

FROM ORAL TRADITION TO RAP

Literatures of the Polar North

Karen Langgård
and Kirsten Thisted (eds)

Ilisimatusarfik/Forlaget Atuagkat

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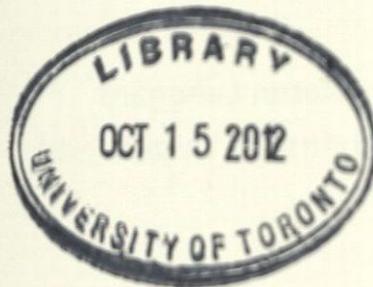
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Contents:

Karen Langgård and Kirsten Thisted:	
Introduction.....	7
Harald Gaski:	
Song, Poetry, and Images in Writing. Sami Literature	15
Malan Marnersdóttir:	
From Oral Poetry to Rap in the Faroes	39
Kirsten Thisted:	
Greenlandic Oral Traditions. Collection, Reframing and Reinvention	63
Karen Langgård:	
Greenlandic Literature from Colonial Times to Self-Government.....	119
Michael P. J. Kennedy:	
Canadian Inuit Literature in English. A Critical Bibliography	189
Noel McDermott:	
Canadian Literature in Inuktitut.....	223
William Schneider:	
Alaska Native Writers. Writing and Tradition	245
Alexander D. King:	
A Literary History of Koryak. Writing and Publishing an Indigenous Siberian Language	269
Notes on the Contributors	285

Karen Langgård

Greenlandic Literature from Colonial Times to Self-Government

Greenlandic literature including Greenlandic poetry is written in Kalaallisut (Greenlandic), an Inuit language totally different from European languages.¹ Greenlandic literature is written for Kalaallisut speaking Greenlanders. However, nowadays one finds collections of poems that include some written in Danish and some in English. **Magssanguaq Qujaukitsoq** entitled his first collection of poems *Sisamanik Teqeqqulik* [With Four Corners] (2007), because in addition to poems in Kalaallisut it had some in Danish, English and Avanersuarmiutut, the dialect of Kalaallisut spoken in the Thule area. Globalization, or rather glocalization takes place in Greenland, and in its literature, too. Ever since the mid-1970s pop/rock songs have become an important part of the literature written in Kalaallisut. Some of the singers, like Julie Berthelsen and Nivi Nielsen, who made their names abroad, sing most of their songs in Danish or English—a further sign of globalization.

Seen from a global perspective it is not extraordinary that glocalization takes place in modern Greenlandic society being as it is in online communication with the rest of the world. The extraordinary thing is the fact that under such circumstances the vast majority of a population of less than 60,000 speaks their own local language and even to such a degree that Kalaallisut at present gains usage in domains once dominated by Danish / English. And, authors continue to develop literature written in Kalaallisut and thus continue to develop Kalaallisut used as literary language.

However, seen from a Greenlandic perspective, translations of literary works written in Kalaallisut (translated mostly into Danish) are not new. The more recent trend is to produce literary works that include original pieces in other languages. Greenlandic readers expect their national literature to be in Kalaallisut.² Why is this so? Part of the answer to this question is to be found in the past and in the discursive struggles going on in Greenland today.

The literary history began with the oral tradition, a rich tradition of songs, lyrics, myths and stories, brought to Greenland by the Inuit when they migrated from North America and then further developed through the centuries. It was written down from the mid 19th century. Around 1900 a written literature developed, appropriating the European written literary genres throughout the 20th century. In this anthology, Kirsten Thisted's chapter

describes the prose part of the oral tradition,³ while this chapter will describe the written literature. Both chapters discuss the relation between oral tradition and written literature in Greenland. Both chapters see oral tradition as part of the literature in Kalaallisut.

The next pages will sketch a survey of the development of Greenlandic fiction. Many authors and many works, even important ones, are not mentioned. As far as the chapter describes development from the last decade it will further be subject to all the uncertainties always concomitant to dealing with the latest tendencies.

A short note on the history of Greenland

The Inuit forefathers of the Greenlanders migrated in the late twelfth century from North America to Greenland. A couple of centuries before that, the Norse settled in Greenland, but disappeared after five centuries. The Danish-Norwegian Kingdom allowed Hans Egede to start his mission and the colonization of West Greenland in 1721. East Greenland and Thule were gradually incorporated into the kingdom around 1900. In 1953, Greenland was decolonized, but became part of the Danish Kingdom. Until that point Greenlanders spoke Kalaallisut and only a very few knew some Danish. After 1953, modernization took place with Danification seen as a way towards achieving equality of status with Danes. But after a decade it was realized that Danification carried the threat of loosing Kalaallisut and ethnic-national identity. In 1979, Home Rule was established and a process of Greenlandization began. Self Government (not independence) replaced Home Rule in June 21, 2009.

Post-colonialism versus post-modernism and globalization

Grand narratives are supposedly dead. Post-structuralism, deconstructionism and post-modernism have taken over. According to the current discourse, not only is identity constructed, but the whole idea of the subject is fragmented. The women's movement and feminism is replaced by Queer Studies. Post-colonial ideas⁴ about hegemony are replaced by globalization and visions of a post-national utopia. If one decides that there is scientifically no such thing as a gender division, no such thing as "race" and no such thing as ethnicity and nationality, everything is then expected to be fine. However, there are many problems with this view in the world outside academic circles.

The post-structural exclusion of binary meaning structures and the post-modern avoidance of the subject create problems for women's struggle for rights and for the post-colonial decolonising of the mind and of the community. This issue has been discussed in Post-colonial studies (e.g. Loomba, 1998).

Anthropological (e.g. Eriksen, 2002) and post-colonial studies show how ethnicity and nationality are based on the demarcation of the group from "the others". This demarcation is often, and especially in times of social upheaval and transformation, very rigid (digital in the terminology of Eriksen 2002:66), with no room for those betwixt and between. It

is based on a dichotomy of thinking exemplified in *Orientalism* (Said 1978) and does not leave room for Bhabha's ambivalence (Bhabha 1994). This way of thinking may become primordial and essentialist with no understanding that ethnic and national identity are constructs. In Greenland, due to a sense of a lack of full agency,⁵ this way of thinking is found too, and may be stated in the following terms: the Greenlandic identity flows in the blood of the Greenlander. This is the case, even though, according to anthropology, ethnic and national symbols are either invented or are at least reifications of cultural features long outdated.

In Greenland, one finds such reifications and such collective myths about the Inuit traditional culture, appearing as one side of the Janus head. It is very easy to point at the gap between the symbolic ideals and present Greenlandic culture. This is especially the case in Nuuk, the capital. In an article written by a Dane who had done research in Nuuk (for her thesis) the gap was described as almost schizophrenic (Christiansen, 2000). Is she right? Are Greenlanders, and for that matter minorities all over the world, to be described as almost schizophrenic? They may have good reason for thinking of ethnicity as an essential quality of the human being and thinking in ethnic terms dominated by ethnic symbolism. But if the gap grows too big and the demarcation becomes too rigid, the time is then ripe for self-reflection in the ethnic or national group in order to adjust the discourse, though not necessarily to change the symbols.

Some might want to use the term hybrid to describe a situation such as found in Greenland. But this term may send the wrong signal because it focuses too much on mixed provenance. It may be best to call the present culture in Greenland, *Greenlandic*, and thereby stress that although this culture is post-colonial and not harmonious throughout, it is no more a conglomerate than many other nonpost-colonial cultures. The label *hybrid* better applies to those instances where a person finds a way to combine two separate cultures, for example the Greenlandic and the Danish. The same goes for the concept used by Homi Bhabha: the third space. Of course the present Greenlandic society has been nurtured both by the Inuit culture, and since 1721, by the Danish/Scandinavian one as well. Exactly this situation combined with the fact that the Danish culture was the culture of the colonizer makes it perfectly reasonable and strategically necessary for Greenlanders to sometimes under-communicate their Danish roots and over-communicate their Inuit roots. It is a way to handle the imbalance of power and agency, and to further decolonize the mind, but also, being a very small population, to gain political strength taking advantage of the international tendency towards recognition of Indigenous Peoples.

Research on literature and on the conditions of language in Greenland places the researcher as a participant in the always on-going, ethno-national negotiation. But whether as insider or as outsider, it is always necessary to reflect on the ethno-national aspect because of its prominence in a post-colonial setting. To some, the Greenlanders may seem to be too much like the Danes. For others, it can be difficult to understand why all this talk about

ethnicity still is necessary and charged with meaning, just as it is difficult for some men to understand that certain women still feel the need to talk about equal opportunities. Clearly, there needs to be a balance between denying otherness and making it exotic. That balance point revolves around respecting otherness and the choices made, more or less collectively, by the others. Fortunately, in the case of Greenland versus Denmark there is no fundamental discord about human rights.

When considering literature and language one may make comparisons with what is found elsewhere in the world or one may conduct an internal evaluation of the development and compare it with contemporary needs and goals. Compared with other Inuit regions, both Greenlandic literature and the Greenlandic language situation are huge success stories. However, seen from within, a lot remains yet to be accomplished.

The Greenlandic language situation—a short note

The grand narrative of Kalaallisut is a successful story of the survival of the language after what was felt to be a crisis in the 1960s, 70s and 80s because of the Danification that followed modernization after 1953.

However, seen from within, the demands for competence in foreign languages have increased while the actual competence decreased for a couple of decades or more after 1979. Furthermore, Kalaallisut, if it is to be used as the main language, needs to be developed much more and much faster than at present—in spite of impressive gains. The teaching of the language as a mother tongue is in need of total revision.

The approach both from the government and from the common man to language has been essentially pragmatic except for the discourse that accompanied the fear of the shift in the language policy (and use) around 1979. To some degree this discourse is still part of the ongoing debate on language policy (Langgård, 2001d, 2003a, 2003b, 2009a). In connection with the establishment of Self Government there has been and still is a discursive struggle in Greenland about Kalaallisut. The Greenlandic Self Government, naturally, advocates that Kalaallisut be the language of Greenland. This has been written in law, too. The challenge is how to implement this. How does one achieve a balance between this ideological intention, the establishment of a totally Kalaallisut speaking Greenland, and a pragmatic attitude? For example, there is still a need to import academics few of whom become fluent speakers of Kalaallisut. How does one balance between the nationalistic ideology and the minority rights of the group of Greenlanders who primarily speak Danish (as an outcome of the Danification period in the decades after 1953 during which learning Greenlandic was marginalized)? Although Kalaallisut has always been taught in all grades, a thorough upgrading of the school system in general and of Kalaallisut as a subject are necessary in order both to ensure a high educational level in general in the future and to enhance the collective response to taking charge of Kalaal-

lisut by the Greenlandic population. To this end, the schoolteachers have to be further educated to cope with the new challenges and to ensure that the care of the language is in the hands of native speakers. This in turn should lead to a higher standard of education in the population at large.

Still, it has to be stressed that seen from outside, the development of Kalaallisut is indeed impressive, not least when considering the rapid language-shifts taking place all over the world.

The beginnings of Greenlandic literature

The grand narrative of Greenlandic literature is also a story of success. It began more than a century ago and has developed into a national literature with a large body of works—nobody keeps count of their total number anymore. This paper will mention only few of them.

Perhaps the most important decision ever made concerning Kalaallisut and literature written in the language was that made by Hans Egede when he decided in the 1720s, that because the Lutheran mission should be carried out in Kalaallisut he thus had to educate natives as catechists. Further, as a result, Kalaallisut became a written language and the population was taught to read it. When the Danish and (a decade later) the Moravian missions came to Greenland their missionaries wrote hymns in Greenlandic. New and larger hymn books were often published over the years, as were translations of the Holy Bible.

By the middle of the 19th century all of the Greenlandic colonized population was reported as being literate. H J Rink, governor of South Greenland (i.e. the southern part of West Greenland), saw social problems among the Greenlanders. He thought that this crisis could be dealt with by enhancing the self-esteem of the population. He encouraged the people to take an active part in the gathering and the writing down of the Inuit oral traditions as they had developed in Greenland. He installed local democratic municipal organs with Greenlandic participation in 1862. In 1861, he started a newspaper written in Kalaallisut with a Greenlandic editor. The newspaper included translations of European literature. The goal was to present role models for the Greenlanders, to give them some knowledge of the world outside Greenland and to allow Greenlanders to debate among themselves (Langgård 1998a). Thus, through hymns⁶ and through translation of European fiction, literature was with a utilitarian purpose introduced to the Greenlanders. The first European novel translated, for example, was Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*, published in serial form in the newspaper. Greenlanders were explicitly told about the purpose and how to 'use' literature.

In the last decades of the 19th century the Greenlanders themselves began to write hymns, and inspired by the hymns written by the great Danish writer N F S Grundtvig, they

improved the Greenlandic hymn tradition (Langgård, 1994, 2001a and b, 2002, 2008b). Over the years, one of the hymns written by **Rasmus Berthelsen** (1827-1901) became a kind of national Greenlandic Christmas hymn *Guutterput* [Our God]. Otherwise, the Greenlandic hymnal *Tussiutit* is much like the Danish one. Some of the hymns draw on the theme of the Greenlandic landscape, as does the Danish one on the Danish landscape. The hymns in it are those originally written by the missionaries and those written by Greenlandic authors, as well as original Greenlandic hymns and others inspired by foreign hymns. Due to typological differences between Danish and Greenlandic, in most cases the original versions are by far the best. The latest edition was published in 2008.

From the beginning of the 20th century Greenlanders wrote songs, novels and short stories. Lyrics and plays came later on (Langgård, (1984)87, and 1998:100ff). In 1908 the first edition of the songbook *Erinarsuutit* [Songbook] was published in Greenland. **Jonathan Petersen** was the editor and he also wrote most of the songs. This songbook was reprinted with an increasing number of songs in the following years 1909, 1913, 1921 and 1934.⁷ In the first four editions the three great poets included were **Jonathan Petersen**, **Henrik Lund** and **Josva Kleist**. The 1934 edition contained songs written by **Pavia Petersen**, **Frederik Nielsen** and **Kristen Mikiassen** (later: Poulsen) – of course, all in Kalaallisut.

The first novel came out in 1914, *Simmattugaq* [The Dream] written by **Mathias Storch**. Six more novels were published before 1950; *Ukiut 300-nngornerat* [300 Years After (i.e. colonization)] by **Augo Lynge** (1931), *Tuumarsi* [Thomas] by **Frederik Nielsen** (1934), *Ersinngitsup piumasaa* [The Will of the Invisible] by **Hans Lynge** ([1938]67), *Piniartoq Saamu* [Sealhunter Samuel] and *Ilumulli illitaaq* [Indeed, You Too] by **Karl Heilmann** (1942 and 1949) and *Niuertorutsip pania* [The Daughter of the Trading Station Manager] by **Pavia Petersen** (1944).

Peter Gundel published four short stories in the newspaper *AvangnâmioK'* in the period 1918 to 1927 (Gundel 1961).

Plays were written too. For example, *Ikinngutigiit* [Friends] by Pavia Petersen was staged in 1934 (Petersen 1938). Authors Hans Lynge and Karl Heilmann among others created some plays, too.

Frederik Nielsen was the first to publish a collection of poetry in 1943. Four years later came a collection written by Kristen Poulsen.

Nation building and literary forms—mimicry, assimilation or appropriation?

Before the start-up of the newspaper in 1861 (Langgård 1998a), the Greenlandic population was aware of the concepts of ethnicity and nationality and had a sense of an imagined Greenlandic ethnic-national⁸ community, in Benedict Anderson's sense of imagined community. However, due to a different development in Greenland, the newspapers were not a precondition, only a means to develop further the awareness (Anderson 1983, Langgård



ATUAGAGDLIUTIT.

MALINGINARNIK TUSARUMINASASSUNIK UNIVKAT.

Januar 1.

1861.

No 1.

Umiarssuarnik, nussame 1860me,
Nungmitunik.

(nugterissor R. Berthelsen.)

Aussak kingudiek nangiútok kuja-
tā tamákerdlune sikorssuakatdlarmat,
umiarssuit tatullimut Arasungut ujarkiat
Nungmut nunaligput, kujañanut nunaliv-
figssæterugkamik. Umiarssuallingmle-
rianguatdlartut, umiarssuit tåuko, niggí-
nalerdlune sikorssuit áma pulatidlugit
Nùp ikera milipát. Umiarssuarnik av-
dlanik ilimasugtuerútok únukut silagig-
sorssúgá áma umiarssuártulekaut, ersser-
putdlo umiarssuit ungingitsut (Sukornor-
timik taissagarpal) zatdliartuarsinardlu-
tik, sikutdlo amerdlavatdlármata keker-
tarssúp avatánut kiserput. Ornigdugit
ajornaratdlarpal, kainatdlúunit avkutigssá-
rángitdlat, naluvaaitdlo inuisa süssusiat.
Akago kaungmat aitsát náinat ornigpait,
uteramigdlo nagsarpal aqdlagkanik umi-
arssuit nálagánit. — Osautgait nála-
garpagssuagdliit Amerikarmiussutdlo, nu-
namik takujartuárdlutiit tamaunga pi-
ssut. Umiarssuit xanigdliartorlauardlu-

tik umiarssuallivik angunek ajulerpát si-
korssuarnit. Taimailissut áma umiar-
ssuártulerput, pujorssuardlo imáinarme
takutípor, kanitdingmatdlo takuait
umiarssuit mardluk, imáitumik: angúti-
ligssuau umiarssuarmik avdlamik kalig-
tor. Ama tåukua Amerikarmiut kalu-
siúpait, tåssalo taimailivdlune Nùp umi-
arssuallivik umiarssuakalerporoq arfínek pi-
ngasunik. Nigginardlune sikorssuit ava-
lagtinek ajulermagit, umiarssuit tåukua
nunalisimáput avdlorpagssuit, Nùvdlo
inue aitsát taima inungnik amerdlatigi-
ssunik takúput nunamingne. Tai-
maingmat Aron Rangermio kinuvigár-
put, takungmagit ássilerkuvdlugit, takord-
dlörnermilik, ássilissálo tåuna ujarkamut
nakiterparpat.

Amerikarmiut akilinermérkársimav-
dlutiit tamaunga ikársimáput Manitsuv-
dlo erkánut kekerlaluungnut nunalitdlu-
tik; nunale ilisarngilát inungnigdlo ta-
kussinek ajordlutik. Tingmissanik
mangningnigdlo umassúnguanigdlo ta-
malainik katerssíput; Nùvdle erkánut
pagdligukamik aitsát nuánálerput inug-
sissaleramik. Sákunik kalátdlit piniar-

1998). The discourse of the 19th century, as it is known from the newspaper articles of the time, was very much an ethnic-national discourse defining the ideal Greenlander as the competent seal-hunter and the pious Christian. This kind of discourse dominates much of the written literature of the 20th century, directly as well as indirectly, as the population began to negotiate the transition from a hunting culture to a modern, multi-trade nation with fishery as the basic trade (Langgård 1999b, 2000c).

The pace of nation-building increased after 1900 and at the same time Peqatigiinniat, a national and religious revival movement (Thuesen 1988), started. Greenlandic literature started as part of this process of nation building. Written in Kalaallisut, it provided a forum for dialogue among Greenlanders, as did the Greenlandic newspapers—a second one started in 1913. The debate in fiction and in newspaper articles, and, as might be expected in everyday conversation, strengthened the feeling of belonging to an 'imagined community'. In other words, Greenlandic literature began functioning as one of the tools of nation building, in mirroring the fact that Greenlanders had been introduced to literature with a purely utilitarian point of view. After the church caused Peqatigiinniat to move away from the socio-political debate and to a more moralistic approach (Langgård ([1984]1987), the socio-political aspect flourished in the newspapers and in fiction, including national song lyrics.

Although indigenous literature was part of their nation building, Greenlanders chose to use European models. They did not try to use or adapt the forms of their oral tradition. This seems to match with what Frantz Fanon calls the first phase. Fanon then describes a second phase where the native intellectual begins to remember some of the legends of his people, without being truly part of his people. In the third phase the native intellectual will create revolutionary literature till finally, he realizes that he both has to fight a war and has to free himself from the European forms (Fanon, 1961). The Greenlandic authors were never that distanced from Greenlandic society and *vice versa*, as Fanon sensed in the settings he experienced. The Greenlanders used the Danish/European genres and forms, and they still do, but they appropriated them for their own needs. (For a discussion of this, see below).

Mimicry as a term covers all of the following shades of meaning: imitation and/or aping, and/or parody. It is used to expose what takes place between the colonized and the colonizer as the colonized is appropriated by the colonizer to the culture and the abilities of the colonizer. The colonizer¹⁰ needs colonized men adapting to his own culture, but never equal to himself: "almost the same, but not quite" (Bhabha 1994:86). When the colonized gets close to similarity, the colonizer unconsciously senses menace, is subject to anxiety and thus will find it crucial to assert his control. Through this action he actually shows his anxiety and thus opens up a breach that the colonized can take advantage of. Mimicry is constructed around ambivalence and must continually produce its slippage (Bhabha 1994:86; e.g. Ashcroft et al. 1998).

Colonies all over the world bear witness to this phenomenon with nationalistic movements growing as a result, or do they? Did the decolonisation take place because of mimicry as menace or rather because mimicry gave the colonized some intellectual means to use for a decolonizing of the mind? While the colonizer clearly intends to appropriate the colonized other according to the mimicry theory, it is not at all clear whether agency is seen on part of the colonized when the mimicry results in ambivalence and menace, i.e. whether the colonized participate by assimilating to the colonizer's culture (but never succeeding one hundred percent) or by actively and consciously appropriating features of the colonizer's culture / strategically pro forma adapt to the colonizer's culture (for a critical view of Bhabha, see e.g. Childs and Williams 1997:129ff and 133ff). Thus, what can be seen as mimicry from the perspective of the colonizer will on part of the colonized be described in the following in terms of conscious active thoughtful appropriation versus unconscious unreflecting irresponsible imitation.

While creating the Greenlandic literature, the purpose, seen from a Greenlandic point of view, was not mimicry as menace. It represented an appropriation of the European forms to the Greenlandic setting to meet the needs of Greenlandic society for debate and praise of the country (for 'appropriation', see e.g. Ashcroft et al. 1998). The literary forms were not seen by the Greenlanders as assimilation or adaptation, but appropriation. The concept of appropriation was expressed very unambiguously in a song, written by Jonathan Petersen published in 1913, in *Erinarsuutit* (my translation):

*We whose job it is to serve our country
are not just aping men.
We welcome new ideas and things,
but use them according to our culture and traditions.
All the important ideas and things we get and those unimportant ones,
you shall welcome them but with due consideration,
because we need all the important things
since they will be good for the Greenlanders.*

It was accepted as part of the Greenlandic debate that economic and socio-political development had to be based upon an ethnic-national awakening. This development was wished for not only by Greenlanders, but also by progressive Danes, if for no other reason than the new trade, large-scale fishery, needed a population that was better educated. However, such a process towards more knowledge and competence was seen as a threat by those afraid of losing control, or more narrowly defined, afraid of increasing secularization and the breach of the monopolistic power that the church maintained in spiritual matters (for more details, see Langgård 2006, Wilhjelm 1997, 2008). Thus the colonizer's psychological response to mimicry as menace was seen in Greenland, too.

Critical discourse among Greenlanders was not a new phenomenon. The descriptions

of Greenlanders in the reports from the 18th century written by Hans Egede and his sons (Egede 1925; Egede & Egede 1939) and by David Crantz (Crantz 1765) show this. But in the beginning of the 20th century it was much more articulated. It was about an internal negotiation of norms. However, such discourse might have had some impact on the Greenlanders' relationship with Danes, for example, when progressive Greenlanders aligned themselves with progressive colonizers. This is expressed by Greenlanders themselves, for example in the work of Jens Chemnitz, (1909/10). This critical discourse is found in the literature, starting with song texts and with the first novel (Storch 1914).

"Mimic men" (or actually "mimic persons" because the phrase includes women, too)¹¹ in the sense of aping persons, wannabes, were well known figures and were criticized in the literature (e.g. Storch (1914)59: 21; Pavia Petersen (1934)58 the fictive figures Taateraaq and Naaja), as well as in the newspaper debates, both by those in favour of adopting new trades and those in favour only of kayak-hunting (e.g. Clasen, 1913; Niels Lynge 1915:70); and, indeed already noted in the 1860s by Motzfeldt (e.g. Motzfeldt, 1864). Aping was criticized, while conscious appropriation was not. "Mimic persons" in Greenland "aped" the Danes by buying things or doing things like the Danes, or later by trying to speak Danish (often incompetently).

There is evidence that the hegemony exerted by the colonizer was not total. When one reads the newspaper articles before and especially after 1900, one is struck by the level of competence in the debate. Within the parameters set by the colonizer the Greenlanders made their choices, and did it only after serious considerations about how they wanted to develop their country. They carried on a very sophisticated negotiation¹² of their ethnic-national identity, and they had disagreements about the issues. They wanted *siumukarneq* [prosperous progress] and some of the opinion-formers agreed that new occupations should be developed to compensate for the occupational crisis in the seal hunting industry and that Greenlanders should obtain much more knowledge in order to be on a par with European levels of competence. One of the competences they decided to develop was to write literary works in Kalaallisut for the Greenlandic society (e.g. Langgård 1998a, 2008a).

Greenlandic literature draws very little directly from the oral tradition both in form as well as in content, but since a great part of the literature is about former times, it contains much of what was known or thought to be known about the culture of the past, both before colonization and afterwards.¹³ Only a few examples in the pastiche form have appeared in lyrics. All in all, Greenlandic literature still uses the Danish and European forms. Why is this so, in spite of the fact that ethno-nationality has been politicised since the 1960s?

Perhaps part of the reason is that Greenlandic literature began before Greenland was described in Danish fiction.¹⁴ When it did appear it was never referred to as a sort of

Dark Continent. The Greenlanders were not demonised (as noted too, in Thisted 1990), nor were mixed marriages considered a disgrace.¹⁵ Thanks to the lack of stigmatization in Danish fictional literature, the use of the Danish/European forms was not hindered. Further, the Greenlandic literary language was Kalaallisut and the products were thus necessarily marked as Greenlandic, and could become loaded with symbolic power of an ethno-national kind without any need for distinguishing itself from the literature of the colonizer by using special forms or metonymy (see below). This is still so (Langgård, 1996, 1998a)¹⁶.

The question of how the literature is related to the oral tradition has been investigated. Among the few who have done research on Greenlandic oral tradition and literature one finds the Danish researcher Kirsten Thisted. Over the years she has re-edited a great part of the oral tradition by investigating the handwritten manuscripts still preserved. Thisted (1992) found traditional Greenlandic literary works unsatisfying when using Danish and Western literary theories, and found them (as well as their models) outdated when compared to Danish and Western ones (Thisted 1992: 222¹⁷; 2001: 421). Further, Thisted found that the lack of a tight plot in some of the novels and the absence of round characters described with deep psychological insight, should perhaps be interpreted as special features of the oral tradition, and thus called for a different theory to be applied to Greenlandic literature (Thisted, 1992, espec p 222 f). Langgård (1996) criticized these points of view because they tended to turn them into exotic works—"exoticising" them. Thisted (2002b) avoided to some degree the temptation to see Greenlandic literature as some type of exotic genre.¹⁸ She now stresses that the Greenlandic authors deliberately choose their literary strategies, including how to use the oral tradition. However, Thisted's focus in 2002, is more on content rather than form and structure. Perhaps further discussion and research are still needed to discover how to draw the line between pastiche and a more direct use of oral structures found in the literature.

There has been a fascinating development within the literary horror genre during the last few years. These works should be seen as inspired and grounded in *qivittor* stories, which are about hermits leaving their society in anger because they feel insulted by the community, as well as in other horror stories. These stories are not a left-over from the past but very much part of a living oral genre of today; now developing into written form. If anywhere, this is where one finds a more direct connection between the oral tradition and written literature.¹⁹

Hans Egede and the Christian Mission avoided erotic metaphors in its hymns although such metaphors were used a great deal by one of the great Danish hymn writers, H. A. Brorson (1694-1764). This seems a reasonable decision considering the fact that the Mission with its limited degree of competence in Kalaallisut asked the Greenlanders to obey the Ten Commandments. This attitude towards erotic metaphors continued in the praise of

the landscape found in the national songs and is unlike anything contained in the Danish ones. Greenlandic literature was created by a thoroughly Christianized society with its Victorian sexual norms as moral guidelines, and so it remained even after modernization, with an increasing gap between the moral expectations and the facts of daily life. These issues, strictly regulated (in fact made taboo) in the written word distributed amongst the Christian Greenlandic population, are quite unlike what was considered normal in the traditional, oral mocking-songs.

Finally, in general, metaphors²⁰ were not a stylistic feature of the oral tradition, neither were there many comparisons. Because of this, literary similes became powerful and significant devices when Greenlandic literature began using them (Langgård (1984) 1987:97 and 100ff; Thisted 1992).

The appropriation of Scandinavian '*nationalromantik*' (romantic nationalism)

Greenlanders did use Danish and European forms, but they did not succumb to assimilation. They appropriated them. In addition to avoiding erotic metaphor and to introducing comparison as a literary device, they made other adaptations, too, when they appropriated for example the Danish patriotic song genre.

Some of the Danish national songs glorified Denmark; some of the Greenlandic ones glorified Greenland. But the Greenlandic songwriters added another kind of songs, they rebuked their fellow Greenlanders for their laziness and lack of skills in kayaking and their addiction to coffee, tobacco and other European goods. Greenlanders found the model for this in a songbook written in Kalaallisut by C J Spindler (1838-1918), a Moravian missionary (Spindler, 1876).²¹ The form was used in many songs written in the first decades of the 20th century as part of the ongoing negotiation of ethno-national identity that dominated the newspapers in the second decade, and is found as well, in the first two novels written in Kalaallisut.

On the other hand, Danish national songs glorified Denmark by celebrating the history of Denmark and its landscape. Greenlandic authors also glorified their country by describing its natural beauty, but they did not include in them any heroes from the past. For example, *Nunarput* [Our Land], the national anthem of Greenland²² written by Henrik Lund (1912), describes first how the immemorial land is the parent of its inhabitants and provides them with everything. Secondly, it asks for development, stressing in the last stanza that the people have to believe in themselves and their abilities. In the first and second stanza the people are called the children of Greenland. Thus, the song praises the country and is infused with a Greenlandic version of romantic nationalism. The *significant other*—the Danes—are not mentioned in the song and thus the song became part of the debate on ethno-national identity, including debate on the colonial child-metaphor with

the colonizer as Mother.²³ There is no reference to the past except to the age of the country. Another song, Jonathan Petersen's *Nuna asilasoq* [The Vast Land] (a.q. 1913), later on considered a kind of extra national anthem, glorifies the country and its people as they live on the coast, travel along it and get their livelihood by hunting. Here, too, the past is not mentioned. Why not?

The West Greenlandic population was for a long time Christian by conviction. This meant that universal romanticism would never catch on. The Danish form of romantic nationalism (Danish: nationalromantik) on the other hand appealed to the Greenlanders as they already had an awareness of ethnicity and nationalism, but not to its full extent. The forefathers of the Greenlanders were looked up to for their hunting competence, but their culture was seen as pagan and evil. Collective remembering and forgetting are normal for ethnic groups when creating ethnic symbols and manipulating their history (Hobsbawm 1983, Eriksen 2002). But the mechanism of collective forgetting was not possible for the Greenlanders around 1900. The paganism of the past was very present for them because of the missionary influence in East Greenland from 1894 on, and in the Thule Area from 1909 on. In East Greenland the Danish missionary had one of the Greenlandic catechists as an assistant from 1901 on, and a Greenlandic priest replaced the Danish one in 1904. Greenlandic priests and catechists were in charge of the mission in the Thule Area from its beginning. Since the so-called Women's Boat Expedition to East Greenland in the 1880s, the Inuit of these two regions had become more and more a part of the imagined community seen from the perspective of the Greenlanders in West Greenland. It was a rather big issue in the newspaper (Langgård 1998a, 1999a(2010)). The culture of the forefathers of a distant past in this way unfolded right before the eyes of the West Greenlanders. They were confronted by living human beings whom they thought must be very much like their own pre-colonial forefathers.²⁴

Even though collective forgetting was obviously not an option, one song explicitly states this fact. This was written by **Josva Kleist** (1879-1938), when he was catechist in Narsaq Kujalleq, in the southernmost part of Greenland, a Moravian parish until 1900, when the Moravian Brethren had to leave. There were many immigrants from the south-eastern part of East Greenland and this continuous immigration made the issue of pagan forerunners of immediate importance, as is seen in the forth stanza (my translation):

4. *Those, our forefathers,
Who once lived at this place -
Those who were pagans,
We shall not follow in their footsteps.
But their competence
To hunt and to store up food
And their means for it -
All that we need a lot.*

The socio-political debate—Greenlandic appropriation versus Danish hegemony

As already referred to, an extensive and wide-ranging debate took place among Greenlanders about ethno-national identity, especially in the decade 1910-1920, because of the change of trades and considerations about child rearing, education and the school system among other reasons. The Greenlanders used the theory of evolution in a liberating way, emancipating them from the imperialistic “child-metaphor” since the Danes, too, had once been a stone age culture and since God has given all mankind the same capabilities. The only thing required was to work hard for development. In the debate, opinions were divided in a crisscross way. Inspiration from outside was seen as something positive, while thoughtless mimicry in the sense of thoughtless assimilation was heavily criticized. The Danish state laid out the possibilities; the Greenlanders decided how to use them. The Danish state did not at all have complete hegemonic power over the Greenlandic population. The Greenlanders exerted agency through a deliberate appropriation among other things. Some welcomed the fishery as a separate trade, others, perhaps more so in the beginning, did not. Some welcomed new subjects in the schools such as geography and history and even more so, arithmetic. Others found them unimportant for Greenlanders. Some would stick with seal-hunting, but wanted to use the imported school system to help restore the seal-hunting by introducing it as a subject complete with a seal-hunting textbook. The division was thus not either for nor against importation nor inspiration from abroad, but a deliberate choice in both cases (see, e.g. Langgård 2003c and 2008a). The debate went on, and one can read part of it in the media in the newspapers, in the fiction and in songs. **Josva Kleist** published a collection of his own songs, *Erinarsuutit*, and they are all debate songs (Kleist 1912). The same goes for parts of a songbook published in Ilulissat (Lynge & Ostermann eds.) 1913). The more broadly composed songbook from the catechist training *Erinarsuutit* with Jonathan Petersen as editor had equally large sections as follows: 1. patriotic songs including regional songs; 2. socio-political debate songs; 3. nature poetry, mostly intertwined with religious feelings, but at the same time national depicting the Greenlandic landscape and the impact of the seasons; and, 4. Morning, evening and spiritual songs. In addition to these the book contained some other songs, including some addressed to the Teacher Training College in Nuuk.

In the beginning the socio-political debate also dominated prose:²⁵ the first two Greenlandic novels criticize their age and both of them envision a future society on a par with the European ones. **Mathias Storch**’s novel, *Sinnattugaq* [The Dream] (1914), describes what has to be changed. First and foremost, the level of knowledge²⁶ will need to be increased considerably. The novel ends with his vision of the future as shown through his protagonist’s dream: a modern dynamic Greenland anno 2105, faithful to Christianity. **Augo Lynge**’s novel, *Ukiut 300-nngornerat* [300 years after] (1931), is much more secularized. Christianity is not a theme, and the story takes place in the future in the year 2021, 300 years after colonization. Some of the characters look back on the period

kap. 6.

inûsugtut sumilûnît píssuserigajugtarpât autdlaru-sungnek, amerdlanernik takussakarumanek. nunavtínile píssutsit nápertordlugit tamána perusungnertik inûsugtut nâmagsinek saperpât, tássame suliagssat píngitsûsagamikik piumassamingnik autdlaraluarunik.

taimáitumik atorfigssakardlutik autdlartut kisimik tamána iluakutigissarpât. ajokigssat kavst ilíniarusungnermit pingikaluardlutik autdlarusungnerinarmi t ilíniarfíssuialartarput, tamánalo ilíniälerneratigut nalunartángilak.

Pâviap autdlarusugtut ilagisimavai, kisiánime áma ilíniarusugtut, máname Simûp okausia puiornek ajoramiuk: sût tamarmik pitsaunerussúngortariakarput, tamána suliagssak angekaok sulissordle akgissarsisaok». tamána pivdlugo aperssortikame palasip ajokissángorkoriarmane pileritsagsimavok, nauk arname piniarnigssane iluatigalugo inerterniarâne.

umiarssuit akungnagtôrdlugit Nûngmut avkutâta ilarssua sinerssuinardlugo atorpâ. autdlásagame nuánâraluarpok tu-sâmassane amerdlasût takúsagamigit. Manitsordle inúngorfine áungariartuleramiuk kialerêrpok angerdlarserdlune. er-ninardle angerdlarsernek tamána sujugdlek kângitúpok niu-vertorusekarfingmut Atanermut pigamik.

uvdlok táuna misigissai kímaínarsínáungilavut. aitsâme taima aningaussamik angitigissumik nangminek tigusisimavok, palasiata tigumalôrdlune 1 krônimik tuningmane. nuánâvikasekaok nangminek pisiniardlune inûvdlualârumavdlune, pisiagssanilo nautserssorêrdlugit. sulile pisiniartitdlugit palasiata orniglugo aperilerpâ: »takuagssarserêrpit?«

Pâvia akungnagtôrdlune okarpok: »nâgga!« isumakara-luaramime takuagssaminik ingmíkut tunisagâne krône táuna okarane túniungmago.

»pisiniat soraertinagit takuagssarsiutiginiaruk akago uv-dlanguak autdlásagavta«, palase okarpok. (Pâviame palasimut ilauvdlune kujámukarame).

sôrdlume tássá Pâvia avângarssuak tagiarâ narrujûmíngarame. avdlatutdle sapilerame nálagarsiulerdlune 75 Øre pisiutigâ 25 Øre unigtitdlugo, táuna iluarissaminut atoru-mavdlugo. timiussarsiane ánikamigit tigdluangajagpailûnít Øriutinguane erdligigaluarnermit.

around 1900, as a time when finally some development has been made for Eskimo culture that has stagnated totally. Thus both of these books criticize their own time heavily stating that everything had to be changed. The Eskimo culture had been amazing and impressive, but could not cope with the demands of their time, the 20th century, and thus changes had to be made. Both of the novels stress the potential of the youth and promote the abolition of arranged marriages. Greenlandic literature thus contributed to the rejection of the idea of authority based on age. The novels were socio-political, but not in a romantic national way.

Frederik Nielsen (1905-1991), the author of the third novel, felt that Storch and Lynge had been too categorical in their criticism, and wrote a novel, *Tuumarsi* [Thomas] (Nielsen 1934), that depicted the seal-hunting and Christian culture of the 19th century in a positive way, but not with a nostalgic romantic nationalistic emphasis. The protagonist is not without flaws, but he is still impressive in his fight to overcome the crises of his life and in his community, which includes his reflections on religion, starvation, and the death of his son at sea along with many others in a storm. While not exactly a romantic national novel, there are here Greenlandic characters worthy of emulation (Langgård 2000b). The fourth novel will be discussed later after consideration of the last novels published before modernization and Danification.

Karl Heilmann (1893-1958), published two novels, *Piniartoq Saamu* [Sealhunter Samuel] and *Ilumulli illittaaq* [Indeed, You too] (1942 and 1949), in which the young catechists are depicted as totally dedicated to their future vocation in a rather naive way, and the life of the villages is described as idyllic. However, in both of the novels some of the characters reflect on the role of the Danes. They criticize the Danes for not being sincere and for being in Greenland just to make money (Heilmann 1942), and point out that collaboration with Danes doesn't work, because Greenlanders are considered inferior (Heilmann 1949).

Pavia Petersen wrote a historical novel, *Niuertorutsip pania* [The Daughter of the Trading Station Manager], about the last decades of the 19th century (Petersen 1944). The author chose as his protagonists a Danish man, his Greenlandic wife and their daughter. As a former sailor, the Dane has seen the world including many colonies and can compare these with the conditions in Greenland. At first he finds that the Danish colonial rule is outstanding. However, later when more integrated into the community he finds many flaws. For example, that Danish colonial rule has not done enough to educate the Greenlanders is shown in his discussion of how life is organized with the factor of the town and the pastor. Meanwhile, his wife develops a deeper feeling for and understanding of her Christian faith. When, at the end, their daughter is asked whether she will choose the secularized heritage from her father or the religious one from her mother, she wants both of them. The message of the novel is very much in line with H J Rink's policy of the 19th century and with the ideas of the Peqatigiinniat when it started, but insists on

combining them. Petersen uses his historical novel to criticize the educational system of his own time, which was administrated by the church. Although it is pro-Christianity, Petersen's novel is very critical of the Mission and Church.

Thus, there is much criticism of how life is organized but there are also worthy Greenlandic role models depicted in the novels. There are no calls for decolonization, but both fellow-Greenlanders and Danes are asked to make a serious effort to create a better future.

Nature used as effect and as an arena for experiencing something greater than man

Even though the poets were inspired by European Romanticism, neither they nor their readers considered them exceptional. No source talks about the Romantic idea of the Genius. They were cultural personalities important for the self-respect of Greenlandic society. They wrote poems in the collective style as was the norm of the songbook form. The poem was not, at least on the surface, a personal lyric. They included descriptions of nature in their poems, an inspiration from the romantic nationalistic style. Nature is praised for its beauty and at the same time the beauties of nature dispose the mind to open up to the world of God. The poet **Henrik Lund** personifies parts of the landscape and considers natural beauty a reflection of paradise on earth, as in *Ilaanni unnulermat*, an evening song from 1914 (Erin. V 1934, no. 205). The narrator of the poem watches how the evening sun greets the mountains, how the mountains 'turn' to greet the sun, how the sky greets the sea, and how the sound from the creeks rises to become like "the clouds' angels' sound." In stanza six the theme of nature and paradise comes together as the narrator says, *And it is wonderful in this way / to be on earth / and deep within us regard / that up there as the more important; our twilight hour world's glorious beauty / is just like a huge veil to the spirits land*. The poems of Henrik Lund on their own appear to be very personal and yet when read or sung in the songbook context amid other songs the voice in them is a collective one. The epiphany experienced by the narrator through the beauties of nature rests on solid Christian ground. One of the most soul-stirring hymns is Henrik Lund's hymn about Nicodemus who under impact of the evening landscape is finally able during the crucifixion to understand Christ's message to him under their former night's talk. In stanza five the narrator states, *But when the evening sun is shining / later at the mountains, / and when the beams fall on / the peaks in Lebanon in the North, / the blood at the wood, too, is lightened / running from 'Him who is from God'*.

Although, the novels before 1953, are not in the genre of romantic nationalism in general, they all include features of romantic style in their descriptions of nature. Nature is used to underscore, by contrast or analogy, the situation and the feelings of the characters. As one example, a precocious boy wanders deeply worried while the rest of the community enjoys the fires and the cooking and the wonderful evening where the sea swallows dive

into the calm sea (Storch 1914 kap 1). The main character, the competent seal-hunter, dies in the final pages of the novel and the beams of the moon from behind the clouds fall on his body while it is lifted up by his grandmother and by angels (Nielsen 1934). The young hero looks down from a plain at the interior of the country and praises the vast Greenlandic nature as grandiose (chapter 4); a Greenlandic fjord in summer time is the coulisse for hunting criminals (chapter 4 ff). However, in chapter one of the same novel the descriptions of cultivated land with dairy cattle farming and (especially) sheep herding, together with the frequently referred to urbanization are praised as the future solutions to present problems (Augo Lygne 1931).

New themes: forefathers and language in the songs of the 1930s after the long sled journey.

In 1921 the fourth edition of *Erinarsuutit* (Petersen ed. 1921) was published. In the same year the Danish King visited Greenland and Knud Rasmussen started his Fifth Thule Expedition with the long sled journey across arctic Canada and Alaska (Rasmussen 1927:69). The fifth edition of *Erinarsuutit* (Petersen ed. 1934) did not appear until 1934. In this, two of the new authors inspired by the long sled journey have the migration of the Inuit to Greenland as a theme. At that time the Greenlanders in the Thule area and in East Greenland were no longer the epitome of pagans of the past, but were becoming part of the Christian Greenland to a much greater degree than before.²⁷

The ethno-national discourse could also refer to the pagan past. This is the case in the songs written by **Kristen Mikiassen** (later Kristen Poulsen, 1910-1951) where Greenlandic culture is seen as being inherited from the spirit of the forefathers which is like solid bedrock on which to build, as in Number 57 entitled *Issittup kulturia* [Arctic Culture]. In Number 107, the past, and the strength of the forefathers are also seen as means to counter the faint-heartedness of those who are fighting for something. The forefathers, too, are included in some of the poems he composed in the 1930s and 1940s (Poulsen, [1947] 1980) notably in Numbers 14, 18 and 22, where Poulsen refers to their immigration to Greenland and describes them as *sapiitsut* [one word combining both competence and bravery]. Finally, in Number 26, a commemorative poem about Jørgen Brønlund, the Greenlander who died with two Danes in the famous expedition to North East Greenland, Brønlund is described too as *sapiitsoq*.

Because of their immigration from North America, **Pavia Petersen** (1904-1943) characterizes the forefathers as *sapiitsut*. He describes Greenland as a gift from God to the Greenlanders and Kalaallisut as the ethno-national symbol that also links Inuit from Greenland to Alaska (Knud Rasmussen proved, as had been done before him and also described in *Atuagagdliutit*, that Inuit can understand each other across this enormous area (Langgård 2008d), (Number 3, Number 34).

Inspired by a Danish song by N F S Grundtvig about the mother tongue Danish, Petersen wrote a song about the Inuit language as mother tongue, the language of the

forefathers, the language of the heart and the tie between Inuit, similar to Scandinavian. His song ends with a stanza about the language as a gift from "Heaven" (Number 100). Neither the wider ethnic perspective nor the connection to God is seen in the song written by Grundtvig.²⁸ Pavia Petersen also wrote songs that describe the autumn and the winter of Greenland in a positive way. This too, added to the process of nation-building in which the description of Greenland's beautiful nature and climate is celebrated. The thought that Greenlanders genetically match the harsh climate fits in this approach as well. Petersen says that the blood of the Greenlanders is suited to the cold winds coming from the icecaps and the snow topped mountains—in his metaphorical language: "*the mountains put on their caps*" (Number 165). The idea that the culture lies like an essence in the blood of the Greenlanders would later on in the 1960s become an important aspect of the lyrics of Moses Olsen, that reified the kayak culture as an ethno-national symbol, and contributed to the start of the mobilization for Home Rule (Olsen 1969).

Pagan forefathers in written prose before 1950

Greenlandic authors gathered inspiration from Danish national romanticism and ascribed to their forefathers, in their fictive portrayal of the past, the ability to anticipate Christianity: that there was one divine power, and concepts of mercy and neighborly love—the ethical claims of Christianity.

In Denmark, B S Ingemann, author of historical novels in the style of romantic nationalism, wrote one on Greenland, too, *Kunnuk og Naja eller Grønlænderne* [Kunnuk and Naja or the Greenlanders] (Ingemann 1842). In this novel some Greenlanders sensed vaguely the Christian spirituality in advance of and prior to the Mission. They adumbrated Christianity without understanding it, in a romantic way. Greenlandic readers already knew of the novel from a Greenlandic translation in *Atuagagdliutit* in the 1911, issue 8ff. In Greenlandic literature this idea was appropriated by **Peter Gundel** (1895-1931) in 1918, in the first of four short stories that he published in the newspaper *Avangnāmioq*²⁹ (1918-27 and later on as a booklet in Gundel 1961). The protagonist as a young boy has some presentiments of Christianity when surrounded by nature and its emotional impact, but not understanding his own feelings, he attributes them to the sun. He promises himself that he will seek more insight when he is older. Later, when he and his family move south and thus reach areas where the mission is found, he seeks spiritual insight by joining the Mission in accordance with his earlier decision.

Another model sought to bring pre-colonial times into Greenlandic literature as a romantic nationalistic past. This model was used by **Hans Lynge** (1906-1988), in *Ersinngitsup piumasaa*, the fourth of the seven novels published before 1950 (Lynge (1938) 1967). It tells a story³⁰ about a pre-colonial community where two young sons have been brought up by a man that turns out not to be their father, but the man that murdered their violent biological father and thereby saved their mother. According to the norms and rules of the

culture they have to kill him, no matter how good a “father” he had been to them. After the killing, one of the brothers leaves the community to live in the wilderness alone. He is joined by the young woman he loves. They go through crises which end up with his initiation as a shaman, not least thanks to the love he receives from the woman. He is a new kind of shaman, acting out of love and for the health of the community. The novel stresses the harsh norms of the traditional culture, but shows through its protagonists that Greenlanders themselves through their own agency can establish norms just as well as if they were part of Christianity (Thisted 1990). At the same time, the author through this mechanism makes the forefathers acceptable to Greenlanders of the 1930s (Langgård Forth-a, 2010). Before the secret about their “father” is revealed, the young protagonist seems to have been born with a silver spoon in his mouth. However, when he is in a trance he has presentiments that he shall go through a dark crisis before again approaching the light. A further feature of the romanticism used in the novel is the use of nature as underscoring, both analogically with and in contrast to the feelings of the characters. To sum up, romantic nationalism is found in an appropriated form first in the songs and only later on in novels, the first one being Lynge’s from 1938.

Romantic nationalism 1950 - 1971

When Greenland was “decolonized” by becoming part of the Danish Kingdom in 1953 and modernization and Danification had started, the past became the dominant theme of the novel genre.

In 1954³¹, **Ulloriannguaq Kristiansen** (1927-1998) published a novel *Nunassarsiaq* [The Acquired Future Land] built upon legends in the oral tradition that have been regarded as legends about the Norse period and the encounter between the Norsemen and the Inuit.³² The writer transforms these legends into the novel form: the characters are round, the readers hear about their motives and feelings, and the novel is filled with natural settings which underscore the action. It describes how the leaders of the two groups want a peaceful co-existence, but how mutual suspicions grow because of the wiliness of an Inuit woman, Navaranaaq. She succeeds in her wish for strife. She manipulates the Norsemen and they kill off all the Inuit women and children while their men are hunting. In the end the Inuit are victorious, but without any pleasure. Although co-existence is promoted as the positive norm by the protagonists, the novel has in its last page the following message: two totally dissimilar peoples cannot share the country, and one of them has to be removed in a kind way.

The Greenlandic leader is the more moral one, but before their last fight, both leaders are exposed to evil powers. The Norseman is exposed to temptation from the Devil which he resists. The Inuit leader is forced by the Sea Woman³³ to act against his will in an unethical way, and he can not resist. In this way, the Christian author lets Christianity stand unshaken as the right doctrine, but at the same time he upholds the ethno-national perspective (Kristiansen 1954).

In Otto Rosing's (1896-1965) novel *Taseralik* [name of a place] (1955)84), the setting is colonial Greenland in the middle of the 19th century. Its focus is how the small local communities of Greenland are characterized by kind and helpful Christians who are good and industrious seal-hunters. This novel became extremely popular and will be described in more detail below.

The same author also wrote a novel *Gulunnguaq* (the name of the protagonist) about the early phase of the Christian mission in West Greenland in which the Greenlanders are portrayed as good, hardworking seal-hunters. However, the characters fall into two groups: those who welcome Christianity, and those who oppose it and are dominated by superstition and evil. The novel succeeds in describing how jealousy starts and anxious, superstitious feelings take over (Rosing 1967).

In 1970, the novel *Ilissi tassa nunassarsi* [This is Your Future Land] by **Frederik Nielsen**, deals with the immigration from North America to Greenland. Nielsen had already published a novel (see above) and two collections of poems (see below). The novel incorporates content from the Inuit oral tradition, but selectively. Those main characters that embody good morals are not involved in actions that would be considered offensive during the author's lifetime. In this way the novel presents the forefathers of the Greenlanders in a romantic, nationalistic mode. Further, it shows the readers how the oral tradition might have developed when details given about the lives of a certain generation are forgotten by their descendants. Thus, the novel as part of a written literature, gives the readers a fascinating depiction of an ever changing oral tradition. In the last part of the novel the use of the historical novel genre is changed into a critique of the contemporary situation. It highlights in negative terms the fact that the encounter between the Norsemen and the Inuit does not remain peaceful and looks upon the fictional situation as a parallel to the chauvinism in 1970s' Greenland. Navaranaaq in this story is a young girl of mixed descent. Caught as such in the tensions between the more chauvinistic and racist fractions within both of the two ethnic groups, Navaranaaq becomes the direct cause of strife (Nielsen 1970, Langgård 1992b).

One year later, in 1971, a book was published which was to become the cult novel of the 1970s and of the early 1980s, **Ole Brandt**'s (1918-1981) *Qooqa* [the name of the protagonist] like Hans Lynge's novel from 1938 (Lynge [1938] 1967), this one too, takes place in pre-colonial times³⁴ and depicts how the Greenlanders in socio-political matters create norms on a level with the ones taught by Christianity. They abrogate blood feuds and overcome superstition and black magic. Further, they are like supermen in hunting skills and execute in a very competent way their commercial relations with English whalers with whom they speak English. Religious issues are seldom raised and if touched upon, the worship of "the one up there" is mentioned in an expression vague enough not to be offensive to Christians³⁵.

In these ways the novels give a romantic, nationalistic picture of a past society featuring

prominent Greenlanders who are industrious, competent and who embody ethics and morals of a high standard. The descriptions in all these novels are romantic and nationalistic, but not politically nationalistic except in the first mentioned *Nunassasiaq* from 1954, whose message seems to be an unambiguously nationalistic request to keep "Greenland for Greenlanders". Even though the novels in general aren't written in a nationalistic tone, they express a countermovement and a balance to the vehement modernization of society. In the 1995 edition of his literary history in Kalaallisut, Christian Berthelsen mentions how popular these novels were because of their depictions of a past that was idyllic and unbelievably good. Berthelsen suggests that modernization made many Greenlanders feel insecure and for this reason, when it became incomprehensible, they "clung to the Greenlandic identity" (*kalaaliussutsimut najummatsernertut*). This fact can help to explain their interest in the past (Berthelsen 1995:150, 157).

Otto Rosing: *Taseralik*

To cling to the Greenlandic identity is seen only in retrospect by Berthelsen in 1995, as he does not mention it in the 1976 edition of his history. But some authors in the 1950s did write about the past, expressing their concerns for their contemporaries. Otto Rosing makes this explicit in the preface to his novel *Taseralik*.³⁶ He writes as follows: *It is my hope that this little book will be seen not only as entertainment, but will show the younger generation the importance of respect for our forefathers. Let us move forward with an intact connection back; only then will we be able to understand and make useful our national distinctive characteristic – and only then can we meet the future with adequate foundation.* (Rosing 1955:preface, my translation).

Taseralik will be used to exemplify the kind of discourse that one can find in the Greenlandic romantic, nationalistic novels. *Taseralik* takes place in colonial times in the mid-19th century. Two families travel from south and north respectively to the summer hunting gathering, Aasivik, in *Taseralik*. The competence and industry of the Greenlanders are underlined. The novel describes the festive mood because of the abundance of game and because the young ones meet and fall in love. The Greenlanders are characterized as kind, helpful and capable people, industrious hunters and good Christians as the following extract shows: *Then Vittoralak went southwards. Now he had been the pilot of these strangers who did not know the route themselves. He did not at all consider the possibility to get paid for this; it was only a pleasure to get the opportunity to show the strangers such kindness. In this Vittoralak adhered to a true Greenlandic way of thinking of the following: "We are all constantly travelling, and one encounters so many unknown situations. We must not just give up this readiness to help that was the constituting element of the national character of our forefathers." And also, Vittoralak knew indeed also these words from the Saviour: "Everything that you want mankind to do to yourselves you shall do to them!"* (Rosing (1955)1984:140, my translation).

When it comes to love between the young people, the novelist shows no hesitation in describing the process in the purest of terms. When the son of the one of two families, Mikaalli, wants a wife, it is not difficult for him to follow the commandment not to have intercourse before marriage. Rosing writes: *It is not at all that difficult to obey these norms when you really have the will to do it! Whenever he happened to think of women he remembered the scriptural passages he had read in the Holy Book: "Charm is deception, and beauty is vanity, but the woman that fears the Lord shall be praised ... (1955, pp. 84:102).* Mikaalli prays and then, *The power of love moved him, and up where the sunbeams made the landscape shimmer he kind of saw a vision.... ((1955)1984:104, (my translation)).*

Later on in Taserlik, Mikaalli sees and then meets the perfect, pure young woman Maaliannguaq, the daughter of the other of the two families. Maaliannguaq has the purest mind. She too dreams about her meeting with the one person who is meant for her. However, she is pursued by a young man who only wishes to force himself on her, violently, both on their way to Taserlik and also during their stay there. This happens at the same time as Maaliannguaq and the young hero Mikaalli, are very slowly and in a very chaste manner becoming acquainted with each other. Her hero saves her at the last minute when the violent one starts to force himself on her and the novel ends happily. Thus, the novel is also a love story that takes place on the romantic level (including presentiments before actual encounter, where the issue of the romantic adumbration of what will come is again present) taking place within sexual norms that would be appropriate for the European bourgeoisie of the 19th century. The author draws on ethno-historical sources, but uses the genre, historical novel, to present the source material by using crosscutting techniques and much commentary from the implied author.³⁷

West Greenlandic and East Greenlandic forefathers in the same anthology

In 1967, **Villads Villadsen** (1916-2006), published some epic poems, *Nalusuunerup taarnerani* [In the Darkness of Paganism, literally: of the huge ignorance]. What the poems have in common is the fact that all the events take place in the southern part of East Greenland. Most of them describe the pagan communities at the end of 19th century, a period characterized by extreme violence, which is also described by Knud Rasmussen (1909). However, the first epic poem in the collection is about the final clash between Inuit and Norsemen and the scene is laid at a place called Aluk in East Greenland. Aluk, in the West Greenlandic oral tradition has a very positive connotation. It is said that a man who had been away from Aluk for a certain period was so overcome with emotion on seeing the sunrise when he returned that he died. Furthermore, the Inuit and especially their leader behave very nobly in Villadsen's poem. The leader Qasapi, is a great commander, of great integrity with a very nationalistic attitude. At the same time he is a

deeply religious man whose prayer and thanks to Toornaarsuk at the bottom of the sea are cast in phrases reminiscent of Christian forms. In this way Villadsen includes both groups of forefathers, those in West Greenland and those in East Greenland, in the same work, but distinguishes one from the other very clearly. This collection of poems contributed to the development of a negative attitude on the part of West Greenlanders against the East Greenlanders who end up with a stigmatised identity (Langgård 1999a(2010)). For West Greenland, Villadsen thus continues the romantic national depiction of the forefathers as role models, in this case in an extremely anachronistic way both politically and religiously. The political stance is illustrated in the speech, six stanzas long, that Qasapi makes to his “army” before the “battle.” In the speech, he uses the expression most often invoked since the 19th century to refer to the country in a nationalistic sense, *nunarpuit* [our land]. He mentions his men’s brave blood, inherited from the forefathers. They will stand together in the fight. In the last stanza of his speech he says, *Our land that we here stand on / listen to me, let us own it! / We live here. / Let us alone be masters of it!* (Villadsen 1967:9, my translation). After they have won the victory, Qasapi addresses his men. His last words are the following stanza. *Let the drift ice at sea, / our snow-covered mountains, / the majestic huge icebergs, / the cataracts that pour foaming across our mountains, / let them all silently tell / that the Greenlander for ever shall stay there / in his land, let them in all times proclaim / that he alone shall be master there forever.* (Villaden 1967:23, my translation).

This nationalistic discourse is an anachronism, but a highly effective one in the contemporary Greenland where modernization and Danification made the population feel set aside as a mere spectator to the process. With this work, the literature is moving to the next phase, the phase of politicized nationalism and mobilization towards Home Rule.

Summing up: romantic nationalism and Greenlandic literature

Romantic nationalism had a big impact on Greenlandic literature from its beginning, but only through gradual adaptation. No works can be described as adhering to universal romanticism as was the case in Denmark. Neither were the borders of genres broken down in any of the works, as was the case in the Danish romanticism. Romanticism came to Greenland in the shape of romantic national songs praising the land that yields to its people all they need. But there were also socio-political rebuking songs. From romanticism also came the idea of using nature to underscore human behaviour and as the place where individuals can have recourse to deep thought and significant emotional experiences (including presentiments of future events and emotions).³⁸ Greenland did not know wars, and therefore, the kind of hero worship that wars give rise to, was ruled out. The fact that the Christian beliefs of the period did not accept in any way the paganism of the past, and that these attitudes were reinforced by the missions to the pagan East

Greenlanders and the Greenlanders of the Thule Area, meant that the literature could only gradually draw in the forefathers, and only using certain strategies. For example, it was thought necessary to depict the heroes of the past in a manipulated way as characters whose norms are in line with Christian morals and ethics. Added to the political message of the works is the perception of love for the one and only, chastity before marriage, the young people's right to choose their own mate and a vehement rejection of arranged marriages. In the 1950s and 60s, works were published that look back with nostalgia—and gradually overlap with the mobilization towards Home Rule, ideas of the noble savage, and of romantic nationalism used as a political weapon.

Collections of poems not directed to nation-building

In the 1940s, two of the authors who already had published poems in *Erinarsuutit* each published a collection of poems.

Frederik Nielsen, who at that time had already published a novel and some songs in *Erinarsuutit*, published a small collection of poems in 1943, *Qilak nuna imaq* [Sky land sea], and many more in 1962, *Qilak nuna imaq allallu* [Sky land sea and others (poems?)]. He had liberated himself from the usual habit of explicitly drawing on Christian gospel. He saw the Greenlander not just as a citizen with double nationality (Greenlandic and Danish), but also as a citizen of the world. Apart from a couple of poems in response to World War II, his poems do not have ethnicity and nationality as themes. He compares the birds' song in Greenland with the Royal Orchestra (in Copenhagen). He was urbanized and looked at nature from the town. In the collection of 1962, he includes poems from abroad: Denmark, Canada and Sweden. He was innovative, too, by including love as a theme in the Greenland setting. As previously mentioned, the theme of love had been very well represented in the oral tradition without any limitations, but left out in the written literature up till then. Most of the poems in the collections were not meant to be sung. Many were without metric form, which was highly innovative for 1943 readers only accustomed to song lyrics. His poems are therefore only indirectly part of nation building through their contribution to the diversity and the expansion of the literature written in Kalaallisut. (Langgård 2000b)

Kristen Poulsen, (former Mikiassen) who had some songs in *Erinarsuutit* and later on wrote a more anthropological novel about the East Greenlanders (1952), published a collection of his poems, of which some were romantic national and/or religious; others were not. Some would tell about the shortness of life. His are innovative in the sense that some of his poems are very personal. Especially, one poem is outstanding and very moving. It describes how he sits at his dearest one's, (his wife's) deathbed with his infant son and there they witnesses her death. He then wonders how he will be able to go on and take care of the son. The impact of the poem's narrative is further enhanced if the reader

is aware of the fact that he recently moved to Southern-most part of West Greenland for his job as catechist and did not have any personal network.

The fight for Home Rule—the symbols

When Greenland was decolonized by becoming part of Denmark and modernization began in 1953, the Danification, when it accelerated, was gradually accompanied by a socio-political politicization of ethnicity and national feeling. This meant an intensified use of literature once more, now in the struggle for Home Rule. **Moses Olsen** (1938-2008), later on an important politician, was the one who, through his poetry (Olsen 1969, 1998³⁹) and a very fine short story (Olsen 1970), created the new ethno-national symbols. Olsen reified the material aspect of the seal-hunting culture, first and foremost through his use of the kayak. He expressed that both a sense of freedom and the songs of the forefathers lie in the blood of the Greenlander, but this heritage has to be awakened. The Greenlander he felt needs to feel in contact with nature, open minded to the impact from nature, to get into contact with his roots. In this way Olsen makes ethnicity an inherited essence. This is a natural way of thinking at a time of ethnic mobilization. Decades later he would advocate for Greenlanders to be both Greenlandic and global (Langgård 2004c). Among his later poems one finds some that testify to his joy over his political achievements, but also his apologies to his family for having been too much away, absorbed in his efforts for his country. One finds a poem about divorce in which two flowers start drifting happily along in a small creek, but eventually bump into a barrier and the water sends them on to the ocean in two different directions without ever meeting again.

His love poems are among the earlier ones. Moses Olsen drew on the Greenlandic nature in his political poems, and also in his very fine love lyrics. The body of the woman is described in relation to elements of the Greenlandic nature. Olsen metaphorically describes the feeling of falling in love as blood running through the veins like the roaring torrents of Greenland's mountain streams. Moses Olsen thus inherits the practice of intertwining nature and politics from Henrik Lund, but does not incorporate Lund's use of it to express religious feeling. Instead, he continues to write love poetry, as introduced by Frederik Nielsen. He combined it with references to nature. This combination of politics and, especially, of love with nature is a sophisticated innovation. Through the use of metaphor Olsen thus invokes the natural landscape of Greenland to reflect the inner life of the speaker of the poems (Langgård 1992a and forthcoming-b).

The struggle for Home Rule and mental decolonization

Moses Olsen's poems were soon followed by poems of opposition often written in Danish. There were poems without metric form and poems published as songs on recordings and tapes, from the late 1970s and especially in the 1980s.⁴⁰ Many of these poems are marked by being clearly propagandist, but not all of them are without literary qualities

(Per Langgård 1990).⁴¹ The new feature was that the poems campaigned for opposition towards the Danes and their dominance considered hegemony in Greenland, and for a mental decolonization and change of discourse to one based on Marxism and the ideas of Franz Fanon (Fanon 1961). The Danes were seen as capitalists profiting from the Greenlanders and ruthlessly suppressing them. Greenlanders are described as proletarians suppressed by capitalists.⁴² The tone was very harsh, as for example in a poem of **Aqqaluk Lynge**: *One of ours is dead / they have once more taken away a part of our selves / he has sought his own death(d) / and has found it by himself – it was said / but suicide is murder* (Lynge, 1982, English translation Lynge, 2008). Even collections of poems that were not propagandist for example those by **Krisian Olsen aaju**, in 1976, revolve around themes like identity crisis. But non-political poems were written too, as for example some of the poems in the anthology *Inuit nipaat - Grønlandske digte i 1980'erne* [Inuit's voices—Greenlandic poems in the 1980s] (Karen Nørregaard (ed.) undated).

The collection of poems written by **Ole Korneliussen** (1947-) is the one work from the period that young readers still read with most pleasure. The content ranges from criticism of colonial times and their consequences to existential poems, including poems that allude to Church and Christianity in a very negative way. Some of the poems are modernistic in their use of metaphoric language (Korneliussen 1973 and 1991).

In the novel the romantic national style prevailed, but the reading of it politicized as with Brandt's cult story *Qooqa*. **Fr. Nielsen** wrote three more volumes in addition to his novel from 1971, creating a four volume historical fictional account beginning with the immigration from Canada to the establishment of Home Rule (Nielsen 1970, 1982, 1983 and 1988).

Other authors focused on contemporary daily life and socio-political problems like the feeling of being rootless, relationships breaking down, suicide and murder. **Hans Anthon Lynge** (1945-) is the most prominent of them. His novels are still read by young people, but today they are seen as descriptions of the past and somewhat outdated (Lynge 1976 and 1982). From a post-colonial perspective the collective novel *Umiarsuup tikitinngilaattaani* [When waiting for the ship to come] (Lynge 1982), is interesting: in a Greenlandic small town the whole population from time to time throughout the day take one more look at a Dane who sits in his boat not capable of managing his outboard motor. The description represents a 180 degree turn, Danes used to be the capable ones.

Some authors, especially **Villads Villadsen** (1916-2006), discussed socio-political problems, but in a somewhat overdramatic way and from an old-fashioned Christian point of view that hardly touches the youth of today.

Women authors

So far, I have not made mention of female writers. Greenlandic culture was in colonial time male dominated and this continued even after 1953. The authors were men.⁴³ But

in the 1970s, finally, women's voices were heard. Collectively adopting the alias *Kilut* [sewing stitches] a group of women published a newsletter and some of the women's protest poems were produced on a record, *Aasivik* in 1979. The group didn't last very long. Very soon afterward, this attempt gave way to the more male dominated post-colonial fight, as very often happens in such settings.⁴⁴

However, the period did see literary works written by women. Among the more prominent were the following. In 1981, *Mâliâraq Vebæk* (1917-), published *Bussimi naapinneq* [The encounter in the bus], the first novel published by a female Greenlandic author. The novel depicts how a Greenlandic woman perishes in Denmark. Until then, some of the works of Greenlandic literature had women characters, but either in smaller rolls as passive in a male dominated universe as in Storch 1914, or as means to propagate a Christian ethno-national message, as in Petersen 1944. Vebæk's novel, although still including the ethno-national perspective, focuses on the fate of a woman.

Women were also the central figures in the novels written by *Grete Guldager Thygesen* (1937-), in which she gives a very idyllic picture of the recent past. In her first novel *Kalaaleq arnaq* [The woman Greenlander] (Thygesen 1984), her young female protagonist, Biina, marries a young Danish doctor and becomes a role model in her small community where she is looked upon as if she were an angel. The sequel *Qaqgartoormiut* [Those living among large mountains] (Thygesen 1988) has a larger cast of characters but with Biina as one of the prominent figures.

In *Dorthe Nathanielsen*'s (1934-) novel *Aani* (the name of the protagonist), the lives of three generations of women are described, but the focus is on the middle one who is of the author's own generation. The protagonist is a woman who follows a Danish man, but returns to her village, marries the one who had loved her before, and remains a housewife. The novel gives just a glimpse of the development of the role of women of the 80s, in the depiction of the third generation. The primary focus of the novel is on identifying themes current in the lifetime of the author.

Lyrics written by women appeared too, increasing somewhat in number, as can be seen in *Nørregaard* 1980 and undated.

There was a sense of relief, amid the nationalistic use of the literature by men, when *Mariane Petersen* (1937-) in 1988, published her collection of poems *Niviugak aalakoortoq allallu* [The drunken fly and others]. Petersen breaks away from the ethno-national self-importance of previous writing. The poems are delightfully grotesque, focusing on great and small things in Greenlandic daily life. After another collection of poems (1993), Petersen published a collection of poems which with freewheeling fantasy appeals to both the intellect and the humour of small children (1997).

To sum up, women entered the scene and women's perspectives were included. But, excluding a short period with the publication of *Kilut*, the themes were not in any sense seen from a feminist perspective (see also Thisted and Rajala 1997b). Development in the defining of gender roles has taken place during the decades since then, but more as

a result of the impact of tendencies from abroad. Neither feminist literary works nor feminist groups have appeared. The ethno-national perspective prevailed, even as it became less topical.

The late 1980s and the 1990s

In the sphere of literature the enormous ethno-national mobilization that marked the 1970s and the 1980s, seemed to be followed by a cooling down in the late 1980s and in the 1990s. Only a few new authors had entered the scene. Were the resources used to build up and develop Home Rule perhaps? Perhaps the strong tradition of politicization of the literature and the old purists' endless criticism of the language use of the younger ones blocks the renewal? The fact is, that a glance at the works from the period shows that either they are written by already established authors (Villads Villadsen, Kristian Olsen aaju, Hans Anthon Lynge, Ole Korneliussen, Mariane Petersen, Måliáraq Vebæk, Jessie Kleemann) or by older men (like Hans Hansen, Jørgen Fleisher, H C Petersen). The Greenlandic authors were characterized by being rather old (except for Kleemann) and they still are. Their works are important. The problem is that they are not being followed by younger ones. Only a few young authors have made their debut during this period, among these is Kelly Berthelsen.

Furthermore, the Greenlandic literary situation is also marked by the post-colonial tendency, diaspora⁴⁵ authors. Some of its most important writers live outside Greenland, for example Måliáraq Vebæk, Kristian Olsen aaju, and not least, Ole Korneliussen. True to their experiences, these writers allow their environment to influence the content of their work. However, they write only (or first and foremost) in Kalaallisut, even though they ensure that some of what they write is made available in Danish.

The language situation is another important factor influencing the development of Greenlandic literature. Kalaallisut, a language in a post-colonial setting and spoken by only some 50,000 speakers, has enormous strength seen from a global perspective, due to the fact that it has been a written language for such a long time and that it was standardized so early. Because so few Greenlanders knew any Danish before 1950, Greenlandic literature could gradually develop without any foreign competition. And, as already mentioned, writers did not have any problems in adapting the European and Danish literary forms, distinguished as it was through its use of Kalaallisut. In the second half of the 20th century Greenland took a leap from the closed and almost monolingual Kalaallisut speaking Greenlandic society to the modern Greenland that is part of the globalizing world with all the new media. This posed a great challenge for Greenlandic literature. The foreign international media became increasingly part of everyday life through television, videos, DVDs and film. The process of Danification after 1953, meant that Greenlanders felt that their language, culture and identity were threatened, but it also meant an enormously increased, direct access to foreign culture including fiction and lyrics, with Danish as the connecting link. As a result of this, younger readers made new demands on Greenlandic

literature. They wanted a literature that was about Greenlandic problems, but with the psychological depth and the degree of suspense that they experienced in foreign literary works and, first and foremost, from movies. Such demands were not really being met within the 1990s, and this is still a problem.

The individual authors of the 1990s

Hans Anthon Lynge (among the established authors), published a small collection of poems about the development of a girl through the years when her older sister is confined to her bed, and in the end dies. He shows in the poems, among other things, how life goes on thanks to the birth of a brother (Lynge 1990). In the late 1990s, Lynge participated in the making of the movie *Qaamarngup uummataa / Lysets hjerte* [Heart of lightness] (Rygaard & Pedersen 2004), and in the same period he published *Allaqqitat* [Rewritten things] (Lynge 1997) (Langgård 2001e; Thisted 2001). In both of the works the focus is on how modernization contributed to the breakup of society.

In *Allaqqitat*, Lynge focuses on the time leading up to the establishment of Home Rule in 1979. In the book he embodies the discussions and the points of view of that period, and the readers are to realize that these are the same discussions that still go on in Greenland today, although more than 25 years have elapsed (in 1997) since the 1979 setting of the novel. The fictional layer of the book is very thin; the debate totally dominates it. The protagonist of the novel is the narrator who reads the diaries of an old friend and the readers hear his reactions to them which are inserted into long passages of quotation. The diaries can be seen as representing the views and feelings that the narrator has repressed. Likewise, the movie, as it was illustrated on the advertising poster, is about how to retrieve one's alter ego, and its content is parallel to themes in the novel.

The main theme of the movie is how the narrator's generation must find the repressed part of themselves and become reconciled to their fate: modernization and the difficult problems of identity. They must, in the way myths work, find strength by establishing ties back to the ideas of the traditional seal-hunting culture (Thisted 2002a; Rygaard & Kleist 2004). It was disappointing for many young people that the first contemporary Greenlandic-Danish movie resorted to the use of the seal-hunting symbolism. Lynge's reply to this was that the young people themselves should then create works of art out of their own lives, and based on their own generation.

In the 1990s, **Ole Korneliussen** turned productive again. The first sign of this came when the winner of a literary competition was decided upon: Korneliussen's short story written about a young man in the hours before he commits suicide (Korneliussen 1990). This short story has become part of the "canonized" works of Greenlandic literature. Back in 1990, it was felt by many to signal a new start for Greenlandic literature.

Korneliussen enlarged his collection of poems published in 1973, *Putoq* [The hole] in a new edition *Putoq nutaaq* [The new hole] (Korneliussen 1991). Further, he published a

rendering of some of his poems in Danish together with a few composed only in Danish. As he resides in Denmark, some of the poems are about his Danish context (Korneliussen 1993). Korneliussen also published a collection of short stories *Uumasoqat* [Your fellow creature] in 1992, which are all set in Greenland. However, in some of them the narrator is a Greenlander who is only there for a summer visiting the place where he was born. The stories treat the same issues as did Hans Anthon Lynge's *Allaqqitat* (Lynge 1997), but in a more sophisticated way. Korneliussen presents individual characters and shows them in discrete episodes and events: disagreements on a tour of the fjord, the thoughts of a young man in the hours before his suicide, a father who almost shoots his small son because he cannot deal with his failed relationship with the boy's mother, etc. Through these stories Korneliussen depicts indirectly and subtly how society has become stuck in what should just be a transitional position (Langgård 2004b).

Korneliussen did write a novel in Danish, which wasn't published. He wrote it in a changed version in Kalaallisut (1999) and then finally made a third version, which was published in Danish in 2000. In the two published versions he has placed the action of the novel in Denmark (although he does not say so explicitly) probably because he resides in Denmark. The protagonist who is also the narrator of the novel burns his old boat in what seems to be Greenland (although not stated explicitly). He then stresses that only because of convention will he tell about his ethnic heritage which does not mean anything to him. He tells the readers that he respects those who continued their migration from Alaska and down through Greenland to Cape Farewell. Then he adds that this is just like what he himself has done: when it became possible because of technical developments to move from the area around Cape Farewell to Denmark he did so. For the hero, Denmark is a very nice place and then again it is not. Slowly, the dark sides of Denmark are revealed in an aggressively ironic tone, while the urban landscape seems more and more to appear only in the forms of a Greenlandic mountain landscape with raging torrents. The protagonist dare not look back, which is echoed in the title of the Danish version, called *Saltstøtten* [Pillar of salt] and the introductory quotation from the first book of Moses in both published versions (Korneliussen 1999 and 2000). The hero has to deal with the renunciation or repression of his Inuit roots in order to move on. He undergoes a crisis. However, he does not end up as a pillar of salt, but is left sitting on top of a sack of road salt, looking at his former boat still smouldering (now in what appears to be a Danish environment). In the novel the author describes the settings and the other characters in a stream of consciousness technique through the words of the protagonist. The words uttered by the others are not rendered, only the questions and remarks made by the protagonist are heard. There is no dialogue in the novel. The hero does not stand as a trustworthy narrator. Indeed, time and again his points of view are rather absurd. However, they are just as self-contradictory and confused as are the opinions of any citizen whenever frustrations dominate. It is an interesting novel, laying open a man's frustrations. However, it is rather a harsh book, its content fiercely antagonistic against all human nature. Seen from the perspective of Greenlandic literature, the novel is in-

teresting too, because the satire is directed against circumstances in the society of the former colonizer. The same satiric view is maybe not that interesting in a Danish context because Korneliussen's points of view don't seem to be new in a Danish socio-political context (For two readings of the novel: Thisted 2001; Langgård 2001c).

Among the authors who continued writing in the 1990s, one finds **Kristian Olsen aaju** (1942-). He has published many works in prose as well as in poetry. He has also written poems of opposition (see above). His main themes are identity in general and as a Greenlander, man's experiences with nature "painted" with words as an analogy to his oil paintings. The last publication of his in the 20th century was "*Imod det blålige – Tungujuuartumiut; Digte, Taallat, Noveller*" [Towards the bluish—poems, short stories, short novels] 1998, in which he included fiction about the Norsemen. Some of the stories of the oral tradition were thought to describe the encounter between Inuit and Norsemen in Greenland.⁴⁶ This encounter has been a recurring topic in Greenlandic written literature, either focusing either on Inuit's victory, or using it as an example of the encounter between the two cultures, analogous to today's meeting between Danes and Greenlanders (see above on Kristiansen 1954 and Villadsen 1967 and on Nielsen 1971, and see Langgård 2004a). However, aaju depicts them in their own world in Greenland.

During the 1990s **Hans Hansen** (1925-1999) published a trilogy stretching over several generations. It starts in the 1940s and ends in the 1980s, the story taking place in Greenland and also in Denmark. There are Danes among the characters in the novels (published using Hansen's alias: Albert Nuka in 1989, 1993 and 1995). Further, Hansen published a collection of short stories that is remarkable because it is written in Danish, not in Kalaallisut. Its title is *Stavnsbundne får vinger* [People in serfdom get wings] (Hansen 1995). Even though its author is a Greenlander whose mother tongue is Kalaallisut and he had already published in Kalaallisut, this collection is composed in Danish which makes it rather striking. (The first draft of Korneliussens's novel was in Danish, but remained unpublished). Furthermore, it is about interactions between Greenlanders and Danes, not always a happy conjunction. However, here, neither of the ethnic groups is portrayed as the evil one. For the most part the stories are told with a twinkle in the eye. For example, a couple from a small village in Greenland is sent to Denmark as a reward for the husband's loyal service to a state company. They are totally unprepared to be away from their own culture and their own language. Of course, they end up time and again in situations where they break the Danish norms, or get lost, as when they have just learned to count the railway stations and then embark on a train that does *not* stop at their station. Contrary to the practice in many Indian novels about India written in English for example, Hansen does not use metonymy in post-colonial sense where some words in a local language are left without translation to remind the reader that his access to the content is only partial (see Ashcroft et al, 1989 or 1998 *sub voce* metonymy).⁴⁷ In this respect Hansen follows the practice established by Signe Rink, whom in content and

attitude he resembles very much. Signe Rink was Danish but born in Greenland and in her fiction, written in the last decades of the 19th century, she would insert words, expressions and whole dialogues in Kalaallisut but always with a Danish translation or explanation (e.g. Rink 1887). Her work is appreciated in Greenland today. Hans Anthon Lynge has translated part of her fiction into Kalaallisut (Langgård 2007 and 2008e; Lynge 2003).

Among women writers, **Máliáraq Vebæk** published her second novel *Ukiut trettenit qaangiummata* [Thirteen years later] in 1992, which is a sequel to her first one. Thirteen years have elapsed since the action of the first novel first took place. Katrine's daughter, Emilie, lives her life as a young girl in Denmark. She has inherited many problems after her mother's suicide. This second novel is thus about a young girl of mixed descent, Greenlandic and Danish, living in Denmark. However, it also describes how the ethnic borderlines are being drawn in Denmark in a way different than before. The author planned a third volume which explains the very open ending of the second.

Jessie Kleemann (1959-) is a visual and performance artist. She incorporates into her art the traditional pre-colonial spiritual, non-material⁴⁸ culture including some few concepts that are still common knowledge in Greenland.⁴⁹ In 1997, she published *Taallat Digte Poems* with her own illustrations, with her poems appearing as translations into Danish and English. Here she describes a relationship between a man and a woman, unmasking its dark sides without embellishment. Very intimate feelings were described in a very personal way (but not in a private way). The passionate feelings are described through the use of metaphors drawn from the arctic environment and to some degree through references to traditional, spiritual Inuit culture, and language that reminds the reader of the pan-arctic Inuit culture. The poems caused a debate in the newspapers. The content was provocative and the form modernistic and thus the poems demanded more of the readers, even though modernistic poems had already been published by Ole Korneliusen in 1971. What was provocative was the content and the illustrations rather than the form. The same content would be provocative even if expressed in a more conservative form.⁵⁰ A Greenlandic female journalist found the poems disgusting and therefore absurd (Sermitsiaq, no. 27, 1997, and further in no. 28 and no. 32, 1997). To avoid discussing the 'disgusting' parts, she focused on the 'absurd' imagery of icebergs on fire. Her reaction showed that the poems were not without interest, and perhaps they made some readers reflect once more about their own norms.

As already mentioned, only a few new authors appeared, but **Ole Kristiansen** (1966-), created lyrics for his rock music and produced them on CDs (Kristiansen, 1988, 1991 and undated; all of them with English translations). His poems are part of the large production that since the protest poetry of the 1970s and 80s, has continuously been created by Greenlandic bands. But in quality, his work was superior to the others. His poems are for the most part actually too complicated to be communicated as songs (this is due

to their literary qualities). Most listeners are not able to discern the message when only listening to the sound track. His lyrics are very interesting and he has made music videos out of some of the best ones. Among Greenlandic music videos his videos stand out in their creativeness and their professionalism. The main theme of his poems is the nature of the relationship between male and female including how difficult it is to reach each other, and how the relationship fades away. Another theme is that of urbanization. Most Greenlanders are now mentally urban and they have to recognize this reality instead of longing for the past, for a freedom that may exist outside the towns. In a few poems his political command is that Greenlanders must acquire competence and then outdo the "foreigners".

Both Ole Kristiansen and Jessie Kleemann seek to create a mythical frame for their poetry out of the non-material, pre-colonial culture. As previously mentioned, unlike many other post-colonial literatures in general, the Greenlandic one makes very little use of traditional Inuit culture to find inspiration from which to transform European literary forms and to find a frame other than contemporary Western and modern ones. Moses Olsen used the material culture. He reified⁵¹ the concept of the kayak, of the women's boat and of others as central ethno-national symbols. The literary use of these symbols is still being imitated by writers and the symbols still dominate Greenlandic graphic logos today. However, using spiritual elements of pre-colonial culture, as Kristiansen and Kleemann do, is not without problems. Most readers have very little knowledge of traditional beliefs and only know very few stories of the oral tradition. However, this new literary development may increase with time.

The 1990s did not see many publications of work by young authors. Two anthologies of poetry appeared, the later of them in 1995 (*Inuusutut taalliaat 102* [102 poems written by young people] Jokum Nielsen et al. eds.). Included in this volume is work by Augusta Marie Jeremiassen who is a visual artist. In her lyrics she shows courage and the ability to describe both tender, erotic feelings and tough confrontations that wear one down. The poems show glimpses from a fight over who shall take care of the home. These are strong poems about problems that many share, and thus important in the increasing attempt in Greenland to open up discussion in order to find solutions to social and family problems.

Late in the 1990s, a new young author, **Kelly Berthelsen**, published two books that consist mostly of poems, but also include some prose pieces, which in their content point to developments in the following decade. His work will be considered in the next section.

Tendencies and themes in works from the first years of the new millennium

Greenlandic literature has been through a crisis; at least evaluation of it by the younger generation was negative (Langård 1999c). But perhaps, the years just before the millennium and the first decade of the new millennium have seen literary works that to a higher

degree match the needs of young readers at the same time as young or at least younger authors have come forward. But why has there been this period of what Per Langgård (1990) called "ørkenvandring" [wandering through the dessert], and why has it continued to some degree even after 1990, and thus was felt to be like a crisis, especially in 1990s? Had literature as a vehicle for political ends gradually lost its importance? Did literature have to find new ways?

Perhaps, it is that Greenland needs not only literary works as ethno-national symbols in order to strengthen nation building, but also works that have the effect that literature can have, which is to explore and express aspects of everyday life from a local perspective based on that culture and its historical background, which at the same time remain open to themes from globalization and the world outside. However, it is a difficult challenge to meet. It is difficult to analyse the everyday life and aspirations of the modern Greenlander when the literature has been first and foremost used as a political tool, or, at least in most cases, has been intertwined with the concept of ethnicity for a century.

Furthermore, literature now has to compete more and more with the television and movies that the younger generation uses their time on, regardless of their language competence (for media and youth, see Pedersen & Rygaard 2000; Pedersen 1999). Because of the great costs of creating movies and television programs, it does not seem likely that future productions will be able to fulfil the need for the younger generation, or indeed for all in Greenland, although there has been an exciting increase in the production of relevant works in the last few years. Therefore, it is still very important that literary works that can interest the younger readers will continue to be published and hopefully even increase in number and quality.

During the last decade the school system has gone through a reform. During this process, discussion centred on how the more traditional socialization of children had to change from passive obedience to a development of children's ability to take control (or in post-colonial terms: to exert agency), to debate and reason, and to express their feelings. This is a very difficult process because the traditional way of behaving, the passive obedience, is part of the self-concept of many when defining their identity as Greenlanders and as Inuit. However, the process is necessary, because open discussion of social problems is necessary. Greenlandic society is still marked by alcoholism, neglect of children, incest, child abuse and violence, and it is still haunted by suicides. The necessary, open discussion of this situation finally began to take place after 2000. It had been postponed because such discussion in the public arena was not part of the traditional way of handling such things. Part of the explanation may be found in the way ethnicity and especially politicized ethnicity works. When a people choose to define themselves and are defined by others as ethnically and nationally distinctive, and when they have to fight for mental decolonisation and to gain power (in post-colonial terms, agency), then there will be a tendency to demarcate the ethnic group very sharply (in terms from theories on ethnicity and nationalism: a digital demarcation in stead of an analogical one with flossy borders (see Eriksen 2002)). In the case of Greenland it is furthermore a possible

strategy for society as well as for individuals to overemphasize the Inuit identity and underemphasize the Scandinavian roots that are part of the Greenlandic contemporary culture (or in terms from theories on ethnicity and nationalism: over-communicate versus under-communicate (Eriksen 2002)). This dichotomy of thinking makes it a very difficult process to introduce attitudes that so far are seen as Danish and European, even though the process is more a development from a culture with many small local communities to an urbanised, modern society than it has to do with ethnicity. For some time now the debate has been on-going and during that time the number of suicides dropped to less than 50 (in a population of only 57,000!).⁵² The debate has carried on in the press. However, perhaps the literature of the later years has as well contributed, because there has been a turn towards a more psychologically based focus on individual life problems, including the up till now tabooed ones, like violence and child abuse.

The following sections will outline these tendencies, but will not cover all details nor other facets of the literary works.

The thriller genre

The stories of the old oral tradition do not really exist anymore in oral form. Apart from the telling of autobiographical stories, it is the thriller genre that thrives in Kalaallisut, as qivittooq-stories [hermit stories] as well as stories in general about supernatural experiences. Transcriptions of recordings of oral stories are being published (Vebæk, 2001). Furthermore, the genre has also developed into a written genre with texts created in written form. Birgit Kleist Pedersen has described how the thriller genre is not just entertainment, but also an important means of getting into contact with one's own feelings which otherwise might not occur. This function of the genre is seen at work in society in general and in Greenland as well (Pedersen 2002, 2008). Written works in the genre show a tendency to emphasise emotional elements that earlier on were left implicit in the oral tradition. The thriller genre has seen a development into longer stories and even into novel format.

In 1998, **Jens Peter Olsen** published a collection of qivittooq-stories (Olsen 1998) in some of which he broadened his narratives. For example, he has one of his qivittooq-figures (*Atatama oqaluttuua* [My grandfather's story] Olsen 1998:35-62) tell in detail how he has refrained from joining a qivittooq-group and in this way has thus avoided if not all, then many problems, especially avoiding evil forces. The leader offers him human blood to drink in order to acquire superhuman powers, but he refrains. This ethical choice is thus a theme in addition to the thrill factor in the story. Thus, some of the stories are similar to the vampire stories of Anne Rice in so far as ethical choice is included as one of the themes.

Another twist is given to the genre in a book published in 2001, a thriller novel *Inuil-lisimasup ikioqqunera* [The hermit's cry for help], written by the Greenlandic politician, **Otto Steenholdt** (Steenholdt 2001). The author insisted that the book is not to be reckoned as fiction, that it is not to be read as a novel, but should be seen as a documentary of real

events. In keeping with this insistence the first person narrator of the novel is a member of the Danish Parliament, as Steenholdt himself had been. Someone asks him to help his old friend, Japhet, but in an utterly secretive way. Japhet is thought to be dead, but it turns out that he had become a hermit. He has ended up in great difficulty and has to be rescued out of his lonely place in the wilderness and moved out of the country. The protagonist accomplishes the mission, although he is anxious and uncertain. In doing this, he is brought into contact with feelings about nature that he has not experienced for years. He then leaves his friend in Denmark and is forced to promise that he will not try to track him down again, even though his friend is very anxious after having left the Greenlandic wilderness. In the first pages of the novel the readers hear how the protagonist while staying abroad in a foreign big city feels that somebody is watching him. In the last pages of the book, where previous events have been told in a long flash back, the narrator is led to a room where his friend Japhet appears, now as an elegant lady.

The novel describes many emotions: from fear of facing the wilderness and one's own feelings, to relief and joy when finding one's way back to them. The protagonist has a wife who finds it totally acceptable that her husband leaves her a short message when he goes away. He describes her response as a sign of her acceptance, but later on he admits that it is felt more like emptiness. Later on, after saying goodbye to his friend in Denmark, the narrator impulsively enters a florist's shop to buy a kind of funeral bouquet for his friend. The florist asks the purpose of the bouquet and he answers that it is for his wife. He then goes to the cemetery and places the bouquet on a grave he comes across. The novel is written in the thriller genre, but its underlying meaning is about how the suppressed feelings of the protagonist surface and how he cannot leave them behind as part of an earlier phase of his life when he was in contact with nature. He is obliged to reflect on those feelings although he is a modern man with a career in a metropolitan environment. Incidentally, one of Steenholdt's Christian names is Japhet, as he himself states in his autobiography (Steenholdt 1997: 203).

Traditional culture mirrored in literature

Already mentioned above is the weak attempt to include elements of pre-colonial spiritual culture in the poetry written by Ole Kristiansen and Jessie Kleemann. A somewhat different angle is the approach of **Kristian Olsen aaju** in a novel *Annaliattap aavaava* [Annaliatta's grandmother] published in 2002 (Olsen 2002). Here he quotes from the oral tradition when his female protagonist looks back at her life and thinks about how she lived totally absorbed in the past culture in which she dreamt about experiencing the suppression of women and the violence against them in the Inuit community of the past, as she found it briefly described in Singajiik's family saga.⁵³ In it, aaju quotes half a page from Singajiik's family saga. He cannot presuppose that it is part of the knowledge base of his readers, just as the authors who want to allude to the traditional, spiritual culture in their poems. The mental and physic violence of the dream is in stark contrast to the

love that she experiences with a man that she chooses herself. Unfortunately, this love is later defeated because of a crime committed against him abroad.

Stories about the Norsemen and some other parts of the oral tradition were used in Greenlandic romantic nationalistic, historical novels or epic poems where the theme was nation building, the cultural meeting between Greenlanders and Danes, and how to think about one's own pagan forefathers. In contrast to this, aaju uses the past to describe a modern woman's thoughts about gender roles and equality and about liberation from the old discourse of the man as seal-hunter.

The narrator is in some passages too didactic. Especially in chapter five when "matu" [door, lid, cover] is introduced as a metaphor together with the Kalaallisut expression meaning "to open up" to describe how important it is to be in contact with one's feelings. Such a passage sounds like a psychologist's explanation and aaju is a trained psychologist. However, the author creatively plays with using different narrators and with many time planes, as he explores new forms for Greenlandic literature.

Testimony, a new literary form in Greenlandic literature?

In the late 1990s, **Kelly Berthelsen** (1969-) started a new trend in Greenlandic writing, a genre that together with the thriller became a characteristic feature of the following decade: the testimony. In 2001, three prose works and a collection of poems of this kind appeared. Three authors stepped forward—all of them women—and testified about what they had gone through in their personal lives. **Else Løvstrøm** deals with a traumatic year's stay in Denmark when she was a child, while **Ernu Nielsen** (a pseudonym) outlines in a first person narrative the mental and psychological abuse of a young girl. Nielsen's story was serialised earlier in the newspaper *Sermitsiaq*. Finally, **Vivi Lyngé Petrusen**'s testimony is about the domestic violence she experienced in a former relationship.

In Greenland there is the same degree of lack of acceptance of this genre as serious literature, as there is for example with Chicano testimonies, and there was with Danish feminist testimonial literature of the 1970s. Further, many readers amongst the small population of Greenland will inevitably know the persons depicted in the testimonies and find it embarrassing to read this kind of novel, because they will meet the involved person the next day when shopping. Further, the themes and the descriptions of them might in themselves be embarrassing, as was the case with a novel entitled *Atornerlugaaneq – atornerluineq – atornerloqatiginneq* [To be abused – to abuse – to abuse each other] and published under a pseudonym in 2005 (Nuka 2005). The story is about a boy who is sexually abused and who as an adult cannot take care of his family and becomes an abuser himself. Due to its very explicit sexual scenes, no one has ever in public mentioned the name of the author, although he has left clear traces of his identity in the novel. The book has been bought by libraries, but at the time of publication there was some discussion about whether it should be made available to the public.

Testimonial literature is an important genre in Greenland. It explores serious social problems that until recently have not been mentioned in public, especially violence against women and sexual abuse of children. Furthermore, it digs deeper into the emotions than has been the norm in Greenlandic literature. Through these features, testimonies might open up new tendencies in Greenlandic literature by satisfying the demands for more psychological and in-depth descriptions of characters and events. As it is always the case with this kind of writing, the challenge is to take private experiences and make them accessible, interesting and credible for the readers, not be dismissed as mere rumours about a particular person.

Vivi Lyngé Petrussen (1961-) is the one writer that does this with most success. The title of her novel *Naalliuksitaanerup pissaanerani* [At the mercy of violence] (Petrusson 2001b) speaks for itself. In it, Petrussen describes how the heroine gets into a physically and psychologically violent relationship and, in a horrifying way, step by step loses her self-esteem and becomes totally paralysed. This evolves to the point where she is beyond fear of dying and cannot be threatened with a gun and therefore is able to break the power of violence. From this turning point on she gradually manages to leave the relationship first physically and then also mentally. The novel shows how isolated such a person is. Those around her don't see her problem, and they certainly do not want to interfere. The novel is narrated in the third person, with long paragraphs from the protagonist's diary kept during the relationship. This makes space for the woman's reflections about how she could have ended up in such a horrible situation. Vivi Lyngé Petrussen also published, some months before this novel: *Kalunnerit – Lænker* [Chains], a collection of poems in Kalaallisut and in Danish (Petrusson 2001a). In this volume are poems about her unhappy love story, but also poems about leaving the situation as a mentally stronger person and one capable of entering into a new and happy relationship. Her books have been widely read. Unfortunately for Greenlandic fiction, she has chosen not to write fiction after these two books, but non-fiction. In 2010, she published *Inuunera akisussaaffiga: Imminut qiviarluni inuttut ineriarneq* [My life my responsibility: to develop as a person by looking at oneself] that also has attracted many readers, which is unusual for books written in Kalaallisut.

Both Ernu Nielsen and Vivi Lyngé Petrussen have declared in the media that their works tell their own stories. Many novels, especially debut novels, will often show clear traces of autobiographical issues.⁵⁴ But the more important aspect of testimonial works is that the authors, more or less explicitly, use their own story for the benefit of those who have been or will go through the same experiences.

The individual versus society versus the global world

In Greenlandic literature the focus on individual experience has increased during the last decade and the collective socio-political angle has decreased. The interest of writers in society has not disappeared, but much of the more direct application has. This tendency is true for Georg Olsen and Kelly Berthelsen. The toning down of the ethnic symbolism

and discourse about the true Greenlandic way of life that took place in society at large, but especially among young people in the late 1980s and in the 1990s, meant that many readers were not satisfied with Greenlandic literature. In addition to this, another feature of it resulted in the youth being kept at a distance because the old works presupposed knowledge of Christianity and the Bible and many of them embodied in their discourse an old-fashioned, Christian morality.

However, during the latter years religious and spiritual issues have become topics of current interest. At one end of the spectrum are themes inspired by television programs like *Ändernes Magt* [The powers of the Spirits] on Danish television which were also broadcast on Greenlandic television. At the other end of the spectrum one finds themes that have grown out of the debate on issues that until recently have been taboo: violence, incest, child abuse, suicide and neglect of children. These bring to the forefront serious questions like the following. How to change course? Did we lose our spirituality and through this our ethical responsibility? How to ensure that the citizens, to a much higher degree, take care of the problems and take responsibility themselves? Such issues have been the reason for some to ask for Self Government some years ago, while others felt that these problems had to be solved first and only then should Self Government be introduced. Both Georg Olsen and Kelly Berthelsen have within the last decade written from an existential point of view about religious issues. **Georg Olsen**'s debut book is about life, rebirth and how every individual person has part in the good as well as in the bad; in the masculine as well as in the feminine traits. Human beings have to reflect over these. His novel is mythical-religious. The book describes several spiritual encounters as part of personal development. Obviously, the novel was part of the debate about how the lack of a spiritual base results in lack of responsibility for other human beings and through this to the social problems of today's Greenland (Olsen 2001).

Kelly Berthelsen covers many themes in his works, but two main topics stand out in those published around 2000 (undated and 1999 (both mostly poems), 2001 (prose) and 2002 (poems). The title of the last one is rather expressive, *Imerajuup nulia* [The alcoholic's wife] (Berthelsen 2002). Berthelsen describes the process of forgiveness and reconciliation towards the parent generation's alcoholism as one between alcoholic and co-alcoholic and that of the protagonist himself and his addictions. While looking back on a childhood and youth that ended up in addiction to drugs and alcohol, the main character often, in the end, hopes for God's help. Berthelsen plays creatively with the language. He describes feelings in detail, provocatively and concretely, including those that are difficult to cope with; not veiled behind abstract expressions. In *Misigissutsit* [Experiences] (Berthelsen 1999), the narrator praises his mother and finds a way to understand his father. He is weighed down by a sense of guilt, but finds his way to the insight that forgiveness is possible. In the 2002 collection, his mother is to a greater degree seen as co-alcoholic. In such poems Berthelsen comes very near to the testimony genre. His words are part of the process taking place in Greenland that try to penetrate feelings connected with issues that till now have been un-

NASA-p isertaasa isertugaanersaat

Uangaana silaannarsualiartarnermut tunngasut meeraal-lunga soqutigisarigikka. Taamaammallu internetteqaler-mat NASA pillugu paassisutissanik misissuisinnaanngo-rama assut qujasunga.

Ullunaasiit ilaanni suliakka qatsuteriarakkit internet-tikkut pulaaqattaarujuulerpunga, soorlikiarluaasiit NA-SA-p nittartagaa iserfigalugu. Nutaarsiassat iserfigeria-rakkit takulerpara isertugaatit ukiut 25-t isertarineqareer-lutik ammakkat takuniarneqarsinnaasut. Alutornar-toqassammata tassunga pulavunga. Sorpassuummata mi-sisorlugit pilerpara »nalunartut« aamma ilanngunneqar-simasut. Tassami suut tupinnartut aliortugaasinnaasut, puugutaasalluunniimmik kalaallit alutorisutoqaagatsigit ingerlaannavik tassunga aamma pulavunga.

Ila ukorsii! Kalaallit aamma ilanngunneqarsimapput.

Taamaniuna qaammammuliartaleqimmata kikkut tam-mik malinnaasut. Ilaasa qaammat inoqassangatik-kaat, ilaasa kooqarsimassangatikkaat, ilaasalu illukorsua-qarsimassangatillugu. Sunaaffali qaammapput soqanngi-vippoq uumassuseqanngivilluni. Isertarli taamanimut isertarineqarsimasoq aajuna:

Taamaniuna Shakrim Citsym Namahs, indiamiu inge-niøri, qaammammut nunnigummik angallatalimmik titartaallunilu sanasuusooq aamma qaammammi angalaar-tussanngorsimasoq. Angalaalersimavoq siornaajummagu Armstrongip tikitai qaangerniarlugit ungasiliarniavilluni. Nunnigussissununa inummut ataasiinnarmut naatsorsu-usaasoq, taamaammallu ajutoornissaanut qaammasiart-aammi allamik sillimmateqartoqarsimasoq.

Taamaalinerani qaammasiartaammi inuttaasut qaam-mat assileqattaarlugu ulapputeqaat, aammami nalunngi-

spoken. Concerning alcoholism, the break through came less than two decades ago when in the early 1990s leading Greenlandic politicians were forced to reflect on their own addictions. Lars Emil Johansen is the one who most openly acknowledged his alcoholism in public. Around the turn of the millennium the literature began to reflect this new openness.

The other main theme for Berthelsen is socio-political criticism. This topic is found in some poems and short prose pieces that have a close affinity to debate essays. These very often focus on the lack of conscious use of Kalaallisut and the process of decolonization, not least the process of mental decolonization. Berthelsen opposes that Greenlanders still accept Danish dominance that Greenlanders are still economically dependent on Denmark and that skilled labour is still called in from abroad. The criticism is, as also in the works of Ole Kristiansen, levelled against the Greenlanders themselves, against their way of exerting Home Rule. In this way it is similar to the discourse before mobilization for Home Rule, especially during the early 20th century.

In accordance with the tendency to draw on traditional spirituality, Berthelsen fantasizes in one of his short stories about an encounter between the Greenlandic culture and the Western one in *NASA's most secret secret* (Berthelsen 2001, for an English translation see Langgård 2008a). In the story, a Greenlandic shaman approaches the Americans when they are landing on the moon. The shaman travels without a space suit, wearing skin pants and under his arms the wings of a bird. The shaman really frightens the Americans although his only motive for visiting them is that he thought that they might serve him a cup of coffee (Greenlanders have been fond of coffee ever since colonization took place). This story is a humorous version of the process of decolonization of the mind which takes as a starting point the old cultural roots.⁵⁵

In dealing with existential themes as well as socio-political themes Berthelsen, in some of his poems and prose takes a metaphor, amplifies it and then uses it to frame his narrative in a concrete way. For example in his description of how alcoholism breaks down a man, the narrator moves in the inner universe of the alcoholic in the short story that gives its title to the collection: *Tarningup ilua* [The inner room of a soul] (Berthelsen 2001). The narrator walks around inside the head of the alcoholic. In another short story *Majuartarfít* [The steps], Berthelsen describes how society is out of step and not developing by expanding on the metaphor of building stairs (Berthelsen 2001). The same use of metaphor is seen in the poem "*Qaqisoq*" [He who moved upwards] which is a word normally used as a dead metaphor to indicate upward social mobility. Berthelsen takes the word literally and expands on it (Berthelsen 2002).

The books written by Berthelsen are uneven in content as well as in literary quality. This was commented on when his collection of short stories (Berthelsen 2001) was nominated for the Nordisk Råds Litteraturpris 2003 (The Nordic Council's Literary Prize 2003) (Isaksen, 2003). However, if one evaluates them separately, then some of the poems and shorts stories stand out. One may not agree when Isaksen calls the content of the book "A society in dissolution". Literature written out of indignation is characterized by focusing on those things the author wants to be changed, without mentioning all the

things that he likes. Berthelsen is not writing a comprehensive description of Greenlanders for foreigners.

The last decades have witnessed many literary competitions arranged in order to encourage new authors. This includes a competition about ghost stories resulting in one of the most popular books in Greenland, *Eeq!* [Disgusting!] 1990 (Frederik Lyngé ed.).

In 2000, *Ukioq 2020* [The year 2020] (Abelsen et al. (eds.) 2000) was published. For this volume young Greenlanders were asked to tell in short stories or poems what they thought the situation would be in 2020. Considering the theme and the fact that Greenland is a post-colonial country, one might expect a preference for issues like Self Government and Independence. In the poems a more independent Greenland is mentioned, but by far, most of the contributors express their hopes for fewer shortcomings in the care of children, the alleviation of other social problems, better cohesion in families and for better schools. Among the short stories, one is about a future high-tech Greenland that is yet a good place for people. Another short story is a dystopia about a world where things go wrong and a pandemic wipes out mankind, all seen in a Greenlandic perspective. Of the last three stories in the book one is about how Greenland achieved independence eleven years earlier in 2009, has had to undergo a severe crisis that was inflicted on the country from abroad, but now has achieved stability. The second is a dream in which all the social problems are solved, the people have become well educated, and independence is achieved with a 23 year old woman as leader. The third story is a nightmare about a future totalitarian Greenland where, in collaboration with the USA, cities are closed and military round-ups common.

Ukioq 2020 mirrors the tendency in literature to include individual, ethnic and global concerns. None of the themes are free-wheeling independence fantasies except in one of the short stories.

Rock, pop and rap: issues of vital interest for the younger generation

Five years ago, once again it seemed as if literary texts by young authors were only to be found on CD's. Well established artists like Kristian Olsen aaju and Frederik Kristensen kunngi⁵⁶ published their work in books. The singer Rasmus Lyberth had published a collection of poems in 2001 (Lyberth 2001). But none appeared by new, young writers. The serial *Kalaaleq* published some poems in each issue, but in general these poems expressed very common feelings but without wording specific enough and without details precise enough to be eye-opening. The same goes for Mari S Abelsen's *Aajuku ogariartuutikka* [This is what I am going to say], a collection of poems, 2006.

A ray of hope for literature was seen, when in 2004 a collection of poems to celebrate the jubilee of Home Rule and written by the students at the gymnasium (the junior college) in Nuuk was published with texts in Kalaallisut, Danish and English. In the Kalaallisut

mother tongue courses, the students were asked to write in Kalaallisut about the theme, Youth. Some of the poems were about suicide, unfortunately predictable, because suicide is a fact of life too well known to all young people in Greenland today. One of the poems written by Malik Olesen, was graphically formed like a cross and showed the desperation and disillusionment of the narrator, left behind when a girl friend kills herself (Frøsig et al (eds.) 2004).

This theme is also represented in the songs of rock/pop groups. Members of some of the most popular groups have experienced the desperation of loss associated with suicide and written songs about it. One of the music videos often played in the early 2000s, was made based on such a poem: *they leave us all the time, the sun is dead, brother/sister you are capable of living! - those bloody suicides their number increases and increases, don't you be in love with death, please look how dear life is* (Chilly Friday 2001). In order to help address the problem of suicide, participants in WHOs international day were asked to write down their personal experiences and a small collection of poems, letters and narratives came out in 2006 (Hegelund et al). The aim was both to comfort those left behind and to change the old attitude, that suicide is a choice that each individual can make freely no matter how hard it hits the bereaved.

In general, apart from a few collections of poems, the more fascinating work has for decades come out in the form of pop or rock song lyrics. This has been the case since SUME (a popular rock band from the 1970s and still giving concerts) and Ole Kristiansen started. Part of the reason for this is perhaps, that records, tapes and CDs have never been subject to older⁵⁷ speakers' rejections of and attacks on younger speakers' language use. Neither have they been subject to the dominant conservative attitudes to Greenlandic literature and its themes. Thus, there has been liberty to innovate, and rap has its own variants in Kalaallisut to offer.

Ole Kristiansen still produces CDs. He developed further his use of traditional spiritual culture in his songs in 2004. The title *Qaqqat asiilasut* [The vast mountains] alludes to Jonathan Petersen's *Nuna asiilasq* (see above). The interpretation of the song with that title might be that it promises support to the young ones who try to act in a (socio-)political context that is growing darker. In another of the songs the narrator is fascinated by a young woman, but witnesses how she jumps to the unsafe ice, and he wonders whether she will appear again in spring thaw. Other themes are relationships between man and woman, how discourses can end up as moral clichés, how time can rule man. In a period where Kalaallisut often is used with shorter words than in former times, Kristiansen plays with the word formation and creates very long words, words that he then sings as if he sort of runs through them from tone to tone.

Rap is not completely new in Greenland. Nuuk Posse has worked with hip-hop since

1991, continuing some of the themes from the protest poems of the 70s and 80s. But in Nuuk in the autumn of 2003, a rap group of three very young boys who called themselves **Prusic** made a CD, which resounded with listeners in Nuuk and in Greenland. They rapped very outspokenly and provocatively about how parents addicted to alcohol and drugs failed to take care of their children. They told about the abuse that they experienced as children. They took sharp issue with children and young people who showed off because they are drug users and who let drugs and sniffing damage their brain: "eat their brain". Their message is social, but they have among their poems one political one, too. In this poem they reject the government policies because they think that the government let down children and young people. The title of the poem is expressive, *Kalaallit Kunaat* [Greenlanders, good night]. It is a play on words with the sound being almost like *Kalaallit Nunaat* [Greenland]. It is also a play on the metaphoric meaning "it is completely goodnight" equivalent to 'it is completely crazy', hinting that the opposite is needed to wake up as a people, not to go further into a sleepy state.

The Prusic song most often played addressed the parents directly. These parents are accused for not being interested in their children, but using all the money for booze and drugs. They ask parents to raise them properly. When told to keep silent because they are children they ask then why, being just kids, they are left alone at home. They tell how their parents have taught them to smoke drugs and they are ashamed of themselves. But they feel that their parents are the ones to blame, because as children they don't know how to raise themselves. A father did not come to his boy's confirmation because of drugs and booze. He did not even call on the phone. A grandmother spends all her money on alcohol, and forgets to give the children something to eat, and so on.

It was a well known fact that many children roamed the streets while their parents were at home drinking or that many were small scale criminals or addicted to alcohol and other substances. But this CD brought the problems into focus in such a painful way that it was difficult to look the other way. The committee for prevention, Paarisa, used the CD to promote its message, and since then, there has been more focus on the problems. Among other things, research has shown that the profile of the young people most in danger are those with the characteristics of being raised in a village, in a family with alcohol problems, with low social status and with violence. Further, neglected children tend to get into trouble when they are quite young. There is a correlation between troubled home conditions and suicide. Lyrics in rap-form have thus demonstrated its horrifying relevance in today's Greenland. The rappers in Greenland do not rap against each other, but bring forward their messages to the population at large.

The last five years

In 2006 and 2007, three young talented writers made their debut. This shows how quickly things can change when considering very small populations. Obviously, new young writers were still coming forward.

Except for two small trilingual anthologies from the gymnasium, **GU2** (theme: the nice parts of life at GU) and **GU3** (theme: ghost stories) (Augustusen et al. (eds.) 2008 and Blume et al. (eds.) 2010) prose has only been published by three diaspora authors: Jørgen Petersen, Kristian Olsen aaju and Ole Korneliussen. Greenlandic prose literature of today still lacks counterbalance to the diaspora-dominance.

Jørgen Petersen's (1969-) novel *Qattuneq issiaviklik* [The hill with a bench] (Petersen 2005), about homosexuality as experienced by a Greenlander, is in line with the testimony literature and thus important as such. Two years later he published another novel *Julia Qapip ullui arfineq-marluk* [Julia Qapi's seven days] about the emotional development of a woman over the course of a single week (Petersen 2007).

Kristian Olsen aaju published a collection of poems in 2006 as well as one in 2009.⁵⁸ In prose he published in 2007 *Ajunngitsup ajugaanera* [The victory of the good], about several women's and men's relationships and their dissolutions and in 2010, he published a crime novel *Kakiorneqaqtigii* [Those who have been tattooed together]. Both novels focus on the lives of modern Greenlanders not just in a globalized Greenland. His protagonists do not stay in Greenland all the time, they go abroad and they interact with the world abroad (as was also the case for example in Olsen 2002). In the latter novel he introduces the crime novel genre to Greenlandic literature—well, almost. Actually, the second novel ever published was in the crime novel genre, but focused totally on nation building (Lynge 1931). aaju's novel is much more like a modern crime novel, it has a crime plot that is revealed only in last pages, yet uses the plot to describe emotions and reactions to distress (Olsen 2007, 2010). Some of aaju's works could perhaps have gained in quality by more careful reviewing (a point of view expressed too in the reviews for instance when a collection of short stories of his was nominated by Greenland for the Nordic Council's Literature Prize in 2004 (e.g. Niels Lyngsø 21. Febr. 2004 at www.politiken.dk)), but he is important for Greenlandic literature because he has tried in many of his works to introduce new issues and genres to Greenlandic literature.

Ole Korneliussen published a fine collection of short stories in the spring of 2010, with a title (typical for him) that alludes to the Bible, *Meerannguatut Ilinngikkuni* [If not becoming like a small child]. It contains six mesmerizing short stories. They describe the inner universe of his characters, in long passages in a kind of third person stream-of-consciousness. He uses to some degree the same literary means as he used in his former prose works, but this time he adds more reactions from the surroundings to give his readers a more clear insight into his protagonists' actual situation. A recurrent theme is how keeping up appearances can do harm. A child is an adopted child without knowing it, but although told that she is precious to her parents, she is never their first priority; in the end as a youth she gets into problems with drugs, yet still her parents focus only on

(their perception) that no harm has been done, it is still possible to keep up appearances. A Danish married couple is concerned when their son falls in love with a girl of mixed descent Greenlandic-Danish, but with an unknown Danish father; in the end it turns out that she is the 'unknown' daughter of the boy's father. A small boy is without real communication with his parents; they give him a violin and expect him to figure out how to use it through exercise; the boy goes deeper and deeper into an illusion about how the violin activated by wind will play for him; in the end he takes it on a tour in his father's boat into a dangerous wilderness way beyond his control. A protagonist experiences how an old man slowly disappears into dementia from visit to visit. Further themes are found in the stories.

The stories are written in Kalaallisut. Some of them take place in Greenland. Some are connected to Greenland. Some do not show whether or not they take place in Greenland, but could have done so. For instance this is the case with the one about dementia. It is a feature which is widening the borders of Greenlandic literature in an important way just as *aaju* does, but in quite another way. Greenlandic literature is not bound solely to Greenlandic settings and problems; it can describe problems common to all mankind.

Among the established artists **Mariane Petersen** recently (autumn 2010) published a collection of poems in a nice design. She has written her poems both in Kalaallisut and in Danish (and except for one expression out of style, in perfect Danish; the author has been trained as a state-certified translator). The content is in precise expressions of small important emotional responses to nature and everyday life, and then in a suite of poems comparing lifestyle in Greenland today with former periods with seal-hunting and later on, fishery. The comparison does not show the present day development as a step in the right direction. Some Greenlanders will often, if under pressure, still regress to a discourse of nostalgia for the traditional seal-hunting past glory. When asked whether she doesn't fear that her readers will interpret these poems as nostalgia towards the past, she said that it was a comparison, that she had written her poems as they were published and then it was up to the readers to use them (personal communication November 2010). The poems are not meant to be nostalgic, but to show Greenlanders the flaws of the Greenlandic lifestyle of today as perceived by the author. Does the collection succeed in this? Is it finally possible not to be interpreted on the premises of a discourse that a postcolonial decolonization of the mind should have outdated long ago?

Thus, the prose works of the last five years are only written by established diaspora authors. But, this is not the case for song lyrics. In 2006 and 2007 fortunately, three young authors got their debuts: Katti Frederiksen, Magssanguaq Qujaukitsoq and Nuka Nathanielsen allayed the fear that no new authors would publish, but on CDs.

Frederiksen and Qujaukitsoq obviously draw on personal experiences, but render them interesting and accessible for others without cliché. Apparently, Christian beliefs

are an issue of importance to both of them for personal reasons, following tendencies of Greenlandic literature since the turn of the millennium, and not like the older generation's use of Christianity in their literary works as a way to maintain old (sexual) morals. Most of their poems are existential, some are socio-political or a mixture.

Katti Frederiksen's (1982-) collection of poems and some few prose pieces *Uummataq kissaa* [The wish of my heart] 2006, contains some socio-political poems. In a short manifesto in her book, she states that if one does not care for political issues, then this is the equivalent of not caring for life. One of her poems alludes to a song written by Henrik Lund in 1910 about Narsaq, the town in South Greenland where Frederiksen grew up. Henrik Lund's Narsaq is a rich, fertile place with a thriving population, with cattle, a place to be compared to the Biblical land of milk (and honey) (*Erinarsuutit V* number 31, (Petersen (ed.) 1934)). Frederiksen's Narsaq is stagnating compared to the neighbor town Qaqortoq. All that the inhabitants do is sleep, drink alcohol, have children and wait for something to happen. The criticism is thus against her fellow Greenlanders, like that seen in Kristiansen's rock songs, in Korneliussen's short stories from 1992, and others. But most of the poems are about life values and existential emotions: emotions in a relationship, the emotions of being left behind through a suicide, gratefulness towards her caring mother. It is important to find "the key" to "open up" the other one in her relationship. For Frederiksen, Christianity is a firm foundation in life, a trust in God. Most of her poems are sophisticated in their expressions and avoid cliché, but not that easy to read.

Magssannguaq Qujaukitsoq (1977-) was born in Thule and uses the Thule dialect in some of his poems, as was mentioned in the beginning of this article. He composes his poems in Kalaallisut, Avanersuarmiutut, Danish or English. In 2007, he published his collection of poems *Sisamanik Teqeqkulik* ['With four corners']. His themes are identity and faith, name, family and surroundings. His Christian faith is not just full of confidence; it is a much more complicated set of emotions, in some poems more simple and calm. In his collection of poems from 2009 *Déjà Vue*, he addresses themes from everyday life, including big issues not that easy to settle. It seems as if he has chosen to be inclusive rather than exclusive in his selection of poems for the collection. His style is broad with rather long poems infused with words, expressions, structures repeated in his poems. In many of them he addresses specific groups of readers. In some of the poems his narrator shows an admonishing tone, addressed to young people of today's Greenland. Can this be done in 2009? If rap can use an admonishing tone against fellow Greenlanders (see above), then why not? The message is remember that lifetime will elapse so quickly for all; there is not time enough in one's life to throw it away through abuse of alcohol and drugs. He writes about how nice a relationship can be, and how lonely one can feel when ignored; about how important friendship is when one needs someone to listen and in the extreme case how it can

mean the difference between choosing life or suicide. He presents some directly political poems too. The last poem of the collection is written in English and entitled *Dear sir and madam*. In this one he writes in his usual broad style that "our" land, dreams, questions, quest for freedom, etc. are not so different from "yours". The poem ends as follows: / *We wish to live in a Nation undivided by race, opinion and sex as do thee. / Our beliefs are no stronger nor weaker than thine. / Our eyes are no dimmer nor blinder than thine. / Our actions are no faster nor slower than thine. / But, still our values have the same weight and virtue like thine. // And yet, we have never met. / And yet, we have never spoken. / And yet, we have never listened to one another. // I believe we still have time to meet. / I believe we still have time to speak. / I believe we still have time to listen to one another. // We still might have a future together, if we begin to see, hear and feel for one another. // The final call has not yet come. // The time is here and now.*

Nuka Nathanielsen published *Naagamik Toquniarnitsinni* [When They Finished, on Our Way to Die] (Nathanielsen 2007). The title and first two poems refer to The Doors and Jim Morrison's '*The End*'. The poems speak of a young man's at times alarming, desperate and chaotic feelings, but also of the need of love – all seen from the perspective of the life inevitably dragging to its close.

The following year, Arnajaaq Lynge published *Nattoralik Marloralik* [The Eagle with Two Wives] (Lynge 2008). The title poem is a free-wheeling fantasy playing with words and illustrations. In her poems life is precious, too precious to sleep away. It is stressed that one should keep away from the dark sides. Christianity and the traditional Inuit spiritual powers are fused.

Conclusion

Greenlandic literature grew as a written medium through the appropriation of European forms. It has been used socio-politically and ethno-nationally as a space for internal debate among Greenlanders, and later on, from the 1960s to mid-1980s in the mobilization for Home Rule, it was directly turned against the Danes as the imperialistic exploiting colonizer. From the mid-1980s socio-political critical works once more mainly address their fellow-Greenlanders demanding a more self-reflexive and conscious mental decolonization. This use of literature still prevails. On the other hand, there has in all the phases from the very beginning until now been literary works produced that do not directly serve the task of nation building.

Although the perpetual demarcation on all levels towards "the Others" (i.e. the Danes), has influenced everyday life and art, the descriptions of relationships between Greenland-

ers and Danes are remarkably shallow. The literature has been mostly used as a space for internal debate among Greenlanders in which the Danes are the unmentioned Others that provided the standard against which one demarcated one's ethnicity. In a country with a long tradition of mixed marriages—and through them intimate cultural encounters—it is remarkable that such relationships have not been analysed to any significant extent. If at all, cultural encounters between Greenlanders and Danes are described, they take place in most cases in Denmark. An exception to this is the fact that the encounter between the Inuit and the Norsemen in Greenland has been explored many times. The conclusion drawn in most renderings has been that while a purely Greenlandic Greenland is desirable, very few would accept that this should be obtained through any kind of discrimination.⁵⁹ In some cases this historical material has even been used to further a wish for a more peaceful co-existence and a continuation of friendships in general (see Langgård 2004a).

After Danification an increasing number of Greenlanders could read Danish. The consequence was new inspiration, but also new attitudes towards Greenlandic literature and new demands. For a period before and after 1990, young people grew tired of listening to the endless discourse about the authentic "Greenlandic-ness" that seemed very retrospective, as if belonging to a museum world. It was felt that literature ought to be less bound to the ethno-national issues and symbols. It ought to be more exiting, more breathtaking, more cliffhanging. Literature should be about everyday lives and problems in a modern Greenland.

Furthermore, literature encountered competition to an ever increasing degree—in general from movies and television programs. This is still the case even though, during the last decade, a large percentage of the youth grew up as more or less monolingual, Kalaallisut speakers.⁶⁰ However, even the more monolingual Kalaallisut speaking Greenlanders spend their time watching action movies and playing video games. Thus, literature seems to be under pressure.

By 2003, the Greenlandic publishing firm established in the 1950s to publish works in Kalaallisut, announced in the newspaper that they could not accept and publish every manuscript submitted to them. A certain standard of quality was required, otherwise it would not be economically viable to publish them due to the competition that had developed in other areas (Larsen, A/G Sept. 2nd 2003). While earlier on it was sufficient if a text was written in Kalaallisut, this had now changed. Competition might have had a good impact on the literature. But in the end the firm closed down. To publish Greenlandic literature needed more funding than available. The publication is now done by two other firms, owned by non-Inuit. Due to lack of funding and human resources no serious publisher's reviewing is offered to the authors writing in Kalaallisut.

Literary innovation is hampered in still other ways. The education of teachers in Greenland was for many years under severe pressure. In order to accomplish the goal of Greenlanification the policy was that as many teachers as possible should be educated. Unfortu-

nately, this resulted in a lowering of education standards. This situation greatly affected the teaching of the mother tongue, Kalaallisut. There were no innovative developments in teaching methods, and the quality of instruction and achievement was therefore poor. Even though the ideology of Home Rule attributed a high symbolic value to Kalaallisut, the status of the discipline was low. This is still the case. Because of this situation, young people feel they have had enough of Greenlandic literature and that it is boring. In general they have not been stimulated in school towards creative writing in Kalaallisut, neither do their experiences of Greenlandic literature in school make them ascribe much prestige to the literature. In short a stimulating environment is lacking (see also Pedersen 2004). The author Hans Anthon Lynge has tried to nurture young lyrics by work shops, inviting authors from Denmark too, and young poets have made their debuts.

Literature has played an important part in nation building in Greenland, and it shall be evaluated, among other things, from this perspective. Innovation happened in Greenlandic literature around 1970 (cf Per Langgård 1990), but that does not mean that literary works worth reading were not written before that time. The problem was rather to be found afterwards, after the establishment of Home Rule. Perhaps the numerically rather small Greenlandic population expected too many literary works of high quality from their fellow Greenlanders. Maybe too much was published. The best part of literary works, even among those serving socio-political ends, could stand more critical and aesthetic assessments. The earlier Greenlandic literature might give younger readers today insight into the social and psychological history in Greenland during the last hundred years. Thus, after acquiring the knowledge that they are presupposed to have as readers of the old texts, they will gain a better base from which to understand their own times and the different discourses of today, both the ethno-national ones and those dealing with life values across generations and the geographic diversity of Greenland.⁶¹

Greenlandic literature shows how nation building through collective selective remembrance and reinterpretation has used the past, both the pre-colonial one and the colonial one. The ethnic-national symbols reifying general concepts from the spiritual pre-colonial culture and about the material pre-colonial culture have been over-communicated for a too long time. While a general lack of knowledge about more details from the past is a problem for a more innovative use of the past. To reflect on the use of the past and the discourses about it is seen too (e.g. Frederiksen's poem below).

It is important that Greenlandic readers will again be genuinely interested in Greenlandic literature, but in order to do so, it is necessary that the quality continues to develop and improve. However, this is not that easy in Greenland for the reasons mentioned, but also because the publishing houses are not equipped with the capacity to yield publisher's reviewing to the authors, and, professional literary criticism is almost totally non-existent in the media. Although more and more finish their BAs and MAs in Language, Litera-

ture and Media from the Department of Greenlandic Language, Literature and Media, Ilisimatusarfik, the University of Greenland, till now none of them have written critical literary reviews. It will still take a lot of personal courage. Greenlandic political journalism has increasingly grown critical. But literary criticism would be a new institution. In addition, although the young speakers in recent years more and more trust their own Kalaallisut, decades of the older generation's criticism against youth's use of language still makes it a difficult job for a young MA to review an older author's literary creativity, including language use.

Still, the steady and developing literary production out of a population of only 57,000 is impressive. Five years ago the mobilization for Self-Government might have once more turned literary production into a campaign literature, but this did not happen. No easy solutions are recommended in literature. Literature deals with national issues, but such a focus is not dominant, it is only one among many others. Quite the opposite, literature more and more unveils problems that many in Greenland live with or witness, but it describes too, the happier experiences. Some literary works do this in a rather straightforward manner; others use more subtle styles.

The literary history in Greenland includes both oral tradition and written literature. It began with the oral tradition, a rich tradition of both lyrics and stories, now mostly in written down format. It now encompasses the European written literary genres, appropriated throughout the 20th century. With pop, rock and rap the circle has returned to lyrics to be sung, but not in any way as an unbroken tradition in which oral poems gradually developed into modern rap. Those who rap nowadays, or compose pop or rock songs, probably know nothing of oral tradition. The only direct, unbroken link back to these roots is to be found in the modern thrillers and ghost stories. However, the European genres have been thoroughly appropriated and used for Greenlandic needs for more than a century. And, this process goes on.

On the radio and as music video on television the band Nanook has been broadcast this autumn (2010). Their CD *Seqinnitta qinngorpaatit* [Our sun shines on you],⁶² tells in songs a narrative about an increasing depression and darkness, and admonishes those going further and further into the darkness not to give in. Many of the songs have lyrics worth reading. When listening to the songs or reading the texts, the narrator of the lyrics first appears to tell about someone in trouble, and their relationships. Upon close reading one notices the line *Nunannguarput taarsilerpoq* [Our dear country is darkening (Nanook's inner cover text in English on the CD)]. This line twists the interpretation. The song's title is translated as *Dark Birds* and it runs as follows in the translation: *They are stiff as frozen up there / My life is altered again / My body is getting colder within / As if it is getting empty / Dark birds where are thou landing / Our dear country is darkening / Please, please dear bird show me / Lead me to a new life / Lead me*

to a brighter world (Nanook's inner cover text). Perhaps, the message is that it is all one. The depressions (and suicides) are intimately connected with the realization that Kalaallit Nunaat, its population and its politicians have to make a new start. It did not automatically follow in the wake of Self-Government. The old ethno-national discourse, still presenting strong at least whenever things become difficult, is not constructive any more. Katti Frederiksen expresses it in the following way in a poem (Frederiksen 2010:19). The past hits the narrator vehemently, but the kayaks are stranded. When comes the effort from today's population? The past can only be reached in dreams, in a pure nostalgia for the past. The issue is not the old culture, but today's outdated discourse about the past. The narrator of the poem can look at the wrecks, realize she belongs to another time framed by Christianity and can, without reluctance, move on in her present time (my translation):

*Ersinerummi aamma tikittaraanga
qulalersillunga qilalersillunga.
Immammi tarajuata tikittarmanga
qilaatillu katuata anaasarlunga.
Qaannallu tinnugussaasimapput,
naak qajanngitsut.
Inuilukua naak?
Ersinerulli aamma toqgissisittaraanga,
taammaavorlimi aamma imertertiga.
Siulima immamut aarlortartut
takunngikkaannga qilammut aarlortunga.
Arajutsisikkusoqaakkami,
Sakkuiimi atorusuttaraluqaakka,
sinnattunnili kisiat tikittaraakka,
Aagalu kusertuarpoq,
qularneralu suujunnaarsippaat
takulerakkit tinnugussaasimasut amiakkui.*

You know, the fear always reaches me
makes me insecure and thirsty.
You know, when the ocean's salt reaches me
and the drum's stick beats me.
And the kayaks lie stranded by low tide,
although they are not capsized.
But where are their men?
Fear also always makes me feel peace
You know, this is also the one who waters me.
My forefathers who looked up at the ocean
They do not see that I look up to the heavens.
You know, I really want to get them not to notice me
you know, I would really like to use their gear
but I always reach them only in my dreams
My blood goes on and on dripping
and they put an end to my doubts
when I become aware of the remnants of those stranded by
low tide.

Notes

- 1 I include in the references articles written in Danish, including some of my own, as evidence of the research behind this article. Readers in Scandinavia and a few more familiar with Scandinavian languages will be able to utilize them. There are only a few surveys of Greenlandic literature in English e.g. Berthelsen, 1986.
The pioneer work on Greenlandic literature is written in Kalaallisut and was done by Berthelsen (latest edition: Berthelsen, 1994).
Many Greenlandic literary works have not been translated into English. However, a recent initiative has so far produced a translation of Aqqaluk Lynge's poems. An extensive part of the Greenlandic literature has been translated into Danish over the years – and I indicate some of the translations in the reference list. For literature prior to 1984, see also Berthelsen, 1984.
- 2 Because Greenland now has some Danish speaking Greenlanders the demarcation of Greenlandic literature has become more ambiguous. Early examples of published works written in Danish which somehow are part of the Greenlandic literature include: e.g. Daorana 1995, Hansen 1995. For considerations about demarcation, see Langgård, 2008e.
- 3 For the prose see Thisted's chapter, for the songs and lyrics of the oral tradition, *inngerutit*, see Petersen 1959, Hauser and Petersen 1985.
- 4 'Post-colonial' is used here to refer to Post-colonial Studies, and in the sense that they cover colonial status as well as the results of decolonization. In most cases a post-colonial status is characteristically one with a lot of problems inherited from the colonial period.
- 5 In post-colonial theory, "agency" is used to refer to the ability of post-colonial subjects to initiate action in engaging or resisting (former) imperial power.
- 6 Hymns and national songs are reckoned as part of the national literature both in Denmark and in Greenland, and some of them even among the canonical literary works. In Greenland the national songs are even more important than in Denmark because they were the first secular literary works.
- 7 The next edition did not come until Home Rule, and did so without many additions or changes. The genre, national songs, culminated before World War II as it did earlier on in Denmark (Braad 1981). During the mobilization towards Home Rule, protest songs were distributed using LPs. Nowadays songs appear on CDs.
- 8 Even though Greenlanders did not have sovereignty over Greenland, they considered Greenland to be their country (while simultaneously recognizing its status as colonized). To render this awareness of nationality I will use the word 'ethnic-national'. In those times they would talk about 'race' and 'folk' (i.e. the German 'Volk'). In contrast to the Inuit in Canada and in Alaska and to the Sami peoples in the Nordic Countries, there was no "Northern Frontier" to gradually push northwards to blur the limits of territory (Berger 1977). Greenland is an island.
- 9 My research thus contradicts Thisted's in 1990, where she thought that Benedict Anderson's theory applied to the development in Greenland. According to Thisted 1990 the Greenlanders did not see Greenland as an imagined community when the first editions of *Erinarsuutit* and *Storch* 1914 were published.
- 10 In this paragraph I use 'he' and 'his', since the Greenlandic setting was very male dominated.
- 11 See Ashcroft et al. 1998 sub voce "mimicry".

- 12 Negotiation in the anthropological sense of the word, used to describe the conscious part of the defining process on ethnicity (Eriksen 2002).
- 13 It is a natural part of descriptions of old times in Greenland to include the telling of a story from the oral tradition.
- 14 For a description of Danish fiction about Greenland, see Thisted 2003.
- 15 Mixed marriages were not recommended for socio-economic reasons. However, those of mixed descent later grew important for the development of an employed, salaried workforce (Langgård 2008c).
- 16 There was lots of stigmatization of e.g. Indians in English literature, Indians adopted the European forms, but in some cases used metonymy. For an introduction to the diversity in post-colonial literatures, see Ashcroft et alii (1983) 2002: chapter 2.
- 17 Quote (my translation): "The Greenlandic literature is in many ways like the literature written in the phase of transition from the early European literature and the bourgeois genres, and therefore a very obvious thing to do, is to read it as part of what is described in studies like e.g. Ian Watt *The Rise of the Novel* or Erich Kahler *The Inward Turn of Narrative*. In this way however, book after book of the Greenlandic literature will appear to be as being literature in embryo form, to be equated with well known, but past phases of the European literary history." To discourage such a reading, Thisted thought that Greenlandic literature called for a different theory.
- 18 The difference is seen in the titles of her articles: "Orality/literarity, a Theoretical Discussion of 'the Greenlandic' in Greenlandic Literature" in Thisted 1992, compared to Thisted 2002b, "Theoretical Approaches to Greenlandic Literature" (my translations of the titles of the articles). In the former article those works that were considered literary, sort of ended up being less Greenlandic.
- 19 For considerations about rap, see below.
- 20 Subject to the proviso that language always builds on basic metaphors.
- 21 An important genre among the traditional oral songs was mocking song contests to solve disputes, but these songs were accusations aimed at an individual person in a conflict between two individuals. The written songs in the *Erinarsuuit* tradition can not be seen as a genre grown out of the oral tradition.
- 22 Henrik Lund did not write it with the intention that it should be the national anthem, at all. He wrote the first stanza praising the country, left it unfinished for a couple of years and then finished it by adding debating stanzas. He even used the melody used for the Swedish anthem: *Du gamla, du fria, du fjäll-höga Nord*. When the Danish eskimologist, William Thalbitzer, proposed to use the song as Greenland's national anthem, some Greenlanders protested because the song did not have an original Greenlandic melody, as shows, too, the review of the 5th edition of *Erinarsuuit*, (Nielsen & Dalager 1936). Later on, Jonathan Petersen composed the melody that is used now.
- 23 However, in the latter part of the song, when talking about development as evolution through careful appropriation of parts of the European civilization, he is caught in the imperialistic discourse. To express the thought developed civilized societies have chosen as the expression used for *civilized, inersimasut* which basically meant *grown-ups* was used back then.
- 24 The European idea of evolution and the "primitive" culture of the colonized—as the equivalent of their own culture in a distant past—were enacted by the West Greenlanders towards the Thule Greenlanders and especially towards the East Greenlanders!
- 25 I will here focus on novels and for lack of space will leave out short stories and plays.

26 Storch and his generation would understand 'knowledge' in a broad sense: knowledge about the world outside Greenland and about European culture, spiritual as well as technical, and knowledge in the sense knowing how to think in a reflexive way about what happens and what needs to be done. If at all they included traditional knowledge, it should now be used with a higher degree of conscious responsibility. Orderliness was one of the buzz words.

27 However, East Greenlanders were still subject to stigmatizing and they still are (Langgård 1999/2010)

28 See Grundtvig [1963]1983. In Greenland the circumpolar perspective was a current issue because of Knud Rasmussen, but not new information. Neither was including God into the arguments a new issue in the debate—that had been introduced in an article on Poul Egede in the first volume of the newspaper *Atuagagdliutit* in 1861, and was used in some of the newspaper articles as well as in some of the songs written in the beginning of the 20th century.

29 The other Greenlandic newspaper, started in 1913, was edited in Qeqertarsuaq on Disko Island, while *Atuagagdliutit* had its editor in Nuuk.

30 According to the author's preface he found inspiration in Knud Rasmussens description of an Inuit family in Canada. However, the novel is fiction about Greenland (as shows the author's frequent use of the lexeme *Kalaaleq* [Greenlander] in his text)

31 Actually, in 1952, Kristen Poulsen published a book on the East Greenlanders. It is published as a novel, but it is more a kind of anthropological description with very little fiction included. (Poulsen, 1952). For its later popularity, see Thisted's chapter in this anthology: maybe the pagan content was not transformed enough for the readers in 1952.

32 Most researchers think that the stories were re-interpreted in the 18th century when Danes asked about the Norse. The story of Navaranaaq is equivalent to the Canadian one of Mavaranaaq.

33 In the Inuit traditional world view, in times when there were no hunting animals, the shaman had to go down to the bottom of the sea to the Sea Woman and comb her hair because whenever the Inuit broke the taboos her hair became dirty and no sea animals could emanate from her until the shaman had cleaned her hair.

34 Brandt draws on local oral tradition (Petersen undated), but uses the novel format.

35 This idea of the sun, "the One up there", was also used in a Danish play, put on stage in Denmark for the 200 year anniversary of Hans Egede's arrival in Greenland: Kaddara, written by the Danish doctor Norman-Hansen. Its narrative is about the times before colonisation and the mission. It drew in the shaman institution—and praise of the Sun. It was mentioned in *Atuagagdliutit* 1920/21 nr 9. Worship of the Sun was not part of traditional Inuit culture, but John Davies thought that to be the case when he met Inuit in Greenland in 1585.

36 Taseralik is a name of a locality, lit. a place with a lake.

37 Further, Wieland's Oberon was translated into Greenlandic and printed in *Atuagagdliutit* in the 19th century—twice because of its popularity. No doubt, Rosing found his inspiration in Oberon for his use of presentiments about the one and only in Taseralik.

38 In the pre-colonial culture, shaman apprentice would have to seek the wilderness to endure loneliness and finally initiation. But the attitude to nature in the fiction is like the romantic attitude to nature and within Christian culture.

39 Olsen (1998) is a substantially expanded republication of Olsen (1969) with many new poems.

40 LP/tape recordings e.g.: SUME 1976; Aasivik 77 Qullisat; Aasivik 79 *qangattarsa qangattarsartigut*, Inneruulat naajorarpugut 1980; Juaaka: *Oqaluttuat*, 1982. Poems e.g.: Aqqaluk Lynge, 1982 and 2008.

41 One poem, written by Malik Høgh: *Qaallorimi* [New tracks in the snow] stands out (for a close reading, Langgård (1987)92c).

42 One might ask whether this tone could be justified when comparing the history of colonization in Greenland with other parts of the world, including the Danish colonization in the Virgin Islands. However, justified or not, it was obviously a necessary prerequisite of the decolonization of the mind. This seems to show that in a post-colonial setting it is more a question of matter than of degree.

43 However, the women of the 19th century are described in a very competent and balanced way by Signe Rink in fiction in the last decades of the 19th century. She was born of Danish parents in Greenland. She left Greenland for education and socialization at nine years old and in 1853, returned (seventeen years old) and married to the man who a few years later became governor of South Greenland (i.e. the southern part of West Greenland). She knew the Greenlandic culture and knew the language—she was able to look at the society simultaneously as insider and outsider. (Langgård 2007, 2009b and c)

44 E.g. Chicanas' problems in finding a balance amid the national fight and the feminist fight (Saldivar-Hull 2000). It was an issue that Henriette Rasmussen (later Minister of Education and Culture of the Home Rule) described, when she herself was a Greenlandic woman studying in Denmark (Rasmussen 1975).

45 Diaspora authors here in the post-colonial sense: authors not living any longer in their own country.

46 As mentioned above in a footnote: Most researchers think that the stories were re-interpreted in the 18th century when Danes asked about the Norse. The story of Navaranaaq is equivalent to the Canadian one of Mavaranaaq.

47 One has to read Danish authors to find post-colonial metonymy: there are some un-translated phrases in Ibsen 1908.

48 In contrast to including the traditional material culture, reified as symbols.

49 The common man in Greenland knows very little about the oral tradition, even though written versions have been published since the mid 19th centuries—and a lot has been published during in the 1990s (Thisted 1997a and 1999).

50 I fully subscribe to New Criticism's dogma that content and form cannot be separated. However, very different poems can still narrate about the same phenomena.

51 For the term 'reification' see Eriksen 2002.

52 Unfortunately, this development in the right direction seems to have stopped in 2010.

53 The saga is recorded in Rasmussen, (1924)79:276-354, but aaju used the version written by Kristoffer Lynge (1957)78:301.

54 In this way the first novel in Greenlandic literature, Storch 1914, came very close to being a testimony novel. It was considered a roman à clef and the experiences of protagonist, Pavia, were said to have been those of Storch himself (Balle 1917). But Storch did not confirm this, and his theme is not about injustice done to an individual, but socio-political problems.

55 A similar but less convincing, at least a less charming, short story is the one that Isaksen refers to. It is about how to protest against all the homage paid to the Norsemen in jubilee celebrations of their migration to Greenland (Isaksen 2003).

56 Kristensen 2005 and 2007. Kristensen 2005 is a small collection of poems in Kalaallisut but with translations into Danish and English. One of the poems about a man's existential experiences when coming down from his small home in the mountain has been put on stage by theatre group *Silamiut* as a musical in Nuuk 2009. This is not a new way to use Greenlandic literary works. The same was done with Villads Villadsens epic poems about the final fight between the Norse and Inuit, see above.

57 Elders is a concept with many connotations in Inuit communities in North America. The situation in Greenland is very different from the one in North America, therefore it is problematic to use the term 'elders' here.

58 Since 1978 aajuu has published collections of poems, collections of short stories and novels, amounting to 18 books in total.

59 The same attitude can be found in the avoidance of metonymy in the postcolonial sense.

60 A gap has grown between Nuuk, which is more bilingual in general, and the rest of Greenland that has seen in the Greenlandification process an increased monolingualism among the younger part of the population. The result is not just a difference in language use, but in cultural differences because of differences in access to knowledge about the world that the young ones can use and draw inspiration from.

61 These thoughts about Greenland are inspired by what Klaus P Mortensen has written about this subject in a Danish context (Mortensen 1991).

62 The band brands itself as Inuit / Greenlandic by its name, the cover of the CD (for instance the head of a polar bear) – and by a sound in the start that might sound like a traditional drum. The traditional drum has been used in the 1970s and 1980s to carry a nationalistic message, but not at Nanook's CD.

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