands in relation to Denmark. In all the material subsequently produced around the exhibition, Iceland and the Faroe Islands are consistently categorized as 'dependencies' (*bilande*) instead of 'colonies' (*kolonier*), neglecting the fact that both Danish experts and Icelandic and Faroese citizens had equally rejected the term 'dependencies', which they interpreted as more or less synonymous with 'colony'. Greenland is alternately categorized as dependency and colony, while the Danish West Indies are consistently termed a colony. While a 'colony' is a territory under the immediate political control of the state, which has claimed the territory as part of its domain, the Danish state defined its *bilande* as inseparable parts of the monarchy, but with certain provincial rights – as opposed to the Icelanders' own interpretation. The Icelanders claimed to be "a free-associated land".[107] The Faroese on their part claimed to be a part of Denmark.[108]

1.1.3 The Tivoli 1905 Exhibition

The exhibition itself is very well documented through contemporaneous reportage in newspapers and magazines. First and foremost, a fully illustrated guide provides insight into the intentions and thoughts that lay behind the curating.[109] Here, the hierarchy of the Danish Kingdom and its overseas territories is defined and visualized already on the front cover, which is embellished with an arrangement of five emblems representing the different parts of the Danish Kingdom. At the very top the royal crown hovers, forming the center of a royal blue ornament of leaves, which extends from the crown so that it both crowns and encircles the five coats of arms. Right under the royal crown, the emblems representing Denmark and Iceland are juxtaposed, which supports the discourse of equality expressed in the declaration of the Icelandic Students. Along with the Faroese emblem, which is smaller and placed beneath the two others, they form a trinity. Denmark is represented by the coat of arms with three lions surrounded by hearts; Iceland is represented by the new falcon emblem, which had recently replaced the less impressive headless stockfish (c. 1560–1903); and the Faroe Islands is represented by a ram. Under this trinity, we find first an emblem of a naval vessel above a crown and then letters 'St.' and a cross, referring to St. Croix. At the very bottom of the hierarchy is the standing polar bear, representing Greenland.

On the first page of the catalog the political context of the exhibition is briefly outlined as a time of upheaval. The changes are framed as positive: the reader should rest assured that even though the countries' relations are being renegotiated, the process will mean a strengthening of the bonds rather than a weakening – or even a disruption. According to the text this strengthening is based on the blossoming love of the Danish people towards their overseas possessions. The catalog outlines four events that have contributed to this reaction. In the case of the West Indies, there are the political discussions of a potential sale of the islands (in 1902), where the effort to avoid the sale "has spawned a renewed interest in,

Illustrated guide with 45 images from the Tivoli Exhibition. Front cover.

dare we say love for our old possessions".[110] A similar interest is said to have arisen in regard to Greenland. The catalog talks about a veritable "Era of Reforms" (*Reformæra*), initiated by the Danish Government, at the same time as The Danish Literary Greenland Expedition (1902–1904) [111] has put the "Greenlandic Issue" (*det grønlandske Spørgsmaal*) on the political agenda. "The issue" concerned miserable living conditions in Greenland that critics felt were due to bureaucratic Danish rule. The catalog does not go into detail on this sensitive matter.[112]

In the case of Iceland, the catalog text highlights how the fact that the Icelanders had been granted their own constitution under the Danish crown (in 1874) resulted in an increased interest in the country amongst Danes and strengthened the bonds between the two countries:

> It was *the new Icelandic Constitution* that suddenly moved us closer to the old Saga Island and the proud Icelandic people. There was a strong link between Denmark and Iceland on the day when the then Minister of Iceland *Alberti* with the king's sanction gave the Icelanders the choice between two constitutional proposals, both meeting the wishes of the Icelandic people for a freer and more independent position in relation to Denmark. [emphasis in the original][113]

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Finally, the catalog text outlines how the aforementioned Faroese member of parliament Jóannes Patursson had managed "to arouse a sympathy and interest for the Faroe Islands, which they have had to do without for too long".[114] It concludes that there is now "a fertile soil for any endeavor, which has the purpose of strengthening the ties ever more firmly between Denmark and its colonies and northern dependencies".[115] The text frames the exhibition as such an endeavor. In the text – as well as in the general preparation for the exhibition – the Icelandic protests were accommodated in such a way that the Icelanders were highlighted as having a special status as an independent people with the right to make their own decisions – within the boundaries of the Danish Kingdom. Nowhere in the text is there any reflection on whether the other peoples of the colonies and dependencies might take offense at the fact that only the Danish government and the Danish people is granted agency. Nowhere are there reflections on whether the love is mutual. The text is aimed solely at a Danish readership, with phrases such as "our colonies" and "our dependencies". This Danish *we* is synonymous with the *we* used to describe the visitors to the exhibitions. In this way, a clear distinction is made between the peoples of the Kingdom: The Danes are the spectators being prepared to gaze at the other members of the Realm and inspect their products.

Thus prepared, the readers are now taken on a guided tour of the exhibition by the text, which leads them from room to room, right from the entrance until they can finally refresh themselves with an ice cream soda and rest their feet on the Caribbean veranda. The point of departure was the entrance to the main hall where one found a small Danish cottage that, according to the catalog, "in a way symbolizes the connection between the Motherland and the Danish Atlantic islands".[116] On the other side of the entrance was the Icelandic wooden house that accommodated the main part of the Icelandic exhibition, which in this symbolic way had thus been separated from the rest of the exhibition. The placement of the wooden house next to the cottage reflects and repeats the equation of Denmark and Iceland on the front cover, where the coats of arms are juxtaposed. The position of the two houses also points to how Icelandic culture was often equated to the traditional folk culture of the Danish peasantry, which at that time was an important focal point in the conception of the Danish nation and its roots.[117] In a report from the exhibition in a Danish paper the journalist points to the influence that the Icelanders had on the design of the exhibition:

> One of the Icelanders' complaints was that Denmark itself was not represented in the exhibition, and in order to accommodate it, a copy of a small farmhouse from Zealand was built with a stork's nest on the roof, and inside it, a woman from Hedebo can be seen doing embroidery work.[118]

The coats of arms that are shown on the cover of the catalog were also included in the exhibition. The Icelandic coat of arms adorned the wooden house, while

The Greenlandic hall. *Photo from the illustrated guide.*

the Greenlandic counterpart was equipped with a rather curious installation with a stuffed polar bear fetus under a replica of the Danish crown. Inside the main hall, the visitor was immediately confronted with the Danish coat of arms as a reminder of the purpose of the exhibition: to showcase the goods, raw materials and crafts from the Danish territories. In the West Indian section, the strong focus on colonial trade was highlighted, with a backcloth showing a Danish colony in Tranquebar. A frieze showed Danish naval ships and thus created associations with Denmark's status as maritime, colonial and trading power. The discourse of an economy based on enslavement is echoed within the text, as the section is linked to another showing maps, coins and images of Danish uniforms and forts from other colonies. Likewise, the guide to the exhibition describes how the non-Danish population of the colonies is represented through "a series of amusing negro dolls" and local handicrafts from "very primitive products" to "the more evolved".[119] The text is also careful to mention a Danish foundation for orphans, and highlights "the energy with which the Company [*Plantageselskabet Dansk Vestindien*] has approached the plantation matter".[120]

At the center of the exhibition was a large collection of traditional Greenlandic hunting artifacts: kayaks, a fishing boat, a sledge with five stuffed dogs, hunting and fishing tools, a skin tent and so on. The description in the exhibition catalog is dominated by a discourse that presents the Greenlanders as "noble savages", having reached the peak of their culture before contact was made with the so-called "civilized world" – after which point the culture has declined. Only the products of the East Greenlanders, who had only been in direct contact with the Europeans for two decades, are described as artistic handicrafts. The text distinguishes between the artifacts that are perceived as products of "pure" Inuit culture and those that are seen as hybrid products. In the case of the latter, the text refers to the alleged Greenlandic desire for mimicry (*efterabelseslyst* in Danish) since their meeting with Danish culture, and these products are assigned no cultural

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or aesthetic value.[121] Modern Greenland is represented through the Greenlandic periodical *Atuagagdliutit*.[122] The text states that the first numbers were the most interesting as they included illustrations by Aron from Kangeq (1822-1869). His wood cuttings demonstrated "the peculiar perception and curious way of representing the seen".[123] The text also points out that today's techniques are updated and that Lars Møller, the son of the newspaper editor, owns a photographic studio in Godthaab (Nuuk). This is all mentioned *en passant*, however, as if it held no real interest. Furthermore, a number of export goods are shown: skin, blubber and cryolite. It is worth noticing that at this early point in the 20th century minerals are already highlighted as something that will determine Greenland's future.[124] In the case of this development it is taken for granted that the Danish authorities and scientists will have the agency – not the Greenlanders themselves.

The description of the Faroe Islands highlights the fact that the islands are small: "Even if the Faroese exhibition is in the nature of things not very extensive, it is a full proof that an able-bodied, frugal, intelligent and hardworking people inhabits the small rocky islands up there north of Scotland."[125] The way the exhibition is curated invites a focus partly on the processing of resources and partly on folklore and cultural heritage. In the case of the Faroe Islands this means a focus on tools and utensils for sheep farming and fishing. The maps and prospectuses of the General Staff are also shown. The text also describes the reproductions of Faroese "smoke houses" (*røghuse*) or turf houses, and the modern "glass houses", meaning houses with glass windows. It states that such modern houses are enjoying increased popularity, but still concludes with an account of the quaint smoke house as the place where generations of Faroese gather to share legends and ballads. A connection is made to the bourgeois culture of the middle class with an account of the construction of a Tórshavn living room complete with mahogany furniture, as well as pictures with reference to Danish newspaper satire, silhouettes and a captain's diploma on the wall.

The Icelandic section was divided between the main hall (Icelandic industry and older handicrafts) and the aforementioned wooden house, which accommodated a private collection of Icelandic handicrafts. The products were to a large extent very similar to those shown from the other North Atlantic Isles: mainly skins and handicrafts. At the same time, the way the section is described signals modernity: The description of skin and textile products places Icelandic industry somewhere between small-scale handicraft and mass production, the latter exemplified by a new tobacco factory in Akureyri.[126] The Icelanders are said to have attained a high cultural "level" (*standpunkt*)[127] – a statement that is further supported by the exhibited copies of Snorri Sturluson's writings, as well as other famous literary works. The exhibited book collection also contains newer European classics, as well as newspapers and other print items that consolidate the idea of a high literary culture in past and contemporary Iceland. However, the power relation is still signalled when Iceland is described as one of "our Atlantic isles" (*vore Atlanterhavsøer*).[128]

The West Indian porch where guests could rest after strolling around the exhibit. *Photo from the illustrated guide.*

At the end of the exhibition there was a restaurant, a raffle and stalls where visitors could buy products from the Atlantic islands. Here, the relationship's primary content and the ideological framework for the exhibition were re-confirmed, as goods and products from the Danish colonies and dependencies were promoted. The exhibition catalog encourages the exhausted visitor to mimic the Danish presence in the colony by letting the "Negress" (*negerinde*) bring him or her a drink on the West Indian terrace.[129] This emphasizes the positioning of the visitor as a subject that may enter into the role of imperialist in the West Indian scenography.

While in the representation of Iceland and the Faroe Islands, emphasis is placed on the old Norse cultural community, the West Indies and Greenland are portrayed as foreign and exotic places and cultures.[130] The lack of recognition that characterized the depiction of Greenland in the recent publication *North Atlantic Faces* has a long history. At the same time, the representation has its roots in fact: Greenlandic culture *de facto* has different origins from the Scandinavian cultures. Likewise, the different power relations are demonstrated by the fact that the Icelanders were represented by the presence of a diaspora in the metropole (Copenhagen) who expressed a clear opinion about the way in which they were represented. This was far from being the case for Greenland. Neither in Denmark nor in Greenland did Greenlanders comment on the exhibition. If anyone in Greenland was aware of the discussion raised by the Icelanders, and if they had an opinion, it seems that they chose to keep it to themselves.

1.2 Crypto-Colonialism

1.2.1 The Dynamics of Crypto-colonialism

There are several elements in the 1905 Tivoli exhibition and the discussions about it that offer insight into key aspects of Iceland's general status and position within the Kingdom at the time – aspects that resonate in contemporary Icelandic cul-

ture and international relations. Around the time of the preparation for the Tivoli exhibition an essay was printed in the paper *Norðurland*, in which the sheriff and town clerk of Akureyri Klemens Jónsson weighed in on one of the primary debates of the century: Iceland's relation to the world's perceived civilized and uncivilized countries, and thus its relation to neighboring countries. Jónsson lines up what it means for the Icelandic people of his time that they have the "splendid Sagas and excellent ancient literature – the finest books that were written in the world in the 12th and 13th centuries".[131] Firstly – he states – it means that the Icelanders are a nation; and secondly it means that they are "decent people, and not *skrælingjar*".[132] As previously described, at the time the word *skrælingi* referred either to a barbarian (in general) or specifically to the Inuit.

Even though Iceland's ancient literary heritage was – and still is – a key reference point in the nation-building process, in the 20th century contemporary culture was also highlighted. In 1937, the Reykjavik men's choir went on a tour of the Danish Kingdom and central Europe. In his conscientious documentation of their travels in the journal *Eimreiðin*, Guðbrandur Jónsson (1938) firstly reports how the visit to Copenhagen went very well, how Danish radio had shown great interest in the choir and how the singers had met their fellow Icelanders at the Icelandic Association (Íslendingafélagið). In Berlin the ambassador for Iceland and Denmark came to greet the choir,[133] as did the chairman of the Danish national radio, as the choir was to return home via Copenhagen. On that occasion, Jónsson writes, a large number of Icelanders and Danes were gathered to see the ship off and as the choir saluted the Danish audience with a fourfold hurrah the Danish chairman let the crowd shout a loud hurrah for Iceland. This was repeated at the visit to Tórshavn, where the representatives saluted each other in turn with loud mutual hurrahs for the two countries.[134] Jónsson concludes his report from the tour by addressing the contemporary reader about the purpose and effect of such a venture, in a recognizable manner: "It shows that we are not *skrælingjar*, but a cultured nation, which is at the forefront of the artistic field."[135] This is yet another example of the acceptance and cultivation of the Icelandic connections with Denmark and the Faroe Islands, whereas a sharp line was continuously drawn between Iceland and Greenland.

The close but unbalanced relationship with Denmark has not led to a rooted tradition of post-colonial studies in Iceland, but in recent decades an increasing number of scholars, journalists and artists have begun to point to the relevance of the post-colonial perspective in an Icelandic context, and the interest is increasing. While post-colonial issues do come to mind when one engages with Icelandic literature, art, political patterns and even economic history, there are obvious reasons why the established post-colonial theories do not easily fit the historic relationship between Denmark and Iceland. It is not a classic case. There has been no basis for racial discrimination, and Icelandic cultural heritage gained a high standing in Denmark and the rest of Europe with the waves of national romanticism, serving as a sort of 'reservoir' of shared heritage in 19th- and

20th-century national romantic discourse, as reflected in the Tivoli 1905 exhibition. The Icelandic sagas were included in the imperial canon as early and primary examples of Scandinavian literature. Likewise, the *Alþing* ('parliament') at Þingvellir (literally 'Parliament Field') gave Iceland status as 'the cradle' of Scandinavian democracies. Thus, the relationship between Iceland and Denmark has generally been characterized by both inequality and mutual identification. The anthropologist Michael Herzfeld's warning against a too simplistic notion of the concept 'colonialism' comes to mind: "The world is no longer made up of colonizers and colonized alone, nor was it ever so simply split."[136] While the relationship between Iceland and Denmark in particular may not have been one of classical colonialization, the many centuries under Danish rule have had consequences for the development of Icelandic society and for the developments of perceptions of national identity in both nations.

In order to describe such local complexity and the internal paradoxes of European models of dominance, Herzfeld has introduced the concept 'crypto-colonialism', *crypto* meaning 'hidden' or 'secret': an unspoken and ambiguous status of coloniality, so to speak. Briefly put, a crypto-colony is a country that has not had the status of an official colony, but has (among other characteristics) what Herzfeld calls a "symbolic as well as material dependence on intrusive colonial power".[137] Most crypto-colonies have political statuses that have spurred the use of an unambiguous nationalist rhetoric. Herzfeld's optics highlights spatio-temporal axes that result in a placement of the crypto-colonies in the role of peripheral buffer zones or geographic outposts on the border of the "others" and associated with a distant past, while the dominant countries were associated with civilizational progress and a geographical center. Crypto-colonial historical narratives highlight Eurocentric conceptualizations of the past as a means of gaining recognition through identification – such as emphasis on Ancient Greece, or the Icelandic saga tradition and thousand-year-old parliamentary practice – rather than through emphasis on features of contemporary society. It is significant in this context that in previous centuries Iceland was positioned as a "Hellas of the North".[138]

Herzfeld uses Greece as an example of the inherent insecurity of a position as a buffer zone on Europe's border, but the relevance of the Icelandic example is obvious: "Greece is certainly not the only country in which elites cultivated among the citizenry a deep fear of becoming too closely identified with some vague category of barbarians."[139] In a crypto-colonial optics Iceland has pendulated, as is clear in the Tivoli exhibition, between center (as a reservoir of cultural heritage) and periphery in constructions of Danish cultural history and self-perception.[140] Iceland's position as the buffer zone between these perceived geographical and cultural spheres (concretely "too close" to Greenland) is at the core of the "Tivoli dispute".

The power system that creates a structure where some countries get a crypto-colonial status is based on three simultaneous conceptions of temporality:

Firstly, a general paradigm of progress instituting a hierarchy between past and present, where the present is given prevalence; secondly, notions of "frozen societies" where the past has taken residence in the present; and thirdly, the imagination of the crypto-colony as a society where, conversely, the past has prevalence over the present – a "glorious past". According to Herzfeld, this can actually stand in the way of achieving a central and powerful position in the global community: "As such, their [ancient civilizations] 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.'"[141] Herzfeld points out that Greece as a crypto-colony is a source of cultural wealth, as well as a political and economic outsider in today's international society.[142] Similar things could be said about Iceland, especially after the economic and political breakdown of 2008.

Thus, the key elements in an investigation of crypto-colonial aspects of Icelandic cultural history are conceptualizations of time and space.[143] Inherent in the concept of time are understandings of the past and ideas about the future. Many post-colonial scholars have pointed to the rigidity of modern Western ideas of classifying societies as either "ahead" or "lagging behind".[144] The classification of societies in successive stages of development reduces the simultaneous coexistence of different cultures to teleology, and thus establishes the hierarchy so central to imperialism (implicitly racism) and colonialism. The national self-image promoted by the Icelandic students in the Tivoli dispute reflects how this Eurocentric mindset has become internalized, and turned into a fear of ending up on the wrong side of the divide between civilized and non-civilized. Thus, the crypto-colonial approach exposes what is referred to as western culture as an entity characterized by inner mechanisms of exclusion and hierarchies.

From a European perspective, Iceland has been a cultural and ethnic outpost on the border of the Arctic area and the Danish colonies in Greenland. This position as a perceived buffer zone in the European periphery has had shifting connotations, and has influenced internal and external ideas about Iceland, as well as the internal relations within the region. This fact also points to the importance of a pluralization of the concept of *the western cultural sphere*. Inspired by J. N. Pieterse's point about a complex and plural West,[145] it must be emphasized that some countries, at the same time as being fully included in the category of *the West* as well as being placed in Europe, have crypto-colonial positions – like Iceland. Through history, Iceland has been associated with naturalness in different ways. This naturalness has an implicit duality since it has referred to nature as both something primitive (in opposition to culture) and as something authentic and valuable. In recent decades there has been a new constructive approach to associations with what was earlier characterized as 'uncivilized' in fields such as the experience economy, and thus a market deployment of the ambivalent status of the buffer zone, which will be investigated further in Section 4.

1.2.2 *Nordatlantens Brygge:* Building a 'Home' for the Region

As mentioned in the introduction, the motto of the North Atlantic House in Copenhagen, *Nordatlantens Brygge*, used to be a self-contradictory statement about three countries that have not had a strong connection, but at the same time have grounds for rebuilding their ties.[146] Viewed in the light of Iceland's ambivalent attitude towards Greenland and the sphere of nature and primitivism that Greenland often comes to represent, the slightly cryptic statement from the earlier version of the *Nordatlantens Brygge* website makes more sense. Not only were the overseas possessions, or 'dependencies', divided by never being allowed to refer to one another, since each of the overseas possessions always referred directly to Copenhagen. The embrace of imperial ideologies and hierarchies was also an important contributing factor to the division. Crypto-colonialism can be seen as a defensive strategy, as exemplified in the statement: "We have never been colonized!", which is often heard from members of the societies Herzfeld characterizes as crypto-colonial. In view of this, it is no wonder that Iceland was somewhat skeptical of the idea of moving in with the two former possessions, which remain part of the Danish Kingdom. Only later has it come to seem relevant to all parties to examine what they might have in common by virtue of their shared past as subjects to the empire, and a present where geography creates comparable conditions in a wide range of areas, not least in terms of problems of long distances and harsh climates. This promotes visions of a future where unity would strengthen both the group and the individual members. Perhaps to some extent by chance, the *Nordatlantens Brygge* in Copenhagen has come to play an important role in visualizing a shared bond that otherwise has a very vague presence.

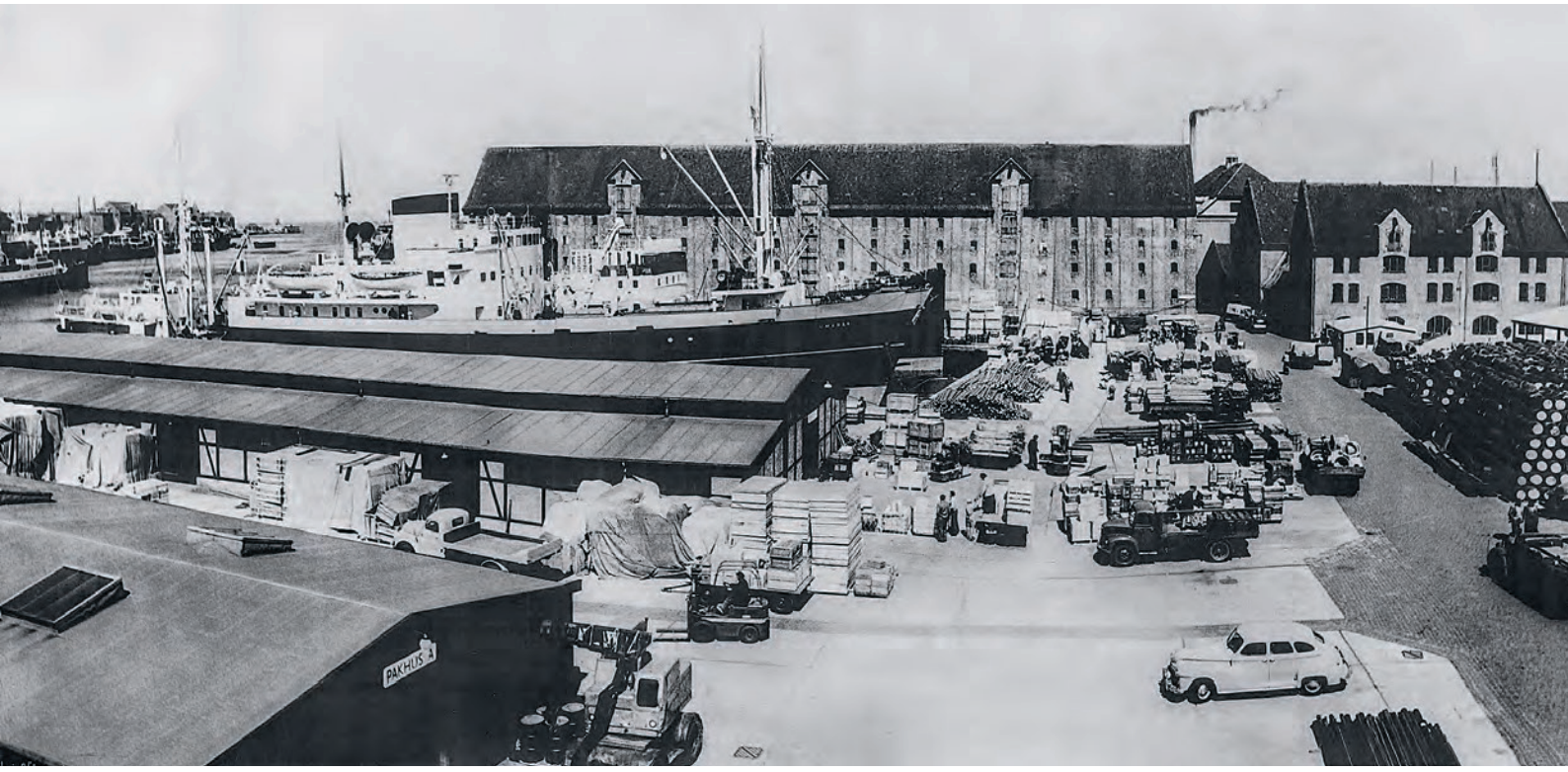
Creating a physical space capable of visualizing and representing what is shared is crucial for cities, nations, regions and international organizations. *Nordatlantens Brygge* in Copenhagen today plays an important region-branding role by providing a 'home' for an imagined community consisting of Greenland, Iceland and the Faroe Islands. The center has managed to brand the North Atlantic region as the epitome of the 'New Nordic' wave in food, architecture and lifestyle. In a sense, the establishment of the house means that the ring is closed, and old wounds healed: The Icelanders, who once refused to be exhibited alongside Greenlanders in a context of hierarchy and colonial subordination, currently live side by side with the Faroe Islanders and Greenlanders, but in a new, completely redefined context, with equality and partnership as the keystones. However, the road to this state of affairs has not been without obstacles. Seen from a North Atlantic perspective, it is important to note that Iceland, the Faroe Islands, and Greenland have established a form of unity, although Iceland is no longer a part of the Danish Realm. On the other hand, Norway is not included in this shared living arrangement, which naturally weakens the position of the house as a common home for the North Atlantic – if Norway, or at least coastal Norway, is to be included in this concept.

There are a host of anecdotes about the creation of the *Nordatlantens Brygge*. According to one such story, which is often told in the Danish-Greenlandic community in Copenhagen, Iceland was strongly opposed to the project. Iceland was happy to move its embassy in Copenhagen to new and larger premises – but not to cohabit with the Faroe Islands and Greenland, which are not real states. That smacked of colonialism. Nevertheless, a representative of the Greenlandic Home Rule administration succeeded in luring the Icelandic Foreign Minister to at least take a look at the site. They drove down Strandgade – and the moment the large, beautiful warehouse appeared, the Minister allegedly changed his mind. "That is where we should have our embassy!" he said, pointing to the southern end of the building, the part that first appears as one approaches.[147] With the Icelandic flag waving outside, it would be an extremely grand location; the Minister saw this immediately.

Like all urban myths, the story exists in many variations, none of which necessarily have any basis in reality. However, the fact that the stories consistently express Icelandic reservations about bringing the three nations' representations together in itself tells an interesting story that has roots in the dynamics of the Tivoli dispute. Once again, one could witness Icelandic reservation about being too closely associated with Greenland – and in this case also the Faroes. However, according to one of the stories told in Iceland, Iceland wanted nothing to do with the building for another reason. It had long ago been nicknamed the Maggot House – referring to the infested flour that Icelanders had allegedly received from Copenhagen. The objection here seems directed at Denmark and the imperial system, rather than against Greenland and the Faroe Islands.

The Icelandic press covered the establishment of the *Nordatlantens Brygge* from the initial idea phase, and in some of the articles there are clear reservations. In an article about the 2003 groundbreaking for the building, however, politicians Davíð Oddsson (Iceland) and Høgni Hoydal (Faroe Islands) both stated that coming together in a building located in Denmark, the old colonial power, is no longer problematic; instead it is as testimony to the strength of the North Atlantic nations.[148] Davíð Oddsson, who at the time was Prime Minister of Iceland, stated that it took some persuasion to convince the Icelandic government to place their embassy in a warehouse.[149] The Prime Minister also found it necessary to assure readers that the address was a respectable one, the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs being one of its closest neighbors. He emphasized that Danish investors had footed much of the bill for renovating the building.

In 1999, Permanent Secretary Marjun Hanusardóttir, who also became a member of the board for *Nordatlantens Brygge*, described the Faroese engagement in the building as a way to preserve an important part of a common history, while also contributing to a common present and future[150] – wording that also matches the current official agenda. Hanusardóttir added that the building might also act as a counterweight to the European Union, which is pulling each of the North Atlantic nations south. In a report in the Greenlandic newspaper *Atuagagdliutit/*

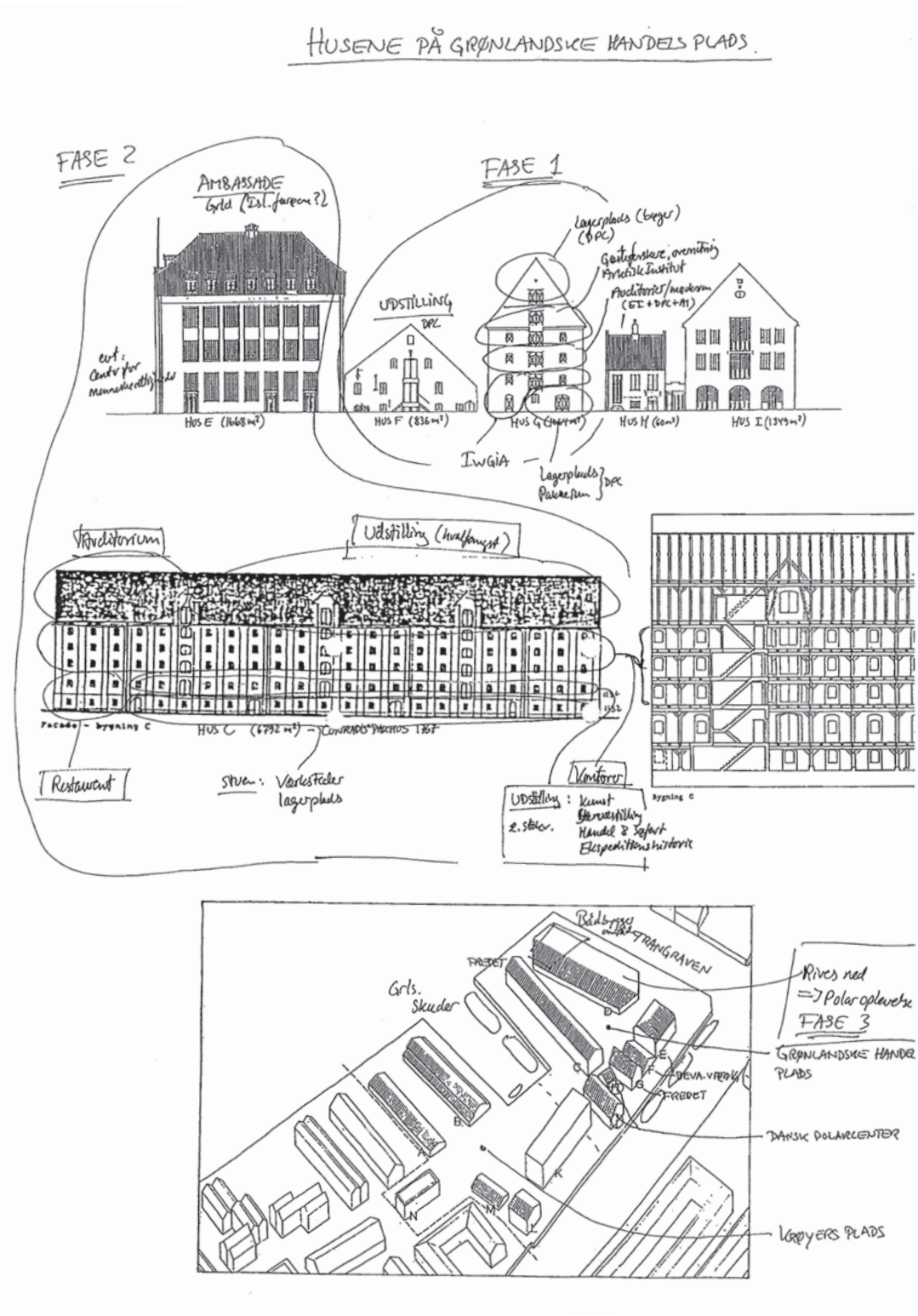


Grønlandske Handels Plads (Greenlandic Trade Square), 1955.

Grønlandsposten that same year, the initiative was described in positive terms as the creation of "a North Atlantic powerhouse" (*et nordatlantisk kraftcenter*) in Copenhagen.[151] The article described how, despite the lack of funding, all three countries supported the project. That may not have been strictly true. If the Icelanders were originally the most skeptical, however, it was nevertheless also an Icelander who ensured the plan's success.

1.2.3 From Warehouse to North Atlantic House

It all began with the Greenlandic Home Rule administration's long-standing wish to have a more distinctive administrative center in Copenhagen. The administration had their eye on the approximately 7,000-square-meter listed warehouse on *Grønlandske Handels Plad*s (The Greenlandic Trade Square), built in 1763 by architect and mason J. C. Conradi. The correspondence about this project dates all the way back to the late 1980s.[152] The buildings were abandoned by the Greenlandic trade, which had relocated to Nuuk/Frederikshavn/Aalborg after the introduction of home rule, and the entire area now belonged to the customs department. It was clear, however, that part of the building would have to be rented out.[153] The customs department was aware of the specific nature of the area and supported initiatives to preserve a North Atlantic cultural environment. In 1992, the old cooper's workshop was restored in an adjacent building. Three different institutions – the Danish Polar Center,[154] the Department of Greenlandic and Arctic Studies (University of Copenhagen), and the Danish Arctic Institute[155] – moved in. From his office, the director of the Danish Polar Center, Morten Meld-



In the original proposal, the idea was that Conradi's warehouse should be part of an experience and culture center, while embassies and representations should be placed in other buildings in the area. As shown in the drawing, a restaurant with North Atlantic food was included in planning from the beginning (the famous restaurant NOMA was located here 2003–2017). The plans for an experience center at the square have been reproduced in different forms, but with the recent construction of a complex of luxury homes, they have finally been dropped.

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gaard, was able to see beyond the old warehouse and on to Nyhavn. He was, of course, aware of the Home Rule administration's plans, and he also had a clear idea of who the other future residents of the building might be.

The warehouse had initially served as a warehouse for Icelandic trade before it was used for Greenlandic trade. Since 1747, the entire area had belonged to the General Trade Company, which handled the trade in Greenland during that time and in 1767 also took over trade with Iceland, the Faroe Islands and Finnmark.[156] Thus, Meldgaard's plans initially also included Norway. In June 1996, Meldgaard wrote the first memo on the development of the area with a continued North Atlantic and Arctic profile. The following outlines his vision:

> Grønlandske Handels Plads offers the most beautiful setting for the development of a vibrant environment with the North Atlantic and polar areas as its main theme and with knowledge, exhibition, crafts, trade, education, research, and administration as its ingredients. The old Grønlandske Handels Plads may become a window to Greenland, the Faroe Islands and the polar regions, through which information and experiences can be conveyed to the Danish public and foreign visitors and tourists. [157]

Meldgaard managed to convince certain key people of the merits of his vision, but he lacked a well-connected ambassador for the project. On 22 January 1997, he wrote a letter to Iceland's former president, Vigdís Finnbogadóttir. The letter was quite short, but opened on a poetic note with a description of the view from Meldgaard's office. He explained that his intention was to create a North Atlantic center where Iceland, the Faroe Islands, Greenland and Denmark would be able to meet "partly with an eye to our common past but also to the present and the future. (…) One could create such a window to the North Atlantic, or to Europe, depending on one's vantage point."[158] Could the former president make time for a visit to the Polar Center?

The meeting was arranged, and both Meldgaard and Finnbogaóttír recall that it was the building itself that won her over.[159] In her speech on the 10th anniversary of the building's dedication, 29 November 2013, she described how she showed up for the meeting slightly unprepared. She thought the project was mainly about a group of academics who wanted to set up a research center. When she realized the true scope of the project, she got cold feet. But then Meldgaard took her to see the building. She described her first impression of it as overwhelming, because the historical use of the building was so clearly sensed – and smelled. The building itself thus triggered the memory of the exchange of products to and from the North Atlantic that had taken place for centuries:

> The story of the place where our compatriots from Iceland and Greenland and the Faroe Islands for the first time set foot in the country into which they had been placed by the vagaries of history, and which, as children, they had only heard of. The story about how they returned home, enriched with the knowledge, visions, and spirit they had gathered from all over Europe, but beginning here, at the *Nordatlantens Brygge*.[160]

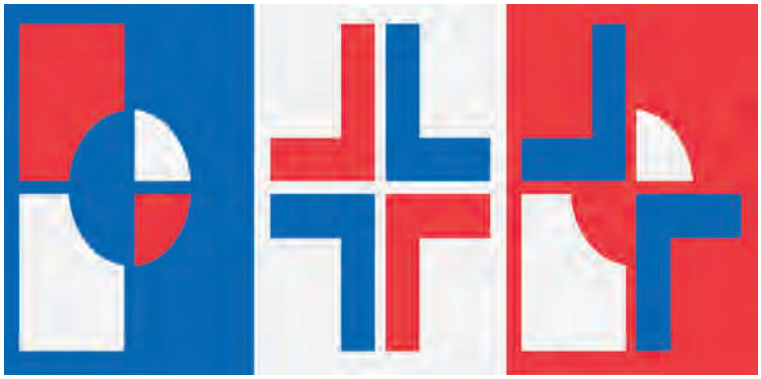
Thus, it was on her first encounter with the building that Finnbogadóttir lit on the name *Nordatlantens Brygge*, literally 'the North Atlantic Wharf'.

Finnbogadóttir highlights the positive side of the story – the exchange of goods, and Copenhagen as the gateway to Europe. This is what the three nations have in common, and it is now a shared source of strength for them. In her speech at the inauguration of the building in 2003, Finnbogadóttir cited the words of Queen Margarethe I at the creation of the Kalmar Union, which from 1397 to 1523 united the Nordic region: "The cord that is spun from three strands is unlikely to break."[161] In Finnbogadóttir's speech, the words are used to describe the new unity of the Faroe Islands, Iceland and Greenland. The building is also part of a darker story, however, which Finnbogadóttir addressed more explicitly in her speech on the 10th anniversary in 2013. In this speech, she chose to expand the three-leaf clover to a four-leaf clover, a well-known symbol of good luck. Denmark must be included with the three North Atlantic nations, because it was Denmark that bound them together in a state context. That story deals mostly with bondage and coercion, but this only lends greater symbolism to the fact that the building has now been taken over by the once oppressed nations. In 2013, Finnbogadóttir recapitulated the process of establishing the center as follows:

> It was a vision of preserving all the good that unity under the Danish Realm had *also* led to. It was a vision of creating in freedom what was once achieved by force. Because so much of it was worth preserving, regardless of the reasons behind its creation. And because it was also built on the love that is found in the heart of this strange community of nations. [162]

In Finnbogadóttir's view, the *Nordatlantens Brygge* is thus a place both to remember the past and to build a vision for the future. The building itself offers what the Dutch philosopher Eelco Runia called a *fistula*: "an abnormal passageway" between the present and the past.[163] Although the story of the North Atlantic Nations as part of a former Danish empire may – for various reasons – be less prominent in the national narratives today, the building is capable of activating and recalling that part of history. By virtue of its new purpose, however, the building now *overwrites* the importance of the old colonial warehouse. The *Nordatlantens Brygge* thus serves as a kind of palimpsest,[164] where the materiality of the building continues to draw attention to the colonial history that is the foundation for the present building, but imbued with new meaning. Around Copenhagen, there are several such warehouses that testify to Denmark's past as a colonial empire (and slave-trading nation). The debate about the current use of these buildings, and whether the history of their construction and original use should be more clearly conveyed, is testimony to the reinterpretation of history that is happening in Denmark and may be seen as a result of Denmark's ongoing conversion from a relatively homogenous society to a much more multicultural and globalized society.

Seen from a Danish perspective, the *Nordatlantens Brygge* is a reminder that



Flag produced for *Nordatlantens Brygge's* 10th anniversary in 2013. The Icelandic flag was officially adopted in 1915. The Faroese flag (*Merkið*) was officially adopted in 1940, but had been used since 1919. The Greenlandic flag (*Erfalasorput*) has been used since 1985.

the Danish Realm consists of several elements and cultures, and that multiculturalism has deep roots in Danish history. Viewed from a North Atlantic vantage point, however, it is not the multicultural perspective that tops the agenda. On the contrary, it rests on a notion of Iceland, the Faroe Islands and Greenland as distinct nations, who share the building as *neighbors*, just as they are "neighbors in the North Atlantic".[165] The idea of the *Nordatlantens Brygge* as a setting for three independent nations is emphasized in all the information produced by the center; it is also the story conveyed on guided tours of the building and in conversations with past and present employees. In the words of Karin Elsbudóttir, director of the *Nordatlantens Brygge*:

> The individual parts of the building have strong individual identities. Perhaps the community we have created here has gradually led to a sense of North Atlantic unity, but that was not our original intent, or, at least, not our primary intent.[166]

Only occasionally, as in the celebration of the 10th anniversary, do all three nations gather for joint events. Otherwise, it is very much the case that Icelanders go to Icelandic events, Faroe Islanders to Faroese events and Greenlanders to Greenlandic events. For all three types of events, there are also a number of Danes who are invited or who have an independent interest in, respectively, Greenlandic, Icelandic or Faroese affairs. For a small group of actors, these interests overlap.

The Icelandic attitude that there is a difference between the embassy and the two representations is also reflected in the physical design of the interior of the building. While it was originally intended that all floors should be open, with free passage throughout, security concerns surrounding the Icelandic Embassy made it necessary to build an internal wall that physically separates the Icelandic embassy from the culture center in the part of the building that also houses the Faroese and Greenlandic representations. This produced a certain sense of detachment and, possibly, inequality. At least, it may easily appear that way for a visitor. All the more remarkable, therefore, was the new flag symbol that was produced in connection with the 10th anniversary.

The flag symbol was created from the flags of the three nations, cut up to form

new blue, white and red constellations. On a blue, red or white background, these symbols formed a new "common flag" for the North Atlantic. The new symbol confirmed that the former Danish possessions have now reached a level of nationhood that is neither threatened nor disputed. Moreover, it reflected confidence in the potential of the North Atlantic as a region. The flag symbol was printed on postcards, which are still available, but it has not been used since; nor has it found its way onto the new website for the *Nordatlantens Brygge*. This could well indicate that the move from aversion to love does not happen quite as easily as in Vigdis Finnbogadóttir's three- or four-leaf clover stories. In the following, we will delve deeper into the emotions that 'stick' to objects – in this case, a building. First, however, we will explain why we find it necessary to extend the theoretical framework of the post-colonial field.

1.3 Re-orienting the Post-colonial

Whether or not to apply the concept 'colony' to countries in the North Atlantic has been a recurrent discussion – one we will explore in Section 2, 'The Specter of an Empire'. In legal and political discourses, as well as in historiography, the terms 'province', 'possession' (*besiddelse*), 'dependency' (*biland*) and 'colony' have been used interchangeably to describe the relations of Iceland, the Faroe Islands and Greenland to the Danish state.[167] This covers a long-lasting indeterminacy as concerns these relations – but it also has to do with shifting politics and strategies. Especially in the case of Iceland, Herzfeld's concept of the "crypto-colonial" captures this aspect of obscurity – a condition that, as mentioned, encompasses a defensive strategy: "We have never been colonized!" Denmark, on the other hand, claims a position as exceptional and benign in comparison with other, far more brutal colonial powers.[168] In relation to Greenland, the general perception in Denmark has been that Denmark was in Greenland to help the Greenlanders develop and become able to take care of themselves in a modern world. From the 1960s on, however, this perception was challenged by a counter-narrative demanding that Denmark start recognizing its history as a colonial power, also in relation to Greenland and the Faroe Islands.[169] Our aim in this book is not primarily to determine what is true and false in these postulates, but rather to examine what kind of marks these discussions have left in the present, and what possible scenarios for the future these discussions about the past respectively open and close. Currently, the argument that Greenland was never a (real) colony does not win much resonance in Greenland – but that does not mean that this will always be so. Maybe some time in the future, it will prove a better strategy for Greenland and Greenlanders to subscribe to the idea that Greenland was not a (real) colony. Since the content of the concept of 'colony' is open to interpretation, the status of the Greenlandic past as a colony or not a colony – or something in between – also remains open.

Previous studies have shown that post-colonial theory cannot be applied in the same manner in every possible situation. In each case the current context, social conditions within the colony, and not least the concrete relations between colonial power and colony must all be taken into account. The North Atlantic cannot readily be described using quite the same parameters as India, Africa or the West Indies, for example. Nor is it possible to describe the whole North Atlantic under one common framework – the discrepancies between the status of Greenland, Iceland and the Faroe Islands must be taken into consideration. Despite such reservations, much valuable insight and many theoretical perspectives can still be drawn from post-colonial and related theory, with a specific focus on power and power relations. As has been demonstrated, issues of power and dominance are highly relevant for the North Atlantic.

In recent years, however, a number of initiatives have been taken to 're-orient' post-colonialism. In particular, we have found historian David Scott's analysis of post-colonial historiography fruitful.[170] Post-structuralist research has criticized the essentialism of anti-colonialism, but – as Scott argues – without fundamentally altering the questions raised and thus the issues one is able to discover. We will return to Scott and his arguments in 1.3.3., 'A Longing for Total Revolution.' Before that, however, we will introduce two major topics in the post-colonial field: firstly, the theory of affect, because emotions are a highly relevant topic for post-colonial analyses; and secondly, the discussion of the relationship between colonialism and modernity.

1.3.1 *NORDEN* as an Emotional Community

A building associated with previous centuries' maggot-infested flour, or a new symbol of exchange and love. The story about *Nordatlantens Brygge* evokes the strong but ambivalent emotions that reign in what was once the Danish empire. Something similar could be said about what we usually describe as 'the Nordic family'. The Icelandic author Hallgrímur Helgason has in humorous terms tried to capture the complicated emotional relations implied by the family metaphor, which still bear witness to the Nordic Region's, *Norden*'s, origins in two rival superpowers, Sweden and Denmark:

> But even though we don't speak the same language, Danes and Icelanders, and would never be able to share a society, we still are relatives. We belong to the Nordic family. You feel it the best when you travel abroad. If you are, for example, walking down a street in Rome, and you suddenly hear Danish behind you, you immediately run for cover.
>
> It's because you see yourself. It's so pathetic. You're nothing special anymore. You're not unique. You're just like this Danish guy.
>
> And this is why every time you go to a meeting in the Nordic countries it feels very much like a family gathering. There is the head of the family, father Sweden, looking very

rich and fat, and politically correct. But if you look carefully, you can see that his eyes are full of children's labor in faraway lands. And there is mother Denmark, a bit pleased but mostly annoyed at having to break off her happy hour down at the bar to see her long grown up kids. "Huh huh, there you are…"

The couple divorced many years ago after father started spending all his time abroad with his young mistress Ikea.

And there is the oldest of the children, good old sister Norway. She looks terrific, all dressed up in her new opera outfit. Her husband, Mr. Olje Fondet, is there as well, trying hard not to show himself off as the billionaire he really is. And there is brother Finland, who nobody understands and everybody is dead sure that is not the son of our father, though nobody has ever dared to ask about it. But we do know that once, early in her marriage, mother Denmark traveled alone with her girlfriends out east…

And there is brother Faroe Islands, who will be forty later this year but still lives in his mother's house, chain smoking and unemployed. And there is the youngest, Greenland, that mother adopted on her own, after the divorce, but was too old to really take care of. And finally there is Iceland, who moved out of his parents' house way too early and spent his teenage years in America, heavily influenced by all the things he found there, but then came back home. With the help of drugs and arrogance this kid crashed his car some four years ago. He really doesn't like to talk about it, and starts shouting at you if you dare to mention it.[171]

The idea of the colonial empire as a "mother" to the colonies is a well-known metaphor, used primarily by the colonial powers themselves for the purpose of legitimizing the colonial project. By taking over the metaphor and creating an allegory that encompasses the whole Nordic region, Helgason firstly demonstrate how history leaves its mark, so that relations and positions do not dissolve and disappear simply because the colonized rebel and throw the colonizers out. Secondly, Helgason provokes the parties to reconsider not only the metaphor, but also the patterns of action that mean the metaphor still has life and meaning. Turning the image of "Mother Denmark" into an irresponsible and neglectful parent, he lifts the family metaphor out of the frame of legitimizing imperialist ideology within which it is usually articulated.

The very fact that the allegory makes sense and at the same time amuses a Nordic audience while they curl their toes in embarrassment testifies that *Norden* exists as a zone of "cultural intimacy", which the previously mentioned anthropologist Michael Herzfeld has described as constitutive for collectives.[172] The concept of cultural intimacy expresses the combination of identification and embarrassment that Herzfeld finds to be a key factor in collective identity formation – not least when it comes to national identity. It was coined as a means to understand historical writing, politics and everyday practices as intertwined fields in which narratives about collectives are created, expressed and negotiated. With its emphasis on how emotions act as an integral part of such complexes of discourses and narratives, connecting the personal with the public, Herzfeld's work may be

seen as an essential precursor to what has since been called the 'emotional turn' in social studies and cultural studies.

In the vocabulary of such emotional studies, Helgason's allegory deals with the Nordic countries as an *emotional community*. Social psychologist Margaret Wetherell uses this idea to describe how communities are held together by shared repertoires of emotion, intertwined with shared repertoires of interpretation. The concept of emotional communities thus connotes groups who share certain emotions, which bind the individuals together and differentiate them from outsiders.[173] In Wetherell's theory, human affect and emotions are inextricably linked with meaning-making: Symbols and metaphors are powerful because they enclose and provoke affect and thereby emotion.[174] Through the act of *affective practice* (routines and patterns which become embedded in the individual)[175], emotions get patterned together with narratives and discourses, creating the sort of *emotional and interpretative repertoires* that give order and meaning to the community.[176]

Similarly, in the theory of Sara Ahmed, who works at the intersection of feminist and queer theory, critical race studies and post-colonialism, emotions are studied as cultural practices, rather than as individual psychological states: They are located in the interaction *between* people rather than *within* the individual itself. While Wetherell speaks of affective or emotional communities, Ahmed talks about affective or emotional *economies*, borrowing from Marxism the idea of circulation and accumulation: Just as money accumulates through circulation, so emotions circulate and create emotional or affective value.[177] However, in Ahmed's point of view, it is the objects of emotion that circulate, rather than emotion as such. Emotions stick to objects; some objects are associated with happiness, others with the opposite. Human bodies, too, are transformed into objects of emotion, which then circulate, like any other object.[178] Through processes of discourse and stereotyping, some emotions 'stick' to particular bodies. Like the philosopher and feminist theorist Judith Butler, Ahmed sees such 'sticking' and circulation as reliant on *repetition*. It is through repetition that social forms and cultural norms are produced and embedded in the individual. Thus: "Sticking is dependent on past histories of association that often 'work' through concealment."[179] Power, then, as both Wetherell and Ahmed demonstrate, is crucial to the agenda of affect studies:

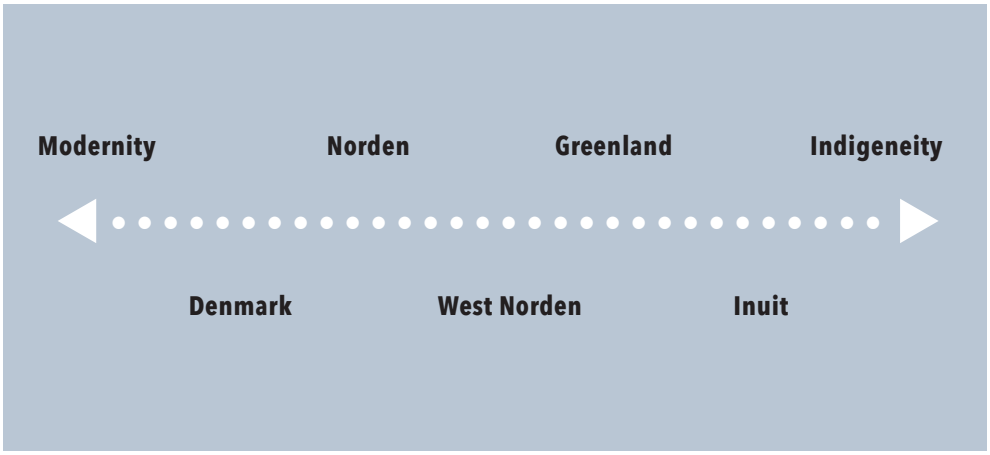
> How are practices clumped, who gets to do what when, what relations does an affective practice make, enact, disrupt or reinforce? Who is emotionally privileged, who is emotionally disadvantaged and what does this privilege and disadvantage look like?[180]

It is therefore not surprising that affect studies come out of, or at least relate to, the same academic environments that engage in gender studies and post-colonial studies.

There may not be any 'privileged' or 'disadvantaged' in Helgason's allegory. However, there is certainly an uneven distribution of power, inherent in the fami-

ly metaphor, where parents are supposed to have power over their children – until they grow up and take responsibility for their own lives. The family metaphor has a certain logic: Children must grow up and become equal and independent. At the same time, it builds on a particular emotional economy: Parents must show their children love, interest and – to a certain point – indulgence. In return, the children must show their love and respect. The metaphor of the 'Nordic family' is well established, but in Helgason's interpretation it has become a satire about dysfunctional relationships. In a way, the satire may be directed primarily against Iceland, which is positioned within the (otherwise often rejected) framework of empire and colonialism *by an Icelander*. Seen from an Icelandic perspective, the satire bites, precisely because it strikes down in these old pain points about whether it is or is not a colony. In Helgason's satire, Iceland, the Faroe Islands and Greenland unite in a common inferiority, because of the continuing dependency and lack of maturity that seem to stick to these three nations and thus the people who wear these national identities. Most marginalized, as usual, is Greenland, the problem child who is not even related by blood, but adopted – the word 'adopted' here is used as a metaphor or euphemism for 'colonized'.

Helgason's allegory can thus also be seen as a satirical variation on the love theme, which Vigdis Finnbogadóttir took up in connection with the establishment of the North Atlantic House. It is worth noting that Finnbogadóttir carefully avoids the otherwise well-established family metaphor and replaces it with the clover whose leaves, whether they are three or four, grow evenly on the same stalk. In particular, the clover metaphor allows the story of the North Atlantic to be shaped as a success story – which may be useful in giving the region a strong brand that can attract investors and promote development. The story of the peaceful and equal *Norden* is a positive tale, which in Ahmed's terms can circulate in the Nordic countries, including the North Atlantic countries themselves, as a "happy object". However, it may seem difficult to make this narrative fit Greenland, where asymmetry in the relationship with Denmark has been greatest, and where the process of decolonization seems far from over. Greenland has invested in developing a brand that aims at getting the Greenlanders out of the role of the oppressed and underprivileged, and into the role of modern, self-confident and self-reliant individuals.[181] Because Greenlanders also identify as an indigenous people (in accordance with the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, see 1.1.1), they simultaneously have to maintain an emphasis on the oppression, suffering and loss that is a part of their history. As a result, it is easy to get stuck in the mixed feelings of pride and shame that stick to this category.[182] Thus, the transition to modernity seems far more complicated in Greenland, where rapid cultural change in some areas and for some Greenlanders has had negative consequences, than is the case in Iceland and the Faroe Islands. But it is not necessarily straightforward here, either. In the following, we shall therefore look more closely at the concept of modernity.



Greenlandic sense of identity stretched out between modernity and indigeneity. Model reproduced from Gad 2016, p. 77, with permission from the author.

1.3.2 North Atlantic Modernities

The coupling of Europe and modernity is pivotal to European self-perception, as well as post-colonial criticism. The European metropoles are associated with modernity, placed in opposition to the preservation of pre-modern traditions, which are supposed to take place in the peripheries. This perception was often reproduced by the peripheries themselves. The North Atlantic cultures and literatures fascinate by their explicit hybridity and crossing of borders between what we conceive as pre-modern and modern. A great deal of self-exoticizing is going on, but the exchange between center and periphery also bears witness to the fact that "the West is more than just a monolithic centre, and the Rest is more than just an unshapen mass", as Bergur Rønne Moberg has put it.[183]

In a Nordic context, the Nordic countries are often perceived as a 'softer' version of European capitalism, leaving room for a similarly softer and more compassionate modernity, in concert with the idea of the "Scandinavian model".[184] Seen from a Greenlandic perspective, Denmark incarnates the "colonial Other" and is therefore associated with Europe, while *Norden* is mobilized as a more positive "other" – including Norway, which itself was subjugated to Denmark for a period.[185] At the other end of the continuum between modernity and tradition/indigeneity, we find the (West) Greenlanders (*Kalaallit*), who define themselves as more modern than the Inuit ancestors and certain other Inuit (including East Greenlanders and the *Inughuit* – previously named Polar Eskimos – in the northwestern corner of Greenland) who are closer to indigeneity. The model below illustrates this logic:

Modernity is a contested term.[186] In this book we use it to describe the advent of industrialization, urbanization, secularization and the development of the modern state – linked to individualism and the creation of subjects who understand themselves as citizens, regulated by the state through norms of physical and mental health, according to the French philosopher Michel Foucault, among others. In this respect, *modernity* covers both the materiality of modernization and the ways in which humans interpret themselves in relation to these conditions.

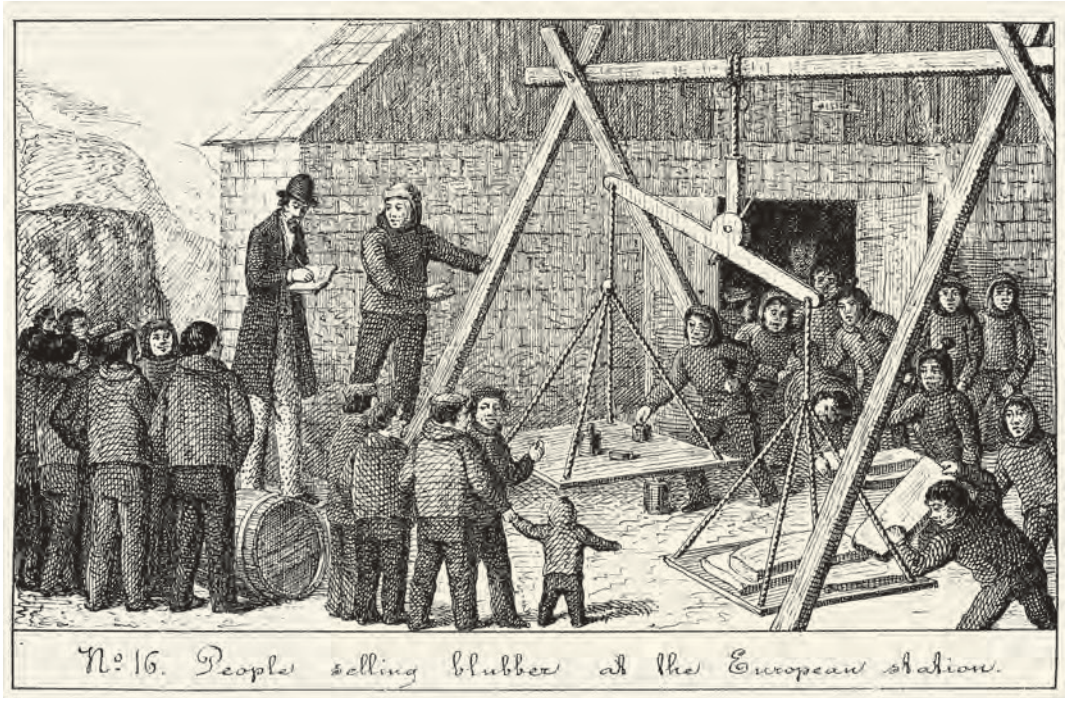
Maybe even more contested is the related term *modernism*. We use this term not in order to describe the aesthetic qualities of certain works of art and literature, but as a common denominator for any cultural production that attempts to aestheticize, reflect or simply grapple with modernization and modernity.[187]

The assumption that modernity has a 'Western' provenance has within anti-colonial movements and post-colonial theory led to the rejection of modernity and rationality as inherently imperialistic and totalitarian. [188] Instead of claiming that the *dominant* modes of thinking in the modern West have been rationalist and Eurocentric, these have been described – in turn – as the *only* kind of thinking *conceivable* in the West.[189] Hence the divide between the West and the "Rest", as delineated by the cultural theorist Stuart Hall.[190] Hall reminds us that the borders have become blurred: 'the West' is no longer only in Europe, and not all of Europe is in the West, if we use this term to describe not only a geographical position but a certain kind of society formation and development. Nevertheless, Hall claims, "It's true that what we call 'the West,' in this second sense, did first emerge in Western Europe."[191] Not all theorists will agree with him. Some will claim that modernity was developed in the cultural encounter, rather than in Europe, and afterwards "exported" to the rest of the world. This is similar thinking to that underlying Benedict Anderson's point that the modern nation state was not "invented" in Europe but emerged as a result of imperialism: Colonies such as Brazil, the United States and the newly freed Spanish colonies were the first to develop what we today describe as a "national consciousness".[192]

According to the historian David Scott, many of the factors we refer to as characteristic of modernity emerged earlier in the colonies than they did in Europe – in stark contrast to the common European perception of the traditional 'others'.[193] He builds on, among others, the Afro-Trinidadian historian C. L. R. James (1901–1989). In a later appendix to his seminal text about the Haitian revolution *The Black Jacobins: Toussaint L'Ouverture and the San Domingo Revolution*, James describes the black slaves, who have usually been portrayed as atavistically pre-modern, as among the first truly modern people:

> When three centuries ago the slaves came to the West-Indies, they entered directly into the large-scale agriculture of the sugar plantation, which was a modern system. It further required that the slaves live together in a social relation far closer than any proletariat at the time. The cane when reaped had to be rapidly transported to what was factory production. The product was shipped abroad for sale. Even the cloth the slaves wore and the food they ate was imported. The negroes, therefore, from the very start lived a life that was in its essence a modern life. That is their history – as far as I have been able to discover, a unique history.[194]

In a way, this observation goes even further than James' (and others') argument that it was the labors of Africans in the Caribbean who created both the plantation wealth and gave the bourgeoisie "that pride which needed liberty", and thus



Greenlanders selling blubber at a European trading station.
From H. J. Rink, *Danish Greenland,* 1877. *Lithograph after drawing by Aron from Kangeq.*

contributed to human emancipation.[195] The black enslaved people not only made modernity possible, they simply became modern, and to portray the colonized as if they still lived in stagnant tradition merely adds insult to injury.

It can certainly be argued that something quite similar applies in the North Atlantic, not least with regard to the Greenlandic Inuit. Even though the Greenlanders were never enslaved, and even though modernity emerged at a slower speed in Greenland, Greenland was not outside the horizon of Occidental modernity, once it was colonized. Blubber was the main economic incentive for its colonization by Denmark. Between 1721 and 1775, a number of colonies were established along the west coast, where workers rendered the blubber by cooking it over a low temperature in enormous cauldrons. As the blubber is rendered (melted down in order to clarify it), it turns into a waxy substance called train or whale oil. It was this oil which illuminated the cities of Europe, and thus paved the way for modernization and modernity. In Copenhagen, the first whale oil lamps were installed in 1681: a total of 500 lamps, each placed on top of painted wooden poles.[196] A public life at night-time, with more secure streets, as well as theater productions and other large public events, was dependent on lighting, which for a long time meant blubber. Lots of blubber was needed for great occasions. For instance, 800 whale oil lamps could light up a theater, while 3,000 candles made from whale blubber were needed to light up the ballroom at a royal wedding. Cities were completely dependent on blubber until gas lamps were introduced; in Copenhagen this happened in 1857.[197]

Train was produced throughout the North Atlantic. Both in Icelandic and Faroese train is simply called *lýsi* or *lysi*, light. Even the uncooked raw material had light in its name, *rálýsi*. Train was highly appreciated because it also created

light and prosperity in the North Atlantic societies. At the same time, the trade significantly changed the way in which natural resources were utilized, and the structures of social organization. This was especially true for Greenland, where trade made a reason for creating a surplus, which in combination with the import of firearms had an impact on the number of animals caught. In contrast with the old days, where the catch was distributed among the whole group at a settlement, any surplus beyond what the family and closest relatives needed for themselves was now sold to the trade. As the number of seals decreased – partly because of hunting pressure and disturbance, partly because of climate change and a number of other factors – conflict level increased in the small communities. In the newspapers of the time, we hear people complaining that no one is willing to donate a skin anymore; everything goes to the highest bidder. Even the smallest skin patches can multiply in value when converted into trinkets and knickknacks, which are sold at the ships and to the Danes living in Greenland.[198] This example underlines the fact that imperialism was part of capitalism as a world system.

From the beginning of the 20th century, the Greenlandic elite began demanding that Greenland be included in the rest of the world. The Danish administration kept Greenland sealed off from foreign enterprise, with reference to the risk of exploitation and extinction, which had been the consequence of such experiences elsewhere. However, the Greenlanders claimed that since their life had changed so dramatically anyway, there was no point in holding back development. They wanted to become on a par with "more developed nations", as it says in the national anthem,[199] or simply to claim "a place in the sun", as it was expressed by Vice Provost Mathias Storch (1883-1957), one of Greenland's most prominent politicians during the 1920s and 1930s.[200] Seen from a Greenlandic point of view, striving for "a place in the sun" was not an existential question about being 'traditional' or 'modern', but a struggle to achieve a position from which it was possible to gain the most from modernity.

Accepting the fact that modernity is not something inherently European, but developed in the cultural encounter and exchange between Europe and the rest of the world, and closely linked to the development of capitalism, makes it possible to end the unfruitful discussion about the colonies as belated, derivative and inferior 'copies' of the European centers – a discussion that has led to essentialism and a demand for the return to 'traditional ways' in identity politics.[201] To many theorists this position has proven to be a dead end, since colonialism happened, and there is no way of turning the clocks back to pre-colonial times.[202] For the same reason, a number of historians and theorists of social sciences also reject terms like 'alternative modernities'[203] (including 'divergent', 'competing' or 'retroactive' modernities).[204] Unfortunately, these attempts to pluralize the concept of modernity derive from an initial assumption as to the 'Western' provenance of modernity.[205] This is not the same as denying that modernism looks and feels very different, depending on the location and position from where one experiences it. Fredric Jameson, one of the 'fathers' of modernity/modernism theory, insists