Blubber Poetics:
Emotional Economies and *Post*-Postcolonial Identities in Contemporary Greenlandic Literature and Art

By Kirsten Thisted

I begin to perform almost as in a sleepwalking state. I paint my face and let the drum be a kind of mirror. The audience can see that it's not a mirror all right, but I know the mask so well that I can do it in this way. Then I bind up my face and begin to move around to the sound of my poems, while I hold the drum up to the audience so they can see it. It's an old drum. I don't play on it, but I hold the drumstick, so that it looks as if I'm just about to. Instead I push the drumstick through the hole in the skin. It's a very, very slow dance.[1]

With these words, the poet, actor, painter and performance artist Jessie Kleemann (b. 1959, Upernavik, Northwest Greenland) describes one of her performances. Anyone with even the slightest idea about the role of the drum as a symbol of Greenlandic identity and as a bearer of respect for the old Inuit culture will feel the shock that this seemingly disrespectful action sends through the audience. However, Kleemann is far from disrespectful. The drum and the drumstick are old symbols of the female and male, and the symbolic act of the performance is not an act of violation and disrespect but rather an act of breakthrough and fertility. The sudden move from the expected to the completely unexpected makes the audience aware of the role of the drum as a symbol and forces the spectators to rethink the symbol and the link between the present and the past that it represents. This new awareness, however, is born through feelings that are very dissimilar to the pleasure of nostalgia that is usually associated with the symbols of a glorious and noble past. Kleemann does nothing to accommodate the desire for these kinds of pleasurable feelings.

The technique of turning the face into a sort of ritual mask is a legacy from the Tuukkaq Theatre, which, in the 1970s, was an important voice in the call for a renewal of Greenlandic identity based on respect for Greenlandic culture.[2] This was part of an international movement that saw the people of the Third and Fourth Worlds not only as victims of Western greed, but also as a corrective to Western culture. Tuukkaq was inspired by the Italian theatre director Eugenio

Barba who had studied Kathakali theatre in India in the early 1960s and used it as a point of departure in his development of a sort of archetypal art form or 'universal theatre'.[3] Based on non-verbal body movement and an image-evoking artistic idiom, this theatrical form was able to cross borders in an increasingly globalised world. In Tuukkaq, performative body language was based on the movements of Inuit drum dancers and the grotesque East Greenlandic *uaajeerneq* and West Greenlandic *mitaartut*: costumed performers who enacted fertility rites in pre-Christian Greenlandic society. These types of performances have survived in new forms, for instance, as a sort of Twelfth Night entertainment at the close of the Christmas season.

Just as the Tuukaq Theatre transplanted the traditional Inuit art forms of drum dance and mask dance into a completely new context, Kleemann's performance gives the Tuukkaq tradition a new twist — and a sharper edge. Although the Tuukkaq performers were young and beautiful and the main feelings projected by the performances were pride and joy in belonging to the ancient Inuit culture, Kleemann seeks to approach the feelings of loss, shame and inferiority that triggered this need to affirm a more positive identity. Kleemann's performances point to these negative feelings as an absent present of historicity (underground feelings, the elephant in the room that everyone pretends not to notice).

In many ways, Greenland is a success story. After being subjected to Danish colonial rule from 1721 to 1953 and then incorporated into the Danish state on unequal terms from 1953 to 1979, Greenland has gradually acquired growing autonomy, first during the period of home rule in 1979-2009 and then, since 2009, under self-government. Greenland is still a part of the Kingdom of Denmark but acts increasingly as an independent state. However, despite the increased self-confidence provided by the Act on Greenland Self-Government, issues such as insufficient formal education, a poor economy, alcohol and drug addiction, suicide, violence, sexual assaults and child abuse are always on the Greenlandic agenda and continue to fuel old stereotypes about the Greenlanders as 'lost in translation' between tradition and modernity.

The ambivalence between the pride in the celebrated cultural traditions associated with a bygone past and the shame caused by a supposed insufficient capability to master and integrate into the modernity of the present is a condition the Greenlanders share with many ethnic minorities, particularly other 'indigenous peoples'. While having proven a powerful strategy for achieving rights and recognition, the discourse of 'indigeneity' obviously comes at a price, not least because this discourse emanates from Western European philosophy and colonial mindsets.[4] Indigenous peoples remain stuck in the position of civilisation's 'Other' — whether in a negative sense as primitive brutes or in a positive

Fig. 1: Jessie Kleemann performing with West Greenlandic drum. Photo: Allard Willemse.

image as a kind of corrective. In both cases indigenous peoples are defined as different.[5]

Contesting these types of dichotomies and essentialised identities is part of a current international trend. There is a sense of connectedness between Greenlandic poets and artists such as Jessie Kleemann and Pia Arke and Sámi artists such as Marja Helander, Katarina Pirak Sikku and Liselotte Wajstedt. Maybe it is no coincidence that female artists, particularly, seem to stand out in this field. Within European nationalism, women have traditionally been positioned as bearers of culture, guardians of language and guarantors of the continuity of tradition. This positioning has been inherited by indigenous peoples, including Greenlanders and Sámi, as evident in modern, written literature.[6] Thus, power and counter-power are intricately linked in anti-colonial discourse.

This article will focus on the emotional economies at work in this kind of discourse. Thus, emotions will be studied as cultural practices rather than as individual psychological states. Much emphasis has been placed on different types of 'capital' in societies, for instance, 'social capital' or 'cultural capital'.[7] However, emotions also circulate and accumulate a sort of 'capital', aligning some bodies with each other within a community while marginalising other bodies.[8] The

New Zealand-British social psychologist Margaret Wetherell talks about emotional as well as discursive communities maintained and developed by discursive and emotional practices.[9] This article will analyse how such practices are explored and contested in the artistic endeavours of avant-garde artists such as Jessie Kleemann, Pia Arke and Niviaq Korneliussen.

The postcolonial and the post-postcolonial

The postcolonial question — is it really such a big deal? Birgit Kleist Pedersen, associate professor at Ilisimatusarfik, University of Greenland, raises this question in an article about contemporary Greenlandic film, theatre, art and literature, written for the anthology *The Postcolonial North Atlantic*.[10] Her answer is both yes and no. Yes, because the issue still holds relevance for some people, especially the older generations. No, because to the younger generations, born after the implementation of Greenlandic Home Rule, the question seems irrelevant. Young people may even find the topic problematic. Pedersen quotes Sara Olsvig, a prominent young Greenlandic politician who, at that time, was one of the two Greenlandic members of the Danish Parliament elected for the left-wing political party Inuit Ataqatigiit (IA) for which she has since become the chairperson:

> […] the process of decolonisation takes time, and it costs energy and mental effort — much more than one might expect. What you have been inclined to forget is that even the thought of decolonisation itself contributes to adhering to the process.[11]

Pedersen is therefore sceptical of what she calls 'a dislocated "writing back from the Centre"'.[12] Her phrasing plays on the postcolonial punch line 'The Empire Writes Back', the title of the seminal book that introduced postcolonial theory in literary studies.[13] Pedersen questions who actually benefits from initiatives such as *Rethinking Nordic Colonialism: A Postcolonial Exhibition in Five Acts*, a Danish project that includes artists from Greenland, the Faroe Islands, Iceland, the Finnish part of Sápmi as well as Denmark, Norway and Sweden. The intention was the reactivation of a collective memory of a colonial past in the Nordic countries, a topic that is, of course, relevant. On the other hand, Pedersen agrees with Olsvig that the discourse about colonisation and decolonisation may be part of the problem rather than the solution:

> As long as the repetitive intra-ethnic self-ascriptions and the inter-ethnic ascriptions made by others are used, it will be difficult for Greenlanders — or any other former colonized peoples — to free themselves from being stigmatized in a fixed position as colonial victims. It is high time that we move on![14]

On a similar note, the Danish political scientist Ulrik Pram Gad has suggested that Greenland needs to move beyond postcoloniality, defined as a situation in which coloniality proper has formally ended but nevertheless continues to be a seemingly necessary point of reference for most of society.[15] According to this idea, Greenlanders would be better off replacing their postcolonial identity with a post-postcolonial Greenlandic identity, transcending the constant reference to Denmark as the colonial 'Other'.[16]

However, judging from the examples of lyrics, literature and film provided in Birgit Kleist Pedersen's article, there is little to indicate that such a post-postcolonial Greenlandic identity is in the making. It is, nevertheless, worth noting that 1) the home rule generation has focused on conflicts between generations of Greenlanders rather than between Greenlanders and Danes, and 2) that the considerable interest in the music and revolutionary song lyrics of the 1970s and 1980s seems to be more about nostalgia for this period than an expression of rebelliousness toward the former colonisers.[17]

Pedersen does not elaborate on the reasons why this particular period is the topic of nostalgia right now. Her article was written before the release of the documentary *Sumé, the Sound of a Revolution*, which tells the story of the first Greenlandic rock band.[18] The film illustrates that the 1970s represents a time when people united in a common uchronotopia: a shared dream of a perfect future.[19] During these years, a wave of energy and belief in the future swept through society. The wave had its origins in the anti-authoritarian, anti-imperialist revolt in the United States and Western Europe, and, in Greenland, it manifested itself in the demand for autonomy and 'Greenlandisation' or a return to Greenlandic values after decennia of 'Danification'. Independence became the magic word that would open a new and better world in which Greenlanders would, once and for all, free themselves from past dependence and subservience.

Today, the road to such a perfect future seems open. The Act on Greenland Self-Government leaves it up to Greenlanders to decide whether they want to stay within the Unity of the Realm. However, this has also paved the way for internal disagreement and fragmentation, not least because the discussion about crucial decisions — for instance, whether the Greenlanders should start mining uranium or not — is now an internal debate among the Greenlanders themselves, not between the Greenlanders and the state or a former colonial power. As far as internal decisions are concerned, Naalakkersuisut, the Government of Greenland, *is* the state. Likewise, it is a fact that, although Greenland has now been self-governing for more than a generation, the above mentioned social problems, including the poor economy, insufficient education, alcohol and drug addiction, child abuse and an alarming suicide rate among adolescents, have not been solved. Therefore, it becomes increasingly difficult to believe in inde-

pendence as a magic word, and the people interviewed in the film, young and old, look back on the 1970s with nostalgia and envy because of the power and engagement that emanate from the music, texts and images from this period. They ask themselves what went wrong, why the process stopped, and what they will need to do to regain some of that commitment.

For some, the answer seems to be to hold on to the revolutionary narrative of the 1970s: Greenland is not yet free, they claim. Only when full autonomy has been achieved will the Greenlanders be ready to transform and embrace a new and independent identity. To many, this manoeuvre must be supplemented with some sort of reconciliation with the past. The Greenlanders need to come to terms with what happened during colonial times and during the post-war years of modernisation and urbanisation — with or without the co-operation of the Danes.[20] To others, a reconciliation commission would be a waste of time and money. They argue that the Greenlanders have already spent too much time looking back. Instead, their energy should be focused on formulating a Greenlandic Constitution as this will enable a discussion about the direction in which citizens want society to go. Nevertheless, both in Greenland and Denmark there appears to be a strong interest in new perspectives on Danish-Greenlandic history. New history books and documentaries are being produced which include Greenlandic sources to a much greater extent than before.[21] Regardless of how necessary and useful these history projects are, they are only marginally successful at including the deep layers of emotion tied into memories, symbols and representations of the past. In this context, art offers an opportunity to mediate, communicate and maybe even process the otherwise unspoken, unspeakable.

The cultural politics of blubber

In some of her more recent art installations and performances, Jessie Kleemann has worked with blubber. She characterises such performances as 'extreme'.[22] Blubber and art come from two very different worlds, and crossing that boundary seems to be a provocation in itself.

The outside world's primary interest in Greenland has always been about energy. Today, it is oil and uranium, but it was once blubber. Blubber illuminated the cities of Europe, and thus paved the way for modernity. In Copenhagen, the first whale oil lamps were installed in 1681: a total of 500 lamps, each placed on top of a painted wooden pole.[23] A public life at night, with more secure streets and the possibility of theatre plays and large public events, was dependent on lighting, which, for a long time, meant blubber. Lots of blubber was needed for large occasions. For instance, 800 whale oil lamps could light up a theatre, while 3000 candles made from whale blubber were needed to light up the ballroom at

a royal wedding.[24] Cities were completely dependent on blubber until gas lamps were introduced — in Copenhagen this happened in 1857.[25] Accordingly, blubber was the main economic incentive for the Danish colonisation of Greenland. Between 1721 and 1775, a number of colonies were established along the West coast where workers rendered the blubber by cooking it over a low temperature in enormous cauldrons. As blubber is rendered, it turns into a waxy substance called train or whale oil that is used for lamps, soap-making and, much later, for making margarine.

Blubber was a precondition of the Inuit's existence in the Arctic.[26] The Inuit blubber lamp provided heat and light. During winter, meat was cooked over the lamp, and pelts were dried on drying racks hung over it. The lamp was the central symbol of the family. Every household needed one or more *qulliit* (sing. *qulleq*) 'stone lamps'. The bowl of the lamp was filled with tenderised blubber, which was lit with a wick made of moss. It was the women's task to keep the flame burning, while the responsibility for keeping the blubber reserves full rested primarily on the men. Good reserves of blubber were synonymous with security, while shrinking reserves were a cause of great concern not only for the women in individual families, but throughout the small communities in which people tried to help each other through periods of failure in hunting.[27] Blubber was synonymous with light and strength, while a lack of blubber meant darkness, weakness and, ultimately, death. Blubber thus played an important role in the Inuit's spiritual life through myths and rituals.[28]

Blubber is different from the fat of land animals. Blubber is much thicker, and it is vascularised, meaning that blood can circulate in blubber. Many marine biologists, therefore, prefer not to refer to blubber as fat at all. They see blubber as a unique type of connective tissue between the animal's skin and its internal organs.[29]

It seems to be these two aspects — the physicality and quality of blubber and the precolonial and colonial history of blubber — that interest Kleemann. Something about it is reminiscent of human skin, she claims, and then there is the smell: 'Blubber is blubber, and it starts to smell a little after a while'.[30] To Kleemann, the smell is 'sea-like'.[31] However, she is well aware that the smell is repulsive to people who are not used to it, or to people who are not interested in becoming associated with it:

> In my childhood we had to learn Danish and be Danish. And we had to be ashamed! Blubber, EW! But now we are suddenly supposed to be *so* Greenlandic! And then, what is that? Blubber brings out strong feelings. Therefore I invited it into my installation and included it and investigated it in my performance.[32]

The blood, the blubber and the meat do not really need explaining. As someone of a post-colonial heritage and a woman, a Greenlandic woman, I have a great need to actually own the wild side of my history.[33]

Although the Europeans themselves made use of blubber, until it was replaced by gas and kerosene (paraffin), it became associated with the backwards and the primitive. In Denmark, the phrase 'jysk tranlampe' (Jutland train oil lamp) is used to mock a person who comes from a small town or rural setting in Jutland as being uneducated and primitive. Turned into the image of an early hunting and gathering (Stone Age) culture, the Greenlanders became representatives of the earliest and thus the lowest step on the ladder of social evolution, an idea Greenlanders were introduced to at the beginning of the 20th century. In Kleemann's statement above, this idea is synthesised in the expression 'the wild side of my history'. Actually, the Greenlanders were seen as so primitive that the whole country had to live without petroleum because the Danes were convinced that the Greenlanders could not be trusted to handle this flammable substance.[34] This continued until the Second World War when the Americans introduced the kerosene lamp, among other amenities.[35]

Thus, it is no coincidence that Kleemann associates blubber, especially, with shame. Blubber seems to have attracted the negative connotations that have not adhered to other aspects of Greendlandic culture, such as traditional food like *mattak* (the skin and the outer layer of blubber from whales).[36] Greenlandic food (raw or dried) plays an important role as a nodal point in Greenlandic identity.[37] But somehow, blubber marks a border — a border that is continually transgressed, but still a border — between outlying districts and urban settlements. Many city-dwelling Greenlanders claim that they like to eat seal *suaasat* (soup cooked with barley or rice) while outdoors or visiting others, but not at home, since they do not want the smell in their house.[38] The hunting culture is celebrated as cultural heritage, but the smell of it is considered primitive and shameful.

Blubber is, therefore, the perfect symbol of the ambivalence that prevails around the link between present-day Greenlanders and the ancient hunting culture. On the one hand, this is a relationship of great pride. The Inuit had developed a culture that ensured their survival under circumstances where the white man could not. This idea is repeated again and again in the ethnographic literature. On the other hand, this culture was seen as doomed by the encounter with the much stronger white civilisation. The Inuit were like children, they needed protection and guidance in order to be transformed into a civilised (enlightened (!), modernised, urbanised) people. Missionaries, priests and teachers, foreign administrators and, for that matter, even the Greenlandic elite constantly held

Fig. 2: Jessie Kleemann, performance, Amsterdam, 2010. Photo: Allard Willemse.

forth on this topic. Consequently, pride and shame became entangled emotions related not only to the Greenlandic past but also to the very notion of Greenlandic identity, which is constructed with the legacy of the past as a central, privileged signifier or reference point.[39]

It is this ambivalence that Jessie Kleemann addresses in her *orsoq* (blubber) performances — or *orsoq ballets* as she calls them — which include dance and blubber or dancing with blubber.[40] She wears different dresses, and each performance has its own particular course. Here Kleemann describes one such performance:

I've tied a lot of blubber around my stomach in a plastic bag that I've fastened with the help of household film. On top of it I'm wearing an old white dress embroidered with beads that I bought on Bali and on my feet high-heeled patent leather shoes. I have two faces: my own and a mask on the back of my head. The audience is waiting out in the yard. I move out to them, back and forth, until I reach the room where there is a stage with musical instruments. Here I sit down in the same way our grandmothers sat with their legs stretched out sideways. Then I stand up and begin to dance with the ulos, clap them together like castanets. Out among the spectators I cut myself up like a seal, a long cut up the stomach. The spectators react: some laugh and flee from the room, others are nailed

to the spot. I work with the blubber, take it in my mouth, dance with it, let it sink down around my legs and so on. Finally, I wrap myself up in household film with the orsoq between my breasts and catwalk out.[41]

The connection between bodies and meaning is thoroughly investigated by the British-Australian scholar Sara Ahmed, who works at the intersection of feminist and queer theory, critical race studies and postcolonialism. Ahmed shows how emotions circulate between bodies, and how some emotions 'stick' to particular bodies through processes of discourse and stereotyping.[42] Emotions stick to objects; some objects make us happy, others make us sad.[43] Human bodies too are transformed into objects of emotion, which then circulate like any other object. Like the American philosopher and feminist theorist Judith Butler, Ahmed sees such 'sticking' and circulation as reliant on *repetition*. It is through repetition that social forms and cultural norms are produced and embedded in the individual. Thus, 'sticking' is dependent on 'past histories of association that often "work" through concealment'.[44] With this perspective, Kleemann's performance can be interpreted as an investigation of the historicity of the association between blubber and Inuit (women) and the concealed emotions of shame connected with this association.

The performance becomes 'extreme' first and foremost by virtue of the mixture of cultural elements: blubber and Balinese beads, a mask and high-heeled shoes, ulus (crescent-shaped women's knives) used as castanets, the posture of Inuit grandmothers, catwalking. Had we been present at a performance without these mixtures and crossings, we would not have been provoked to the same degree — or maybe not at all. A performer dressed in Inuit skin clothing, sitting on a stage in the grandmother position with legs stretched out, cutting the blubber with the ulu, would have been interpreted as ethnographic scenery, and, even though the audience might not have liked the smell, the blubber would have been perceived as in its right place. The already established cluster of semantic signifiers and emotions sticking to them would have remained unassailed. In Kleemann's performance, everything is out of place. The ulu *is* transformed from an Inuit tool into the musical instrument of a Spanish dance. The woman's body is transformed from human to animal. The blubber is transformed from food and fuel into a foetus that is then, in turn, transformed into a substance connected with other indefinable emotions and sensations, including the erotic. Thus, Kleemann tinkers with the symbolic make-up of cultural identities, seeking to short-circuit the clusters of meaning and emotions that comprise this type of meaning-making.

Through the unexpected use of the ulus as castanets, Kleemann points to the modern transfer of this object from tool to symbolic representative of the

cultural heritage and pride associated with the Inuit past. Today, the ulu serves as a kind of 'happy object', adding to Greenlanders' cultural capital. To some Greenlanders, the ulu has become invested with so much affinity and esteem that it is almost regarded as a sacrilege to use it in accordance with its intended purpose: cutting blubber and meat.[45] Its proper place is considered to be on the wall, where pictures with Christian content once created a framework for the residents' understanding of life and testified to the residents' proper moral habitus. By using the ulu to cut blubber today, Kleemann brings the ulu back to its original function, thereby disclosing the schizophrenic view of the past, manifested in the tendency to turn the ulu into an almost religious symbol, while blubber, the very material that the ulu used to cut, has been turned into a vehicle for shame.

Merging her own body with the substance of blubber, Kleemann takes upon herself the shame of the primitive — a role historically incarnated by the indigenous, 'exotic' female, whose body was seen in a European context as a token of 'natural' sexuality and availability, unchained by the conventions of civilisation. Paradoxically, the European idea that this body, just like a child's body, was unaware of shame became a further source of shame for the Inuit body as Greenlanders undertook the transformation from 'primitive' to 'modern'. Thus, to Ahmed's list of 'affect aliens': feminist kill-joys, unhappy queers and melancholic migrants, Kleemann adds the tragic indigenous person, lost in translation between (ideas of) the archaic and the modern. Both indigenous and non-indigenous peoples have been co-producers of this discourse, which posits that indigeneity and modernity belong in separate and incompatible worlds. Offering the audience no release or reconciliation at the end, Kleemann's performances leave even her non-indigenous audience trapped in a state of bewilderment and frustration — not dissimilar to the bewilderment and frustration inflicted upon the indigenous person by this kind of discourse.

Ugly feelings

In Kleemann's performance it is obviously not the performer or her performing persona who feels shame. The discomfort seems to be transferred to the audience, who clearly feels intimidated and desperately tries to avoid eye contact with the performer.[46] Kleemann's performances never aim at creating pleasure for the audience. Rather, she seems to address what Sianne Ngai, professor of American literature, cultural theory and feminist studies, has called 'ugly feelings'.[47] Ugly feelings are ignoble feelings, or feelings that are considered morally degraded and unjustifiable such as envy (as opposed to jealousy) and irritation (as opposed to anger).[48] While anger can be righteous, an irritable person is affected, according to Aristotle, by the wrong things too severely and for longer

than is considered appropriate.[49] Because these are feelings one really should not have, they produce *discomfort*: an *unpleasant* feeling *about* the feeling (I feel ashamed of being envious; nobody likes an irritable person). Ugly feelings, therefore, have potentials that more 'prestigious', i.e. worthy and accepted, feelings such as anger or fear lack. Ugly feelings, such as envy, irritation, paranoia and anxiety, promote 'meta-responses' (I feel envy, but I also feel that I should *not* be feeling envy). Accordingly, Ngai points to the relationship between ugly feelings and irony as a divide between utterance and meaning that creates a distance and space for reflection. Ugly feelings are non-cathartic, offering no satisfaction or purifying release.[50] Ugly feelings are characterised by their weak intentionality. They tend to be *diagnostic* rather than strategic, and diagnostically they are associated especially with states of *in*action.[51]

The *sleepwalking* or trance-like state that characterises Jessie Kleemann's performances seems to suggest just such a weak intentionality. The performer shows no emotion at all. The performance evokes images, and there are certainly emotions at stake, however, these emotions are often vague and profoundly ambivalent. According to literary scholar Philip Fisher, there are two main ways in which a literary text can elicit emotion from its reader: *sympathy*, which means that the reader feels what the other is feeling, and *volunteered passion*, in which the reader 'feels something exactly because the other does not'.[52] Something similar may apply to performances, but somehow Kleemann deflects either of these responses in her audience. Kleemann's performances seem to take place within a certain 'atmosphere' of mixed emotions such as loss, anger, melancholia and, centrally, disgust. How does one react adequately to an 'atmosphere'? The frustration this creates is not easy to shake off. Whether the audience enjoyed the performance or not, they may remember it many years later. Therefore, Ngai's definition of ugly feelings as diagnostic rather than strategic seems to be an apt characterisation of Kleemann's performance art. The audience realises that the performer is investigating something important — and they realize that they are invited to take part in this investigation!

In the blubber performances, disgust seems to be the most prevalent emotion: the disgust that the material itself evokes due to its smell, not to mention the self-inflicted caesarean section and the other, very intimate interactions between this highly potent material and the performer's body. Ngai presents disgust as an ugly feeling 'par excellence'[53], 'the ugliest of "ugly feelings"'.[54] There is no way of transforming disgust into aesthetic beauty or, thus, into a commodity. This is, after all, what we often expect from art, hence the expression 'event industry', wherein 'culture', art and music are important sub-categories. There is something violent and profoundly unconsumable about disgust that makes it a prophylactic against feelings such as benevolence or pity, which are usually

Fig. 3: *Jessie Kleemann, performance Amsterdam, 2010. Photo: Allard Willemse.*

feelings that the powerful in an asymmetrical power relationship use to manage aversion toward an object that is considered socially inferior.[55] Kleemann's blubber performance might have had this effect, had she stuck to a more predictable or conventional script and dressed in Inuit skin clothing, situating herself on the stage in the grandmother position, legs stretched out, cutting the blubber with the ulu as discussed above.

Performing as she does, however, bringing disgust and thus an element of violence into the performance, Kleemann not only evokes disgust but the 'meta-response' of the ugly feeling: our shame about feeling disgust. Disgust was the reaction of the early missionaries, administrators and scientists who were confronted with the unusual household customs of the Inuit, where urine was stored side by side with blubber and food in big containers under the sleeping platform, in order to serve multiple tasks (hair washing, depilation of skins, etc.). The literature is full of repulsed descriptions of these practices, often with detailed records of how the visitor felt sick and had to leave the stuffy house in a hurry before fainting or throwing up.[56] However, since the Danish Arctic

explorer Knud Rasmussen (1879–1933) taught the Danes to respect and acknowledge the Inuit hunting culture as the noble life of a people of nature (the German word 'Naturvolk'), Danes have known that disgust was not an appropriate emotion when confronted with such customs. Rather, one should feel respect for these practices of necessity.[57] In this way, Kleemann manages to capture the ambivalent feelings of 'front-stage' admiration and celebration and 'back-stage' disgust and contempt for that part of Inuit heritage that too openly invokes what Kleemann, in the interview quoted above, refers to as 'the wild side of my history'.

Kleemann is not the only female Greenlandic artist who brings an element of violence to the performance scene. The Greenlandic-Danish artist Pia Arke (1958–2007) also knew how to short-circuit the hegemonic discourse equivalence between 'Eskimo', 'woman', 'childish', 'impulsive', 'natural', and 'erotic'. Just as Kleemann usually strips naked or almost naked during a performance, Pia Arke performed naked in several art photos and videos, embracing the primitive 'exotic' role in which male explorers often cast Inuit women.[58] Early photographers staged their models with Arctic nature as a background, indicating the close relationship between the Inuit and this particular setting. In one of her videos (*Arctic Hysteria*,1996) Arke positions herself crawling naked on a photograph of Arctic nature. In a sense, she steps into the frame in which male explorers, scientists and photographers placed her Inuit foremothers — and where the anti-colonial movement left her — but she refuses to stay in her place. Demonstrating that the depiction of the Inuit woman as belonging to the Arctic nature is exactly this: an image and nothing more. She ends up tearing the photograph to pieces, leaving the stage empty except for the torn strips of paper. Thus, the performance can be read as a symbolic de-framing of the indigenous body.[59]

Arke's focus is not on disgust but on another 'ugly feeling': *animatedness*. Ngai uses this concept to cover both the idea that the racial other is characterised by a special physicality and liveliness or expressiveness, and the idea that the racial other must be controlled by the white man (or woman) in a type of ventriloquist act because the racial other is not viewed as having a voice of his or her own.[60] Arke uses the title *Arctic hysteria* for several of her art pieces. This title refers to European preoccupations with Inuit expressiveness, generally described as uncontrolled emotion and reflected in the much discussed medical term 'Arctic hysteria'.[61] *Perlerorneq* was the term by which the Inuit named a certain kind of insanity wherein a person lost his or her senses, typically during winter or when the light began to return. Such a person might, for example, tear off all of his or her clothing and run outside naked and barefoot, insensitive to the snow and cold. Associating this particular illness with the European idea of hysteria, which was closely associated with women (the word is derived from *hystera*, the

Fig. 4: Screenshot from the video Arctic Hysteria, *1996.*

Greek word for uterus), clearly worked as a way to mark a boundary between the civilised, controlled European man and the effeminate, irrational, uncontrolled natives. Arke takes over the concept and idea of 'Arctic hysteria' including the nudity, but, with her completely calm and investigative demeanour, she becomes the one who makes the diagnosis, rather than the one who is diagnosed. Likewise, by performing in a way that is completely sexually uninviting, she refuses to assume the role of erotic object. Instead, she turns the pornographic gaze back on the spectator, locating the sexual desire and 'animatedness' where it belongs. In this way, she takes back the power of definition and the right to speak for herself — even though she never utters a word during the performance — just like Jessie Kleemann, who also usually performs in silence.

Both Kleemann and Arke's performances respond to foreign images and stereotypes about Inuit women that they twist and reshape into a new direction. The Asta Nielsen film *Das Eskimo-Baby* which premiered in 1918 is an example of this type of representation. Arke and Kleemann may or may not have seen this film, which is rarely shown, but stills from the film circulate along with a great number of other images cut from the same cloth. The film is built on urban legends about the 'Eskimo coming to town'.[62] It visualises and concretises images and attached emotions that have become part of the Danish-Greenlandic 'cultural economy of emotions' and have, to some extent, become part of Greenlan-

dic identification and self-representation. Therefore, a film like *Das Eskimo-Baby* is part of the Greenlanders' cultural heritage, whether one likes it or not.

Das Eskimo-Baby was shot in Berlin in 1916 under difficult circumstances during the First World War. Asta Nielsen (1881–1972) began her career in Denmark but moved to Berlin, which, during the silent movie era, was a serious competitor of Hollywood. The genre of the movie is comedy. The action is set in Europe. The son of an affluent, elderly bourgeoisie couple has been to Greenland. On his return he brings 'a little surprise' with him from Greenland. The 'surprise' is a woman named Ivigtut.[63] She has her hair set in a Greenlandic-style top-knot, and she is dressed in the West Greenland suit with leather embroidered sealskin boots (*kamiks*), sealskin pants and a silk anorak with a beaded collar that, by this time, had developed into a national costume used at special occasions like Christian festivals. Ivigtut is clearly 'wild', unfamiliar with cars and the practices of civilisation, such as European table manners and behaviour considered decorous for women. From the outset she upsets the bourgeois environment. The family plots to get rid of her until Ivigtut gives birth to a daughter. Then it is revealed that the couple is already married. The film ends with the young couple returning to Greenland.

Inge Kleivan, a Danish professor emeritus of eskimology, has analysed the film and emphasises that it was never meant to function as any sort of documentary, but was made for entertainment purposes only.[64] The Inuit woman is staged in an endless series of comic situations — for instance at the dinner table where she snaps open a can of sardines in oil and eats the tiny fish directly from the can, oil streaming down her cheeks, confirming the idea that Eskimos just love whale oil and cannot go without it. The accompanying text reads 'Esskimo-Manieren' (Eskimo eating manners), a pun on *essen*, the German word for 'eating'. Another text conveys the thoughts of the shocked dinner guests: 'Das ist kein [this is no] Eskimo, das ist Fress-kimo', *fressen* meaning 'to eat without manners as animals do'. However, Kleivan does not conclude that this should offend a modern audience since the Eskimo woman is the most positive figure in the film. The laughter is constantly on her side and directed at the prudish German, upper-class women.[65] Kleivan emphasises the 'vitality' associated with the Eskimo woman[66] — which is most appreciated by the male characters of the film. While the European women are shocked by the free and unconstrained behaviour of this foreign woman, the European men take a much more positive interest in her — for obvious reasons, considering the perfect fit of her skin-trousers on her well-shaped buttocks.

The film leaves its European audience in a feel-good mood — we have been entertained and had the opportunity to laugh at our own stuffy, civilised manners; we may even have been encouraged to loosen up a bit. Meanwhile, the na-

tive woman and the brave young man who wants to live with her are sent back to the far north, creating a safe and distinct border between 'them' and 'us'. Sianne Ngai analyses how black women writers and artist have protested against this racialisation of bodies and the idea that art produced by racialised bodies must be 'animated' (sensually and sexually charged), reproducing the white stereotype in order to gain recognition as genuine and authentic.[67] As demonstrated, the art of Jessie Kleemann and Pia Arke does the same in an Inuit context.

Language, love and the nation

Firmly embedded within Western European anti-imperialism and coupled with the youth rebellion's dissatisfaction with the conformity and inauthenticity of Western society, the quest for Greenlandic autonomy inherited the idealisation of certain non-Western societies, in particular the so-called 'people of nature', who grew into a political force beginning in the 1970s under the name of 'indigenous peoples'. The demand for authenticity is exemplified by the demand that Greenlanders should speak the Greenlandic Inuit language: *Kalaallisut*.

The idea of Greenlandic linguistic and cultural authenticity was nothing new in the 1970s. In its origins, this was a colonial, governmental strategy. As described, the colonial economy was dependent on the Greenlanders' willingness to hunt for, produce and sell skin and blubber from sea mammals. Only a few people were allowed to be trained in other professions, and the inherited Inuit pride in the hunt was supported by an image of the seal hunter as the 'genuine' or 'real' Greenlander.[68] Greenlandic was considered the natural language of the Greenlanders, and only the people employed as helpers for the church and administration (catechists, secretaries, servants etc.) were encouraged to learn Danish. While the politics of the colonial administration depended on isolation (as a primitive people, the Greenlanders were seen as so vulnerable that they had to be protected by the benevolent Danish authorities), the Greenlandic elite wanted to become part of the world, on par with all other peoples. It was therefore with broad Greenlandic acceptance that Danish was taught in schools when Greenland became part of Denmark in 1953.[69] However, Danish teachers were employed *en masse*, and Danish soon became the language of instruction instead of being taught as a foreign language. Danish was dominant everywhere — and so were the Danes. The Greenlanders had not become equal citizens within Denmark; on the contrary, the Danes came to Greenland in unprecedented numbers, and they continued in their roles as masters. While Greenlandic politics before and right after 1953 had aimed at *similarity* and equality between Greenlanders and Danes, in the 1970s it became a politics of *difference*, accentuating the specific ethnicity of the Greenlanders and the status of the Greenlanders as an independent people according to the UN Declaration on the Rights of Peoples.

The quest for a Greenlandic identity and political self-determination began as a quest to strengthen the Greenlandic language, and the Home Rule Act of 1979 specified Greenlandic as the primary language of the country. The Greenlandic language became the marker of Greenlandic identity.[70]

In the meantime, Danish had become the first language of many who considered themselves Greenlanders. Intermarriage between Danes and Greenlanders has been common since the earliest days of colonisation, although it was originally firmly managed and restricted by the colonial administration.[71] With the large import of Danish teachers, engineers, workers etc. from the 1950s onwards, mixed marriages became common, and, often, the offspring of such marriages became monolingual Danish-speakers. Thus, the Danish language became a very visible and audible sign of cultural dominance.

For decades, colonial politics had been based on a rhetoric of *love*: the Danes loved and protected the Greenlanders who in turn loved and respected the Danes.[72] With the fight for home rule and the politics of difference, the Greenlanders terminated this contract of emotions. Now, Greenlanders protested loudly against Danish expectations of gratitude and rejected the Danish ideal that had been constantly held up to them as an inspiration in comparison to which they would, almost by definition, fall short. In Fanon's words, the Greenlanders had subjectified white people, the Danes, and internalised the white gaze at the Greenlander as an object. [73] Building a nation of their own, independent from the former colonial power, the Greenlanders were now to become their own subjects and invest their love and identification in their own nation.

Suddenly, the modern Greenlandic culture was seen as suspect because modernity and urbanity had become synonymous with 'Danish'. Paradoxically, the independence movement thus returned to the rhetoric of the colonial administration, praising and idealising the cultural heritage of hunting traditions as genuinely 'Greenlandic' while condemning modernity as something foreign and incompatible with Greenlandic society and tradition. Apart from being Eurocentric in its racialisation and culturalisation of modernity as European and white, this idea was extremely problematic for the population of Greenland in which the 'foreign' is, to such a high degree, already a part of oneself.

This general divide was projected onto the so-called 'half-Greenlanders': persons with only one parent of Greenlandic heritage, not least because they often lacked competence in speaking Greenlandic. Since love for the nation was now invested exclusively in Greenland and Greenlanders, only the Greenlandic language could be the object of the Greenlanders' love and devotion. Although (cautious) protests were heard from Danish-speaking Greenlanders,[74] it was not until recently that bilingual Greenlanders began to negotiate this monolingual norm. In the exhibition *Ordet/ (-assiliaq)* at Nuuk Art Museum, January–Febru-

Fig. 5: Lisbet Poulsen (left) and Niviaq Korneliussen (right): Ordet-(assiliaq) at Nuuk Art Museum, January–February 2016.

ary 2016, the author Niviaq Korneliussen (born 1990)[75] displayed a long poem on a series of posters hung on the wall. The poem was hand-written, adding an intimate and very personal flavour to the text. The text told a love story, expressed as a mournful reflection after the end of an almost symbiotic relationship wherein one party has demanded the other's total submission. However, the title: *Til dig, mit modersmål* (For you, my mother tongue) indicates that the poem should be read as an allegory of the nation's claim that its members swear eternal allegiance to the national language:

Uaguujuassaaq [det sku altid være os]/Det lovede jeg dig/(…)/Din stemme gav genlyd i min/Du lærte mig, hvordan jeg skulle føle/hvordan jeg skulle tænke/hvordan jeg skulle udtrykke mig/(…)/det var dig og mig against the world/(…)/Til dig sagde jeg/I'll turn into a monster for you/Og det gjorde jeg/(…)/Jeg hadede fremmede som du/For du sagde jeg skulle/JEG HADER ALT DET, DER IKKE ER DIG, råbte jeg/(…)/Men jeg var intet værd, hvis jeg ikke var med dig/Hos dig var jeg jo verdensmester/(…)/ There's a riot inside of me/Noget der brændte for noget andet end dig/Noget større, der ikke holdte

mig væk fra alle, som ikke var dig/ Og så sagde du, råbte du, skældte mig ud/HVAD FANDEN LAVER DU/Du smed mig ud, ud af mit hjem/det eneste sted, jeg nogensinde havde kendt/(…)/Forlad mig ikke, bønfaldt jeg dig/Jeg har brug for dig/Men det var du ligeglad med/(…)/Jeg mærker din tilstedeværelse, hvor end jeg går/Ekkoerne fra dine ord/(…)/ ASAJUASSAVAKKIT [jeg vil altid elske dig]/Det lover jeg dig/Men din kamp har aldrig været min/For dig hader jeg ikke mere/Jeg dræber det monster, du har skabt i mig/(…)/ Lad mig have det sidste ord og sige/At min stemme ikke længere er din

Uaguujuassaaq [it will always be the two of us]/This I promised you/(...)/Your voice echoed in mine/You taught me how I should feel/how I should think/how I should express myself/(...)/it was you and me against the world/(...)/To you I said,/I'll turn into a monster for you/And I did/(...)/I hated strangers/because you told me to/I HATE EVERYTHING THAT IS NOT YOU, I cried /(...)/ But I was worthless if I was not with you/With you I was the world champion/(...)/ There's a riot inside of me/Something that burned for something other than you/Something bigger that didn't keep me away from everyone who wasn't you/ And then you said, you cried, you scolded/WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU DOING/You kicked me out of my home/the only place I had ever known/(...)/ Do not leave me, I implored you/I need you/But you didn't care/(...)/I sense your presence wherever I go/The echoes of your words/(...)/ASAJUASSAVAKKIT [I will always love you]/This I promise you/But your battle has never been mine/Because you I hate no more/I'll kill the monster, you have created in me/(...)/ Let me have the final word and say/that my voice is no longer yours

Like a jealous and domineering lover, the nation demands that the beloved not only forsakes but also excludes and hates all others in the name of love. However, this kind of love becomes monstrous and limiting. The narrator in the poem has tried to open up the relationship, but for the dominant partner, the nation, it is a matter of all or nothing, and in the end, the narrator has to let go. The poem is written mainly in Danish with a few central words in Greenlandic and a few sentences in English. In this sense, the poem may be read as a showdown with the nationalist use of the idea of the 'mother tongue', an idea which the former colony uncritically inherited along with the rest of the nationalist discourse during the course of Greenlandic nation-building.

In practice, the demand for linguistic purity is not only undesirable but utterly unattainable. In the real world, no one is monolingual. Because languages and cultures are in constant contact, languages permeate each other. Just as Jessie Kleemann visualises the cultural mix in her performances, in her poems she lets one word in one language lead to another in a second language. From this, she creates new meanings that only appear at the intersection of the two — or three — languages. Like Niviaq Korneliussen, Jessie Kleemann works creatively

with Greenlandic, Danish and English. Blubber also appears in Kleemann's poems. Here, the substance is associated with the Greenlandic language, the 'Eskimothertongue':

Eskimuuara/inoorlaatut/Tununni amaarpara/Nakimaalluni/Nikorfavoq/Orsorsunnialaartumik inuttut/Tipigissoq soorlumi/Eskimuuara nukittooq taamaattoq
Eskimuutut oqaatsikka/Qallunaffaarittut danskisut allagaapput/Soorlu Orvillip tuluttut ilinniarai/Tassami uumassuseqaramik/Ima uummaritsigaat allaat uumasutut/Nungukkiartuinnartutut isigisaallutik/Sananeqaataat illit atuarsinnaanngisattut illutik
Eskinuunuaraatiga/Tipigik soorlu baconip orsua/Puisip siatap qaani sikatsitaq/Taanna nungukkiartunngilaq/Mamaq.
Eeri aajuna kalaallisut allataq/Nalussanngilat/Eskimuuatut oqaatsikka uani allassimapput

My eskimother/is like the baby/[I]Carry on my back/Head held high/Proud/Like a real orsoq-inuit/I smell good and/Strong as my lovely eskimother
My eskimothertongue/Is written in Danish through and through/Orville's learning it in English/Because it's almost Alive/So alive that it's seen as/One of the endangered species/As the DNA you cannot read/Yourself into
My eskibaby/smells and tastes good/Like orsoqbacon on top/Of the roast of seal/Which is not in danger of extinction
Eeri is written in Greenlandic here/Just as you know it/My eskimothertongue says what there's to read[76]

Linked to words such as 'mother', 'baby' and 'mother tongue', the word 'Eskimo' becomes a signal of ethnicity: the kind of identity that is seen as inherent in a people and which is passed from one generation to the next. While 'mother tongue' points to the immaterial part of Inuit heritage, the implicit image of the *amaat* points to the material part. When we hear that the poem's narrator is carrying the mother on her back like a baby, we automatically envision the many pictures of women carrying babies in the Inuit woman's fur coat with a hood that is big enough for the baby. Apparently, there is a direct link between the 'eskimother' (the past), the poem's 'I' (the present) and the 'eskibaby' (the future). As in the performance, blubber and (wo)man, *orsoq* and *inuk*, melt together and become one, but in the poem there is no shame. It is all about pride, and it smells good!

There is, however, something fishy about the whole thing. The made-up words 'my eskimother', 'my eskimothertongue', 'my eskibaby' (*Eskimuuara*, *Eskimuutut oqaatsikka*, *Eskinuunuaraatiga*) indicate an ironic gap between the celebrated idea of cultural heritage and the fact that this heritage is mediated through the lens of colonialism; for example, consider the word 'Eskimo', an

Fig. 6: Lisbet Poulsen, Nuuk graffiti, photo, art piece exhibited at Ordet/ (-assiliaq) at Nuuk Art Museum January–February 2016.

exonym used by outsiders during colonial times which still carries colonial overtones. Just think of the way the word was used in the film *Das Eskimo-Baby*! The complexity of the whole affair becomes clear when we learn that this 'eskimothertongue' is written in Danish 'through and through', and in some cases even acquired via English. The idea of an 'un-contaminated' heritage, 'clean' of foreign influence, no longer makes sense.

It is no wonder that the idea of an 'Eskimo' or indigenous language cannot work as some kind of prefabricated imprint defining the individual's existence, cf. 'the DNA you cannot read yourself into'. This section of the poem, which addresses an external discourse about the language (and its speakers) as endan-

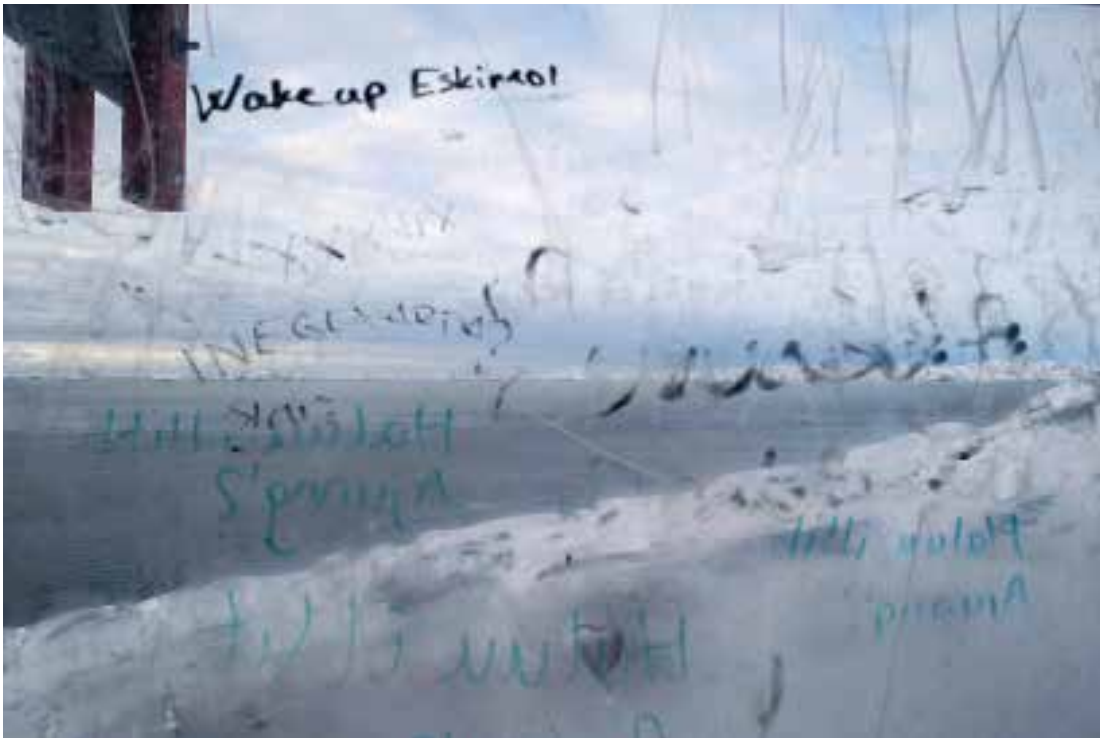

Fig. 7: Lisbet Poulsen, Nuuk graffiti, photo, art piece exhibited at Ordet/ (-assiliaq) *at Nuuk Art Museum January–February 2016.*

gered, also points to an asymmetrical balance of power in which the power of definition rests with whoever is controlling this discourse and not with the narrator herself. Obviously, the language is alive and well — the irony is directed at the dominant discourse of endangerment.

The word 'eeri' works as a sort of riddle in the poem: 'Eeri is written in Greenlandic here [….] 'My eskimothertongue says what there's to read'. If we read the word in Greenlandic it simply means the letter 'r', but it also has associations with the word *eeq*, which covers the same feeling of something uncanny or spooky as *eerie* in English. Like a ghost, the meanings and connotations thus wander through the languages, demolishing the idea of watertight bulkheads between different languages and identities. The human brain does not come hardwired for any specific language, it comes hardwired for *language*. As humans, we are *languagers*. We will make use of any language systems we come across, and they all become part of who we are. [77]

The same point is made when the blubber suddenly turns into 'orsoqbacon', indicating both a cultural transformation and a similarity between the two cultures' shared pleasure in the taste and smell of animal fat. This version of the tradition is in no danger of extinction because it is constantly metamorphosing into new forms. Certainly, there is an irony here concerning the discrepancy

between what Greenlanders consider their proper, 'natural' food and what they actually eat. Thus, Kleemann's poem destabilises the rhetoric of difference that underpins the Greenlandic (post)modern nation-building project, leaving the reader of this poem just as puzzled and frustrated as the audience at one of her performances.

Conclusion

Defined and defining themselves as an indigenous people, Greenlanders need to be adept at negotiating the semantic content of this category in order to escape the stereotype of being 'lost in translation' between tradition and modernity.[78] Within this cultural discourse, Greenlanders are seen as essentially alien to modernity. Therefore, the 'lost in translation' narrative always unfolds as a 'way too fast' story: from Stone Age to Atom Age in a single generation! Not only is this discourse not in keeping with actual history. The Greenlanders were by no means living in the Stone Age in the mid-20th century. It also overshadows the competing political discourse according to which the more unfortunate results of Greenlandic modernisation are, first and foremost, to be located in the way this process was implemented, positioning the Greenlanders as passive bystanders or at the lowest levels of the corporate hierarchy, unable to develop or use their actual competencies.[79]

During colonial times, the Greenlanders idealised and subjectified the Danes. Once they recognised that there was no way the Danes would allow them to pass as Danes, no matter the degree to which they were formally declared Danish citizens, the Greenlanders began to idealise what was considered 'their own' culture. Since this was defined in opposition to all things Danish, the pre-colonial Inuit became a new point of reference for Greenlandic identity. However, the Greenlanders were no longer precolonial Inuit. Again, they could only fall short of the ideal.

Greenlanders are thus trapped within this ambivalence, with the pride of the past and the shame of the present 'sticking' to their bodies. This has become part of what constitutes the Greenlanders as an emotional community — just as it has become an important ingredient in the emotional economy underlying the relations between Danes and Greenlanders. Usually, the Danes are assigned responsibility for the decline of Greenlandic Inuit culture. Consequently, Danes are supposed to feel guilt, not personally, but at a collective level. Obviously, this Danish guilt will never stick to the Danish body the way shame sticks to the individual Greenlandic body. Rather, taking responsibility can be seen as a continuation of the colonial narrative with its persistent rationale of viewing the Danes as responsible for Greenland's development.[80] Someone who accepts responsibility maintains their superior position, while the one who feels shame

risks being stuck with the shame. That is also why a certain wariness has developed in Greenland towards the rhetoric of coloniser versus colonised, because it is so hard to escape a perception of the coloniser as history's active subject, while the colonised assumes the position as the passive object.

By bringing 'ugly feelings' such as disgust and 'animatedness' to the fore, Jessie Kleemann and Pia Arke confront their audience with emotions that may not be 'overcome' by a simple apology from the Danes to the Greenlanders — even if the Danish government were willing to offer such an apology, which it most definitely is not. Colonialism and its aftermath are far more complicated, as Niviaq Korneliussen points out with her demonstration of the ways in which Greenlandic opposition to Danish nationalism has itself become afflicted by the fundamental problems of nationalism such as exclusion, limitation and restriction.

It is the conclusion of this article that the arts and artists may go beyond what is possible in politically framed reconciliation processes. Without any pre-defined solutions (the call for apologies, forgiveness, etc.), the artists in question invite their audience to confront ambivalent emotions which normally remain tacit and hidden because they are too complicated and painful to address openly and because they raise questions which may not have an answer. Voicing the unspeakable, the artists somehow manage to break that silence which enables the continued existence of outdated emotional economies.

Perhaps the time is ripe for the work of artists like Arke, Kleemann and Korneliussen. While considered 'strange', perhaps even 'un-Greenlandic' during her lifetime, Pia Arke has received growing recognition since her death, even in Greenland. Likewise, Jessie Kleemann has been considered a highly controversial figure in Greenland. Currently, however, it seems that a growing number of people are beginning to appreciate her work. Her 2015 exhibition in Nuuk, the capital of Greenland, drew large audiences and received enthusiastic reviews. Niviarsiaq Korneliussen certainly provokes the older generations, not so much because she is gay and writes about it, but because of her irreverent handling of national symbols, including the Greenlandic language. For the very same reasons, however, young Greenlanders cherish her work. At a time when efforts to confront the sense of loss and disorientation after the anti-colonial revolution seem insufficient to secure a better world, not only in Greenland but on a global scale,[81] art can offer new perspectives and perhaps eventually inspire new uchronotopias, new dreams for a perfect (or at least more promising) future.

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Notes

1 Kleemann in Mondrup 2012: 57.
2 Eichberg 1990.
3 Meerzon 2012.
4 Kuper 2003: 395.
5 Thisted 2013.
6 Rajala and Thisted 1997.
7 Bourdieu 1986.
8 Ahmed 2004. Ahmed coined the concept *affective economies*. In this article the words *affects* and *emotions* are used synonymously.
9 Wetherell 2012.
10 Pedersen 2014.
11 Olsvig 2010: 14, quoted in Pedersen 2014: 287.
12 Ibid.: 305.
13 Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin 1989.
14 Ibid.: 307.
15 Gad 2008: 3–4.
16 Ibid.: 17.
17 Pedersen 2014: 292, 304.
18 Høegh 2014.
19 The *uchronotopia* concept was introduced by Schultz-Forberg (2013). It is a combination of Bachtin's *chronotopoi* — narratives that follow their own historical logic when representing time and space framed by the genre of which they are part — and *utopia*, the idea of a perfect time yet to come. Since the past, the present and the future are closely linked in both personal and collective narratives of identity, shaping a new uchronotopia will simultaneously reshape the image of the past.
20 When the Government of Greenland in 2013 decided to set up a reconciliation commission, the Danish government expressed the opinion that this was an understandable need, seen from a Greenlandic point of view, but that the Danish Government was not seeking to participate in such work, see Thisted 2017.
21 As, for example, Olsen 2005, 2012, Thor, Jón Th, Daniel Thorleifsen, Andras Mortensen, Ole Marquardt 2012, Breum and Gottschau 2016.
22 Kleemann in Mondrup 2012: 120.
23 Københavns Belysningsvæsen 1932: 186.

24 http://assistens.dk/gronlandshvalen/ [Accessed 5 January 2015]; Parby 2007.

25 Parby 2007.

26 Grønnov, Appelt and Odgaard 2014.

27 See the film about the Inuit blubber lamp (*qulliq*) on You Tube: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rjjxUE6XSdQ [Accessed 5 January 2015]. The film was recorded in Canada (Kunnuk 1992). The Canadian and Greenlandic Inuit shared many cultural elements; today they share many of the same symbols and highly appreciate this common cultural heritage. The women's song expresses the mixed feelings of security and concern associated with the blubber and the blubber lamp: I was cold, it made me warm / with little *qulliq* far away / when I hunt an animal, it won't dry inside a snow house, far away / it dries clothes with little *qulliq* / as long as it has blubber, far away / I'm running out of blubber / I'm worried / I'm getting weak, far away.

28 When the shaman, the *angakkoq*, went to the spirit world, the lamps were extinguished, and the audience had to guide him or her back with their songs and calling. *Sedna*, The Mother of the Sea, in West Greenland known as *Sassuma arnaa*, lived in her house at the bottom of the sea together with all the different sea mammals. The container under her lamp that the surplus oil from the lamp dripped into was filled with sea birds (Egede 1984 [1741]: 118). Usually, she would let the whales and seals and sea birds swim from her house at the bottom of the sea, out through the house's entrance and up to the surface, where people could hunt them. However, when people did not follow the rules, she would keep the animals behind the bottom lamp at the house's entrance. Now, the people would starve, until an angakkoq embarked on the dangerous journey to visit her, wrestle with her and clean her house and hair, which had become filthy with secret abortions and similar breaches of rules and taboos.

29 See http://education.nationalgeographic.org/encyclopedia/blubber/

30 Kleemann in Mondrup 2012: 120.

31 Ibid.

32 Kleemann in Thisted 2010: 261, KT translation.

33 Kleemann in Frank 2012: 47.

34 Brun 1946: 265.

35 Kaalund 1983: 109.

36 *Mattak* is definitely a happy object, cf. the description of the *ulu* below. *Mattak* confirms the status of the person who is able to serve it as an insider in Greenlandic culture. *Mattak* is hard to get, it is rarely for sale, and, generally, the Danes dislike it. *Mattak* is therefore used as a sign of inclusion and exclusion (Thisted 2012: 397–98).

37 Roepstorff 1997.

38 My own observations, based upon many years of teaching university students and high school/college teachers in Greenland.

39 Petersen 1985.

40 Kleemann in Mondrup 2012: 26.

41 Kleemann in Mondrup 2012: 129.

42 Ahmed 2004.

43 Ahmed 2010.

44 Ahmed 2004: 13.

45 Katti Frederiksen. Personal communication. This interview took place in Katuaq, Nuuk, on 18 March 2012.

46 This conclusion is based upon many experiences with Jessie Kleemann's performances and covers both my own feelings and what I have observed in the audience in addition to what I have heard afterward from fellow spectators and, on a few occasions my students.

47 Ngai 2007.

48 Ibid.: 3.

49 Ibid.: 175. Usually, irritation is categorised as a *mood*, rather than an emotion, since it lacks an explicit occasion or object. Emotions are about *something*, while moods are diffuse and seems to be about nearly everything, Ibid.: 179.

50 Ibid.: 6.

51 Ibid.: 22.

52 Fisher 2002: 142, quoted in Ngai 2005: 188.

53 Ibid.: 334.

54 Ibid.: 335.

55 Ngai 2007: 345.

56 Examples are numerous. In an article inspired by the history of mentality, the historian Thomas Lyngby analyses the letters and memoirs of the Danish priest Carl Emil Janssen, written 1844-49 (Lyngby 2004). He presents the following quotation from a service at Umannaarsuk on 7 February 1847 in which the priest almost collapses:
The Greenlanders were crammed together in the two small rooms of the house. Oh! I felt so bad then from the

former exhaustion and the sultry air from the many people. Everything went black before my eyes, I felt a weight on my chest, my head was swimming, so I thought I might have to ask them to leave. However, I strove to gather all my strength. When the hymn ended, and I was about to turn and talk to them, I narrowly avoided collapsing, but I steadied myself against the table and leaned against the wall (Ibid.: 29 KT translation).

Original text: Grønlænderne stuvede sig tæt sammen i Husets to smaae Værelser; Ak! saa fik jeg saa inderlig ondt af den tidligere Udmattelse og af den trykkende Luft fra de mange Mennesker, det sortnede for mine Øine, sugede mig for Hjertet, alt løb rundt for mig, saaat jeg meente, at jeg vistnok maatte bede dem om at gaae bort igjen; dog stræbte jeg at samle al min Kraft; da Psalmen ophørte, og jeg skulde vende mig om for at tiltale dem, var jeg paa et hængende Haar styrtet omkuld, men jeg støttede mig ved Bordet og lænede mig mod Væggen.

57 As, for instance, Helge Bangsted, a young man on his first trip to Greenland in 1920, preparing to go with Knud Rasmussen on the Fifth Thule Expedition. In the following excerpt, he is on a congratulatory visit with the Greenlander Karl whose daughter is turning 18:

I threw myself down on the sleeping platform and rested my head against the duvets, while the coffee was cooking on the stove, which stands in the corner by the window, and the youngest son of the household, to the great amusement of all (myself included), entertained himself by sprinkling a thin strip of pee across the floor, while a dog was taking a shit and farting in the entrance. That is how it is! (…) Oh, all these lovely childish people, who are not children at all! (Diary from West Greenland (Bangsted 1920, 13 October, KT translation).

Original text: [J]eg væltede mig ned paa Briksen og lænede Hovedet mod Dynerne, mens Kaffen blev kogt paa Komfuret, der staar i Hjørnet ved Vinduet og Husets yngste Søn til alles (ogsaa til min!) store Moro forlystede sig med at pesse en tynd Stribe over hele Gulvet og en Hund sked og fes i Gangen. Saadan er det! (…) Aa alle disse dejlige barnlige Mennesker, der slet ikke er Børn!

58 Mondrup 2012a, Thisted 2012a.

59 See Thisted 2012a.

60 Ngai 2005: 89-125.

61 Dick 1995.

62 See Kleivan 2003: 106.

63 The name of a well-known Greenlandic cryolite mine. Probably the filmmakers just thought that it sounded 'Eskimo' and fun, and it was one of the only Greenlandic names that sounded even slightly familiar.

64 Kleivan 2003: 109.

65 Ibid.: 111.

66 Ibid.: 105.

67 See, for instance, the analysis of Nella Larsen's novel *Quicksand* (1928), Ngai 2005: 174-208.

68 Thomsen 1998, Rud (forthcoming).

69 Jensen 2001.

70 As it had been from the time the Greenlanders first began to discuss issues of identity and what it meant to be Greenlandic. From early on, the educated elite protested against the idea that only a seal hunter was a Greenlander and pointed to language as the common denominator; Berthelsen 1983, Langgård 2003.

71 Seiding 2013.

72 See, for instance, Thisted 2014.

73 Fanon 2014 [1952].

74 For example, see Mondrup 2004.

75 She debuted with a short story in 2012 and has since released the critically acclaimed novel Homo Sapienne, 2014. See also Thisted 2016a.

76 The poem 'Eskimuuara/Eskimother' is quoted in Greenlandic and English as recorded in Mondrup 2012: 87–88. Quoted with the permission of the author.

77 For modern perspectives on people as *languagers*, see Jørgensen 2010.

78 Thisted 2014.

79 Thorleifsen 2005.

80 Thisted 2017.

81 Scott 2014.

← CONTENTS