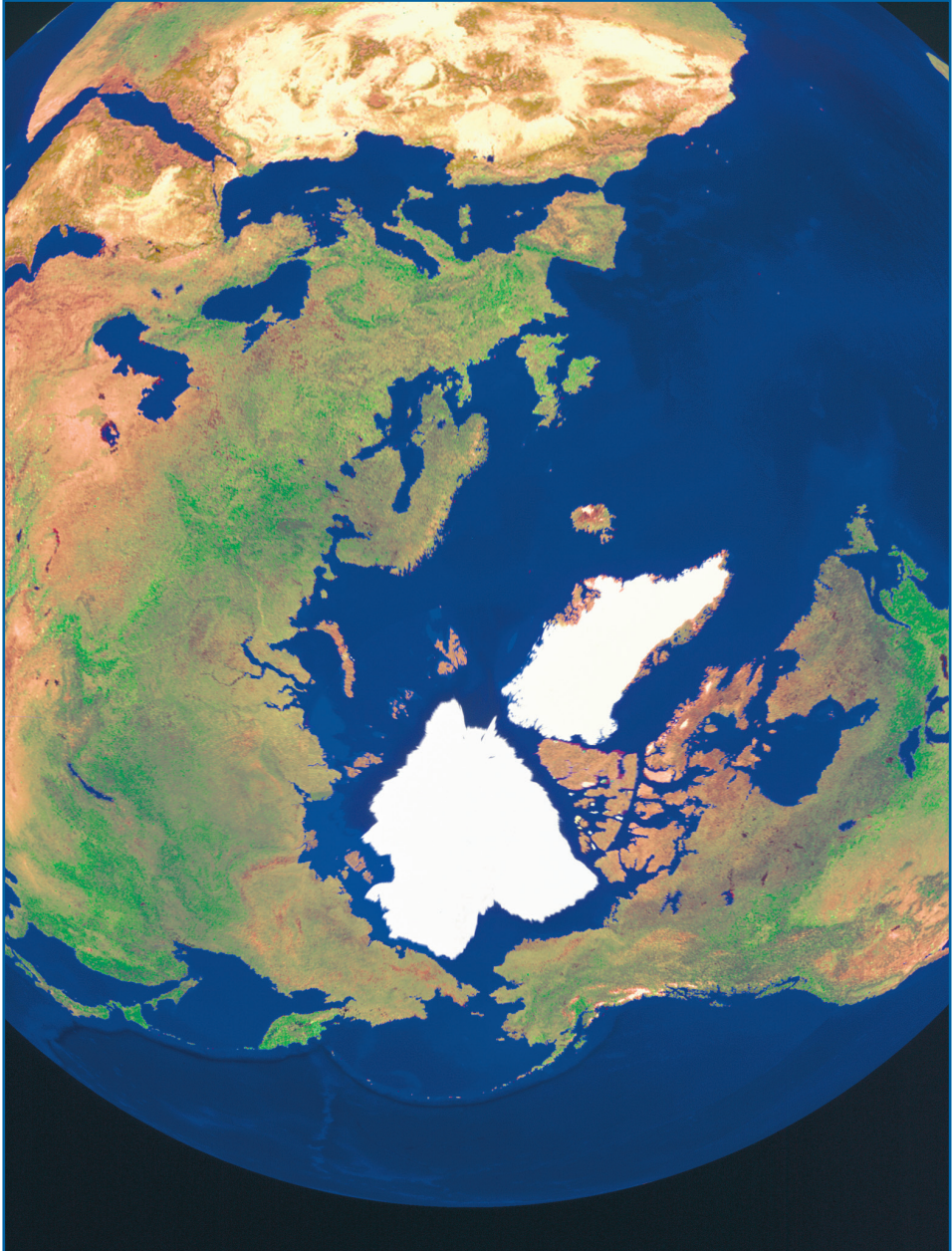


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No. 1 • 2011



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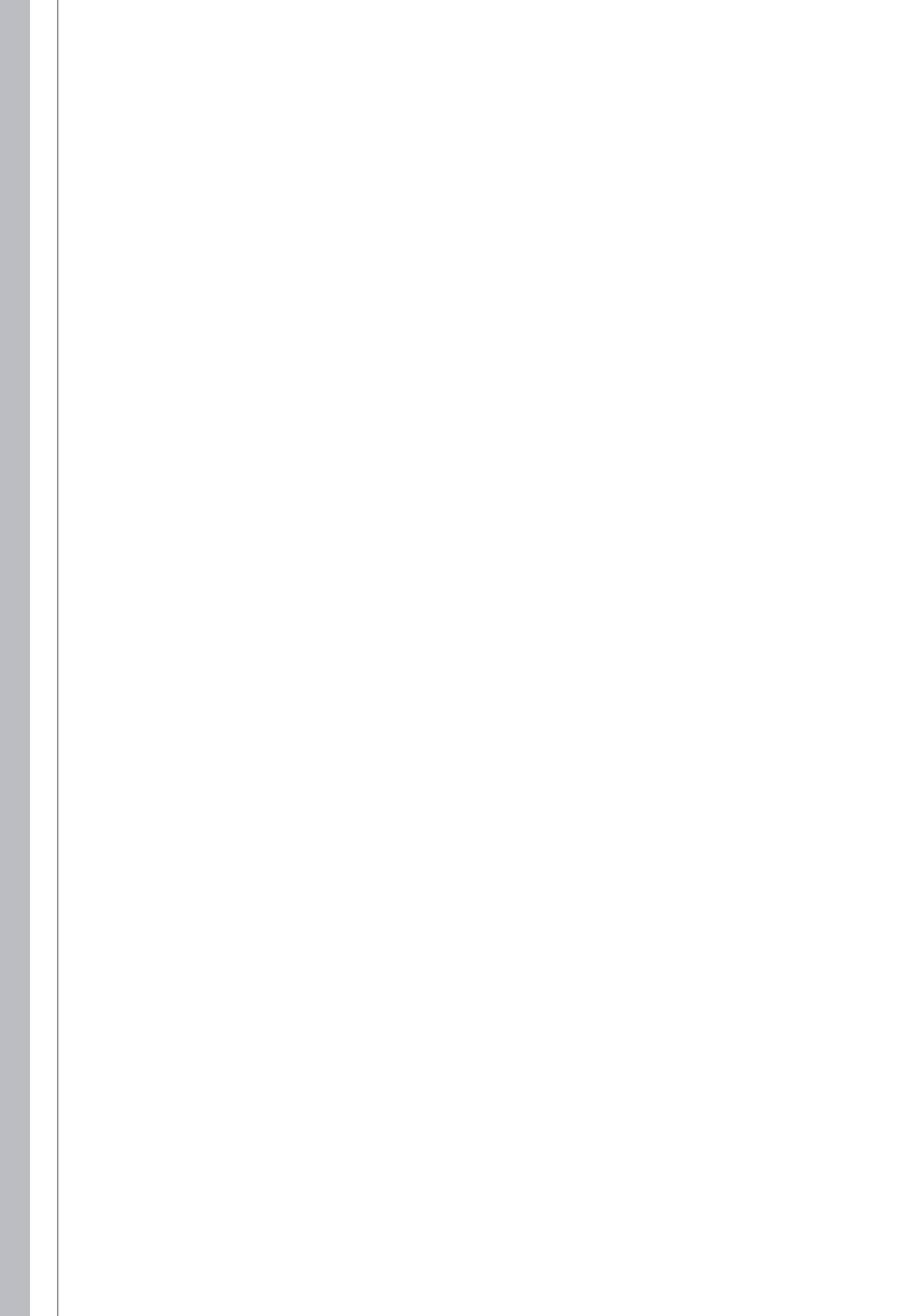
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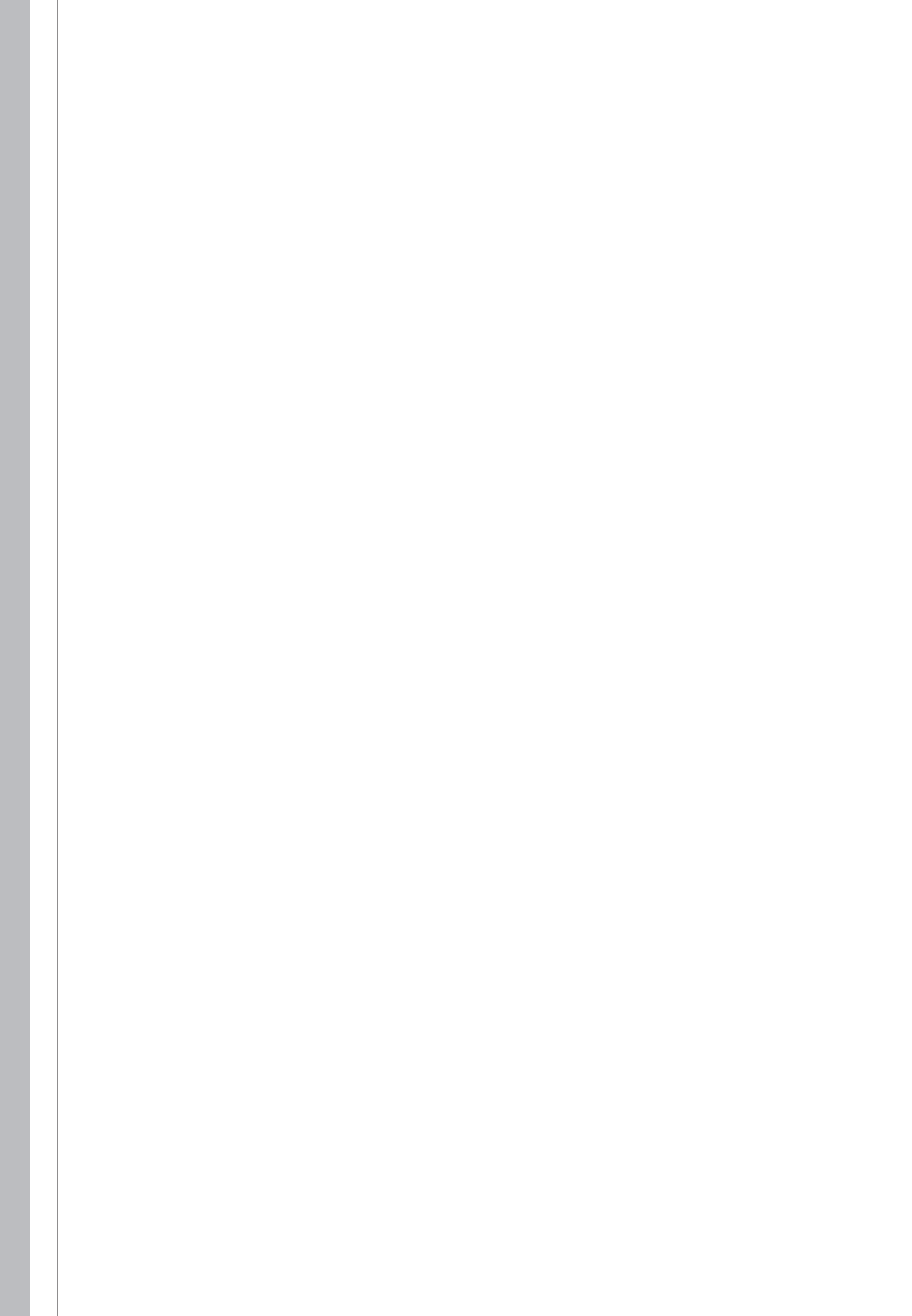
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LOTTA M. OMMA, LARS E. HOLMGREN & LARS H. JACOBSSON

Being a Young Sami in Sweden

Living Conditions, Identity and Life Satisfaction

ABSTRACT Objective: The aim of the present study was to illuminate the contemporary cultural reality of being a young Sami in Sweden, with special reference to issues such as identity/self-perception, autonomy, and experiences of being ill treated and discrimination.

Design: The study comprises a qualitative and a quantitative part. The qualitative part includes meetings, discussions and dialogues with young Sami and others. The quantitative part includes a questionnaire on socioeconomic conditions, Sami ethnicity, experiences of being ill-treated because of a Sami background, specific questions on identity and self-perception, questions about self-determination, and thoughts and expectations of the future. The sample consists of 876 young Sami aged 18–28, of whom 516 (59 per cent) responded to the questionnaire.

Results: A majority are proud to be Sami and wish to preserve their culture. 71 per cent have a close connection to a Sami community. Most of the young Sami have had to explain and defend their culture and way of life. Nearly half had perceived discrimination or ill-treatment because of their ethnicity, with reindeer herders reporting a higher degree of ill-treatment (70 per cent). Reindeer herders exist in a severe environment with an insecure legacy. Most of the young Sami in this study have a positive self-perception and think that their lives are meaningful. Very few dropped out of school and very few are unemployed.

Conclusion: We believe that there are protective factors that potentially explain the well-being of this group; a strong feeling of belonging among the Sami, strong connections to family, relatives and friends and good sociocultural adaptation (to have a job, completed school).¹

KEYWORDS young Sami, perceived discrimination, well-being, ethnic identity

Introduction

Since prehistoric times, the Sami have lived in an area that now extends across four countries, comprising the Kola Peninsula in Russia, northernmost Finland, the coastal and inland region of northern Norway, and parts of Sweden from the middle of the country northwards. This region is called *Sápmi* ['Samiland'].

The official number of Sami in Sweden is between 20,000 and 25,000. This figure is probably far too low: Hassler and colleagues estimate the number at 40,000 to 50,000, calculated from various registers such as the Sami Parliament electoral register, depending on the way Sami identity is defined (Hassler *et al.* 2004).

Around 10 per cent of Sami in Sweden are employed in reindeer husbandry. This is one of the traditional Sami occupations, others being handicrafts, hunting and fishing. More recent professions include tourism, media, art and music. In Sweden, reindeer husbandry is organised in a *sameby*, which is both an economic association and a specific geographical area. Nationally, there are 51 *samebys* from the middle to the far north of the country. There are approximately 4,500 reindeer owners in the country overall. Many of the reindeer herding Sami also work part-time in the majority community.

Until *Sápmi* was drawn into the sphere of interest of the surrounding nations in the Middle Ages, the region had been viewed as a barren wasteland. The Sami were not organised as a state, instead living in *sijdda* societies (Ruong 1982). *Sijddas* were groups of families living in an area with set boundaries, with hunting and fishing rights divided within each *sijdda*. From the middle of the nineteenth century, there was increased interest in exploiting these northern lands for agriculture. Darwin's theory of the evolution of species was soon applied to explain the development of the human races and their various cultures. Leading scientists of the day ranked farming and industrial societies above hunter-gatherer and nomadic societies, meaning that it was the destiny of Sami culture to give way to superior agriculture. Settlers were encouraged to move to the land that Sami had used for grazing and paid taxes on for hundreds of years. As a result, the Sami lost a great deal of their winter grazing areas, limiting their opportunities to live in the traditional manner. Many lost their reindeer herds and suffered hunger as a result (Lundmark 2002).

The Swedish policy was two-pronged: segregation on the one hand and assimilation on the other. Reindeer herders should be segregated and remain in their traditional nomadic way of life under the dictum "Lapps should stay Lapps" (Mörkenstam 1997; Lundmark 2002). This expression represented the Government's view that if the Sami lived in houses and received a good

education, they would not wish to continue the hard life of reindeer herding. A special form of boarding school was set up, with lower standards and lower aspirations. In temporary wooden constructions, a type of wooden shack, the children lived far from their parents (Pusch 1998; Amft 2000). In such schools many children became ill. Pusch describes the cultural hierarchy and nomadic boarding school system established by law in 1913. This aimed to keep the mountain Sami segregated, not only from the Swedish population but also from the forest Sami who were regarded as even lower socially (Pusch 1998). The forest Sami were settled and herded their reindeer in a more restricted forest area and were not nomadic.

The statement “Lapps should stay Lapps” also expressed a general view that the Sami could not be farmers and therefore could not receive the same state support to farming as other Swedish inhabitants. Those Sami who did not own reindeer should simply be assimilated into the Swedish society and in a sense cease to be Sami. This assimilation policy led to extensive loss of ethnic identity, language and traditional knowledge, both in Sweden and Norway (Minde 2003; Lehtola 2004).

The long history of discrimination and racism may have had a significant impact on Sami self-esteem. However, over the last 30 years a strong indigenous movement has emerged worldwide, and the Sami are now incorporated into an international network of indigenous peoples. This has strengthened their position as an ethnic minority. Many indigenous peoples are fighting for their rights to land and water. This double influence and the kind of impact it may have on young Sami today is the background to the current study.

The Sami Identity and Context

Identity is here viewed as a social construction that is formed and developed in a context of relations to others through life. Ethnic identity is constructed through a complex of processes, depending on self-reflection and self-assignment to a very high degree but also determined by descent. There are at least three groups of Sami: young Sami who grow up without knowledge of their Sami heritage and who as adults start to search and explore this phenomenon; those who grow up aware of their Sami heritage but without being a member of a *sameby* (Sami community); and those who grow up surrounded by other Sami as members of a *sameby* (Åhrén 2008).

Phinney (1990) conducted a review of empirical research on ethnic identity and found that three theoretical frameworks had a significant impact on the conceptualisation of ethnic identity: social identity theory, a theory of acculturation and culture conflict, and identity formation, drawing on a psychoanalytic perspective. Social identity theory, like acculturation theory,

concerns the potential problems resulting from participating in two cultures. Both theories acknowledge that ethnic identity is dynamic, changing over time and context. Psychoanalytic theory emphasises the solving of different development tasks in the formation of identity (Erikson 1968). Berry and colleagues emphasize that acculturation is a two-dimensional process in which both the relationship with ethnic culture and the relationship with the dominant culture must be considered and that strong identification with both groups is indicative of integration or biculturalism, while identification with neither group suggests marginality (Berry *et al.* 2006).

There have been very few studies in Sweden on young Sami, their living conditions and life satisfaction, and there is very limited knowledge about what it is like to be a Sami today. In Norway a larger number of studies have been conducted, but they generally report few overall differences between Sami and their non-Sami peers regarding behavioural or emotional problems (Kvernmo & Heyerdahl 2003; Heyerdahl *et al.* 2004; Kvernmo 2004). An epidemiological study from Greenland found no statistically significant differences in reported internalisation symptoms between young people in Greenland and their Danish peers (Curtis *et al.* 2006). However, Bjerregaard *et al.* concluded that accidents, suicides, violence, and substance abuse are of major importance for the pattern of ill health in most Inuit communities (Bjerregaard *et al.* 2004).

Kirmayer *et al.* (2003) reviewed recent literature examining links between a history of colonialism and government intervention in Canada, Australia and New Zealand. They found that, with some exceptions, there are high rates of social problems, demoralisation, depression, substance abuse, suicide and other mental health problems in aboriginal communities.

Aim

The overall aim of this study is to illuminate and explore the contemporary cultural reality of being a young Sami in Sweden by investigating some basic socioeconomic conditions, their view of Sami culture and Sami way of life, existential issues, self-perception, and experience of ignorance and being ill treated because of ethnicity.

We further wish to make some comparisons between the Sami themselves, considering gender, education, rural or urban living, occupation (to be a reindeer herder or not), and perceived discrimination.

Methods

Both qualitative and quantitative methods were used to illuminate the research questions.

Qualitative Section

As it was important to give groups and individuals opportunities to participate in the research process, a kind of Participatory Action Research (PAR) was applied (Foote Whyte (ed.) 1991). This was accomplished through:

- Meetings and discussions with Sáminuorra, the Sami youth organisation (2007 and 2008)
- Participating in a Sami Youth Conference in Lycksele (2008) attended by young Sami from Sweden, Norway, Finland and Russia, with the theme of mental health.

We also participated in a “round-table meeting” by invitation of the Office of the Ombudsman for Children (BO) in Stockholm (2008) as part of their commission “Let Sami children talk.” In this meeting a representative of the office of the Ombudsman against Discrimination (DO) participated and urged us to ask questions about perceived discrimination/being badly treated because of ethnicity.

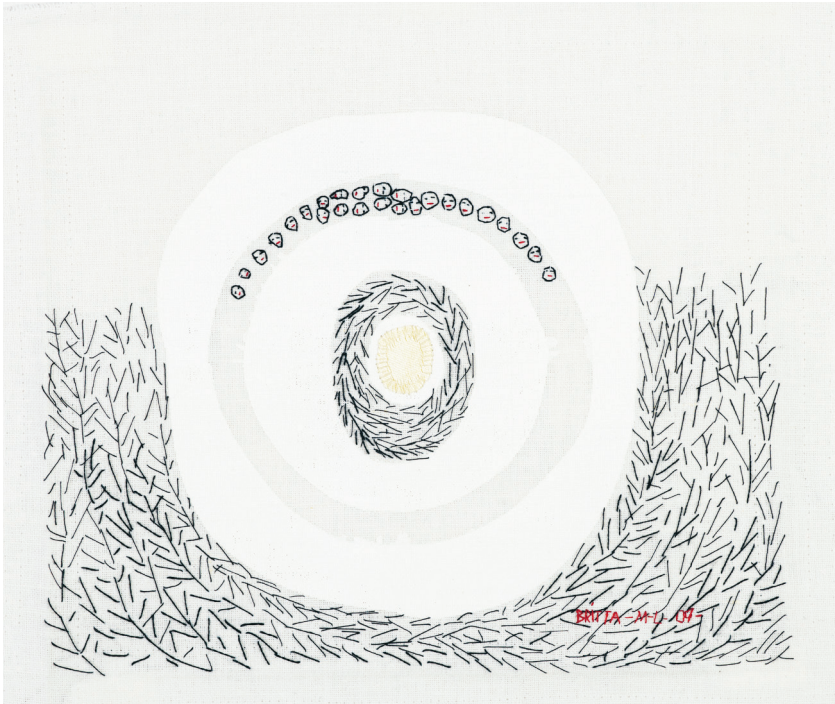


Fig. 1. *The SCHULLS* by Britta Marakatt-Labba. According to Sami belief, one must let the departed rest in peace. The skulls which were dug up for supposed research reasons caused problems for the souls of the deceased, still restlessly searching for the skeletons robbed from them. In our study it has been important that the informants felt involved throughout the research process in order to avoid disrespect.

Quantitative Section

The questionnaire was constructed on the basis of the discussions with young Sami, our knowledge of the Sami culture and clinical experiences of more than 30 years of using a lot of traditional self-evaluating scales considering self-esteem, depression, anxiety and anger (Antonovsky 1980; Ouvein-Birgerstam 1985; Beck *et al.* 2001; Eriksson & Lindström 2006). In 2008, a questionnaire was sent out to a group of young Sami aged 18–28 years.

The questionnaire consisted of several sections:

- Socioeconomic conditions: gender, age, educational level, occupation, family situation and place of residence.
- Questions about Sami ethnicity: knowledge of the Sami language, connection to a *sameby* or Sami organisation, engagement in any Sami activities, thoughts and expectations about the future.
- Perceived discrimination, questions of being ill treated/or assaulted because of their Sami background.
- More specific questions about self-perception/self-esteem and, connected to this, questions about autonomy and possibilities to participate in important decisions.

Other domains in the questionnaires were health, alcohol use, and contact with suicide. Results from this part of the questionnaire will be presented elsewhere.

Participants

In order to identify and obtain addresses contact was made with many different Sami organisations, including the Sami Parliament, the director of Sami schools, the Sami Education Centre in Jokkmokk, and the Sami Youth Organisation.

The final group consisted of 876 persons aged 18–28 years. They were all sent a questionnaire to their home address. After one reminder, 516 (59 per cent) returned the questionnaire.

Statistical Analysis and Ethical Approval

The results of the questionnaire were examined using frequency tables and cross-tables with the Pearson chi-square test and/or Fisher's exact test to determine potential statistical significance.

This study was approved by the Regional Ethical Review Committee in Umeå (§ 06-007). Participation in interviews, group sessions and completion of the questionnaire was voluntary and anonymity was provided. The study was conducted according to the Helsinki Declaration.

Results

Qualitative Section

In a meeting with the Sami youth organisation, the 60 participants were divided into working groups with 7–9 participants each to discuss the following questions: What is it like being a young Sami?; Do young Sami feel well?; Are there any differences between female and male Sami regarding well-being?; What questions do you think are important to ask concerning health/well-being? All the groups reported their results and a lively discussion ensued, from which two concrete themes emerged: Pressure from within and pressure from without.

The young Sami spoke of “great pressure to preserve Sami culture and the language in particular.” They were very conscious of the fact that so few people are speaking Sami that it is in danger of being lost. Some were very concerned about the possibility of continuing reindeer herding, as the Sami are losing grazing land to other interests. It became clear that the economic situation of reindeer herding is very difficult, with considerable expenses. For example, unlike forestry, farming and horticulture, reindeer herding does not receive tax subsidies on fuel. For some young Sami, it would be a difficult personal dilemma to choose to do something else instead of reindeer herding, as nobody would then continue the tradition after their parents.

Some of the young women spoke of their interest in reindeer herding, which was not encouraged. They felt disappointed and sometimes excluded. One of the groups concluded as follows: “It’s hard for the girls to get in [to reindeer herding] and it’s hard for the boys to get out.” Further, it was sometimes difficult to resolve conflicts between Sami groups as all the time was taken up fighting for rights against the majority society. Some individuals felt insecure regarding questions of identity—who is Sami and who is not (Åhrén 2008).

The young respondents stated that it was not easy to be a Sami in Sweden, because Sami are valued less and suffer discrimination and racism. Many talked of their experiences of others’ ignorance about the Sami and their history. They stated that in “Swedish” schools, pupils learn very little about the Sami, with a great deal of prejudice as a result. For example, it is often claimed that Sami drink a lot of alcohol, despite the fact that nobody has undertaken a study of this question in Sweden (in Norway there are studies looking into this issue [Spein 2008]). A Sami in traditional dress is easy to identify, and if you then get drunk it is easy to extrapolate from one individual to the entire group. The young people stated that they very often

had to explain and defend Sami culture and the Sami way of life. Always defending and explaining is not easy, and sometimes this prevented the young people from going out and having fun.

In the discussions, it became obvious that the most positive and strengthening aspects of their lives were the strong connections to family and relatives and a strong feeling of belonging to the Sami people. In working with reindeer, the family plays an extremely important role, in which everybody is necessary and able to help. Even children have tasks to fulfil.

The young people preferred to be anonymous in this kind of research and felt a questionnaire was appropriate. The discussions and dialogues outlined above subsequently formed the basis for the questionnaire.

Results of the Questionnaire

Socio-Demographic Background

Most of the young people (78 per cent) lived in the four northernmost regions of Sweden (Norrbotten 46 per cent, Västerbotten 21 per cent, Jämtland 8 per cent and Västernorrland 3 per cent). However, 6 per cent lived in the Stockholm region and 4 per cent in the Gothenburg area.

Table 1 presents some socio-demographic background data.

A majority of the respondents were female (57 per cent). One third lived in a settlement with fewer than 3,000 inhabitants (20 per cent lived in a settlement with fewer than 200 inhabitants). One third lived in a city with more than 50,000 inhabitants.

Education: 63 per cent had completed 12 years of school, and 31 per cent had completed more than 13 years of education, meaning college or university. Only 6 per cent had received nine years or less of education.

Occupation/work: 62 per cent of the group were working and the majority had full-time jobs; 80 per cent answered the open question on the type of employment. 33 per cent were studying, mostly full time. Just 1.9 per cent were unemployed or on sick leave, and 2.3 per cent were receiving government subsidies to stimulate employment. The respondents thus reported many kinds of work. 10 per cent worked in reindeer herding.

Sami Identity

A majority of the respondents (83 per cent) were “proud of being Sami” and 16 per cent chose the response alternative “I don’t think of that.” As many as 71 per cent answered that they had a close connection to a *sameby*, and 82 per cent had participated in traditional Sami activities such as working with reindeer, hunting, fishing and handicrafts.

Table 1. Socio-demographic/economic conditions among females and males in per cent.

Age	Female N=295	Male N=220	Total N=516
18–22 year	41.4	40.8	
23–28 year	58.6	59.2	
Missing information			n=1
Years of education			
≤ 9 years	5.1	6.4	
10–13 year	58.7	70.5	
≥ 14 years	36.2	23.2	
Missing information			n=2
Living situation			
Alone	25.3	20.5	
With partner	30.1	32.9	
With partner and children	14.2	7.8	
Alone with children	1.7	0.5	
With parents	24.6	32.4	
Other alternative	4.2	5.9	n=7
Missing information			
Community size			
1–3,000	35.1	36.3	
3,000–10,000	13.0	12.8	
10,000–50,000	18.9	25.7	
50,000–	33.0	25.2	
Missing information			n=13

One quarter of the young people could speak Sami (26 per cent), and a little over one quarter could understand the language but did not speak it. Eighty-six per cent responded “Yes” to the question “Do you want to learn Sami?” One quarter received their early education in one of the five Sami schools in Sweden (available from 6 to 12 years of age).

Perceived Discrimination/Being Ill-Treated and Experience of Ignorance about the Sami

Table 2 shows the responses to questions about experiences of being ill-treated because of the Sami background.

As many as 37 per cent of the young people had requested education in the Sami language but had not received it. 64 per cent answered “No” to the question “Did you learn anything about the Sami or Sami culture in a normal school?” A quarter replied “yes” to the question, “Has a teacher said something bad about the Sami?” and below are some citations from 135 examples of teachers’ comments:

	Yes	No	N
"Have you received education in the Sami language?"	63 %	37 %	n=410
"Did you learn anything about the Sami or Sami culture in normal school?"	36 %	64 %	n=503
"Have you found derogatory formulations about the Sami in school textbooks?"	41 %	59 %	n=496
"Have you been treated unfairly by a teacher because of your Sami background?"	17 %	83 %	n=516
"Has a teacher said something bad about the Sami?"	25 %	75 %	n=516
"Have you been treated badly by other people?"	45 %	55 %	n=516

Table 2. Questions about experience of being ill-treated because of ethnicity and ignorance about the Sami.

They talked as if we didn't exist, as we were far away in the forests. Teachers from areas without Sami know nothing about their country's indigenous people or the opposing group that hates Sami; they say nothing, and we are, like, invisible to them.

My alleged laziness and lack of ability in maths was due to my Sami ethnicity.

I can't speak my native language because teachers told my mother that it would confuse me if I was educated in Sami.

The reindeer herders had twice as often experienced "teachers saying something bad about the Sami" as other participants in the study (43 per cent compared to 22 per cent). On the topic "Have you often or sometimes been unfairly treated by teachers because of your Sami ethnicity," 38 per cent of the reindeer herders answered "yes" compared to 10 per cent of the others.

To the question "Have you been treated badly by other people," 45 per cent of respondents replied "yes." Here are some examples:

They say that we live on subsidies, drive the reindeer on the railway track to get money, that we have many advantages (we can use land for grazing, we have fishing and hunting rights).

Derogatory comments about the Sami occur:

If I'm looking for a job, I never tell them about my Sami ethnicity because then the job might go to somebody else.

I have been spat on. They have thrown stones at me. I have been beaten because I spoke Sami. They told me to go to hell. Generally I have been assaulted and my existence has been threatened by adults and children. There is a lot more but over time I have repressed a great deal. At the same time it has all made me stronger.

At primary school it was usual to be called “Lapp bastard.” The teachers never took any notice. It was as if they condoned the bullying with their silence.

As regards the question on being ill-treated by others, there was a statistically significant difference between the reindeer herders and the total group, with 70 per cent of the reindeer herders having been ill-treated by others because of their ethnicity compared to 43 per cent of the non-herding group.

Sami Culture and the Sami Way of Life

Nearly all (92 per cent) thought that it was important to preserve and strengthen the Sami culture. Most of the young people felt it was important to have meeting places for Sami, and 63 per cent attended Sami ceremonies or festivals, such as the Jokkmokk Winter Market, or participated in various Sami sports championships.

Many responded to the open question “What is for you the most important part of the Sami culture?” A third mentioned the Sami language and its preservation. Another third answered “reindeer” or “reindeer herding” and the possibility to continue herding. Half of those who mentioned language also stated that reindeer herding was important, and vice versa. After these, respondents also mentioned the bonds among the Sami with strong ties to family and friends and a feeling of connection with nature. It became obvious that the young people see Sami culture as a way of life, an entirety, a lifestyle, a special way of feeling, thinking, learning and perceiving throughout life. Here is an example:

To me it's a special and fundamental relationship to everything else, to nature and people. Sami culture influences my values and perception in every way and unfortunately in contrast to Swedish society. The yoik, the Sami way of singing, is very important for me but I don't want to prioritise anything above anything else, because the culture is a whole, a way of thinking, feeling and perceiving throughout your life.

Two questions focused on whether the respondents had felt forced to defend or explain Sami culture and the Sami way of life. Here, 82 per cent had “often” or “sometimes” felt forced to do so, and 90 per cent had “often” or “sometimes” been asked to do so.

Self-Perception

In Table 3 responses to a number of questions on self-perception are presented along with statistically significant differences between male and female respondents

Most respondents have a positive self-perception and are satisfied with their life situation and performance. They feel secure and have somebody to talk to about important matters. A majority have a good relationship with their family.

The responses to the questions in Table 3 were dichotomized, so that very often/quite often became “often” and seldom/very seldom became “seldom.” Six of the questions show statistically significant gender differences ($p < 0.05$). Female respondents were less satisfied with their life situation and performance, and thought about the meaning of their life more often than male respondents. They also reported less often having a good relationship with their family, and did not feel secure to the same extent as male respondents. Male respondents reported that they did not have somebody to talk to about important matters to the same extent as female respondents.

As many as 21.2 per cent of the reindeer herders seldom had anybody to talk to about important matters compared to 7.3 per cent of the other respondents in the study ($p < 0.05$).

One of the questions in Self-perception “I have somebody to talk to about important matters” showed significant statistical differences in the back-ground variable community size; 15,1 per cent ($n=27$) of those living in a place with fewer than 3000 inhabitants had seldom somebody to talk to about important matters (not showed in the table).

Table 3. Self-perception in per cent for young male (N=220) and female (N=295) Sami.

		Very often	Quite often	Seldom	Very seldom	p
I am satisfied with my performance	Male	37.9	55.7	5.9	0.5	0.006
	Female	28.8	57.3	11.9	2.0	
I feel alert and full of energy	Male	30.6	54.3	13.7	1.4	ns
	Female	23.7	55.3	19.3	1.7	
I think my appearance is okay	Male	42.2	44.0	13.8	0.0	ns
	Female	27.5	55.9	12.2	4.4	
I am satisfied with my life situation	Male	41.3	50.5	7.3	0.9	0.005
	Female	32.7	50.7	14.3	2.4	
I have a good relationship with my family	Male	74.0	24.2	1.8	0.0	0.036
	Female	67.3	27.2	4.8	0.7	
I feel secure	Male	63.9	32.0	3.2	0.9	0.027
	Female	58.6	32.2	7.5	1.7	
I have somebody to talk to about important matters	Male	60.7	27.4	9.6	2.3	0.031
	Female	73.9	19.7	5.4	1.0	
I think about the meaning of my life	Male	19.3	31.2	34.8	14.7	0.003
	Female	33.2	30.5	28.2	8.1	

After dichotomized into often/seldom
 ns = not significant $p > 0.05$

Autonomy and Possibilities to Participate in Important Decisions

The questionnaire also included questions on autonomy and possibilities for the young people to participate in important decisions. The answers are shown in Table 4.

As a group, the young people experienced a high degree of autonomy and possibilities to participate in important decisions about their situation. Comparing the view of the reindeer herders with other respondents in the study there was a statistically significant difference ($p < 0.05$); 11.5 per cent of reindeer herders did not feel that they could participate in important decisions concerning their situation compared to 0.9 per cent of others, and 50 per cent of reindeer herders compared to 35.7 per cent of others stated, “other people decide about important decisions in my life.”

There were no statistically significant differences between males and females in any of these questions. Nearly 40 per cent of the young people agreed that it sometimes was not easy to obtain the information they needed.

We also included a general question on life satisfaction. To the question whether they considered themselves happy, 36 per cent of the young people answered “very happy,” 55 per cent answered “quite happy,” 7 per cent “not especially happy” and 2 per cent “I don’t know.”

Table 4. Questions on autonomy, responses in per cent for men and women combined (n=515).

	Yes, nearly always	Yes, sometimes	No
What I do myself determines how things develop	79.7	19.9	0.4
Others decide about important decisions in my life	3.9	33.3	62.8
I feel I can participate in important decisions about my situation	80.0	18.0	2.0
It is easy to obtain the information I need	56.2	39.4	4.1

Expectations of the Future

The questionnaire also included a number of open-ended questions on expectations of the future.

“*How do you want the future to be?*” Half of the respondents (n=263) stated that they wanted to continue living the way they were living now; the other half (n=245) wanted to change things. They gave examples like “[I want to] change my drinking habits,” “increase my self-esteem,” “live in a way that makes me feel better,” and “not live for other people.”

They also answered more generally, giving high priority to changing

their work situation. Many wanted to prioritise their family and tend to important relations more than they did today. Many wanted to live a less stressful life and to settle down and have children. Several answered that they wanted to work with reindeer herding more, learn the Sami language and make sure that their children could learn the language.

“What do you think you will be doing in five years’ time?” A majority thought that they would be working, several mentioned a specific job. Several wanted to continue reindeer herding and several expected to start reindeer herding. A few thought that they would settle down and have children, a few thought that they would have completed their studies, and some answered, “I don’t know.”

“Your greatest concern about the future?” Here 398 answered this open question. A majority mentioned concerns about not being able to continue reindeer herding (reduction of grazing land, climate change). After that, most were worried about their work situation—whether or not they would have a job and, if they had a job, where they would want to live and whether they could manage on their income.

Discussion

Limitations of the Study

The response rate of 59 per cent is satisfactory considering the problems of reaching a group of young people who move around quite a lot. Young people are also less likely to respond to a questionnaire. There was a gender difference in the dropouts, with 68 per cent men and 32 per cent women. Most of the non-responders came from the very north of Sweden (Karesuando, Kiruna, Jokkmokk). An interpretation is that the dropouts may consist of many reindeer herders. It is possible that the results are not then representative for reindeer herders. Further, the results in this study are only representative for young Sami who have an explicit Sami identity. In Sweden, most Sami are assimilated into Swedish society and it is generally not possible to identify who is Sami and who is not.

Socioeconomic Background

The majority of the young people had completed school and very few were unemployed. It became clear that the reindeer herders were facing a difficult financial situation: reindeer herding incurs considerable expenses, and is dependent on nature and its shifting fortunes. The young people regard reindeer herding as a way of life rather than a job and wish to continue in spite of economic hardship (Nordin 2007).

Sami Ethnicity

We agree with Kirmayer *et al.* (2000) that there are multiple meanings of aboriginal (indigenous) identity.

Being part of an indigenous people, being Sami, is something the young people are proud of. The native Sami language and/or the possibilities to learn it seem to be of high importance, and an absolute majority want to learn the language. Reindeer herding is viewed as a very important carrier of culture, and the reindeer have great symbolic value. It could be hard to be a Sami in Sweden, the young people are compelled to explain and defend their culture and way of life; often they were given the impression that reindeer herding was an obstacle to societal progress. From the statements given by the young Sami, it is obvious that Swedish people use the same arguments today as a century ago. In the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century, agriculture seemed to be the highest level of culture and the Sami cultural destiny was to die out (Lundmark 2002). Now we know that the industrial society has also had its day (in Europe) and that we are living in a postmodern society based on information and high technology, and yet Sami culture is still alive. In his book *Myten om framsteget* ['The myth of progress'] the philosopher Georg Henrik von Wright discusses how our extremely technocratic and profit-maximising society is losing its connection to nature and more spiritual values, with a consequently large impact on people's well-being (von Wright 1993).

It became clear that the young people in this study view Sami culture as a way of life, a whole, a lifestyle, a special way of feeling, thinking, learning and perceiving throughout life. Nearly all (92 per cent) felt that it was important to preserve and strengthen their culture.

In our view, most of the young people in this study have a strong and positive Sami identity. According to Phinney (1990), this should result in a positive relationship to health and well-being.

Perceived Discrimination and/or Ill-Treatment

Half of the respondents had been assaulted or ill treated because of their ethnicity and for the reindeer herders the figure was 70 per cent. A quarter had experienced derogatory language from people like teachers, police and bus drivers—a mixture of racism, discrimination and ignorance. The results show that the more explicit a person's Sami ethnicity was, the more discrimination he or she experienced. This means that if you speak the native language, or are a reindeer herder, you are more exposed. A study in Norway has shown that ethnic discrimination is an important variable related to health inequalities and that lower socioeconomic status could not fully ex-

plain inferior health reports given by Sami participants (Hansen *et al.* 2010). Whitbeck *et al.* conducted a qualitative study on perceived discrimination, traditional practices and depressive symptoms based on a sample of Native American adults. They found that discrimination was strongly associated with depressive symptoms and that engaging in traditional practices buffers the negative effect of discrimination (Whitbeck *et al.* 2002).

In Sweden, Sami have a legal right to learn their native language in school, as they are the indigenous people of Sweden. However, this obligation is not fulfilled and 37 per cent of the respondents in the present study had asked for education in their native language but had not received it. Several studies have shown that learning one's native language or language revitalisation can be a health-promotion strategy (King *et al.* 2009; Bals *et al.* 2010). In this study, it was clear that the opportunity to learn their native language was extremely important to the young people.

It is very striking that about 90 per cent of the young Sami were compelled to defend and explain about their culture and history. It is then obvious that there is a lack of information and education about the indigenous people of Sweden—the teaching about the Sami is scarce in schools, contrary to the obligation given in the Education Act. In a study entitled “Exotic reindeer herders and the magic of the Drum,” the author assessed 63 school textbooks regarding their description of the Sami: half did not mention the Sami at all, and those that did gave a superficial and limited description (Karlsson 2004). In our opinion, the Sami people have been neglected by the Government, which, as over a century ago, turn a blind eye to their situation. Ignorance about the Sami is a burden that increases pressure on the young people, and could be a very significant stressor. And perhaps more seriously, this ignorance could be a breeding ground for prejudices and racism.

Like Bals *et al.*, we believe that Sami nation-building and cultural revitalisation have contributed to cultural pride and promoted well-being among the Sami (Bals *et al.* 2010). We believe that ethnic socialisation (transmission of information, values and perspectives about ethnicity to children) comes not only from parents (Balto 1997) but also from Sami society and organisations, which helps to generate positive attitudes towards their own ethnic identity (Yasui *et al.* 2004; Yasui & Dishion 2007). The reindeer herders as a group exist in a very severe situation. They do not feel participant in important decisions about their situation and feel, to a higher degree than other respondents, that others decide about important matters in their life. This could be a risk factor with a negative impact on well-being in the long run. We believe that being respected as a people with their unique history and life situations, and the opportunity to continue their traditional way of life, are the most important contributions to the well-being of this group.

Self-Perception

All the young people in this study have an explicit Sami identity and a majority are proud to be Sami. A majority of the young people in the study are still connected to a *sameby* and are engaged in work with reindeer, fishing, hunting or handicraft. They belong somewhere and are part of something greater than themselves—and in our view this connection is health promoting. The Sami still experience a traditional way of life, with reindeer herding, hunting and fishing, which could be an important element in understanding differences between Sami and the well-being of other indigenous peoples. In a review article by King *et al.* assessing the underlying causes of the health gap between indigenous and non-indigenous people, the authors stated: “Cultural identity depends not only on access to culture and heritage but also on opportunities for cultural expression and cultural endorsement within society’s institutions” (King *et al.* 2009).

Another factor promoting well-being is good relations with family, relatives and friends. In Sami culture the family is valued very highly, and a strong connection to one’s family gives a feeling of belonging and of not being alone.

Gender Perspective

Although both female and male respondents reported having good relations to family to a very high degree, there was a statically significant gender difference in favour of the males. This is both interesting and surprising, as women are commonly said to have more social relations than men. On the other hand, compared to male respondents, female respondents reported not only having more important relations (somebody to talk to) but also having more thoughts about the meaning of life. The male respondents were more satisfied with their life situation and their own performance compared to female respondents. It is not easy to understand these differences: is it a difference in coping style, with females having a more reflective cognitive style or are they more sensitive to norms and demands mirroring gender differences in expectations and demands socially constructed in our society? The women generally seemed to be the carriers of tradition and culture, and they are still responsible to a very high degree for raising the children, which could be a great stressor when one’s culture is under threat.

Conclusions

We believe it is more fruitful to think in terms of risk and protective factors to understand the complexity of human well-being, where negative life experiences can be mediated by positive or protective factors. The young Sami in our study had experiences of ill-treatment because of ethnicity to a

high degree. The ignorance about the Sami is apparent, they have very often had to defend and explain their way of life and culture. This could be both a stressor and a clarifying factor. Being aware of differences in culture and lifestyles probably helps to understand and gain a more profound perspective on life, as well as helping to learn to cope with different situations in life (Yasui & Dishion 2007; Bals *et al.* 2010).

However, in this group of young Sami people we also found factors promoting well-being; to have work/or study, a positive self-esteem, good relations with family, relatives and friends and a strong feeling of affinity among the Sami.

NOTES

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JAN RAGNAR HAGLAND

Literacy and Trade in Late Medieval Norway

ABSTRACT Only faint traces can be observed of literacy connected to domains other than the legal sphere in late medieval Norway. This may be the result of poor archival practices for keeping written material not strictly connected to legal matters, such as the activities carried out by merchants and tradesmen. The present article tries nonetheless to study whether or not it is possible to relate the notion of literacy to trade in this period of time. The lack of evidence written in Roman letters may, it seems, to some extent be remedied by runic inscriptions excavated in medieval Norwegian towns. We must assume that the use of runes within the domain of trade grew out of an increasingly more complex organisation of mercantile activities which we see especially in an important port such as Bergen in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. It is, perhaps, not only due to chance that the discovered evidence seems to reflect the situation before the middle of the fourteenth century, when Bergen in particular was struck by the Great Plague. Whether the dramatic events caused by the Black Death did create a discontinuity in runic literacy connected to trade, we do not know.

KEYWORDS Old Norse, medieval literacy, runes, trade

As has been stated elsewhere, only faint traces can be observed of literacy connected to domains other than the legal sphere in late medieval Norway—that is to say in Norwegian society from the middle of the fourteenth century up to about 1500 (cf. Hagland 2005: 95 f.). This may, of course, to a certain degree at least, be the result of poor archival practices for keeping written material not strictly connected to legal matters, such as, for instance, material related to the activities carried out by merchants and tradesmen. In the following we shall nonetheless

try to investigate whether or not it is possible to relate the notion of literacy to a specific domain such as trade in this period of time. In so doing we shall have in mind the situation in England, summed up by Clanchy (1993: 237) as follows:

With lesser merchants, it is doubtful whether literacy in Latin was yet an essential skill, as they worked from memory and tally sticks. Book learning and book keeping became crucial to lesser merchants only when they ceased to travel with their wares and sat in offices instead. On the whole, that is a development of the fourteenth century rather than the twelfth, as far as England is concerned.

Any similar kind of development in Norway is difficult to trace. The preserved source material of records written on parchment or paper with Roman letters contains practically nothing that allows us to make estimates of the level of literacy connected to this important domain of social life in Norway in the period from about 1300 to 1500. There are, of course, in the preserved sources a large number of so-called *vitnebrev* (notitia or affidavits, perhaps) that record in writing the purchase and sale of landed property and also receipts for the sale of land (cf. Hamre 2004: 62–68). We do not need to expand on this kind of document here. Suffice it to underscore that these still belong primarily in the legal sphere as evidence of specific transactions—transactions that in themselves differ from what we usually speak of as trade. DN II 333, issued 10 December 1356 in Bergen, might be a good example of the former type in which the transaction of land is stated as follows: ... *ek Peter Hakonar son viðr gænger þui meðr þesso minu brefue at ek hefuir sælt Petre Sigurðr syni jord mína er Husstad eitir er liggr j Jorunda fyrði aa Sunmære* [‘I Peter Hákonarson acknowledge by my letter to have sold to Peter Sigurðarson my estate (farm) called Husstad situated by the Hjörundfjord in Southern Møre (Sunmære)’] and so on according to established legal formulae. DN II 241, issued 4 February 1341 at Raumsaas¹ could serve as a good example of a receipt for payment involved in such a transaction stating that

...*þæir helldo hondom Vesete a Raumsase ok Haldor Gudbrandz son mæd þi skilyrði at Haldor væita þa viðr gongu at han hafde þa fyrste peningh ok efstæn ok allæ þær j millum firir þrigiæ aure bool j Raumsase er han hafde selt Kolbjorn þo sua at Vesete lauk honum i halft kyrlaghe en annæt Kolbjorn...*

[‘They shook hands, Vesete at Raumsási and Halldor Gudbrandsson, to the effect that Haldor acknowledged to have received the first and the last penny and all in between for three *eyris-ból* worth of land at Raumsás which he had sold to Kolbjorn, specifying, though, that Vesete had paid him half a cow’s worth and Kolbjorn the other half...’]

Also the preserved cadastres of property of the Church as well as of the secular upper classes may be seen as expressions of literacy relating to economic transactions (cf. Hagland 2005: 37–40). But again the making of cadastres cannot be seen as an activity relating to trade as such. However, what little we have preserved of written material that does relate to trade proper, some few notes from the 1490s (cf. Hagland 2005: 95 f.) for the keeping of accounts or for stock-taking, seem, formally, to be quite close to the corpus of cadastres from the period that occupies us here.

This utmost scarcity of source material for the study of literacy connected to trade in late medieval Norway seems, in part at least, to improve somewhat if we take the digraphic situation of the High and Late Middle Ages into consideration. That is if we include runic inscriptions among the sources. The question has been asked, however, whether or not runic writing in general should be included in the notion of literacy. Spurkland (2004: 342) puts it as follows:

It is commonly assumed that literacy was developed in response to the need for extending and materializing the collective memory. But the texts preserved for posterity, such as laws, religious texts, legends, historical narratives, charters, and even literary texts, were written in order to be delivered aloud on special occasions. Books and letters were intended for many people and were commonly read aloud and listened to. Runic script had a different purpose. What was carved in runes was primarily intended for silent reading. The addressee of most of the medieval runic inscriptions was not the collective but the individual. The text should not be broadcast but mediated from eye to eye.

As a consequence of this, Spurkland maintains,

[t]he literate mentality and everything that follows in its wake was more or less absent in the rune-carver's surroundings, where he sat handling his knife and incising his runes on a piece of wood (Spurkland 2004: 342).

This is a very general position to take as far as the question of possible runic literate communities is concerned and it needs to be modified—as has in fact been done, to some extent at least, by Spurkland himself in a subsequent article (Spurkland 2005). It is, at any rate, a well established fact that a considerable number of the medieval runic inscriptions, for example from Bergen, have to do with trade, one way or the other, inscriptions that clearly belong in a literate community or in literate communities. Suffice it here to mention Ingrid Sanness Johnsen's well documented study "Die Runeninschriften über Handel und Verkehr aus Bergen" (Johnsen 1987) in evidence of this. The writing in runes related to trade in this particular urban con-

text includes a wide range of text types, from simple labelling to letters of considerable length and complexity as we shall see below (cf. Johnsen 1987: 739–744 for a survey of the letters unearthed in Bergen). It is true that some of the letters relating to trade seem to have one individual addressee, but even so, they clearly belong in a literate community. We shall return to this point below. The shorter messages, which, to a certain degree at least, seem to belong in older archaeological contexts than the letters, contain, in part, what appears to be simple forms of accounting and should, as it seems, be compared to the kind of literacy among lesser merchants referred to by Clanchy in the quote cited above. The shorter messages belong first and foremost in the twelfth and early thirteenth centuries. Furthermore, one-word labels like *salt* [‘salt’] and *olea* [‘oil’] (B 34 and N613 from Bergen, cf. Johnsen 1987: 742–743) most certainly belong in a wider context than one individual recipient of the “message.”

Be this as it may. There is every reason to think that the runic inscriptions relating to trade, the runic letters in particular, did belong in a genuinely literate context—a context in which the choice of script appears to have been circumstantial rather than anything else.

We shall take a much quoted letter from Bryggen in Bergen as our main example of a runic inscription that displays distinct and characteristic features of a fairly advanced level of literacy connected to trade in particular in the period that occupies us here, the N-648 (NIyR). As has been pointed out by several scholars, this is obviously a business letter between well-established traders or merchants in Bergen at the very beginning of the fourteenth century (cf. NIyR VI: 97–106, Johnsen 1987: 718–721). The letter reads as follows in normalized Old Norse:

Hafgrími féлага sínum, sendir Þórir fagr kveðju Guðs ok sína, sannan félagskap ok vináttu. Mart skortir mik, félagi! Ekki er munngátit, eingi fiskarnir. Vil ek at þú vitir, en eigi kref þú. Bið bóndann koma suðr till vár ok sjá hvað oss liðr. Eggja hann til; en kref þú einskis hluta mér; ok eigi lát þú Þorstein lang vita. Send mér hanzka nǫkkura. Ef Sigríðr þarf nǫkkurs, þá bjóð henni. Heit þú mér ekki vætta hýð válaði.

[“To Hafgrim, his partner, Þórir Fagr sends God’s and his own greetings, true partnership and amity. I am in lack of many things, partner. There is no ale and no fish. I want you to know, but do not require anything from me. Ask the proprietor (bóndann) to come south to us to see how we are. Urge him to do so, but do not ask anything from me. And do not let Þorsteinn Lang know. Send me some gloves. If Sigríðr needs anything, then offer it to her. Promise me no reproach for my incapacity”].

The text of this letter has the formal set-up of a standard charter as we know it in the comparatively large Norwegian corpus from the thirteenth century onwards (cf. Hamre 2004). In this particular case, then, the text has a *protocol* with an *inscriptio* (*Hafgrimi, félaga sinum*). It has an *intitulatio* (*Þórir fagr*), a *salutatio* with an *invocatio* (*sendir...kveðju Guðs ok sína, sannan félagskap ok vináttu*). Then there is a *publicatio* or a *promulgatio* (*vil ek at þú vitir*) after the initial part of the *narratio*, which begins with the words *Mart skortir mik, félagi!* and continues after the *publicatio*. It is, moreover, possible that the last sentence (*heit þú mér ekki vætta hýð válaði*) constitutes a conventional *eskathocol* of a business letter. Judging from the context of the letter as a whole, this seems feasible, but as the runic inscription N648 is the only text of its kind preserved in the corpus of charters, there is nothing with which we can compare this detail in the preserved Norwegian source material (cf. Hagland 1994: 87–88). This is the most complete of the runic letters from Bryggen in Bergen that have so far been published and the one that, seen from a formal point of view, is the most consistent. It is, however, not an isolated case. At least six more inscriptions from the same environment reveal formal features similar to N648, although sometimes quite fragmentarily so. They are all archaeologically dated within a century after N648, archaeologically dated to ca 1300, as we have seen (for details cf. Johnsen 1987: 739–42 and NIyR VI: 97–139). Even if lacking the formal set-up of N648, some of these inscriptions are, moreover, epistolary in wording and content, obviously related to wholesale business or retail trade in some way or the other. N650 is a good example of a fully preserved and well-formed text of this kind:

*Eindriði! Þetta átt þú mér at gjalda: Tvá mæla ok þrjú sáld, en *annarstveggi sextán mæla. En þú skalt, Eindriði, taka þat korn sem Bergþórr á mér at lúka. Eigi minna en sextán mæla skalt þú taka eða elligar tak þú eigi. En fýður minn bið ek at hann gildi mér þrjú sáld.*

[Eindriði! You will have to pay me this: Two *mælar* and three *sáld*,² and in addition(?) sixteen *mælar*. And you shall, Eindriði, take the grain which Bergþórr is due to pay me. You shall not accept anything below sixteen *mælar*, if so you shall take nothing at all. And I ask my father to pay me three *sáld*].

Corresponding runic texts from elsewhere are not known, even if fragments of letters whose content and context can not be clearly identified may occur, a possible example of which is N834 from Trondheim, archaeologically dated to the period ca 1275–1325. The fragment may be read as follows: Side A: *Illt er mér nú, Ívarr, góða, Guð bø(n)(?)*--- [‘I am in a difficult position

now, Ívarr when the yields (?) are concerned, may God'] ---“ Side B: *ek hugi at fyrir se komet opt bo*--- [‘I think that [???] has often been obstructive (?)’] ---. It is obviously a message of some sort, but it cannot, with any degree of certainty, be connected to trade.

The existence of the Bryggen epistolary runic material, such as the examples given above, means, at any rate, that literacy at a quite advanced level can provably be seen as part of the community of trade and tradesmanship in that particular urban setting. Literacy at a certain level, then, provably did exist among merchants at least as early as the beginning of the fourteenth century. The N648, carved on the four sides of a square (15 x 13 mm) wooden stick, 250 mm long (cf. NIyR VI: 97–98), may even be seen as an expression of the archetypal medieval runic inscription. It could in consequence possibly be the outcome of a typical situation in which a rune carver, if we are to believe Spurkland’s vivid description, void of anything like a literate mentality, was “handling his knife and incising his runes on a piece of wood” (see quote above).

There is, however, every reason to see texts like N648 and N650 as integral parts of a Scandinavian late medieval digraphic literacy, evidenced by texts written in runes as well as in Roman letters. That is to say that they should be considered the “end product” (cf. Clanchy 1993: 20) of the same literate mentality as evidenced by the relatively large corpus of records written on parchment or paper with Roman letters in the same period relating to the legal sphere of society in some way or other. In consequence there is no reason to exclude runic writing as such from the notion of literacy at large. The runic business letters from Bergen differ from congruent written sources only by the choice of script and material used for conveying these messages. As has frequently been pointed out, this choice was obviously circumstantial. Activities outside the scriptorium did not easily lend themselves to writing letters with pen and ink on parchment, whereas comparatively long and complex texts could without too much difficulty be incised by a competent and literate carver on a wooden stick prepared for such usage.

The N648 provides, moreover, evidence to the effect that merchants, even when travelling with their wares, depended to a degree on literacy rather than on memory and oral transmission. In situations like the one experienced by the trader at work south of Bergen, as it seems, the choice of script and medium was obvious in a digraphic community such as late medieval Bergen. The carver’s intimate knowledge of the structure of a formal letter in general displays a quite advanced level of literacy that can indeed be related to trade. It is not feasible to think that a well-formed letter like N648 did exist in complete isolation. There is, in consequence, no reason to

think that the scanty material that has been discovered in archaeological contexts rather than in archives, represent unique instances of individual literate skills related to this domain. They should rather be seen as the faint footprints of a Norwegian development parallel to what Clanchy suggests for England in the fourteenth century (cf. quote above) even if not of the same proportions.

The (runic) literacy evidenced by the epistolary texts from fourteenth century Bergen seems to build, in part at least, on an earlier and less developed level of literacy related to trade, such as labelling and short notices having to do with simple book-keeping or accounting. The relatively large corpus of marks of ownership unearthed in Bergen and Trondheim constitutes a major and important part of labelling practices (cf. Hagland 1988, Johnsen 1994). These marks may contain a personal name only, such as *Þormóðr* (N754, Bergen) and *Torfi auk Þorkr* (N798, Trondheim). In most cases there is a personal name together with the present tense singular of the verb *eiga*, 'to own'—*á*, such as *Óláfr á*, 'Ólafr owns' (N716, Bergen), *Árni á*, 'Arni owns' (N782, Trondheim). In some cases there is even a grammatical object, usually the pronoun *mik*, 'me,' or the noun *sekk*, 'sack,' such as *Nikulás á mik*, 'Niculas owns me' (N715, Bergen), *Ormr á sekk*, 'Ormr owns the sack' (N796, Trondheim). Some of these marks are incised with tallies, obviously used for counting, which associates these runically inscribed objects to a large corpus of tally sticks, some 600 of which have been recorded in the excavated material from Bergen and univocally interpreted as evidence for commercial activities of some sort (cf. Hagland 1994: 86).³ The marks of ownership seem to have served mainly to identify owners of wares during transport into the ports of Bergen and Trondheim (cf. Hagland 1994: 84–86), the implication of which is that the emerging medieval runic literacy connected to trade should not be confined to urban settings such as the two ports from which this particular kind of archaeological evidence is known. The phenomenon of marking may, as such, have been much more widespread.

Moreover, an inscription like N654 may serve to represent one of several expressions of runic literacy from the twelfth century, related to rudimentary accounting at a slightly more advanced level than the tally sticks mentioned by Clanchy (see above): *Pétr lét tvær merkr, Óláfr þrettán pund // Sverðolf r-- engu lokit*, ['Peter delivered two marks, Ólafr thirteen pounds // Sverðolf [has]-- paid nothing.']

Chance, then, provides us with material that unveils a fairly well developed runic literacy connected to trade already in fourteenth century Norway. The representativity of this material cannot be established with any degree of certainty. There are reasons to believe, however, that the elaborate runic texts that constitute the culminating point in terms of literacy con-

nected to trade represent only a fraction of what was actually produced. A corpus of wax tablets—*diptycae*—has been unearthed in Trondheim and elsewhere, Bergen included. At least part of this material belongs in archaeological contexts from the late twelfth century onwards (cf. Hagland 2002: N875). The tablets may have been used for messages written in either of the two available scripts and may well have been used in connection with trade. We do not know. Nonetheless these objects are there as tangible evidence of a kind of literacy that implicitly extends, by far we must think, the evidence represented by the relatively restricted amount of inscriptions carved on wood, bone and so on.

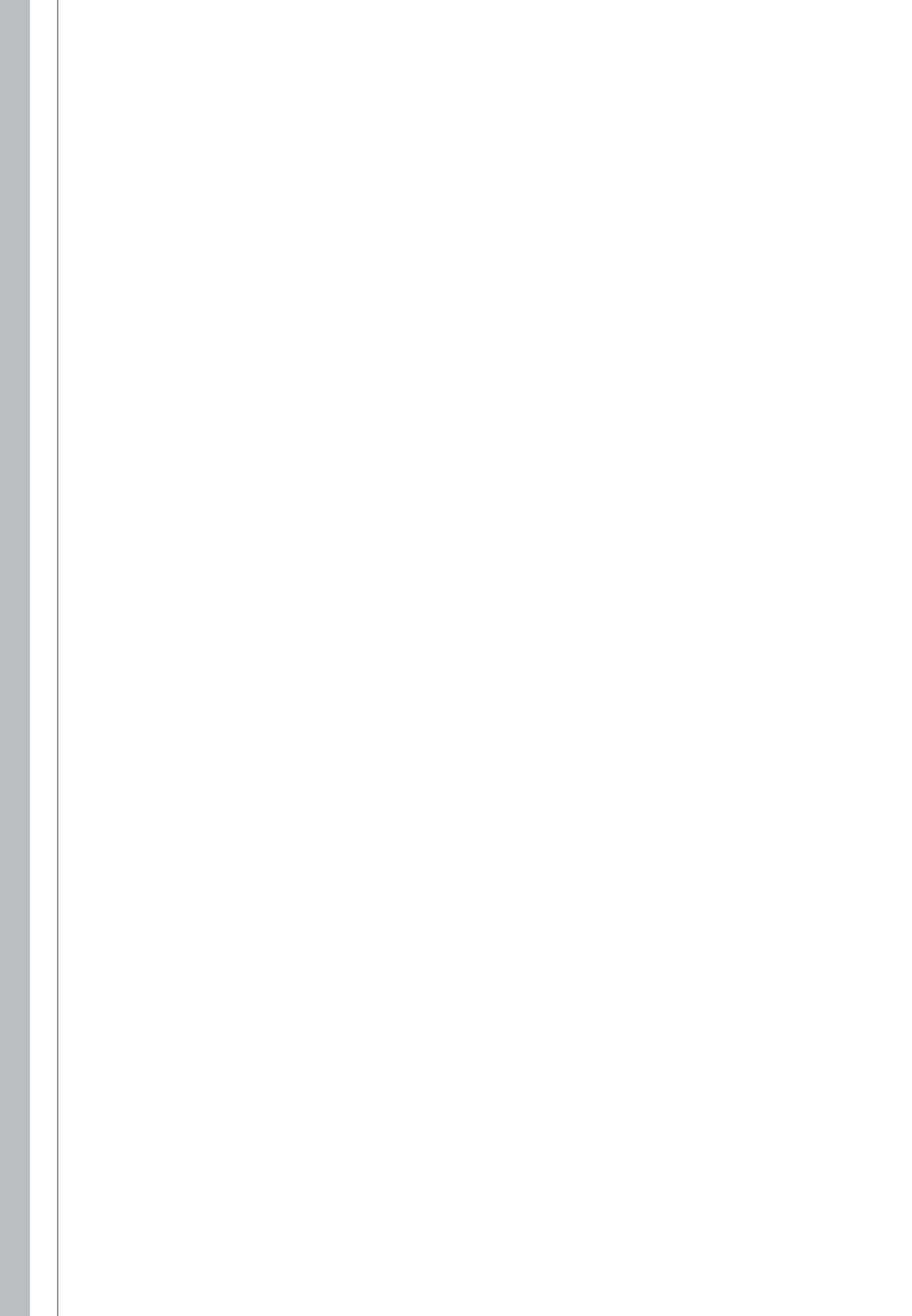
We must assume that the use of runic inscriptions within the domain of trade grew out of an expanding and increasingly more complex organisation of mercantile activities which we see especially in an important port such as Bergen in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. It is, perhaps, not only due to chance that the discovered evidence seems, by and large, to reflect the situation before the middle of the fourteenth century, when Bergen in particular was struck by the Great Plague (cf. also Helle 1982: 686–693). Whether the dramatic events caused by the Black Death did create a discontinuity in runic literacy connected to trade, we do not know. What we can clearly see in the material from the first part of the fourteenth century, though, is what should be called a literate mentality connected to trade expressed in runic writing. Once established, we must think, this mentality continued to produce texts in ways that cannot be properly traced in the sources till early modern times. Texts related to the domain of trade do not seem to have been meant to last in the period of Norwegian history that concerns us here. Archival routines and practices for taking care of written material produced for running businesses of various kinds no doubt belong in societies more strictly regulated than late medieval Norway.

NOTES

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- ¹ Today: Romsås, municipality of Ringebu in Gudbrandsdalen.
 - ² A measure of capacity. A *sáld* contained six *mælar*. There was no standard cubic content, but in most cases a *sáld* would equal 97.2 litres.
 - ³ Nine of the 114 published marks of ownership from Bergen and one of 24 from Trondheim have tallies carved into them: N660, 676, 677, 689, 706, 757, 766, 767, 772 (Bergen) and 797 (Trondheim).

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ANNEGRET HEITMANN

„[A]lles öde und kahl, und somit echt isländisch“

Ein Reisebericht aus dem Jahr 1846
oder die Anfänge des Island-Tourismus

ABSTRACT Der Artikel stellt einen Reisebericht der Österreicherin Ida Pfeiffer in den Mittelpunkt, die im Jahr 1845 Island besuchte. Da Tourismus als ein Phänomen und Charakteristikum der Moderne gilt, lädt Pfeiffers Islandreise zu Fragen bezüglich der Anfänge touristischen und einer möglichen Authentizität frühmodernen Reisens ein. Der Authentizitätsbegriff, der heute oft im Zentrum neuer Tourismusforschung steht, stellt einen Einfallswinkel für die Analyse dar. Während die Autorin selbst die Ursprünglichkeit des Landes und die Echtheit ihres Erlebens hervorhebt, wird deutlich, dass sie eben diese Authentizität durch bestimmte Inszenierungsverfahren hervorbringt. So ist es nicht erstaunlich, dass – wie eine zeitgenössische Karikatur belegt – die Autorin schon in der Mitte des 19. Jh. in einen Tourismusdiskurs eingeschrieben wird.

KEYWORDS Tourismus, Reiseliteratur, Islandreisen, Island im 19. Jh., Ida Pfeiffer, Authentizität, Weiblichkeit

Heute ist Island ein Reiseland, das insbesondere Wanderer, Rucksack- und Abenteuer touristen anzieht. Die weite Landschaft, Lavawüsten, Geysire und Vulkane verheißen Ruhe, Einsamkeit und Erlebnisse von Authentizität und Ursprünglichkeit. Diese touristische Sehnsucht geht mit einem Kolonialisierungsgestus und mit dem Widerspruch einher, die Alterität und ‚Ursprünglichkeit‘ entlegener Gebiete gleichzeitig zu verherrlichen, zu vermarkten und letztlich zu ihrer Zerstörung beizu-

tragen. Damit ist die dem Tourismus inhärente Ambivalenz aufgerufen, die ihn seit seinen Anfängen prägt und die den „homo touristicus“ (Spode 1999: 112) zu einem typischen Vertreter der modernen Gesellschaft macht und ihn vom transhistorisch nachweisbaren Reisenden unterscheidet. Während die Reise der vormodernen Zeit sich durch ein Vorhaben und einen Zweck (Pilgerfahrt, Handel, Bildung) auszeichnet, gilt der Tourismus als vorübergehender, interesseloser Ortswechsel zum Zwecke individueller Erbauung, wie ihn erst die moderne Zeit seit der Industrialisierung kennt. In seiner „Theorie des Tourismus“ stellte Hans Magnus Enzensberger als wichtigsten Determinanden für das Aufkommen des Phänomens das Vorhandensein und die Kapazität von neuen, schnelleren und flexibleren Verkehrsmitteln dar; Tourismus ist also verkehrstechnisch bedingt und geht schon insofern mit Modernität, Fortschritt, Tempo und Zielgerichtetheit einher (Enzensberger 1964: 189). Diese Faktoren schufen aber nicht nur die Möglichkeit, sondern auch das Bedürfnis zur Reise, denn die Industrialisierung selbst brachte die Lebensverhältnisse hervor, die eine „Flucht aus der selbstgeschaffenen Realität“ (Enzensberger 1964: 191) geradezu herausforderten und im Laufe von sehr kurzer Zeit eine Massenbewegung hervorriefen.

Auf diese Weise schlägt das Streben nach Authentizität, Erleben und Erholung, das der Tourist zu verwirklichen sucht, zwangsläufig in sein Gegenteil um: Der beabsichtigte Ausstieg aus der Zeit wird durch Fahrpläne normiert und die Suche nach Freiheit und Abenteuer wird durch den massenhaften Ansturm auf die Reiseziele konterkariert. Das Authentizitätsstreben geht also mit einer Erfahrung von Vergeblichkeit einher. Es ist daher nicht verwunderlich, dass man den Touristen meist pejorativ bewertet hat, ihm symbolisches Kapital aberkannt und Oberflächlichkeit, unangemessene Hast und Streben nach Scheinwerten zugesprochen hat (Hachtmann 2007: 13; Culler 1988: 153). Touristen sind immer nur die anderen, da jeder von ihnen seine eigene Teilhabe an dem Massenphänomen zu verdrängen bemüht ist. Hinzu kommt eine ebenfalls meist negativ bewertete Tendenz zur Mittelbarkeit des Erlebens: Denn sobald ein Ort entdeckt und als Reiseziel und als sehenswert markiert ist, wird er zum Zeichen seiner selbst, seine Besucher werden zu Nachfahren (Culler 1988: 155). Der touristischen Erfahrung liegt also eine Nachträglichkeit, eine Vermittlung durch Karten, Führer und diverse andere Medien zugrunde, die den Blick prägen (Urry 1990). Obwohl durch die Suche nach Ausstieg, Neubeginn und Ursprüngen motiviert, scheint der Tourismus sein eigenes Ende von Beginn an zu enthalten, die implizierte Teleologie mündet unmittelbar in Niedergang.

Da das beschriebene und oft abschätzig behandelte Phänomen aber nicht nur unausweichlich, sondern allgegenwärtig ist, vor allem aber weil die ihm inhärenten Paradoxa historisch und kulturell aussagekräftig sind,

bemüht sich die aktuelle Tourismusforschung um eine Neubestimmung des zentralen Authentizitätsbegriffs (Knudsen & Waade 2010). Statt den Wettstreit um Echtheit, Originalität und unberührte Landschaften zu verurteilen, arbeitet man heute an einer Historisierung, Differenzierung und Erweiterung des Konzepts und seines weitreichenden Verständnisses: „The discussion of authenticity has had epistemological as well as ontological aims“ (Knudsen & Waade 2010: 10). In der heutigen Postmoderne kann man sogar mit einer „performative authenticity“ rechnen, die Tourismus als Handlung begreift und selbstkritisch und selbstreflexiv mit dem eigenen touristischen Erleben umgeht (Knudsen & Waade 2010: 12–13). Es stellt sich aber auch die Frage, ob diese als Meta- oder Endzeitphänomen betrachtete Erscheinung überhaupt jemals einen „reinen“ Anfang gehabt hat, ob es in Bezug auf interesselose Reisetätigkeit untouristische Authentizität oder ob es unschuldigen Tourismus geben konnte.

Aufschluss geben könnte eine Islandreise, die im Jahre 1845 durchgeführt wurde. Die Mitte des 19. Jahrhunderts stellt eine Schwellenzeit dar, in der der Tourismus in seinem Ursprungsland England bereits massenhafte Züge anzunehmen beginnt, auf Island aber noch keinerlei touristische Infrastruktur vorhanden war und die angestrebte Ursprünglichkeit, das heißt die sogenannte „object-related authenticity“ (Knudsen & Waade 2010: 10), die Authentizität und Echtheit des Reiseobjekts, zwangsläufig vorlag. Eine solche Reise erscheint geeignet, um an den Anfang zurückzugehen, um zu untersuchen, ob und wie grundlegend sich der „tourist“ vom „traveller“ unterscheidet, ob es sich um einen elementaren sozialen wie medialen Umbruch handelt oder ob die Landnahmebewegung des Tourismus auch unabhängig von Eisenbahnen und Pauschalreisen nachweisbar ist. Dabei geht es in erster Linie um „subjective“ oder „existential authenticity“ (Knudsen & Waade 2010: 11), das heißt die Frage nach dem Erleben des Reisenden, die eine besondere Note dadurch erhält, dass es sich im vorliegenden Fall um eine reisende Frau handelt, die ihre Nordlandfahrt in einem 1846 erschienenen Buch dokumentierte.¹

Ida Pfeiffers Reise als „Anomalie“

Als die Wienerin Ida Pfeiffer 1845 zu ihrer Reise nach Island aufbrach, war das ein außergewöhnliches Unterfangen, nicht nur die Exotik ihres Reiseziels betreffend, sondern auch den Mut, diese Reise als alleinstehende Frau zu unternehmen. In diesem Sinne ist Pfeiffers Islandreise auch als „Anomalie“ rezipiert worden, sei es ablehnend (von einigen Zeitgenossen) oder anerkennend (von feministisch orientierter Forschung; Mouchard 1990): Ihr Bericht über die Nordlandfahrt sei die Schilderung einer außergewöhnlich

mutigen Frau, der nur knapp bemessene finanzielle Mittel zur Verfügung standen und die, auf sich allein gestellt, den schier unerträglichen Strapazen und Gefahren einer Expedition in von der Zivilisation unberührte Gegenden schutzlos ausgesetzt war, zumal sie „in dem Bewußtsein [reiste], als Frau unwiderruflich mit den Konventionen gebrochen zu haben“ (Pelz 1993: 227).

Der Konventionsbruch betraf nicht nur die Islandreise, wie die biographisch ausgerichtete Frauenforschung ermitteln konnte, die ihrem ungewöhnlichen Lebenslauf einige Aufmerksamkeit gewidmet hat (Habinger 1997).² Von ihrer Reisetätigkeit, die sie im Alter von 45 Jahren nach dem Tod ihres Mannes begann, als ihre beiden Söhne erwachsen und selbständig waren, hat in erster Linie die Exotik der beiden Weltreisen sowie der damals Europäern nahezu unbekanntem Insel Madagaskar Interesse gefunden.³ In jüngerer Zeit sind die Werke Pfeiffers im Kontext feministischer oder gender-theoretisch orientierter Forschung als geschlechtsspezifische Repräsentationsform gelesen worden (Zienteck 1988). Während erste Arbeiten über Reiseliteratur von Frauen zunächst das Außergewöhnliche, Nicht-Beachtete und die Abweichung von den männlich geprägten Normen der Gattung betonten, ergab die sukzessive Aufarbeitung des Textfeldes nicht nur die Erkenntnis der Diversität dieser Texte (Bassnett 2002: 227), sondern auch eine kaum erwartete, relativ große Zahl an Reise- und Landesbeschreibungen von Frauen.⁴ Die Mitte des 19. Jahrhunderts, in die Pfeiffers Expedition im Jahre 1845 fällt, hat man sogar als das „goldene Zeitalter des Reisens und der Reiseliteratur von Frauen“ (Pelz 1993: 209) bezeichnet.

Die Vielzahl der Einzelnen lässt bestimmte Verallgemeinerungen über Frauenreisen zu und relativiert in gewissem Maße den Ausnahmecharakter. Pfeiffer war auch bei weitem nicht die Erste und Einzige, die sich nach Island aufmachte. Wenn auch Komfort, Tempo und Reisemittel einer Islandreise vor 150 Jahren dem heute gesuchten Abenteuer-Charakter zwangsläufig entsprachen, wurde die Vulkaninsel im Nordatlantik ab der Mitte des 18. Jahrhunderts zunächst von vereinzelt, ab dem 19. Jahrhundert dann von immer mehr meist in Gruppen organisierten Reisenden erkundet: „Soon, first-hand descriptions of travels in Iceland became the backbone of descriptions of the country“ (Sumarliði Ísleifsson 1996: 230). Neben Ida Pfeiffers Buch gehörten zu dieser Textgruppe u. a. die Reiseberichte von Johann Anderson (1747), Eggert Olassen (1775), Henry Holland (1810), George Stewart Mackenzie (1810), Ebenezer Henderson (1819) und Lord Dufferin (1857). Es stellt sich daher die Frage, wie und ob Pfeiffer sich zu ihren Vorgängern und Reisetraditionen sowie -motivationen verhält, ob die Authentizität des Erlebens durch Vorfahrer beeinflusst wird.

Ida Pfeiffers Island

Über ihr Vorhaben gibt die Autorin selbst klare Auskünfte. Nach einer religiös legitimierten Reise in das Heilige Land und den Nahen Osten will sie nun eine entlegene und als ungastlich und stürmisch bekannte Atlantikinsel besuchen. Mögliche Kritik an ihrem erneuten Aufbruch aus ihrer Wiener Heimat und an der Wahl des Reiselandes nimmt sie in einer Vorrede vorweg: „Abermals eine Reise, und noch dazu in Gegenden, die jedermann eher flieht als aufsucht. Es scheint diese Frau macht solche Reisen nur, um Aufsehen zu erregen“ (Pfeiffer 1999: 15). Diesem Vorwurf hält sie entgegen, dass es sie dränge, Island kennenzulernen, weil sie sich in der dort zu erwartenden „Anschauung erhabener Naturszenen [... ihrem] Schöpfer so nahe gebracht [fühle], daß [...] keine Mühe zu groß“ sei (16). Um nicht durch dieses Vorhaben in die Nähe von romantischen „Schwärmern“ gerückt zu werden, grenzt sie sich gleich zu Beginn des Textes von „empfindsame[n] Beobachter[n]“ (23) ab. Ihr geht es um die wahrheitsgetreue Wiedergabe des Erlebten, und so schätzt ihr Publikum sie denn auch wegen ihrer Ehrlichkeit und Nüchternheit (Habinger 1997: 46). „Ich schildere alles, wie ich es finde, wie es meinen Augen erschien, ungeschmückt, aber wahr“ (Pfeiffer 1995: 28) erklärt sie programmatisch in ihrem ersten Bericht über das Heilige Land. Und in dem Islandbuch distanziert sie sich von Reiseberichten, die bereits vorhandene nur wiederholen und sich so stark an den Eindrücken des Gelesenen orientieren, dass sie „in ihrer erhitzten Fantasie selbst Sachen zu sehen, zu hören und zu empfinden sich einbilden, die gar nicht vorhanden sind“ (140). Aufs Schärfste verurteilt sie „dergleichen Lügen und Prahlereien“ (140) und will sich stattdessen nur der Wahrheit ihrer eigenen Anschauung widmen. Damit wird dem tourismus-typischen Erleben nach Anleitung eines Reiseführers eine deutliche Absage erteilt.

So ist sie denn in ihrem Bericht dem in der klassischen Epistème vorherrschenden Paradigma der Sichtbarkeit verpflichtet (Foucault 1995), sie beschreibt Wetter und Wolken, Flüsse und Felsen, Gesteinsarten und Aussichten, Hütten und Häuser, Interieurs und Kleidungsstücke, Ess- und Trinkwaren. Besonders ausführlich werden die „Merkwürdigkeiten“ der isländischen Natur, die Lava, Geysire, Schwefelquellen und der Aufstieg auf die Hekla dargestellt. Die Repräsentation des Sichtbaren fällt in den Kontext der eurozentrischen Systematisierung der Natur, für die Linnés Klassifizierungsprojekt sinnbildend wurde (Pratt 1992: 24–30). Reiseberichte der Aufklärungszeit stehen ganz im Zeichen der wissenschaftlichen Erfassung der dem Auge zugänglichen Welt, die Hinzufügung von Pflanzen- oder Naturaliensammlungen als augenfällige Ergänzung der Erlebnisse stellt einen typischen Zug dieser Reiseberichte dar. Diesen Gattungsvorgaben entspre-

chend fügt auch Pfeiffer eine Liste über auf Island gesammelte Pflanzen und Insekten ihrem Bericht als Anhang bei (270–275), gibt sehr exakte Entfernungs- und Zeitangaben und fügt ein Dokument an „aus welchem man die Besoldung der königlich dänischen Beamten, sowie auch verschiedene andere Taxen und Gebühren ersehen kann“ (266). Wenngleich die Autorin in diesem Punkt bemüht ist, sich als Entdeckungsreisende darzustellen, weist der Eklektizismus ihrer Dokumente eher auf ein touristisches Interesse hin und erinnert weniger an ein wissenschaftliches Unternehmen als vielmehr an Auflistungen in Reisehandbüchern.

Trotz des gelehrten Anspruchs unterliegt die Annäherung an das fremde Land einer Beschränkung, die im Falle Islands besonders deutlich wird. Denn noch heute kann ein isländischer Bauer oder Lastwagenfahrer bei dem Gang durch seine heimatliche Landschaft ihre historische Bedeutung erklären. Das an der Oberfläche karge Land birgt eine Historizität in sich, die dem lediglich schauenden Besucher verborgen bleiben muss. Doch kein einziges Mal wird die Sagaliteratur in Pfeiffers Bericht erwähnt, nie werden Orte mit Geschichte und Geschichten verbunden. Ganz vereinzelt und in sehr knapper Form werden historische oder literarische Ereignisse aniziert, da aber Kontexte oder Erklärungen fehlen, müssen dem unkundigen Leser die Andeutungen unklar bleiben.⁵ Diese Informationsarmut ist insofern erstaunlich, als der Ida Pfeiffer bekannte Reisebericht des Schotten George Steuart Mackenzie, den sie in ihrem Text auch zitiert, ausführliche Kapitel über die Geschichte des Landes seit der Landnahme enthält. Er zitiert Saxo und bezieht sich in seinen Ausführungen auf eine Vielzahl von Sagas, berichtet über die Christianisierung und umfassend auch über die Institution des Thing. Seine Darstellung geht so weit ins Detail, dass er sogar formale Kennzeichen der literarischen Werke erklärt (Versmaß, Kenningar u.ä.), und er lobt in deutlichen Worten den „außerordentlichen“ Charakter der altisländischen Literatur, das rege Geistesleben und die „vortrefflichen Männer“ des alten Island (Mackenzie 1815: 14–48).⁶

Der programmatisch vertretene unvoreingenommene Blick, der auf Informationen aus Vorgängertexten verzichtet, um authentisches Erleben zu ermöglichen, birgt ein Defizit nicht nur in Bezug auf die isländische Vorzeit. Das mangelnde historische Verständnis lässt die Autorin offenbar völlig vergessen, in welcher politischen Situation die Insel sich befindet. Auch das hatte sie bei Mackenzie nachlesen können; so schreibt er zum Beispiel, dass die Isländer durch die Kolonisation durch Dänemark „viel von ihrem Geist verloren“ (66) hätten und dass „Talente und Literatur der Isländer beinahe bis zum Verschwinden unterdrückt“ (70) worden seien. Neben Naturkatastrophen und Krankheiten wie Pocken- und Pestepidemien hatte vor allem die Ausbeutung durch dänische Händler die von Pfeiffer beobachtete

verheerende Armut des Landes bedingt. Sie schreibt von „ärmlich[en] und besonders unrein[en]“ Hütten, von der fehlenden Hygiene der Menschen, ihrer kärglichen Nahrung und Trägheit:

Tritt man in eine solche Kate, so weiß man wirklich nicht, was schrecklicher ist, im Vorraume der erstickende Rauch oder in der Wohnstube die durch die Ausdünstung und Unreinlichkeit so vieler Menschen verpestete Luft. Ich möchte auch beinahe behaupten, daß der in Island herrschende schreckliche Ausschlag, Lepra genannt, mehr eine Folge der beispiellosen Unreinlichkeit, als des Klimas und der Nahrung ist (58).

Gegenüber dem erklärten Realismus fällt die starke Wertung des Beobachteten auf, vor allem die angebliche Faulheit und Falschheit der einheimischen Bevölkerung ziehen immer wieder die Kritik der Autorin auf sich: „Ich muß gestehen, daß ich den Charakter des Isländers bei jeder Gelegenheit tief unter meiner Erwartung fand, und noch tiefer unter den Schilderungen, die ich in Büchern gelesen hatte“ (81). Der Kontakt zu diesen so negativ beurteilten Menschen beschränkt sich allerdings in erster Linie wiederum nur auf die Anschauung, denn verständigen kann sich Pfeiffer mit den Einheimischen nicht. Sie hat für die Reise etwas Dänisch gelernt,⁷ scheint sich aber kaum bewusst zu sein, dass es sich dabei nur um die Sprache der hauptsächlich in Reykjavík ansässigen Kolonialherren handelt. Isländisch bezeichnet sie als „Kauderwelsch“ (131), wenn sie in den privaten Bibliotheken der Bauern Bücher in isländischer Sprache findet, legt sie sie desinteressiert aus der Hand (85 oder 145). Keinen ihrer einheimischen Führer durch das Land befindet sie für Wert, mit seinem Namen eingeführt zu werden,⁸ stets beschwert sie sich über deren Langsamkeit, Unzufriedenheit, Unreinlichkeit und Geldgier (58, 67, 71, 81, 88, 112, 141, 167). Nie bringt sie diese Eigenschaft mit der politischen Entmündigung und der kolonialen Unterdrückung zusammen, die in der großen Armut resultierten, die die beobachteten Eigenschaften mancher Isländer vielleicht begründen könnte.

Während Pfeiffer in ihrer Heimat selbst Unterordnung und unverschuldete Armut erleben musste,⁹ identifiziert sie sich in der Fremde nicht etwa mit der entrechteten Bevölkerung, sondern übernimmt die in der Gattung vorherrschende Perspektive der Privilegierten. In dieser Beziehung bietet sie ein frühes Beispiel des sich überlegen fühlenden westlichen Touristen, der die Fremde seinem euro- und ego-zentrischen Blick unterwirft und aus der Betonung der ‚Andersheit der Anderen‘ seine eigene Superiorität ableitet.¹⁰ Das Streben nach unvoreingenommenem, authentischem Erleben kann also auch eine Beschränkung der Erkenntnismöglichkeiten bedeuten.

Ida Pfeiffers Selbstinszenierung

Das Bekenntnis zum ‚prosaischen‘ Blick (163) lässt das Subjekt des Erzählens nicht als Repräsentation der Innerlichkeit hervortreten, wie es die neue Form des ästhetisierten Reiseberichts ab dem 19. Jahrhundert kennzeichnet (Brenner 1989: 35). Doch es gibt einige Passagen, an denen die Autorin die außergewöhnliche Schönheit des Landes beschreibt und „erhabene [...] Naturszenen“ (16) in der vulkanischen Landschaft ausmacht. Die beiden herausragenden Gelegenheiten, bei denen sie sich ergriffen zeigt, ergeben sich an den Zielpunkten zweier Expeditionen: am großen Geysir und auf der Spitze der Hekla. Beide Höhepunkte schildert sie im Zeichen des Unsagbarkeitstpos des Erhabenen. Die Strahlen der Geysirexplosion sind „unbeschreiblich“, für die damit verbundenen Töne „weiß [sie] wirklich keine Worte zu finden“ (136). Ebenso geht es ihr, als sie nach anstrengendem Anstieg den Gipfel der Hekla erreicht: „Solch ein Bild, wie ich es hier sah, meinen Lesern zu versinnlichen [...], ist leider meine Feder viel zu schwach.“ (153). Die Autorin ruft hier die rhetorische Tradition des Erhabenen auf, die eine Natur zu beschreiben versucht, die Bewunderung und Schrecken gleichermaßen hervorruft und angesichts des überwältigenden Eindrucks Sprachlosigkeit hervorbringt: „Am ergreifendsten aber ist die Stille, die Einsamkeit, da hört man keinen Laut, da sieht man kein lebendes Wesen. Alles ist tot“ (110). Auf dem Höhepunkt der gesamten Reise, bei Erreichen des Hekla-Gipfels, sieht sie Szenen der Vernichtung: „ein unermeßliches Chaos“ (152), „gräßlichste Schluchten, Höhlen, Ströme, Täler, Berge“, „das Bild einer erstarrten Schöpfung, tot und regungslos“ (153), dessen Furchtbarkeit sie „für alle ausgestandenen Beschwerden und Gefahren reichlich entschädigt“ (153).

Im Zentrum des Strebens stehen also das Eingeständnis von Sprachlosigkeit und die Erkenntnis der Leere und des Todes, nicht als ein versöhnliches Bild, sondern als ein Schaudern, womit sie sich in die von Edmund Burke begründete Tradition des Erhabenen als Schreckens- und Ehrfurchts-erlebnis einschreibt (Burke [1757] 1990). Dieser Eindruck kulminiert in der Gleichsetzung der Insel mit dem Tod: „Auf der ganzen Umgebung, auf Tal und Bergen lastete Totenstille; alles war ausgestorben, alles öde und kahl, und somit echt isländisch“ (118). Ida Pfeiffer erlebt die Insel im Nordatlantik als Gegenort, der durch seine Alterität besticht und somit der Besucherin die eigene Lebendigkeit – trotz oder gerade wegen der Schlafunterkünfte in Kirchen „in der Nähe meiner lieben verstorbenen Isländer“ (111) – vor Augen führt. Umgeben von „einer toten, erstarrten Natur“ (123) spürt sie in der asketischen Entsagung die eigene Energie: „wir waren die einzigen lebendigen Wesen, die diese wahrhaft greuliche Gegend durchzogen“ (124).

Damit übernimmt sie eine Strategie der Selbstvergewisserung, die mit einer strikten Dichotomisierung von Tod und Leben, von Objekt und Subjekt operiert und sowohl die objektbezogene als auch subjektive Authentizität steigert. Einerseits erhöht sie mit dieser Gegenüberstellung die Intensität des Erlebens, am Anfang des Tourismus steht sozusagen bereits seine Erfüllung. Andererseits kann sie auch an diesem Höhepunkt authentischen Erlebens Konventionen der sprachlichen Repräsentation und bestimmte Beschreibungstraditionen nicht verhehlen.

Indem sich die Autorin auf diese deutliche Weise von der bereisten Umgebung absetzt, kann sie auch ihre Abenteuer als Auseinandersetzung mit der feindlichen Umwelt entwerfen. Trotz der Passagen in der Tradition des Erhabenen stellt sich Pfeiffers Islandbericht am ehesten wie das schon im 18. Jahrhundert populäre Genre der „survival literature“ (Pratt 1992: 20) dar. Den größten Eindruck bei der Lektüre hinterlässt die Fülle an Gefahren und Unannehmlichkeiten, denen sich die Autorin auf ihrer Reise ausgesetzt sieht. Sie tritt als unerschrocken, zäh und kämpferisch hervor, indem sie fürchterlichen Stürmen (96) und „gefährlichen Abgründen“ (59) trotzt und sich „den schrecklichsten Entbehrungen und Mühen“ (79) unterzieht. Sie muss „die anstrengendsten Ritte“ (79) überstehen, die Wege sind „im höchsten Grade beschwerlich“ (100), die „furchtbare [...] Gewalt umherliegender Felsentrümmer“ (103) bringt sie in Gefahr. Hinzu kommt der primitive Charakter der Unterkünfte, die man ihr gewährt, die wiederholt mit Worten wie „ekelhaft“, „furchtbar“, voll von „üblen Gerüchen [...] Schmutz [und einem] Überfluß an Ungeziefer“ (111) charakterisiert werden. Nicht viel besser steht es mit dem Essen, das entweder „frugal“ nur aus „ein[em] Stückchen Brot und etwas Käse“ (92) besteht oder ihr „durchaus nicht [mundet]“ (74). Wegen ihrer knappen finanziellen Ressourcen reist Ida Pfeiffer nicht mit einem Zelt und eigener Kochausrüstung wie andere Expeditionen, sie bewegt sich – das ist allerdings anders in der Landschaft auch nicht möglich – zu Pferd vorwärts und übernachtet meist in Kirchen, die man ihr zur Verfügung stellt. In ihrer Optik tritt die Reise als Leidensgeschichte hervor, zu deren Beschreibung krasse Adjektive und Adverbien, bevorzugt in superlativischer und komparativischer Form, eingesetzt werden: Alles ist „gräßlich“, „schrecklich“, „höchst einförmig“, „noch viel gefährlicher“, „verwüstet“, „furchtbar“, „eklig“, „grausig“, „öde und kahl“ (passim); „ach, es war wirklich furchtbar!“ (122) und „Es kann nicht leicht etwas Beschwerlicheres geben“ (119). Die objektbezogene Authentizität wird dabei eindrucksvoll herausgestellt, die Ursprünglichkeit des Landes geht so weit, dass die Reise zu einer einzigen Strapaze wird: „Acht bis zehn Tage lebte ich oft nur von Käse und Brot und die Nächte brachte ich meist auf Kisten oder Bänken zu, wo ich oft vor Kälte kein Auge schließen konnte“ (79).

Vergleicht man ihren Bericht mit zeitgenössischen Islanddarstellungen, so wird deutlich, dass der Realismus in eine Selbstinszenierung übergegangen ist, die nicht unbedingt repräsentativ ist. Mackenzie notiert über mehrere Monate hinweg die Wetterlage, und es gibt durchaus Tage, für die „Stille“, „Heiter“ oder „Ein wenig Wolken“ verzeichnet wird, während Pfeiffer den Eindruck von dauernden Stürmen, Regenfällen und Kälte erweckt. Das Essen, das ihm in Island serviert wird, bewertet Mackenzie als sehr wohlschmeckend, er erwähnt ein Menu aus gekochtem Lachs, gebackenem Hammelfleisch, Erdäpfeln und Sago mit Rahm als Nachtisch (Mackenzie 1815: 182). Außerdem lobt er Kuchen, Roggenbrot und gekochten Sauerampfer, die ihm in isländischen Familien serviert werden (Mackenzie 1815: 195). Auch die Übernachtungsmöglichkeiten in den örtlichen Kirchen hat er im Gegensatz zu Pfeiffer als angenehm empfunden: „In der Kirche von Saurbar schliefen wir sehr behaglich“ (Mackenzie 1815: 180). Und er schätzt insgesamt die Gastfreundschaft, über deren Verwehrung Ida Pfeiffer mehrfach klagt (167), hoch ein: „Die Gesetze der Gastfreundschaft beobachten sie vorzüglich genau. Wenn sie wenig geben, so ist es weil sie wenig zu geben haben“ (Mackenzie 1815: 336).

Pfeiffer scheint also Strapazen und Gefahren zumindest so zu betonen, dass demgegenüber ihre Fähigkeiten, sie zu ertragen, deutlich hervortreten. Sie inszeniert sich angesichts der ihr durchgehend feindlich gegenüberstehenden Umwelt als Heldin, die die überkommene geschlechtliche Semantisierung des Reisens unterläuft. Denn die Eroberung des Raums, die Mobilität der Erfahrung, die den westeuropäischen Reisebericht trägt, ist traditionell männlich konnotiert.¹¹ Wenn Pfeiffers Selbstdarstellung mit solch gängigen Imaginationen von weiblicher Passivität bricht, leistet sie einen Beitrag zum ‚ungendering‘ ‚of the heroic risk-taking traveller“ (Bassnett 2002: 225) oder des Abenteuertouristen als notwendigerweise männlich. Die Dokumentation ihrer Leistungen und ihrer Fähigkeiten überschreitet die zeitüblichen Begrenzungen des weiblichen Subjekts. Doch resultiert aus dieser Überschreitung eine grundlegende Infragestellung der Geschlechterdifferenz?

Ida Pfeiffers Weiblichkeit

Die zwei offensichtlichen, sich logisch ergebenden Möglichkeiten, die aus der textuellen Hinterfragung der Geschlechterdichotomie folgen könnten, werden explizit ausgeschlossen. Zum einen wäre es denkbar, dass die Autorin, die mit ihren Islanderfahrungen ihren Mut und ihre Entschlossenheit unter Beweis stellt, sich dem ‚starken‘ Geschlecht ebenbürtig fühlt und in Entsprechung zu männlichen Identitätsmustern entwirft. Das Reisedasein

außerhalb des angestammten sozialen Kontexts wäre eine ideale Voraussetzung für eine derartige Transgression. Bei manchen Isländern ruft diese merkwürdige Frau durchaus Vorstellungen von Männlichkeit hervor, sie trauten ihr „eine Menge Kenntnisse [... zu], die sonst nur den Männern eigen sind“ (122). Zum anderen wäre die Überschreitung beider vorgegebener Geschlechtsidentitäten hin zu einer Zwischenposition, einer Transzendierung der dichotomen Normen denkbar, die einer Witwe, die ihr Leben und ihre Verpflichtungen als Ehefrau und Mutter hinter sich gebracht hat, eine durchaus akzeptable Alternative bieten könnte.

Ida Pfeiffer aber beharrt auf ihrer Weiblichkeit, wie andere reisende Frauen des 19. Jahrhunderts hält sie fest an einem „high ideal of womanhood“ (Middleton 1965: 9). „Wäre ich ein Mann, ich würde ganz anders sein“ (19), hält sie gleich einleitend fest, „so aber, als Frau schweige ich“ (19). Sie spricht von ihrem „zarte[n] Geschlecht“ (43) und reist – im Gegensatz zu manchen ihrer Geschlechtsgenossinnen (Pelz 1988: 145) – in ihrer traditionellen Frauenkleidung, wiewohl sie über deren Unbequemlichkeit und den für das Vorhaben unpraktischen Charakter mehrfach klagt:

Eine sehr unangenehme Sache ist ferner das Reiten mit den langen Frauenkleidern, denn man muß stets warm angezogen sein, und da schlagen sich die schweren, oft noch vom Regen tiefenden Kleider derart um die Füße, daß man beim Auf- und Absteigen vom Pferde im höchsten Grade unbeholfen ist. Das Schrecklichste aber ist, während der langen Regenzeit auf einer Wiese die Ruhestunde halten zu müssen. Die langen Kleider saugen da auch noch das Wasser vom nassen Grase auf, und man hat dann wirklich oft nicht einen einzigen trockenen Faden mehr an sich (80, vgl. auch 174).

Die Hosen tragende Führerin, die die Autorin gleich nach ihrer Ankunft in Havenfjord trifft, die „wie ein Mann“ agiert, wird als „merkwürdig“ apostrophiert (59) und nicht als mögliches Vorbild akzeptiert. Indem Pfeiffer mit regennassen Röcken reitet und auf Berge klettert, erhöht sie ihren Selbstentwurf als Frau, die mit Widrigkeiten zu kämpfen hat. Sie betont daher stets ihre Weiblichkeit, um das Ungewöhnliche ihres Vorhabens zu unterstreichen. Für den Schiffskapitän „gehörte wahrhaftig viel dazu, eine Frau auf solch eine Reise mitzunehmen“ (45), argumentiert sie, und wenn ihr Führer bemerkt, „daß er noch nie jemanden zu Pferde so weit geführt habe“ (151) wie sie, steigert sich ihre Leistung natürlich in Anbetracht ihres Geschlechts ganz erheblich und betont ihre Einzigartigkeit. So erreicht sie ein hohes Maß an existentieller Authentizität, ein „personal investment“, das im Zentrum touristischen Strebens steht (Knudsen & Waade 2010: 11).

Man kann vermuten, dass aus der Not der strapaziösen Reise nicht nur die Erlebnistiefe hervorging, sondern dass die Beschreibung dieser Kom-

bination von (das Land betreffender) objektbezogener und (das Erleben betreffender) subjektiver Authentizität möglicherweise ihrer Popularität zugute kommt: je ungewöhnlicher und gefährlicher die Reise, desto außerordentlicher ihre Persönlichkeit und desto besser die Verkaufschancen des Buches. Wenn sie sich als Angehörige des ‚schwachen Geschlechts‘ inszeniert, die ihre Rolle in der durch nichts zu erschreckenden Asketin findet,¹² ist das nicht zuletzt eine Vermarktungsstrategie. Dieser Weiblichkeitsentwurf führt sie andererseits auch in ein Dilemma. Denn während sie einerseits ihren Status als Frau stets betont, nimmt sie andererseits das Recht in Anspruch, wie ein Mann die Welt zu erfahren. Ihre bewundernswerte Stärke (als Abenteurer) ergibt sich aus ihrer bedauernswerten Schwäche (als Frau). Ob wir daraus schließen können, dass Ida Pfeiffer, wie es aktuelle Tourismusforschung beschreibt, die Authentizität ihres Erlebens durch besonderen körperlichen Einsatz performativ hervorbringt, oder ob es sich um Schreibstrategien handelt, die die Erinnerung und das Erleben überlagern und prägen, lässt sich nicht zweifelsfrei erschließen. Sowohl das Überbietungsphänomen als auch die mediale Umsetzung und Bewahrung stellen untrennbar zum Tourismus gehörige Merkmale dar.

Ida Pfeiffers Medien

Die traditionelle Tourismusforschung geht von einer Koinzidenz vom Ausbau und der Verfügbarkeit von Verkehrsmedien und dem Anwachsen des Tourismus aus. Im Island des 19. Jahrhunderts können wir natürlich weder Eisenbahnen noch andere moderne Verkehrsmittel, Hotels oder auch nur Hütten für Wanderer finden.¹³ Umso mehr fällt die Hektik auf, mit der die Expedition durchgeführt wird. Ida Pfeiffers Reise besteht aus ständigem Aufbruch (Pelz 1988: 153), aus Eile, Tempo und Ruhelosigkeit: „Ich drang also auf Weiterreise“ (98) lautet ein typischer Satz. Ankommen, Verweilen und Genießen sind ihre Sache nicht: „Seit frühmorgens hatte ich nichts genossen als ein Stückchen Brot und etwas Käse; – dennoch gönnte ich mir nicht die Zeit, erst Kaffee zu kochen“ (92). Nichts ärgert sie mehr als Langsamkeit und Verzögerung, die einen stetigen Streitpunkt mit ihren isländischen Führern ausmachen. „O syrische Eile und Pünktlichkeit!“ ruft sie ironisch aus, „Dich begrüße ich auch hier, beinah am entgegen gesetzten Ende der Welt“ (83). Und sie beschwert sich: „Nichts ärgerte mich stets mehr in Island, als die Langsamkeit und Gleichgültigkeit seiner Bewohner in all ihrem Tun und Treiben. Auf alles, was man begehrt oder wünscht, muß man die längste Zeit warten“ (112). Als „weiblichen Ahasver“ bezeichnet Annegret Pelz die Autorin, was die Ruhelosigkeit gut charakterisiert, doch wenn sie von „Irrfahrt“ spricht (Pelz 1993: 224), verkennt sie die Planung und die

ihren Vorgängern (wie Mackenzie) genau nachgefahrenen Routen. Exakte Zeitangaben strukturieren ihren Bericht, Auflistungen der zurückgelegten Meilen beschließen die Reiseabschnitte (100, 127 und 162). Wenn sie stolz berichtet, wie viele Meilen sie „gemacht“ (100) habe, ähnelt sie den modernen Touristen, deren Ferienwert sich durch Entfernungangaben bemisst.

Als Touristin stellt sich die Autorin auch durch die bevorzugte Wahl ihrer Verkehrsmittel dar (Jehle 1989: 84–94). Innerhalb Islands ist sie auf Pferde angewiesen, doch für die An- und Abreise von Wien über Kopenhagen wählt sie nur aus Geldmangel Segel- anstelle von Dampfschiffen, wie insgesamt die Relation von Zeit und Geld (Habinger 1997: 116) – auch wie beim modernen Touristen – eine ausschlaggebende Erwägung ihrer Reiseplanung ausmacht. Moderne, schnelle Verkehrsmittel sind ihr dabei willkommen:

Der Preis für diese kurze Fahrt von 8 bis 9 Stunden ist entsetzlich teuer; doch werden die übertrieben fordernden Unternehmer bald an den Reisenden durch eine Eisenbahn gerächt, auf der man die Strecke mit viel weniger Zeit- und Geldaufwand zurücklegen können (22).

Sie denkt in Kategorien von Konkurrenz und Wettbewerb, notiert die Pferdestärken des Dampfschiffes und seine Schnelligkeit. Mit der Eisenbahn „flog [...]“ (28) sie von Berlin nach Magdeburg. Ihr Reiseerlebnis wird durch die Verkehrsmittel, die Medien der Fortbewegung, bestimmt, das Tempo ist ein zumindest beachtenswerter Faktor, der auch die Wahrnehmung bestimmt. Denn als das Dampfschiff „viel zu schnell“ (25) durch die Sächsische Schweiz fährt, fällt es schwer, alle Bilder aufzunehmen und zu speichern.

Dem Manko menschlicher Perzeption wird mit einem anderen neuen Medium begegnet, das sich zum stereotypen Accessoire des Touristen schlechthin entwickeln sollte und das Ida Pfeiffer wohl als eine der ersten nach Island mitnimmt: „[m]ein, in einem Kistchen verschlossener Daguerreotyp-Apparat“ (24). Durch dieses technische Hilfsmittel vermag die Touristin, der Bewegung medial Einhalt zu gebieten und weist sich nun gewiss als eine Vertreterin der Modernität aus: das Verfahren, 1837 von Jacques Daguerre entwickelt, war sechs Jahre vor ihrer Islandfahrt in der Pariser Akademie der Wissenschaften erstmals präsentiert worden, und wiederum drei Jahre später, also drei Jahre vor Pfeiffers Abreise, wurde in Wien ein „sogenannte[r] Taschenapparat [...] zum Zusammenlegen, die sich ihrer leichten Tragbarkeit willen zum Aufnehmen von Bildern auf Reisen besonders eignen“¹⁴ vorgestellt. Die Aufnahmen, von denen zwei erhalten sind (Jehle 1989: 71), gelten als die ersten photographischen Wiedergaben der isländischen Natur.

Das Reiseerlebnis wird also durch moderne Medien der Beförderung

beschleunigt und mit Hilfe eines neuentwickelten Speichermediums wiederum arretiert und damit reproduzierbar. Doch nicht nur durch die wenigen Daguerreotypien, sondern vor allem durch die Verschriftung wird die Reise zu einem ‚Medienereignis‘. Pfeiffer wird durch ihre Reiseerlebnisse zur Autorin, die Einnahmen ihrer Autorschaft erlauben ihr weitere Reisen. Gleich nach der ersten Fahrt in den Nahen Osten hat sich die Publikation der Erlebnisse als lukrativ erwiesen (Jehle 1989: 73), fortan dienen die Veröffentlichungen, die schon während der Fahrt durch genaue Aufzeichnungen vorbereitet werden, zur Aufbesserung der Reisekasse für die jeweils folgende Unternehmung. Das Erlebnis wird von seiner medialen Repräsentation durchdrungen und antizipiert nicht zuletzt dadurch typische touristische Aktivitäten des 20. Jahrhunderts. Der Bericht selbst weist eine starke Tendenz zur Selbstinszenierung auf, die einerseits die Konvention des Erhabenen aufruft und zum anderen auf Abenteuer- und ‚survival literature‘ hindeutet.

Ida Pfeiffers Kaffeemühle

Die Reiseberichte der Autorin haben sich zwar gut verkauft, doch die Strategien haben offenbar nicht zu ihrer Beliebtheit beigetragen. Eine zeitgenössische Zeitungskarikatur ist nicht dazu angetan, Ida Pfeiffers Mut zu feiern oder auch nur, sie sachlich zu beurteilen.¹⁵ Ganz eindeutig beabsichtigt der Zeichner, sowohl die Frau als auch die Reisende der Lächerlichkeit preiszugeben, indem das Touristische ihrer Unternehmungen besonders deutlich ausgestellt wird. Er bildet sie mit Attributen wie Teleskop, Henkelkorb und Kaffeemühle ab und will damit wohl die Unvereinbarkeit von Weiblichkeit und Reise- sowie Entdeckungstätigkeit behaupten. Eben diese Inkompatibilität des naturwissenschaftlich motivierten Reisens (Teleskop) mit den heimischen Utensilien (Strickzeug, Kaffeemühle) weisen sie als touristische Hybridfigur aus, die das Eigene in der Fremde nicht missen will und deren Lächerlichkeit durch ihre Geschlechtszugehörigkeit (Kleid, Hut, Korb) eine Steigerung erfährt.

Noch bissiger wirkt der Kommentar in der Bildunterschrift, dessen Unsinnigkeit den ideologischen Charakter der Zeichnung entlarvt. Den der Touristin zugeschriebenen Worten „Lauf nicht vor mir davon“ müsste in logischer Konsequenz ein Satz wie „Hab keine Angst! Ich bin nicht gefährlich“ folgen. Die Unterschrift der Zeichnung hingegen setzt eine Pointe, die dem „Wilden“ das letzte Wort zuspricht und die Lacher auf seine Seite zieht. In der Konfrontation mit seiner ‚Echtheit‘ tritt ihre Präsenz als besonders deplatziert hervor. Inmitten der leeren Landschaft verängstigt und vertreibt sie die ‚Ureinwohner‘, zerstört die Authentizität des Landes und

tritt somit als perfekte Verkörperung der Touristin sowie des pejorativen Tourismus-Diskurses hervor. Die Kombination ihrer Attribute lässt jedes einzelne als unpassend hervortreten, nichts an ihr erscheint echt, ihre Pose ungläubwürdig: Der Karikaturist spricht ihr damit jegliche Authentizität ab. Dieser abwertende Gestus stellt nicht nur eine Visualisierung von Ida Pfeiffer als Ausnahmeerscheinung dar, die Zeichnung setzt voraus, dass die Abgebildete schon im Jahre 1855 als Touristin wahrgenommen wurde. Die Karikatur bezieht ihren Witz aus einem schon damals pejorativ konnotierten Diskurs von der mangelnden Authentizität und fehlenden Unschuld touristischen Erlebens.

Eine gelehrte Reisende.



Ida. Lauf nicht vor mir davon, ich fürchte mich
nicht vor Wilden. 6

Der Inulaner. Aber ich!

NOTEN

- ¹ Pfeiffer 1999: 15. Zugrunde gelegt wurde die orthographisch modernisierte Ausgabe von Gabriele Habinger, die Angabe der Seitenzahlen im fortlaufenden Text nachgewiesen wird. Der Titel der mir leider nicht zugänglichen Originalausgabe lautet: Reise nach dem skandinavischen Norden und der Insel Island, 2 Bde., Pesth, 1846. Eine zweite Auflage erschien 1855, eine Übersetzung ins Isländische 1945. Daneben gab es eine Übersetzung ins Englische (New York, 1852). – Ein anderer Artikel der Verfasserin über Ida Pfeiffers Nordlandreise, der einige identische Passagen enthält, ist erschienen unter dem Titel: „An der Oberfläche des Vulkans. Ida Pfeiffers Islandreise im Jahre 1845“, in Thomas Seiler (Hrsg.): Herzort Island. Aufsätze zur isländischen Literatur- und Kulturgeschichte. Zum 65. Geburtstag von Gert Kreutzer, Lüdenscheid: Seltmann & Söhne, 2005, S. 256–276.
- ² Vgl. Habinger 1997. Eine sehr gründliche, volkskundlich orientierte Studie, die das Leben und die Reisepraxis Pfeiffers zum Inhalt hat, hat Jehle 1989 vorgelegt. Ältere biographische Darstellungen haben veröffentlicht: Lebzelter 1910; Stökl 1920.
- ³ Vgl. Pfeiffer 1850, 1856 und 1861.
- ⁴ Bekannte Reiseschriftstellerinnen im 19. Jahrhundert waren z. B. Otilie Assing, Isabella Bird Bishop, Regula Engel, Ida Hahn-Hahn, Therese Huber, Mary Kingsley, Fanny Lewald, Marianne North, Maria Schuber, Johanna Schopenhauer, May French Sheldon, Flora Tristan, Mary Wollstonecraft. Als die berühmtesten weiblichen Reisenden der skandinavischen Literatur des 19. Jahrhunderts können Fredrika Bremer, Friederike Brun und Camilla Collett gelten. Vgl. auch: Frederiksen 1985: 104–122; Felden 1993. In Bezug auf das nördliche Skandinavien gibt es etliche Arbeiten von Anka Ryall und Heidi Hansson, die auch das Forschungsprojekt „Foreign North. Outside Perspective on the Nordic North“ an der Universität Umeå leitet. Vgl. z. B. Ryall 2004; Hansson 2005 u. 2006.
- ⁵ Es handelt sich um die Nennung des Namens des Dichters und Geschichtsschreibers Snorri Sturluson (1178–1241), als Pfeiffer seine „Badewanne“ in Reykholt sieht (116), und um den Bezug auf eine Sage (nicht Saga!) über eine Räuberhorde (119). Außerdem wird in 10 Zeilen, aber kaum erschöpfend auf die Geschichte von Thingvellir eingegangen (104) und in einem Satz die Geschichte Skálholts angerissen (144).
- ⁶ Dabei handelt es sich um die Ausgabe, die Ida Pfeiffer benutzt hat.
- ⁷ Ihre Kenntnisse werden von ihr selbst allerdings offensichtlich überschätzt, denn meist erntet sie für ihre Anwendung nur Gelächter (157). Wenn die Verständigung reibungslos klappt, ist davon auszugehen, dass die dänische Oberschicht in Reykjavík – Beamte oder Kaufleute – wohl deutsch gesprochen hat (85). Norwegisch versteht sie nach eigenem Dafürhalten „nur sehr wenig“ (190), obwohl die von ihr beschriebenen Storting-Debatten in einer dem Dänischen sehr ähnlichen Sprache vor sich gegangen sein dürften.
- ⁸ Sie scheint die Führer kaum als Menschen wahrzunehmen, denn als sie am Geysir ankommt, erwähnt sie, dass sie ‚allein‘ zurückbleibt und wachen muss, um auf den Ausbruch zu warten, denn ‚einem isländischen Bauern [der offenbar bei ihr war] ist nicht zu trauen‘ (132).
- ⁹ Vgl. die Darstellung der Biographie Ida Pfeiffers z. B. bei Jehle 1989: 19–38. Einer Selbstdarstellung (vgl. Pfeiffer 1861: 18–21) zufolge litt sie in ihrer Ehe unter großer Armut, weil ihr Mann über lange Zeit keine Anstellung als Jurist fand und ihr väterliches Erbe bei einer Bürgschaft verloren hatte. Darin liegt eine Ironie des Schicksals, weil sie ihn aus Standesgründen unter dem Druck der Mutter geheiratet und ihrer Jugendliebe entsagt hatte. Diese biographischen Daten enthalten ‚in a nutshell‘ das Konglomerat an ju-

ristischen, moralischen und ökonomischen Abhängigkeiten, die eine Selbstbestimmung der Frauen des 19. Jahrhunderts verhinderten.

- ¹⁰ „Isländisch“ wird im Text als dem gewohnten „Europäischen“ der dänischen Oberschicht entgegengesetzt entworfen (57), seiner geographischen Zugehörigkeit zu Westeuropa zum Trotz.
- ¹¹ Das betrifft zum einen die sozialhistorischen Gegebenheit der ungleich höheren männlichen Mobilität, aber auch die damit einhergehenden Zuschreibungen und Imaginationen. Vgl. Schülting 1997.
- ¹² Bassnett (2002) arbeitet derartige Selbstinszenierungen in Reiseberichten von Frauen heraus. Sie sieht in der Reise „a means of redefining themselves, assuming a different persona“ (234).
- ¹³ Dass derartige Anstrengungen erst im 20. Jahrhundert unternommen wurden, schildert eindrucksvoll die Arbeit von Marion Lerner. Vgl. Lerner 2010.
- ¹⁴ Eine Notiz in der Zeitschrift *Der Humorist*; zitiert nach Habinger 1999: 280.
- ¹⁵ In *Wiener Telegraph*, VII. Jg., 1855, Nr. 215. Reproduziert nach Habinger 1997: 78.

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STEPHEN PAX LEONARD

Ethnolinguistic Identities and Language Revitalisation in a Small Society

The Case of the Faroe Islands

ABSTRACT This article explores how Faroese managed to be revitalised from a threatened, minority language to become the main language of 45,000 people living on seventeen islands in the North Atlantic. The Faroese language was coupled with a rich oral literature and was spoken in a very narrow and well-defined diglossic context which localised a Faroese linguistic identity. The social space of the homestead was not linguistically infringed upon by the colonial language, Danish, and was left in fact to survive in an environment of thriving spoken traditions. It is argued that these factors and the choice of an orthography quite distinct from the competing variety, enabled the language to survive. Faroese shows us that a tiny language can survive for centuries against the odds, providing certain conditions are in place. It is also evidence of how a low variety in a stable diglossic situation can flourish when the linguistic status quo is dismantled. Faroese has gradually moved into the high variety domain, squeezing Danish out. In theory, the revitalisation of Faroese would appear to be a model of success. Regrettably, the ingredients of language planning success are complex, culture-specific and do not seem to lend themselves to broad reapplication.

KEYWORDS Faroese, revitalisation, diglossia, oral literature, language planning, linguistic identity

Introduction

In discussions of reverse language shift (RLS) or linguistic revitalisation, the case of Faroese has for some reason seldom been the subject of detailed discussion. Other minority languages which have either been revitalised or experienced language shift have been studied, but there have been relatively few attempts to analyse and understand how a tiny speech community under threat in the North Atlantic has maintained linguistic continuity for centuries. One of the reasons for this might be that the explanation of this linguistic survival is not purely a synchronic one, and language planners and sociolinguists have not troubled themselves to delve into the linguistic history of the Faroese.

The Faroe Islands were settled in the early part of the ninth century by Norsemen from principally south-west Norway, but possibly also from the British Isles. As with Iceland, it is conceivable that there was a small population of Irish monks (*papar*) living there at this point, but that with the arrival of the heathen Norsemen they chose to leave. Irrespective of this, there appears to have been direct or indirect contact with the Celts as there are a number of Celtic loanwords, place-names and personal names in Faroese. It appears that the language remained closely tied to the dialects of western Norway in this early period: there would have been trade with Bergen, which was the regional power centre at this time. However, Nauerby (1996: 28–69) discusses how the Faroe Islands became subsequently increasingly isolated and how the language grew apart from the West Norwegian dialects.

Unlike Iceland, we know very little about this early period of Faroese history because there are very few written texts from the medieval period. Our principal Old Faroese text dates from 1298, the *Seyðabrévið* ('Sheep Letter'), and is a statute concerning sheep breeding on the Faroe Islands and acted effectively as the constitution. In 1380 the Faroe Islands became part of Denmark and certainly from the Reformation onwards, the great majority of documents were written in Danish. Prior to the end of the eighteenth century when the language was written down in its present orthography, Faroese had therefore almost no written linguistic history of its own.

Danish had considerable influence on the spoken language too. The first linguists to describe the status of Faroese at the end of the eighteenth century speak of a language that is so "corrupted" by the influence of Danish that every other word is Danish. Svabo (1746–1824), who was the first person to write extensively in post-Reformation Faroese, documenting ballads and compiling the first Faroese dictionary, thought that the Faroese should in fact abandon their language. The death of the language looked imminent.

Grundtvig, Bloch, Hammershaimb, Lyngbye and others collected Faroese ballads in the first half of the nineteenth century and Schrøter produced the first Faroese translation of St. Matthew's gospel in 1823. This was very badly received, as the Faroese were of the opinion that the Faroese language was not suitable at all for religious matters. As Nauerby (1996) notes, when Hammershaimb read from the Gospels in Faroese during a service on New Year's Eve in 1855, the Faroese were so horrified that no further attempt was made. To speak of religious matters using the Faroese language would have been sacrilegious at the time. Since the time of the Reformation, Danish had become the language of the Church and Faroese was considered suitable only for use at home, as is discussed further in the next section.

Prior to Faroese being written down in its present-day orthography, it was considered a dialect or series of dialects. The status of Faroese came to the fore at the time of the Education Bill in 1844 when an attempt was made to organise a schooling system in the Faroe Islands. The overriding sentiment at the time seems to have been that a language could not be considered a national language and thus taught to children unless it had some history of a written tradition. And, if the language was not written in its own orthography, it was considered only a dialect. The written tradition developed quickly and in the context of rising separatism (à propos Denmark), it was decided to forge a link between nationalism and linguistic maintenance. The linguistic revival had begun.

Writers such as Jóannes Patursson (1866–1946) were instrumental in forging this link between national identity and language, which had become a theme across Europe. In this regard, the Faroese were constantly reminded of what had happened on Shetland where the Norse dialect (Norn) died out in the sixteenth century, giving way to English. The Faroese were very keen for their language not to share the same fate, and still seem preoccupied by this today. Many Faroese feel a special bond with the Shetlanders: in terms of geography, they are their closest neighbours and there is a strong cultural link between the islands. However, the Faroese felt that the Shetlanders had lost part of their Norse identity when they lost their own language. Ironically, the loss of the Norn language in Shetland does not seem, however, to have weakened what seems to be a strong and distinct Shetlandic identity, suggesting perhaps that islandhood and relative isolation might be important ingredients of identity, and arguably more significant than language itself.

The first Faroese national newspaper, *Dimmalætting*, was founded in 1878 and a number of articles appeared throughout the next decade claiming that if the Faroese were to lose their language, then they would lose

their nation. Public concern grew until there was a meeting of parliament at the Tinghús on 26 December 1888 to discuss ways to defend the Faroese language and Faroese customs. This became a critical turning point: it was decided at the so-called “Christmas meeting” that clergy would be allowed to preach in Faroese, and thus the diglossia which had been in place for centuries was formally breached. There was an explicit call for action and ethnolinguistic consciousness was to become a component of nationalism. By entrusting Faroese with culturally sensitive functions such as acting as the language of the Church, the language planners had to convince the people that Faroese was no “worse” than Danish.

It is worth considering the dynamics of this speech community in the North Atlantic at the time of this reform. The first census was in 1769 when the population of the Faroe Islands was 4,773. It is thought in fact that the population was between four and five thousand for centuries; the population only began to grow considerably from 1800 onwards as the Faroe Islands switched from a farming to a fishing community. As with some of the languages of Australia, Faroese is evidence that languages with few speakers can support quite considerable dialect variation. There is a good history of dialectal variation in the Faroe Islands with anecdotal evidence of dialectal distinctions already being made in the seventeenth century. As Sandøy (1994: 38–52) has shown, there is good reason to believe that the settlement pattern of the Faroe Islands led to the emergence of dialect distinctions early on.

Although the schooling system and the building of underwater tunnels between many of the islands is likely to lead to some dialect levelling, dialectal (and in particular sub-dialectal) variation remains today. There is a very clear distinction between the dialect of the North and the South where the isogloss runs along the Skopunarfjørður, but there are also dialectal features particular to the islands of Vágur in the west, Sandoy and Suðuroy in the south. In addition to this, there is dialectal variation to be found on these islands themselves: sub-dialectal variation on Suðuroy is said to be particularly rich. Höskuldur Þráinsson *et al.* (2004: 339–367) have documented the history of much of the dialectal variation in Faroese and it will not be repeated here.

Suffice it to say that the most salient dialect distinction is to be found between the dialects of the North and the South and this could be summarised in terms of the phonology as: northern Streymoy, Eysturoy and Norðoyar have [oi] pronunciation for /ei/ whereas the rest of the islands have [ai]; /a/ is pronounced as an open front unrounded vowel before /ng, nk/ in the southern variety and as an open-mid front unrounded vowel in the northern dialects; and there are rather clear dialectal differences with

respect to the phonetic quality of /p, t, k/ after long vowels. Thus, /p, t, k/ are typically pre-aspirated after long vowels north of southern Streymoy, and also in Vágar, except after the high [i] or [u] or diphthongs that end in these elements. Post-aspiration of /p, t, k/ after long vowels only occurs sporadically, for example in Tórshavn (where /p, t, k/ are typically not pre-aspirated after long vowels).

Dialectal identities are strong and are especially important in indexing an identity on the more remote islands, where sub-dialectal variation is at its richest, but where also dialectal variation is at times syntactic and lexical, and not just phonological. There is considerable awareness regarding dialectal variation and the fieldworker is typically told on the islands of Sandoy and Suðuroy in particular, that dialects vary quite considerably from village to village. A comprehensive socio-linguistic analysis of these dialects has not yet been completed, but one suspects that the Faroese are prone to exaggerate dialectal differences. If so, this is noteworthy and is once again the inverse of the ethnolinguistic situation in Iceland, where the notion of sociolinguistic homogeneity (and thus in the eyes of the Icelanders, socio-economic homogeneity or an even distribution of wealth) has a distinct appeal. There was no appeal to a homogenising discourse in the Faroe Islands or bias towards an abstract, idealised spoken language, but instead the overriding impression is one of a complex, pluricentric Faroe Islands. Once a standardised written language had been established, multiple dialect identities did not undermine the linguistic revival movement or the struggle for political autonomy.

On the island of Suðuroy, which lies quite some way south of the other islands, there is clearly an appeal to a separate linguistic (and social) identity. The identity of the Suðuroy inhabitants is ostensibly different from that of the other more religious, church-going Faroese, and language or dialect is to some extent the basis of this different identity. A number of the islanders identified more closely with the Northern Isles and mainland Scandinavia than the Faroe Islands.

It is not clear if this variation and the awareness of it played any role in the survival of the language. The argument put forward in this paper is instead that the Faroese language survived against the odds for centuries because of its atypical relationship with the superstrate, Danish, and because of the long and important tradition of the oral literature in the Faroe Islands. At first glance, it seems that Faroese had reached the point on the language death continuum whereby the chances of the language being saved were very minimal indeed. And yet, the language survived and through the course of the twentieth century came to become fully revitalised. The question is therefore to determine what the relevant factors were

and whether anything can be learnt for modelling the revitalisation of some of the thousands of endangered languages of the world.

Linguistic Maintenance and Ethnolinguistic Identities

The linguistic situation in the Faroe Islands was described previously as diglossic and it is important to understand that the two varieties were used in very different domains and that this distinction was probably respected. Danish was the written language used in public, in Church, Government and schools, whereas Faroese was the spoken vernacular used in private at home: Danish was the *kultursprog* ('language of culture') and Faroese was the *mundart* ('vernacular'). As we have seen, the functions of the high and low varieties were socially determined: the use of the low variety in circumstances for which the high variety alone is socially prescribed was not generally tolerated. We can be sure that this distinction was clear-cut because when Schrøter, the minister in Suðuroy, wrote to the Danish Bible Society in 1815 offering to translate the Bible into Faroese, he points out that Faroese children have a hard time understanding the Danish textbooks that they are supposed to use at home, as they "neither hear nor speak a word of Danish at home" (Höskuldur Práinsson *et al.* 2004: 378). The Faroese exposure to Danish was limited to specific domains: the Danish language on the Faroe Islands was learned through the Bible, so that when people in the *bygdur* ('settlements') tried to make themselves understood in Danish, it would sound as if they were reciting from the Old Testament. In the case of Faroese, it should be borne in mind that the speech community was not only diglossic, but that this high variety was shared by all, irrespective of dialect differences. This high variety with its written language and written literature may have been a prestigious form, particularly as "prestige" may have been something that was religiously defined in this pious community.

In a diglossic scenario, Faroese as the low variety was rooted in a very narrow and well-defined context where the language was not threatened. In such an environment, diglossia situations may endure for considerable stretches of time without any serious encroachment of one of the languages upon the domains of the other. The social space of the homestead was not linguistically infringed upon by the colonial language, Danish, and was left in fact to flourish in an environment of a thriving oral literature. Such a functional complementation of two linguistic systems tends to be characterised by stability. The Faroese identity was inextricably linked to this oral literature, which packaged together all the indigenous narratives and collective memories of Faroese rural life, particularly in regions away from

the capital. These were stories of belonging and identification. Ironically perhaps (but not unexpected), it is at this time when these rhymes were first written down and when the Faroese culture evolved from a spoken to a written form that the tradition of telling stories appears to have begun to wane. As previously mentioned, Faroese was not written down until the nineteenth century and this must have added to the value of the Faroese oral heritage, as there was no Faroese written norm to diminish the significance of the spoken language or to compete with it.

The Faroe Islands is well known for its ballads, which were an important part of traditional Faroese life up until quite recently. Today, ballads continue to be performed, but normally in a more organised and institutional manner than previously. There exists a rich heritage of *kvæði* (heroic ballads), *visur* (folk ballads, poems and melodies used for dance), legends, fairy tales, riddles, proverbs and indigenous *tættir*, which are satirical ballads, often written about a particular situation, but which may also concern something very personal. Such ethnic songs, rhymes, counting melodies and lullabies were a particularly important component of Faroese oral literature, as the recital of such rhymes lied at the heart of cultural practice.

For centuries these rhymes have been recited to children of different ages at their homes and on the farms. Such rhymes would typically have been told to children after a hard day's work on the farm when small groups would gather in a household to hear music and stories to pass away the long dark winter evenings. The setting for these rhymes is called *kvöldsetur* ('evening sittings') in Faroese and it provides us with a clear image of traditional rural Faroese life where cultural transmission was based on story telling and music. People would gather in somebody's home (often the kitchen) after a hard day working in the fields, knit, sew and hear stories and rhymes. The *kvöldsetur* were the locus of cultural life where a sense of community was established, founded on the exchange of oral literature. *Kvöldsetur* were thus "a primary institution of remembrance and remained an established feature of Faroese life until the late nineteenth century when economic change rendered them obsolete" (Wylie 1987: 41).

Although there were multiple dialectal identities, there was one cultural norm based on oral literature that tied this speech community together through periods of relative isolation and colonial suppression, albeit one would not want to over-emphasise the latter point. The low variety was therefore very firmly anchored to this permanent and irrevocable milieu—the homestead/farmstead where the oral tradition was transmitted in Faroese exclusively (or almost exclusively). In this manner, the vernacular was coupled with the centuries old rural Faroese identity and traditional way of life. Diglossia appears actually to have aided the language preserva-

tion process because it ensured that the two competing linguistic norms were always contextually separate. Diglossia provided Faroese with a restricted, but locally embedded authentic linguistic identity. Indeed, when one of the varieties was used in the wrong social setting, it was considered absurd as we have seen with the example of early attempts to introduce Faroese as the language of the Church.

With the linguistic revival, the diglossia that had been in place for centuries was dismantled and the Faroese language was invited to compete with its larger neighbour. Faroese went thus from a situation of bilingualism with diglossia (from probably the Reformation onwards) to bilingualism without diglossia. According to Fishman's (2000: 81–89) model where the dichotomies of the written/spoken, bilingual/monolingual, diglossic/non-diglossic are plotted, bilingualism without diglossia is considered an inevitable phase in the transition to monolingualism. Indeed, one could argue that in the case of the Faroe Islands where English is beginning to supplant Danish as the second language, Faroese is moving towards a situation where there is neither bilingualism nor diglossia. A monolingual Faroese speech community would have been surely unthinkable a hundred years ago.

At the time of the linguistic turn, a new orthography was introduced and this enabled Faroese to begin to occupy the high variety territory because it gave some validation to Faroese culture. A written norm can act to foster diglossia, but in this instance the introduction of a written norm was a catalyst in its removal. Faroese was now to create a *kulturmál* ('language of culture') and the ideology that was rapidly gaining ground was that of coupling separatism with linguistic distinctiveness. The emerging positive ethnolinguistic consciousness subsumed an imperative for social action on behalf of the vernacular. It should be highlighted that there was no real linguistic conflict or opposition in the Faroe Islands, as one might expect. Encouraging this positive ethnolinguistic consciousness did not lead to a monolingual monopolisation of the community's communicative repertoire. Faroese had fully accepted Danish as the high variety, but to justify its separateness it had to present itself as linguistically different from Danish. It was, however, the spoken traditions that lent the Faroese an ideology for articulating their cultural differences.

An important issue for this Faroese cultural linguistic or ethnolinguistic identity in recent years has been the issue of naming and renaming due to political change and name laws. Previously, the Faroese had a system of patronymics as still exists in Iceland today. This was banned by the Danes in 1828 in favour of the non-patronymic system used in the rest of Scandinavia. After much discussion and controversy, a Faroese name law was introduced in 1992, reallowing patronyms, and it seems that quite a number

of people actually changed what were at the time their surnames following the introduction of this legislation. Once again, this looks like a subtle shift to what could be called an insular Scandinavian identity. Personal names are highly salient identity markers and the Icelandic naming system is so distinctive and also so un-Danish.

Revitalisation and Orthography

Choosing the written norm was one of the most important events in the linguistic history of Faroese whose significance to the revitalisation of Faroese has perhaps been underestimated. Höskuldur Práinsson *et al.* (2004: 374–392) have provided the full history of the sequence of events and it need not be reproduced here. For the purpose of this article, the relevant points are that those who recorded the oral literature all tried to establish their own standards. Svabo, Schrøter and Jóannes í Króki all used their own orthographies based on their respective dialects, and thus provided useful information on dialect variation of the time. A number of these different norms appear to have been in use for some years, but it was decided that for Faroese to serve as a national language it was imperative to decide on one orthography.

The choice came down to three very different proposed standards for the written language: Svabo's orthography which was largely phonetic, very consistent and based on his own dialect of Faroese, that of Vágar, giving us a good indication of the pronunciation of this west Faroese dialect in the late eighteenth century; Jakobsen's (1864–1918) very phonetically-based written norm (Jakobsen was influenced by the British phonetician Henry Sweet) which aimed at a one-to-one correspondence between speech sounds and letters and was not dissimilar to Svabo's proposal; and finally Hammershaimb's (1819–1909) historically based, supra-local, morphophonemic, etymological orthography (i.e. spelling based on Old Norse).

The latter is of course very much reminiscent of the philosophy behind Ivar Aasen's Nynorsk which became a new written standard in nineteenth century Norway. This new standard was arguably archaic, but was at heart an abstract, proto-Norwegian based on a number of West Norwegian dialects which Aasen knew well and had studied in depth. Faroese and Nynorsk are both unusual in that they are dialect-based superstructures established in a similar period and context, but which were not the languages of the respective elites at the time. Nynorsk, as a new written standard, was based on the idea that the dialects of western Norway shared a common structure, which made them their own language or variety in their own right. One might argue that the consequences of the establishment of these two

norms were, however, quite different: the Faroese written standard might have helped unite speakers of different Faroese dialects, whereas the creation of a second written language in Norway became ultimately divisive.

Hammershaimb overcame the difficulty of knowing which Faroese dialect to base the orthography on by developing a dialect-independent standard that took the language back to the old language, and hence followed the Icelandic model. The etymological spelling solved the problem of dialect differences by concealing them in a common, non-phonetic “starred” form (e.g. variation in the diphthongisation of the vowel *ew/ow* is concealed by the spelling *ó*, corresponding to Icelandic). The ideology was to create a norm that was maximally different from Danish (but also the Faroese dialects which are often quite distinct from the written norm) in order that one could counter the Danish accusations that Faroese was merely a dialect. We know that in the late eighteenth century the Faroese dialects were regarded as “Norwegian,” with no autonomy of their own. Without a national language, separatist calls and the independence movement would have been groundless. The result was a very unphonetic, archaic looking orthographic superstructure that sits above the dialects, incorporating even phonemes that exist in Icelandic but that are not pronounced in Faroese.

The dominant philosophy seems to have been that the Faroese needed to go back to the old language, the ancient norm, in the way that the Icelanders had done. The motivation for this in Iceland was the medieval manuscripts which are sacred there and underpin the Icelandic identity: language is conceived as the living link to the rich corpus of medieval literature written in Iceland. In the Faroe Islands, almost no medieval manuscripts exist, however. The Faroese were told that they were going back to the old Faroese language in accepting this written norm, but we are left to conjecture what this norm might have been. Hammershaimb rooted the orthography in the past, giving the language an historical perspective and also the sense that the Faroese belonged to an ancient linguistic tradition whose maintenance was desirable. Using artificial means, he appeared to have been attempting to enhance the dignity of the language.

Faroese already enjoyed phonological distinctiveness, and the lack of a normalised written tradition meant that it was now possible to tailor an orthographic distinctiveness too. Linguistically, it had become part of an insular Scandinavian identity with Iceland and thus the Faroese began to distance themselves from the mainland Scandinavian identity. The etymological, unphonetic orthography was, however, not without its problems. The Faroese had to effectively learn to read their own language due to the distance between the written norm and the various dialects, and this obviously made the teaching of the written language to children more problematic.

The issue of which norm to use was widely discussed and eventually it was agreed upon to adopt a compromise—the so-called *broyting* ('change'). Although this norm was meant to be a compromise between Jakobsen's and Hammershaimb's proposals, it was in fact much closer to the latter. The Icelandicised orthography was the one that was eventually chosen to represent Faroese, and it is worth exploring what the reasons were behind this. There was a political factor involved here: Jón Sigurðsson, the leader of the Icelandic independence movement in the nineteenth century, wanted to found with Hammershaimb and others the Faroese Society in Copenhagen. Jón Sigurðsson had already produced an Icelandicised version of *Færeyinga saga* which was perhaps read by the Icelandic and Faroese intellectuals, many of whom were living in Denmark.

Indeed, once the process of linguistic revival was underway and linguistic purism became a tool for the separatist movement, the influence of the intellectuals based in Copenhagen was such that a number of the neologisms introduced into the language to replace Danish terms were actually coined in Copenhagen. It would be no exaggeration to say that linguistic policy was being steered by a group of people who were heavily influenced by the events unfolding in Iceland and who did not even live in the Faroe Islands. The Icelandic influence was fully reflected in the linguistic reform. As Fishman (1997: 3) notes, the vernacular frequently plays a major role in nationalist movements, both as a medium for mobilisation and as a desideratum. In the case of the Faroe Islands, it had a symbolic role in representing an ethnocultural aggregate: the vernacular was the language of the traditional, oral literature in which the Faroese identity was established.

The primary reason for codifying this norm over the other two suggested orthographies was, however, surely a question of the appeal of linguistic distinctiveness. It was deemed necessary to form a nexus among language, ethnicity and nationhood. In the instance of the Faroe Islands, one could argue that this ethnolinguistic ideology had become the deep structure of overt language practices. Hammershaimb's norm made Faroese look like a distinct language, or at least distinct from any mainland Scandinavian language. With a written norm that looked sufficiently different from Faroese, the task was now to create a literature that used this norm. It seems as if the rich oral heritage was not worthy as a body of literature to hinge a separate national identity on. By using an etymological orthography and making Faroese look like an ancient language, outsiders could perhaps be deceived in thinking that the written culture itself was an ancient one. Although Faroese was never a minority language as such, there is little doubt that the establishment of this specific written norm helped to secure the future of Faroese.

There is of course the important question of why the Faroese chose to

expand their “corrupted” language and make it a national norm when it would have been surely easier to simply accept Danish. As has been previously implied, the answer to this question lies in the ideology of coupling nationalism with the pride of speaking a distinct “national” language. But one wonders if it were also a question of whether adopting a colonial language would have diminished the sense of belonging to a place. In this regard, one can invoke the notion of “ethnolinguistic vitality” which is defined as “that which makes a group likely to behave as a distinctive and active collective entity in inter-group situations” (Giles, Bourhis & Taylor (eds.) 1977: 306). This is a psychological measure of the degree to which one defines oneself relative to where one comes from. All the evidence would indicate a high degree of ethnolinguistic vitality in the Faroe Islands in modern times at least, and perhaps previously. Ethnolinguistic vitality is probably enhanced in very small, homogenous island populations because the parameters for “belonging” are so clearly defined. Wylie & Margolin (1981: 13–45) has shown how the use of spatial referencing in Faroese—toponyms, adverbs of place, spatial referring through persons—creates this discourse of identity construction.

With such dialectal variation and dialect identities, this sense of belonging may be, however, more of a local one than a national one. This sense of belonging to a location has a historical dimension (Mæhlum 2002: 77), and the historical continuity of “places” is something that the Faroese like to emphasize. Place-names (or rather very local topographic references) are often used as personal names in the Faroe Islands. This means that people’s personal names act as group or lineage identifiers, particularly if one family has lived in the same house for generations, which often seems to be the case. As Gaffin (1996: 97) notes, “family becomes almost interchangeable or synonymous with place,” and this is particularly the case with the large number of nicknames that the Faroese employ. The central insight with ethnolinguistic vitality is that when a variety’s vitality (in this case Faroese) is said to be “high,” we can predict social changes in favour of that variety, and most obviously a shift towards wider use of it.

Linguistic Purism and Recent Linguistic Development in Faroese

There was a shift to the vernacular variety and at the same time an urge to employ a “pure” language. As we have seen, linguistic purism was implicit in the codification process: the choice of orthography alone was determined by puristic considerations. Linguistic purism has thus been part of the Faroese linguistic culture since the time that texts were written down in this post-

Reformation norm and continued to be the motivation behind twentieth century language policy. In compiling the first word lists of Faroese, Svabo (1970: XIII) complains that the lexicon is not “pure” enough. As with linguistic purism in Iceland, the focus became the lexicon and Jakobsen began the process of introducing Faroese words to replace Danish ones. It was not, however, simply a question of lexical replacement but also one of nurturing positive ethnolinguistic attitudes. As Jógvan í Lón Jacobsen (2004: 71–106) informs us, many of the words that were considered “Faroese” were not used as they were stigmatised or carried negative connotations.

The Faroese have managed to engineer a complete reversal in terms of linguistic perceptions in a fashion not dissimilar to what has happened in Welsh in the last twenty years or so. As far as I am aware, the issue of how Faroese came to perceive their language so positively has not been fully addressed. As once again has happened in Wales, it is likely that such positive linguistic perceptions and a positive ethnolinguistic consciousness fed off the sense of gaining some political autonomy, independence and nationhood. In the cases of Iceland, Wales and the Faroe Islands, it would appear that language had to become a political tool to ensure successful revitalisation.

As the twentieth century progressed, the use of Faroese moved steadily into the domains previously occupied by Danish. Faroese has been used in schools since 1938, and has been an official language since 1948 when the Faroese declared Home Rule. Although Faroese became the language of education some time ago, it is only now that many of the textbooks are actually published in Faroese. Towards the end of the nineteenth century, Faroese became increasingly accepted as the language of the Church, but once again the Danish Bible was used in the Faroe Islands until 1961 when it was finally translated into Faroese in its entirety. The logistics of ensuring that all pedagogic material is published in Faroese is obviously taxing for such a tiny population. Similarly, the Faroese do not have the resources to produce many television programmes of their own.

Radio seems to have played quite an important role in the more recent stage of norm development. When in 1957 the Faroese radio was introduced, every household received a radio set. Up until this point, people had been listening to Norwegian radio programmes, but now for the first time there was an opportunity to listen to the radio in their own language. The radio acted as a vehicle for formalising a communal linguistic identity that had existed for centuries, and might even have contributed to a sense of linguistic solidarity. It also acted as a platform for linguistic debate: one of the most successful radio programmes in the Faroe Islands was *Orðabókin* (“The Dictionary”). This language programme presented by the well-known linguist Jóhan Hendrik Poulsen, who subsequently assumed the nickname,

Orðabókin, ran for 25 years and it discussed language use, neologisms and in particular Faroese etymologies. At times, this was bordering on language planning as a very bottom-up, collective effort. Although a Language Committee was subsequently established (see below), it was not authoritarian, top-down, prescriptive language planning à l'Académie française.

To feed into this radio programme, people would write in from all over the Faroe Islands with ideas for the origins of obscure words and phrases. Together it acts as a bank of linguistic knowledge, but also of folk linguistic perceptions. The enormous popularity of this programme is a record of the deep-rooted interest in language in the Faroe Islands. It brought different dialect communities together across seventeen islands, and thus the inevitable question arose of what norm or standard should be used when speaking on the radio. Through the radio there was initially an attempt at forming a spoken standard, but this was publicly dropped and it was announced that the policy was that everybody on the radio should be able to speak in his or her own dialect. In this classless society, there seem to be few salient values attached to different speech types. It remains therefore problematic today to talk about a standard Faroese language. Unlike schizoglossic Iceland where there is little tolerance of dialect variation, variation is very much welcomed and this seems to stand in the way of creating a supra-local form for the spoken language at least.

It was Jóhan Hendrik Poulsen who established the Føroyska málnevndin ('Language Committee') in 1985—a Language Committee that was once again based on the Icelandic model. The aim of the Committee was principally lexical innovation, with the explicit intention of introducing Faroese words to replace existing Danish words, or incoming Danish and English words. My own (unpublished) language attitudes research in 2009 showed that the Faroese are on the whole very supportive of language policy. A number of my informants said that they liked the semantic transparency of the neologisms and that this made the whole process of word creation rather fun. The dynamics of lexical innovation are intriguing as there are many instances of words being introduced in such an informal and unorganised manner. The Faroese seem themselves surprised by this and take great pleasure in reciting to an "outsider" anecdotes of how words enter the language. The Head of the Language Committee told me that one day a group of girls knocked on his door saying that they were going to Iceland to play volleyball and that they were disappointed that there was no Faroese word for 'volleyball'. Johann Hendrik or the "Dictionary" as he is called came up with the word *flogbólur* ('flying ball'). The girls went to Iceland and announced that they were the *flogbólur* team from the Faroe Islands and the word for volleyball in Faroese is to this day still *flogbólur*. Of course, lexical

innovation along these lines can only work in such a fashion in a tiny speech community. Most of the neologisms are based on Icelandic coinages or are Icelandic/Danish calques with the spelling adapted to Faroese.

The Faroese informants in their forties and older have witnessed quite a lot of lexical replacement. A number of my informants had gone through a process of lexical shift, switching to the new Faroese words that their children had been told to use at school. The outcome is that (unusually for speech communities), a number of Faroese believe that children speak better Faroese than their parents. What they mean by this is that younger people use more Faroese words. It is the ultimate coup for the language policy makers: people have subscribed to the ideology that the “best” Faroese is that which uses the most Faroese words, but also that these words are good because they represent the old language even though many of them are direct loans from Icelandic.

The notion of “best” Faroese is largely a lexical one, unlike in Iceland where the idea of “best” Icelandic is also partly syntactic. In terms of syntax, it is worth noting that Icelandic once again serves as the ideal point of reference for the purists. Faroese has partially lost the genitive, but there have been attempts to reintroduce it. This was done by listing genitive forms in the nominal paradigms in school textbooks even though they were no longer used in the spoken language. The result has been that there is a distinction drawn between the spoken and written language when it comes to usage of the genitive. It is also true that new and innovative forms of the genitive using the *-sa* suffix have appeared.

There has been some criticism of the policy of lexical purism since about the 1960s, and there have even been popular attempts to do away with the Language Committee entirely. In the 1960s and 1970s a number of prescriptive, purist (and ultra purist) dictionaries were written. These dictionaries tried to avoid so-called *an-be-for-heit-ilsí* words (words containing foreign prefixes and suffixes). These words comprise about one per cent of the entries in the puristic dictionaries which provides us with an insight in to the editorial policies of these dictionaries. The dictionaries that have been written from 1990 onwards tend to be more forgiving of Danish words and a balance has been struck. The issue of dictionaries is controversial in the Faroe Islands, as it is widely acknowledged that they do not represent actual usage, but instead an idealised speech (something called “Academy Faroese”). They point to a clear dichotomy between the spoken and the written language: Danish loan-words are referred to as “spoken language” while the Icelandic loans are noted as being literary in the dictionary. The use of prescriptive norms in dictionaries had the opposite effect and created a purism-backlash, but this problem has to some extent been addressed

now. Although the Faroese have been compiling word lists since the late eighteenth century, the first Faroese-Danish dictionary was written in 1928 and the first Faroese-Faroese dictionary was only written in 1998.

Other opponents to Faroese linguistic purism would question the logic or even the ideology behind replacing Danish loans with Icelandic loan-words. Some may object to what they perceive to be an “aggressive” means of implementing language policy: this is a place where since 1990 the Faroese dairy company provides milk cartons with advice and guidance to consumers on correct language use. This is complemented sometimes by a cartoon with a child being force-fed cereal in the shape of the letter ð—the letter that is hardest to swallow.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the revitalisation of Faroese would appear to be a model of success which language planners should aim to reproduce and recreate elsewhere. Regrettably, the ingredients of language planning success are very complex, culture-specific and do not seem to lend themselves to broad reapplication. My argument has been that the successful revitalisation of Faroese can be explained by the following factors: Faroese was left to flourish as the low variety in a rigorous diglossia; the domain where this variety was spoken was home to a rich and culture defining oral literature, and the RLS process was initiated by choosing an orthography distinct from the competing variety and using this as a political tool in the nationalist movement. Language revitalisation can be achieved by other means, but these are the salient points to Faroese and it would require an act of serendipity for this particular combination of factors to be found elsewhere in a similar context.

It is also significant that Faroese never got to the point where the language became dysfunctional and obsolete. What is more, reverse language shift must have been considered desirable, and one suspects that this might have been aided by the very definite relationship between language and culture. This coupling might have been fostered by the situation of diglossia because it localised the Faroese linguistic identity and tied it to a very narrow context. Unambiguous beliefs about the relationship between language and culture were part of the Faroese culture itself and would have been culturally transmitted from one generation to the next.

Unusually, the outcome of this dismantled stable diglossia where the high and low varieties were functionally differentiated, was that speakers shifted to the low, non-prestige variety and not vice versa. This goes against Fishman's (1967: 29–38) understanding of diglossia where the low variety

loses ground to the superposed high variety. Instead, this would appear to support Ferguson's (1959) model, which predicts that the low variety takes over the outdated high variety as occurred in Greece, where Katherévusa has been modified to reflect much more closely the vernacular currently in use. However, this is not what has happened in the Faroe Islands: neither Danish nor Faroese has begun to accommodate features from the other language. Faroese has simply gradually moved into the high variety domains, squeezing Danish out.

Using Fishman's model, this bilingualism without diglossia is normally indicative of an unstable, transitional situation. This would seem to be the case in the Faroe Islands where bilingualism is also threatened now. Sociolinguistically, Faroese seems to have evolved from stable bilingualism to societal bilingualism, which Fishman (1972: 135–162) describes as a society in which two languages are used but where relatively few individuals are actually bilingual. It is unlikely that Faroese was perfectly diglossic: there was probably some "functional leakage," that is partial overlap of language uses in a diglossic or bilingual situation. There is much in modern life, such as enhanced social mobility, which militates against strict compartmentalisation of high and low varieties.

There have been attempts at forming a standard in Faroese with its codification in dictionaries and grammars, but this norm is not always representative of the language spoken. The chosen Faroese orthography means that the written norm is very different from the vernacular. In the Faroe Islands, the call for reverse language shift was a call for cultural reconstruction and for greater cultural self-regulation. Although the language was revitalised, it was, however, at the expense of the traditional culture. The bond between the indigenous culture and the vernacular was severed. Language planning is ostensibly a modern process that seeks regularity and not the preservation of the sublime. Its objective is not symbolic cultural reinforcement. The oral literature does not lend itself to control and regulation by the authorities, and thus the practice of reciting these rhymes and tales continues to disappear. At the beginning of the twenty-first century the prospects for this tiny speech community itself look, however, to be better than ever before.

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Miscellanea: Notes/Notizen

Researching the North at Aberdeen

In 1996 the University of Aberdeen in north-east Scotland entered its sixth century of existence, having been founded in 1495. The fifth-oldest university in the English-speaking world, Aberdeen was keen to build on its established reputation as a leading research institution and enter a new phase of renewal through substantial fundraising and investment. The result of these initiatives, termed the Sixth Century Campaign, has transformed the university through the creation of over 60 new professorships, the establishment of new departments and research centres and the attraction of external grant support in unprecedented amounts (see www.abdn.ac.uk for an overview of the university, its history and the campaign).

The centrepiece of this renaissance was a conscious decision to brand the institution as the 'Global University of the North,' promoting its work as a world-leading centre for research into the high latitudes, expressed across the full disciplinary spectrum from humanities to the hard sciences. As the holder of one of the new Chairs, and inaugural head of a new Department—Archaeology—I have been closely involved with the development of Northern Studies at the University of Aberdeen, and the editors have commissioned this short piece by way of introduction to a research centre that may be of interest to the Journal's readership.

The 'Global University of the North'

The University itself has always had direct northern links, being founded amid the early turbulence of the Scottish Renaissance and the religious conflicts of the age. Aberdeen, and Scotland, lie at the hub of a vast region that extends across the northernmost third of the globe. Rejecting an overly strict definition by latitude, Aberdeen's 'North' encompasses northern Britain, Scandinavia and Baltic Europe, northern Eurasia and high-latitude North America—linked by the varied communities of the North Atlantic and North Pacific. In research terms, the North is a big room to which Scotland forms one of the main doorways. The North is no periphery but instead a greater world of encounters and interactions.

Academics conducting northern research are now to be found across all three Colleges of the University, in subject areas such as Plant and Soil Science, Zoology, Geography and Environment, Law, History, Celtic Studies, Education, Business and Economics amongst others. The Institution also looks to Northern vernacular traditions in music, art, literature, poetry and performance, a focus that also extends to the university collections in these areas. While northern research plays a major role in all these departments, in two above all it is at the forefront of operations.

Archaeology and Anthropology

Archaeology and Anthropology are sibling disciplines; indeed they are often understood as branches of the same discipline, especially in North America. In the UK, however, they have tended to go their separate ways, and where they do exist

in the same institution, they are commonly in different buildings and/or faculties. At Aberdeen we are trying to reverse this trend by creating synergies at all levels from undergraduate and postgraduate teaching to doctoral and postdoctoral research that could be achieved in no other institution.

Research confluences include interests in material culture, architecture and technology, perceptions of the environment and landscape studies, work with indigenous peoples, and above all, the study of the North: the development of both Anthropology and Archaeology at the university has been underpinned, from the outset, by the objective to make Aberdeen the principal centre for Northern research in these disciplines. Today, they in many ways lead the University's Northern profile and we have the UK's largest concentration of anthropologists and archaeologists working in the high latitudes. Internationally, our teams are similarly distinctive with a global impact, and in both fields our research is recognised as world-leading. Aberdeen anthropologists and archaeologists are conducting active research in northern environments as diverse as Siberia, Iceland, Alaska, the Russian Far East, Hokkaido, Scandinavia and the Pacific Northwest Coast, amongst many other localities.

A particular emphasis of the University's scholars—unique in the UK—is their relationship with indigenous communities: current work is being undertaken with several Native American and First Nations groups, the Sami of Fennoscandia, the Ainu of Japan and a number of Siberian peoples. In Archaeology our flagship project here is the departmental field school in Alaska, based at the coastal site of Quinhagak to study over 25 miles of shoreline settlement along the Bering Sea. The project is run together with the local community of Yup'ik Eskimos, working closely with Native American elders, hunters, fishermen and village decision-makers. The settlements under excavation are up to 1,000 years old with waterlogged soils preserving organics and other normally perishable remains, resulting in a collection of artefacts and building remains unique in Alaska. The finds have attracted global attention in the archaeological community, and the project embodies everything that our Northern agenda is about. In addition to our Alaskan work, we also run field schools in Iceland and Scotland, on which our students learn the fundamentals of archaeological practice. Two more collaborative excavations are now being set up in Japan and British Columbia, both involving the local indigenous communities.

In my own discipline, our international work is anchored through formal collaborations with universities, museums and other relevant institutions in the Aberdeen Network for Northern Archaeology (ANNA), with particularly extensive links in Sapporo (Hokkaido University) and Vancouver (Simon Fraser University) alongside a range of Nordic centres.

Our specific research embraces four key themes:

- **Human interactions with northern environments**—how did individuals and communities adapt to, understand and transform the landscapes they moved and acted in?
- **Material culture, technology and vernacular architecture**—how and why did new kinds of objects, technologies and built structures emerge from, and spread into, the societies of the northern world?

- **The northern mind**—how do past and present societies in the north perceive and understand the world, how do they define themselves in it, and how do they express their beliefs and identities?
- **Interactions between northern populations**—how far did diasporas, colonisations and inter-community contacts define the long-term culture history of the northern world?

Within these we also pursue particular cultural specialisms, including amongst many others:

- the archaeology of the Vikings
- the Northern Neolithic
- the ethno-archaeology of hunter-gatherers

Archaeological links also extend into other Departments, such as Geography and Environment, where the Palaeoecology Research Group focuses on prehistoric and historical changes in land use, especially in the North Atlantic region. In conjunction with our sister disciplines at the University, Aberdeen's archaeological contribution to Northern studies and research is expansive, ambitious and unique.

Centre for Scandinavian Studies

The University of Aberdeen also now has the largest concentration of experts on early Scandinavia in the UK. A Centre for Scandinavian Studies was established in 2007, with a view to bringing together this expertise to coordinate research projects, provide research facilities and supervision, teach undergraduate and postgraduate programmes and promote Scandinavian Studies generally. The Centre's research profile currently includes Old Norse and Old Swedish language and literature, Scandinavian toponymy and runology, medieval history, landscape history and legal history. Its interests resonate very closely, in a synergy unique to Aberdeen, with those of Archaeology and Anthropology, and with colleagues in a number of the other subject areas mentioned above.

A Museum of the North

A truly effective synergy between archaeology and anthropology can only be grown with the support and involvement of a flourishing museum. Not only do such collections provide essential resources for teaching in both disciplines, they are also critical for research involving the collection and conservation of material things, and for studies that would bring together researchers and students with those beyond the academy. While a museum of course gives a public face to this research, and is crucial to enhancing its impact, particularly in a northern context, this can also involve outreach to craftspersons, artists and other practitioners working within indigenous traditions. The University of Aberdeen is exceptionally fortunate in having a Museum (formerly known as the Museum of Anthropology and latterly as the Marischal Museum) with one of the largest and most comprehensive archaeological and ethnological collections of any such institution in the UK.

Northern Futures

At present (March 2011), the University is entering a further phase of renewal with the adoption of a new Strategic Plan for the future. Four interdisciplinary research themes have been chosen to frame the institution's forward objectives, of which one is the North—surely a unique situation in the scholarly world, where high-latitude studies represent a full quarter of a major university's research orientation. A number of exciting developments, institutional clusters and initiatives are now at a stage of advanced planning, and researchers interested in our Northern agendas are encouraged to regularly review the University websites. For more information on any aspect of our research and teaching, all the disciplines mentioned here welcome enquiries.

Acknowledgements and Useful Links

The Northern synergies at Aberdeen are a joint effort, and particular credit should go to Professors Tim Ingold (Anthropology), Kevin Edwards (Geography & Environment) and Stefan Brink (Scandinavian Studies), alongside Neil Curtis of Marischal Museum. The Northern focus at the University was initiated by Principal (the Scottish term for Vice-Chancellor or Rektor) Professor Sir Duncan Rice and is being continued by his successor Professor Ian Diamond.

For more information about the key Northern sections of the University, see:

Archaeology: www.abdn.ac.uk/archaeology;
Anthropology: www.abdn.ac.uk/anthropology;
Scandinavian Studies: www.abdn.ac.uk/cfss;
Marischal Museum: www.abdn.ac.uk/historic/museum.

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Reviews/Comptes rendus/Besprechungen

Charles Emmerson, *The Future History of the Arctic*, London: The Bodley Head 2010, ISBN 978184920256, 419 pp.

The intriguing title of this book has a double meaning. First of all it alludes to the fact that there is a history of ideas and that this is particularly true about the Arctic. Ideas and visions of that region's future economic potential have in the past always been an important driving force behind its multifaceted development, and continue to be so today. The military-strategic significance of the Arctic was also important—a cornerstone in security doctrines both East and West during the period of the Cold War. Although somewhat abated, security issues are still important and in some respects in the present era of privatized globalisation they have taken on new meanings for the future—economic independence, environmental security, managing risk connected to climate change and indigenous peoples' rightful voice in the face of large scale exploitation of oil and gas locked away in the Arctic sea basin as the extent of sea-ice in the summer season diminishes and polar traffic increases.

The second connection between past, present and future, as the author says, is the classical one: the past does not determine the future, but it moulds it. Just as the future of a country depends, to some degree, on its past, so too it is with the Arctic, which is now part of the globalisation process. Consequently, in order to gain a better understanding of where we may be headed, a grasp of the history of the Arctic is essential. It is a necessary precondition to an understanding of the motivations, hopes, fears and ambitions of those who will shape its future.

With this in mind Charles Emmerson, an Australian living in London and expert on geopolitics, has travelled extensively to find out what decision-makers are planning, their visions, ambitions and hopes as well as the views of scientific experts advising them on the one hand and representatives of environmental organizations, fishermen and regulatory agencies on the other, who are concerned about the prospects of unbridled development. A rough count of the many informants the author names in his book gives the number 125 and then there are many more who contributed their views informally during the course of his travels.

As the blurb on the inside cover of the book tells the reader, he takes us along on a journey

from the oil-fields of Prudhoe Bay to the shores of Greenland, from the northernmost settlement on earth to the militarised borderlands of northern Norway. And along the way we meet diplomats, spies, businesspeople, oil-workers, fishermen, politicians and scientists. The Arctic is coming of age. This engrossing book tells the story of how that is happening and how it might happen—through the stories of those who live there, and those who will determine its destiny.

And no, it is not an exaggeration.

Emmerson is well equipped for the task. Educated in Oxford and Paris in modern history and international relations, he then spent some time as an Asso-

ciate Director of the World Economic Forum and was responsible for their work on global risk. This gave him a ringside seat at a whole series of the Davos meetings of that organization, hearing politicians, academics and business leaders discuss their view of the world.

The position also provided him with a unique entry into the Arctic network where he got a superb start into his project in Norway, visiting and discussing in Oslo, Hammerfest, Tromsø, Svalbard and Kirkeness. Across the border the trail goes via Murmansk, Moscow, St. Petersburg and Helsinki to Stockholm, and then on to Copenhagen and Nuuk in Greenland. Where the tectonic plates pull apart in the Atlantic, crisis-ridden Reykjavik provided new meetings with key persons providing further pieces and perspectives on the Arctic. On the other side of the Atlantic another window onto the Arctic was opened for him through stop offs to meet policy makers in Washington D.C., legal experts in Ottawa and key players in the oil industry, science and environmental protection or regulation in Anchorage, Fairbanks and Barrow in Alaska.

Applying multiple triangulations from a variety of different vantage points of geographic space and stakeholder interests, the author has succeeded in composing a factually rich and highly topical review of what is happening in the Arctic. He explains to us the character of the intergovernmental regimes that are in place, how these regulate maritime traffic and procedures Arctic coastal states must follow when seeking to extend their jurisdiction over outer limits of the continental shelves. Therewith we get a better understanding of the much-debated issue of "Arctic governance."

The presentation of current problems and future prospects is nicely framed by a number of chapters that discuss how earlier political, economic and military developments intertwined in the history of major territories. Siberia under the Czars, Alaska after the American purchase in 1867, and the British response to the same involving a Confederation of Canadian provinces pass in review. Thereafter Emerson contrasts the differences in approach between the centralized commando economy of the Soviet Union and capitalist market driven enterprises in North America as well as the respective legacies of the two contrary systems. In both cases the impacts had positive economic and technological effects at the cost of human life and suffering (the Gulag system) plus disruption of indigenous cultures and brutal environmental degradation (in Siberia and North America equally).

The aforementioned topics are covered in the first two parts of the book, where Part I (with two chapters) has the heading "Visions" and Part II (three chapters) is called "Power." The very first chapter introduces us to historical ideas and visions of the future of the Arctic. It is titled "Oracles and Prophets: Rethinking the North." The lives and mutually complementary as well as partly conflicting views of Fridtjof Nansen and Vilhjalmur Stefansson are used as a foil to probe these men's scientific and socio-political projects as symbolic of two different images of the Arctic seen as intimately connected with the history of human progress. The second chapter, entitled "Through a Glass darkly: the Soviet Arctic," takes up significant facets of the coercive approach to modernization and industrialization of the USSR under Stalin and the important roles of Siberia and the Arctic in that context.

Part II begins with the Western counterpoint, "The Making of the Ameri-

can Arctic;” thereafter chapter four portrays the geopolitical tug of war between nations and contending strategies and doctrines behind the present-day lines of demarcation pertinent to who may guard access to what in terms of natural resources. Here we find a discussion of the implications of the sector theory contra the principles embodied in the Spitsbergen Treaty that gave Norway a distinct advantage. The colonial history of Greenland in an earlier field of tension between Denmark and Norway leads over (chapter five) into the period of the Cold War, NATO and superpower rivalry that once benefited the economies—but not necessarily the traditional cultures—of Iceland and Greenland.

We are reminded that one fifth of Soviet nuclear tests took place in the Arctic. Another legacy is the proliferation of a chain of Distant Early Warning (DEW-line) stations across northern Canada tying into the US airbase Thule on northern Greenland. The airbase is about 1,100 km above the Arctic Circle and 1,500 km from the geographic North Pole. It is still active whereas with the end of the Cold War many of the radar stations in Canada were deactivated; parallel to this, abandoned Russian nuclear submarines in various naval yards and bases in and around Murmansk now decommissioned have left radioactive waste that is still in the process of being cleaned up, with assistance from the West.

The five chapters reviewed above provide an excellent overview of present-day problems; they also highlight the resilience of myopic local perspectives and bureaucratic political cultures that have strong roots in the past.

Part III is entitled “Nature,” Part IV “Riches” and Part V “Freedom.” The chapters in these sections zigzag back and forth between past, present and emerging future(s). Linked to “Nature” we are taken on a journey through a series of scientific institutions devoted to many different aspects of polar research, most of them relating to global climate warming, impacts and responses. Particularly interesting is the snapshot we get of the internationalisation of Ny-Ålesund on Svalbard with national scientific stations from ten nations. Some of them are fairly new, manifesting a quest on the part of their countries (China, India, Japan and South Korea) for signalling their economic interests in the future of the Arctic. Then there is a discussion of the consequences of Arctic warming on human settlements, strategic infrastructures and stimulation of new and emerging technologies that in turn bring new opportunities and risks. The inherent tensions come alive in the details.

Part IV, “Riches,” recounts the earlier history of the Klondike gold rush and the slower oil rushes and their problems in the absence of viable infrastructures and reliance on market incentives, Norman Wells 1920 in Northern Canada, Prudhoe Bay Alaska 1968 and later hiccup-like developments until momentary boosts came with the world oil crisis of 1973 and its successor 1979–1980 that for reasons of economic security spurred infrastructural supports from governments.

Another chapter deals with the post-Cold War situation in Russia and the Kremlin’s current strategy for developing its Arctic oil and gas future. We are treated to flashbacks between the past and possible future of Murmansk where the regional governor wants to emulate Tromsø in Norway as a long-term model for his city. Russia’s dilemma in finding a balance between the rule of free market mechanisms and a new mode of centralized commando approach to industrial development is nicely analysed, illustrating the complex essential tension between rapid economic development and environmental accountability.

We learn that the “best symbol of Russia’s ambitions for its oil and gas future, and the best test of its /economic and technological/ ability, lies 550 kilometres north of the Kola peninsula, under 350 meters of the cold Barents Sea”—the huge Shtokman field where the question is the be or not to be of involving foreign partners to bring on-stream vast annual volumes of Liquefied Natural gas for export. Key decision-makers seem to be of two minds, the most heroic option of course being the one of Russian self-reliance. This lends another dimension to the symbolic import of veteran polar explorer Artur Chilingarov’s bearded image and his dapper Russian flag-planting act on the floor of the Arctic Ocean at the North Pole that generated so many ripples in the media.

Russian and other major players’ predictions regarding up and coming scenarios of tapping hydrocarbons in the Arctic seabed spur speculators in Alaska to press for government backing to once again expand oil and gas extraction in the Beaufort Sea, a scenario opposed by environmentalists and some Inuit communities whose voices are much stronger than their counterparts in Russia.

Having outlined and detailed the character of the many tensions at play, the author then devotes a whole chapter to Norway. It is seen as the country of the middle way, an Arctic model of oil and gas development that is not perfect but is better, paying off and probably more sustainable than most approaches Emerson has come across in the course of his travels. A lengthy stay and more intimate relations with leading circles of scientific experts, politicians and environmentalists in that country may of course have influenced his perspective. In this context reference is also made to the role of the Arctic Council (AC) as an important platform for stakeholder dialogues. On this point the book could have been more explicit and gone into further detail, since it touches on the much debated question of what form a stronger collective mode of “Arctic governance” might take and the role of science under the aegis of the AC. It is a role that in some interesting respects differs from that of the geoscientists commissioned to supply data on behalf of one or another country to help make its case for extending claims to the outer limits of the continental shelf naturally appurtenant to it. Geomorphologic features of the Lomonosov Ridge, moreover, also comprise an important scientific problem with geopolitical implications for how lines may be drawn.

Finally, in Part V, “Freedom,” we come to Greenland and Iceland. The discussion about the latter country revolves on “the grand illusion” of being able to capitalize on globalisation without being pulled into its destructive vortices. Emerson visited Iceland in May 2008 just before the economic collapse. The plan for a big new aluminium smelter and powering it with a grand dam to produce hydroelectricity, putting the trust in foreign corporate capital and flooding a remote area, was in full swing. So was grass roots opposition. Following up later developments at a distance he notes the mix of continuing optimism regarding large-scale technological projects including more intensive utilization of geothermal energy and pessimism regarding new collateral damage to the environment.

The breaking of the bubble of domestic speculators who were bent on selling out the country in good neo-liberal style in order to enrich themselves is analysed, but here further elaboration would have been welcome, dissecting more closely the neo-liberal mindset and the financial machinations behind

an unsustainable developmental trajectory and more precisely the lessons to be drawn regarding a “balance” of possibly incommensurable “values” as discussed in the field of environmental economics. What I also miss is a discussion of the earlier “heroic” case of selling out the Icelandic nation’s unique genetic heritage database as a market commodity to high bidding private entrepreneurs whose promises turned out to be hollow. That project soured and petered out but here too in the chaos lie buried deeper moral and ethical lessons still to be drawn. Surely it cannot be as one quoted Icelander jokingly remarks, memory doesn’t stretch beyond two weeks?

The case of Greenland is also taken up in considerable detail and the question of the balancing act is pursued further, this time with the concluding reflection that “the emergence of the world’s first truly Arctic state is not a foregone conclusion.” For a small nation in the era of globalisation there are many pitfalls on the way to real independence, even if that goal may still lie a generation into the future.

Greenland is an instructive litmus paper case. The loosening of Danish political reigns and with it diminishing cash flows from the metropolis to the former colony combines with potential new opportunities and incomes that may come in the wake of climate warming. A melting ice sheet lays bare hitherto inaccessible mineral wealth and the annual opening of Arctic waters under longer periods of time facilitates future hydrocarbon resource exploitation. Some observers, we are told, believe that anthropogenic climate warming may even bring back the cod to fishing ground off western Greenland as natural global warming did in the 1920s and 1930s. The chapter provides an informative overview of the positions of various stakeholders, their basic interests, and again the potential benefits and risks attending different visions or scenarios.

Taken altogether the different parts of the book present much needed historical detail and contextualisation concerning a hot topic in a cold world in transformation. The text is amply illustrated with telling black and white photographic images that speak to the diversity of topics already mentioned. The extensive note apparatus is a delight for the inquisitive scholar. It provides many more details and fine pointers for additional reading; it is supplemented by a good list of references to books and articles. A substantial index is useful as another entry point into the text.

Since the storyline reflects the author’s encounters with so many personalities with different stakes in the call to the Arctic, his diagnosis of present trends and what the future may bring comes alive. The plot is enriched by an interlaced history of ideas, ideologies and materialities.

In this review it has only been possible to outline the main themes of the book without being able to do justice to all the voices and details Emmerson has captured. I recommend—check it out for yourself.

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Gunnar D. Hansson, *Lomonosovryggen, Gråbo: Anthropos*
Förlag 2009, ISBN 9789185722310, 174 pp.

This is a collection of poems the author wrote during his participation in the late summer of 2009 in the expedition of the Swedish icebreaker *Oden II*. It took place under the auspices of the Swedish Arctic Research Program (SWEDARCTIC) coordinated by the Polar Research Secretariat in Stockholm. The expedition, taking place between 31 July and 10 September, was a cooperative venture among the Danish Continental Shelf Project, the Polar Secretariat and the Swedish Maritime Administration. The chief mission of the *Oden II* was to gather data for the Danish Government along the massive undersea Lomonosov Ridge that divides the Arctic Ocean in two. Called LOMROG II this expedition was a follow-up to the Swedish-Danish LOMROG expedition that took place in 2007 (cf. Marcussen *et al.* 2009; Breum 2011). During LOMROG II, a group of marine geologists from Stockholm University participated within the Danish programme. In addition, Swedish scientists worked onboard with projects on zoo-ecology and marine geology.

The area north of Greenland is one of three areas off Greenland where an extension of the continental shelf beyond 200 nautical miles may be substantiated, according to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) article 76. However, it is tricky to obtain the technical data required for a submission to the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf (CLCS) that decides if and how far a country may extend its jurisdiction over the seabed along a continental protrusion. Information that includes geodetic, bathymetric, geophysical and geological data has to be translated and visualised in convincing charts.

The very first step in the chain of evidence to be amassed poses substantial logistical problems due to the severe ice conditions. Note that Russia has submitted an application to the CLCS and is also in the process of acquiring further geoscientific data for a scientific evidence base to backup a jurisdictional claim that might see the Lomonosov Ridge as contiguous with the appurtenance of the continental shelf extending from its own coast. This is being done to the tune of an equivalent of 80 million US dollars worth of R&D investments for the purpose. The Danes for their part have hitherto spent about 70 million US dollars; they too have until 2014 to strengthen their case for an extension of the continental shelf off Greenland towards the North Pole (Breum 2011). At the same time Russia and Denmark have a common interest at heart, which is to come to an agreement with the other Arctic coastal nations to firm up a governance regime for the unclaimed open seas area around the Pole, the so-called “doughnut hole.” This is among other things with an eye to keeping a new strong actor (China) at bay when it comes to future resource exploitation; China has already been knocking on the door of the Arctic Council to try and gain observer status there but until now unsuccessfully. For China, as well as South Korea and Japan, the Arctic is much nearer than the Antarctic while oil and gas resources below the seabed in the Arctic Ocean are more readily accessible in a foreseeable future than those below the Southern Ocean.

The term “continental shelf” is defined in UNCLOS article 76. But, one has to distinguish between term and concept, and, indeed, the *concept* of “continental shelf” has two meanings, a scientific and a juridical one, where the latter (but not the former) has to do with the line drawn along the top of the sea, also called

the “continental margin.” CLCS decision-makers must, on the basis of the evidence put before them, translate scientific findings relating to the outline and character of the seabed far below the surface of the sea into legal pronouncements concerning a country’s jurisdiction. Technically the test of appurtenance implies the following: if either the line delineated at a distance of 60 nautical miles from the foot of the continental slope, or the line delineated at a distance where the thickness of sedimentary rocks is at least 1 per cent of the shortest distance from such point to the foot of the slope, or both, extends beyond 200 nautical miles from the baseline, then a coastal State is entitled to delineate the outer limits of the continental shelf as prescribed by the provisions contained in article 76, paragraphs 4 to 10. In other words, moving from bottom sediments to proxy data regarding seabed features, to models, to maps or visualisations and on to realities, the stronger your science and the better your lawyers, the better probably will be your case as a coastal state.

Thus it was fortunate for the Danes that they could lease the impressive Swedish icebreaker. It also means that it was ultimately a scientific monitoring task that has a geopolitical dimension. In addition to probing the Lomonosov Ridge in a number of places, the vessel’s permanently mounted Kongsberg multi-beam echo sounder as well as a Kongsberg chirp sonar (sub bottom profiler) was used to acquire bathymetric data on both flanks of the Ridge; in addition scientists gathered seismic data in the Amundsen and Markov Basins, and gravity data along the entire track of the cruise to gain an understanding of the bottom profile and other characteristics. This will help Denmark make its case before the CLCS and perhaps also gain a better idea of possible hydrocarbon resources that are locked away below the seabed in that part of the Arctic, all with an eye to future exploitation.

Altogether the *Oden* travelled a total of 3,402 nautical miles and also served as a research platform for a number of other projects along the way. On 22 August 2009 the 60 participants in the cruise set foot on the geographic North Pole. For the *Oden* it was her sixth visit there.

Gunnar D. Hansson is a highly acclaimed Swedish poet who has received many prestigious awards. He is also an essayist and translator, as well as an associate professor of literature at the University of Gothenburg. The present collection of poems, his eleventh, has been very well received, and for good reason. It provides us with a unique view on the Arctic icescape and reflections on what lies below, current hot topics like ice melting, the plight of the polar bear, marine ecology, the constitution of drift ice, and possible futures. All this in an idiom that differs from the digests of facts, figures, curves, charts and arguments on the same subject that may be found in the relevant scientific literature.

The handsomely designed book has on its covers a striking image taken at the North Pole showing soft contours of snow and ice spliced here and there by dark bluish lines of water beneath. The text, sometimes very short, sometimes long, disperses itself across the pages of the collection, interconnecting a variety of thematic nodes as the author reflects on intricate topics: the treatment of the Arctic by classical poets and writers, exploits of polar explorers and scientists in the past, differences between the arts and the sciences in how their practitioners encounter, investigate and report things polar, but we are also treated with autobiographical vignettes and a discussion of the possibility of Arctic poetry as a specific genre.

Epistemology: the author in a reflexive mode/mood asks playfully, is there one Arctic or are there multiple Arctics?—as many as there are epistemic representations, the oceanographers' Arctic, the geologists', the seismologists', the paleo-ornithologists', and I can add, in science too one may find controversies, paradigmatic bifurcations as happened when Tuzo Wilson's plate tectonic theory took off in the early 1960s and Wegener's minority hypothesis of continental drift successively became a majority view. The number of Arctics proliferates.

Ontology: and then he reminds us too: what about representations embedded in practical money-making endeavours—an oil-Arctic, to which I add, a tourist Arctic, etcetera? And then there is the metaphysical world, a moral Arctic, the Kantian Arctic of pure reason, or why not—I ask—the world of environmental NGOs and First Nation Inuit, an Arctic in which the ethics of the precautionary principle is observed. A lot of background research and learning lies behind (and between) prudent expressions in lines that resonate with historical, literary and contemporary allusions.

An example (p. 27):

Från augusti 1896, Franz Josefs Land
 På en dimhöljd ö utan namn
 stiger den f.d. eldaren och fångvaktaren
 Hjalmar Johansen iland från sin sälskinnskajak,
 strax efter Frithiof Nansen, den i andras närvaro
 obstridde, deras villkor identiska,
 den tre år långa isvandring är över. Tills vidare.
 Långt senare: den stora råken öppnar sig.
 Självmod. Nobelpris.

Worth remembering these heady days when Norwegians Anno 2011 are celebrating two anniversaries commemorating the exploits of two outstanding sons of their nation, Nansen and Amundsen. Nansen's birth 150 years ago on 10 October; Roald Amundsen and four companions' physical feat of criss-crossing an abstract mathematical point, a human construct, the geographic South Pole, 14 December 1911.

My attempt at translation:

'From August 1896, Franz Joseph Land
 On a fog shrouded island without a name
 treads the former Stoker and Prison Guard
 Hjalmar Johansen when he lands his sealskin kayak
 soon after Frithiof Nansen, the man in others' company
 incontestable, their conditions identical,
 the three year trek over the ice is over. Until further
 Much later: the great chasm opens
 Suicide. Nobel Prize.'

In a few lines Hansson here captures the two historic figures' initial communality and the asymmetry of their later lifelines. In 1911 former Norwegian gymnastics

champion and polar veteran Johansen challenged the wisdom of Amundsen's premature takeoff from the Bay of Whales into interior Antarctica. He found himself brutally castigated, excommunicated from the inner circle of polar friends and after the venture had to find his own way back the following year from Buenos Aires to Oslo, where he ended up committing suicide in a shabby hotel room, in 1913. Shame and fame. Nansen's life trajectory was brilliant after the success of the *Fram's* north polar drift, renowned scientist, statesman and diplomat whose career was crowned in the cause of European unity, peace and human rights.

On the next page (p. 28) a twist of irony jumps out at us. Amundsen vanished on a flight out of Tromsø in 1928 when his plane went down during a search and rescue mission to find his rival, the Italian explorer and airship designer Umberto Nobile, who had crashed in the Arctic in a dirigible airship, the *Italia*.

In August 2009 Gunnar D. Hansson is carried along by *Oden II*. He is musing about life and what it takes to write Arctic poetry with three thousand five hundred meters of black water "under his shoe soles (just here) and with an ice drift of ¼ of a knot." At the same time elsewhere in the Arctic—the Barents Sea—a hunt is going on for Amundsen's plane. A HUGIN 1000 state-of-the-art Autonomous Underwater Vehicle (AUV) is used to probe the depths; the vehicle has a depth capacity down to 1,000 metres, an operational speed of 4 knots and the ability to stay deployed at sea for 18 hours non-stop with all sensors operating.

The search was unsuccessful, no truth, no triumph. Hansson captures the moment brilliantly.

Here and there the lonely figure of Finn Malmgren, the Uppsala trained meteorologist of the *Italia*, also keeps spooking in Hansson's consciousness in the comfort of his own cabin on the *Oden*. Malmgren was one who survived the crash of the airship only to perish out on the ice a month later. Still, it does not seem that the *Oden's* stock of films shown in the saloon included Peter Finchley's production in 1969 of "The Red Tent" featuring Sean Connery, Claudia Cardinale and Hardy Krüger wherein Peter Finch as Nobile is portrayed as reflecting on his life and the deaths of those who died to rescue him.

A few pages onward, drawing on the knowledge of his geology colleagues on board the *Oden*, Hansson succinctly explains the origins of the Lomonosov Ridge blanket of sediment in a Siberian glacial dam break-up fifty thousand years ago. Time-scales alternate between human and geological time, as on the way to 90° N latitude, "soon everything is South. Disturbing lack of compass points" (p. 25). In the meantime another reflection, "Poetry in both summer and winter, the only possible genre at the 90th parallel North" (p. 16).

One section in the book has the heading "Lomonosov." Here we are briefed on the life and work of the remarkable Russian natural scientist (1711–1765), who also was a poet and reformed his nation's language. It was he whose name is borne by the Ridge at the bottom of the sea.

On the basis of empirical observations of the extent of the Arctic sea ice, Lomonosov early on deduced that there could be no land in the very high latitudes, a view that fifty years later gained acceptance after Fridtjof Nansen, Otto Sverdrup and Hjalmar Johansen's polar drift experiment 1893–1896. This section of the book also contains an intriguing, hilarious detective story involving *Oden* (the god and icebreaker both), a beer-brewing racket (the Swedish word for beer, *öl*, is close to the English *oil*), the UN, clandestine criminal organisations, Swed-

ish secret security forces, and much more. It is an allegory replete with interpretative flexibility but with an unmistakable critical barb directed against unbridled exploitation of natural resources locked below the Arctic seabed.

The book under review here bears witness to the fact that there does exist a genre of modern Arctic poetry and that Gunnar D. Hansson has become one of its prime representatives. Others who contribute to this special genre may be found in New Zealand, Australia, the USA and to some extent in the UK and Canada. France, Chile and Argentina must also be mentioned. Except for the Canadian poets many of these writers have grappled with the play of polar light, katabatic winds, penguin life and pristine wilderness beauty and their own encounters with the same in Antarctica, oftentimes on expeditions similarly facilitated by their national polar research programs. For the most part poets make up a minority. More common is the participation of artists, photographers, underwater photographers, painters, novelists, writers, children's book authors, and film-makers, historians of science, digital media artists, a few musicians and sculptors, choreographers, and the odd science fiction author.

Historically the genre in which Hansson inscribes himself is very different from the Arctic poetry of olden days, that of the Arctic sublime, or reflections by those at home on the frightful fate of shipwrecked explorers questing the Northwest Passage, honouring death, God and country.

The poetry written by polar explorers of the heroic cut themselves is different again. They put on plays and tended to write light-hearted rhymes to entertain and distract from the daily chores in an extreme environment, that is, when they did not muse on isolation and 24-hour darkness and biting storms. The latter is evident in the little broadsheet run by Ernest Shackleton, the *South Polar Times*, brought out during Robert Scott's first expedition down there. It contains entries by several of the participants including Shackleton himself. Later the Australian scientist and explorer Douglas Mawson also penned poems in a similar vein.

More to the point is perhaps Lt Nobu Shirase, the Japanese Antarctic explorer who came onto the scene with his ship 1910–1912 at Amundsen's Bay of the Whales site to explore a rim of the Ross Ice Shelf. He wrote a *waka*, a short Japanese poem, before taking his leave of the continent: "Study the treasures under the Antarctic and make use of them after death."

From the time of the International Geophysical Year to the Fourth International Polar Year scientists have also continued to write poems, at first sporadically but today in larger numbers. The focus is often on specific scientific exploits and personal experience of the unusual and seemingly otherworldly, for example the Dry Valleys of Antarctica. This differs in character and tonality from that of the heroic age.

At King George Island on 16 October 2009 there was even a Poetry Reading Festival down by Fildes Peninsula with contributions by scientists from several of the great number of national stations located on that easily accessible island as a political statement to manifest each country's presence. One may wonder if the national scientific flag waving and scientific duplication there may one day be superseded by a couple of multinational stations and if poetry reading festivals can help prepare the way?

Nowadays we also have a couple of other genres. There is the polar poetry of school children in Nunavut, Canada, as probably also amongst other members

of four million Circumpolar Peoples living along the Arctic rim. Then there is the ecotourist's enthusiastic digital diary illustrated with photographs and video bits. "Tourism is now the largest single activity in the Arctic," notes Gunnar D. Hansen citing an official report (p. 65). Oh, look here a seal, there a bird... something on which to pin meaning, but which/what?

The professional artist's grappling with his/her journey in time and space navigating the repetitious yet at the same time ever uniquely configured snow, ice and water, is different again. Poetry sediment. Lyrical poetry in this respect consists of poems that express thoughts and feelings of the writer in the encounter. It does not tell a story which expressly portrays characters and actions, but more, it seems to me, it directly challenges the reader to share the writer's state of mind, perceptions, emotions and findings in a double journey, outward in the seemingness of the unknown while the ship's depth sounder probes layers of Lomonosovian sediments, and inwardly, existentially as the poet works his way through different layers of the soul. The latter reminds me of the Russian spirit wrestlers who rejected church and state.

Lomonosov would have known the term "spirit wrestlers" (*Духоборцы, Dukhobortsy*) still associated with the radical anti-authoritarian pacifist people, the Doukobhors. Tolstoy in his day helped thousands of them emigrate in several waves, beginning in 1898, out of Tsarist Russia to Canada where they set up communal agrarian settlements on the prairies, and today many are concentrated in relatively remote mountain valleys near Castlegar in interior British Columbia.

The readers are exhorted to test for themselves. My sediment-coring sampler used to recover layers from Gunnar D. Hansson's *Lomonosovryggen*, you may have noticed, has a built in history of science bias. Someone else may be more apt to fasten on literary figures, associations and allusions that also abound—Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Mary Shelley, Joseph Conrad, Harry Martinson, Tegnér, but also Heidegger, Kant, Schopenhauer, or in another category Waldo Emerson and Rachel Carson.

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Giuseppe Nencioni, *The Italians in the Arctic Explorations. A Critique of the Reinterpretation of Nationalism. With an appendix containing Finn Malmgren's diary* (Northern Studies Monographs 2), Umeå: Umeå University & the Royal Skyttean Society 2010, ISBN 9789188466761, 131 pp.

This year, 2011, is the Nansen-and-Amundsen-year. Fridtjof Nansen was born 150 years ago, on 10 October 1861, to be exact. Roald Amundsen (b. 1872) and four companions were the first human beings to reach the Geographic South Pole—the date was 14 December 1911; come December 2011 it will be a century ago. Both men were remarkable polar personalities, Nansen the scientist, artist and humanitarian and Amundsen the explorer, record setter and facilitator of science. Their lives were intertwined and so were some of their ambitions.

Appropriately several Norwegian universities, major museums like the Fram, the Norwegian Film Institute in Oslo, the Norwegian Polar Institute in Tromsø, the Norwegian Academy of Science and Letters and several other institutions are cooperating to honour the two historic figures. The double anniversary is being celebrated with a series of exhibitions, lectures, school outreach programs and other events. A touring exhibition “The Nansen Heritage—Science at the End of the World” has already been shown in Bergen and will be opening in Murmansk, and thereafter successively in St. Petersburg, Berlin and Glasgow before reaching Oslo in September this year. During the entire year a total of almost 130 Amundsen-and/or-Nansen events will take place in Norway and other countries. Perhaps it is not an exaggeration to speak of a “polar fever.” Science, memory, images, symbols and material cultures are all significant ingredients in nation building, nationalism and internationalism. Since this is also a theme that lies at the heart of the book under review here it is worth situating the topic and delving into it in more detail than usual.

II

Amundsen's life ended where his passion began, in the polar world. He disappeared over open water on 18 June 1928 together with his Norwegian pilot Leif Dietrichson, the French pilot Rene Guilbaud and three other Frenchman in a French Latham 47 seaplane a few hours after leaving Tromsø en route to Spitsbergen. Their mission was to participate in a rescue operation some time after it had become known that Umberto Nobile's flight with the airship *Italia* had ended in wreckage. The dirigible had become unstable, rapidly lost altitude and crashed into jagged pack-ice ridges in the Arctic Ocean about three weeks earlier. It was on the return leg from the North Pole that the catastrophe occurred. The gondola carrying Nobile and seven others got separated from the main body of the dirigible, which for its part with several crewmembers still on board rose again into the sky and floated away with the wind.

The position of Nobile and his group of survivors was known by the time Amundsen took off but the whereabouts of the crewmembers of the *Italia* who were carried away in the envelope of the balloon after the moment of the crash was unknown. Likewise the location of a group of three men who had decided

to leave Nobile's camp in order to try and reach the east coast of Spitsbergen by a difficult route over the sea-ice was also unknown. The young Swedish meteorologist Finn Malmgren was a member of this latter group. Injured and exhausted he died on the ice; the other two in his party were later rescued. At base camp Nobile (plus his pet dog) was the first to be picked up by a small plane, already on 23 June, while others in his party were only removed much later by the crew of the Soviet Russian icebreaker *Krassin* when it eventually reached them.

When word first came that the *Italia* was long overdue in Kingsbay, Spitsbergen, Amundsen volunteered his services to lead a search and rescue operation. The Norwegian government asked Italy to supply two Dornier-Wal seaplanes for the purpose but Mussolini's government blankly refused. Thereupon Amundsen managed to get hold of the smaller French seaplane and organized his own operation.

As the story is usually told Amundsen wished to rescue his arch-rival Nobile, the man with whom he had had a bitter schism two years earlier. The conflict had emerged because the Italian engineer and airship designer occupied much more space in the public limelight than Amundsen after the successful flight of the airship *Norge* from Spitsbergen across the North Pole and on to Alaska. The flight of the *Norge* we know now was the first expedition ever to reach and cross the pole (Robert Peary's, Fredrick Cook's and Richard Byrd's prior claims to have reached the geographical polar point have on the basis of perusals of extant records been retrospectively invalidated).

Amundsen and the American millionaire's son Lincoln Ellsworth were the co-leaders of the *Norge* expedition, while Nobile in Amundsen's mind was "only the hired pilot." Behind the jealous clash of personalities there also lay conflicting national interests, with the young democratic Norwegian nation represented by Amundsen, while Mussolini in Italy saw his chance to polish the image of Italian fascism by linking it to the flashy futurism of his technically schooled military man Nobile. Given this situation Amundsen was probably less interested in Nobile and more concerned to locate the runaway balloon and possible survivors on it as well as hoping to find Finn Malmgren and his group; Malmgren had after all served as meteorologist both on Amundsen's Arctic expedition with the ship the *Maud* 1922–1925 (into the Bering Sea and off the shores of Siberia)¹ and on the *Norge's* flight over the pole.

III

It is remarkable how a struggle over national prestige permeated the entire aftermath of the crash of the *Italia*. The search and rescue operations turned into a free-for-all with several countries involved sending their own search expeditions without much attempt to cooperate or coordinate the various efforts. It seems that each wanted to be first to find the survivors and to reap honours on behalf of their own nation. Not only did the Italian government refuse to supply rescue planes to non-Italians but Mussolini and his close adviser, the 32-year-old general Italo Balbo, Minister of Aviation, one of the founders of Fascism and Nobile's rival, also tried to divert attention away from a possible search for the missing balloon and its crewmen that had blown away with the wind. Instead the focus was on finding Nobile and then to isolate him from any contact with the media in order to minimize damage to the public Italian image; soon Nobile was blamed

for seeing to it that he was the first to be rescued and ultimately held responsible also for Malmgren's tragic fate.

Further, when Amundsen and his companions in the small seaplane disappeared, all attention was now suddenly focused on a new search and rescue operation that continued throughout the summer and into September 1928. This further eclipsed the question of the possible fate of the lost balloon and its trapped occupants. Innumerable ships, planes and well over a thousand men were involved in the search for Amundsen, but to no avail.

In the end the *Italia* expedition had cost 17 persons their lives. Only 8 of the members of the expedition itself survived, 6 had disappeared with the balloon, 2 others (including Malmgren) died on the ice; in addition 6 persons (including Amundsen) went down with the Latham seaplane in the icy Arctic waters probably near Bear Island, and another 3 furthermore died in a plane crash by the Rhone River on their way back home to Italy.

As for Nobile he became *persona non grata* in his homeland and after a couple of years left for the Soviet Union where he participated in a Russian airship project. In 1936 he returned to Italy but still found himself obstructed in his every move to gain a new position; disappointed he immigrated to the USA in 1939 where he stayed until Mussolini and the fascist government had been overthrown. Once back in Italy again he initiated a new inquiry into the tragedy of the *Italia* expedition, earlier charges against him were lifted and he began a new career—he joined the Communist Party and became a member of Parliament.

The story of the *Italia* expedition and its fate and that of Amundsen's mysterious disappearance have been told many times and from various points of view. Giuseppe Nencioni's monograph affords a welcome addition to this literature. It provides both a conceptual frame and important historical background factors not easily found elsewhere. Furthermore, it contains a valuable Appendix that renders eight pages of Finn Malmgren's unique diary more easily accessible for interested readers.

IV

Finn Malmgren's diary consists of a series of notes made during and after his second trip with the *Italia*, which began on 15 May 1928 and ended on 18 May after a successful flight of about three days and 4,000 km flying over the northern islands of Franz Joseph Land and arriving at Severnaya Zemlya before returning to Kingsbay on Spitsbergen. These notes Malmgren had with him on the third flight, the one that crashed. Even though they do not weigh anything he probably left them on the snow together with other things in order to save weight before he and two companions set out across the treacherous sea-icescape to try and reach the mainland (Spitsbergen).

The diary notes were collected and preserved by Frantisek Behounek, a professor from Prague University and fellow scientist (radiologist) on the expedition; eventually they ended up in the Umberto Nobile Museum at Vigna di Valle in Italy where the original handwritten version may still be viewed.

Behounek became a wellknown Czech writer whose account (in German) of the fateful expedition was soon translated into Swedish under the title *Männen på isflaket. Med "Italia" till Nordpolen* ['The men on the ice floe. With "Italia" to the North Pole'] (1929). It gives a sympathetic picture of Malmgren's role that

Nencioni also draws upon. He also makes use of Paul Wetterfors' biography, *Finn Malmgren* (1928).

I mention this here for two reasons: first of all it indicates that Nencioni has a good command of his subject, and secondly, I want to draw attention to Finn Malmgren because nowadays very little is generally known about him.

Malmgren was born in 1895 and in the mid-1920s counted as the most promising of a younger generation of Swedish polar researchers. Indeed, Hans W:son Ahlmann the glaciologist (and later diplomat) who was only a few years older and became professor in Stockholm, stated in 1927 how "the only active polar researcher we have had the past couple of decades is Finn Malmgren." When Malmgren disappeared out on the polar sea-ice it was only a couple of weeks after Otto Nordenskjöld, the veteran of a dramatic Antarctic expedition (1901–1904) had died in Gothenburg after being hit by a bus in the street near his house close by the Botanical Gardens. Swedish polar research had lost two important figures in quick succession.

In 1931 a statue of Malmgren was created by Nils Sjögren and placed in Börjeparken in Uppsala (a picture appears in Nencioni's book). Since then Uppsala University every third year still awards a grant for research that covers fields Malmgren was interested in, "meteorology, oceanography, atmospheric electricity and glaciography, particularly in Arctic regions, Nordic alpine areas and Nordic seas."

In Stockholm in 1980 a further—more dramatic—statue was raised depicting a dying Finn Malmgren in the arms of his two companions. It is entitled "Farewell on the Polar Ice" and was constructed by Elsie Dahlberg.

On the basis of his findings as a meteorologist already during the flight on the *Norge*, Malmgren concluded that if future traffic over the polar sea was to materialize, it would not be by dirigibles but by airplanes (Malmgren 1926: 250). This was because of the problem with strong winds and icing that created dangerously risky situations for dirigibles. It was an insight that was tragically confirmed two years later with the crash of Nobile's *Italia*. In the long run the Zepelin never became the research platform that was envisaged by some.

Despite the crash of the *Italia*, the vision of airships as research platforms was nevertheless taken further for a while within the network of enthusiasts organized by the Aeroarctic (1924), a society for promoting Arctic aviation (Nansen was its president and another Norwegian, Harald Ulrik Sverdrup, was also on its Board). Speaking at a symposium of polar scientists in the USA in December 1927, Nobile covered several problems attending the use of dirigibles in polar regions. He recognized the dangers of fog and ice encrustation of the airships and spoke of the need to protect against falling chunks of ice from hitting and tearing the gasbag. Further he discussed the need to protect motors and gas valves against low temperatures. Still, he held that all such problems could be solved and then went on to try and refute those who dismissed the use of dirigibles as platforms for scientific research; against them (Finn Malmberg presumably included) he argued why "the dirigible is the best means of transportation for the exploration of the Arctic zone. The airplanes and hydroplane can be used, but mainly as an auxiliary means of transportation" (in Joerg (ed.) 1928: 424).

In an overly optimistic tone Nobile outlined a futuristic scenario where larger dirigibles might be used to transport entire laboratories for use in Polar

regions. History proved him wrong; in 1952 Arthur Koestler who had participated in the scientific expedition of the *Graf Zeppelin* in 1931 (see more below) summarized:

Just as the dinosaur represented the end product of an atrophied branch of development, it [the dirigible] was too clumpy, vulnerable and slow. But regarded as a monster it had a sublime beauty and was an idol and a fetish for a people who had an aptitude for adoring gods... The silver glitter of the smooth aluminium envelope meant that at a distance the airship looked like a living animal, a good natured Moby Dick that calmly swam amongst the clouds instead of in the sea (Koestler 1953: 302–302).

The failed futuristic vision was an important part of an episode wherein both Nansen and Amundsen had an important role in their different ways as men of action.

V

Nencioni's short account of Nobile and the airship *Italia* forms the seventh section of the second part of his three-part book. The First Part of the monograph consists of an Introduction. It takes up nationalism as a dynamic driving factor behind a whole series of Arctic polar expeditions. Particular attention is paid to the roots of Italian nationalism and its conceptualization as an ideological trope in the writings of Giuseppe Mazzini (1805–1872) and his followers, especially Cristoforo Negri (1809–1896), who six years after the creation of Italy as a nation state was instrumental in founding the Italian Geographical Society (1867). Like its sister organizations in other countries this became a body that sought to stimulate exploration and research and incorporated the usual essential tension that existed during the late nineteenth century (and into the twentieth) between popular geography and scientific geography in an amalgam of adventure, idealism, patriotism and science. As young nation Italy did not pursue many polar expeditions of its own but Italians could be found in the expeditions of several other nations.

Part Two of the monograph takes up seven expeditions in which Italians participated. In each of these Nencioni's focus is in part on interactions between persons of different nationalities, how language difficulties were handled and the Italian participants' comments on national rituals, for example, finding that Swedes had an exaggerated manner of celebrating the birthday of their monarch.

After briefly describing each expedition, its background, purpose and main personalities as well as different national traits, in Part Three of the book some of the threads are drawn together to discuss what the author calls the "core of nationalism." Some conclusions are drawn regarding international cooperation and whether or not that which drove Italians to participate in polar ventures differed from institutional and personal motivations rooted in the cultures of other nations.

The first expedition described is the Austro-Hungarian one of 1872–1874 led by Weyprecht and Payer to Franz Joseph Land. The second is A. E. Nordenskiöld's expedition to Spitsbergen, followed by Nordenskiöld's famous Vega expedition. The fourth is the Danish explorer Andreas Peter Hovgaard's expedition on the

Dymphna that ended up assisting the men of the Dutch International Polar Year (1882–1883) expedition ship *Varna* to overwinter in the ice on the Kara Sea (the *Varna* later sank). Thereafter we are given an account of the Duke of Abruzzi's attempt to reach the North Pole on the *Stella Polare* in the year 1900. Finally expeditions number six and seven are the ones with the airships, firstly the *Norge* led jointly by Amundsen and Lincoln Ellsworth in 1926 and secondly the flight of the *Italia* organized and led by Nobile in 1928.

Since the author's object is to discuss the motivations, position and roles of Italians in each of these expeditions, the reader is provided with some novel angles and insights, among them interesting reflections on the ability of expedition members to rise above national differences and collaborate towards a common goal despite the fact that the sponsoring nation often invested much nationalist symbolism into such exploits and even used them for propagandistic purposes in overarching political agendas. "Belonging to different nations was not an impediment to living and working together," at least not for the most part (p. 40). As a rule it appears to have been more important that there were differences in social rank between officers and researchers on the one hand and ordinary seamen or crew members on the other. Fraternization between the Danes and the Dutch on the ice of the Kara Sea appears to have been a positive exception to this rule, since it seems they also bridged differences in rank.

The account of the *Stella Polare* expedition is pertinent for the light it throws on the life and role of Umberto Cagni, who was second in command on the ship (formerly the Norwegian whaleboat *Jason* of Antarctic fame) and his acquaintance with Fridtjof Nansen whose "furthest north—86° 14'—they reached and exceeded by 20' latitude; it was "a blend of admiration for the Norwegians on the one hand and pride to be Italian on the other" (p. 81).

What is not mentioned is how Cagni as scientist and polar leader was later to cooperate with Otto Nordenskjöld in trying to promote the short-lived International Polar Commission (IPC) created in 1908 and formalized at the World Geographical Congress in Rome 1913 before it fell victim to the raging nationalism of World War I. Internationally minded scientists like Nordenskjöld, Henryk Arctowski, William Speers Bruce and Jean Charcot all tried to counter short-sighted polar populism and promote multi-national cooperation based on an internationally coordinated scientific agenda. As it turned out they were about fifty years ahead of their time. And, ironically, when the International Geophysical Year (1957/58) did come with a strong focus on Antarctica, it was successful because it involved a formula whereby science became the continuation of politics by other means—in other words politics was not set aside but rather masterfully sublimated in scientific rivalry and cooperation between participating nations. Hence high quality research activities in Antarctica have since then—under the Antarctic Treaty—had a double function, the advancement of knowledge on the one hand, and a politically significant manifestation of a nation's presence on the icy continent on the other.

VI

The *Norge* expedition of 1926 is portrayed by Nencioni as proceeding without any friction on board between the leading personalities involved and experiencing no particular technical problems. This is to simplify the situation and glosses

over the concerns that were uppermost in Finn Malmgren's mind as expedition meteorologist. In Malmgren's (1926) account it is clear that both flying in a foggy sky and ice encrustment on the body of the dirigible presented very dangerous risks that led him to especially warn against the icing problem if future expeditions were to be planned.

In his discussion of what happened after the *Norge* expedition, Nencioni does refer to the schism between Nobile and Amundsen but without really explaining the reason for it—the conflict gets personalized. Reliance on a large number of Nobile's writings in Italian (eleven titles dated between 1928 and 1987) is both a strength and a weakness. It is a strength because the average reader is not aware of these sources, but it is a weakness because these same sources are largely treated at face value without sufficient contextualization using source critical methods. It is apparent that Nobile at times in retrospect presented mutually inconsistent memories of past events. Nobile is mainly given the blame for the conflict with Amundsen while it is blandly stated that Amundsen also could be a difficult character who during preparations for the *Norge* flight had according to Nobile expressed "acrid, malevolent and unfounded criticisms" of the Italian (p. 89). Nencioni's references here are two publications by Nobile from 1928 and 1969 (without any exact designation as to the page(s) where one may find the pertinent Nobile quotation).

What is worse is that Nencioni is oblivious of the important fact that Amundsen's own autobiography came out already on 23 September 1927; prior to that it had appeared in serialized form in the American monthly magazine *World's Work*. A large portion of Amundsen's autobiography actually consists of a broadside attack on Nobile as well as on several other personalities including his own brother Leon Amundsen and money hungry capitalists behind the Oslo-based Airclub of Norway that had collected a lot of the funds to support the *Norge* expedition. Amundsen broke his contract with the Airclub because he found it had supported the dashing colonel Nobile's tour of lectures—among others in the USA—in its hopes of recouping capital "investments" (Amundsen 1927a). Note that the first UK edition of the autobiography, entitled *My Life as an Explorer*, contains an Appendix entitled "Refutation of Various Points in Nobile's Lectures in America" (cf. Amundsen 1927b).

Thus it turns out that Nobile's critique of the Norwegian polar hero's acrimoniousness maybe was justified and can just as well be seen as a case of self-defence against the character assassination the equally vain and fame-lusting Italian himself was experiencing.

Remarkably Amundsen's autobiography is not referred to by our author; nor does he refer to either T. Bowmann-Larsen's (1995) well researched two-volume Amundsen biography or to what Susan Barr has more recently written about the famous Norwegian explorer in his role as Norwegian national hero and icon (Barr 2005 contains some tell-tale excerpts from the self-revealing autobiography of an increasingly paranoid, bitter and isolated man who despite much outward bravado always lived with a feeling of deep-seated uncertainty inside himself).

Bowmann-Larsen in particular gives us quite a different picture compared to Nencioni's regarding several important points. He calls Amundsen's autobiography an instance of "intellectual suicide" and notes how during the course of the *Norge* expedition its leader Amundsen sat passively in silent rage. He sullenly

observed how Nobile dropped an Italian flag much larger than Amundsen's and Oscar Wisting's Norwegian flag out of the gondola window when the airship flew directly above the geographic North Pole; additionally Nobile managed to drop a couple of other Italian symbols plus a fascist flag onto the top of the world. Further along in the journey when past the pole, radio contact with the outside world was suddenly broken. Nobile suspected that this was due to sabotage committed by Amundsen. So everything was not as frictionless and cosy as Nencioni leads us to believe.

Even in the case of a later much more well-prepared scientific expedition with a multinational group on board, the *Graf Zeppelin* flight over the Soviet Union in 1931, Arthur Koestler (1953), the only in-house journalist present, reported how there was a lot of friction between that expedition's entrepreneurial and scientific leadership. Furthermore, in preparation for his own task as media man when reading through the annals of great geographic discoveries, Koestler says he was "amazed by the simplicity, greediness, vanity and nastiness [he] found manifested in the behaviour of hardened Arctic heroes" (Koestler 1953: 298). He gives some humorous insights into how men of the pole could jealously exploit symbols and symbolic actions on behalf of their own nations while directing poisonous barbs at their competitors.

After the airship *Norge* landed in Alaska and the expedition members reached Seattle by steamer, Amundsen was further embittered to see Nobile together with two fellow Italians steal the show by descending the gangplank to the dock in spotless military attire, while the Norwegians stood aghast in their rather rough "Alaska costumes" before a cheering crowd and many newspaper reporters who immortalized the world event in pictures and words (Bowmann-Larsen 1995: 468).

Some Norwegians found Amundsen's attacks on Nobile and other personalities distasteful and embarrassing (e.g. Zappfe 1935). In his usual diplomatic style Nansen backed Amundsen, but in his speech at the festivities in Oslo on 16 July 1926 to officially celebrate the expedition members' return to the capital, he exploited the occasion to promote both a domestic nation-building and an internationalist Norwegian agenda that lay more in line with his own humanitarian actions and contributions towards fostering a more viable post-war peace, efforts for which he had received the Nobel Peace Prize in that same city four years earlier. The date of the festivities by the way was nicely orchestrated to coincide with Amundsen's birthday.

As for the *Italia* expedition, the book under review here gives a brief but fairly reliable account. But here again a close reading of some of the works just mentioned above could have thrown additional light on several aspects of the drama (see also Arnesen & Lundborg 1928). Remarkably, Arne Remgård's book *Expedition Italia* (1984, in Swedish) has not been consulted either. That is a pity because Remgård has produced a very readable detailed reconstruction of the various events relating to the *Italia* catastrophe, the plight of the various groups and the roles of their rescuers, as well as that of Mussolini and the politically dictated verdict of the Italian Commission of Inquiry that definitely condemned Nobile, who was then duly stripped of his many honours and marginalized.

VII

What I also miss in Nencioni's analysis of the role of nationalism in polar exploration and research is an elucidation of the dialectical character of the duality of the pursuit of exploration and research as knowledge in an internationalist spirit on the one hand and the parallel expression of nationalist politics on the other, which also appears to have been at work in important respects in the Arctic. Some such notion is implicitly there in his text but it needs to be articulated more clearly.

It was not only—as he suggests—a matter of nationalism creating an atmosphere of collaboration and solidarity because explorers were nationalists or patriots. It was also the other way around, science lent greater credibility to patriotic agendas while contributions to an international body of knowledge helped generate greater national prestige and geopolitically established a stronger presence of a young nation in a changing world.

In spite of its shortcomings Nencioni's book provides a novel window on the history of polar exploration in the Arctic. It raises many interesting issues and homes in on a central question, that of the multiple roles of nationalism and patriotism in the context at hand. Also we get thought-provoking illustrations of how in some respects the personal contains the political.

When trying to relate nationalism and internationalism, however, I suggest that more incisive analysis requires a further articulation of the several nested dimensions involved, for example the personal, the institutional, the country specific, the cultural, and the geopolitical.

During the current Nansen-and-Amundsen year and the "polar fever" it is generating, scholars in Northern Studies are particularly challenged to continue honing reflexive intellectual tools when coming to grips with and critically reinterpreting the recurring themes of nationalism and internationalism and the entangled nature of these and other dimensions.

NOTES

¹ It should be noted that the title and date of H. U. Sverdrup's series of reports on the scientific results of the *Maud* Expedition 1918–1925 as it appears in Nencioni's reference list—where it is simply called "Scientific Results (1933)"—is incomplete and hence confusing (cf. in my list, Sverdrup 1928–1933).

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Book

Paasi, A. (1996). *Territories, Boundaries and Consciousness. The Changing Geographies of the Finnish-Russian Border*, Chichester: John Wiley & Sons.

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