

‘Kvæði í Føroyskari Samtíð’

Exploring Ballads as Popular Culture and Heritage in
Contemporary Faroese Culture

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The candidate confirms that the work submitted is her own and that appropriate credit has been given where reference has been made to the work of others.

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Abstract

Faroese ballads are some of the oldest and most prominent features of a specifically Faroese cultural heritage and history. Before the development of Faroese orthography in the 19th century, these ballads and folktales were communicated orally only. The preservation and dissemination ballads have evolved from relying solely on the participation of singers and storytellers to being easily employed in contemporary cultural activities

Since the early 2000s, there has been a reinvigoration of the ballads in Faroese culture. The areas which this has been most prominent is in the Faroese heritage and tourism industry, education and music. Although there has been research on the ballads and as part of Faroese oral culture and on their linguistic significance, there has been relatively little research done on their implementation in contemporary Faroese culture.

As a focal point, this thesis investigates how the ballads have been repurposed in contemporary Faroese popular culture and what this means in terms of establishing and reaffirming this particular strand of Faroese cultural heritage. By combining the ballad material with qualitative research methods and interviews, the thesis draws together historical literature with the experiences and views presented by the people and institutions who today actively engage with ballads, with a focus on Faroese education and music. This thesis explores to what extent the ballads are still present within Faroese culture and how people are engaging with them in contemporary cultural practices.

The thesis concludes that if the ballads are to continue to be a dynamic part of Faroese lived experience, it is crucial that a continuous engagement with the ballads has to be supported by different means. This includes funding, research, and allowing the ballads to be repurposed and reimagined in Faroese culture.

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Introduction: Continuation and Adaptation of Ballads in Contemporary Faroese Culture

In April 2018 the government of the Faroe Islands, an archipelago of 18 small islands with just over 50,000 inhabitants¹ located in the North Atlantic between Iceland, Norway, and Scotland, agreed to officially support the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (Paris, 2003) (hereafter called CSICH).² The Faroe Islands only have an associated membership in UNESCO, as they cannot be full members due to not being a sovereign state in their own right. The Faroe Islands are an autonomous part of the Kingdom of Denmark, therefore, the inclusion of the Faroe Islands in the Convention is done by being included as part of Denmark, who ratified the Convention in October 2010.³ The Faroese UNESCO delegation had already submitted a motion in 2015 to the Faroese government to consider ratifying the principles of the convention, as the UNESCO

¹ According to Hagstova Føroyar (Statistics Faroe Islands, the national statistical authority of the Faroe Islands) the most recent number was 50.498, recorded in December 2017. Hagstova Føroyar, 'Fólkatal 2017', <<http://www.hagstova.fo/fo/lyklatal>> [Accessed April 2019].

² Løgmannsskrivstovan, *Løgtingsmál nr. 115/2017: Uppskot til samtyktar um at seta í gildi UNESCO sáttmálan um verju av siðaarvi frá 2003* (March 2018) <<http://www.logting.fo/files/casestate/22441/115.17%20U.t.s%20UNESCO%20sattmali%20fra%202003.pdf>> [Accessed September 2018].

UNESCO, 'Text of the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage' (Paris: 2003) <<https://ich.unesco.org/en/convention>> [Accessed April 2019].

³ The Faroese Government's agreement to ratify the Convention: Løgmannsskrivstovan, *Løgtingsmál nr. 115/2017: Uppskot til samtyktar um at seta í gildi UNESCO sáttmálan um verju av siðaarvi frá 2003* (Tórshavn: 2018) <<https://logting.fo/files/casestate/22441/115.17%20U.t.s%20UNESCO%20sattmali%20fra%202003.pdf>> [Accessed April 2019].

The promulgation for the Faroe Islands to be included in the Convention as part of Denmark: Løgmannsskrivstovan, *Bekendtgørelse om udvidelse til Færøerne af UNESCO-konvention af 17. oktober 2003 om beskyttelse af den immaterielle kulturarv*, (Tórshavn: 2019) <<https://logir.fo/Bekendtgorelse/2-af-28-01-2019-om-udvidelse-til-Faeroerne-af-UNESCOkonvention-af-17-oktober-2003-om>> [Accessed April 2019].

Denmark's activities in relation to the Convention: UNESCO, 'Denmark and the 2003 Convention', <<https://ich.unesco.org/en/state/denmark-DK>> [Accessed April 2019].

Finland's activities in relation to the Convention: UNESCO, 'Finland and the 2003 Convention', <<https://ich.unesco.org/en/state/finland-FI>> [Accessed April 2019].

Sweden's activities in relation to the Convention: UNESCO, 'Sweden and the 2003 Convention', <<https://ich.unesco.org/en/state/sweden-SE>> [Accessed April 2019].

Norway's activities in relation to the Convention: UNESCO, 'Norway and the 2003 Convention', <<https://ich.unesco.org/en/state/norway-NO>> [Accessed April 2019].

Iceland's activities in relation to the Convention: UNESCO, 'Iceland and the 2003 Convention', <<https://ich.unesco.org/en/state/iceland-IS>> [Accessed April 2019].

convention is an important tool in ensuring the ‘preservation and appreciation’ of traditions and intangible heritage.⁴ Greenland, which has a similar political status to the Faroe Islands, agreed to ratify the convention in 2009, leaving the Faroe Islands to be quite late in joining the other Northern countries to ratify the CSICH.⁵

The Faroese UNESCO delegation included the Faroese ballads and ring-dancing as some of the important parts of Faroese intangible heritage that should be preserved under the CSICH.⁶ It is even plausible to argue that they are the most distinctive and important part of Faroese intangible cultural heritage. Norwegian traditional dancing was inscribed in 2019 on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, so the Faroese ratification of the Convention was likewise able to include the ballads and ring-dance as part of the same list.⁷

Faroese ballads, or *kvæði*, are mostly composed in the Faroese language and are unique to the Faroe Islands.⁸ The ballads have their own set terminology in the Faroe Islands, and they are not commonly related to ‘singing’ as we know it from commonly known genres or other musical performances. The term *kvøða/kvøðing* is used to denote the way the ballad is performed vocally, which is a combination of singing and chanting, as opposed to the Faroese word *syngja*, which refers to singing.⁹ The collection of Faroese ballads encompass several hundred short or long, satirical, humorous, or epic narrative ballads, of which the earliest are believed to date back to the Middle Ages.¹⁰

⁴ The Faroese National Commission for UNESCO, *Áheitan á landsstýrismannin í mentamállum um at fáa UNESCO sáttmálan um verju av síðaarvi settan í gildi í Føroyum*, (Tórshavn: 2015) <<http://cdn.lms.fo/media/6483/img-604140911-0001.pdf>> [Accessed May 2019].

⁵ For Greenland’s activities in relation to the Convention: Greenland’s National Museum and Archives, ‘Intangible Cultural Heritage’. <<https://en.nka.gl/heritage/intangible-cultural-heritage/>> [Accessed February 2020].

⁶ Other examples mentioned are traditional boat building, working with wool and other traditions related to Faroese food.

⁷ UNESCO, ‘Practice of traditional music and dance in Setesdal, playing, dancing and singing (stev/stevjing)’, (2019) <<https://ich.unesco.org/en/RL/practice-of-traditional-music-and-dance-in-setesdal-playing-dancing-and-singing-stev-stevjing-01432>> [Accessed February 2020].

⁸ Some ballads in Faroese corpus are in Norwegian and Danish.

⁹ Other terms include:

Kvøðingarlag: Ballad singing/way of performing the ballads

Kvøðari/Kvøðarar: Person(s) singing/chanting a ballad

Stev: Dance step and rhythm

¹⁰ There is no exact number, but the largest collection of Faroese ballads is Svendt Grundtvig and Jørgen Bloch’s *Føroya Kvæði: Corpus Carminum Færoensium Vol. I-VIII*, edited by Grundtvig et al., Universitets-jubilæets danske samfunds skriftserie, 324, 332, 339, 341, 344, 347, 357, 368, 406, 420, 427, 438, 540, 559 (Copenhagen: Munksgaard, 1941-2003). There are eight volumes in this collection, the first six were published by C. Matras and N. Djurhuus between 1941 and 1972 and the two subsequent volumes were published in 1998-2003 by S. Gálvin and M. Chesnutt. The eight volumes contain 236 ballads. See also Christian Matras, *Svabos færøske visehaandskrifter. Udg. Fr Samfund til udgivelse af gammel nordisk litteratur ved Chr.*

At the beginning of the new millennium, there was a trend developing in repurposing the ballads in Faroese culture. This period was influenced by a culmination of events taking place in the Faroe Islands in the preceding years, both politically and culturally. At the International Ballad Conference in June 2015 in Tórshavn, the Faroese capital, literary scholar Malan Marnersdóttir described the ballads as being ‘the crown jewels in Faroese literature’¹¹ and considered that the ballads ‘[...] hava verið við til at mynda bæði høgtíðir og gerandisdag hjá føroyingum’ ([...] have been part of shaping special as well as every-day events in the Faroe Islands),¹² such that the ballads have a longstanding significance for the Faroe Islands. From these brief statements and the government’s official support of CSICH, the significance ascribed to the ballad tradition in Faroese culture can be gleaned: In contemporary Faroese culture, the Faroese ballads are seen as a prominent part of national history and heritage, a productive literary form and an important contributing factor to the ways Faroese people socialise, celebrate and understand themselves. However, considering that the Faroese government has now agreed to ratify the CSICH, it is evident that intangible heritage as a whole has become as relevant for the Faroe Islands as it has for its Nordic neighbours.¹³

Creating the Faroese: Political and cultural relationships

The Faroe Islands belong to the Kingdom of Denmark, but The Home Rule Act of March 1948 states:

The Faroe Islands have the status of a self-governing community within the Kingdom of Denmark. [...] Within the framework of this Act the Faroese People, through its elected representatives, the *Løgting*, and Executive

Matras (Copenhagen: Gyldendal, 1939). There are also several ballads that were composed after these publications. Some of these were compiled into two volumes in 1997-1999 by Sverri Egholm, *Nýggja Kvæðabókin, Vol I-II* (Tórshavn: Lindin, 1996-1999). There were about 40 additional ballads in these two volumes.

For more on the dating of the Faroese ballads, see Michael Chesnutt, ‘Bevussrímur and Bevusar tættir: A Case Study of Icelandic Influence on Faroese Balladry’, in *Opuscula*, 12 (Bibliotheca Arnarnagana, 44) (2005), pp. 399-437, pp. 408-9.

¹¹ Malan Marnersdóttir in the opening lecture to the ballad conference titled *Og dansurin gongur...*, Tórshavn, Nordic House 20-25 July 2015.

¹² Sólfinn Hansen, *Endurreisn Kvæðanna: Um Støðufesti í Føroyskum Skaldskapi* (Tórshavn: Faro University Press, 2006) p. 9. See also Jóan Pauli Joensen, *I Ærlige Brudefolk. Bryllup på Færøerne* (Copenhagen: Museum Tusulanums Forlag, 2003) pp. 222-230 for the Faroese ballad and chain dance in relation to wedding celebrations.

¹³ For CSICH and general UNESCO related projects in the Nordic countries, see for example Marianne Holm Pedersen, ‘Levende kultur – en fortegnelse over immateriel kulturarv i Danmark’, *Magasin fra Det Kongelige Bibliotek* 4 (2017), pp. 62-70, Gro B Ween, ‘Protection of Sámi intangible cultural heritage and intellectual property rights and its relation to identity politics in a postcolonial Norway’, in *Intellectual Property, Cultural Property and Intangible Cultural Heritage* (London: Routledge, 2017) pp. 157-173, Tone Honningsvåg Erlien, ‘New Methods for Dissemination of Intangible Cultural Heritage – Transmission of and Participation in Dance Traditions in Norway’, in *Open Heritage*, H. Mellemsether, M. Iancu eds. (Sibio, Romania: Editura ASTRA Museum, 2016), pp 97-120, and Sigurjón Baldur Hafsteinsson, ‘Museum politics and turf-house heritage.’ *Þjóðarspejilinn* (Reykjavik: Háskóli Íslands, 2010), pp. 266-273.

established by the latter, the *Landsstýrið*, takes over, within the Unity of the Realm, the administration and government of Faroese affairs as indicated in this Act.¹⁴

Faroese has officially been the language of the Faroe Islands and internal affairs are solely governed by the Faroese Løgtingið (parliament) and Landsstýri (government) and the Faroe Islands now hold considerable political autonomy, whilst also being considered part of the Danish kingdom.¹⁵ The Faroe Islands do not have full membership in the EU, apart from through their association with Denmark, so the relationship with the EU is largely governed by the Fisheries Agreement (1977) and the Free Trade Agreement (1997, amended 1998, 1999, 2001, 2002, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2010).¹⁶ In 1948, there was a referendum on whether the Faroe Islands should become independent from Denmark, which resulted in a majority vote of remaining part of the Danish kingdom.¹⁷ The Faroe Islands were struggling to rebuild after the economic crash when the fishing industry collapsed in 1992 and the Faroe Islands had to rely on financial aid from Denmark.¹⁸ They are still in the process of paying it back. In 2001 there was supposed to be a public vote about another referendum on the Faroe Islands separating from Denmark, but it was cancelled at the last minute due to disagreement between the Danish government and the *Løgting*.¹⁹ At this point, the Faroe Islands also still faced issues with being recognised as a nation separate from Denmark, as was emphasised by the Danish

¹⁴ Árni Olafsson, 'International status of the Faroe Islands', in *Nordic Journal of International Law*, vol. 51 (1982), pp. 29-38, pp. 29-30. <https://brill.com/view/journals/nord/51/1/article-p29_6.xml> [Accessed February 2020]. For the Home Rule Act, see Statsministeriet, *Lov om Færøernes hjemmestyre*, Act no. 137 of 23. March 1948.

<<https://logting.elektron.fo/logkjak/logir/Heimastyrilog/Heimastyrilogin%20donsk%20-%20LOV%20nr%20137%20af%2023-03-1948.htm>> [Accessed May 2015]

¹⁵ A more detailed description can be found in Peter Kivisto and Östen Wahlbeck, 'Debating Multiculturalism in the Nordic Welfare States', in *Debating Multiculturalism in the Nordic Welfare States*, Peter Kivisto and Östen Wahlbeck (eds.) (London: Palgrave, 2013), pp. 1-22, p.10.

¹⁶ Fisheries Agreement from 1977 allowed the members of the European Economic Community (Rome treaty 1957) to fish in Faroese waters: Føroya Løgting, *Framhald av fyrbilsskipan um rættindi hjá fiskiførum frá felagsmarknaðarlondunum at veiða á sjóðki Føroya*, no. 1198-21 2. August, 1977. <<https://logting.elektron.fo/lgt/FrameYvirilit.asp?ar=1977>> [Accessed May 2015]. The Free Trade Agreement: The Council of the European Union, 97/126/EC: *Council Decision of 6 December 1996 concerning the conclusion of an agreement between the European Community, of the one part, and the Government of Denmark and the Home Government of the Faroe Islands, of the other part*, Official Journal L 053 (Brussels: 1996) <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?qid=1582975864172&uri=OJ:L_1997_053_R_0001_001> [Accessed August 2018]. The Faroe Islands are not considered an OCT (Overseas Countries and Territories) as for example Greenland is, although they have the same level of authority within the Danish Kingdom.

¹⁷ For more details on the referendum and the outcome, see Tina Adele Hoff, *Danmark og Færøerne: En historisk undersøgelse af udviklingen i relationen mellem Danmark og Færøerne 1850-2010* (Copenhagen: Museum Tusulanums Forlag, 2012), pp. 101-102.

¹⁸ Jákup Thorsteinsson and Sjúrdur Rasmussen, 'Rigsfællesskabet mellem Danmark og Færøerne', in *Folketingets Festskrift*, Ole Stig Andersen et al. (eds.) (Copenhagen: Gyldendal, 1999), pp. 491-532, p. 498.

¹⁹ Hoff, p. 110. For more on the Faroe-Danish political relationship, see also Rebecca Adler-Nissen 'The Faroe Islands: Independence Dreams, Globalist Separatism and the Europeanization of Postcolonial Home Rule', in *Cooperation and Conflict*, Vol 49, No. 1 (2014) pp 55-79.

government referring to the Faroe Islands as a 'community within the Danish nation' during the discussion on the Faroese Referendum in 2001.²⁰

The Faroe Islands have never been an independent country, and John F. West writes that the Faroe Islands were 'among the last territories in the world to be discovered and peopled'.²¹ The Faroe Islands were an early Norwegian settlement from the 8th century up until the 16th century, when Norway, together with its dependencies the Faroe Islands, Greenland, and Iceland, became part of the Danish kingdom following the collapse of the Kalmar Union in 1523.²² Norway was then transferred to Sweden after the Treaty of Kiel in 1814, whilst The Faroe Islands, Iceland, and Greenland remained under Danish governance.²³ Norwegian records show that whilst being subjected to the overall rule of Norway, the Faroe Islands were largely a self-governing entity; a Faroese political unit was established whose *løgting* (principal parliament) was led by a *løgmaður* (head of parliament) and regularly met on *Tinganes* in Tórshavn.²⁴ Geographically distant from Denmark and historically exposed not only to Danish but also Norwegian rule, the emergence of a specific Faroese cultural and political development is marked by centuries of shifting political relationships and discussions of identity, language, and belonging.²⁵ The ballads have rarely been at the very centre of these debates, but have nevertheless been important in establishing a part of Faroese culture that has largely grown and developed within a specific Faroese framework. From being shared orally between members of the local community, the ballads are now also preserved in archives (written and audio), as well as in publications. The Faroe

²⁰ Adler-Nissen, p. 64 and Hoff, pp. 111-112.

²¹ John F. West, *Faroe: The emergence of a Nation* (London: C. Hurst & Company, 1972), p. 4. There are studies to suggest that the earliest settlements on the Faroe Islands date back to the pre-Viking era, to around 4th-6th century. See M. J. Church, S. V. Arge, K. J. Edwards, P. L. Ascough, J. M. Bond, G. T. Cook, S. J. Dockrill, A. J. Dugmore, T. H. McGovern, C. Nesbitt, I. A. Simpson, 'The Vikings were not the first colonizers of the Faroe Islands', in *Quaternary Science Reviews*, Vol. 77 (2013), pp. 228-232. <<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0277379113002230>> [Accessed July 2020].

²² Harald Gustafsson, 'A State that Failed?', in *Scandinavian Journal of History*, 32/3 (2006), pp.205-220, p. 210. A study into the genetic diversity in the Faroe Islands from 2005 found similarities between DNA of Faroese and Norwegian men, while the female DNA taken from Faroese subjects was found to have Celtic origins. See the study here: Thomas D Als, Tove H Jorgensen, Anders D Børnglum, Peter A Petersen, Ole Mors & August G Wang, 'Highly discrepant proportions of female and male Scandinavian and British Isles ancestry within the isolated population of the Faroe Islands', in *European Journal of Human Genetics*, 14 (2005), pp. 497-504 <<https://www.nature.com/articles/5201578>> [Accessed November 2019].

²³ More on the governance of Norway can be found in Sigurd A. Aarnes, 'Myths and Heroes in Nineteenth-Century Nation Building in Norway', in *Romantic Nationalism in Europe*, J.C. Eade ed. (Canberra: HRC Australian National University, 1983) pp 101-114, p. 102.

²⁴ Jonathan Wylie, *The Faroe Islands: Interpretations of History* (Kentucky: The University Press of Kentucky, 1987), p. 9.

²⁵ West, p. vi, Hans Jacob Debes, 'The Formation of a Nation: The Faroe Islands', in *Ethnicity and Nation Building in the Nordic World*, Svend Tägil (ed.) (Illinois: Southern Illinois University Press, 1995), pp. 63-82, p. 67. See also Hans Jacob Debes, 'Omkring Formationen af en Nation', in *Fróðskaparrit*, vol. 41 (1993), pp. 17-54, pp. 21-22.

Islands have throughout history had a conflicted relationship with self-representation and autonomy, which Jørgen Bærenholdt sums up here:

For the Faroese people themselves, writing the history of the Faroes is loaded with tensions over national questions, attitudes to which were ambivalent throughout most of the twentieth century. [...] There is no doubt that the national question has caused bitter conflicts among Faroese politicians and between Faroese and Danish politicians, thus making the authoritative historical self-presentation of the Faroes as a society problematic.²⁶

As Bærenholdt suggests, the concept of Faroese identity has always been considered *in relation to* the relationship with Denmark. Firouz Gaini also argues that the relationship between the Faroe Islands and Denmark remains unresolved 'and always blurs the vibrant debate on Faroese cultural and national identities' in that Faroese cultural identity has seldom been analysed independent of the influence of the Faroe-Danish relationship.²⁷ John Mitchinson also argues that the relationship with the Danish language has had a huge impact on the development of a Faroese written standard and the emergence of the Faroe Islands as a largely monolingual society.²⁸ Furthermore, there is also the movement of people between Denmark and the Faroe Islands (for education, work, love) that continues to inform (but not necessarily define) identity and culture for many Faroese people.²⁹

The ballads are an important part of analysing and determining how Faroese culture has developed. They continue to be identifiers of a Faroese identity. However, dissemination and continuation of ballads and the Faroese ballad tradition have been influenced by the relationships the Faroe Islands has

²⁶ Jørgen O. Bærenholdt, *Coping with Distances: Producing North Atlantic Societies* (Oxford: Berghan Books, 2011), p.79. These tensions also include the Faroese practice of pilot whaling, which has received criticism from, for example, the European Union, the Danish government and animal welfare groups such as Greenpeace and Sea-shepherd. For more on this, see for example Jóan Pauli Joensen, *Pilot whaling in the Faroe Islands: History, ethnography, symbol*, Vol. 51 (Tórshavn: Faroese University Press, 2009), in particular, pp. 234-249 discuss this in detail. For additional literature on pilot-whaling in the Faroe Islands and in the North Atlantic, see also Eyðun Andreassen, 'Ordinary Europeans from Northern Norway to the Mediterranean: On gender and identity on the Faroe Islands', in *Making Europe in Nordic Contexts*, Periti J. Anttonen (ed.) (Turku, Finland: University of Turku, 1996) pp. 77-104, and 'Epilogue', in Karen Oslund, *Iceland Imagined: Nature, Culture and Storytelling in the North Atlantic* (Seattle: University of Washington University Press), pp. 152-170.

²⁷ Firouz Gaini, 'Cultural Rhapsody in Shift: Faroese Culture and Identity in the Age of Globalization', in *Among the Islanders of North: An Anthropology of the Faroe Islands* (Tórshavn: Faroese University Press, 2011) pp 132-162, p.132.

²⁸ John Mitchinson, *Danish in the Faroe Islands: A Post-Colonial Perspective*, unpublished PhD thesis (UCL, 2012), pp. 286-287. This is, however, problematised further by Mitchinson on pp. 43-49, as there is an ongoing debate on whether the Faroe Islands are *bilingual*, i.e. Danish is a form of second, native language, or if Danish is seen as a *foreign* language, but compulsory in schools. See also John Mitchinson, 'The Saming of the Few: Post-Colonialism without the "Other"', in the Faroe Islands, in *Scandinavica*, 49.2 (2010), pp. 6-26, Karoline Kühl, 'Translocated Danish in Northern Europe: The case of Faroe Danish and Dano-Norwegian', in *Sociolinguistica* 31.1 (2017), pp. 57-72.

²⁹ Sigrí M. Gaíni, 'Tur/Retur DK', in *Frændafundur 9*, Höskuldur Práinsson and Hans Andrias Sølvará (eds.) (Reykjavík: Hugvísindastofum, 2018), pp. 187-198, pp. 187-188.

with surrounding countries. The ballads have been incorporated into Faroese society throughout history, and, as this thesis will argue, will continue to be part of a contemporary and popular culture in the Faroe Islands.

1. Ballads in Contemporary Faroese Culture: Background and Literature Review

The Faroe Islands are, despite their geographical remoteness, a culturally thriving part of Scandinavia and Western Europe with a developed infrastructure connecting them directly to Iceland, Denmark, Norway United Kingdom and other parts of mainland Europe.³⁰ Faroese ballads have long been part of cultural and social life, but also a part of a unique Faroese heritage.³¹ They have been intimately connected to the Faroe Islands' history of settlement, heritage and linguistic development and have been a continuous presence in Faroese culture.

As the political initiative of the UNESCO nomination shows, the ballads are regarded as a domestic asset worthy of safeguarding *and* as deserving formal recognition on an international scale. Such strengthening and promoting of a living culture has outward-facing implications that resonate with the recent growing international interest in Nordic locations and narratives.³² Building on this popularity helps to bolster tourism and the local economy; it also facilitates the export of talent and the wider dissemination of cultural products beyond a limited home market.³³ These developments can in turn have an impact on and intensify the population's engagement with traditions that also become part of a commodified heritage and become commercially attractive.³⁴ This can further

³⁰ A ferry regularly sails between Denmark, The Faroe Islands and Iceland, whilst the national airline (Atlantic Airways) and Scandinavian Airlines have daily flights to Denmark, Norway, Iceland, UK, France and Spain. For export and shipping infrastructure, see Bærenholdt, pp. 123-124.

³¹ Annika Christensen, 'Performing (Hi)Stories: Narrative elements in Faroese Balladry and Ring Dance', in *Events and Narratives in Language*, Janusz Badio (ed.) (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2016), pp. 45-48, p. 46.

³² Introduction to *Beyond Borealism: New Perspectives on the North*, Ian Giles et al. (London: Norvik Press, 2016), p. 10.

³³ Joshua John Green, *Music Making in the Faroes: The Experience of Music-making in the Faroes and Making Metal Faroese* (Tórshavn: Sprotin, 2013), pp. 195-197, and p. 221.

³⁴ The Faroese examples will be discussed in detail in Chapters 5 and 6. For the commodification and commercialisation of heritage and culture more broadly, see Theodore Adorno, 'Culture Industry Reconsidered', in *The Culture Industry*, J. M. Bernstein (ed.) (London: Routledge, 2001), pp. 98-106, Arjun Appadurai, *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), and Britt Baille, Afroditi Chatzoglou and Shadia Taha, 'Packaging the Past: The Commodification of Heritage', in *Heritage Management*, vol. 3 (1) (2010), pp. 51-71. <<https://doi.org/10.1179/hma.2010.3.1.51>> [Accessed July 2020].

problematize the relationships between heritage, cultural policies and expressions of (individual and collective) cultural identity, as it has for other forms of identity expressions.³⁵

As these introductory observations make clear, the ballads are at the heart of a complex case of interlocking discourses, sensibilities and practices which have energised communities, politics and culture on the Faroe Islands. The case of the Faroese ballads as enduring and generative, invites further scrutiny and exploration, particularly from a contemporary point of view. It has been the incentive for undertaking the research upon which this thesis is based. This study is a historically informed exploration of the meaning and uses of ballads with a particular focus on *contemporary* Faroese culture. The use of the term 'contemporary' is in this thesis being understood as covering the last two decades, so from the early 2000s to the present day.³⁶

In this chapter, there will also be a brief explanation of Faroese ballad categories and ring-dance. The section here also serves to provide background information on the practice of the ballad performances, with some historical background of the dance itself, as this will not be discussed in chapter 4, which focuses on the dancing societies. For those who are not familiar with the ballads or the ring-dance, this will provide a historical and cultural context.³⁷

As there has already been a lot of research on the ballads and their development from being passed on orally to being considered an important part of Faroese literature, this chapter will include an in-depth literature review, showcasing the direction of the current research on ballads.³⁸ This literature review will be used to define the present state of research into the Faroese ballads and act

³⁵ This is discussed in Soo Hee Lee and Tajana E Byrne, 'Politicizing Dance: Cultural Policy Discourses in the UK and Germany', in *Dance and politics*, Alexandra Kolb (ed.) (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2011), pp. 281-304, see especially p. 182.

³⁶ This is in part due to getting an insight into ballads in 21st century Faroe Islands and in part due to the new material that emerged in the early 2000s in popular music.

³⁷ It is not going into depth with ballad formulas and metres, for that see Eyðun Andreassen, 'Strofeformer, rytme og metrum I baladediktningen', in *Nordatlantiske foredrag* (Tórshavn: Norðurlandahúsið, 1991), pp. 125-131, H. Grüner-Nielsen, *De færøske kvadmelodiers tonalitet i middelalderen: belyst gennem Nutidsoverleveringen* (Copenhagen: E. Munksgaard, 1945), Micheal Chesnutt and Kaj Larsen, 'De ældste færøske kvadhåndskrifter, vol. 1', in *UNIFOL. Årsberetning* (Copenhagen: Institut for folkemindevidenskab, 1990), Patricia Conroy, 'Oral Composition in Faroese Ballads', in *Jahrbuch für Volksliedforschung*, vol. 25 (1980), pp. 34-50, and also Conroy, *Faroese Ballads and Oral-Formulaic Composition*, PhD Thesis (Berkeley: University of California, 1974).

³⁸ Given the constraints and limited space of a thesis, the literature review will focus on the research that has in any way been relevant for this particular project, and therefore there is evidently some works that I do not discuss in any details. I have provided for this by adding these to footnotes where relevant.

as a stepping stone for the main arguments of this thesis. Given that this is a large area of research and there is still much to come in the future, it is important to also define the limitations of the research that has already been done. This review is, however, also an acknowledgement of the immense work that people have done before and without it, it would not be possible to create an engaging and fruitful debate. The Faroese ballads have been (and still are) characterised by their prominence in defining Faroese culture. Therefore this review will also include brief historiography of the ballads, but with a particular focus on the academic discussion.

1.1 Ballad types and categories

In the Faroe Islands, there are broadly speaking two types of ballads: *Kvæði* and *tættir*. The distinctive characteristics that distinguish the two are the length and the topic being narrated, whether it is for example based on Icelandic saga literature or a humorous event that has taken place in the local village. Melody, verse structure and performance remain the same.

In English, *kvæði* is translated as a *heroic* or *long* ballad. The heroic ballads are of considerable length, running up to several hundred verses and they usually have a narrative structure with multiple themes and divisions.³⁹ A prime example is *Sjúrdar Kvæði*, which is comprised of 566 verses and is divided into four main narratives: *Regin Smiðjur*, *Brynhild*, *Høgni* and *Aldrias*.⁴⁰ They usually feature epic exploits, historical events and mythical legends. *Sjúrdar Kvæði* is for example based on the Germanic hero Sigurd and narrates events taken from the 13th-century *Nibelungenlied* and 14th-century *Völsunga Saga*.⁴¹ Most of the Faroese heroic ballads draw on events and people from Icelandic sagas and wider known legends and myths from other European countries, for example, Norway and Scotland.⁴²

³⁹ Mortan Nolsøe, 'Some Problems Concerning the Development of the Faroese Heroic Ballad', in *Jahrbuch für Volksliedforschung*, Vol. 17 (1972) pp 87-93, pp. 88-89.

⁴⁰ 'Sjúrdá Kvæðið', in *Føroya Kvæði*, vol. 1, Dánjal Niclasen, (ed.) (Tórshavn: Bóagarður, 1998), p. 177. This particular version is from Napoleon Nolsøe's collection from 1840: *Qyðabók um fodna Manna Roisnir frá fisti Findartui. Irt i Féreiun o goimt i Huanum ät okkara Døvum. Skriva úr gomlum Bløvum äv Candidatus medicinæ & chirurgiæ N. Nolsøe*. (Copenhagen: 1840).

⁴¹ Jonathan Wylie and David Margolin, *The Ring of Dancers: Images of Faroese Culture* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1981) p. 69; Hansen, p. 18.

⁴² Nolsøe (1972), p. 88; S. Hansen, pp 16-18.

However, the function of the heroic ballads was more complex than merely telling stories from the countries surrounding the Faroe Islands, for, as Jonathan Wylie and David Margolin argue, the 'heroic ballads provided and controlled exposure to kinds of behaviour inappropriate to everyday village life. At the same time, they served to maintain the concept of membership in western Scandinavia'.⁴³ The longer, heroic ballads did not narrate local village life in the Faroe Islands, but they were, however, a crucial way for Faroese people to reimagine and engage with culturally significant relationships to the wider world.

Referred to as jocular or short ballads, *tættir* are shorter and often considered to be a variation of the *kvæði*, since the singing and melody are similar and they are performed in the same way.⁴⁴ Besides the length, the main difference between *kvæði* and *tættir* is that whilst the *kvæði* conceptualise historic events and the figures of myth and legends, the shorter *tættir* 'are produced locally...[and] deal almost exclusively with Faroese topics, feature identifiably Faroese people and place names, and portray traditional Faroese customs'.⁴⁵ Hammershaimb writes that these ballads were often used as entertainment in the small Faroese communities, where individuals, events or anything that was going on in the village would be portrayed in a humorous and often mocking, manner.⁴⁶

As S. Hansen suggests, there are several Faroese ballads (perhaps in particular *tættir*) which suggest that knowledge about Faroese customs and life is needed for them to make sense.⁴⁷ An example is *Frunatáttur*, which was composed by the Faroese seaman and poet Nólsoyar Páll (1766-1808).⁴⁸ *Frunatáttur* mentions real persons that people were able to recognise when the ballad was being performed. It refers to mundane village gossip: what are local trends, who is trying to seduce whom. Compared to the longer *kvæði*, *Frunatáttur* has only twenty-one verses, so is very short in comparison. This ballad takes up several issues that originate from Faroese society, both local romantic relationships and trends amongst local girls.

⁴³ Wylie and Margolin, p. 69.

⁴⁴ Wylie and Margolin, p. 68.

⁴⁵ Seán Galvin, 'Tættir (Faroese Satiric Ballads) as Mirror Images of a Life Cycle', in *Jahrbuch für Volksliedforschung*, Vol. 36 (1991) pp 78-82, p. 78. <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/847619>> [Accessed February 2015].

⁴⁶ V.U. Hammershaimb, *Færøsk Anthologi Vol. I* (Copenhagen: S.L. Møllers Bogtrykkeri, 1947 [1891]), p. L.

⁴⁷ S. Hansen, p. 55

⁴⁸ Nólsoyar Páll, *Frunatáttur: Ein skemtirima eftir Nólsoyar Páll*, William Heinesen (ed.) (Tóshavn: Estra, 1967). See appendix 1 for the first two stanzas.

The jocular ballads concerned themselves with local events and people, and were often composed for special occasions, very often to ridicule an inhabitant of a village ‘whose behaviour departs significantly and presumably consistently from the norm’.⁴⁹ Although in *Fruntatáttur* there are just innocent references to fashion and the feeble pursuits of a bachelor, *tættir* worked as a form of public gossip, through which people could collectively make fun of each other and put the victim’s shame on public display without it having any real consequences: the person was not directly confronted by his or her questionable behaviour, the jocular ballad was used mainly for entertainment purposes. It worked as a form of soft control on people’s behaviour as having a jocular ballad to one’s name was not a particular honour.⁵⁰

1.1.1 Ballad categories

According to *Types of the Scandinavian Ballad* (TSB), the Faroese ballads in *Corpus Carminum Færoensium* are split into six main categories. The two categories that the majority of the ballads fall under are ‘Ballads of Chivalry’ (Riddarakvæði) and ‘Heroic Ballads’ (Kappakvæði) and in the TSB catalogue, these are the ones that have the most subcategories and are therefore the most varied categories of the ballads. Even though two ballads might belong to the same category and share an overall theme, they might differ in the subject matter. For example, *Ríki Álvur* (TSB D 128; CCF 32 A) and *Biðilin* (TSB D130; CCF 115) are ballads of chivalry, but these tales of seduction belong to two very different sub-categories.⁵¹ *Flúgvandi biðil* (CCF 127), is a ballad of chivalry, but it also has supernatural elements to it.⁵² Although most of the ballads of chivalry are based in sub-categories relating to courtship and seduction, this category also includes the subcategory ‘Novelistic Ballads’. These are

⁴⁹ Wylie and Margolin, p. 69

⁵⁰ There are several collections of these shorter, jocular ballads, see for example Marius Johannessen, *Tættir vol. I-VI* (Tórshavn: Grønalíð, 1978 [166-1974]), *Grør so Fagurt*, J. Enni et al. (eds.), (Tórshavn: Føroya Skúlabókagrunnur, 1980), .

⁵¹ *The Types of the Scandinavian Medieval Ballad: A Descriptive Catalogue*, ed. by Bengt R. Jonsson, Svale Solheim and Eva Danielson (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1978) p. 111. *Ríki Álvur*, for example, is listed under ‘attempted seduction leads to marriage’. The character Helvar attempts to force Helga, the daughter of Álvur, to be his mistress. Helvar gets wounded by Álvur’s son in law Geyti, and Helga nurses Helvar back to health, which in the end leads to marriage and a happy ending. The ballad *Biðilin* belongs to the sub-category ‘seduction does not lead to marriage’. A man tries to seduce a young woman but fails miserably as her brothers catch him in the act and threaten to kill him. Unlike Helvar, the young man in *Biðilin* is more worried about keeping his limbs than about keeping the young woman. These ballads are about men trying to force women into some form of a relationship but are categorised based on whether this ‘seduction’ works out in their favour or not. It can be debated whether these acts of attempted rape can be referred to as chivalrous, but this category does include ballads whose subject revolves around romantic or sexual relationships, forced or not.

⁵² Tóta Árnadóttir, ‘Den flyvende bejler - historie og sammenhæng’, in *Ballads – new approaches. Kvæði – nýggj sjónarmið*, M. Marnersdóttir et al. (eds.) (Tórshavn: Faroe University Press, 2018), pp. 261-292.

ballads with transnational epic or fairy tale motifs, for example, *Tístrams Táttur* (TSB D 386; CCF 110) which is based on the story of the Cornish knight Tristan and the Irish princess Isolde, a 12th-century legend that has figured in Thomas of Britain's Old French poem *Tristan*.⁵³

The other large main category 'heroic ballads' comprise ballads of champions in battles and conflicts with other formidable opponents, their relatives or supernatural beings. *Jallgríms Kvæði* (TSB E 20; CCF 19 A and C) is described as 'warriors successfully defending their countries against invading king are killed by giant'.⁵⁴ This is a long ballad, 83 verses in total. The heroic ballads often include violent events. The 79th verse, for example, that describes Jallgrím's death:

Risin sipaði jarnstongina
við so miklari ferð,
Jallgrímur fekk so ónt eitt slag,
at heilin dreiv á jørð.

The giant threw the iron rod,
with such incredible force,
Jallgrímur got such a hit,
That his brain spilt on the ground

Giants are recurring supernatural beings in the Faroese heroic ballads, often acting as the opponent to the hero. *Stulku Táttur* (TSB E 117, CCF 94) chronicles Torstein's battle with a female giant: 'He saves himself by praying to Saint Olav and promising to serve him all his life if only he defeats the giant. He manages to kill her, but after this, his personality is changed'.⁵⁵ *Skrímlið* (TSB E 113; CCF 90) also tells the tale of a battle between a man and a giant, but even though this is a battle of life and death, it takes place on a chessboard. A farmer agrees to play chess with a giant with their lives at stake. The farmer wins, but instead of paying with his life, the giant fulfils the farmer's requirements of 'good health, vineyards and a palace'.⁵⁶

The other categories in the TSB catalogue are 'Ballads of the Supernatural' (*Kvæði um pátrúgv*), 'Legendary Ballads' (*Halgikvæði*), 'Historical Ballads'

⁵³ Norris J. Lacy et al. (eds.), *The New Arthurian Encyclopedia: New edition* (New York: Routledge, 2005) p. 400. See also 'Tístrams Táttur', in V.U. Hammershaimb, *Færøsk Anthologi Vol. I* (Copenhagen: S.L. Møllers Bogtrykkeri, 1947 [1891]), pp. 216-222.

⁵⁴ *The Types of the Scandinavian Ballad*, p. 211-212.

⁵⁵ *The Types of the Scandinavian Ballad*, p. 249.

⁵⁶ *The Types of the Scandinavian Ballad*, p. 248.

(*Søgukvæði*) and ‘Jocular Ballads’ (*Skemtikvæði/Tættir*). The legendary ballads deal with religious themes, often describing biblical characters or events, for example, *Mariu Vísa Fyrri* (TSB B 2; CCF 149), which is about Mary’s meeting with the Archangel Gabriel and the birth of Jesus Christ.⁵⁷ Ballads of the supernatural deal with magical events, otherworldly beings and how humans navigate the supernatural.⁵⁸ There are not many Faroese ballads in this category and they are primarily about a man or woman being transformed by magic. *Grímur í Fjallinum* (TSB A 15; CCF 54) and *Hindin* (TSB A 21; CCF 135) are both about a king’s son being transformed into an animal by his stepmother, whilst *Krypilin á Vatnsøyri* (TSB A 37; CCF 147) is also about a young man who has been transformed into a ‘cripple’ (*krypil*) by his stepmother and has the enchantment broken by the love from a young woman.⁵⁹ There is only one Faroese ballad in the category of historical ballads.⁶⁰ *Margretu kvæði* (TSB C 6, C 22; CCF 77) is about the Norwegian princess Margaret, also known as the Maid of Norway, the heir to the Scottish throne after her deceased grandfather, King Alexander II. The ballad tells a story inspired by the ‘false Margaret’, who was a woman that tried to impersonate the real princess Margaret, who had died in 1290 in Orkney. In the Faroese ballad, the impersonator is the true princess, but she is still burned on the stake in 1301 by King Haakon V.⁶¹ *Eyðuns Ríma* (TSB C 23; CCF 77 A: II, B: III, C: III, D) is about the execution of Audun Hestakorn in 1302 due to his betrayal of Margreta.⁶²

All the Faroese ballads that are *tættir* are in the category of ‘Jocular Ballads’ (*Skemtikvæði/Tættir*). Although almost all of the Faroese *tættir* come under this category, only a very few are included in the TSB catalogue.

In addition to these categories, it is also worth keeping in mind that there are several ballads in the Faroese ballad repertoire that are not listed in TSB and many of these are in a non- Faroese language (Danish and Norwegian, for example). *Grindavísan* (not in TSB or CCF) for example, is a ballad that pays homage to the

⁵⁷ *The Types of the Scandinavian Ballad*, p. 49.

⁵⁸ S. Hansen, p. 56.

⁵⁹ *The Types of the Scandinavian Ballad*, p. 31-33.

⁶⁰ S. Hansen, p. 56

⁶¹ Rosalind Kay Marshall, *Scottish Queens, 1034-1714* (East Lothian: Tuckwell, 2003), pp. 30-31.

⁶² *The Types of the Scandinavian Ballad*, pp 69-70.

Faroese tradition of hunting pilot whales.⁶³ *Grindavísan* was composed in Danish by the chief administrative officer in the Faroe Islands, Christian Pløyen (1803-1867) and continues to be performed in Danish today. *Grindavísan* was therefore composed using the tradition of the Faroese ballads, but some ballads have been adapted from songs and melodies from elsewhere.⁶⁴

It is also possible to categorise the ballads according to the area (historical and geographical) in which they are set, to see how widely the ballads cover significant events that take place outside of the Faroe Islands. For example, *Gylta Bók* (The Golden Book) is the common name for a collection of ballads that narrate events taking place in countries that neighbour the Faroe Islands. The official title of this collection is *Føroysk Kvæði um Brøgd Norðmanna Ættarinnar úti og Heima*, which translates into 'Faroese Ballads about the Deeds of Norse Descendants abroad and at Home'.⁶⁵ The ballads are divided according to the geographical locations in which the ballads are set, which are the Faroe Islands, Iceland, Greenland, Norway and the United Kingdom. Jóannes Patursson writes that in addition to the subject matter, these ballads also illustrate the formulaic differences between some of the Faroese ballads and that they are popular ballads to dance to.⁶⁶

1.1.2 Faroese ring-dance

Specific events and gatherings usually include *Føroyskan Dans* (Faroese ring-dance), the Faroese ring-dance that traditionally accompanies the ballads. When performing the ring-dance, the participants create a big ring or chain, lock arms and move in a ring by stepping two steps to the left and one step to the right or back. While the ballad is performed and the circle is moving, the dancers actively stomp their feet with every step, creating the rhythm of the ballad.⁶⁷ The ballad meter plays a significant role in determining the rhythm and tempo of the ballad as it is

⁶³ Jústines Olsen, Ólavur Sjúrdarberg, Valborg Rasmussen, *Grindavísan av Christian Pløyen* (Tórshavn: Føroya Skúlabókagrunnur, 2004) p. 28.

⁶⁴ *Sinklars Visa*, for example, is a ballad that has been adapted from the Norwegian poetic ballad *Zinklars Vise*. It was composed by Norwegian poet Edward Storm (1749-1794) in 1781 and chronicles the travels of George Sinclair and his defeat during the Kalmar War in the Battle of Kringen in 1612, where Norwegian peasants defeated a force of Scottish mercenaries led by George Sinclair, a nephew of the Earl of Caithness under the commander of Lieutenant Colonel Alexander Ramsay. See also Hans P.S. Krag, ed. by Per A. Holst, *The Battle of Kringen and the Scottish Incursion in 1612* (Stavanger: Per A. Holst Forlag, 2012 [1838]).

⁶⁵ Jóannes Patursson, *Føroysk Kvæðið um Brøgd Norðmanna Ættarinnar Úti og Heima* (Tórshavn, Einars Offset, 1979 [1925]), p. 5.

⁶⁶ Patursson (1979 [1925]), p. 162.

⁶⁷ S. Hansen, p. 69

being performed.⁶⁸The ballads are performed without the help of any instrument, so body and voice become the source from which words, melody and rhythm originate.⁶⁹ It is also worth noting that even though the dance itself is simple, many factors are necessary for a ring-dance to be enjoyable and to move smoothly; the movements of the body are just as important as how the ballad is being performed.⁷⁰ Keeping the ring-dance in order was already a concern in the early 20th century when Jakob Jakobsen wrote a short article on how the ring-dance performance should be kept intact, namely his 'Dansur og Kvøðing' published in 1904 by the student newspaper in Copenhagen, *Várskoti*.⁷¹ The beginning of the ballad is always started by stepping the left foot to the left, and all subsequent verses should be started on the left foot. Jakobsen also refers to the phrase 'at fáa orið undir fótin', literally meaning getting the word under your foot.⁷² This refers to the relationship between the rhythm created by the stepping of the feet and the rhythm of the ballad itself. The bodies and the voices have to work together in a strictly harmonious fashion. If each verse is begun on the left foot it helps to maintain a steady rhythm throughout.

There are no records to show where the Faroese ring-dance originated.⁷³ There have been suggestions that a version of the dance came to the Faroe Islands from Continental Europe and has subsequently evolved into what it is today. Chain or ring-dancing was highly popular in other European countries in various periods from the Middle Ages up until the 19th century. Richard Wolfram argues that the ring-dance as it is performed in the Faroe Islands bears some resemblance to the French traditions.⁷⁴ There are similarities between the Faroese ring-dance and the French medieval *Carol/Carole*. Although this particular dance form is no longer

⁶⁸ Daniel Galbraith, 'Meter, prosody and performance: evidence from the Faroese ballads', in *Nordic Journal of Linguistics*, Vol. 42/3 (2019) pp. 227-261, p. 227, <<https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/nordic-journal-of-linguistics/article/meter-prosody-and-performance-evidence-from-the-faroese-ballads/4664075C64C197F2BE1B65D74F7A0A63>> [Accessed July 2020]. For more on ballad meter in general, see for example Lev. Blumenfeld 'Meter as faithfulness', in *Natural Language and Linguistic Theory* Vol 33 (2015), pp. 79–125, and Nigel Fabb and Morris Halle, *Meter in Poetry: A New Theory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

⁶⁹ Mortan Nolsøe, 'Ballads and their cultural setting in the Faroe Islands', in *ARV: Scandinavian Yearbook of Folklore*, Vol. 38 (1982), pp 155-165, p. 156.

⁷⁰ S. Hansen, p. 70.

⁷¹ Jakob Jakobsen, 'Dansur og Kvøðing', in *Greinar og Ritgerðir* (Tórshavn: H.N. Jacobsens Bókhandil, 1957), pp. 79-80.

⁷² Jakobsen (1957), p. 79.

⁷³ N. Djurhuus, 'Dansen', in *Færøerne I* (Copenhagen: Dansk-Færøsk Samfund, 1958).

⁷⁴ Richard Wolfram, 'European Song-Dance Forms', in *Journal of the International Folk Music Council*, Vol. 8 (1956), pp. 32-36, p. 32. <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/834743>> [Accessed February 2015].

prominent in contemporary society, Robert Mullally describes the *carol* as a circle formed by people holding hands and stepping simultaneously to the left following the rhythm of the music/song.⁷⁵ The significance of the closed ring and the direction the dancers move (to the left) alludes to some common perceptions about similar dances. There is, for example, the religious aspect, as the ring can signify a warding off evil spirits, by protecting those in the ring.⁷⁶

The Faroese ring-dance is usually an autumn/winter activity. Dancing societies usually have their first gathering in October and finish their year on *Føstu*, a term used to describe the period for fasting before Easter in the Protestant church in the Faroe Islands.⁷⁷ In the Faroe Islands, this is marked by the holiday *Føstulávint* (Shrovetide). Christmas is usually included in this period, but no dance usually takes place on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. Some several societies and communities will have a ring-dance-event on the 26th of December (*Annar Jóladaður*, Boxing Day in Britain) as this day is considered to be important in the ring-dance calendar. There is, therefore, a close relationship between the Protestant church calendar and the public organisation of the Faroese ring-dance.⁷⁸ For example, schools usually only teach ballads *and* ring-dancing between *Trettandakvøld* (the evening of the Feast of the Epiphany) and *Føstu*.⁷⁹

1.2 Literature review

1.2.1 Writing down the ballads: 19th-century Romanticism and early development of Faroese ballad-culture

The interest in collecting and preserving ballads in writing during the 19th century did not come suddenly but was the culmination of a long-standing interest in Faroese culture and way of life.⁸⁰ Preservation was an especially crucial area for the

⁷⁵Robert Mullally, *The Carole: A Study of a Medieval Dance* (Surrey: Ashgate, 2011), p. 38.

⁷⁶ Mullally, p. 39

⁷⁷ This is similar 'Lent', in Catholicism, but *føsta* is related to Protestantism and in the Faroe Islands it signifies the end of ring-dancing activities in most schools and dancing societies in the Faroe Islands usually do not dance during this period.

⁷⁸ There is no law that strictly prohibits ring dancing taking place at any point in the year.

⁷⁹ This is not governed by any legislation, but follows a tradition that stems from the 19th century, where this was custom. See V.U. Hammershaimb, 'Færøiske skikke og lege', in *Savn úr 'Annaler for Nordisk oldkyndighed og historie' og 'Antiqarisk Tidsskrift'* (Tórshavn: Emil Thomsen, 1969), pp. 190—192, p. 190 and *Føsta*, at Málráðið, <http://malrad.fo/news_article.php?NewsArticleId=144> [Accessed June 2020].

⁸⁰ There is not a lot of documents or other physical evidence from the Faroe Islands during the middle ages, but the literary and archaeological evidence there is, has been analysed and written about in detail. See for example K. Edwards and D. Borthwick,

19th-century ballad collectors, influenced by the Romantic notion of conceptualising the *Volk*-essence, where the traditions and rituals of ‘common’ folk held the key to human enlightenment. Johann Gottfried von Herder (1744-1803) argued that all human beings make sense of their own experiences in different ways, for example using mythology and folksongs and that human creativity must be embedded in the particular culture of a communal language.⁸¹ Herder writes:

In more than one province I am acquainted with folksongs, regional songs, peasant songs that certainly would lack nothing when it comes to liveliness and rhythm, naiveté and strength of language. But who is collecting them? Or who cares about them? The songs of the people, from streets and alleys and fish-markets, in the traditional roundelays of the country folk? [...] All unpolished peoples sing and act; they sing about what they do and thus sing histories.⁸²

National belonging, in Herder’s view, would depend on more than just belonging to a specific ethnic group or geographical location. National belonging would also have to rely on the sharing of common experiences and a common language in.⁸³ Herder mentions people and activities that were common for people from ‘the streets and alleys and fish-markets’ that connected through their shared language and their shared activities, as well as their sociological status.⁸⁴

Drawing on Herder’s concept of national belonging, the early interest in Faroese ballads also depended on observing and recording activities, songs and stories from an everyday-perspective. One of the earliest recorded observations of Faroese ballad singing can be found in Lucas Debes’ *Færoæ & Færoa Reserata*, originally from 1673. Debes was a Danish priest whose recordings included the

‘Peaceful Wars and Scientific Invaders: Irishmen, Vikings and Palynological Evidence for the Earliest Settlement of the Faroe Islands’, in *The Viking Age: Ireland and the West. Papers from the Fifteenth Viking Congress, Cork, 18–27 August 2005*, J. Sheehan and D. Ó Corráin (eds.) (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2010), pp. 66–79, Jóhannes Jóhansen, ‘A Paleobotanical Study Indicating a Pre-Viking Settlement in Tjørnuvik, Faroe Islands’, in *Frøðskaparrit*, 19 (1971), pp. 147–57, Niels Winther, *Færøernes Oldtidshistorie* (Tórshavn: Emil Thomsen, 1985), originally published in 1875, Hans Jacob Debes, *Føroya Søgá II: Skattaland og len* (Tórshavn: Føroya Skúlabókagrunnur, 1995), pp. 101-109, N.F.S. Grundtvig, ‘Færingesaga’, in *Skandinavisk Folkekalender* (1846), Knud J. Krogh, *Kirkebøstolene og Kirkjubøur* (Tórshavn: Emil Thomsen, 1988), Arne Thorsteinsson, ‘On the development of Faroese Settlement’, in *Mediaeval Scandinavia Odense 2* (1981), pp. 189-202, Símun V. Arge, Guðrún Sveinbjarnardóttir, Kevin J. Edwards and Paul C. Buckland, ‘Viking and Medieval Settlement in the Faroes: People, Place and Environment’, in *Human Ecology*, 33 (2005), pp. 597-620, < <https://link.springer.com/content/pdf/10.1007/s10745-005-4745-1.pdf> > [Accessed December 2019], and Jógvan Isaksen, *Færøsk Litteraturs Historie vol. 1* (Nivå: Marselius, 2017), pp. 16-18.

⁸¹ Herder quoted in Frederick M. Barnard, *Herder on Nationality, humanity and history* (London: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2003), p. 38.

⁸² Johann Gottfried Herder, ‘Excerpt from a Correspondence on Ossian and the Songs of Ancient Peoples (1773)’, in *The Rise of Modern Mythology 1680-1860*, Burton Feldman and Robert D. Richardson (eds.) (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1972), pp. 228-230, p. 229.

⁸³ See for example Johann Gottfried Herder, ‘On contemporary uses of mythology (1767)’, in *The Rise of Modern Mythology 1680-1860*, Burton Feldman and Robert D. Richardson (eds.) (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1972), pp. 230-233.

⁸⁴ Herder (1972), p. 229.

landscape and animal life as well as cultural life and he writes this about the Faroese people and the ballads:

De ere ikke genedige til nogen unyttig Tids-Fordriv eller forfængelig Lystighed, men mest forlyste sig med Psalmer at sjunge Dage igennem, men ellers udi deres Bryllupper og udi Juledagene forlyste sig med nogen enfolding Dans, udi en kreds havened hinanden fat om Haanden, og sjungende nogle gamle Kæmpe-Viser.⁸⁵

They do not engage in unproductive leisure activities or vain entertainment but entertain themselves mostly by singing psalms throughout the day, but at their weddings and during Christmas they entertain themselves with a simple dance, where they form a ring by holding each other's hands and sing some old Ballads.

Norwegian clergyman and historian Peder Claussøn Friis (1545-1614) included a section on the Faroe Islands in his *Norriges og omliggende Øers sandfærdige Beskrivelse*.⁸⁶ Friis writes that rich people live in the Faroe Islands and also that some are rumoured to have ancestors who were giants.⁸⁷ The earliest written record of a Faroese ballad is from the 1630s when Danish physician and natural historian Ole Worm (1588-1654) got parts of different Faroese ballads. These writings were initially thought to be lost, but in 2017 professor Peter Hvilshøj Andersen-Vinlandicus discovered these fragments amongst documents from Danish philologist and priest Peder Syv (1631-1702).⁸⁸ Syv does also mention the Faroese ballads in his work: *Et Hundrede Udvalde Danske Viser ...*, originally written in 1695.⁸⁹ Andersen-Vinlandicus included photocopies of the ballad fragments in the appendices for his 'Origin and Age of Sjúrdarkvæði According to Rational Philology'.⁹⁰ Some of the early work that preceded the extensive interest in ballad

⁸⁵ Lucas Debes *Færoæ & Færoa Reserata*, (Tórshavn: Landsprentsmiðjan, 1950) p. 124. The ballads are also to be found in other travel writing. For example in the diary of German Carl Julian Graba from 1828: *Dagbók í árinum skrivað á eini ferð til Føroya*, Eyðun Winther (transl.) (Tórshavn: Emil Thomsen, 1987), p. 104, Thormod Torfæus, *Historisk Beretning om Indbyggernes Bedrifter paa Færøerne* (Copenhagen[n. pub.], 1770), G. S. Mackenzie, *A short Account of the Faroe Islands. Drawn up for the Edinburgh Encyclopædia* (Edinburgh: A. Balfour, 1815), pp. 14-15, and George [Jørgen] Landt, *A Description of the Feroe Islands containing an account of their situation, climate and production, together with the manners, and customs of the inhabitants, their trade, etc.* (London: Longman, Hurst, Ries, and Orme, 1810), p. 25 and p. 299 (leisure), pp. 405-406 (weddings).

⁸⁶ Peder Claussøn Friis, *Norriges og omliggende Øers sandfærdige Beskrivelse : Indholdendis Hvis værd er at vide, Baade om Landets og Indbyggernis Leylighed og Vilkor* (Copenhagen: Hans Kongel. Mayests. Priviligerede Bogtrykkerie, 1727), pp. 136-146, <<https://www.nb.no/nbsok/nb/3055a03b05499fcb3a70f8b48a04fab6?index=1#139>> [April 2020].

⁸⁷ Friis, p. 145 and 146.

⁸⁸ Copenhagen: Royal Library of Copenhagen, Rostgaard 21, 4to. Ole Worm also included a short description of the Faroe Islands in his *Snorre Sturlesøns Norske Kongers Chronica*, Peder Claussøn Friis (transl.) (Copenhagen: Martzan, 1633).

⁸⁹ Peder Syv, *Forøgede med det Andet Hundrede Viser ... Til Lyst og Lærdom* (Copenhagen, P. Høpfner, 1787) <<https://archive.org/details/snorresturlessns00snor/page/448/mode/2up>> [Accessed April 2020].

⁹⁰ Peter Hvilshøj Andersen-Vinlandicus, 'Origin and Age of Sjúrdarkvæði According to Rational Philology', in *Ballads – new approaches. Kvæði – nýggj sjóðnarmið*, M. Marnersdóttir, E. Andreassen, S. A. Dahl, T.K. Jakobsen and E. Isholm (eds.) (Tórshavn: Faroe University Press, 2018), pp. 128-133.

collection during the 19th century, was Jens Christian Svabo's (1746-1826) work on Faroese language and ballads. This work was later published as *Indberetninger fra en Reise i Færøe 1781 og 1782* and contains ballads that have been written down using a phonetic rendition of Faroese and a description of Faroese society and language.⁹¹ For Svabo, the language spoken on the Faroe Islands was very significant, as he deemed it to be in a precarious position and thought that it would soon be replaced by either Danish or Icelandic.⁹² Svabo's work on the Faroese ballads was picked up by Hans Christian Lyngbye, who used his limited knowledge of Faroese to write down ballad verses with the help of Johan Henrich Schrøter.⁹³ Lyngbye sent the ballad verses to the Danish professor of theology, Peter Erasmus Müller, who then encouraged Lyngbye to continue his work, resulting in the publication of *Færøiske Qvæder om Sigurd Fofnersbane og hans Æt*.⁹⁴ Müller furthermore encouraged his assistant Jóannes í Króki to collect and record ballads, which he continued to do using the phonetic style of Faroese when writing them down.⁹⁵

In addition to writing down ballads, travel writing and recording memories from a childhood in the Faroe Islands also became popular during the early 19th century. Niels Christoffer Winther (1822-1892) a Faroese scholar, gave a rendition of his memories of growing up in the Faroe Islands:

Det er gået mig som mangel en anden Fjældbo: først da jeg forlod Færøerne, hvor jeg er født, og kom til Danmark, vaktes Bevidstheden om Betydningen af, hvad jeg halvt drømmende havde oplevet i min barndom. [...] [J]eg følte

⁹¹ Jens Christian Svabo, *Indberetninger fra en Reise i Færøe 1781 og 1782* (København: C.A. Reizel, 1976). See also Joachim Begtrup, *Nogle Oplysninger til Nærmere Kundskab om Færøerne, fornemmelig med Hensyn til Undervisningen der, fra de ældre til de nuværende Tider, med Forslag til en dansk Skole i Thorshavn* (Copenhagen: U&G Goldings Forlag, 1809). For a historical overview of the ideas and consideration about Danish/Faroese language and the Faroese culture during the same time-period, see Hans J. Debes, *Føroya Søgá 3: Frá Kongaligum Einhandli til embætisveldi* (Tórshavn: Føroya Skúlabólagrunnur, 2000), pp. 129-133 and pp. 135-136.

⁹² Svabo, p. 265, S. Hansen, p. 72, see also Malan Marnersdóttir, 'Towards a Monolingual Canon. Faroese and Danish on the Faroe Islands', in *Battles and Borders: Perspectives on Cultural Transmission and Literature in Minor Language Areas*, Petra Broomans, Goffe Jensma, Ester Jiresch, Janke Klok and Roald van Elswijk (eds.) (Eelde: Barkhuis, 2015), pp. 133. See appendix 2 for a comparison Svabo made between Danish, Icelandic and Faroese.

⁹³ Hans J. Debes, *Nú er tann stundin komin: Tjóðskaparræsla og sjálvsstýrispolitikkur til 1906 – við søguligum baksýni* (Tórshavn: Føroya Skúlabólagrunnur, 1982), p. 76.

⁹⁴ Hans Christian Lyngbye, *Færøiske Qvæder om Sigurd Fofnersbane og hans Æt* (Copenhagen: 1822), p. X.

⁹⁵ Jóannes í Króki, *Sandoyarbók*, ed. by Rikard Long (Tórshavn: Mentunargrunnur Føroya Løgtings, 1968) p. VII. See also Patricia Conroy, 'Min god even, Jóannes í Króki', in *Fróðskaparrit*, vol. 42 (1994), pp. 15-20, and Eivind Weyhe, *Hentzasavn: Kvæðasavnið hjá Jóannes í Króki frá 1819* (Tórshavn: Faroese University Press, 2011). Eivind Weyhe, published Jóannes í Króki's entire ballad collection, *Hentza Savnið*, a project that was originally started by Christian Matras (1900-1988) several years previously which was subsequently abandoned and not taken up again until Weyhe started his research. Other early Faroese ballad collectors include Napoleon Nolsøe (1809-1877), Johannes Clemensen and Hanus Hanusson (1794-1854). See for example W. Glyn Jones, 'Faroese Literature', in *A History of Danish Literature*, vol. 1, Sven H. Rossel (ed.) (Lincoln, Nebraska: The University of Nebraska Press, 1992), pp. 545-587, pp. 546-547.

derfor en inderlig Længsel efter de stolte Fjælde [...] de dejlige Sagn, der levede I Folkemunde der oppe, og I hvilke Fjældboens simple Levevis og Fortidens Stordåd afspejlede sig [...].⁹⁶

The same has happened to me as has happened to many mountain-dwellers: It was only when I left the Faroe Islands, where I was born, and came to Denmark, awoke the consciousness about the importance of, what I dreamily had experienced in my childhood. [...] [I] therefore felt a longing after the proud mountains [...] the lovely folktales that survived in the vernacular up there, and in where the mountain dweller's simple way of life and the great deeds of the past are reflected [...].

Winther also here makes the connection between Faroese culture being defined through its differences to the Danish, something which was common for Faroese-born scholars studying and working in Denmark.⁹⁷ The 19th-century interest in the ballads and their preservation, therefore, had many different factors: There was a scholarly interest to explore Faroese language, culture and nature; promoting and nationalising possible links to a Norse/Nordic past, similar to that of Iceland and the sagas, and finally, there was the exaggeration of the *Volk*-essence in illustrating the cultural life in the remote Faroe Islands.⁹⁸ The Icelandic sagas were read and studied, and this also included *Føroyingasøga* (the Faroese Saga). This saga is considered to be the most comprehensive narrative of the early Faroese settlement, although there are issues with *Føroyingasøga* not being accurate in terms of events, as well as it being chronologically inconsistent.⁹⁹ *Føroyingasøga* chronicles early Norse settlement in the Faroe Islands and how the Faroe Islands went from being an autonomous part of the Norwegian kingdom, with their own government and traditions, to become subjects to the stricter rule of the Norwegian king and was converted to Christianity around the year 1000.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁶ Winther, p. III.

⁹⁷ Oslund, p. 124.

⁹⁸ This is discussed in Leyvoy Joensen, 'Atlantis, Bábylon, Tórshavn: The Djurhuus Brothers and William Heinesen in Faroese Literary History', in *Scandinavian Studies*, Vol. 74, No. 2 (2002), pp. 181-204, pp. 184-186. https://www.jstor.org/stable/40920372?seq=6#metadata_info_tab_contents [Accessed April 2020]. See also Hans Jacob Debes, 'Tjóðskaparrørslan sum søguligt fyribrygdi og granskingarevni', in *Fróðskaparrit*, vol. 36-37 (1989), pp. 8-27, p. 13, Jonathan Wylie, 'The Christmas Meeting in Context: The Construction of Faroese Identity and the Structure of Scandinavian Culture', in *North Atlantic Studies*, 1 (1) (1989), pp. 5-13, and Jóan Pauli Joensen, 'Museum and related institutions in the Faroe Islands', in *Scandinavian Museums and Cultural Diversity*, Katherine Goodnow and Haci Akman (Oxford: Berghahn, 2008), pp. 212-221, 212-215.

⁹⁹ Wylie, p. 9-10

¹⁰⁰ See Bo Almqvist (transl.), *Färingesaga* (Hedemora: Gidlunds Bokförlag, 1992), and Painter, Robert K., (transl.), *The Faroe-Islander Saga* (Jefferson: McFarland & Co, 2016). For more on early Faroese settlement, see Steffen Stummhann Hansen, 'The Early Settlement of the Faroe Islands: The Creation of Cultural Identity', in *Contact, Continuity, and Collapse: The Norse Colonization of the North Atlantic* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2003), pp. 33-71.

There has therefore been a long-standing interest in Faroese and wider Scandinavian literature, traditions and folklore, creating the foundation for a lot of the work that continued during the 19th century.¹⁰¹ The Faroese linguist and literature scholar Jakob Jakobsen referred in 1905 to the Faroese ballads as the oldest form of poetry that existed in the Faroe Islands.¹⁰² He went further to define the ballads as ‘historical poetry, or perhaps rather legends as poetry’ (*søgulig irking edla heldur sagnairking*), a form of verse that narrated historical events, stories or legends. Jørgen Bloch, Svend Grundtvig’s collaborator in making a Faroese ballad collection, *Corpus Carminium Færøensium* argued that the ballads were considered one of the few places in which Faroese history and language in its true form was to be found.¹⁰³ What Bloch meant by ‘true’ form is unclear, as he does not go into much detail besides saying that ballads were one of the few ways the Faroese language and history existed before the 19th century, largely ignoring the rich oral culture that exists within any community and that in the Faroe Islands was more than the ballads.¹⁰⁴ Bloch, therefore, saw the ballads as one of the few links to a Faroese identity or origin, containing the very essence of *Faroese*ness that could somehow be captured.

V.U. Hammershaimb (1819-1909) was another prominent name in the Faroe Islands during this time, as he wrote extensively on the Faroese language, the ballads and the status of the Faroe Islands in relation to Denmark.¹⁰⁵ Hammershaimb is often credited with being the primary force behind the creation

¹⁰¹ See also Jón Helgason, ‘Færøiske studier’, in *Maal og Minne* (1924), pp. 29-37, Peder E. Müller, ‘Om de færøiske Qvæders Beskaffenhed og Ælde’, in *Færøiske Qvæder om Sigurd Fofnersbane og hans Æt*, H.C. Lyngbye (ed.) (Tóshavn: Emil Thomsen, 1980 [1822]), pp. 3-42, Hans Christian Lyngbye, ‘Brókartáttur’, in *Det Skandinaviske Litteraturselskabs Skrifter* (1817), Hans Christian Lyngbye, ‘Færøiske Oldsager. B. Efterretning om adskillige Oldsager og Mærkværdigheder paa Færøe’, in *Antiquariske Annaler*. Udgivne ved Den Kongelige Commission i Kjøbenhavn for Oldsagers Opbevaring 3 (1820 [1817]) and Hans Christian Lyngbye, ‘Noget om Færøerne, især om de der brugelige Bryllupsskikke’, in *Magasin for Rejseagttagelser 1* (1820). Micheal Chesnutt and Kaj Larsen, ‘De ældste færøiske kvadhåndskrifter, vol. 1’, in *Unifol*, årsberetning (Copenhagen: Institut for folkemindevidenskab, 1990), pp. 23-49.

¹⁰² Jakob Jakobsen, ‘Gomul Føroysk Irking’, in *Greinar og Ritgerðir* (Tórshavn: H.N. Jacobsens Bókahandil, 1957) pp. 81-82, p. 81.

¹⁰³ Svend Grundtvig and Jørgen Bloch, *Føroya Kvæði: Corpus Carminum Færoensium Vol. VII*, M. Chesnutt and K. Larsen (eds.) (Copenhagen: C.A. Reitzels Forlag, 1996), p.13

¹⁰⁴ The Faroese language existed orally for centuries, and there are several examples of people speaking Faroese alongside Danish and shifting between the two, making bilingualism a characteristic of early Faroese society. See for example Björn Hagström, ‘Nordic language history and literary history V: Faroe Islands’, in *The Nordic Languages: An International Handbook of the History of the North Germanic Languages Vol. 1*, Oskar Bandle et al. (eds.) (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2002), pp. 482-485 and, more broadly on orality and literacy in the Nordic countries, Gun Widmark, ‘From Old Nordic to Early Modern Nordic: The development of oral and literary styles’, in *The Nordic Languages: An International Handbook of the History of the North Germanic Languages Vol. 2*, Oskar Bandle et al. (eds.) (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2005), pp. 1213-1221, and Jørgen-Frantz Jacobsen, *Nordiske kroniker* (Copenhagen: Lindhardt og Ringhof, 2016).

¹⁰⁵ See for example V.U. Hammershaimb, ‘Det Færøiske sprog’, in *Kjøbenhavnsposten* (19 December, 1844); V.U. Hammershaimb (ed.), *Færøiske Kvæder I-II* (Copenhagen: Det Nordiske Litteratur-Samfund, 1851-1855).

of Faroese typography and language, although it has been argued by Christer Lindqvist that Hammershaimb could not have achieved this without extensive collaboration with others.¹⁰⁶ For Hammershaimb, the practices of ballad singing and storytelling were ways to remember early Faroese history that had ‘høvdingar og stormænd, hvis dådskraft og hele færð var jævnbyrdig med deres frænders I Norge og Island’ (chieftains and great men, whose achievement was equal to that of their fellow men in Norway and Iceland) and the Faroe Islands were part of the grand narratives of the Norse heroes and kings, at a time when the other Scandinavian and Nordic countries shared a similar culture and language.¹⁰⁷ Hammershaimb argues that the ballads were a way to create relations between the past and the increasing cultural independence of the Faroese community arising during the late 18th and early 19th century, whilst still demonstrating the Faroese ‘membership in the wider Scandinavian world’.¹⁰⁸ Hammershaimb also adhered to the same beliefs that Bloch, Grundtvig and Svabo did, namely that the ballads, and with them, the Faroese vernacular, were in danger of disappearing and had to be ‘saved’ to preserve part of Faroese identity.¹⁰⁹ *Færøsk Anthologi Vol I & II*, published in 1891 by Hammershaimb, contains both ballads and an observational, anthropological account of the Faroe Islands and the different customs and traditions, including ballads and ring-dancing. This publication included ballads and folktales that had been recorded by various people which Hammershaimb took great care to re-write using a stylised version of written Faroese.¹¹⁰

In his ‘Meddelelser fra en rejse’, Hammershaimb, for example, writes that two people from Suðuroyð (the most southern island of the Faroe Islands), an old, blind woman and a young man, related ballads and folktales to him, although he did

¹⁰⁶ Christer Lindqvist has recently argued that there is evidence that Hammershaimb drew on the work of others and had several collaborations, for example, with the Icelandic independence leader Jón Sigurðsson (1811-1879) on the creation of the Faroese written language. Lecture available on: Christer Lindqvist, ‘Hvør gjørði føroyska skriftmálið?’, Nón, broadcast 20-03-2019, Kringvarp Føroya (2019) <<https://kvf.fo/non?sid=92880>> [Accessed October 2019]. There is also a discussion about this topic with the chairwoman of Málráðið (The Faroese Language Council), Sólvá Jónsdóttir, available at <https://kvf.fo/non?sid=92881> (In Faroese) [Accessed June 2018].

¹⁰⁷ Hammershaimb (1891), pp. XIV-XV. Hammershaimb also writes that some ballads are based on the sagas and other publications derived from Iceland, where the Faroese ‘må søge kilden og grunden til deres sprog og sprogminder’ (have to look for the source and the foundation for their language and language-heritage), referring especially to the shared heritage of Old Norse. See ‘Olufs Kvad’ (pp.41-71, p. 42) and ‘Færøisk Sproglære’ (pp. 225-308, esp. pp. 225-227) in *Savn úr ‘Annaler for Nordisk oldkyndighed’ og ‘Antiqarisk Tidsskrift’* (Tórshavn: Emil Thomsen, 1969)

¹⁰⁸ Wylie and Margolin, p. 69

¹⁰⁹ V.U. Hammershaimb, ‘Meddelelser fra en rejse på Færøerne i 1847-48’, in *Savn úr ‘Annaler for Nordisk oldkyndighed’ og ‘Antiqarisk Tidsskrift’* (Tórshavn: Emil Thomsen, 1969), pp. 30-40, p. 30.

¹¹⁰ Debes (1982), pp. 86-87.

not record their names.¹¹¹ Although it cannot be disputed that Hammershaimb's work was important to the preservation and continuation of ballads, it is evident that he exaggerated the Faroe Islands and its culture as a romanticised ideal, and a lot of his narratives paint an idealised, even naïve, image of everyday life in the Faroe Islands.

In the late 1880s, when Faroese identity was part of a cultural and political debate, the oral material in the form of the ballads and the tales experienced a form of revival, what Michael Chesnutt refers to as a period of 'refolklorization' when oral ballads and folk tales – originating not from prominent literary or artistic work, but the mouths of common people - became vital in imagining a Faroese identity that had a Norse origin.¹¹² This period also signifies the repurposing of medieval history as a locus for national identity in the Nordic countries. The imagery of the seafaring Viking and the common (but hardworking) Farmer became symbolic representations of Scandinavian/Nordic identity.¹¹³ The historian Erik Gustaf Geijer (1783-1847) wrote the two folklore-oriented poems *Vikingen* and *Odalbonden* (The Viking and the Farmer) and these poems became an important point of reference for late 19th-century nation-building in Scandinavia and Iceland.¹¹⁴ The poems detail the life of these two types that represented a symbiosis of the individualistic freedom of travel and the traditional continuity of cultivating the earth and building a home.¹¹⁵ Hans Kuhn argues that these two

¹¹¹ Hammershaimb (1969), pp. 31-32. Hammershaimb does mention an Ole Jespersen, a school teacher that dictated ballads and folktales for Hammershaimb, as well as collecting and recording proverbs that Hammershaimb later worked into texts. For proverbs see *Færøsk Anthologi Vol II*, (Copenhagen: S.L. Møllers Bogtrykkeri, 1947 [1891]), pp. 314-321 and 'Færøiske ordsprog' (pp. 154-186) and 'Nogle færøiske talemåder' (pp. 187-189) in *Savn úr 'Annaler for Nordisk oldkyndighed' og 'Antiqarisk Tidsskrift'* (Tórshavn: Emil Thomsen, 1969). See also 'Færøiske Trylleformularer', in *Savn*, pp. 9-19, for Faroese magic spells, also collected by Ole Jespersen.

¹¹² Micheal Chesnutt, 'Aspects of the Faroese Traditional Ballad in the Nineteenth Century', in *ARV: Scandinavian Yearbook of Folklore*, Vol. 48 (1992), pp. 247-259, p. 258. See also David Atkinson, 'The Ballad Revival and National Literature: Textual Authority and the Invention of Tradition', in Timothy Baycroft and David Hopkins (eds), *Folklore and Nationalism in Europe During the Long Nineteenth Century. The National Cultivation of Culture*, vol. 4 (Leiden: Brill, 2012), pp. 275-300, and Kim Simonsen, *Literature, Imagining and Memory in the Formation of a Nation: Travel Writing, Canonisation and the Formation of a National Self-Image in the Faroe Islands*, PhD dissertation (University of Roskilde, 2012). For more on the cultural and linguistic influence of Norse in Faroese nation/identity-building, see Uffe Østergaard, 'The Construction of Faroese Identity: Nordic, Norwegian, Danish – or Faroese?', Unpublished lecture at the 39th Deutschen Historikertag (Hannover: 1992).

¹¹³ See for example Hans Kuhn, 'The Farmer and the Viking: Forms of Romantic Nationalism in Nineteenth Century Scandinavia', in *Romantic Nationalism in Europe*, J.C. Eade (ed.) (Canberra: HRC Australian National University, 1983), pp. 81-100, p. 81

¹¹⁴ The poem is in Bertil Nolen, 'Erik Gustaf Geijer as Poet and Historian', in *A History of Swedish Literature*, Lars G. Warne (ed.) (London: University of Nebraska Press, 1996), pp. 181-183. For more on 19th-century nationalism in Iceland, see Summarliðið Ísleifsson, 'Icelandic National Images in the 19th and 20th Centuries', in *Images of the North – Histories – Identities – Ideas*, Sverrir Jakobsson (ed.) (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2009).

¹¹⁵ A more detailed synopsis of the poem can be found in George Biztray, 'Awakening Peripheries: The Romantic Redefinition of Myth and Folklore', in *Romantic Poetry*, Angela Esterhammer (ed.) (Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing, 2002), pp. 252-248, p. 232.

archetypes embodied the social and political statement of the Romantic notions sweeping through the Nordic countries, namely that ‘not the great individuals of history books – the kings or other leaders and geniuses – were the true bearers of history, but the countless anonymous men not commemorated by monuments or in writing’.¹¹⁶ National Romantic ideologies manifested themselves more prominently in the Faroe Islands during the latter part of the 19th century, especially through Grundtvig, Hammershaimb and Jakobsen.¹¹⁷ Iceland had experienced a ‘national awakening’ and the sagas, the Icelandic language and Old Norse mythology played an important role in cementing Icelandic national consciousness and providing a cultural legitimacy.¹¹⁸

In the Faroe Islands, cultural legitimacy was based on elevating local practices and customs. The traditions of the ‘common folk’ – sea-farers, farmers – became of interest to many from outside of the Faroe Islands as well.¹¹⁹ It was during this time that ballads and ring-dance became an integral part of Faroese culture and identity.¹²⁰ Nauerby further argues that ‘the transnational and international foundations for nation-building were established during the latter half of the 19th century’, and that Faroese language and culture was given a ‘political dimension within the framework of National Romantic ideology.’¹²¹ Thomas Nipperdey argues that ‘[t]he primary conviction of Romantic Nationalism was that

¹¹⁶ Kuhn, p. 81. See also Fredrik Svanberg, *Decolonizing the Viking Age*, vol. 1 (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 2003), pp. 36-99. Svanberg argues that the ‘Viking Age’ was largely constructed and influenced by Romantic ideologies during the 19th century and that the perception of the Viking created during this period, and remains until today.

¹¹⁷ For more on this see Hans J. Debes, *Nú er tann Stundin... Tjóðskaparræsla og Sjálvstýrispolitikkur til 1906 við Søguligum Baksýni* (Tórshavn: Føroya Skúlabólagrunnur, 1982), in particular, pp. 14-20; Tummas Lenvig, (ed.) *Frælsannamál 1899-1926: Blaðgreinir, Fólkafundir, Røður* (Tórshavn: Bókagarður, 1997), in particular Rasmus Rasmussen’s speech from 1904, ‘Framburður í Íslandi og í Føroyum á 19. Øld’, pp. 67-76, and his 1905 article ‘Føroyar sum Tjóð’, (pp. 106-109), originally printed in *Tingakrossur* no. 33. See also Jonathan Wylie, ‘Eg Oygjar Veit. Views, Overviews and Oversight’, in Firouz Gaini (ed.), *Among the Islanders of the North: An Anthropology of the Faroe Islands* (Tórshavn: Faroe University Press, 2011), pp. 11-56.

¹¹⁸ Simon Halink, ‘Asgard Revisited: Old Norse mythology and national culture in Iceland, 1820-1918’. PhD-thesis (Groningen: University of Groningen, 2017), pp. 65-66, and for a more in-depth study of Iceland and the Romantic Movement, see pp. 125-162.

¹¹⁹ These included Wilhelm Grimm that wrote, ‘Färöiske quæder om Sigurd Fofnersbane og hans Æt’, in *Göttingische Gelehrte Anzeigen*, III (Göttingen: 1824). For additional literature on the dissemination of Faroese ballads during the 18th and 19th century, see for example W Glyn. Jones ‘Ballads, Songs and Snatches. The Eighteenth century in the Faroe Islands’, in *Digternes Paryk. Studier I 1700-tallet*, M. Alenius, P. Dahlerup, S. P. Hansen, H. Hertel, P. Meisling (ed.) (Copenhagen: Museum Tusulanum, 1997), pp. 87-104, Kurt Schier, ‘Om kvæðidiktningen på Færoyene i det 19th århundrede. Noen esepjónsforhold’, in *Fróðskaparrit*, vol. 42 (1994), pp. 37-52, Mortan Nolsøe ‘Innsamling av fiske- og folkevisetradisjon på Færøylene’, in *Vento Urpo. Fältarbetet: Synspunkter på etnfolkloristisk fältforskning* (Helsingfors: 1968), pp. 151-159, and Erik Dal, ‘Tyske, Danske og Engelske oversættelser af Færøkvæder’, in *Fróðskaparrit*, vol. 18 (1970), pp. 77-92.

¹²⁰ Jóan Pauli Joensen, ‘At finna ella upfinna tað føroyska’, in *Fróðskaparrit*, vol 36-37 (1989), pp. 28-38, p. 31. See also Jóan Pauli Joensen, ‘Opfindelsen af det Færøeske folk, kultur og nasjon’, in *De Vestnordiske landes fælleshistorie. INUSSUK*, Daniel Thorleifsen (ed.) (2003), pp. 39-54.

¹²¹ Nauerby, p. 177 and p. 23.

culture, a particular way of life and the more important social institutions are all essentially formed (and shaped) by the nation' and that they are expressions of this sense of unity of a people and nation.¹²² 'It is the national character of culture', Nipperdey further argues, 'which stands in the centre of intellectual activity as well as emotional attachment'.¹²³ Peter Burke also argues that during the 19th century, knowledge obtained and shared by scholars exemplified the 'increasing importance of national consciousness, national rivalry and nation-building in the process of gathering, analysing and disseminating knowledge'.¹²⁴ Nipperdey and Burke both point out the complex nature of what the ballad collection and recording meant for Faroese nation-building: As well as the preservation of ballads in writing, there came about a whole new, and important, aspect of Faroese culture, culminating in archives of written manuscripts and audio recordings, and a national library in the Faroe Islands.

1.2.2 Preserving the ballads, preserving traditions

The act of preserving and safeguarding the work that was conducted during the 19th century was instrumental in creating a continuation of the ballad tradition as Faroese culture as we know it today. However, writings and publications were not readily available during the 19th century. The first we know of anything similar to a library was a book club that was established in Tórshavn in 1826 that in 1828 became the first public library in the Faroe Islands.¹²⁵ This was administered by a literary elite, which Malan Marnersdóttir describes as being 'men in administrative positions and that were well to do' (menn í álitisstørvum, sum vóru væl fyri), spearheaded by council secretary Jens Davidson and Mikkjal Müller, privateer.¹²⁶ They received assistance from Carl Christian Rafn, who had helped set up a library in Reykjavik in 1825.¹²⁷ The idea for setting up a library in the Faroe Islands came from the desire to engage with the Romantic ideals of folklore and medieval texts

¹²² Thomas Nipperdey, 'In Search of Identity: Romantic Nationalism, its Intellectual, Political and Social Background', in *Romantic Nationalism in Europe*, ed. by J.C. Eade (HRC, Australian National University, 1983), pp. 1-16, p. 2.

¹²³ Nipperdey, p. 2.

¹²⁴ Peter Burke, 'Nationalizing Knowledge', *Study Platform on Interlocking Nationalisms* [SPIN], lecture, (2011) <https://spinnet.humanities.uva.nl/images/2011-08/burke_ams-spin-lect_layout_2.pdf> [Accessed June 2020].

¹²⁵ Malan Marnersdóttir (Simonsen), 'Føroyska bókmentaalmennið í 19. øld', in *Fróðskaparrit* 32 (Tórshavn: 1985), pp 6-14, pp 8-10. See also Malan Marnersdóttir and Turið Sigurðardóttir, *Føroysk bókmentasøga 1*. (Tórshavn: Nám, 2011).

¹²⁶ Marnersdóttir (2011), p. 9.

¹²⁷ Dennis Auburn Hill, 'The National Library of Iceland: Its Development and Organization', in *The Journal of Library History* (1974-1987), Vol. 17, No. 4 (1982), pp. 453-462, p. 454-455. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/25541323?seq=3#metadata_info_tab_contents> [Accessed June 2020].

and making these available (albeit to a small number of people initially).¹²⁸ The archives and libraries that exist in the Faroe Islands today were therefore based on similar ideas of preservation as the initial interest in Faroese folklore and ballads by collectors.¹²⁹

The most extensive ballad collections are located in archives based at the University of the Faroe Islands and the Faroese National Library, *Landsbókasavnið*, which has the largest collections of Faroese manuscripts and ballad-related material.¹³⁰ The majority of the 19th-century work of Faroese ballad history and the collection of ballads has been preserved in these archives.¹³¹ There is, for example, a substantial collection of digital recordings and various documents on the ballads and folk tales available from the collections at the University of Faroe Islands, *Handritasavnið* (The Manuscript Collection) and *Bandasavnið* (the Tape Collection), and the Faroese national Library.¹³² The Tape Collection is currently comprised of 2419 recordings dating back to 1902 and is a much-used primary source on Faroese ballad history. This online sound archive is the culmination of work started by Mortan Nolsøe in the 1970s and the subsequent painstaking and long-term project on digitising the content on wax cylinders, cassette tapes and other media, which had been collected by Nolsøe and others who subsequently donated material.¹³³ The Manuscript Collection houses physical documents on various topics, including written records of ballads and folk tales by for example V.U. Hammershaimb and Jakobsen. It has not been disclosed exactly how many documents there are in total in the collection, but creating an index of this is currently a work in progress.¹³⁴ They house the most extensive archive of ballads and Faroese oral history in the Faroe Islands (and most likely anywhere) and offer an interesting perspective for

¹²⁸ Marnersdóttir (2011), p. 9-10. In addition to Faroese ballad records and other Faroese literature that began emerging at the time, there was also an interest in literature from Iceland, Denmark and Norway.

¹²⁹ Marnersdóttir (2011), p. 7-8. See also Vagn Wáhlin, 'Faroese History and Identity. National History Writing', in *North Atlantic Studies*, 1 (1) (Aarhus: Aarhus University Press, 1989)

¹³⁰ Landsbókasavnið, 'Handritadeild', <<https://landsbokasavnid.fo/handrit>> [Accessed February 2020].

¹³¹ There is also an index of all the ballad collections that have been publicised in the Faroe Islands, see Jeffrey Henriksen (ed.), *Kvæða og Vísuskrá* (Føroya Skúlabókagrunnur, 1992).

¹³² Information about these archives was provided by Tina K. Jacobsen, Research Assistant at the Faroese Language department at the University of Faroe Islands during a visit to the University in April 2015. Additional information is available on the University website <<http://setur.fo/en/language-and-literature/archives-and-services/>> [Accessed May 2015]. See also Bandasavnið, 'Forsøga' (Tórshavn: 2017) <<https://www.setur.fo/fo/setrid/almennar-taenastur-og-grunnar/sovn/talgildu-sovnini/bandasavn/forsoga/>> [Accessed August 2019].

¹³³ Bandasavnið, <<http://setur.fo/en/language-and-literature/archives-and-services/>> [Accessed May 2015].

¹³⁴ Handritasavnið, <http://handrit.fo> [Accessed January 2020].

any historic ethnomusicological study or a study of Faroese everyday life throughout history. *Handritasavnið* and *Bandasavnið* have been used as sources for references for subsequent sections in this thesis and have provided a historical perspective in instances.

Landsskjalasavnið (The National Archive) has a wide collection of ballad manuscripts that are open to the public. Apart from being in charge of policies and legislation in these areas, The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Culture also provides available funding for any projects that relate to them, including for the ring-dancing societies. In providing funding and policymaking, the Ministry is as the most important governing body for all activities undertaken by schools, dancing societies and various institutions that help to promote the Faroese ballads.

Considering that the Faroese ballad corpus has been published in book form several times and that it has been digitised and is readily available online, it is safe to say that the written accounts of the ballads are as well preserved as they can be.¹³⁵ The traditions associated with the ballads and Faroese culture, in general, is also preserved in both written form, and through the celebrations of the Faroese language, the national holiday, and through the work and funding put into these acts of safeguarding by the Faroese government. Although the archives and the 19th-century writers and collectors cemented the ballads as a significant part of Faroese heritage, there are aspects of Faroese ballad culture that have changed and/or diminished over the years. Andrea S. Opielka and her work on *dansispøl* (dance games) illustrate this as she argues:

Mens den færøske dans allerede i forbindelse med nationalromantikken blev anerkendt som en unik kulturel arv, udviste man ikke danse- og sanglegene den store interesse. De gik gradvist i glemme i første halvdel af det 20. århundrede, fordi deres faste plads i bygdernes dansestuer var forsvundet i takt med de samfundsmæssige forandringer. Der blev heller ikke foretaget nogen intensiv videnskabelig undersøgelse af danse og sanglegene.¹³⁶

¹³⁵ For example, Árni Dahl is behind the project of getting CCF digitised and it is now available on the Faroese educational website [Snar.fo](https://snar.fo/foroyakvaedi/) (<https://snar.fo/foroyakvaedi/>). Faroese dancing societies often also have ballads available to view and print from their websites, for example, Eysturoyar dansifelag (<http://eystdans.dk/kv-ab-kin/index.html>) and Dansifelagið í Havn (<https://www.danshavn.org/index.php/kvaedasavn?menuid=4843>)

¹³⁶ Andrea Susanne Opielka, *Danse- og sanglege på Færøerne. Oprindelse - udbredelse - nutidig tradition*. (Tórshavn: Faroer University Press 2011), p. 348. See also Eyðun Andreassen, 'Nationalromantikur og nationalisma', in *Brá* vol. 1 (1982), pp. 61-63. The 'dancing games' are a sub-category of the Faroese ring-dance, the rhythm and the stepping remains very similar. These are performed with certain ballads, see for example this performance of 'slippudansur' to the ballad 'Torkils dótur' from *Færøsk Dans og Dansispøl* [DVD] (Sjónvarp Føroya, 1991), clip available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7avW--87bts> [Accessed July 2020].

Whilst the Faroese dance in connection with National Romanticism was already recognised as a part of a cultural heritage, the dance and song games were not shown the same interest. Gradually, they were forgotten during the first half of the twentieth century, mostly because they had largely vanished from the towns' dancing halls as societal changes came about. Nor was there any intensive research into the dance and song games.

Although these games, according to Opielka, were a significant part of ballad-culture before the 20th century, they are now largely vanished from discussions on ballads.¹³⁷ There are various reasons why the interest in ballads and the related activities has changed from time to time over the last few centuries, as both internal and external influences can change any tradition significantly. Some of these influences are directly related to the subjects in this thesis and will therefore be discussed later. Even though later discussions will not focus on religion or religious culture in particular, there is historical importance to the relationship between the ballads and religion in Faroese society. For example, the short ballad *Føroyski dansurin* (The Faroese dance) goes:

Ikki fáí eg meg til at trúgva
Ið hvussu tað enn verður snarað og snúgvað
At dansurin so syndugur er;
Gerði bara onga verri gerð.¹³⁸

I cannot make myself believe
No matter how you twist and turn it
That the dance so sinful is
Just do not do anything worse

The Christian Revival movements that had the most influence in the Faroe Islands beginning in the late 19th and early 20th century were the Plymouth Brethren, also known as 'Darbyist', and the Danish Home Mission (Kirkelig Forening for Den Indre Mission).¹³⁹ This had implications on how the ballads and ring-dance were perceived, as members of these movements heavily criticised the work being done to get Faroese as the official language and that there was 'einki andaligt lív at finnast her' (no spiritual life to be found here).¹⁴⁰ Temperance societies were established and began to campaign against the ring-dance and ballads, even going as far as suggesting they be banned in locations where they had been a weekly

¹³⁷ Opielka (2011), p. 5.

¹³⁸ Andrias Reinert, 'Føroyski dansurin', in *Nýggja kvæðabókin*, vol. I (Tórshavn: Lindin, 1996), pp. 11-13.

¹³⁹ Gerhard Hansen, *Eindarmentan føroyinga og vekingarrørslurnar* (Tórshavn: Emil Thomsen, 1987), pp 289-291.

¹⁴⁰ G. Hansen (1987), p. 225.

event.¹⁴¹ Although the focus was mostly on alcohol consumption, the dancing itself was considered to be ‘sinful’ as there was no differentiation made between that of ring-dancing and other dance forms, which were all perceived as being ‘sinful’ and in direct opposition with the practice of Christianity.¹⁴²

Although today there is no explicit religious opposition to Faroese ballads and ring-dancing, some people still associate them with heavy drinking, creating some issues for dancing societies in getting new members.¹⁴³

1.2.3 Ballads across the spectrum of contemporary cultural Expression

The centrality of the ballads in Faroese cultural life has been born out of the wider spectrum of contemporary cultural production and expression. Before embarking on the closer examinations of Faroese educational institutions and efforts to support ballads through dancing societies and research, the tourist industry and popular music, an overview of other areas of cultural activity serve to underline and exemplify the presence and productivity of the ballad tradition more broadly.¹⁴⁴

Ballads and the Faroese ring-dance have also, for example, frequently been depicted in paintings and sculptures. These artworks were brought together in *The Ballad in Faroese Art*.¹⁴⁵ Part of this exhibition were sketches of the large reliefs William Heinesen and his son Zacharias created in the 1950s that depict scenes from *Sjúrdakvæðið* (the Sigurd cycle). These were displayed in Kommunuskúlin, a large primary and secondary school that opened in Tórshavn in 1956. The image below depicts a part of this larger work, taken from the ballad *Dvørgamoy* (CCF 7) in the Sigurd cycle.

¹⁴¹ Anon., ‘Untitled’, *Dúgván*, 1st November (1917), p. 4.

¹⁴² Freydis Poulsen, ‘Hóast ágang og andaligt trongskygni verður føroyskur dansur tráddur enn’, in *Dimmalætting*, 8th September, 1988, pp 21-22, p. 22.

¹⁴³ During some of the interviews, I was told that some dancing societies struggled to get more members because of this. Given that Faroese society is small and has an ‘everyone knows everyone’ characteristic, regardless of efforts to anonymise, this was not recorded as I decided, with the interviewees’ input, it is not worth risking any of my interviewees getting any negative response for participating in this study.

¹⁴⁴ For a more comprehensive survey on Faroese literature, see Ernst Krenn, ‘Die Entwicklung der foeröyischen Literatur’, in *Illinois Studies in Language and Literature* 26 (1940), Jones W. Glyn. ‘Faroese Literature. In Sven H. Rossel (ed.), *A History of Danish Literature*, vol. 1. (Lincoln, Nebraska: The University of Nebraska Press, 1992), Guðrun Gaard, *Tilblivelsen af en skriftlig færøsk litteratur*, MA Thesis (Odense: University of Odense, 1991).

¹⁴⁵ It was an exhibition in the National Gallery of Faroese Art (Listasavn Føroya) in the summer of 2015. There were in all eighteen artworks displayed for the exhibition, including sculptures, oil on canvas and larger reliefs made by Faroese artists William Heinesen, Janus Kamban, Astri Lühn and others. The exhibition was on from June to August in 2015. Nils Ohrt, then director of the National Gallery and Professor Malan Marnersdóttir provided the text for the exhibition catalogue. Niels Ohrt kindly forwarded me the list of artworks displayed and can be seen in appendix 3.

William Heinesen is best known for his literature and here we can also trace the influence of the ballads that he was depicting in his art.¹⁴⁶ Heinesen was born in Tórshavn in 1900, was educated in Denmark, and wrote extensively on Faroese communities and their daily lives.¹⁴⁷ There is, for example, a short story collection called *Here Skal Danses* (Here we shall dance) and the short story of the same name is based on the attendance at a wedding where the ring-dance illustrates both a celebration and a way to show how the Faroese dance is often perceived by non-Faroese people.¹⁴⁸ Perhaps the best known literary adaptation of ballads is the 1973 novel *Frænir eitur Ormurin* by Jens Pauli Heinesen.¹⁴⁹ The title, which means 'Frænir is the name of the Worm', is taken from *Sjúrdakvæðini*, the story on which the novel is loosely based on. It is set in the Faroe Islands during the 1970s, and instead of the hero battling a dragon as he does in the ballad, he here battles the power of large corporations and right-wing politics. The novel is very indicative of its time but also draws on a very significant interpretation of the ballad.¹⁵⁰

In addition to the art and literature in which ballads have been used as a visual or narrative device, the art on Faroese stamps also constitutes an area where the use of ballads can be explored in greater detail. Faroese stamps frequently have motifs that illustrate Faroese culture, nature or artworks, and the ballads have often been depicted in these in images from the narrative of the ballad or images of the Faroese dance.¹⁵¹ In 1982, Postverk Føroya (The Faroese Postal Services, now named Posta) published a set of four stamps that depict the ballad *Harra Pætur og*

¹⁴⁶ See for example Malan Marnersdóttir, 'Translations of William Heinesen - a Post-colonial Experience', in *The postcolonial North Atlantic. Iceland, Greenland and the Faroe Islands*, Lill-Ann Körber & Ebbe Volquardsen (eds.), Berliner Beiträge zur Skandinavistik, Vol. 20 (2014), pp. 195-212.

¹⁴⁷ See Hedin Brønner, *Three Faroese Novelists: An Appreciation of Jørgen Frantz-Jacobsen, William Heinesen and Heðin Brú* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1973), pp. 38-80, Leyvoy Joensen, 'Atlantis, Bábylon, Tórshavn: The Djurhuus Brothers and William Heinesen in Faroese Literary History', in *Scandinavian Studies*, Vol. 74, No. 2 (2002), pp. 181-204, https://www.jstor.org/stable/40920372?seq=6#metadata_info_tab_contents [Accessed April 2020], and Malan Marnersdóttir, 'William Heinesens Det gode håb i lyset af post-kolonial teori', in *Tijdschrift voor Skandinavistiek* 25.2 (2004), pp. 181-197.

¹⁴⁸ William Heinesen, *Her Skal Danses* (Copenhagen: Gyldendal, 1980). The book's cover illustration is by Heinesen as well and pictures people in a ring-dance. A summary of the story: The wedding (and the dance) is interrupted when a British ship capsizes by the shore, close to where the wedding celebration takes place. All the wedding guests rush out to help and when the immediate danger is over, the wedding guests rejoin the ring-dance, while the British sailors also join in and sing along, even though no one knows exactly what they are singing. The dance is again interrupted as one of the British sailors dies from his injuries. Subsequently, there is a heated debate whether the dance should continue (using some of the more sombre ballads) or whether it is disrespectful to the dead.

¹⁴⁹ Jens Pauli Heinesen, *Frænir eitur Ormurin* (Tórshavn: Forlagið Gestur, 1973).

¹⁵⁰ For more on this, see Jógvan Isaksen, *Í Gráum eru Allir Litir: Bókmentagreindir* (Føroya Skúlabólagrunnur, 1988), especially pp.51-53.

¹⁵¹ Two stamps illustrating the Faroese ring-dance were printed in 1981: Posta, Faroe Islands, *Europa 1981: Føroyskur dansur - Sett av óstemplaðum frimerkjum*, < <https://stamps.fo/Shopitem/1981/0/PPA010681/SETT> > [Accessed May 2019]. See also Kim Simonsen, 'Stamps & National Identity – Faroese Stamps as Loci of Memory', in *Posta Stamps*, No. 17 (2013), pp. 2-8 for a more detailed exploration of Faroese stamps and their relation to Faroese identity-building.

Elinborg (CCF 158, TSB D 72).¹⁵² The illustrations are of specific scenes from the ballad that tells the story of two young lovers, Pætur and Elinborg, who have to go through many ordeals before they can be together.¹⁵³ The stamps also depict the Faroese ring-dance in the right-hand corner and excerpts from the ballad are written on them as well.

The art on these stamps was created by Faroese artist Bárður Jákupsson who also created the artwork for the stamps depicting the ballads *Skrímsla* (CCF 90 A, TSB E 113) in 1986 and *Brúsajøkils kvæði* (CCF 25, TSB E 128).¹⁵⁴ The Faroese ring-dance is depicted on two stamps that were created 1981 were created by Polish postage stamp and banknote engraver, Czesław Słania (1921-2005).¹⁵⁵ In the last decade, there have not been any new stamps that are inspired by the ballads, but it is an interesting (and under-developed) avenue for any further research into Faroese art.

The ballads have also been used as narrative devices in theatre, and they are important spaces where the ballads are interpreted, reimagined and repurposed.¹⁵⁶ The Faroese theatre community has also engaged with the Faroese ballads, as there are a few ballads that have been translated into theatrical performances on stage. In 2002, a young group of actors from Havnar Sjónleikarafelag (Tórshavn Actors' Guild) set up *Margretu Kvæði* as a play on stage in conjunction with an acting camp where groups of actors from the different Scandinavian countries each brought a traditional song to perform on stage.¹⁵⁷ This was the first time this was attempted in the Faroe Islands (as far as records show), and Hansen suggests that it was

¹⁵² See appendix 4, fig. 1 for more images of the stamps

¹⁵³ Elinborg is betrayed by Pætur, as he marries another woman in Denmark. Elinborg, forbidden on boats because she is a woman, disguises herself and several other maidens as male soldiers before they caper a ship and sail to Denmark to bring Pætur back so he can marry Elinborg. See Annika Christensen, 'Metamorphosis, Beauty and the Monstrous: The Female Body in Faroese Folklore', in *Deshima: Désir, érotisme et cultures corporelles en Europe du Nord*, no. 11 (Presses Universitaires de Strasbourg, 2017), pp. 75-88.

¹⁵⁴ See appendix 4, Fig. 2 and 3 for images of the stamps.

¹⁵⁵ See appendix 4, Fig. 5 and 6 for images of the stamps. Czesław Słania was appointed Royal Court Engraver in Sweden and holds the Guinness World record in being the most prolific stamp and banknote engraver of all time. He illustrated several of the Faroese stamps, including the very first Faroese stamps given out by the Faroese Postal Service in 1976. Not much has been written about Słania's life, but some illuminating passages about his life are in Nick Westerby's, 'From the son of a miner to the Royal court of Sweden: Fascinating story of world's most prolific stamp engraver' THEfirstNEWS, March 2019, <<https://www.thefirstnews.com/article/from-the-son-of-a-miner-to-the-royal-court-of-sweden-fascinating-story-of-worlds-most-prolific-stamp-engraver-5195>> [Accessed May 2019]. Some more information about his work on Faroese stamps can be found on the Faroese Postal Services website: <https://stamps.fo/ShopItem/2003/0/PPS990903/ARK> [Accessed May 2019].

¹⁵⁶ S. Hansen, p. 78.

¹⁵⁷ S. Hansen, p. 78-79.

inspired by the theatrical community in Norway, where ballads and myths have been performed on stage for many years.¹⁵⁸ Hansen writes:

Hetta slagið av framførðslu av kvæðum er rættuliga nýtt í føroyskum høpi, men ímyndar møguliga eina gongd, har dentur verður lagdur á at geva *áskoðaranum* eina størri uppliving av kvæðafrásøgnini, enn hesin hevði fingið við einans at hugt at eini dansiframførslu.¹⁵⁹

This kind of performance of the ballads is fairly new in the Faroe Islands, but does, however, illustrate a trend where the emphasis is on giving the *audiences* a greater experience of the ballad narrative than they would have received in watching the ring-dance performance.

With added dialogues and actors playing the characters mentioned in the ballads, the ballads become suitable for an on-stage performance as the performers of the ballads (*kvøðarir* and ring-dancers) are already narrating a story, where actions and characters are fleshed out through the movement of the dancers and voices of the performers.

One of the most important platforms for the dissemination of ballads in the latter half of the 20th century was the Faroese radio station Útvarp Føroya, which first began broadcasting in 1957.¹⁶⁰ Árni Dahl, a Faroese writer, teacher and ballad enthusiast, produced several ballad segments during 1991-96, most notably a regular program called *Vit fara upp á Gólv*.¹⁶¹ *Vit fara upp á Gólv* broadcast recordings of ballad performances from around the Faroe Islands and some that were recorded in the building where Útvarp Føroya was located.¹⁶² These programs also included discussions on ballads, their relationship to other myths and stories from the Faroe Islands and discussions on the composing of the ballads.¹⁶³ Dahl subsequently published an anthologised collection of ballads named *Søga og Stev* (Story and Step) in six volumes from 1996-2000.¹⁶⁴ Dahl is also responsible for the

¹⁵⁸ S. Hansen, p. 79.

¹⁵⁹ S. Hansen, p. 79. Italics in original.

¹⁶⁰ See Hans Egholm, K. L. Hansen, U.L. Hansen, N.U. Dam., *Føroyska Rokksøgan: Frá frummrokki til altjóða tónleikapallin* (Tórshavn: Bókadeild Føroya Lærarafelags, 2016), pp.43-46.

¹⁶¹ The phrase literally translates to 'We go up on the floor'. To go 'upp á gólv' means to ring-dance. There is very little information available about these ballad segments Árni Dahl produced apart from hearing it from other people who listened to them, so the Faroese TV and radio network station Kringvarp Føroya kindly provided this information for the thesis. For more on Árni Dahl there is a 6-part radio documentary on his life and work at Kringvarp Føroya, *Meg minnst við Árni Dahl*, broadcasted March-April, 2014, <<https://kvf.fo/megminnist?page=16&sid=24291>> [Accessed August 2019].

¹⁶² For example Árni Dahl, *Tit brúðarfólk góðu nú lýðu*, broadcasted 16th January 1991 (Kringvarp Føroya).

¹⁶³ There was a segment on Kvívíks-Jógvan, a prolific ballad composer, broadcasted in January 1993 (Kringvarp Føroya).

¹⁶⁴ Árni Dahl, *Søga og Stev*, vol. 1-6 (Tórshavn: Fannir, 1996-2000). Three of these volumes have been digitised, see <<https://snar.fo/soegaogstev/>>

digitisation of the majority of the Faroese ballad corpus from Grundtvig and Bloch's *Corpus Carminium Færoensium*, which is available on the educational platform Snar.fo.¹⁶⁵

Ballads are still part of the regular radio schedule for Kringvarp Føroya (Faroese radio and TV network joined under this name in the 2000s), as the program *Dansival* is broadcast every week. *Dansival* combines ballad performances and discussions with weekly guests who relate specific ballads or performances that carry a special meaning for them.¹⁶⁶ *Dansival* also takes up the current social discussion of the ballads. An episode that was broadcast in March 2019 included a discussion on ballads in Faroese schools, where the Minister of Culture and Education together with two teachers discussed ballads being part of the national curriculum.¹⁶⁷ Radio has been instrumental in ensuring that people with an interest in ballads were not dependant solely on joining dancing societies and it also provided a space for people to hear and learn the ballads in a different way.

1.2.4 Existing research and identifying gaps

Early scholarship on the ballads was influenced by images of an oral Faroese history, images that are still, in some sense, prevalent in contemporary discussions of ballads and ballad history. In the 2018 publication *Ballads – new approaches. Kvæði – nýggj sjóðnarmið*, Eyðun Andreassen and Malan Marnersdóttir write:

Gransking í føroyskum kvæðum hevur snúð seg um somu spurningar sum gransking av kvæðum og fólkaívsum í Norðurlondum annars. Aldur og uppruni, keldur, útbreiðsla og skyldskapur hava verið høvuðsspurningar saman við málsligari gransking, og sum tað sæst í hesu bók, er tað enn spurningar av hesum slag, ið nógvir granskarar eru upptiknir av.¹⁶⁸

Research on Faroese ballads has often evolved around the same issues as the research on ballads and folksongs in other Northern countries. Age and origin, sources, distribution and kinship have, together with linguistics, been the major questions, and as we can see in this publication, these are still some of the issues that researchers focus on.

¹⁶⁵ Snar.fo, *Føroya Kvæði: Corpus Carminium Færoensium*, <<https://snar.fo/foroyakvaedi/>> [Accessed June 2019].

¹⁶⁶ Kringvarp Føroya, *Dansival*, <<https://kvf.fo/dansival?sid=92045>> (Kringvarp Føroya, 2013-) [Accessed June 2019] It is hosted by Jóhann Mortensen and has been broadcast since 2013.

¹⁶⁷ Minister of Culture and Education was, at the time of the broadcast, Hanna Jensen and the two teachers were Jón Kragesteen and Jónleif Johannessen. Johannessen is also active in the ring dancing communities, where he has been the president of Slái Ring, the over-arching committee for the Faroese dancing societies.

¹⁶⁸ Eyðun Andreassen and Malan Marnersdóttir: 'Kvæði og kvæðagransking', in *Ballads – new approaches. Kvæði – nýggj sjóðnarmið*, eds. by M. Marnersdóttir, E. Andreassen, S. A. Dahl, T.K. Jakobsen and E. Isholm (Tórshavn: Faroe University Press, 2018) pp. 7-14, p. 9.

Andreassen and Marnersdóttir here pinpoint where the main focus has been for ballad research: To analyse the ballads in terms of their actual content, and whether that content can further illuminate a more in-depth historical significance, rather than a societal one. Examples of new directions are also dismissing the thinking that cultural texts (ballads, folktales, songs, and so on) only come into being when they are written down, and paying more attention to the importance of orality in the building of Faroese ballad-culture.¹⁶⁹ This issue was especially poignant as Peter Hvilshøj Andersen-Vinlandicus, using rational philology, argued that the Faroese ballads first came into being when they were recorded in the 18th-19th century.¹⁷⁰ This argument was criticised by Eyðun Andreassen, although he agrees that titles of recorded ballads were created by the collectors.¹⁷¹ Richard M. Dorson coined the term ‘fakelore’ in the 1960s, a term he argued includes ‘the presentation of spurious and synthetic writings under the claim that they are genuine folklore’.¹⁷² Drawing on Dorson’s argument, Alan Dundes argues that if ‘folklore is rooted in nationalism, I believe fakelore may be said to be rooted in feelings of national or cultural inferiority’.¹⁷³ So if Dorson’s arguments are applied to Andersen-Vinlandicus’ claim that the early Faroese ballads were fakelore, then it could have come about from a sense of inferiority from Faroese scholars. This is still a topic that has not been researched in great detail, but could provide an interesting debate on folk/fakelore in relation to the ballads and whether it matters if the ballads are ‘genuine folklore’, or an 18th-century invention by entrepreneurial Faroese scholars.

One of the endeavours to get a more nuanced view of the Faroese ballad tradition has also included looking at the ballads in connections with pre-Christian Faroese society, the supernatural and the similarities between Faroese ballads and

¹⁶⁹ Eyðun Andreassen, ‘Sjúrdar kvæði – muntlige middelalder-ballader eller romantisk digtning fra 1800-tallet’, in *Ballads – new approaches. Kvæði – nýggj sjónarmið* ed. By M. Marnersdóttir, E. Andreassen, S. A. Dahl, T.K. Jakobsen and E. Isholm (Tórshavn: Faroe University Press, 2018), pp. 134-153, p. 136.

¹⁷⁰ Andersen-Vinlandicus, p. 130-131.

¹⁷¹ Andreassen (2018), p. 151.

¹⁷² Richard M. Dorson, ‘Fakelore’ *Zeitschrift für Volkskunde* 65 (1969), p. 60. See also Richard M. Dorson, *Folklore and Fakelore: Essays Toward a Discipline of Folk Studies* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1976).

¹⁷³ Alan Dundes, ‘Nationalistic Inferiority Complexes and the Fabrication of Fakelore: A Reconsideration of Ossian, the Kinder- und Hausmärchen, the Kalevala, and Paul Bunyan’, in *Journal of Folklore Research*, Vol. 22.1 (1985), pp. 5-18, p. 13. <<https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/3814466.pdf?seq=1>> [Accessed May 2020].

wider European ballad collections.¹⁷⁴ In addition to the above, there are especially a few papers here that illustrate a new way of thinking about and researching the ballads and their societal significance. Andrea S. Opielka's paper 'At fáa dansen under foden' is a detailed exploration of the role of the leader of ballads during the ring-dance, the *skiparir*.¹⁷⁵ Opielka uses the interview as a method for gathering in-depth qualitative information from participants, who discuss their experience as *skiparir*, leaders of ballad performances. Opielka's research is especially relevant when discussing ballads in contemporary culture, as Opielka lets the participants guide the research, which she supplements it with a thorough theoretical framework, without taking anything away from these stories.

Eyðun Andreassen published in 1992 *Folkelig Offentlighed: En Undersøgelse af kulturelle former på Færøerne i 100 år* which is a detailed exploration of Faroese culture and cultural forms during the 20th century.¹⁷⁶ The study is an empirical study of contemporary culture in the 1990's Faroe Islands. For Andreassen, the various forms of Faroese culture are all intertwined and have to be considered as part of a whole:

At undersøge kultur er at forstå menneskers tankegang, deres motiveringer og deres baggrund for handling og tænkning. Kultur kan ikke undersøges uden at den forstås, eller at der i det mindste – med nødvendige forudsætninger – bliver gjort forsøg på en forståelse. Statistiske registreringer af kulturelle ytringer er uden værdi, hvis man ikke finder udveje til at trænge ind bagved de synlige foreteelser, se skjulte mønstre og relationer, og hele det komplekse net af medvirkende faktorer – individuelle såvel som afhængige af omgivelserne – der reelt ligger bag alle menneskers handlinger.¹⁷⁷

To study culture is to understand the way people think, their motivations and the background for their actions and way of thinking. Culture cannot be studied without being understood, or at least – with the necessary requirements – there is an attempt to understand. Statistical registrations of cultural expressions are without worth if there are not attempts to get behind the obvious, see the hidden patterns and relations and the whole

¹⁷⁴ See, for example, Lynda Taylor, *The Cultural Significance of Elves in Northern European Balladry*, PhD theses (University of Leeds, 2014) on the supernatural. Taylor specifies that there are very few Faroese ballads that deal with the supernatural.

¹⁷⁵ Andrea Susanne Opielka 'At fá dansen under foden', in *Ballads – new approaches. Kvæði – nýggj sjónarmið* ed. By M. Marnersdóttir, E. Andreassen, S. A. Dahl, T.K. Jakobsen and E. Isholm (Tórshavn: Faroe University Press, 2018), pp. 27-48.

¹⁷⁶ Eyðun Andreassen, *Folkelig Offentlighed: En Undersøgelse af kulturelle former på Færøerne i 100 år* (Copenhagen: Museum Tusulanum, 1992)

¹⁷⁷ Andreassen, (1992), pp 17-18

complex net of influencing factors – individual as well as environmental – that actually are behind all people’s actions.

Andreassen and Opielka’s work builds on the continuation of the anthropological tradition, and especially Opielka’s work illustrates an engagement with emerging trends in community research and co-production between researchers and participants.¹⁷⁸ It also focuses on experience, which Pickering argues is central to understanding how people navigate and negotiate culture and their place in it.¹⁷⁹ D. Jean Clandinin and F. Micheal Connely further argue that it is researchers engaging with those different experiences makes it possible to create meanings and make connections.¹⁸⁰ Dennis Gaffin’s *In Place: Spatial and Social Order in a Faroe Islands Community* is considered the first ethnographical study of the Faroe Islands in English. The book ‘looks at how the Faeroese people situate themselves, their identities, and their culture in spatial and geographic ways. It links ecology and the study of “place”’.¹⁸¹ Gaffin also analyses the role of the arts and public culture in the preservation of traditions, including ballads and folklore, and includes a brief summary of the ballad and ring-dancing tradition. Another study that studies the more modern Faroese society is Tom Nauerby’s *No Nation is an Island: Language, Culture and National Identity in the Faroe Islands* from 1996. Nauerby analyses the emergence of the modern Faroese nation and discusses it in relation to globalisation and the nationalistic foundations that developed out of the 19th-century Romantic Movement. Nauerby writes:

[N]ational identities do not last *in spite* of the modernisation process, but on the contrary, have *come into existence by virtue of it*; as a product of the closer transnational and international interconnectedness of the modern age.¹⁸²

¹⁷⁸ See, for example, Firouz Gaini, ‘Cultural Rhapsody in Shift: Faroese Culture and Identity in the Age of Globalization’, in *Among the Islanders of the North: An Anthropology of the Faroe Islands* (Tórshavn: Faroe University Press, 2011) for another Faroese example. For community research in general, see David Studdert and Valerie Walkerdine, *Rethinking Community Research: Inter-relationality, Communal Being and Commonality* (London: Palgrave, 2016), especially pp. 27-48 and Michael Peter Smith, *Transnationalism from below: Comparative urban and community research* (London: Routledge, 2017). For more on research and co-production, see for example Mike Seal, *Participatory Pedagogic Impact Research: Co-production with community partners* (Oxon: Routledge, 2018).

¹⁷⁹ Pickering (2010), p. 18.

¹⁸⁰ D. Jean Clandinin and F. Micheal Connely, *Narrative Inquiry: Experience and Story in Qualitative Research* (San Francisco: Wiley, 2000), pp. 80-81.

¹⁸¹ Dennis Gaffin, *In Place: Spatial and Social Order in a Faroe Islands Community* (Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press, 1996), pp. 1-2.

¹⁸² Tom Nauerby, *No Nation is an Island: Language, Culture and National Identity in the Faroe Islands* (Aarhus: Aarhus University Press, 1996), p. 177.

The fact the Faroese nationalism and the continued interest in ballads and other Faroese traditions is therefore complex and worth a more investigative study, especially from a 21st-century point of view.

Sólfinn Hansen's book on the Faroese ballads, *Endurreisn Kvæðanna: Um Støðufesti í Føroyskum Skaldskapi* published in 2005, draws to some extent on Andreassen's work, as he discusses the re-emergence of ballads within contemporary culture and how the influence of other musical genres (for example, heavy metal, pop and folk music) has reshaped the Faroese ballad tradition and that it offers new forms of interpretation.¹⁸³ Although he does not go into much detail, Hansen crudely outlines the current state of popular music in relation to ballad heritage and makes a crucial point that this requires a completely new reinterpretation from the musicians' side, as the often lengthy and complicated ballad has to be reduced into a 3-4 minute song. It is therefore not just about rewriting ballad verses to music, but considering the ballad as a whole so that the story is also being told.¹⁸⁴

Popular Faroese music is the focus of Joshua John Green's *Music Making in the Faroes: The Experience of Music-making in the Faroes and Making Metal Faroese* from 2013, and although he does not focus on the ballads, this is a study of how the ballads are interpreted in Faroese metal music, and the significance it has for creating an 'aura of authenticity' in music.¹⁸⁵ Green makes use of interviews with Faroese musicians and provides a very thorough illustration of how the Faroese music scene has developed and what challenges it faces at a time when global influences are visible in almost all music, but at the same time musicians are trying to foster and make use of their local heritage.¹⁸⁶ Faroese music has also become an important export for the Faroe Islands.¹⁸⁷

The interaction between the tradition of ballad performances and popular music is analysed in detail in Dragana Cvetanovic, Satu Grunthal and Martina Huhtamaki's paper 'Swangah's „Frá bygd til bý“ - a Faroese Bricolage of Hip Hop,

¹⁸³ S. Hansen also inadvertently draws on Nauerby's ideas, although he is not cited in Hansen's work.

¹⁸⁴ Annika Christensen, *Interview with Heri Joensen* (York: 2016).

¹⁸⁵ Green (2013), pp. 12-15.

¹⁸⁶ See also for example bands such as Hamferð (which will be discussed in more detail later in the thesis), Grandma's Basement and Swangah that exclusively perform in Faroese and base their lyrics on Faroese-specific topics, but are at the same time their music is part of internationally known genres such as heavy metal, pop and hip hop.

¹⁸⁷ See Faroe Islands Alliance for Music Export, <http://www.musicfromthefaroeislands.fo> [Accessed December 2019].

National Romantic Poetry and Ballads'.¹⁸⁸ By doing a close reading of music made by Swangah, a Faroese hip hop group that performs exclusively in Faroese, Cvetanovic, Grunthal and Huhtamaki argue for parallels to be drawn between Faroese ballad compositions and Swangah's music. Here they specifically point towards the content, which deals with local Faroese matters, from popular culture to politics, and compares it to the ballad genre *tættir*, which had similar relevance for Faroese society during the 19th century and before.¹⁸⁹

Gender and ballads are also discussed by Louis-Georges Tin in 'Tá hinskynd mentan kom undan kav' (When heterosexual culture reared its head) where he argues that heterosexuality in chivalric poetry also impacted on the motifs and stories to be found in the ballads.¹⁹⁰ Tin primarily focuses on the French ballads, but his work can be used to trace a specific historic trend that took place in Europe and it especially allows for a more nuanced look into gender and gender roles, apart from the restrictive male/female viewpoints that have been exhausted already.¹⁹¹ Marie Novotná also builds on this in her paper 'Role of the Body - Scandinavian Ballads vs. Old Norse Literature', in which she compares the Scandinavian ballads depiction and description of bodies with those portrayed in Old Norse literature, including bodies of the dead and the ghostly bodies of deceased lovers.¹⁹² Novotná looks at how concepts of the human body are developed in Scandinavian ballads, 'given the supposition that archaic concepts could survive longer in folklore than in official Christian literature.'¹⁹³ These papers provide more varied, and increasingly political and culturally relevant, studies of the Faroese ballads, which have not previously been researched in such a great deal. Topics such as the body, gender and sexuality are very contemporary and relevant in the current climate, and although this is not central to my thesis, these topics will always be on the

¹⁸⁸ Dragana Cvetanovic, Satu Grunthal and Martina Huhtamaki, 'Swangah's „Frá bygd til bý“ - a Faroese Bricolage of Hip Hop, National Romantic Poetry and Ballads', in *Ballads – new approaches. Kvæði – nýggj sjónarmið*, M. Marnersdóttir, E. Andreassen, S. A. Dahl, T.K. Jakobsen and E. Isholm (eds.) (Tórshavn: Faro University Press, 2018) pp. 78-100.

¹⁸⁹ Cvetanovic et al, p. 80

¹⁹⁰ Louis-Georges Tin, 'Tá hinskynd mentan kom undan kav', in *Ballads – new approaches. Kvæði – nýggj sjónarmið* M. Marnersdóttir et al. (eds.) (Tórshavn: Faro University Press, 2018) pp. 181-212. This paper derives from Tin's more in-depth study published as *The invention of Heterosexual Culture* (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 2012)

¹⁹¹ Tin (2018), p. 182.

¹⁹² Maria Novotná, 'Role of the Body - Scandinavian Ballads vs. Old Norse Literature', in *Ballads – new approaches. Kvæði – nýggj sjónarmið* M. Marnersdóttir et al. (eds.) (Tórshavn: Faro University Press, 2018), pp. 293-305. The 'body' here is not necessarily male or female, but more used as an instrument or symbol of something more problematic.

¹⁹³ Novotná, p. 294.

periphery and will inform and add to the analytical work that will be done in subsequent chapters.¹⁹⁴

As the literature review suggests, there is missing a more specific focus on popular culture, heritage and education when discussing the Faroese ballad tradition. In particular, there has not yet been a study that considers these areas to be connected and influence each other. This thesis will illustrate the connections, and demonstrate how ballad research is relevant for contemporary Faroese culture.

1.3 Filling in the gaps: Ballads, popular culture and new directions

The following key questions have guided the analysis:

- 1) Why and how are the ballads still present in everyday culture in the Faroe Islands?
- 2) How, when and why did ballads become an important part of Faroese identity?
- 3) In what ways are the ballads used', i.e. taught and learned, performed and embodied, displayed and adapted, negotiated and mediated, within Faroese society by individuals, groups and institutions?
- 4) How does the ballad tradition contribute to the image of the Faroe Islands abroad and the wider notion of Nordic heritage and identity?

These questions formed the initial roadmap for how to approach the question of Faroese ballads and contemporary Faroese culture and their (re)interpretation and negotiation in Faroese nationalism, identity formation and engagement with heritage. The thesis will discuss these questions using a framework of approaches and methods derived from a cross-disciplinary perspective. Analysing the ballads as part of culture necessitates a varied methodological framework that includes anthropological and sociological approaches to culture as both a concept and a way to organise a society, as well as ethnographic approaches to analyse cultural experiences through qualitative research methods.¹⁹⁵ Finally, it is also necessary to

¹⁹⁴ Gender, sexuality and the female body have been central topics in an article I have written on Faroese folklore: Annika Christensen, 'Metamorphosis, Beauty and the Monstrous: The Female Body in Faroese Folklore', published in *Désir, érotisme et cultures corporelles en Europe du Nord*, Dëshima, revue d'histoire globale des pays du nord, no. 11 (Presses Universitaires de Strasbourg, 2017).

¹⁹⁵ Qualitative research methods here refer to interviews, observations and what emerges from analysing these in context.

include a historiographical approach to make connections between the past and the present in a way that is rooted in a personal connection between experience and history as an 'everyday matter'.¹⁹⁶ Cultural studies, as a discipline, draws on different theoretical and analytical perspectives. Graeme Turner writes:

It would be a mistake to see cultural studies as a new discipline, or even a discrete constellation of disciplines. Cultural Studies is an interdisciplinary field where certain concerns and methods have converged; the usefulness of this convergence is that it has enabled us to understand phenomena and relationships that were not accessible through the existing disciplines.¹⁹⁷

Far from being a form of cherry-picking between various methods, cultural studies are rooted in human experience.¹⁹⁸ Micheal Pickering also argues that 'experience is central to cultural studies' and that it serves as an important part of the methodological approach to analysing culture, because

while experience is common to both researcher and researched, the specific experiences we have are always in some degree different and individual to us, as are the ways we derive meaning and significance from experience or draw on our experience to contest other cultural definitions put upon experience, particularly by those in positions of power, authority and control.¹⁹⁹

Although the ballads have since the 19th century and up until today been a topic for academic discussion, these discussions have largely grouped the ballads *either* with folklore, literature or the study of the Faroese language development, and few of the scholarly works have critically considered the presence of the ballads within a contemporary Faroese culture by applying an interdisciplinary approach. There are a few contemporary studies which have analysed the contemporary cultural and societal significance of Faroese ballads and peoples' experience with the ballads. An important concept that needs to be included in this analysis is Kristinn Schram's 'Borealism', which has in recent years become more important in the study of the Scandinavian and North Atlantic region.²⁰⁰ Drawing on the term 'Orientalism' that

¹⁹⁶ Jorma Kalea, *Making History: The Historian and Uses of the Past* (London: Palgrave MacMillan, 2012), p. 1.

¹⁹⁷ Graeme Turner, *British Cultural Studies: An Introduction*, 3rd edition (London: Routledge, 2003), p. 9.

¹⁹⁸ Turner, p. 10.

¹⁹⁹ Micheal Pickering, 'Experience and the social world', in *Research Methods for Cultural Studies*, M. Pickering (ed.) (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010), pp. 17-31, pp. 17-18.

²⁰⁰ For more on 'Borealism' and representations of the North, see Kristinn Schram *Borealism: Folkloristic Perspectives on Transnational Performances and the Exoticism of the North*, PhD thesis (Edinburgh: University of Edinburgh, 2011)

Edward W. Said discusses in his 1978 publication *Orientalism*, ‘Borealism’ is a relatively new term which has made its way into the academic discussions of how the ‘North’ is perceived and represented. Like Said’s ‘Orientalism’, ‘Borealism’ concerns itself with the nexus of power: Who is representing whom, and who influences that representation?²⁰¹ ‘Borealism’ can therefore in its broadest terms be described as the representation of ‘the North’, as a cultural and political entity, as well as a historical and geographical location. ‘Borealism’ also refers specifically to representations of the Scandinavian and the North Atlantic North, and is in this thesis preferred over the term ‘Eurocentrism’, although they both derive from a similar position and a similar critical standpoint.²⁰² This will especially be explored in detail in chapters 6 and 7, which will discuss Faroese popular music, but it is worth noting here that this perception of the North permeates many aspects of the study of Faroese culture and heritage. It is therefore important to consider the various studies of Faroese culture and from them draw together an approach that seeks to illustrate contemporary Faroese culture in a nuanced way.

This thesis will also discuss the way representations comes into play in how people view themselves, individually and as a cultural/communal unity. Kim Simonsen uses the terms ‘auto-image’ and ‘hetero-image’ about the production of a specific Faroese^{ness}.²⁰³ These terms refer to the attitudes towards cultural values, it being one’s own (self-image, auto-image), or towards the ‘other’ (hetero-image) as defined by Joep Leerssen.²⁰⁴ Although these are predominately used in relation

<<https://www.era.lib.ed.ac.uk/bitstream/handle/1842/5976/Schram2011.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>> [Accessed August 2019]; K. Schram ‘Banking on Borealism: Eating, Smelling, and Performing the North’, in *Iceland and Images of the North*, Sumarlídi Isleifsson and Daniel Chartier (eds.) (Québec: Presses de l’Université du Québec, 2011), pp. 305-328; the essays in *Beyond Borealism: New Perspectives on the North*, I. Giles. et al. eds. (London: Norvik Press, 2016), especially Jan D. Cox, ‘The Battle of Kringen in Nordic Culture and History’, pp. 116-130, Haftor Medbøe, ‘The Compass of Nordic Tone: Jazz from Scandinavia’, pp. 149-166 and Christina Sandau, ‘At the Crossroads of Estonian and Finnish Identities’, pp. 271-291. See also *Visions of North in Premodern Europe*, D. Jørgensen and V. Langum eds. (Turnhout: Brepols, 2018), and Cannady, Kimberly, F. Holt, and A. V. Kärjä, ‘Echoes of the colonial past in discourse on North Atlantic popular music’, In *The Oxford Handbook of Popular Music in the Nordic Countries*, Fabian Holt and Antti-Ville Kärjä (eds.) (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017).

²⁰¹ Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978). Beyond their linguistic similarities and that they describe power existing within certain structures, we need to ensure that these debates clearly distinguish the systematic relationships of power and the history of colonial/imperial conditions between the West and the East mapped out in Edward Said’s ‘Orientalism’, and the form of exoticisation taking place in Europe’s representation of the European ‘North’. For more on ‘Orientalism’ see Edward W. Said, ‘Orientalism Reconsidered’, in *Cultural Critique*, No. 1. (Autumn, 1985), pp. 89-107. <<http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0882-4371%28198523%290%3A1%3C89%3AOR%3E2.O.CO%3B2-6>> [Accessed August 2019], and Bryan S Turner, *Orientalism, Postmodernism and Globalism* (London: Routledge, 1995).

²⁰² On Eurocentrism, see Samir Amin, *Eurocentrism*, R. Moore and J. Membrez (transl.) (New York: Monthly Review Press, 2009) and Ella Shohat and Robert Stam. *Unthinking Eurocentrism: Multiculturalism and the media*. (London: Routledge, 2014).

²⁰³ Kim Simonsen, ‘Elevating the Early Modern North. Images of the North and the Use of ballads and Sagas by Early Modern Scholars’, in *Northern Visions in the pre-modern Era* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2017), pp. 287-306, pp. 288-290.

²⁰⁴ See Joep Leerssen, ‘A summary of imagological theory’ on *Imagologica: Dedicated to the Critical Study of National Stereotypes*, <https://imagologica.eu/theoreticalsummary> [Accessed July 2020].

to literature, they help to illustrate how people and cultures view themselves and others, and that this is often based on a complicated system of representation. These systems of representation will be discussed using the terms exoticism and self/auto-exoticism that relate to Leerssen and Simonsen's definitions of self/hetero- image, but indicates another level of intention. For the Faroese tourism industry and music scene, the exoticisation is an intentional mechanism employed. In chapters 5 and 6, there is a detailed discussion of self-exoticism in relation to tourism and Faroese popular music, as this is significant to the way the Faroese musicians represent themselves and their music, and how the tourism industry employs this as a narrative tool for making the Faroe Islands and attractive tourist destination. From this, it is possible to draw together an approach that seeks to illustrate contemporary Faroese culture and self-representation in a nuanced way.

Another term to consider is 'primitivism'. 'Primitivism' as a term has deep roots in European Romanticism, where the primitive became an idealised escape from civilised Europe.²⁰⁵ Primitivistic images of the Faroese landscape, the celebrated 'simple' life the people lead there, and the idealised connection to Vikings, have been selling points for the tourism and the music industry. But they have also been used as a form of self-representation. This will be discussed in greater detail in chapters 5 and 7, but this simplistic image of the Faroe Islands has further implications. In the preface to *Among the Islanders of the North: An Anthropology of the Faroe Islands*, Gaini states that the Faroe Islands 'are usually considered relatively homogeneous culturally' and further argues that it can create limitations for the potential for studies in the culture of the Faroe Islands if the nuances within all aspects of Faroese culture are glossed over in this way.²⁰⁶ It is therefore important to consider how heritage and collective identities are formed. McDowell argues that 'the selective use of the past as a resource for the present implies that heritage is inseparable from the concepts of memory and identity because groups narrate their past in order to legitimize identities' and Arno Van der

²⁰⁵ For more on the discourse and cultural definition of 'primitivism', in general, see Micheal Bell, *Primitivism vol. 19* (London: Routledge, 2017).

²⁰⁶ Firouz Gaini, 'Introduction', in *Among the Islanders of the North: An Anthropology of the Faroe Islands Ungdómi* (Tórshavn: Faroe University Press, 2011), pp. 1-11, p. 8.

Hoven supports this by saying that 'Heritage is ...constituted of collective memories'.²⁰⁷

When it comes to talking about the ballads specifically, it is possible to talk about a form of collective culture, as the ballads are part of growing up in the Faroe Islands. This is echoed in the observations Joshua John Green makes about how ballad heritage has informed contemporary cultural practises in the Faroe Islands as he writes that

when visiting the Faroes today, there is considerable evidence to suggest that some of the cultural elements *selected* and *reframed* during the nationalist period and especially the *chain dance and their accompanying ballads* have retained a great deal of their significance as *national symbols*.²⁰⁸

What Green is indicating here, as a non-Faroese observer, is that there is a conscious reiteration of the ballads as an important part of Faroese identity. This can also be gleaned from the qualitative interviews Green bases his research on and these interviews are of immense value for any study of Faroese ballads and Faroese culture to read how his participants relate themselves to Faroese ballad heritage.²⁰⁹ The phrase 'popular culture' as it relates to the topics discussed in this thesis therefore draw on what sociomusicologist Simon Frith's argues to be the defining characteristics of popular music:

[T]he issue is not how a particular piece of music or a performance reflects the people, but how it produces them, how it creates and constructs an experience - a musical experience, an aesthetic experience - that we can only make sense of by taking on both a subjective and a collective identity.²¹⁰

In *Music as Social Life*, Thomas Turino argues that music and dance are in the very fabric of community building.²¹¹ It is about the participatory aspect of music that makes it valuable as community research.²¹² Sociologist Stuart Hall argues that '[it]

²⁰⁷ S. McDowell, 'Heritage, memory and identity', in Graham, B. & Howard, P. (Eds.) *The Ashgate Research Companion to Heritage and Identity* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), pp. 37-53, p. 39 and Arno Van der Hoven, *Popular Music Memories: Places and Practices of Popular Music Heritage, Memory and Cultural Identity*, PhD Thesis (Erasmus University Rotterdam, 2014), p. 12.

²⁰⁸ Green, p. 90.

²⁰⁹ Green interviewed 38 Faroese musicians. Although his focus was not ballads, but Faroese music in general and heavy metal as a genre in the Faroe Islands, this was a topic that kept resurfacing and Green has also devoted a chapter to this in his book.

²¹⁰ Simon Frith, 'Music and Identity, in *Questions of Cultural Identity*, Stuart Hall and Paul du Gray (eds.) (London: Sage Publications, 1996), pp 108-127, p. 109.

²¹¹ Thomas Turino, *Music as Social Life: The Politics Of Participation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008).

²¹² Turino, pp. 2-5.

is the participants in a culture who give meaning to people, objects and events.’²¹³ This is also the foundation on which this thesis is built: how Faroese institutions, groups and individuals work towards *maintaining* and *nurturing* a cultural, public interest in the ballads as a Faroese practice and part of a living everyday culture in the Faroe Islands.

R. Burke Johnson and Anthony J. Onwuegbuzie argue that interdisciplinary research and the understanding of multiple methods is necessary to ‘facilitate communication, to promote collaboration, and to provide superior research’.²¹⁴ Following Johnson and Onwuegbuzie’s suggestion in ‘complementing one method with another’, this thesis draws on anthropology, historiography, ethnography, as well as musicological studies and research on contemporary heritage, all with Faroese culture as the focal point.²¹⁵ Examining the ballads within a context that weaves together the ballads and their historical and anthropological significance is used to look at the development of Faroese cultural identity, and discuss how they continue to be a significant part of everyday Faroese culture, as well as being incorporated into educational, political and cultural policies. The ethnographic inquiry will guide the use of the interviews and the discussions on Faroese education, tourism and heritage industry, and reiterate Pickering’s mentions of participation and co-production of research. Drawing on musicological studies and research on popular music, the thesis will illustrate how identity and nationalism are explored. Finally, this thesis will consider new ways of considering the significance of the ballads for Faroese culture as both inward and outward-looking, institutional policies and the historical development of a Faroese cultural identity.²¹⁶

It becomes possible to connect the participatory aspect of the ballad, as a part of a shared heritage that has been practised amongst Faroese people for centuries, with the international influences that have shaped contemporary culture

²¹³ Stuart Hall, ‘Introduction’, in *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices*, Stuart Hall (ed.) (London: Sage Publications, 1997), pp. 1-12, p. 3.

²¹⁴ R. Burke Johnson and Anthony J. Onwuegbuzie, ‘Mixed methods research: A research paradigm whose time has come’, in *Educational Researcher*, Vol. 33, No. 7 (2007), pp. 14-26, p. 15.

²¹⁵ Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, p. 15.

²¹⁶ I have discussed this partly in Annika Christensen, ‘Metamorphosis, Beauty and the Monstrous: The Female Body in Faroese Folklore’, published in *Désir, érotisme et cultures corporelles en Europe du Nord, Deshima, revue d’histoire globale des pays du nord*, no. 11 (Presses Universitaires de Strasbourg, 2017) and Annika, ‘Performing (Hi)Stories: Narrative elements in Faroese Balladry and Ring Dance’, in *Events and Narratives in Language*, Janusz Badio (ed.) (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2016), pp. 45-58.

in the Faroe Islands. The history of the ballads is intertwined with the political history of the Faroe Islands and the development of a cultural agency.²¹⁷ Social and political changes can affect the engagement with local heritage, tourism, education and popular culture. These areas deserve specific attention, as they are representative of how the ballads are engaged within the Faroe Islands, but there is limited research into these areas. It is in these areas we can explore how ballads are supported (politically and through public funding) by governmental institutions, including the Ministry of Culture and the Faroese education system. We can learn how they are taught to future generations through the activities organised by dancing societies and schools.²¹⁸ Finally, it becomes possible to ascertain how the Faroese community(y/is) present their ballad heritage.

1.3.1 Structure and approach

Structure of the thesis

The first three chapters of the thesis will deal in greater detail with how ballads and ballad culture is appropriated and negotiated through education, research and governmental initiatives. In Chapter 2, I will explore the mechanism of Faroese governmental institutions to maintain and create an environment where the ballad tradition thrives but is protected and preserved under a set of pragmatic conditions. This chapter creates the basis for discussing the individuals and groups within these and institutions that each have their influences: Teachers, members of dancing societies and the people working in these institutions. Although they are not state institutions *per se*, the Faroese ring-dancing societies have also been included. This is partly because the societies receive government funding and are vocal about the preservation of the ballad and ring-dancing tradition, but they also play a part in organising *how* the ballads and ring-dancing are preserved as a practice in the Faroe Islands, as they are considered to be an authority on the Faroese ballad tradition and host the largest oral repertoire of ballads and ballad performances.²¹⁹

²¹⁷ Especially in relation to building the idea of *Faroeness* during the 19th century, an idea that persists and has ongoing relevance for the Faroe Islands. See further discussions of this in Christensen, Annika, 'Making Heritage Metal: Faroese Kvæði and Viking Metal', in *Medievalism and Metal Music Studies: Throwing Down the Gauntlet*, Ruth Barrat-Peacock and Ross Hagen (eds.) (Bingley: Emerald Publishing, 2019), pp. 108-119.

²¹⁸ Some will also evidently learn from family members, friends, etc., but it is not common.

²¹⁹ Faroese societies have active members and organise events for the majority of the year.

The aim for this first part of the thesis is to get a clearer view of how the ballads are taught and learned, performed and embodied, displayed and adapted, negotiated and mediated, within Faroese society, by closely investigating the specific agendas and methods utilised by Faroese institutions.²²⁰ Furthermore, the next three chapters will discuss in more detail the concerns and opinions of those that are part of these institutions. Many dancing society members have strong opinions and concerns about how governmental and educational institutions perpetuate and continue the ballad traditions, which will be explored in chapter 4. Chapter 3 includes discussions visits I made to two schools that work hard to ensure that the pupils get to engage with the ballads on their terms to avoid this formalised setting.

The second part of the thesis looks closer at the Faroese tourism and music industry, and how these incorporate the ballads and the idea of a unique Faroese identity as both a form of outward-facing display of Nordic heritage, as well as an inward-facing negotiation of identity, self/auto-exoticisation and belonging in the larger Nordic community. These chapters will investigate, how tourism and music negotiate and present the ballads in contemporary Faroese culture. There will be overlaps with the previous chapters which is to be expected since institutions affect opinions and ways of thinking much more broadly in society (and vice versa), but this part will focus on tourism and music in relation to international influences meet and interact with the traditional. This section aims to analyse what happens when the global meets the local, and how this influences the perception of Faroese ballad in the Faroe Islands and abroad, how the term 'tradition' is negotiated in contemporary Faroese culture and, finally, how this affects self-representation of Faroese identity at 'home and abroad'. The final chapter will focus on how the analysis of Faroese ballads, their integration into contemporary culture and impact on cultural identity, can be applied to other forms of activities that have social, cultural or political consequences in for, example, other small nations that engage with their heritage in contemporary cultural practises. Furthermore, it will consider the wider framework in which Faroese ballad research currently finds itself.

²²⁰ Using the words 'agenda' and 'methods' is deliberate here as Faroese cultural institutions have a clear and firm approach to the preservation and continuation of the Faroese ballad tradition, which will be discussed in greater detail.

Interviews

From early on in this project, it became clear that using interviews would be necessary to gain answers to some of the questions posed in chapter 1. What I found was that the interviews also generated additional questions and added much more depth and a variety I could not have predicted. Pickering argues that it is this unpredictability that shapes and creates the value for research involving participants.²²¹ During the conversations, the interviewees were reflecting on their own experiences, which in turn required me to reflect on my own experience of engaging with ballads throughout my childhood and youth. Tessa Muncey argues that these experiences can be perplexing when trying to translate it to academic terms, but also offer research into something that illuminates how people engage and negotiate their presence in their experiences.²²² It was through this interaction that the most fruitful material came into being. Using ethnographic approaches are therefore highly valuable when discussing community and socially related subjects. It would have been possible to conduct the research without the interviews, but it would have resulted in a one-dimensional thesis, relying too much on a theoretical framework to analyse individual and subjective experiences.²²³

Interviews were conducted in 2015 and 2016 with participants, who actively engage with the ballads in a variety of ways.²²⁴ Eighteen people took part in the interviews, each interview being between 30 minutes to 1 hour long. Interviews were conducted with members of dancing societies, ballad-scholars representatives from the Faroese Ministry of Culture, teachers from two schools, and Heri Joensen, the lead singer from the band Týr. Since this study seeks to provide an insight into how people engage with ballads, only people who actively engage in practices involving ballads (scholarly interest, members of dancing societies, teaching the ballads in schools, musicians) were invited to partake. The participants were between 27 and 78 years old, all Faroese- or Danish-speakers and the majority were

²²¹ Pickering (2010), p. 21.

²²² Tessa Muncey, *Creating Autoethnographies* (London: Sage publications, 2010), pp. 1-3.

²²³ Clandinin and Connelly, p. 12.

²²⁴ Andrea Opielka has conducted interviews with narrower target groups in relation to the studying the performance of Faroese ballads. See A. S. Opielka, *Danse- og sanglege på Færøerne. Oprindelse - udbredelse - nutidig tradition*. (Tórshavn: Faro University Press, 2011) and A.S. Opielka 'At få dansen under foden', in *Ballads – new approaches. Kvæði – nýggj sjóðnarmið*, pp 27-48.

or had been members of a dancing society. Although the study did not involve dancing societies, in particular, it was a natural outcome that a lot of people interested in the Faroese ballads would also be members. The participants lived in the Faroe Islands and Denmark. From the interviews I was, in particular, looking for four key answers: 1) Are the ballads a point of interest for governmental procedures (allocation of funding, research, etc.) and how the UNESCO convention for intangible heritage will affect this, 2) how are ballads negotiated within the Faroese primary and secondary education systems, 3) what are the procedures, ramifications and consequences of mediating ballads through popular music and finally 4) what are people's personal experiences with the ballads. Using the material gathered in interviews with participants, it becomes possible to combine and correlate theoretical propositions with what my informants had to say. It is necessary to couple the informants' experience with the ballads as historical and cultural texts interpreted in relation to their historical development. This also means it is imperative to consider how previous studies of the Faroese ballads have been shaped and whether a reading of ballads in contemporary Faroese culture that goes against the grain of this established discourse may be needed in order to engage with the ballads historically, culturally and experientially

During the recruitment of interviewees, the focus was on approaching people and institutions that fitted with my target group, so I approached primary and secondary schools, dancing societies and utilised my social network.²²⁵ As the fieldwork was dependent upon being in the Faroe Islands it was conducted over the course of several trips. Each one of the participants that is part of this study has different experiences and opinions and by allowing for a multitude of views all juxtaposed to each other creates a more nuanced and less constrictive look at how the ballads function within contemporary Faroese society and exemplify how people engage with them. The focus was researching a self-selecting group that chooses to actively participate in ballad culture, so no interviews were conducted with people that have no interest in Faroese ballads or do not participate in any

²²⁵ In order to access potential participants, the first port of call was to get in touch with organisations that could forward my request to their members or contacts. I approached Lærarafelagið (Teacher's Union) and Slái Ring. They forwarded my email to all their members. I asked friends to either participate (many are members of dancing societies) or suggest someone who might be interested in an interview.

activities involving ballads. Such a study would be far more beneficial if it was given a platform of its own, and not just lumped together with the study of this particular thesis.

The interviews were organised according to qualitative methods of information gathering: participating in and observing practises involving the ballads and interviewing the people who continue to mediate ballads in contemporary Faroese culture. The experience of participating in ring-dancing and thoughts about the adaptations of ballads in Faroese culture were central to this inquiry. Through this personal engagement with the ballads, it is possible to consider new ways in which the ballads inform cultural memory, identity and contemporary practices in the Faroe Islands. My (vocal) involvement was kept to a minimum and I was conscious of trying not to interrupt, even if the conversation went slightly off-topic or there were long pauses. King, Horrocks and Brooks argue that it is important to keep control of the interview to gain valuable insights, but also that 'enabling the participant to feel comfortable opening up to you' will build a rapport and encourage a positive relationship.²²⁶ Another reason for this is that I discovered in one of my first interviews, was that it is valuable to talk around the subject before getting to the crux of the matter, allowing a varied and multi-dimensional answer to the questions. The participants also frequently said interesting and valuable things that would not have been included otherwise. This was a feature that influenced the structure of the interview process as I progressed further.²²⁷

As the interviews yielded personal stories, the participants could make an informed decision about whether or not they wanted their identity to be concealed before the interview. Katja M. Guenther points out that '[the] act of naming is an act of power. Parents naming children, conquerors naming new lands, and organizations naming themselves all involve the assertion of authority and control'.²²⁸ The default solution of concealing participants' identities ignores the

²²⁶ Nigel King, Christine Horrocks and Joanna Brooks, *Interviews in Qualitative Research*, 2nd edition (London: Sage, 2019), p. 77. For more on leading questioning and interrupting, see p. 81.

²²⁷ See Christina W. Stage and Marifran Mattson, 'Ethnographic interviewing as contextualized conversation', in *Expressions of ethnography: Novel approaches to qualitative methods*, Robin Patric Clair (ed.) (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2003), pp. 97-105.

²²⁸ Katja M. Guenther, 'The politics of names: rethinking the methodological and ethical significance of naming people, organizations, and places', in *Qualitative Research*, Vol. 9 (4) (2009), pp. 411-421, p. 412.

complications that might arise from taking away their agency. As Guenther further argues, the decision to name participants should not be based solely on whether or not they or the researcher wish to do so, but by critically considering whether ‘the use of real names and/or of details that could lead to the discovery of real names may be appropriate when such strategies maintain the analytic rigour of the research without posing significant risk to respondents’.²²⁹ The majority of the interviewees decided to have their name attached to their statements.

Doing fieldwork ‘at home’ and reflections on the researcher’s position

Conducting fieldwork in one’s own native country can present both advantages and disadvantages. The advantages for me were that I master the Faroese language and have an understanding of the culture. I found it relatively easy to gain access to the community or group of people that I was researching. I was born on Streymoy, the largest island of the Faroe Islands. I received the majority of my education, before university, in the Faroe Islands, apart from a year in a Danish boarding school at the age of sixteen. I am well acquainted with the ballad tradition, although I have never been an engaged practitioner. However, the field presented some initial challenges that I was not anticipating, and that are worth mentioning here.²³⁰ I was frequently asked about my knowledge of and skills relating to ballads and ring-dancing, as it was assumed that I was either a member of a dancing society, musician or someone interested in folklore. I was expected to at least know many ballads by heart. I know only a few verses in chronological order in a handful of ballads.²³¹ Although these questions were asked in a pleasant and non-confrontational manner, it set up some parameters I and my informants had to acknowledge: Even though there were no language or cultural barriers, I was not a part of this particular group and wider circle of experts that know about and work with the ballads on a day-to-day basis. In this instance, I did consider myself an outsider, with some minor privileges such as language and general knowledge.

Gaining the privilege of being an ‘insider’ to any cultural group is contingent on several complex factors and relies on more than being able to speak the

²²⁹ Guenther, pp. 418-419.

²³⁰ Detailed notes are to be found in appendix 5.

²³¹ Considering most ballads are a minimum of twenty verses and there are hundreds of them, this is not very impressive.

language or even to have grown up in the same area. Researchers Ayça Ergun and Aykan Erdemir, who in their self-reflexive and comparative account of their fieldwork experiences in Azerbaijan and Turkey experienced how their insider/outsider status was contingent on various additional other factors such as religion, gender and age, etc. and that their status was never fixed, but was constantly negotiated between researchers and informants.²³² As Ergun and Erdemir point out, the nature of insider/outsider is ambiguous and fluid:

The researcher's constant negotiation with informants is inevitably a never-ending process. Even for so-called native ethnographers, becoming an insider is not straightforward. Characteristics attributed to researchers might not fully overlap with the researchers' perceptions of their own ascribed and achieved identities. One can, therefore, find himself or herself in the position of an insider in a foreign land or an outsider in his or her land.²³³

Conducting fieldwork in the Faroe Islands will ultimately be shaped by the small community in which this is taking place. This means that the sense of anonymity is harder to achieve as there is a large chance that people will know the person being interviewed if they talk about a particular event. The participants in this study are acutely aware of this as it largely defines the whole experience of living in the Faroe Islands. It does however also further shape how ethnographic work is to be conducted in the Faroe Islands as it becomes impossible to talk about a culture divided into exclusive subcultures, simply due to the small number of people.²³⁴ People may take part in and identify with several cultural groups or activities, without there necessarily being rigid terms that define these groups. Before one of the interviews, the participant asked: 'What "hat" should I put on?'²³⁵ They were referring to the role they were to occupy when answering my question, as the ballads permeated several aspects of their life, both personal and professional. The participant asked a pertinent question, namely what position they should occupy when answering the interview questions: should they answer according to their position as an academic, a member of a dancing society, a storyteller, a parent or

²³² Ayça Ergun and Aykan Erdemir, 'Negotiating Insider and Outsider Identities in the Field: "Insider" in a Foreign Land; "Outsider" in One's Own Land', in *Field Methods*, Vol. 22 (1), (2010), pp. 16-38.

²³³ Ergun and Erdemir, p. 34

²³⁴ Firouz Gaini, *Miðlar, Mentan og Seinmodernitetur: Ein Antropologisk Lýsing av Føroyskum Ungdómi* (Tórshavn: Faroese University Press, 2008), p. 14.

²³⁵ Annika Christensen, *Interview with a member of a dancing society, no. 4* (Tórshavn: 2015).

other. In the Faroe Islands, there is a constant negotiation of cultural identity in terms of living in a small society, but at the same time identifying with it.

The participants provided their opinions so it was important for the project that their voices were heard and that they were acknowledged if the participants so wished. The subject matter discussed during the interviews was not of a sensitive nature, but during the transcription and subsequent consultation, care was taken to not include any information that implicated people who were mentioned during the interviews but did not participate themselves. The act of naming participants should always be based on 'balancing the protection of internal and external confidentiality, research goals, strategies in the field and the presentation of data, and personal comfort.'²³⁶ These factors also have to be taken into consideration when conducting this type of fieldwork work in a community as small as the Faroe Islands, where the statement 'everyone knows each other' is not just an empty phrase. Considering the interview 'as a moment of engagement, a site of participation in the life of the person we meet and talk with', allowing that long pause and going in different directions can give the material deriving from the interview more substance and context.²³⁷ Annette Kuhn writes that 'informants' accounts are consequently treated not only as data but also as discourse, as material for interpretation', and it is through the mutual engagement between the person being interviewed and me as the interviewer that the contexts of interpretations are developed.²³⁸

1.4 Conclusion

This chapter has reviewed the existing literature on ballad research and has outlined the gaps that are in the present literature. To provide a critical stance on ballads in contemporary Faroese culture and the implications of nationalism and romanticism that governs a lot of ballad research. The research questions are designed to explore this in more detail. These questions are also designed to

²³⁶ Guenther, p. 420.

²³⁷ Jenny Hockey and Martin Forsey, 'Ethnography is not participant observation: Reflections on the interview as participatory qualitative research', in *The Interview: An Ethnographic Approach*, ed. by Jonathan Skinner (London: Berg, 2012) pp. 69-88, p. 75.

²³⁸ Annette Kuhn, *An Everyday Magic: Cinema and Cultural Memory* (London: I.B. Tauris Publishers, 2002), p. 9.

explore the ballads and ring-dancing as Faroese intangible heritage. Therefore this chapter has also briefly outlined the push towards preserving ballads under the UNESCO CSICH, which will be discussed in more detail in the following chapter.

This chapter provided a brief outline of ballad categories and the ring-dance, as the main concern of the thesis is to analyse and investigate the cultural and social implications of the ballads and the aspects surrounding them. However, introductory knowledge of the contents and structure of the ballads, as well as a little knowledge on the ring-dance, is useful for a reader that has no previous knowledge of ballads in the Faroe Islands.

This chapter has also discussed how ballads permeate different aspects of Faroese culture, including art, literature, theatre and radio. This section shows that there are many valuable areas of interest when it comes to researching ballads in contemporary Faroese culture. It is by carefully exploring these various areas the ballads appear in that the primary focus on popular music, education, and tourism has been developed. These areas offer unique insights into representation, heritage, and nationalism. It, therefore, becomes possible to analyse how these function as vehicles for identity formation – both in terms of the identity of the individual and formation of a specifically Faroese cultural identity. This necessitates varied methodological framework that includes anthropological and sociological approaches to culture as both a concept and a way to organise a society, as well as ethnographic approaches to analyse cultural experiences through qualitative research methods. It is here the interviews offer a valuable new dataset for investigation.

This thesis is a critical exploration of ballads in contemporary Faroese culture, but it is also an investigation of identity formations, heritage ideologies/politics and how the individuals experience is part of the wider cultural discourse in the Faroe Islands. Therefore, the following chapters will explore different ways to think about and engage with ballads and encourage new and creative discussions on ballads in contemporary Faroese culture.

2. Intangible Heritage, Institutional Heritage: Political and Cultural Institutions

The issue of preserving the Faroese ballads and ensuring their continuous circulation within Faroese society is highly topical for many of the major cultural and educational institutions in the Faroe Islands. It is not just the ballads that have to be preserved; the rituals and traditions surrounding them are also passed on to future generations through institutionalised measures.²³⁹ Faroese culture is preserved as much in celebratory activities as it is in archives. Governmental bodies and institutions are as much involved in the national holiday and the celebration of other culture-related events as they are in creating policies and securing funding for archives. Besides the physical manuscript archives and audio collections, the Faroese language and culture are also documented as part of celebrations and activities organised by various institutions and governmental bodies. An example is Móðurmálsdagur (Day of the Mother Tongue), which is celebrated every year on the 25th of March and is a day devoted to the Faroese language and the celebration of V.U. Hammershaimb's birthday.²⁴⁰ This event came as a response to the United Nation's International Mother Language Day, which is on the 21st of February every year.²⁴¹ It consists of a list of events that are organised every year by different Faroese companies, and Málráðið (The Faroese Language Council), the Ministry of Education, Research and Culture and Nám are always involved. The first of these celebrations of the Faroese language was in 2012 and they have continued being an

²³⁹ S. Hansen, p. 79. See also Peter Aronsson and Lizette Gradén (eds.), *Performing Nordic Heritage – Everyday Practices and Institutional Culture* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013) for more general information about traditions and practices in the Scandinavian and Nordic countries.

²⁴⁰ Nám, 'Móðurmálsdagur' (2019), <<https://nam.fo/adrar-sidur/tidindi/nytt/news/modurmalsdagur-1/>> [Accessed February 2020].

²⁴¹ United Nations, 'International Mother Language Day', <<https://www.un.org/en/observances/mother-language-day>> [Accessed February 2020]. This celebration was proclaimed by UNESCO in 1999 on the 30th General Conference in November 1999, see 'Draft report of Commission II', 30C/62 (1999), <<https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000117961.page=38>> [Accessed February 2020].

annual celebration since then. Some years have had a theme where the event has had a focus on a particular aspect of Faroese language, for example, technical/work language (yrkismál) in 2017.²⁴² The Faroese national holiday *Ólavsøka* is celebrated each year 28th to 29th of July, and each year on the 29th, people gather for communal singing at midnight on Vaglinum, a square located in the centre of Tórshavn.²⁴³ This is always followed by everyone joining in a ring-dance, where the ballad 'Ormurin Langi' is performed. It is a very popular event, especially for tourists visiting the Faroe Islands. The ring-dancing society Tøikum Lætt usually also have ring-dancing events during *Ólavsøku*, which usually draw those who are interested in ring-dancing and perhaps are already society members.²⁴⁴

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Culture (prev. The Faroese Ministry of Education, Research and Culture) governs and promotes growth in areas of education, research, sport, culture and the arts.²⁴⁵ In relation to the safeguarding and promotion of Faroese heritage, their main areas of influence are the laws and legislations that are passed through the Løgting and are governed by the Ministry. Ballads, ballad history and ring-dancing are compulsory subjects in Faroese schools, and the Ministry also supports the Faroese ballad tradition by providing funding to ring-dancing societies, which will be discussed in further detail in the following two chapters. This chapter will therefore lay out the different policies, projects and events organised by Faroese governmental institutions, as well as discuss how worldwide organisations such as UNESCO, has influenced and shaped the parameters for Faroese institutions.

2.1 Defining the difference between intangible and tangible

Folarin Shyllon describes intangible heritage as being 'the opposite of tangible cultural heritage. It is non-physical and therefore not touchable except in its

²⁴² Móðurmálið, 'Móðurmálsdagur' (2019), <<http://snar.fo/tema/skaldskapur-og-midlar/modurmalid/modurmalsdagur/>> [Accessed June 2018].

²⁴³ Everyone is given a pamphlet and hundreds of people gather to sing together. See Visit Faroe Islands, 'Ólavsøka (St. Olaf's Day)', <<https://whatson.fo/en/event/olavsoka/>> [Accessed February 2020].

²⁴⁴ During my interviews with members of ring-dancing societies, most said that they happily avoided the ring-dance on Vaglinum. One interviewee said that it was like 'holding a bag of heavy sand in each hand' to try and dance with people who were either drunk or did not know anything about Faroese ring-dance.

²⁴⁵ Uttanríkis- og Mentamálaráðið (Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Culture), <<https://www.ummr.fo/>>, [Accessed April 2020].

tangible expression’,²⁴⁶ and Janet Blake further argues that it ‘is embedded in the social and cultural lives of the cultural communities’.²⁴⁷ These statements are echoed in UNESCO’s definition of ‘intangible heritage’ as being ‘the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills ... that communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals recognize as part of their cultural heritage’ and that is being ‘transmitted from generation to generation, [and] constantly recreated by communities and groups in response to their environment, their interaction with nature and their history’.²⁴⁸ The term ‘intangible’ is therefore used to evoke something which is alive in the community in which it is mediated and disseminated but cannot be fixed. This raises different questions of preservation, ones that are more complex than in regards to for example architecture and building, for how can something be *preserved* if it is dynamic and alive?²⁴⁹ A further criterion is that intangible heritage must not have become fossilised; according to UNESCO, ‘[t]o be kept alive, intangible cultural heritage must be relevant to its community, continuously recreated and transmitted from one generation to another’.²⁵⁰ To say that the ballads have been relevant for communities on the Faroe Islands would be an understatement. They have made their way into almost all aspects of Faroese culture and will even be encountered by those islanders whose interest in medieval oral traditions and their legacies are minimal.

Faroese schools, heritage institutions, governmental institutions and dancing societies all have their part to play in the way that ballads are being promoted and disseminated in the Faroe Islands, and how they are interpreted by Faroese people and others in terms of cultural identity and sense of self as part of a Faroese community.²⁵¹

One of the most significant initiatives has been the Faroese government agreeing to adhere to the CSICH. On an institutional and political level, there seems

²⁴⁶ Folarin Shyllon, ‘Cultural Heritage and Intellectual property: Convergence, Divergence and Interface’, in *A Companion to Heritage Studies*, William Logan, Máiréad Nic Craith, and Ulrich Kockel (ed.) (Chichester: Wiley Blackwell, 2016), pp. 55-68, p. 56.

²⁴⁷ Janet Blake, ‘UNESCO’s 2003 Convention of Intangible Cultural Heritage. The Implications of Community Involvement in ‘Safeguarding’’, in *Intangible Heritage*, Laurajane Smith and Natsuko Akagawa (eds.) (London: Routledge, 2009), pp. 45-73, p. 46.

²⁴⁸ UNESCO, ‘Text of the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage’, (Paris, 2003) <<https://ich.unesco.org/en/convention>> [Accessed April 2019].

²⁴⁹ Blake, p. 47.

²⁵⁰ UNESCO, ‘Safeguarding without freezing’, <<https://ich.unesco.org/en/safeguarding-00012>> [Accessed September 2018].

²⁵¹ S. Hansen, p. 61.

to be a growing interest in preserving and maintaining traditions, crafts and skills that have been passed on for generations mainly through these being passed on in families. Although the ballads are the part of Faroese intangible traditions that have been preserved in much greater detail than anything else, these traditions benefit from institutional and official parameters being put in place.²⁵² It is no longer just about what the individual is interested in learning, it enters into a much more complicated system which is affected by global measurements. In short, it is here where heritage (tangible and intangible alike) becomes political.

2.2 UNESCO and its influence on the Faroese ballads

In 2009, the Faroe Islands became associated members of UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) and the first Faroese UNESCO committee was established in 2012.²⁵³ The current committee, which took over in 2016 and remains until a new election takes place in 2020, is made up of six people, including Annika Sølvará, chair of the Faroese Research Council, and Sigurð í Jákupsstovu, Dean of the University of the Faroe Islands. As the Faroe Islands are not a sovereign state in their own right, their UNESCO membership is through their connection to Denmark (which is a member state) and they remain 'associate members', which means that the Faroe Islands are not allowed to vote on matters relating to UNESCO.²⁵⁴ There is a long list of areas UNESCO works to develop further, but what is of relevance for this chapter is that 'It strengthens the ties between nations and societies, and mobilizes the wider public so that each child and citizen ... may grow and live in a cultural environment rich in diversity and dialogue, where heritage serves as a bridge between generations and peoples'.²⁵⁵ Each outgoing committee is required to write a report outlining the work they have done and what they have achieved in their term. In the 2012-2016 report it stated:

Útbúgving, gransking, mentan, samskipti og upplýsing eru týðandi tættir í menning og framburði í føroyska samfelagnum. Við atlimaskapi í UNESCO

²⁵² A caveat to mention is that this only works as long as it continues to be a collaboration with other cultural groups, e.g. the dancing societies.

²⁵³ Mentamálaráðið, 'UNESCO', <<http://www.mmr.fo/arbeidsoki/altjoda-samstarv/unesco/>> [Accessed September 2018].

²⁵⁴ UNESCO, 'The Faroe Islands' <<https://en.unesco.org/countries/faroes?language=fr>> [Accessed March 2017].

²⁵⁵ Ibid.

hava Føroyar tikið fyrsta stigið fram ímóti einum meiri sjónligum leikluti í altjóða samstarvinum.²⁵⁶

Education, research, culture, communication and information are important parts in the development and progression of the Faroese society. By becoming associated members in UNESCO, the Faroe Islands have taken their first step towards becoming increasingly more visible in international collaborations

In the report, it is evident that to foster international relations, the areas of education, research, culture, communication and information have to be given priority in the Faroese society. Faroese ballads (in conjunction with the Faroese language) have remained an important point on the Faroese UNESCO committee's strategy list. In June 2015, the Faroese UNESCO division sent an appeal to the then Minister of Culture, Bjørn Kalsø, to have the CSICH approved in the Faroe Islands, as this would ensure steps being made taken to preserve Faroese intangible heritage, where the ballads and ring-dance were focal points, and ensure their wider distribution through research and education as well.²⁵⁷

The CSICH has since 2003 become the subject of debate: what is intangible heritage and what procedures should be put in place to safeguard it? What does it mean to 'safeguard' a heritage that is defined as 'intangible'? UNESCO specifies that the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage 'is of general interest to humanity and should therefore be undertaken through cooperation among bilateral, sub-regional, regional and international parties' and that 'communities, groups and [...] individuals should never be alienated from their intangible cultural heritage'.²⁵⁸ The Convention further states:

For the purposes of this Convention, consideration will be given solely to such intangible cultural heritage as is compatible with existing international human rights instruments, as well as with the requirements of mutual respect among communities, groups and individuals, and of sustainable development.²⁵⁹

The purpose of the Convention, as listed in Article 1 in Text of the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, is to ensure that Intangible

²⁵⁶ The Faroese National Commission for UNESCO, 'Frágreiðing um virkseimið hjá føroysku UNESCO nevdini 2012-2016', <<http://cdn.lms.fo/media/8838/unesco-fr%C3%A1grei%C3%B0ing-2012-2016.pdf>> [Accessed April 2017], p. 4.

²⁵⁷ The Faroese National Commission for UNESCO, *Aheitan á landsstýrismannin í mentamálum um at fáa UNESCO sáttmálan um verju av siðaarvi settan í gildi í Føroyum*, (Tórshavn, 2016) <<http://cdn.lms.fo/media/6483/img-604140911-0001.pdf>> [Accessed November 2016].

²⁵⁸ UNESCO, 'Ethics and Intangible Cultural Heritage' <<https://ich.unesco.org/en/ethics-and-ich-00866>> [Accessed October 2019].

²⁵⁹ UNESCO 'Text of the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage', Article 2, <<http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/en/convention#art2>> [Accessed March 2017].

Cultural Heritage is safeguarded and this includes the peoples involved in creating this intangible heritage; that awareness of its importance is raised on a 'local, national and international level', and to 'provide for international cooperation and assistance.'²⁶⁰ The Convention operates on three levels: local, national and international. Janet Blake points out that, amongst other instances where the local, national and international intersect, 'the relationship between the state and local levels in implementation is crucial' as the convention places a lot of responsibilities onto those who, daily, are the ones maintaining and getting involved with this heritage.²⁶¹ The convention makes a distinction between communities, groups and individuals, although these can also be seen as being interlinked in many ways. For the purpose of this chapter, it is valuable to establish the characteristics the Convention sets up for these three definitions, especially what is meant by *communities* and *groups*. *Communities* are 'networks of people whose sense of identity or connectedness emerges from a shared historical relationship that is rooted in the practice and transmission of, or engagement with, their ICH [intangible cultural heritage]', whilst *groups* are defined as:

People within or across communities who share characteristics such as skills, experience and specialist knowledge, and thus perform specific roles in the present and future practice, re-creation and/or transmission of their intangible cultural heritage as, for example, cultural custodians, practitioners or apprentices.

Individuals have very similar characteristics to the definition of the *Group*, as they are defined as

those within or across communities who have distinct skills, knowledge, experience or other characteristics, and thus perform specific roles in the present and future practice, re-creation and/or transmission of their intangible cultural heritage as, for example, cultural custodians, practitioners and, where appropriate, apprentices.²⁶²

Although these definitions were 'met with some criticism from certain parties', Janet Blake argues, 'they do represent an attempt to define terms that have

²⁶⁰ UNESCO 'Text of the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage', Article 1, <<http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/en/convention#art2>> [Accessed March 2017].

²⁶¹ Blake, p. 47.

²⁶² UNESCO, *Expert Meeting on Community Involvement in Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage: Towards the Implementation of the 2003 Convention, 13-15 March 2006*, (Tokyo, 2006) <<http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/doc/src/00034-EN.pdf>> [Accessed January 2019].

hitherto been used without any exact meaning, albeit with reference to CSICH'.²⁶³ Since the Convention states that there should be a large amount of involvement from the communities, the CSICH is 'navigating relatively uncharted waters' and this might cause issues and raise questions when implementing the requirements of the convention.²⁶⁴ This collaboration between the community, groups and individuals on one side and governmental bodies on the other (which in the case of the Faroe Islands constitutes both the Faroese *løgting* and, to some extent, the Danish government) is, therefore, something that has to be defined before any actual work can be carried out: 'There is, therefore, a need to build a state/community partnership that is both bottom-up and top-down, with the role of government seen as being primarily a supportive one (in terms of finances and expertise'.²⁶⁵

The Faroese UNESCO committee, therefore, seeks to create a framework of support and expertise for the ballads and the ring-dance to thrive in the Faroese community. As Armgarð Weihe, principal at the Ministry of Education, Research and Culture states, there are already groups and individuals that work towards generating knowledge in research and education on the Faroese ballads and promote and maintain the cultural practises of ballad singing and ring-dancing through events.²⁶⁶ It is critical for the Faroese membership in UNESCO that these individuals and groups can continue to have this framework in which they can promote the growth of the ballads in the Faroese community. It is through this continuation that the ballads can continue to be a part of the living culture in the Faroe Islands, for as Blake further argues:

Unlike a site, a monument or artefact that has material existence beyond the individual or society that created it (possibly wholly unknown to us today) it is only through its enactment by cultural practitioners that ICH [intangible cultural heritage] has any current existence and by their active transmission that it can have any future existence.²⁶⁷

²⁶³ Blake, p. 60.

²⁶⁴ Blake, p. 62.

²⁶⁵ Blake, p. 64.

²⁶⁶ Annika Christensen, *Interview with Armgarð Weihe* (Tórshavn: 2016).

²⁶⁷ Blake, p. 65.

Valeria Lo Iacono and David H. K. Brown, however, argue that there has to be an awareness of how these intangible forms of heritage are intertwined with the contextual environment in which they are prospering and growing:

The label of intangible is particularly problematic when considering dance as heritage, given the central role that the human body has in the practice of dance, and because the phenomenon of dance is simultaneously emergent from, and constitutive of culture and society.²⁶⁸

This quote illustrates how difficult it is to talk about dance in relation to preservation and heritage. Dance is a practice that relies on the human body being in motion, which means in turn that it is dynamic and open to change. It might be that some will argue that the ring-dance itself has little to no variations, or that the ballads have been comprised into a standard archive but it is worth noting that there are still variations in how one ballad is being performed in different places in the Faroe Islands. For example, Hansen argues that the act of recording the ballads in writing had a profound effect on how they are learned and how they 'should be' performed.²⁶⁹ This created a Faroese ballad canon, where the ballads had to be performed in a certain way. In the interview with dancing society member Erlendur Simonsen, he noted that having different melodies for the same ballad used to be celebrated and each ballad performance bore traces of the area in which the performers originated. In the past few decades, however, there has been a standardisation that can prohibit the Faroese ring-dance and ballad singing from developing within the community:

Um eg komi við ein øðrum lagi eru tað nógv sum hyggja skeivt upp á meg, og kanska fara úr dansinum, físa sindur um at tad er tad skeiva lagið, at hattar er ikki rætta lag og sovarit. [...] [Nú] er tad sum ein facitt-listi, tað er *ein* rættur melodiur.

If I try to introduce a different melody, many will give me weird looks, and will perhaps even leave the dance, they will huff and puff about it being the wrong melody, that it is not the right melody and such. [...] [Now] it is like there is a check-list, that it is *one* right melody.²⁷⁰

²⁶⁸ Valeria Lo Iacono and David H.K. Brown, 'Beyond Binarism: Exploring a Model of Living Cultural Heritage for Dance', in *Dance Research*, Volume 34 Issue 1, (2016), pp. 84-105, p. 85. <<http://o-www.euppublishing.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/doi/pdfplus/10.3366/drs.2016.0147>> [Accessed April 2017].

²⁶⁹ S. Hansen, p. 72.

²⁷⁰ Annika Christensen, *Interview with Erlendur Simonsen* (Tórshavn: 2015).

Sheenagh Pietrobruno also argues that '[the] idea that intangible cultures can be concretized into objects *counters* the very nature of culture, which is a living process and performance, constantly transforming and changing'.²⁷¹ UNESCO has in many ways laid claim to what can be considered 'good' culture, or at least what culture is worth safeguarding.²⁷² This is an issue the people invested in the Faroese ballads (individuals, groups and stakeholders) are aware of, as there is evidence that the ballad texts and performances are becoming more formalised in institutional settings. With regard to the Faroese institutions' attempts to support and preserve Faroese ballad traditions, what are the implications or barriers in trying to preserve something that is in fact as much a practice embedded in everyday life, as well as being an established part of Faroese cultural heritage?

Iacono and Brown argue that living cultural heritage is not a fixed entity but that

[it] is also constituted by socially and culturally influenced traditions and conventions, as well as by the feelings and emotions of people and the way they relate to this heritage, including taste and perceptions. Heritage and human beings are indissolubly connected and continuously shape each other in an open-ended fluid dialogue.²⁷³

This includes the involvement of expertise from various fronts, for as Kirshenblatt-Gimblett points out in regards to the measures laid out by the UNESCO's Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage, '[h]owever much these measures are intended to *safeguard* something that already exists, their most dramatic effect is to build the capacity for something new'.²⁷⁴ Intangible heritage such as the Faroese ballads – including the ballad archives and the ring-dance – requires an additional highly specialised framework for preservation. Kirshenblatt-Gimblett argues that the frameworks for these intangible heritages include 'an internationally agreed-upon concept of heritage, cultural inventories, cultural policy, documentation, archives, research institutions, and the like'.²⁷⁵ Sverri Egholm points out that if the attitude towards the Faroese ballad tradition is that it

²⁷¹ Sheenagh Pietrobruno, 'Cultural Research and Intangible Heritage', in *Culture Unbound*, Vol. 1, (2009) pp. 227–247, p. 232. Emphasis is my own.

²⁷² Pietrobruno, p. 231.

²⁷³ Iacono and Brown, p. 100.

²⁷⁴ Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 'Intangible Heritage as Metacultural Production', in *Museum International* 56, 1–2, (2004), pp. 52–65, p. 55.

http://kodu.ut.ee/~cect/teoreetilised%20seminarid_2010/etnologia_uurimisr%C3%BChma_seminar/KirshenblattGimblett_Barbara_Intangible_heritage2004.pdf. [Accessed Marts 2016].

²⁷⁵ Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, p. 55.

should be preserved only, it becomes impossible to also have it as a living part of Faroese culture:

Ógjøriligt er at varðveita eina fólksliga mentan sum hesa heila og óbroytta í einum samfelagi, ið hevur broytst so nógv sum tað føroyska. Og í somu løtu tú medvitandi fert at *varðveita*, so skundar tú undir skiftið frá tí livandi fólksliga til tað yrkiskenda. Ella tað fer í forna, ið ikki má rørast. Tá verður eingin náttúrlig menning, og vit verða standandi í stað og tøvva.²⁷⁶

It is impossible to preserve such a folk culture like this as a whole and unchanged in a society like the Faroese that it has been through so much change. In the same instance that you begin to consciously *preserve*, then you immediately start to shift the living folk culture to be specialised. Or, it might become a form of a relic and it cannot be touched. There is no natural development and we remain frozen in place and become hesitant.

A tradition which is kept alive through the participation of people cannot remain dynamic and part of a growing society if it is institutionalised through preserving it in a static form.²⁷⁷ The institutionalisation of this kind of heritage will only fossilise it, preserve it in a form that is not available to change, for as Mallik et al. argue, 'intangible cultural heritage is very fragile and its preservation must capture the background knowledge that lies with its exponents, such as dancers, musicians, poets, writers, historians, and the communities at large'.²⁷⁸ When ballads in print were limited before and during the 19th century, people learned them from listening and participating in the ring-dance. This also entailed that *kvøðarir*, especially the *skipari*, would change some of the words or perhaps even add additional verses. The same ballad might therefore be very different depending on where and when it was performed. This diversity disappears when ballads are being updated in the printed ballad collections and recordings. Iacono and Brown write that [the] use and interpretation of the term intangible is problematic to describe the complexity of human practices [...] Instead ... we argue that practices and the artefacts that surround them are embodied heritage, internal to all human beings and affecting us at physical and emotional levels.'²⁷⁹ Thinking about this in relation to the Faroese ballads and the traditions and tangible material that is connected

²⁷⁶ Sverri Egholm (ed.), *Nýggja Kvæðabókin 1* (Tórshavn: Lindin, 1996), p. 7.

²⁷⁷ This is discussed in detail in Anupama Mallik, Santanu Chaudhury and Hiranmay Ghosh, 'Nriyakosha: Preserving the intangible heritage of Indian classical dance', in *Journal on Computing and Cultural Heritage*, Volume 4, Issue 3 (2011), 25 pages, p. 11:2. <<https://dl.acm.org/doi/pdf/10.1145/2069276.2069280>> [Accessed April 2020]. This study also looks at how dance can be preserved using digital technology, such as instructional videos etc.

²⁷⁸ Anupama et al., p. 11:2.

²⁷⁹ Iacono and Brown, p. 85.

with the tradition as discussed in Chapter 1, the intangible and tangible are indissolubly linked and are better defined as ‘living cultural heritage.’

The Faroese ballad traditions are therefore both a living cultural heritage and embodied heritage, as well as being defined by the terms of intangible heritage. It shows that ballads are a complex part of Faroese culture Faroese institutions and cultural groups, therefore, have to find a way to negotiate all these different discourses on heritage, preservation and embodied practises.

2.3 Institutional influence and autonomy: Navigating and negotiating the institutional parameters for Faroese ballad culture.

The education system in the Faroe Islands ensures that ballads and ballad tradition are compulsory subjects in Faroese primary and secondary schools. According to the Primary Education Act of 1997, the ballad tradition, *kvøðing* (ballad singing) and ring-dance are compulsory school subjects.²⁸⁰ All Faroese schools follow the national curriculum, but teachers are free to organise this according to each year-group and their own skill-level in this area.²⁸¹ Most Faroese schools have both primary and secondary pupils, with pupils starting at the age of seven to finishing at the age of sixteen.²⁸² While the teaching of ballads is prescribed by the act, there are no specific guidelines and teachers choose the material they deem to be appropriate to the various age groups. This means that ballad learning (and the amount of ring-dance that is involved) is very different from school to school.

The Faroese government allocates funding specifically for the Faroese dancing societies. This funding is supervised and allocated by the Ministry of Education, Research and Culture. This money goes to Slái Ring, the organisational hub for the Faroese dancing societies, which distributes it to finance events organised by the various societies. Up until 2014, there was no funding set aside specifically for dancing societies. There was funding available for music and arts-related activities, of which the dancing societies would get a share, but the dancing

²⁸⁰ Løgmannasskrivstovan, *Løgtingslóg nr. 125 frá 20. juni 1997 um fólkkaskúlan*, § 8 (Tórshavn, 2018) <<http://www.logir.fo/Logtingslog/125-fra-20-06-1997-um-folkaskulan-sum-seinast-broytt-vid-logtingslog-nr-34-fra-28>> [Accessed June 2018].

²⁸¹ Nám, ‘Kravd undirvísingarevni’ (2017), <<https://namsaetlanir.fo/folkaskuli/kravd-undirvisingarevni/>> [Accessed May 2018].

²⁸² In the Faroe Islands, there is not the divide between primary and secondary schools as in the English education system. Children first attend school when they are about seven years old

societies wanted to ensure that a specific sum would be allocated specifically to the societies.²⁸³

There are therefore measures in place to support the continuation of the Faroese ballad tradition by the Faroese government, and it is evident that individuals and groups who safeguard traditions like these need the required institutional support. The ballad tradition has changed extensively over time and as Egholm argues, the continuation of the ballads as part of a living Faroese culture does not depend upon preserving them, but rather to acknowledge that they are a dynamic part of living cultural heritage.²⁸⁴ This has to be reflected in the way the Faroese government chooses to engage with the Faroese ballad tradition. Therefore it is important to discuss how this living heritage is engaged within contemporary education and how it is supported by Faroese institutions. This will be discussed in more detail in Chapters 3 and 4, but for now, it is worth considering that there are many factors to consider when it comes to the continuation and preservation of living, embodied and intangible heritage. Kirshenblatt-Gimblett argues that there is a clear distinction between those who are the creators or maintainers of intangible heritage and those tasked to safeguard it. Even though the UNESCO committees are there ‘to provide guidance, make recommendations, advocate increased resources, and examine requests for inscription on lists, inclusion in proposals, and international assistance’, there is also a risk in that the interest of the actors of the living cultural heritage and that of committees and policymakers might not always be aligned.²⁸⁵ Pietrobruno points out that although ‘the value of living culture in actual circumstances is generally determined by the people involved in its production and performance’, the concept of formalisations has some influence in the preservation and continuation of heritage and community rituals and events.²⁸⁶ So the challenge is how to preserve these traces of variation as UNESCO insists that ‘safeguarding does not mean fixing or freezing intangible cultural heritage in some pure or primordial form. Safeguarding

²⁸³ This can, for example, be seen in *Løgtingslóg nr. 148: Løgtingsfíggarlóg fyrifíggarárið 2014* (2013), <<http://www.kunngerdaportalur.fo/?id=2d050181-e147-4c1e-afae-a65ac1733b99>> [Accessed May, 2020]. This is an overview of the governmental budget for 2014. The Faroese dancing societies received part of funding allocated to music and singing.

²⁸⁴ Egholm (1996), p. 8-9

²⁸⁵ Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, p. 55.

²⁸⁶ Pietrobruno, p. 231

intangible cultural heritage is about the transferring of knowledge, skills and meaning'.²⁸⁷

2.4 Conclusion

This chapter has detailed the parameters in which Faroese governmental institutions and bodies negotiate their involvement in Faroese culture and the ballads. This is mostly done through funding and providing dancing societies and schools the necessary time and material to engage with the Faroese ballad tradition. The UNESCO CSICH will continue in future to inform the institutional parameters for Faroese heritage, and this includes an increasing focus on the ballads as a living and dynamic part of Faroese culture.

There is a multitude of ways to engage with ballads and Faroese heritage, without it solely being defined by constrictions of political policies. Schools are only required to offer their pupils lessons involving ballads and ballad heritage, and dancing societies are autonomous in planning which ballads to perform, when to have events and who can join in. For the ballads to be mediated and preserved for generations to come, it is important that this 'open-ended fluid dialogue' as argued by Iacono and Brown, is made possible.²⁸⁸

The parameters set up in this chapter will inform the next two chapters on ring-dancing societies and education. This chapter, therefore, provides an insight into how Faroese cultural identity is partly constructed through governmental and educational institutions and what role the ballads play in this construction. Additionally, it illustrates how the ballads are not merely an activity engaged with out of personal interest, but that they are an integral part of Faroese education, outward-facing representation and part of an officially constituted cultural heritage.²⁸⁹ However, a crucial aspect of this discussion is whether the institutionalisation of the ballads and promoting them as heritage can lead to stagnation. It is here the UNESCO CSICH and the definition of intangible heritage can offer some insights.

²⁸⁷ UNESCO, 'Safeguarding without freezing', <<https://ich.unesco.org/en/safeguarding-00012>> [Accessed September 2018].

²⁸⁸ Iacono and Brown, p. 85.

²⁸⁹ S. Hansen, p. 62.

3. 'At finna stevið': Ballads in Primary and Secondary Education

Ballad teaching in schools have been a part of the curriculum in Faroese primary- and secondary schools for a long time, but it varies greatly how this is taught from school to school. This chapter will discuss in more detail ballad teachings in the Faroese school system, using examples gathered from fieldwork and using interviews. How ballads are integrated into lessons and into being part of school activities will be discussed using examples gathered from visits to two schools in the Faroe Islands in 2016, Frískúlin and Hoyvíkar Skúli. These schools were chosen for the study because they have integrated ballads into different lessons and are creative in their approach to how pupils learn ballads and about Faroese heritage.²⁹⁰ The ballads were used for spelling exercises, as inspiration for art and for communal events where the pupils performed them in the ring-dance. The discussion will also focus on how ballads in schools legitimise the claim that ballads are an integral part of Faroese heritage and identity, but in a dynamic way and in which both pupils and teachers have a certain level of autonomy. It is common for schools to follow the traditional 'dansitíð' (dancing period) when including the Faroese ring-dance.²⁹¹ The period in which the students usually dance is between Christmas and *Føsta*, and then again after the Easter holidays to the summer vacation in June/July. There are instances where ring-dancing societies might have dancing evenings during autumn or the Christmas holidays, but for schools, the Faroese ring-dancing period is ingrained in the yearly plan and is different depending on the school. At Frískúlin and Hoyvíkar Skúli, for example, they start as soon as a new term starts in August, and dance all year apart from during *Føstu*.

²⁹⁰ Although this is correct, they were also the only schools that got back to me and wanted to be included in the study.

²⁹¹ This does not include the ballads. It is only the dance itself that is under such constraints.

Frískúlin is in the village of Velbastaður and has only 20-30 pupils, whilst Hoyvíkar Skúli is in Hoyvík, close to the capital city Tórshavn, and has over 400 pupils. These two schools provided good examples of how schools of different sizes organise their ballad teaching. In Frískúlin, for example, all the pupils will perform ballads together frequently, whilst in Hoyvíkar skúli this is a much larger and less frequent affair that requires planning.

Various institutions, as well as groups and individuals, strove (and continue to strive) to keep the ballads and ring-dance in Faroese schools and to make them an integral part of learning and growing up in the Faroe Islands. There has nevertheless been very little discussion about what this means concerning further development of a national heritage and an individual, as well as national, identity. Different issues have to be navigated and negotiated in this instance, and getting ballads into schools provides a nuanced, but also a common image of small communities formalising parts of their heritage.

3.1 Ballads in Faroese schools: Two visits, Frískúlin and Hoyvíkar Skúli

In March 2016, I visited two Faroese schools to see how teachers and pupils engaged with the ballads in their subjects. Although the Primary Education Act (§8) 1997 clearly states that ballads should be part of the school curriculum, it is vague in the sense that it does not provide structured guidelines on how this teaching should be organised. Teachers receiving their degree in the Faroe Islands are trained in teaching ballads and ring-dance, but how this is to be utilised in classes is left open to interpretation by the individual school and/or teacher.²⁹² As mentioned briefly earlier, Nám is a public institution under the Faroese Ministry of Education, Research and Culture that ‘provides services and educational material to the education system’ (veitir tænastrur og undirvísingarmiðlar til skúlaverkið) and helps school teachers with supplementary training, including occasional training sessions

²⁹² Teachers, who have completed their Education degree at the Faroese University before 2016, have had the opportunity to take the module *Skaldskapur av mannamunni* (Oral poetry, ballads, folk- and fairy-tales). See Fróðskaparsetrið, ‘B.Ed. (Bachelor of Education) og diplom í undirvísing (1.-10. flokk), Skeiðslýsing: 7355.12 Skaldskapur av mannamunni’ <<https://www.setur.fo/fo/utbugving/bachelor/folkaskulalaerari/skeiðslýsingar/?educationYearId=383&courseId=7355.12>> [Accessed August 2018]. In this module, the bachelor students are required to learn about the ballads and their history, as well as perform the ballads and the ring-dance themselves. This ensures that, although there may be teachers that are more practised than others, that primary and secondary school students are taught by someone who possesses at least some knowledge and has some practise in the subject.

on ballad performance and ring-dance.²⁹³ According to a representative from the Department of Education from the Ministry of Culture and Education, there was a period when this became a necessity as there were many teachers that had little to no experience in teaching ballad performance and dance.²⁹⁴ It was a popular course and there are considerations about taking it up again, as it is evident that pupils will benefit from learning the ballads and ring-dance from someone who has the required skills and there is also a certain level of enthusiasm from the teachers' side, as they are willing to take on this supplementary training that is not necessarily compulsory. As the representative further argued during the interview, it is this curiosity and enthusiasm that should be cultivated, as the Faroese ballads and ring-dance thrive in an environment, where there are *people* that are enthusiastic about learning and performing the ballads, and not so much the formalised guidelines and policies.

Therefore visiting two schools and seeing how ballads are incorporated into teaching was important. Examples of how teachers and pupils navigate the open guidelines provide a more accurate depiction of how schools in the Faroe Islands engage with ballads in their teaching. Besides, it also provides a glimpse of how children and young people engage with ballads in a formalised way and what effect this has on their interest in ballads and Faroese heritage more broadly. There are some caveats to be mentioned here. My interviews were with two school teachers, and given their status as a form of gatekeepers, it is evident that the information they provided does not conflict with their role as representatives of the school.²⁹⁵

3.1.1 Frískúlin

My first visit was to Frískúlin, a small school in a Faroese village where the pupils are aged seven to sixteen. As soon as I stepped out of the car on the parking lot, I could hear the voices of children, who loudly *kvøðu* a ballad, and their rhythmic stomping along with the ballad they were performing. It was a Friday and it is

²⁹³ Nám, 'Um Nám' <http://nam.fo/um-nam/>

²⁹⁴ Annika Christensen, *Interview with a representative from the Faroese Ministry of Culture* (Tórshavn: 2016).

²⁹⁵ See for example Carolyn L. Wanat, 'Getting Past the Gatekeepers: Differences Between Access and Cooperation in Public School Research', in *Field Methods*, Vol. 20.2 (2008) <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/1525822X07313811?casa_token=JGHSmO5yB3wAAAAA:hDRXZjj7MXDefMqlAgPtA2upXyM00uipwvaBBDL5CfVy17SRtdgPHGw5deY1QygA7t3EOv2a5v0> [Accessed July 2019]

common practice that all the students of the school 'fara upp á gólv' (get onto the floor) and perform ballads they have learned every Friday. The idea is that the students practise parts of a ballad every week (or a whole one if it is short) in their subjects and then get to perform them on Fridays. This was the first Friday after the Easter holiday, so it had been a while since they had performed the ballads with the ring-dance and they all seemed very excited to get this Friday tradition back on track.

When I arrived, they had not yet finished for the day, so I had a moment to just observe and listen. Although two teachers participated in the dance, it was clear that it was the students who controlled the ballad and the rhythm of the dance. The ballads were *skipaðar* by pupils, something which the school actively encourages them to do. The pupils participating were fully engaged in what they were doing and paid me no attention. Movement, embodied practices and full immersion such as this are important for how children relate to and interact with the world around them, as Susan R. Koff writes:

This exploration of the world and objects continues as a child grows, and it is often focused on play. From a developmental perspective, a child's interest in play and physical exploration continues throughout childhood, although the classroom's formal structure often places limits on those activities.²⁹⁶

'We are very aware of what we want to achieve with the Faroese ring-dancing', a teacher from Frískúlin informs me, 'it is cultural heritage, history, language [...]. It is also about getting them moving and motor learning'.²⁹⁷ (Vit eru øguliga tilvitað um hvat vit vilja við føroyskum dansi. [...] Tað er mentunararvur, søga, mál. [...] Tað er eisini um at røra seg og motorikk). Eeva Anttila writes that to allow children agency is 'seeing the children as experts and active agents in constructing their own culture, which is seen as having the potential to generate a shift in educational practices'.²⁹⁸ However, this statement also indicated the precedence of this interview: the teacher was friendly and cooperative, but the interests of the school

²⁹⁶ Susan R. Koff, 'Toward a Definition of Dance Education', in *Childhood Education*, 77:1 (2000) pp. 27-32, p.28. <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/00094056.2000.10522134?casa_token=AMuSgu7_Z00AAAAA:gNr4P95SY18-zrwlXTK0rc727vyXGKOMg-XOgSORKzrrE3TzDYm7bjEn3dmYqZ5v1E9qUyvH1g> [Accessed January 2020].

²⁹⁷ Annika Christensen, *Interview with a teacher at Frískúlin*, (Velbastaður: 2016).

²⁹⁸ Eeva Anttila, 'Children as Agents in Dance: Implications of the Notion of Child Culture for Research and Practice in Dance Education', in *International Handbook of Research in Arts Education*, L Bresler (eds.) (Dordrecht: Springer, 2007), pp. 865-879, p. 865.

were paramount. As all the interviewees for this project volunteered to do so, I did not see it necessary to push or make the participants feel uncomfortable, as this can be detrimental to the collaboration between interviewer and interviewee.²⁹⁹

When the ballad and ring-dance was over, the younger pupils and a couple of teachers sat in a ring on the floor. This is also something that is done every Friday, where the pupils sit and reflect on the week that has passed. I was allowed to join and was introduced to everyone there and allowed to ask some questions after the reflection was over. As someone who had little to no interest in or knowledge about the ballads as a child in the 1990s, I met children that had a broad range of ballads embedded in their memory, they knew all the stories and they were excited to talk about them. There has been a lot of recent interest in heritage education for children, and being able to talk to the pupils at Frískúlin offered an insight into how this works in practice.³⁰⁰ I asked the pupils what their favourite ballads were and was presented with a range of different ones. Most agreed that *Ormurin Langi* was a good one – especially since it had exciting battles and heroes in it! Others preferred ballads that dealt with more romantic or tragic events, such as *Ólavur Riddararós* and *Harra Pætur og Elinborg*. ‘They prefer it when there is action and murder’ the teacher told me later, ‘[the] more gruesome [the ballad] is, the more they enjoy it’. (Tey dáma best tá tað er spenningur og dráp. Jú meira grusom, jú betri dáma teimum).

I and the teacher thereafter spent some time talking about the ballads they had planned for the rest of the school year. The ballads are a sustained curricular integration and the pupils work together across different ages. Like most Faroese village schools, Frískúlin is small and admits 10-12 new pupils every year. The students share the same common rooms as they are divided into three levels instead of the usual ten levels common in the Faroese school system. Pupils between the ages of seven and sixteen are therefore doing activities together and

²⁹⁹ King, Horrocks and Brooks, p. 61.

³⁰⁰ See for example G. Simşek, and A. Elitok Kesici, ‘Heritage education for primary school children through drama: The case of Aydın, Turkey’, in *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 46, (2012), pp. 3817-3824, Tim Copeland, ‘Archaeological heritage education: citizenship from the ground up’, in *Treballs d’Arqueologia*, 15, (2009), pp. 9-20, Juli-Anna Aerila, Marja-Leena Rönkkö, and Satu Grönman, ‘Field trip to a historic house museum with preschoolers: Stories and crafts as tools for cultural heritage education’, in *Visitor Studies*, 19.2, (2016), pp. 144-155, and Tulay Ocal, ‘Necessity of cultural historical heritage education in social studies teaching.’, In *Creative Education*, 7.3, (2016), pp. 396-406.

interact. This also means that although the material is provided according to the skills of the individual student, there are themes and content that are very similar across the different age groups. This is common in small Faroese schools, where it makes sense to have different age groups in the same space. According to Frískúlin's website, however, this is part of the overall goal:

Øll børn mennast, hvør í sínum lagi. Fyri at stimbra og stuðla hvørjum einstakum barni í menning síni á øllum økjum - kognitivum, sosialium/etiskum, kropsligum og musiskum/listarligum - er neyðugt at mæta barninum, har tað er, fyri at tað kann mennast so væl, sum tað kann. Við at geva børnunum verulig akademisk val, gevur lærarin barninum hókandi ávirkan á og ábyrgd av síni læring og móguleikan fyri at finna og brúka sína rødd. Í øllum hesum er lærarin medvitandi og virkin, sum m.a. fyrimynd, vegleiðari, stuðul, mentor, samskipari og myndugleiki.³⁰¹

All children develop at their own pace. To strengthen and support each individual pupil in their development in all areas – cognitive, social/ethical, physical and musical/artistic – it is necessary to meet the child on their current level so that they can develop under the best circumstances. By giving the children real academic choices, the teacher gives the child suitable influence and responsibility for their learning and allows them to find and use their voice. The teacher is aware and active in all this, as role-model, tutor, support, mentor, coordinator and authority.

Multi-grade classes or teaching are common for schools in small communities, where the heterogeneity of a classroom defines the way the teaching is organised.³⁰² There is, however, little research on this form of teaching and its impact (and beyond that of its effectiveness) over the last couple of decades, as Hyry-Beihammer and Hascher argue, but they agree that this form of class-room organisation has a long history, due to its necessity for small, often rural, communities.³⁰³ As a strategy in their multigrade-teaching, Frískúlin implements *integrated learning*, 'so everything gets integrated across disciplines' the teacher said.³⁰⁴ She continued by explaining:

³⁰¹ Frískúlin, 'Grundhugsjón Frískúllans' <<http://www.friskulin.fo/hugsjonin/>> [Accessed May 2018].

³⁰² Eeva Kaisa Hyry-Beihammer and Tina Hascher, 'Multi-grade teaching practices in Austrian and Finnish primary schools', in *International Journal of Educational Research*, Vol 74 (2015), pp. 104-113, p. 108-109. <<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0883035515000749>> [Accessed January 2020]. See also Ian Birch, and Mike Lally, *Multigrade teaching in primary schools* (UNESCO Principal Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, 1995), and Linley Cornish, 'What is multi-grade teaching?', in *Reaching EFA through multi-grade teaching*, Linley Cornish (ed.) (Armidale: Kardoorair Press, 2006), pp. 9-26.

³⁰³ Hyry-Beihammer and Hascher, p. 105 and 106.

³⁰⁴ For information on integrative learning see Mary Taylor Huber and Pat Hutchings, *Integrative Learning: Mapping the Terrain. The Academy in Transition*. (Washington, DC.: Association of American Colleges and Universities, 2004) and Mary Taylor Huber, Pat Hutchings and Richard Gale, 'Integrative Learning for Liberal Education', in *peerReview*, Vol. 7, no. 3/4 (2005), <<https://www.aacu.org/publications-research/periodicals/integrative-learning-liberal-education>> [Accessed November 2019]

Vit tosa um og hugsa øguliga nógv um at brúka føroyskan dans og kvæðið ... fyrri tað fyrsta er tað ein munnlig frásøgn og vit taka altíð útgangspunkt í tí at tað er ein frásøga, onkur fortelur, so tey ímynda sær. Vit sum lærarir skulu læra okkum at seta okkum inn í søgna, og fortelja sum eitt ævintýr.³⁰⁵

We talk and think a lot about using the Faroese ring-dance and the ballads ... first of all, it is an oral narrative and we always take basis is that it is a story, someone is telling it and then they use their imagination. We, as teachers, have to learn to familiarise ourselves with the story and tell it like a fairy-tale. The teacher also showed me that the pupils use ballads as material for their Faroese spelling and grammar classes, where the pupils are given sheets with ballad text. The pupils then have to identify and spell correctly the missing words. As there are several age groups under the same roof, the ballads are used differently by the different pupils according to their level. What all the pupils seem to enjoy together, however, is that they have created a narrative of the ballad *Ólavur Riddararós*, where each verse is written on a drawing that illustrates what is happening in the verse. This is displayed on the wall where the Friday ring-dancing takes place, where it works as a display of the children's skills, but also functions as a prompt for those who might have forgotten the verse that comes next.

Using the examples from Frískúlin, the ballads are particularly well suited for primary and secondary education, as they allow the pupils to be physically active, as well as creative. The pupils can engage with them on different levels and through the ring-dance performance, they can fully embody and enacts the stories and the visual imagery they have created out of it. Through the interview, I got a glimpse of how important the teachers at Frískúlin see the ballads as part of teaching, but I was also, through the ring-dancing when I first arrived, able to see how the pupils engaged with ballads. This was an 'un-filtered' moment that was interesting to observe, as it showed a genuine engagement with the ballads from the pupils' perspective.

3.1.2 Hoyvíkar skúli

Hoyvíkar Skúli is located in Hoyvík, an area that has largely merged with the Faroese capital Tórshavn. Hoyvíkar Skúli is a much larger school than Frískúlin, both in actual physical size and the number of pupils attending. During the interview, the teacher I

³⁰⁵ Annika Christensen, *Interview with a teacher at Frískúlin* (Velbastaður: 2016).

was interviewing and I sat in an empty classroom. I did not have the opportunity to meet any of the pupils and during the interview, it was just me and the teacher in the room. This school has about 450 pupils, and there are occasions when all of them will meet and do a ring-dance, where the *skipari* is one of the teachers and she has to wear a microphone. The school and the teachers are very conscious of their way of preparing their pupils by teaching them *stev* (the right way to dance) as well as the ballads. The teacher told me:

Tað eru avbjóðingar við at finna stevið. Til dømis, børn sum hava motorik trupulleikar. So onkutíð byrja vit við tí áðrenn vit byrja uppá kvæði, so taka vit saman ring og so gera vit stevið. Tað kunnu vit gott gera nokk so leingi, eini 5 minuttir har vit bara gera 'vinstra, saman, vinstra, saman, høgra, saman'.³⁰⁶

There are challenges in finding *stevið* – if, for instance, there are children with mobility issues. So sometimes we will start with that, before the ballad, we'll make a ring and practice *stev*. We can spend quite a lot of time on that, about 5 minutes where we just go 'left, together, left, together, right, together'.

Given the size of the school, it is impossible to get the whole school together for ballad performances and ring-dance on a frequent basis. In order to keep the ring-dancing a regular event, Hoyvíkar Skúli runs a system where pupils from different years (for example, year 3 and year 6) meet up to perform ballads. Sometimes the school also announces a day and time when there will be ballad dancing, and then all teachers, who are able to join, will bring their pupils. The teacher told me her view of ballad teaching in the school:

Heildarmyndin er orduliga góð. Sjálvt um nøkur kunnu vera sindur trek at fáa við, tíma tey flestu. Og summi tíma tað orduliga væl! Tað er nakað av tí besta tey vita [...]. Men eg haldi eisini at man skal ansað eftir at tað ikki bívur for leingi [...]. Gera tað oftari, men í minni brotum.

Overall, it is really good. Even if there are a few where it is difficult to get them engaged, most of them like it. And some really like it! It is their favourite [...]. But I also think you have to be careful it does not drag on [...]. Do it more frequently, but have shorter sessions.

The teacher here echoes the sentiment that heritage education has to be done with the pupils in mind. In such a large school, it is harder to engage everyone across different levels, an issue which smaller schools like Frískúlin might not have as there are so few pupils. Hoyvíkar skúli is creative in the way they approach this issue,

³⁰⁶ Annika Christensen, *Interview with a teacher at Hoyvíkar Skúli* (Hoyvíkr: 2016).

creating smaller groups and ensuring that the pupils are given adequate time and practice to feel comfortable in participating. The two schools give their pupils the necessary space and time to engage with the ballads on their own terms. In facilitating any form of learning for a varied group, Sandra J. Stone writes:

The learning environment should permit all children to engage in the processes of learning. Such an environment includes active, hands-on learning experiences that are based on children's interests and choices.³⁰⁷

The teachers at Hoyvíkar skúli accommodate the large numbers by taking the time to make sure all the pupils get to practice together a bit beforehand, before starting on the actual ballad. In Frískúlin, as there are fewer pupils, it is easier to get them all to practise together and it is possible to have the whole school get together on a Friday to perform a ring-dance. This would, however, not work as well in Hoyvíkar skúli, as it would take away the time pupils and teachers can engage with the ballads in smaller groups and diminish the time used to get the pupils comfortable.

3.2 Providing inclusive spaces for ballad learning

There are different issues to consider in teaching ballads in schools, and Hoyvíkar Skúli and Frískúlin are examples of how some of these issues have been overcome. This is largely due to the creative and patient approach in getting pupils involved in the ballads, by allowing them the space to practice and giving them the responsibility of the ballad performance. That the pupils are so engaged with the ballads and ring-dance at Frískúlin and Hoyvíkar Skúli, provides an example of how ballad education in the Faroe Islands has changed. To compare with my own experience, learning a ballad consisted of studying and memorising the text more than actually performing the ballad. There was no play involved, or pupils actively engaging with or leading a performance. It was strictly academic. As Anttila writes, there has been a shift towards engaging with children's cultural experiences; she mentions for example a Finnish day-care where children are the ones telling stories and the adults are the ones listening.³⁰⁸ Taking creative and engaging steps to

³⁰⁷ Sara J. Stone, 'Teaching strategies: Strategies for teaching children in multi-age classrooms', in *Childhood Education*, 71:2, (1994), pp. 102-105, p. 103.

https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/00094056.1995.10522590?casa_token=WveSnKnc9iEAAAAA:nnO6tOboKzvayl_m5KkYM4rzAQQ_wOjTBDQv2lbZXNO4uDQC_yE2bvddnYHmMA_MTLgTa2TAZQ> [Accessed: January 2020].

³⁰⁸ Anttila, p. 865.

integrate heritage, instead of it being just an object of study, allows pupils to generate knowledge about ballads and ballad tradition, and learn how it relates to themselves and their own experiences.

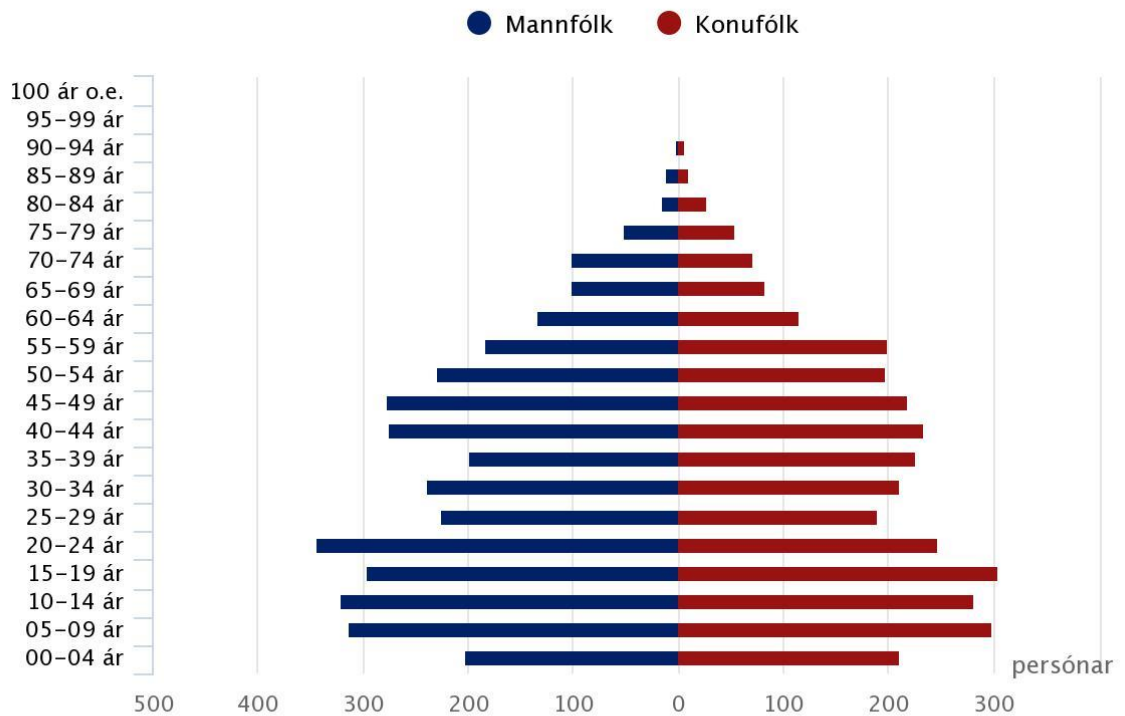
At one of the schools that participated in this study, the teacher told me of a young child, who was adopted from abroad and, at the time of the interview, had yet not acquired comprehensive Faroese language skills. However, in the ring-dance, he could fully participate and could *kvøða* several ballads as he knew them by heart. That fact that he could be a part of communal activity and fully take part had a great influence. The teacher even exclaimed ‘hann verður fantastiskur sum skipari!’ (He will be amazing as a *skipari*!). Faroese schools can, however, encounter criticism regarding foreign language and ballads. Some people have been criticised for not having fully developed Faroese language skills when speaking with an accent and have been verbally penalised for instructing others in ballads, as it is not deemed that ballads should be taught by anyone who cannot speak flawless Faroese.³⁰⁹ The tables below show a 2019 census of people living in the Faroe Islands, but were not born there:

³⁰⁹ As this is a sensitive subject, I have chosen to not put any details of who these persons are and these conversations do not exist on any recording. Although these issues are important to discuss, I am also aware that the Faroe Islands are so small that it is difficult to maintain anonymity if any details are provided.

Table 1: Table showing number of people not born in the Faroe Islands according to gender and age. Hagstova Foroyar, 2019

Fólkapýramida, kyn og aldur

ikki fødd í Føroyum



A large number of people are in the age range that attends primary and secondary schools (7 to 16 years). Although these are not large numbers, it does make a difference in a place like the Faroe Islands where the overall population is 50.000 people. The discussion surrounding ballads and ring-dancing in Faroese schools need to account for the differences in the pupil's Faroese language skills to create a more inclusive space to learn. Erlendur Simonsen, who is a member of a dancing society and frequently visits schools to get pupils interested in Faroese dancing says that '[tað] skal vera stuttligt. Tey skulu læra at tað er okey at gera feil, tað skal ikki vera for stívt!' (It has to be fun. They should learn that it is okay to make mistakes, it does not have to be so formal!).³¹⁰ Ballad teaching is therefore as much about making the ballads accessible for different stages of Faroese language learning. This also includes and ensuring that any particular language barriers do not prohibit

³¹⁰ Annika Christensen, *Interview with Erlendur Simonsen* (Tórshavn: 2016).

anyone to take part in the ballads and ring-dance. The Primary Education Act explicitly states: '[Fólkaskúlin] skal við støði í heimligari mentan menna kunnleika næminganna um froykska mentan og hjálpa teimum at fata aðrar mentanir og samspæl manna við náttúruna.' ([The primary/secondary school], with the basis in local heritage, shall educate pupils in Faroese culture and help them understand other cultures and the interplay between humans and their environment).³¹¹ Engaging with culture, heritage and environment is a function of primary and secondary education in the Faroe Islands.

In some schools, as well as the ballad repertoire and Faroese ballad history, the pupils are also introduced to the newer adaptations of ballads in other media. The music by Týr and Eivør and the way they have adapted ballads to contemporary and popular music are included in the ballad teaching. The Faroese ballads and the ballad heritage is not seen as something static, but as a dynamic part of Faroese culture and this is communicated to the students during their lessons. 'If a ballad is modernised, we will also use that. ... To show the 'cool' side of ballads' the teacher in Hoyvíkar Skúli explained. It is also part of showing the pupils that the ballads are not only for ring-dancing and being part of a heritage, but that they continue as a dynamic part of Faroese culture.

3.3 Teaching of ballads and Faroese cultural developments

The educational side of the Faroese ballad tradition therefore weaves together the past, traditions and heritage that ultimately shape and illustrate the present. In discussing how the past is negotiated in the present, Brian L. Molyneaux writes:

The problem is that the actual past is always out of reach. Even material remains, no matter how old they are, are perceived and used in the present—and so paradoxically, they are ageless, endlessly transforming as the society around them changes. There are then two pasts: the temporal one that passes and is gone and the metaphorical 'past' that is held in the memories and traditions of a society and its surroundings. It is this diverse and ever-changing past, part of the multifarious world of ideas and personal

³¹¹Løgmannasskrivstovan, *Løgtingslóg nr. 125 frá 20. juni 1997 um fólkaskúlan*, § 2 (Tórshavn: 2018) <<http://www.logir.fo/Logtingslog/125-fra-20-06-1997-um-folkaskulan-sum-seinast-broytt-vid-logtingslog-nr-34-fra-28>> [Accessed June 2018].

and collective agendas of a society that we encounter in our daily lives and through which we must work.³¹²

Molyneaux further argues '[when] experience is organized in this way, to constitute 'education', learning moves from the realm of direct experience to a world where information is created, selected and directed (via a formal curriculum or implicit agenda) to a specific audience.'³¹³ Teaching and learning about heritage and the past is therefore fraught with challenges, as there is a process of negotiating, restructuring and re-creating the past through institutional means.³¹⁴

Although individual teachers had previously incorporated ballads in their teaching, it was not until 1997 that ballads and ring-dancing became an official part of the Faroese school curriculum. This formalised introduction caused a public debate in the 1990s. In 1988, a committee was established to survey the interest in getting the ring-dance as part of the Faroese curriculum. In the committee were Eyðun Andreassen and Eivind Weyhe from the University of the Faroe Islands, Hensar Ellingsgaard, the chief school principal in the Faroes at the time, and Heðin M. Klein. This survey resulted in *Føroyskur dansur: Álit um dans og kvøðing í skúlanum*.³¹⁵

One argument for getting the ring-dance into Faroese schools was that the ballads were important for teachings about heritage and identity. In an article published in the Faroese newspaper *Sosialurin* in 1995, Regin Eikhólm wrote that more than ever the Faroe Islands needs to propagate the prominent values that are associated with a Faroese identity, the ballads and ring-dance being 'mentanarkjølfesti føroyinga' (the cultural ballast of the Faroese people).³¹⁶ Some resistance was based on the Faroese ballads and ring-dance being deemed an unnecessary part of education in a society that should focus on preparing students and young people for a world outside of the Faroe Islands. In a letter to the editor in *Sosialurin* entitled 'Dansa teg býttan' (Dance yourself silly) in 1997, the author, who signs the letter with *Mentanarvrakið* (the cultural wreck), argues:

³¹² Brian L. Molyneaux, 'Introduction: The Represented Past', in *The Presented Past: Heritage, Museums and Education*, Brian L. Molyneaux and Peter G. Stone (eds.) (London: Routledge, 2006), pp. 1-12, p. 1.

³¹³ Molyneaux, p. 8

³¹⁴ Also keeping in mind that this is adapted for various levels within each school.

³¹⁵ Eyðun Andreassen, Eivind Weyhe, Hensar Ellingsgaard and Heðin M. Klein, *Føroyskur dansur: Álit um dans og kvøðing í skúlanum* (Tórshavn: 1994).

³¹⁶ Regin Eikhólm, 'Føroyskur dansur og átrúnaður – bæði aldargomul mentanarkjølfesti føroyinga', in *Sosialurin*, 15th August (1995), p. 11.

Er tað soleiðis ætlað, at VIT dansa fðroyskan dans í koti og knæbuksum, meðan vit lata onnur taka sær av tilikum keðiligum og líkagyldugum sum oljuvinnu, fiskiíðnadi á hægri teknologiskum støði, og líknandi?

Is it really the plan that WE should dance the Faroese ring-dance in homespun coats and short trousers, while we let others deal with such boring things like the oil industry, the technological advancements in the fishing industry and the like?

³¹⁷

The ballads and Faroese ring-dance are seen here as being something frivolous and should only be part of activities *outside* the educational institution. The opposition to including Faroese ring-dance was expressed by individuals like in the letter to the editor above. There is a conflict between progress and tradition being set up in this letter. Edward Shills writes that the idea of progress has been set in opposition to tradition: ‘Change has become coterminous with progress; innovation has become coterminous with improvement’ and that what is deemed as traditional is thought of as ‘[belonging] to the routine of life and is too petty to be acknowledged’.³¹⁸ This did, however, not have any large ramifications and the ring-dance was included in the school curriculum in 1997 and has remained part of it since.

Today, the ballads are a compulsory part of a Faroese primary and secondary education. On the one hand, it is seen as a tool in learning Faroese, developing motor skills, as well as the ballad tradition and ring-dance. On the other hand, it is also ensuring that a part of Faroese ballads is preserved and disseminated. Some pupils will also learn more ballads and partake in ring-dancing out of pure interest, whilst others will only partake during their school years. Nevertheless, as will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 5, the ballads are a part of how Faroese identity and image is constructed, regardless of any personal engagement from the individual. Small communities investing in the local in terms of language, traditions and practices/rituals, are examples of the value placed on cultural identity. Not cultural identity just as ‘national consciousness’ as argued by Benedict Anderson³¹⁹, but a return to a form of ‘rootedness’, which Robert Hay refers to as a specific bonding to a place, through communal, cultural and ancestral

³¹⁷ ‘Dansa teg býttan’, in *Sosialurin*, 10th July (1997), p. 2. The ‘homespun coat and short trousers’ refers to the Faroese national costume, where men usually wear this.

³¹⁸ Edward Shills, *Tradition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), p. 4.

³¹⁹ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1991) p. 45.

bonds.³²⁰ The ballads and ring-dance are no longer so much characterised as merely a tradition, but something that is part of this rootedness. This can also be described as a return to some of the ideals that characterised Romanticism (if it indeed was ever left).

3.4 Conclusion

This chapter has discussed in detail how ballads and ring-dancing are integrated into the Faroese education system, using Frískúlin and Hoyvíkar Skúli as examples of how this is achieved. As there are no detailed studies of how ballads are negotiated into Faroese primary and secondary education, this chapter offers a glimpse of how this is approached by schools. These two schools have measures in place to ensure that ballads and ring-dancing are visible in their education and teaching. However, as this chapter has also touched upon, each school is different in this regard. Although ballads and ring-dance are part of the national curriculum, there are no specific instructions provided to how the schools integrate it. Considering the influence the CSICH could have on heritage management as discussed in Chapter 2, it is possible to also consider a change in the future teaching of ballads and ring-dancing in Faroese schools.

Frískúlin and Hoyvíkar skúli have creative and engaged staff members that ensure that ballad teaching is dynamic and is keeping with the times. The two schools carefully consider the pupil's language and mobility skills to ensure everyone can participate, and integrate the modern adaptations of ballads in popular music. In the interviews, I got an impression of the work that goes into translating the ballads into teaching materials. However, I was also aware that the teachers I interviewed first and foremost represented their schools and pupils. I managed to get a short observation of the pupils in Frískúlin performing a ballad and ring-dance, but this was as a passive observer in where I am drawing my own conclusions. Other areas that could be a potential future study would be interviewing the pupils themselves and get an idea of their experience, as this

³²⁰ Robert Hay, 'Sense of Place in developmental context', in *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 18 (1998), pp. 5-29, pp. 6-7. <https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Robert_Hay/publication/236177208_Sense_of_Place_in_Developmental_Context_Journal_of_Environmental_Psychology_181_5-29_1998/links/59e70ac94585151e54658c9f/Sense-of-Place-in-Developmental-Context-Journal-of-Environmental-Psychology-181-5-29-1998.pdf> [Accessed December 2020].

would provide a more fruitful, collaborative exchange. Virginia Nightingale, for example, writes that observation as a useful research strategy should include ‘active exchange between researcher and research subjects’, so another ethnographic project would include more time on observing and engaging in a more collaborative exchange.³²¹

Collaborations between schools and dancing societies are already taking place, so there is an opportunity to get this formalised, with appropriate funding. If Hoyvíkar Skúli and Frískúlin put so much effort into this endeavour, it would suggest that many other schools do as well. It would therefore be optimal if schools got a more structured form of support from the government, to ensure that not all the responsibility is placed on the shoulders of individual teachers in creating an engaging way of teaching ballads.

To conclude, this chapter illustrates how ballads are being formalised in education, but it also shows that primary and secondary schools have to decide for themselves how this is done. This indicates that there can be a discrepancy in ballad teaching across Faroese schools, as there are no formalised guidelines to follow, nor are schools given structured governmental support on this.

³²¹ Virginia Nightingale, ‘Why observing matters’, in *Research Methods for Cultural Studies*, Micheal Pickering (ed.) (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010), pp. 105-124, p. 121.

4. Faroese Ballads and Ring-dancing Societies

Um man vil hava tað livandi skal man tora at lata tað liva
If we want to keep it alive, we have to have the guts to let it live
- *Member of ring-dancing society*

In the Faroe Islands, numerous societies regularly meet up to *kvøða* and ring-dancing. There are ring-dancing societies (in Faroese *dansifeløg*) on various islands in the Faroe Islands and also in Denmark. The first ring-dancing society was established in 1952 and there are 16 societies in the Faroe Islands today. The first society was established in the Faroese capital, Tórshavn and was suitably named *Dansifelagið í Havn* (the Dancing Society in Tórshavn). The second dancing society to be established was founded in 1954 in Klaksvík, which is the biggest town in the northern Faroe Islands. The majority of the other societies were established from the 1970s to the 1990s. Now approximately 2,000 members are spread over the different societies (2017/2018).³²²

This chapter argues that the Faroese ring-dancing societies have, since the first society was established in the 1950s, been an established part of Faroese ballad tradition, and this is especially due to the acknowledgement of the societies as cultural gatekeepers by the government. Today the societies receive public funding and throughout the year organise public events where non-members can also attend. This chapter will therefore illustrate how ring-dancing societies are affecting contemporary Faroese ballad culture and heritage. Using material gathered from interviews with society members, the analysis will focus on how ring-dancing societies are having an impact on how ballads are disseminated, and how the tradition of ring-dancing is continued. In principle, everyone can join a ring-dancing society. However, as discussed in the previous chapter, there can be language and cultural barriers. This chapter will therefore also investigate what the dancing societies are doing to overcome these barriers. There is not extensive

³²² Slái Ring, 'Limafeløgini', <<http://www.sr.fo/limafelogini.html>> [Accessed May 2018].

literature and research on Faroese dancing societies. This chapter also draws on Andrea S. Opielka's research on the work of the societies and the *skiparir*, as well as the interviews and information provided by the Faroese Ministry of Culture.

4.1 Organisation of the Faroese dancing societies

All the Faroese dancing societies are members of Slái Ring, an organisation that acts as a central organisational hub for the Faroese dancing societies. The committee is comprised of representatives from different societies and is voted in through election. Slái Ring was established in May 1978, after Sumbiar Dansifelag called all the other dancing societies to a meeting to discuss whether it would be beneficial to set up a central organisation in the Faroe Islands.³²³ This means that there is a central body representing all the dancing societies in such matters as, for example, acquisition of funds and being a joint force in discussions of matters regarding ballads and Faroese ring-dance. The allocation of funding set aside specifically for dancing societies was argued by the committee of Slái Ring, explains Jónleif Johannessen, who has been chairman.³²⁴ Responding to this, the Ministry set up a separate account for Slái Ring. It is therefore now possible to see exactly how much public funding goes into maintaining and promoting the Faroese ballad and ring-dance tradition in the Faroe Islands.³²⁵ It is evident that the funding dancing societies have received has increased in the past few years. In 2013, the funding dedicated to the dancing societies was 250.000 DKK p.a. and in the years 2016-2018, Slái Ring received 500.000 DKK annually in funding, and it is specified that a large part of this should go to fund activities related to getting children involved in ring-dancing.³²⁶ The dancing societies provide communal structures that facilitate the ballads as intangible heritage to survive, and potentially, to flourish. Public funding amplifies this, provided the heritage is seen as worthy of such policy and financial support.

³²³ Slái Ring 'Um Sláið Ring', <<http://www.sr.fo/um+slaid+ring.html>> [Accessed April 2017].

³²⁴ Annika Christensen, *Interview with Jónleif Johannessen* (Klaksvík: 2016).

³²⁵ Annika Christensen, *Interview with Alda Joensen from Ministry of Culture and education* (Tórshavn: 2016). It is difficult to say exactly how the funding for ballads and ring-dance has changed over a long period of time, as the ring dancing societies received funds from a pot dedicated to cultural and artistic activities more broadly. Only in 2013 did the Ministry of Culture have a designated post on their budget for the societies.

³²⁶ Fíggjarmálaráðið, *Løgtingsfíggarlóg fyri fíggjarárið 201, 7.24.2.03 Føroyskur dansur* (Tórshavn: 2016).

4.2 'At fáa orið undir fótin': Learning a ballad and performing the story

There are a variety of methods people use to learn a new ballad. As Andrea Opielka concluded from her qualitative research on *skiparir*, this can include reciting it out loud when doing chores, or revising the text as bed-time reading.³²⁷ Opielka illustrates in her study that members of dancing societies, especially those who have the role as *skipari*, are doing more than merely learning something to recite by heart: it is important during a ballad performance that you can immerse yourself into the story. A *skipari* is the person who is leading the ballad performance, usually in conjunction with the Faroese ring-dance. This person will start each verse/stanza and usually will *kvøða* the first one or two lines by him or herself before the rest of the performers join in. The *skipari* is also the only member of the group who is expected to know the entire ballad by heart. Each ballad performance has one *skipari*. They temporarily take on the role of a narrator and urge the listeners to pay attention to the events that are about to unfold. The ballad becomes something to actively engage with. The opening stanzas are composed to draw people into the story, for example in *Jøkils kvæði* (CCF 74):

Gevið ljóð og lýðið á,
meðan eg fari at kvøða
um tann sterka avrekskappa
Jøkil, sonur Búa.

Be silent now and listen,
whilst I will chant
about the man so strong
Jøkil, son of Búa

It is stated clearly that this story will revolve around a specific character (Jøkil) and his adventures and deeds. The *skipari* takes on the role of the first-person narrator in the ballad and starts each subsequent stanza.

It is considered bad form if performers do not follow the *skipari's* lead and instead are starting the verse. It is also the *skipari* who sets the tempo and rhythm for the ballad, so if they are interrupted or not allowed to lead, it will often result in the whole ballad performance going askew. Mortan Nolsøe argues that the *skipari* effectively carries the whole ballad and ring-dance performance:

³²⁷ Opielka (2018), pp 27-48.

A good leader was able so to make the ballads live that not only the dancers, but the old people sitting along the walls or around the fire-place, were so carried away by the ballad that they tore at their clothes when he described a battle, or let the tears run down into their beards over some tragedy.³²⁸

The indication that the ballad performance had such an impact on its participants also suggests the immense importance of collective participation: it becomes an enacted performance, where both performers and audiences experience the events almost physically. To be effective, a *skipari* therefore has to have expert knowledge of the ballad text, as well as being a great a storyteller that can engage the other participants. One of the dancing society members, who agreed to be interviewed had been *skipari* at several ring-dance performances. She described one particular experience:

Tað var fyrstu ferð eg skipadi eitt langt kvæði [...]. Og eg hevði lisið, og lisið og lisið og eg dugdi hetta uttanat á fingrunum. Eg var komin út á eitt stað sum kvæði er sindur fløkt og tá misti eg burtur. Tað sum man ger í froyrskum dansi tá skiparin missur burtur, er at hini kvøða niðurlagid eini tvær ferðir fyri at vita um man ikki fær tráðin aftur. Eg fekk ikki tráðin aftur og eg spekuleraði leingi upp á hví. Tá fann eg faktiskt útav at eg var ikki nóg bevíst um at halda konsentratiúnina. Tá hava tankarnir farið onkra adrastaðni og eg kláraði ikki at fanga tað aftur. Eg hevði ikki lært heilt hvussu bevíst eg skuldi vera um at halda konsentratiúnina.³²⁹

It was the first time I was *skipari* of a long ballad [...]. And I had revised and revised and revised, and I knew it by heart. I had come to the part where the narrative in the ballad is a bit tangled, and then I completely lost where I was in the narrative. What you do in Faroese ring-dance, if the *skipari* forgets, is that the rest of the dancers *kvøða* the refrain a couple of times, to see whether it jogs the memory. I just could not find my way back to it and I spent a lot of time thinking about why. Then I actually realised that I did not know how to maintain my concentration. My thoughts must have gone somewhere else entirely and I did not manage to find my way back. I had not learned how to be properly aware of my concentration.

So although a *skipari* is experienced and knows the ballad exceptionally well, it requires a full presence at each performance for it to go well. Several of the interviewees mentioned that it is important to ‘liva seg inn í’ the ballads, a phrase that means to let oneself *live* the ballad and the dance, not just to repeat steps and words from memory. This little story of a person’s experience as a *skipari* provides a unique insight into how it feels to be part of the ring-dance. It also shows what

³²⁸ Nolsøe (1982), p. 163.

³²⁹ Annika Christensen, *Interview with a member of ring dancing society, no. 6* (Tórshavn: 2015).

happens in a ring-dance when the *skipari* forgets their lines when the other participants help to jog the memory whilst repeating the refrain of the ballad. What I found particularly interesting, is that no one else offered to start the verse. This could be because no one else knew what the next verse was, but this could also allude to a sort of unspoken rule: If the *skipari* does not know the verse, it is bad form for another member to jump in.

4.3 'Dansurin er fyri øll': The importance of creating community

The Faroese ring-dance is portrayed as an open and communal event which

everyone can participate on equal footing. For example, Gerhard Hansen writes:

Føroyski dansurin var við til at byggja upp ein felagsskap í fólkinum, sum knýtti tey hvørt at øðrum. Ognarbóndur og ognarleys, rík og fátøk, børn, ung, og gomul av báðum kynum, slóu ring saman og trúðu dansin, sum skiparin veitti lív, og hvørs innihald øll upplivdi í sjálvum sær, og sum kom til sjóndar á teimum alt eftir hvat, kvøðið varð um.³³⁰

The Faroese ring-dance helped strengthen a community that brought the people together. The freeholders and the property-less, rich and poor, children, young and old of both genders, joined together in the ring and danced, with the *skipari* providing life to the dance and ballad, which each person experienced on their own terms and, depending on what the ballad being performed was about, was reflected in the dancers' expressions and movement.

Hansen describes a personal and almost intimate connection between the dancers and their community. Some of these aspects that have their roots in a localised community can be lost in the participation in the dance with dancing societies, as people can come from various parts of the country and still be in the same society. However, it is important to note that there are barriers, as discussed in the previous chapter. Although the Faroese dance is talked about and portrayed as being for everyone, there are examples of this not being the case.

It became clear, during the interviews that there continues to be a strong communal feeling being created in dancing societies and that these societies can act as small communities on their own. An example of this is *Fótatraðk*, a Faroese ring-dancing society that is based in Copenhagen and here many people, who move to Copenhagen for study, will join the society. At the time of the interview, in July

³³⁰ G. Hansen, p. 30.

2015, the number of members in Fótatraðk was about 40, with 20 being regular and active members. Although the majority of these members are Faroese, some regular members are Norwegian, German, Danish and Swedish. As Birita Lamhauge Jógvansdóttir states, ‘Føroyski dansurin er fyri øll’ (The Faroese [ring] dance is for everyone).³³¹ The fact that this ‘everyone’ is Northern European and/or Scandinavian, does, however, indicate that the Faroese ring-dance is not as diverse as it is portrayed to be. Jógvansdóttir, who at the time of the interview was the president of the society, clearly indicated that having a dancing society in Copenhagen illustrates the multiple layers of what significance the Faroese ring-dance has as a community, although this significance is predominately (if not only) for Faroese people. As Jógvansdóttir stated, many Faroese people joined to meet other Faroese people, to speak their own language and generally just socialise with others from ‘home’. Two interviewees also stated that ‘av tí at man er í Keypmannahavn blívur man meira tjóðskaparligur’ (You become more nationalistic when you are in Copenhagen), referring to the desire to engage with one’s own language and everyday banalities that suddenly have become novel. There is a lot of literature on these varying forms of long-distance nationalism or nationalistic feelings that begin to emerge when outside the country or community one calls home.³³² Nina Glick Schiller writes that ‘persons who adopt the stance of long-distance nationalism continue to consider another territory as their homeland’.³³³ A large Faroese community exists in Copenhagen, and there are a lot of events organised aimed at Faroese people and there is also a ‘Faroese House’ (Føroyahúsið) on Vesterbro.³³⁴ However, Gaini argues:

Tó skal ein vera varin við at sammeta tað at vera góður við heimlandið og at hava heimlongsul við tað at hava tað føroyska umhvørvið í Keypmannahavn sum arenu fyri lívsstíl. Við lívsstílinum fylgir ikki nøkur serstøk politisk sjón. Lívsstílin hevur við øðrum orðum onki beinleiðis samband við ynski um

³³¹ Annika Christensen, *Interview with Birita Lamhauge Jógvansdóttir* (Tórshavn: 2015).

³³² See for example Benedict Anderson, ‘Long-distance nationalism: World Capitalism and the rise of identity politics’, in *The spectre of comparisons: Nationalism, Southeast Asia and the world* (1998), pp. 58-74, N. Glick Schiller and G. Fouron, *Georges woke up laughing: Long distance nationalism and the search for home* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2001), Z. Skrbis, *Long distance nationalism: Diasporas, homelands and identities* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1999), Ø. Fugleud, *Life on the outside: The Tamil diaspora and long distance nationalism* (London: Pluto, 1999).

³³³ Nina Glick Schiller, ‘Long-Distance Nationalism’, in *Encyclopedia of Diasporas: Immigrant and Refugee Cultures Around the World*, Melvin Ember, Carol R. Ember, Ian Skoggard (eds.), (New York: Springer, 2005), pp. 570-580, p. 574.

³³⁴ Gaini, (2008), pp. 109-110, see also ‘Føroyahúsið’ <<https://www.fohus.dk/da/>> [Accessed June 2020].

sjálvstýri Føroya, ið onkur kanska kann freistast til at halda. Lívsstíllurin sigur fyrst og fremst nakað um sosiala netverkið og áhugamálini hjá persóninum.³³⁵

However, one has to be careful in comparing being fond of the homeland and being home-sick, with having the Faroese environment in Copenhagen as an arena for a certain lifestyle. In other words, the lifestyle does not have any direct connection to wishing the Faroe Islands to be [politically] independent, which some could be tempted to think. First and foremost, the life-style says something about the social network and the interests of the individual.

For Gaini, it is the creation of a community that is paramount, and cultivating a feeling of belonging in a place where you are somewhat of an outsider.³³⁶ Turino writes:

Through moving and sounding together in synchrony, people can experience a feeling of oneness with others. The signs of this social intimacy are experienced directly – body to body – and thus in the moment are felt to be true. [...] Study of expressive cultural practices like music and dance from different societies can help us achieve a balance between understanding cultural difference and recognizing our common humanity.³³⁷

There is something about the embodiment of the communal that in Turino's quote is alluring and that connects individuals. Having a ring-dancing community such as Fótatraðk, therefore, serves two purposes: Bringing Faroese people together to experience a bit of Faroese-ness, and, at the same time, experience the sense of community in collective dancing.

The individual bodies of the performers are key in the ring-dance, each creates the performance through their voice and steps. It is, however, the *collective* body of several participants that has to harmonise together to create what Jakobsen refers to as a 'good' ring-dance and what Turino calls a 'seamless synchrony'. Lamhauge Jógvansdóttir emphasises this when she says of the ballads and Faroese ring-dance 'er ikki gjørdur til at man skal ganga og pussinussa um hann sjálvur, tað er um samanhald' (it is there so a person can tend to it on their own, it is about community). Although a ballad can easily be performed vocally by an individual and they can create their own rhythm with the body, in the ring-dance it

³³⁵ Gaini, (2008), p. 110.

³³⁶ 'Somewhat' is used intentionally here as Danish language education is mandatory in Faroese schools and there is not a significant cultural barrier given the close cultural and historical connection between Denmark and the Faroe Islands.

³³⁷ Turino, pp. 2-3. See also William H. McNeill, *Keeping Together in Time: Dance and Drill in Human History* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995).

becomes impossible to add the melody and rhythm without the harmonious participation of others.³³⁸

4.4 Ikki bara gráir skallar dansa: Getting children and young people involved

The dancing societies started to include children from the very start in 1952, beginning with an event hosted by Dávur Magnussen, who was a member of Dansifelagið í Havn, called ‘Barnadans’ (children’s dance) in Sjónleikarhúsinum, the theatre in Tórshavn. In the introduction to the 1965 ballad collection *Kvæði, Vísur og Táttar*, Magnussen and Jóhannes av Skarði wrote how important it is to include children in the ring-dance so they could learn the ring-dance and the ballads from an early age, and hopefully continue as they become adults.³³⁹ This transference of heritage across generations is something that has cropped up in recent discussions. In their introductory chapter to *Children, Childhood and Cultural Heritage*, Kate Darian-Smith and Carla Pascoe argue that ‘children are not just producers of cultural heritage but also the audience for heritage displays’.³⁴⁰ Although Darian-Smith and Pascoe refer specifically to museums displays in this case, this can also be attributed to performed heritage: It has to be on level for children to get them engaged.³⁴¹ Darian-Smith and Pascoe also write:

[It] is important to note that if definitions of childhood are recognized as culturally and historically contingent, then many of our taken-for-granted assumptions about the young and the rights of children are also subject to question. There is a vast diversity of experiences of childhood, and while children might be subjective to adult directives, they are also active agents in their own lives.³⁴²

These ‘taken-for-granted assumptions’ mentioned above are also a concern for Gaini, as these assumptions can be outdated and not indicative of real experiences for young people and children.³⁴³ Dancing societies noticed early on that there was a need for children and young people to have their own space to learn ballads and

³³⁸ Nolsøe (1982), p. 157

³³⁹ Dávur Magnussen and J. av Skarði, *Kvæði, Vísur og Táttar*, Dávur Magnussen and J. av Skarði (eds.) (Tórshavn: P.F. H. N. Jacobsens Bókhandils Forlag, 1965), p. 4.

³⁴⁰ Kate Darian-Smith and Carla Pascoe, ‘Children, Childhood and Cultural Heritage: Mapping the field’, in *Children, Childhood and Cultural Heritage* Kate Darian-Smith And Carla Pascoe, (eds.), (London: Routledge, 2013), pp. 1-18, p. 4.

³⁴¹ For more on museum displays and children as visitors, see Laurajane Smith, ‘Taking the children: Children, childhood and heritage making’, in *Children, Childhood and Cultural Heritage* Kate Darian-Smith And Carla Pascoe, (eds.), (London: Routledge, 2013), pp. 107-125.

³⁴² Darian-Smith and Pascoe, p. 4.

³⁴³ Gaini (2008), p. 12.

ring-dance, so their performances are usually separate from the adult performances.³⁴⁴ One crucial effect this has had is that younger ballad singers and dancers have from an early age been given more responsibility as children are asked to 'skipa' the ballads.³⁴⁵ This is still a custom practised by dancing societies, but also in the Faroese primary and secondary schools. This will be discussed in more depth in the next chapter, but it is worth mentioning here that integrating children into the ballad performance and expecting them to be proactive in the performance has had an impact on their future interest in joining dancing societies as adults and continuous interest in ballads and ring-dancing.

The dancing societies do not have an age limit, but, commonly, children are allowed to participate from a very young age, around six to seven years old. Before the establishment of dancing societies, the teaching of ballads and ring-dance was kept within the home. As Hansen notes, there were usually two generations between 'teacher' and 'student': Grandmothers and fathers would teach their grandchildren.³⁴⁶ However, most of the learning consisted of simply participating, to listen to the ballads being performed and learning to partake in the ring-dance.³⁴⁷ Apart from the occasional teacher with the enthusiasm for ballads, they were not taught – formally or professionally – until ring-dancing societies were established.

There is evidence that young people are getting more proactive in relation to ring-dancing and ballads. A society was established in 2015 called 'Ung í dansi' (The young in dance) and this is a society where all the members are under the age of eighteen. The founding members, Róða Bødvarsdóttir, Ólavur Syderbø and Petur Óli Koytu Nicolajsen, stated that '[vit] kunnu ikki bara hava gráar skallar, sum dansa, tí mugu vit hava eitt dansifelag fyri ung. Vit eru jú generatióin, sum skal bera dansin víðari' (we cannot only have them grey heads dancing, therefore we have to have a society for young people. We are the generation that has to continue the dance).³⁴⁸

³⁴⁴ Dancing societies often have children and adults perform on the same day but at different times. The children are, however, welcome to stay and continue with the adults if they want to.

³⁴⁵ 'Eingin skal hjá Ungum Alva Bragdarhugin forða', in *Dimmalætting*, no. 13, 31st January (1991), p. 11.

³⁴⁶ S. Hansen, p. 79.

³⁴⁷ S. Hansen, p. 80-81.

³⁴⁸ Katrin Dahl Hanusson, 'Tað eru ikki bara gráir skallar, sum dansa', in *Røddin* (Tórshavn: KvF, 2015).

<<https://kvf.fo/roddin/greinar/2015/12/15/tad-eru-ikki-bara-grair-skallar-sum-dansa>> [Accessed February 2020].

In addition to issues relating to heritage and traditions, many society members are hopeful that innovations will continue to keep the Faroese ring-dance a dynamic part of Faroese culture. Sonja Johannessen also agreed that 'Føroyskur dansur byrjar at blíva populerur aftur - Í byrjaðni var tað kanska sindur kiksa' (Faroese ring-dancing is starting to become popular again – at the beginning [when I joined] it was a bit dorky) and yet another society member mentions 'at onkur sum er cool og hevur áhuga fyri tí kann lokka fólk til, so man sleppur av við pensionistastemningin sum er' (someone who is cool and is interested in it can lure people in, so we get rid of this senior citizen-atmosphere).³⁴⁹

4.5 Keeping the ring-dance alive: Issues with preservation and staged performances

The Faroese ring-dance is one of the most obvious visual displays of Faroese identity, representing a tradition that goes back several centuries and engages with ballads that are themselves symbols of a Faroese uniqueness in a way. There is also the issue that the ring-dance is considered an important part of Faroese heritage, especially as it can be used to perform heritage to tourists, for example. People who are practised ring-dancers partake in the ring-dance on a different level, immersing themselves in the story unfolding in the ballad. In this setting, all ballad performances vary from each other. For it to be palatable for someone who has never seen this or participated, there has to be some sort of standardisation and it can never be that fully immersive experience as it is for members of dancing societies.

Turino uses the phrase 'staged participatory performances' when discussing dances that have roots in indigenous communities and are displayed as examples of cultural identity for furthering a specific agenda.³⁵⁰ This can be a political act, where the goal is to 'unify the different groups in order to create a nation' as in Turino's example³⁵¹ or identifying the 'value of cultural performances to the economy and to

³⁴⁹ Annika Christensen, *Interview with a dancing society member*, no. 4 (The Faroe Islands: 2015).

³⁵⁰ Turino, pp. 145-148. Turino mentions for example the way the dances *jerusarema*, *mbakuma*, *shangara* and *mbira* were in Zimbabwe used in political rallies as a way to appeal to peoples' sense of (regional) identity and nationalism. These dances were common in the communities they heralded, but in this case, they were utilised for a specific agenda: Each of these dances indexed and was meant to appeal to the public from those regions', p. 146.

³⁵¹ Turino, p. 145.

identity construction'³⁵² in Celia Tuchman-Rostan's terms of using performances in the tourism industry. A ring-dancing performance can also be a staged performance, as they are frequently used to exemplify 'Faroese culture' for either tourists visiting the Faroe Islands or when dancing societies do performances abroad. The following chapter will go into more detail about tourism and the use of ring-dance as a symbolic gesture, but the ring-dancing societies are not isolated from this idea of staged performances as they frequently participate in events such as recordings, displays for tourists and at specific events. The social aspect and the embodiment of the ring-dance performance, which is crucial in ballad performances by dancing societies, is to some extent lost – the involvement remains on a surface level. Experienced dancers learn to negotiate their bodies with the others in the ring and regardless of knowing what the ballad is about or ability to perform it, these dancers can enter the ring without disturbance. This form of investment is very different from the perhaps fleeting tourist-experience of such performances and this is also what Green touches upon in his statement.

During the 2015 ballad conference *Og Dansurin Gongur...*, one afternoon was devoted to Faroese ring-dance. First, the conference participants sat as an audience at a classical concert, passively observing a ring-dance performance by a dancing society. Secondly, all the society members wore the Faroese national costume.³⁵³ The audience was not encouraged to participate in any way, apart from quietly observing the backs of the performers.³⁵⁴ This way of performing the ring-dance as a display is common. Fótatraðk, for example, also frequently travel around Denmark and the other Scandinavian countries to perform the Faroese ring-dance, and this could therefore be thought of as a classic example of Turino's 'staged participatory performance'. It is just as much about the re-enactment of tradition and promotion of tradition and culture, as it is about partaking in something for the sake of pleasure or enjoyment. This added pressure is visible in Birita Lamhauge

³⁵² Celia Tuchman-Rosta, 'From Ritual Form to Tourist Attraction: Negotiating the Transformation of Classical Cambodian Dance in a Changing World', in *Asian Theatre Journal*, 31/2 (2014), pp. 524-544, p. 525.

³⁵³ As the Faroese national costume is considered very formal attire and can cost up to 10.000DKK, it is not common (or advisable) to dance in it on a regular basis. It will only be done on special occasions (national holiday, weddings) or when performing for an audience.

³⁵⁴ This was for those, like me, that sat on the rows closest to the scene. I imagine people sitting in rows a bit further up the slant saw more.

Jógvansdóttir's words when she stated that in *Fótatraðk* they 'vilja promovera dansin og skapa aktivt dansilív' (we want to promote the dance and create a space for active dancing). There is the mention of 'promoting' the dance and to create (or re-create) active participation of the dance. This is what is needed to keep the Faroese ring-dance alive, so to speak, or at least continue to try to gather interest for it.

There are a lot of recordings on outlets such as YouTube where stylised ring-dancing performances are often the ones uploaded: Everyone is wearing either the national costume or similarly formal clothing.³⁵⁵ The *skipari* does not make mistakes, and no one fumbles or makes a wrong step. This idea of 'correct' ballad singing or ring-dancing is also perpetuated through the fact that ballads and ring-dancing are part of formal education, and that, as Hansen writes, there is no longer a familial exchange between generations that came from the younger listening to the older experienced ballad singers. For non-Faroese speakers, the engagement with the ballads is hindered by the language barrier, so there is an element of the performance that largely remains unattainable. For example, during some performances, spectators are encouraged to participate and are provided with relatively easy to acquire dance movements and are expected to be passively moving in the ring. The experienced ring-dancers, on the other hand, in their societies engage in a local and sustained experience where ballad content and movement enter into a relationship. A dance society member, who was interviewed for this project said that there is a visual element to the dance that is fascinating for tourists, but that is not really of interest to people interested in ring-dancing – the content of the ballads and the social aspect of getting together is.³⁵⁶

4.6 Conclusion

This chapter has analysed the role of the dancing societies in preserving and continuing the Faroese ballad tradition. The main conclusions to draw from this is

³⁵⁵ See for example these performances online: 'Sigmunds kvæði, eldra (fyrsti táttur' by Dansifelagið í Havn, (Tórshavn: Kringvarp Føroya, 2012) < <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fx2IEFeTbqg&list=PLgXLUy3k32EQCDdWfFQS7r9z9rAOzUPy9>> [Accessed June 2020], 'Flóvin Bænadiktsson' by Dansifelagið í Havn (Tórshavn: Kringvarp Føroya, 2013) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=100BNctNp4Q> [Accessed June 2020],

³⁵⁶ Annika Christensen, *Interview with a dancing society member*, no. 6 (The Faroe Islands: 2015).

that being able to freely engage with the ballads is paramount if the dancing societies are to continue.

Many of the interviewees mentioned stagnation as a possible outcome of not 'having the guts' to innovate the ring-dance or do things a bit differently. The interviews yielded several stories and thought on ballads and ring-dancing, and these small narratives of experience offered some unique insights into how dancing society members organise themselves in the ring-dance, how societies represent themselves, and, finally it also shows the relationship each society member has to the Faroese ballad tradition. Steph Lawler points out the importance of stories and storytelling in qualitative research, arguing that these stories are 'organising devices through which we interpret and constitute the world.'³⁵⁷ The Faroese ring-dancing societies are therefore important resources for understanding contemporary Faroese ballad tradition, in addition to also preserving and continuing the Faroese ring-dance. However, they are also important in the sense that they create small communities in their own right, creating a space where individuals with interest in ballads and ring-dance can meet and socialise. The societies are autonomous groups within the Faroese community, creating communal spaces across different age groups, interests and abilities.

The responsibility of 'promoting and preserving' that the above quote alludes to, is something that defines a lot of heritage discussions today. With UNESCO's CSICH these discussions are not unique to the Faroese case, but several instances exist where heritage and traditions seem to become the responsibility of the next generation.³⁵⁸ The difficulty of preserving a living tradition has already been discussed, but it is worth noting here that preservation and promotion have to give way to individual and collective interests. Allowing the Faroese ring-dancing tradition to evolve, and to have young people create their own dancing-environment, becomes crucial.

³⁵⁷ Steph Lawler, 'Stories and the Social World', in *Research Methods for Cultural Studies*, M. Pickering (ed.) (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010), pp. 32-52, p. 32.

³⁵⁸ See for example Man-U Io, 'Collaboration between practitioners and public agencies in preserving and promoting musical heritage in Macao', in *Journal of Heritage Tourism*, 14:1, (2019), pp. 19-32, D.M Tudorache, A. Niculescu, M. Musteață-Pavel, A. Radu, 'Generation Y—Challenges for Heritage Planning', in *Caring and Sharing: The Cultural Heritage Environment as an Agent for Change*, V Vasile. (eds) (New York: Springer, Cham, 2018).

The Faroese ring-dance is considered important as Faroese heritage and is thus often governed by established traditions. Several of those who were interviewed also mentioned this in our conversations. Some felt that there was little room for any individuality or *nýhugsan* (new ways of thinking about or doing things) when it comes to ballads and ring-dancing in the Faroe Islands. This is especially visible in what one member of a ring-dancing said:

Í dag læra fólk seg úr bók ella læra seg tað rætta. Eg sakni meira fjøllbroytni, fleiri løg, ikki bara ein rættur máti at dansa og kvøða. Ein og hvør kann yrkja nýggj kvæði ella broyta kvæðini, tað verður bara ikki gjørt. Tað at tey eru skriva niður og hava fingið ein serligan leiklut í okkara bókmentan og fyri tjóðskaparrørsluni. Tað er jú varveitt og niðurskriva, so tað er einki at ræðast. Um man vil hava tað livandi skal man tora at lata tað liva.³⁵⁹

Today people revise using books or focus on learning the right ones. I miss having more diversity, several [melodies]³⁶⁰, not just having one correct way to dance and *kvøða*. Anyone can write new ballads or change the [existing] ballads, just no one ever does. They are written down and have been given a certain status in our literature and in [The Faroese National Movement]. They are already preserved and recorded, so there is nothing to be afraid of. If we want to keep it alive, we have to have the guts to let it live.

The fact that the ballads have been recorded in writing (and digitised) should allow for an assurance that they are already preserved, and as the interviewee suggested, ‘there is nothing to be afraid of’. But there still seems to be a lingering sense of danger when it comes to the Faroese ballad and ring-dance, although no one can specify what that danger is. There is also the question of diversity. Both in allowing different variations of a ballad to exist at the same time, but also diversity in the people that are part of the societies. If the dancing societies want to live up to the ‘Faroese dance being for everyone’, these are issues that have to be negotiated in contemporary Faroese dancing societies.

³⁵⁹ Annika Christensen, *Interview with a member of ring-dancing society, no. 4* (The Faroe Islands, 2015).

³⁶⁰ The interviewee used the Faroese term *lag* which refers both to classical singing and ballad-singing. There is no direct translation, so ‘melody’ is the closest we come to an English equivalent.

5. Heritage Industry and Tourism in the Faroe Islands: Folktales, Ballads and Visual Displays of Faroese-ness

Throughout the 2010s, the Faroese heritage and tourism industry has continued to grow. In 2010, there were around 256,000 travellers to the Faroe Islands, and in 2018 the number was 424,600.³⁶¹ There has also during this period been clear strategies put into place to increase tourism in the Faroe Islands. The goal was to in 2020 have tourism as one of the main industries in the Faroese economy.³⁶²

'Nordic' or 'arctic' tourism are terms used to encapsulate tourism in areas in the northern part of the Atlantic, and the Faroe Islands are often mentioned in relation to research and studies in these terms.³⁶³ There have been studies on Faroese tourism and governmental policies and sustainability, but post-2000 there has been limited research focus on how the Faroese tourism industry is appropriating Faroese culture and heritage as marketable, and none on the impact of ballad heritage on Faroese tourism.³⁶⁴ This chapter analyses how this is achieved and what the possible ramifications this has for Faroese identity, nationalism and appropriation of a Faroese exoticism.

³⁶¹ Hagstova Føroyar, 'Ferðavinna', <<https://hagstova.fo/fo/vinna/tænastuvinna/ferðavinna>> [Accessed April 2020]. See also Nordisk Ministerråd, *Certificering og andre virkemidler til udvikling af bæredygtig outdoor-turisme: Betydning og potentiale for nordiske småsømfund*, p. 15. <<https://norden.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:1392474/FULLTEXT02>> [Accessed April 2020].

³⁶² Visit Faroe Islands, 'Endamál' <<https://www.visitfaroeislands.com/vinna/um-okkum/endamal/>> [Accessed April 2020]. Research and statistics of Faroese tourism have become more visible during the 2010s (see for example Visit Faroe Islands, 'Hagtøl og kanningar', <<https://www.visitfaroeislands.com/vinna/ferdavinnufakta/um-ferdafolkini/hagtoel-og-kanningar/>> [Accessed April 2020] and Hagtalsgrunnurin, 'Gistingar', <https://statbank.hagstova.fo/pxweb/fo/H2/H2_VV_VV07/> [Accessed April 2020]). Before 2013, the statistics of tourists visiting the Faroe Islands were based on the number of people travelling to the Faroe Islands by plane or ferry (see statistics for travellers 1975-2018 at Hagstova Føroyar, 'Ferðafólkaflutningur' <<https://hagstova.fo/fo/vinna/tænastuvinna/ferðavinna>> [Accessed April 2020]).

³⁶³ The term 'arctic' usually also cover tourism in Greenland, Iceland, the Canadian and North American island territories (Newfoundland, Labrador, etc.), while 'nordic' includes Greenland, Iceland, and the Scandinavian countries and their island territories. See for example A. Pashkevich, 'Arctic Tourism: Realities & Possibilities', in *Arctic Yearbook 2014: Scholarly Articles, Section II: Regional Economy & Prosperity*, Lassi Heininen (ed.), (2014), pp. 1-17, <<http://www.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:760300/FULLTEXT01.pdf>> [Accessed April 2020], and C. Micheal Hall, Dieter K. Müller and Jarkko Saarinen, *Nordic Tourism: Issues and Cases* (Bristol: Channel View Publications, 2009), especially pp. 1-25.

³⁶⁴ Some of the ideas are discussed in Lise Lyck, 'Cultural Tourism: A New Selling Point for Faroese Tourism?'. For governmental policies and Faroese tourism, see Hall, Müller and Saarinen, pp. 68-69, on sustainability see Súsanna Laursen, *Færøsk Turisme: Mellem Bæredygtigt Potentiale og Vanetæknning*. (Master thesis). (Roskilde: Department of Environmental, Social and Spatial Change. Roskilde University, 2014).

5.1 The Faroese tourism and heritage industry: Cultural expression of a small community

Lucas Debes in the 17th century wrote that the Faroe Islands 'I sig selv ere intet andet end som nogle høje Klipper, som opstige af det vilde Hav, næsten overbelagte med nogen tynd Jord' (are themselves not much more than tall mountains rising from the wild sea, almost completely covered in a thin layer of dirt).³⁶⁵ The image of the rocky shores in the vast Atlantic has continued to be used to accentuate the reclusiveness of the Faroe Islands and the historical development of a culture and a society that has developed largely in isolation, perpetuating the stereotypical view of island cultures.³⁶⁶ The island, according to Gilles Deleuze, is encapsulated by the fantasy of isolation:

An island doesn't stop being deserted simply because it is inhabited. [...] [We] need only extrapolate in imagination the movement they bring with them to the island. Only in appearance does such a movement put an end to the island's desertedness; in reality, it takes up and prolongs the elan that produced the island as deserted.³⁶⁷

Deleuze presents an island that is governed by its continued remoteness, similar to the 'unexplored, unspoilt' image presented by Visit Faroe Islands' campaign: The remote islands exist outside the banality of everyday life, they are a place of fantasy and tranquillity. The ongoing relevance for National-Romanticism becomes evident in the representation of the Faroe Islands, both as an island-community according to Deleuze's definition of remoteness, but also concerning how the exotic image of 'nordicness' has been utilised for many of the countries located in the North Atlantic, especially in the emergence of nationalisms.³⁶⁸ Contemporary tourism in Iceland bears similarities with the Faroese, as there is a particular interest in the unusual and the Nordic-exotic.³⁶⁹ Bærenholdt also writes that 'tourism propels narratives of place, nation and (post)-colonial order that envision various forms of

³⁶⁵ Lucas Jacobsøn Debes, *Færoæ & Færoa Reserata* (Tórshavn: Landsprentsmiðjan, 1950 [1673]) p. 1.

³⁶⁶ The Faroe Islands were described as 'Wild, wet and windy', in the 2016 Bradt Travel Guide (p. VII) and as a place 'where life moves at an enviable sedate pace' (p. VIII). James Proctor, *The Faroe Islands* (Chalfont St Peter: Bradt Travel Guides, Ltd., 2016).

³⁶⁷ Gilles Deleuze, 'Desert Islands' in *Desert Islands and other Texts, 1953-1974*, David Lapoujade (ed.) (Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 2004), pp. 9-14, p. 9.

<https://archive.org/stream/DesertIslandsAndOtherTexts/GillesDeleuzeDesertIslandsAndOtherTexts1953-1974_djvu.txt> [Accessed April 2020].

³⁶⁸ Oslund, pp. 9-11. See also Gunnar Karlsson 'The Emergence of Nationalism in Iceland', pp. 33-62, and Axel Kjær Sørensen, 'Greenland: From Colony to Home Rule', pp. 85-105, both in *Ethnicity and Nation Building in the Nordic World*, Svend Tägil (ed.) (Illinois: Southern Illinois University Press, 1995).

³⁶⁹ Sigurjón B. Hafsteinsson, *Phallogical Museum* (Zürich: Lit, 2014), p. 25.

imagining ‘holistic destinations’’, but also that ‘in practice, tourism transgresses territorial containers and produces social relations performed at a distance’.³⁷⁰ Tourism is, therefore, a piece of complicated machinery with work undertaken by various actors ‘to translate places and relations into networks performing ‘practical othering’’.³⁷¹ This ‘practical othering’ indicates the level of self-exoticism that is necessary for places to be considered desirable by tourists: it has to represent something that differentiates from everyday experiences by visitors.³⁷²

The Faroese tourism and heritage industry continues to perpetuate a certain level of exclusivity where tourists can experience remoteness and the exotic. What is offered is a form of *cultural tourism*, where heritage and Faroese culture are selling points.³⁷³ ‘Cultural tourism’ as a concept developed during the 1990s and reflected the desire for new experiences and engagement with heritage from other places: ‘The movement of persons to cultural attractions away from their normal place of residence, to gather new information and experiences to satisfy their cultural needs.’³⁷⁴ The World Tourism Organization defines cultural tourism as:

A type of tourism activity in which the visitor’s essential motivation is to learn, discover, experience and consume the tangible and intangible cultural attractions/products in a tourism destination. These attractions/products relate to a set of distinctive material, intellectual, spiritual and emotional features of a society that encompasses arts and architecture, historical and cultural heritage, culinary heritage, literature, music, creative industries and the living cultures with their lifestyles, value systems, beliefs and traditions.’³⁷⁵

It is the term ‘living cultures’ that is perhaps of most significance here. There is a selection of these ‘value systems, beliefs and traditions’ that are interesting for visitors. In the Faroese tourism industry, the marketable is negotiated and presented as the selling point. It is this remoteness and the ‘hard-to-reach’ aspect

³⁷⁰ Bærenholdt, p. 161.

³⁷¹ Bærenholdt, pp. 161-162

³⁷² See also Leerssen, *A summary of imagological theory*. He talks about the less of a threat a country/people are, the more they are considered to be ‘exotic’. This form of self-exoticism is therefore also a way to appear more attractive as a destination and a place to visit.

³⁷³ Further examples of these and the feasibility of Faroese cultural tourism was discussed in Lise Lyck, ‘Cultural Tourism: A New Selling Point for Faroese Tourism?’, Conference paper, The Nordic Council Culture Tourism Conference, June 2003 (Tórshavn).

³⁷⁴ Association for Tourism and Leisure Education and Research – ATLAS, <<http://www.atlas-euro.org>> [Accessed November 2019].

³⁷⁵ World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), *22nd Session of the General Assembly held in Chengdu, China* (Chengdu: 11–16 September 2017).

<<https://www.unwto.org/tourism-and-culture>> [Accessed January 2020].

that seems to be alluring, as the more popular tourist-attractions also are those that are hardest to get to.³⁷⁶

5.2 Unexplored, Unspoiled, Unbelievable: Faroese tourism campaigns

The illusion of remoteness and the exoticness of visiting the Faroe Islands has been the focal points for several tourism campaigns. Visit Faroe Islands is the official tourist board under the Ministry of Trade and Industry. Their campaigns have utilised the portrayal of Faroese culture to fit within images of isolation and fairytale-like landscape, while at the same time emphasising the comforts of a ‘civilised’ tourist destination, catered towards tourists from around the world. It is a place where tourists can explore the ‘jaw-dropping beauty’ of the landscape, as well as experience the local culture up close and personal at events, in which ‘you can enjoy authentic and intimate dining experiences in [local] people’s homes’.³⁷⁷ ‘The Faroe Islands: Unspoiled. Unexplored. Unbelievable’ was a campaign launched in 2013 by Visit Faroe Islands, and it sought to portray the Faroe Islands as a place that offers modern luxuries whilst preserving the ‘unspoiled and unexplored’ parts – be that nature, heritage or people. Tourism campaigns are supposed to find an aspect of a given location that will have a certain appeal, and in the case of the Faroe Islands, it is this image of a place that is almost unaffected by time and globalisation, which today is something that draws especially younger tourists.³⁷⁸

Visit Faroe Islands have also had other campaigns that explicitly tap into these ideas of Faroese nature, ‘way of life’ and engaging with the ‘unspoilt’. As tourism is an important industry in the Faroe Islands now, the COVID-19 crisis in 2020 meant that the industry had to find alternative ways to get tourists to the Faroe Islands. The newest campaign, ‘Remote Tourism’, is an example of virtual tourism. People were able to book virtual tours, where they can control a Faroe Islander that is equipped with a camera:

Just like a real-life computer game, the main player will control the moves of the Faroese islander, who will not only explore locations on foot but also take to the skies by helicopter, giving virtual visitors a bird’s eye perspective on

³⁷⁶ Here it should be mentioned that most ‘remote’ areas have excellent infrastructure for tourism. You can for example fly directly to the Faroe Islands on an Airbus from several places in Europe, including Edinburgh, Paris and Barcelona.

³⁷⁷ Visit Faroe Islands, ‘Heimablidni’, <<http://www.visitfaroeislands.com/see-do/dining/heimablidni/>> [Accessed June 2018].

³⁷⁸ See, for example, Ury and Larsen, p. 74.

our beautiful island nation's steep grassy slopes, our 80,000 sheep and our unspoilt, wild and natural countryside.³⁷⁹

The idea resulted in many 'virtual visits' and did help to continue the tourism industry in the Faroe Islands during Spring/Summer 2020. However, this campaign does illustrate that the people living in popular tourist-attractions are as much part of the experience as the place itself. The people living in these areas are often seen as a spectacle for tourists, they are there to be gazed at.³⁸⁰ With 'Remote Tourism' this is taken a step further, where the 'spectacle' now becomes an object that can be controlled from afar.

Another campaign has capitalised on sustainable tourism, where volunteers are encouraged to help maintain some of the popular Faroese tourist destinations. 'Closed for Maintenance, Open for Voluntourism', was an initiative that was started in 2019, addressing the issue of 'over-tourism' by appealing to tourists for help: '[T]he fragile natural environment in a few popular tourist locations has felt the effects of an increase in visitors. These areas needed a helping hand to ensure they remain pristine; sustainability is the goal.'³⁸¹ Voluntourism is generally seen as beneficial for both tourists and the involved tourist destinations.³⁸²

What these campaign show, is that tourism advertising can be illogical and implausible, whilst still be successful. The Faroese tourism industry offers luxury accommodation and experiences, whilst promoting the islands as 'unexplored' and 'unspoiled'.³⁸³ There is a form of primitivism at play that offers a refuge in a place that seems to be detached from the rest of the world, and where modern adventures can go and explore.³⁸⁴ This has especially caused issues when tourists

³⁷⁹ Visit Faroe Islands, 'Remote Tourism', <https://www.visitfaroeislands.com/remote-tourism/> [Accessed April 2020].

³⁸⁰ See for example Jenny Chio, 'Rendering rural modernity: Spectacle and power in a Chinese ethnic tourism village' in *Critique of Anthropology*, 37(4) (2017) pp. 418–439. <

https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0308275X17735368?casa_token=GU6IA3XdiYwAAAAA%3A_HPpP7Zw2bomKH29-54dU3d_HHc_3fq6KnKMDMPwDXxC4v5zgXdhRAWn70s4gSJQDb4evmBBPPM> [Accessed July 2020]. The idea of communities and people being part of tourist destinations is not a new concept but has already been discussed in relation to sustainable tourism and ecomuseums. For more on this, see Peter Davis, 'New Museologies and the Ecomuseum' in *The Ashgate Research Companion to Heritage and Identity*, Brian J. Graham and Peter Howard (eds.) (Hampshire: Ashgate, 2008), pp. 397-414.

³⁸¹ Visit Faroe Islands, 'Why we are closing – again' <<https://www.visitfaroeislands.com/closed/why-were-closing-again/>> [Accessed April 2020].

³⁸² Kyle M. Woosnam and Yoon Jung Lee, 'Applying Social Distance to Voluntourism Research' in *Annals of Tourism Research*, Vol. 38, No. 1(2011), pp. 309–313, p. 309.

³⁸³ Two new luxury hotels were built in 2018-2020, not to mention the many restaurants (including KOKS, a Michelin star restaurant) that are available to visitors.

³⁸⁴ See for example Glenn Jordan, 'Flight from modernity: Time, the other and the discourse of primitivism' in *Time & Society* 4.3 (1995), pp. 281-303.

have come to the Faroe Islands and taken for granted that the islands are ‘unexplored’ and run into trouble when trying to do the exploring. In the worst cases, tourists have died trying to traverse the mountains by themselves.³⁸⁵ It is also curious that the solution to the issues caused by over-tourism is solved by ... more tourism. The ‘Closed for Maintenance, Open for Voluntourism’ markets the need for ‘helping hands’ to ensure the continuation of the Faroe Islands as a pristine and attractive location to visit – although it is perhaps these same helping hands that have caused some of the issues. Faroese farmers and landowners have long argued for a strict policy on tourism and access to nature paths, but as of yet, this has not happened on a governmental level.³⁸⁶

5.3 Creating the Faroese experience: Immersive experiences and folklore

Visit Faroe Islands promote several immersive experiences where tourists can engage with local culture, for example, ‘Heimablídni’ where ‘you can enjoy authentic and intimate dining experiences in [local] people’s homes’.³⁸⁷ These events also include tourists being able to partake in Faroese ring-dance and ballad singing.³⁸⁸ Throughout the summer months (June-August), the Guesthouse of Gjógv hosts ‘Cultural Evenings’ in the village, Gjógv, where visitors can learn how to ring-dance and perhaps learn a snippet of a ballad, combined with tasting Faroese foods and listening to more contemporary Faroese music.³⁸⁹

There is a definite lure towards the remoteness of the Faroe Islands, as well as the folklore that is used in sculptures and art. The most famous attraction in later years has been the sculpture of the seal-woman, a character from an old Faroese folktale. The seal-woman, which will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter, is a popular destination for travellers. Another sculpture that was erected

³⁸⁵ There are no accessible numbers that show exactly how many tourists have died in the Faroe Islands, but it is an issue that has had some attention in the Faroese media. See for example Frants Jensen, ‘Als ikki samd’ on IN.FO (04.05.2020) https://www.in.fo/news-detail/news/als-ikki-samd-1/?tx_news_pi1%5Bcontroller%5D=News&tx_news_pi1%5Baction%5D=detail&cHash=ce8b49da32ba4babdacedfaff7257a2 [Accessed May 2020].

³⁸⁶ This is the case for many small tourist destinations. See for example Andrea Insch, ‘The challenges of over-tourism facing New Zealand: Risks and responses’ in *Journal of Destination Marketing & Management*, Vol. 15 (2020) <<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2212571X19301453?via%3Dihub>> [Accessed July] 2020.

³⁸⁷ Visit Faroe Islands, ‘Heimablídni’, <<http://www.visitfaroeislands.com/see-do/dining/heimablidni/>> [Accessed June 2018].

³⁸⁸ This can be both as observers, or as actual participants.

³⁸⁹ Visit Faroe Islands ‘Culture nights in Gjógv’ <<http://www.visitfaroeislands.com/event/culture-nights-gjogv/>> [Accessed August 2016].

in November 2017 which pictures a nix (in Faroese, Nykur), a shape-shifting water spirit.³⁹⁰ It is located at Leitisvatn, a large lake that is very close to the airport. Nykurin, which is the name of the sculpture, is also based on a folktale of the same name. The sculpture is a horse, as the nix in the tale prefers to disguise himself as a horse to lure children to the lake and drown them. The location of Nykurin means that it is easy to get to and so it does not require a full day out to see the sculpture. For the visitors coming by plane, it can be seen on the way from the airport quite easily.³⁹¹ There are different ways in which Faroese folklore adds to the distinctiveness of the Faroe Islands as a destination. Eric G.E. Zuelow states: ‘After all, the search for distinctiveness is a core element of the tourist impulse’.³⁹² Zuelow refers specifically to tourism in Ireland, but his observations resonate with the way the Faroese tourism industry promotes the islands as a destination, for example:

There is a curious sense of the discoverer in tourism, a “romantic aura” that finds tourists following, on a kind of spiritual level, in the footsteps of the heroes of exploration: pioneers walking in a track laid by David Livingstone and Edmund Hillary, Marco Polo and Robert Peary.³⁹³

Zuelow’s ‘romantic aura’ can be translated into the search for the ‘unspoilt and unexplored’. Although the ballads are not an attraction in and of themselves, they are integrated parts of what constitutes this traditional image of the Faroe Islands. The history of the ballads, and that they derive from Faroese orality, emphasises the romantic ideals in which they were believed to hold some sort of ‘folk’ essence that ripples through the outward-facing images of the Faroe Islands.³⁹⁴ The focus on the homestead and dining with locals in ‘Heimablídni’ events, and the rugged natural surroundings, indicate a desire to promote the Faroe Islands, but in a way that is accessible and attractive to the tourist expecting comfort. This has also been

³⁹⁰ Visit Vágar, ‘The nix in Sørvágsvatn/Leitisvatn’, <<http://visitvagar.fo/welcome-to-vagar/about/stories-and-legends/nykurin/>> [Accessed December 2019].

³⁹¹ The sculpture has gained some popularity on Instagram where the label #nykurin has 106 posts (see <<https://www.instagram.com/explore/tags/nykurin/>> [Accessed December 2019]). Compared to the 1180 posts #kópakonán has gained, however, it is obvious which one has more appeal to contemporary tourists. (see <<https://www.instagram.com/explore/tags/k%C3%B3pakonan/>> [Accessed December 2019])

Nykurin did get a mention in the comic strip *Scandinavia and the World*, most noted by the ‘creepiness’ of the sculpture. As the comic illustrates, creepy folk and fairy tales is something that Iceland and the Faroe Islands share. See *Scandinavia and the World*, ‘Similar Tastes’, comic strip, (March, 2018), <<https://satwcomic.com/similar-tastes>> [Accessed December 2019].

³⁹² Eric G.E. Zuelow, ‘Made in Ireland?: Irish Tourism in an International Context’ in *Touring Beyond the Nation: A Transnational Approach to European Tourism History*, ed. by Eric G.E. Zuelow (Surrey: Ashgate, 2011) pp 151-170, p. 151.

³⁹³ Zuelow, p. 151.

³⁹⁴ H.J. Debes (1995), p. 82.

seen in tourism campaigns in Iceland where '[tourists] can experience the wilderness from a safe distance', before returning to their normal social lives.³⁹⁵

The dance is also an important element of showcasing a form of Faroese*ness*. As an enacted visual performance, the Faroese ring-dance presents an excellent example of how a tradition can be moulded into a marketable image of the Faroe Islands, for as Tone Honningsvåg, drawing on performances of traditional dance in Norway as a tourist attraction writes:

Denne opvisning er statisk og basert på et inlært repetoar af koreograferte folkedanser og fremstår gjerne folkloristisk. Denne oplevelsen gjenskaper et bilde på en uberørt 100 år gammel tradisjon I å presentere folkedans for turister, Dansen er I utgangspunktet ikke et mål I seg sel, men et middel og verktøy for samhandling og social interaksjon.

This performance is static and is based on a rehearsed repertoire of choreographed folk-dance and is displayed as folkloric. This experience recreates an image of an untouched 100-year-old tradition to present folk-dance for tourists. The dance is not an end in itself, but a tool for interaction and social connection.³⁹⁶

Therefore events involving the Faroese ring-dance allow tourists to the Faroe Islands to experience a stylised and staged 'everyday experience'. The ballads and the ballad performance, therefore, become images of something that can be conceived as being examples of authentic Faroese culture, while at the same time it is constructed as part of a tourism-narrative. The story of the ballads and the fact that they have existed in an oral form for so long is of more interest to the industry than the content of the ballads themselves. Green gives an account of his experience learning ballad performance and ring-dance as part of his Faroese course in Tórshavn, which he describes as 'a memorable, albeit typically touristic one.'³⁹⁷ The first thing Green touches upon is that for someone unacquainted with Faroese ballad performance and ring-dance, it is difficult from the outset to fully immerse oneself in it: 'Because I was not acquainted with the participants, and ... because everyone else involved were much older and almost certainly knew each other, my self-consciousness about being an "outsider" at these events coloured

³⁹⁵ Gísli Sigurðsson, 'Icelandic National Identity: From Romanticism to Tourism' in *Making Europe in Nordic Contexts* (Turku: NIF, 1996), pp. 41-77, p. 70.

³⁹⁶ Erlén, p. 97.

³⁹⁷ Green (2013), p. 102.

my experience there.’³⁹⁸ Through tourism marketing, there is a specific image of what a ‘traditional’ ballad performance is and how this reflects a certain form of Faroese culture that constitutes the outward-facing image the Faroese tourist industry wishes to portray. The Faroese ring-dance is a popular aspect of it, as it is audio-visual and tourists can easily participate in it, without investing time and effort to study the ballads, or the ring-dance. These performances usually also include the experienced Faroese dancers performing in the Faroese national dress, making it a stunning, but also a staged, image of Faroese culture and experience. The ballads themselves are not central, but rather the focus is placed on the experience of the social, enacted, and audio-visual performance which they are a part of.

5.4 Heritage production and engaging with the intangible

The Faroe Islands constitute a small community and it is often said that in the Faroe Islands ‘everyone knows everyone’, and that this aspect of life governs the Faroese social networks. In his essay ‘Class and Committees in a Norwegian Island Parish’, John Barnes made this observation about the experience of living in a small society:

When two people meet for the first time, it is rare in modern society to discover they have a large number of common friends [...]. In small-scale societies, this happens more frequently, and strangers sometimes find that they have kinsmen in common.³⁹⁹

Barnes indicates that there is an inherent difference between the ‘modern’ and the ‘small’ society, whereas it would perhaps be more pertinent to define these in terms of their sizes as this will inevitably be the characteristic of any small-scale community, whether modern or not. Gaini observes that:

[i]n the Faroe Islands, as in many other peripheral small-scale societies, specifically former non-Western colonies, systematic external influence on domestic affairs has often led to the patronization of local culture and to exoticism that estranges ‘us’ (modern) from ‘them’ (non-modern).⁴⁰⁰

Setting up the ‘modern’ in opposition to ‘small’ when studying Faroese community does occur within studies of the Faroe Islands, where there is little attention paid to

³⁹⁸ Green (2013), p. 102.

³⁹⁹ John A. Barnes, ‘Class and Committees in a Norwegian island parish’ in *Models and Interpretations: Selected Essays* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006) pp 67-87, p. 73.

⁴⁰⁰ Gaini (2011), p. 132-133.

the complex social and cultural landscape given the mobility of people inhabiting the islands. These views consider the Faroe Islands a place that exists outside or on the periphery of the constant flux that encompasses the globalised world, Gaini argues that the study of Faroese culture that has been perpetuated for so long is now antiquated and presents a skewed image of the contemporary Faroe Islands.⁴⁰¹ The romantic view of the Faroe Islands as a place which is largely unaffected by social and political change – a static, culturally homogeneous place of “Norwegian authenticity” – ultimately insinuates that ‘the Faroese are, ironically, the unsophisticated, yet noble ‘savages’ of a cloudy enclave surrounded by the “modern” world of the North’ as Gaini further argues.⁴⁰²

Drawing on Barnes’ idea of the social networks in small communities, Thomas Hylland Eriksen suggests that we apply the idea of ‘dense social networks’ in small-scale societies.⁴⁰³ Eriksen’s concept of the ‘dense social network’ that he believes exists in small communities, and which highly influences the way small societies are governed by the tight-knit set of relationships between people, is an example of how to study cultural and social relations in the Faroe Islands.⁴⁰⁴ It affects how social groups are formed and how identity formations occur within cultural and social practices, and it is in this context that the ballads and ring-dance have to be considered. Some people engage with the ballads more than others, but this is an aspect that has had minimal influence on creating specific cultural groups. There are of course groups within the Faroese community that have some characteristics that make it possible to classify them into groups, for example, youth as a group studied by Gaini. However, this separation becomes difficult when going into naming specific cultural groups, without grouping according to age, ethnicity, marital status, religion, sexual orientation, etc. Due to the small number of people, there will be overlaps in the cultural activities that people identify with. It is difficult to even give these groups specific characteristics because they are fairly fluid in

⁴⁰¹ Gaini (2008), p. 12.

⁴⁰² Firouz Gaini, ‘Cultural Rhapsody in Shift: Faroese Culture and Identity in the Age of Globalization’ in *Among the Islanders of the North: An Anthropology of the Faroe Islands* (Tórshavn: Faro University Press, 2011,) pp 132-162, p. 133. See also Alf Ragnar Nielssen, ‘Norrøne forbindelser og innflytelse i Vestnordengjennom tidene’ in *De Vestnordiske landes fælleshistorie*. INUSSUK, Daniel Thorleifsen (ed.) (2003), pp. 15-30.

⁴⁰³ Thomas Hylland Eriksen, *Small Places, Large Issues: An Introduction to Social and Cultural Anthropology* (London: Pluto Press, 2001) p. 78-79.

⁴⁰⁴ Eriksen, p. 82.

their constitution. For example, the Faroese ring-dancing societies have members of different ages, genders, ethnicities, and so on. In his article on heritage production in Gotland, Owe Ronstöm writes:

Any production of collective memory, of a collective past, must be understood in relation to other such pasts. I call such productions 'mindsapes'. The concept urges us to understand a site, whether a tourist destination or a heritage site, as both a mental and a physical entity - 'mind' for the former and 'scape' for the latter. Mindsapes are established by certain perspectives or gazes that makes us see some things and overlook a whole lot more. Mindsapes are institutionalised in 'domains', large networks of interlinked practices, ideas, artefacts, institutions and so on.⁴⁰⁵

Ronström argues that there is a significant way in which small communities organise and utilise heritage, accentuating a distinctive localness, defining and promoting a heritage that is rooted within the small community.⁴⁰⁶ A set of recurring images of *Faroese*ness are present in the promotion of the Faroe Islands as a tourist destination, including artistic and other cultural productions. Among these are for example displays of Faroese ring-dance, food, and Faroese music.⁴⁰⁷ One central aspect has been that, looking from a geographical perspective, the Faroe Islands is very isolated. This isolation continues to inform current narratives of Faroese society and what makes it easier to perpetuate a certain Faroese exoticism.

5.4.1 Exoticisation and imagining oneself

Gaini writes that 'exoticism has characterised most printed portrayals of Faroese culture and society since the 19th century. The remote North-western European archipelago was seldom in the anthropological and ethnological lenses' sharp focus'.⁴⁰⁸ Exoticism in relation to a specific location is constructed by the way it is viewed by 'outsiders'. This could be, for example, how tourism-campaigns are constructing a stylised narrative that gains popularity amongst tourists. However, this exoticism also relies on how it is being presented and constructed by the people living in these places. In a world where information flows rapidly from one part of the world to the other, it is impossible to say that the perception of the

⁴⁰⁵ Owe Ronström, 'A different land: heritage production in the island of Gotland' in *Shima*, 2 (2008), pp. 1–18, p. 4. <<https://www.shimajournal.org/issues/v2n2/c.-Ronstrom-Shima-v2n2-1-18.pdf>> [Accessed February 2020].

⁴⁰⁶ See also L. Smith and E. Waterton, "The envy of the world?": intangible heritage in England' in *Intangible heritage*, L. Smith and N. Akagawa (eds.) (London: Routledge, 2009), pp. 289–302.

⁴⁰⁷ 'Faroese food' has become a staple for many restaurants, for example *KOKS*, *Barbara* and *Áarstova*.

⁴⁰⁸ Gaini, 'Cultural Rhapsody in Shift', p. 132.

Faroe Islands, its culture and people is completely based on an outsider perspective: Faroese culture and identity is as much constructed by the way the Faroe Islands represents themselves to the world. And it is this concept of 'constructed exoticism' that is of particular interest when it comes to Faroese tourism and the heritage industry. Regarding Icelandic identity, Nicola Dibben argues that 'contemporary understandings of Icelandic history ... are themselves based on nationalist constructions of Icelandic identity'.⁴⁰⁹ Here the term 'Borealism' also becomes relevant as Schram argues that it is a specific form of exoticising the North through art, music, food.⁴¹⁰ Benedict Anderson argues in *Imagined Communities* that concepts of nationalism and national identity are culturally rooted in how communities established themselves, through what he argued as being 'imagined because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow members [...] yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion.'⁴¹¹ John Green, drawing on Anderson's concept of 'imagined communities', argues that the size of the Faroe Islands and the population living there (around 50.000 people) 'are indicative of the special situation of the Faroes as an imagined community', adding that 'one's belonging to such an imagined national community, must surely be different (and, arguably, somewhat more strongly felt) in a place like the Faroes where gatherings of a fifth of the nation is possible.'⁴¹²

Roland Barthes wrote extensively on the significance of *mythology* in the way meaning is constructed and interpreted in a society. Mythology or myth, in Barthes' sense of the term, is the relation between utterances and the layers of meaning they are imbued with. This functions through the constant interaction between a *signifier* (an utterance), *signified* (idea or concept) and *sign* (a meaningful unit of a signifier and signified).⁴¹³ 'But myth' Barthes writes, 'is a peculiar system, in that it is constructed from a semiological chain which existed

⁴⁰⁹ Nicola Dibben, *Björk* (Sheffield: Equinox, 2013) p. 25. See also Sigurðsson, pp. 59-68.

⁴¹⁰ Schram (2011), p. 310.

⁴¹¹ Anderson (1991), p. 6.

⁴¹² Green (2013), p. 252.

⁴¹³ Roland Barthes, 'Myth Today', in *A Roland Barthes Reader*, Susan Sontag, ed. (London: Vintage, 2000), pp. 93-149, p. 97. For more on this see Roland Barthes, *Mythologies* (London: Vintage, 2000) and Umberto Eco, *Semiotics and the Philosophy of Language* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986). For more on the origin of the signifier, signified and sign in semiology, see Ferdinand Saussure, *Course in General Linguistics* (1916).

before it: It is a *second-order semiological system*'.⁴¹⁴ Meaning is created within a contextual framework. It is here it becomes possible to link Barthes' work with Anderson's idea that communities are *imagined*: The way a community is viewed by others and views itself is based upon the meaning attached to objects, rituals, traditions, etc. In relating this to the Faroese example, it is worth pointing to Ronström's distinction of what 'tradition' is to heritage and how cultural and national meaning is constructed, where he argues that 'customs, rituals and expressive forms, such as narratives, music and dance' are central to tradition.⁴¹⁵ Ronström further argues that traditions are linked to the local, 'every parish, every group of folk can have its own tradition'.⁴¹⁶ These different strands – the location, the display of folklore, the small community and close relations – all function as a way to display a certain Faroese-ness to visitors. Bithell argues for an interpretation of the 'traditional' as being a slightly ambiguous term:

"Tradition" has long been construed in opposition to "progress" and "innovation" – a conservative force that, while ensuring stability, resists change and casts innovation as inauthenticity. In musical terms, tradition becomes something that can be "betrayed" as individual musicians "sell-out". Yet part of the nature of oral tradition is that its materials are prone to being misremembered, personalized, or improved upon [...]. "Tradition" is useful as a statement of connection with the past, but this can operate on a level that is more metaphorical than literal [...]. Labelling something as traditional can be as much a statement of significance or distinctiveness as a statement of historicity. To define something as traditional today is, above all, to make a statement about how it relates to a sense of identity.⁴¹⁷

In Bithell's words, what is considered tradition, is in constant development. It draws on the historic past, without being stuck in the past or unable to adapt to the dynamic cultural changes in any society. This coincides with Ronström's definition of tradition in heritage production, as it is deeply rooted within the local community and changes based on the people involved. At the same time, there is also a push towards marketing the Faroe Islands as exotic and also 'authentic' in the way remoteness and the unspoilt is celebrated. This is a form of re-traditionalisation, where the focus is put on emphasising activities and traditions that might not have

⁴¹⁴ Barthes, 'Myth Today', p. 99.

⁴¹⁵ Ronström, p. 9.

⁴¹⁶ Ronström, p. 9.

⁴¹⁷ Bithell, p. xxxvi.

had such a prominent place in marketing for tourists.⁴¹⁸ It is also possible to link this to Simon Halink's use of the term 'crowd symbol', drawing on a term developed by Elias Canetti in the 1960s, to illustrate the way this was achieved for the development of Icelandic representation:

The most obvious instruments of contrast, through which a community can define itself in terms of positive differentiation (crowd symbols), consisted in the case of a medieval literary tradition, as well as a landscape that had been deemed abnormal, unnatural and even diabolic for generations. The transformation from dystopian abnormality to utopian uniqueness, consolidated in Romanticism's celebration of nature's sublimity, coincided with the advent of Icelandic national self-awareness.⁴¹⁹

There are parallels to be drawn here, even though Iceland and the Faroe Islands are two very different countries in terms of their cultural history, size and autonomy. These 'crowd symbols' which throughout time have changed and gained different significances operate on the level of Barthes myths, where the meaning of a given image, symbol or sign, shifts in meaning according to its signifier. What Barthes was adamant about was that constructed meaning can always be altered and changed according to its contexts, similar to how negative crowd symbols and negative associations with for example an inhospitable landscape, can be re-organised to something positive, by drawing upon different desires and the trends currently developing in a society.

Between Barthes' mythology and Ronström's distinction of island-heritage production, it becomes possible to illustrate how the Faroese tourism and heritage industry works on a level that ensures that exoticism and national and cultural identity can function on the same level. Ronström makes a clear distinction between 'tradition' and 'heritage', referring to these as different 'mindsapes' arguing that:

Tradition tends to evoke a nostalgic, bitter-sweet modality, a longing for and mourning over lost good old days, together with commitments to honour a specific local past, often personalised as 'family roots'. Heritage is about a

⁴¹⁸ See Carl-Ulrik Schierup, 'Memorandum for Modernity? Socialist Modernisers, Retraditionalisation and the Rise of Ethnic Nationalism', in *Scramble for the Balkans: Nationalism, Globalism and the Political Economy of Reconstruction* (1999), pp. 32-61, and Carl-Ulrik Schierup, 'Beyond Modernization: The Retraditionalisation of Ex-and Post-Yugoslavian Society', In *Social Change and Modernization: Lessons from Eastern Europe 65*, Bruni Grancelli (ed.) (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2011), pp. 155-180, esp. pp. 165-169.

⁴¹⁹ Simon Halink, 'The Icelandic mythscape: sagas, landscapes and national identity', in *National Identities*, 16:3, (October 2014). See also Elias Canetti, *Crowds and Power* (Farrar, Straus and Giroux (Macmillan), 1984).

much more generic past that you may pay an occasional visit to without much nostalgia, obligation or grief.⁴²⁰

For Faroese tourism campaigns, the use of Faroese traditions will have different meanings for visitors and for Faroese people. These strategies of inviting tourists and visitors to experience a slice of ‘real’ Faroese life have been proven successful for Faroese tourism and it reflects on the strategies trending in contemporary Faroese tourism. John Urry and Jonar Larsen point out that the developments within the tourist industry have been affected by, amongst other things, ‘the widespread growth of the “romantic” gaze so that more people wish to isolate themselves from existing patterns of mass tourism’ and that the tourist ‘is a kind of contemporary pilgrim, seeking authenticity in other “times” and other “places” away from that person’s everyday life’.⁴²¹ Faroese tourism is entwined with the notion of exoticism, as has been expressed in tourism campaigns and advertising. This is especially prominent in remote Faroese areas that have become hot-spots for tourists over the last few years.

5.5 The Seal-Woman as a tourist attraction for a remote Faroese village

The Faroese ballads are connected with Faroese folklore and myths, as stories are often reused in ballad composition. One figure, which ties together Faroese ballad culture, folktales and tourism, is Kópakonon. Kópakonon is a mythical creature from Faroese folklore that is part seal and part woman. The story about the Seal Woman is both a very localised, Faroese tale and also has strong connections with other myths in Europe and elsewhere, making it a symbolic figure that appeals to both the local Faroese people and the people visiting as tourists.⁴²²

The story of the seal woman begins when a young farmer witnesses a group of seals emerging on the shore in the Faroese town of Mikladalur. Once on land, they shed their skins and danced in their human form in the moonlight. Amongst the

⁴²⁰ Ronström, p. 9.

⁴²¹ John Urry and Jonas Larsen, *The Tourist Gaze 3.0* (London: Sage Publications, 2011) p. 10 and p. 73.

⁴²² I have discussed the figure of the Seal Woman in greater detail in these book chapters and conference presentations: Annika Christensen, ‘Metamorphosis, Beauty and the Monstrous: The Female Body in Faroese Folklore’, in *Désir, érotisme et cultures corporelles en Europe du Nord*, Deshima, revue d’histoire globale des pays du nord, no. 11 (Strasbourg: Presses Universitaires de Strasbourg, 2017), Annika Christensen, ‘The Female Body in Faroese Folklore: Revenge, love and metamorphosis’, (Conference paper), *Désir, érotisme et cultures corporelles en Europe du Nord, 23-25 March 2017*, (Strasbourg: University of Strasbourg, 2017), and Annika Christensen, ‘The Female Body in Faroese Ballads’, (Conference paper) *54th International Congress on Medieval Studies, 9-12 May 2019*, (Kalamazoo, MI: Western Michigan University, 2019).

group is a girl described as ‘ta fagrastu og fríðastu gentu’ (the most beautiful and fair girl).⁴²³ The farmer immediately falls in love with the girl and steals her seal-skin to force her to stay on land and marry him.

Men kópagentan ... fann ikki húð sína aftur og gekk og sóknaðist eftir henni og fór at láta illa og gremja seg eymliga, tí at tá var náttin umliðin og komið um sólarris; men fyrr enn sólin reis úr havið, fekk hon tev av húðini hjá Mikladalsdreinginum og mátti tí leita til hannsara eftir henni; hon bað hann nú so bønliga og við nýtum orðum geva sær aftur hamin, men hann vildi ikki lurta eftir henni, og fór niðan kleivina til hús, og hon mátti fylgja honum eftir húðini, ið hann bar við sær.⁴²⁴

But the seal woman ... could not find her skin and searched for it whilst she cried in her despair because the night was over and the sun began to rise. Just before the sun rose out of the ocean, she caught the scent of her skin in the hands of the boy from Mikladali and she had to go to him. She begged him to return the skin, but he did not want to hear her words and went to his home; she had to follow because he was carrying her seal-skin.

With her skin locked away in a chest, the seal woman lives on land for many years and has children with the farmer, but she always longs to return to her home, the sea. One day the farmer leaves the key to the chest behind, and the seal woman manages to reclaim her seal skin and return to the sea where her seal mate and children await. When the farmer finds out that the seal woman has escaped he is furious, kills her seal-husband and seal-pups, boils their heads and eats them. The seal woman is punished for her disobedience by the farmer who feels a sense of ownership over her.⁴²⁵ As this takes place, the seal woman returns to the farmer's house and is described as a ferocious monster, screaming and slamming doors as she mourns the death of her husband and children: ‘tað ljótasta trøll [kom] inn í roykstovuna, snoddaði í troganum og rópti av illum huga’ (the ugliest monster came into the front room, sniffed the food trough and gave an angry scream).⁴²⁶ As punishment for his misdeeds, the seal woman vows that the men of Kalsoy will all perish on land and sea in such great numbers that the dead men will be able to create a ring that would reach around the island Kalsoy.⁴²⁷

⁴²³ V.U. Hammershaimb, ‘Kópakona’, in *Færøsk Anthologi Vol. I* (Copenhagen: S.L. Møllers Bogtrykkeri, 1947 [1891]) pp. 345-348, p. 346.

⁴²⁴ Hammershaimb, ‘Kópakona’, p. 346.

⁴²⁵ Christensen (2017), p. 86.

⁴²⁶ Hammershaimb, ‘Kópakona’, p. 347.

⁴²⁷ Kalsoy is one of the northernmost of the Faroese islands and is approx. 31 km².

Kópakonnan first appeared in print in V.U. Hammershaimb's publication *Færøsk Anthologi Vol. I & II*, originally published in 1891. The folktale was adapted into a ballad by Jógvan Dánialson (1843-1926), who spent a lot of his adolescence visiting Hammershaimb, making use of the books available, including Hammershaimb's publications of Faroese ballads. Dánialson did not start to compose ballads until the end of the 19th century when he was over fifty years old.⁴²⁸ *Kópakvæði*, as the ballad is called, has 68 stanzas, with a refrain between each, and closely follows the narrative of the folktale, including the ending where the seal-woman put a curse on the men of Kalsoy. The proximity to the ocean has an impact on what themes and characters are part of local folklore, and it is evident that the seal woman (and other sea-related creatures) feature most prominently in lore in communities that have either been located near water/ocean or have made the ocean their major source of sustenance.⁴²⁹ Anna Louisa Joensen, an experienced Faroese storyteller, who has been to folklore festivals in Denmark and elsewhere, has often told the story of the seal woman to various audiences:

Eg havi fortalt um kópakonuna í Danmark – so fortaldi eg hana og førði hana sindur inn í framtíðina, so blandaði eg tad við frásøgum um mína egnu familju. Fekk at vita at ongantíð fyrr hevur søgan virka so yvirbevisandi. Man skal trúgva sindur uppá tad sjálvur fyri at tað skal vera gott.⁴³⁰

I have told the story about the seal woman in Denmark – I told it and gave it a contemporary context, mixed it in with stories about my own family. I was told that never before had the story seemed so convincing. You have, to a certain, extent believe it a bit yourself for it to be any good.

In this example, the mysticism of the seal woman and her story is translated into a representation of the Faroe Islands. Considering that the audiences found the story convincing, tells us something about the parallels being drawn between a mythological figure, and to a real Faroese person.

The story of the seal-woman was reprinted and published by Edward Fuglø in 2015 and used illustrations from the 2007 Faroese stamp issue *The Seal Woman*.⁴³¹

⁴²⁸ The ballad was first published in: Jógvan Dánialson, *Yrkingar* (Tórshavn: Varðin, 1927), a collection of Dánialson's compositions that was published shortly after his death in 1926.

⁴²⁹ Annika Christensen, 'Exploring Faroese and Icelandic relationships to nature in folktales. *Kópakonnan* and *Selshamurinn*', in *Frændafundur 9*, Höskuldur Práinsson and Hans Andrias Sølvará (eds.) (Reykjavík: Hugvísindastofnum, 2018), pp. 123-132, p. 123.

⁴³⁰ Annika Christensen, *Interview with Anna Louse Joensen* (Tórshavn, 2016).

⁴³¹ V.U. Hammershaimb, *The Seal-Woman*, transl. by Eðvarð Jónsson (Edwardfuglo.com, 2015). The story was published in English, Danish and Faroese.

On the back of the English translation, it states that the story about the seal woman ‘is a poignant account of circumstances recognized by all people that make their living by the sea’, referring to the wide variety of similar stories that exist in several other countries. This is what Enna Garðshorn Mikkelsen analyses extensively in her book *Kópakonan*, which gives an in-depth account of the seal woman legend as it has developed from oral storytelling throughout the world. The story of the seal-woman appears in similar stories from other areas where the seal woman legend is also part of local folklore, for example in Britain, Norway and the region of Micronesia.⁴³² The Faroese folktale can therefore have been inspired by these other tales, and in turn, Hammershaimb can have used literary creativity to root it in a Faroese location. As discussed in chapter 1, the ballads draw on literature and folklore, so there is reason to assume that the recordings of folktales have done the same.

5.5.1 The Seal-Woman as sculpture: The value of tourism in remote areas

In August 2014 a sculpture depicting a woman holding a seal-skin was revealed by the shore in the town of Mikladalur, located on the island of Kalsoy in the Faroe Islands. The sculpture was formally commissioned by the organisers of the Faroese maritime festival, *Sjómannadagur*, which takes place in the northern town of Klaksvík every year.⁴³³ This project was spearheaded by Oliver Joensen, Ólavur Samson and Olivur Thomsen, who are also part of the *Sjómannadagur* committee, and the sculpture was made by Faroese artist Hans Pauli Olsen.⁴³⁴ The sculpture is 2.6 meters tall and weighs approximately 450 kilograms, is made of bronze and steel, and can withstand waves up to thirteen meters in height. It is a naturalistic depiction of a nude woman, with the sealskin draped casually around her feet. The sculpture is placed by the shore, with the sea and mountains in the background.

⁴³² Enna Garðshorn Mikkelsen, *Kópakonan* (Tórshavn: Sprotin, 2015), pp 38-39. The seal is most prominent in the European versions of the folktale. These stories exist in most areas of the world using other forms of sea creatures. From Ulithi in Micronesia, there is a folktale about a creature that is half woman, half porpoise, and follows a similar narrative to the seal-woman tales from Europe.

⁴³³ *Sjómannadagur*, <<http://sjomannadagur.fo>> [Accessed January 2019].

⁴³⁴ Hans Pauli Olsen has made several other sculptures that are located in various places around the Faroe Islands and Denmark. See for example *Kvinden på Broen* (Roskilde, Denmark 2004) and *Skyggen* (Tórshavn, The Faroe Islands 1987) <http://www.hanspauliolsen.dk/Index_Se_V%C3%A6rker_UK.html> [Accessed August 2018]. Olsen has also made sculptures based on saga literature, see for example Malan Marnersdóttir, ‘Faroese Perspectives’, in *Handbook of Pre-Modern Nordic Memory Studies: Interdisciplinary Approaches*, Vol 1, Jürg Glauser, Pernille Hermann and Stephen A. Mitchell (eds.) (Berlin: Walter De Gruyter, 2018), pp. 788-797.



Kópakonan. Annika Christensen

The initiative for this project came from a need to improve the tourism industry in the northern islands of the Faroe Islands, as the numbers had been dwindling over several years. On the tourism website for Kalsoy, the people behind the project write that ‘sagnir, søga og náttúra eru lyklaorð, tá ið um ferðavinnu ræður, og við at varpa ljós á søgnina um Kópakonuna geva vit ferðavinnuni eitt bein afturat at standa á’ (folktales, history and nature are keywords when it comes to tourism, and by illustrating the folktale about the seal woman we provide additional support to the tourism industry).⁴³⁵

The sculpture, the folktale and the ballad serve a purpose that includes creating revenue and getting an increasing influx of tourists to come and visit Kalsoy and the Faroe Islands in general.⁴³⁶ The concept of engaging with local lore and heritage highly defines how the Faroese tourist industry promotes the Faroe Islands as a

⁴³⁵ Visit Kalsoy, ‘Verkætlan fyri uppsetan av Kópakonuni í Helluni í Mikladali’, <<http://www.visitkalsoy.fo/verkaeligltlanin-koacutepakonan.html>> [Accessed April 2018]. For more on the seal woman in contemporary Faroese literature and art, see, Tóta Árnardóttir, ‘Kópakonun í nýggjari feroyskari myndlist og bókmentum’, in *Frændafundur 9*, Höskuldur Þráinsson and Hans Andrias Sølvará (eds.) (Reykjavík: Hugvísindastofnum, 2018), pp. 219-232.

⁴³⁶ Árnadóttir, ‘Kópakonun’, p. 222.

destination of interest. The sculpture of the seal woman in Mikladali is therefore drawing together multiple interpretations of the folktale, as expressed through the 19th-century ballad compositions and contemporary musical performances that utilise the theatrical element as well.⁴³⁷ The renewed interest in this Faroese folktale has culminated in the sculpture that serves as a symbol for the influence of local folklore on Faroese culture, as well as being a site of interests for tourists that might not have otherwise ventured out to Kalsoy.

However, the sculpture of the Seal Woman has caused some discussions, because it relies heavily on the image of a naked woman, who is desirable, and beautiful to look at. On her blog, Faroese art-critic Kinna Poulsen wrote that it was vulgar and criticised the lack of artistic imagination when it came to interpreting the folktale, which Poulsen sees as being both beautiful and touching:

Í staðin fyri at viðgera evnið listarliga, hevur listamaðurin eftir øllum at døma fokuserað uppá sjálvan tann fysiska vakurleikan á kvinnuni, sæð úr einum mannligum sjónarhorni. Úttrykkið er naturalistiskt, heroiserandi og anakronistiskt.⁴³⁸

Instead of treating this subject artistically, the artist has by all accounts focused on the physical beauty of the woman, seen from a male perspective. The expression is naturalistic, heroising and anachronistic.

It did not have anything to do with the sculpture being nude, but more the fact that the physical attributes of the seal woman became a focal point, whereas the Faroese version of the folktale depicts a woman who sees her children being murdered and then turns into a ferocious monster. Instead, the sculpture presents a generic image of beauty, despite beauty being the very thing that caused the seal woman's grief in the first place:

[The Seal Woman's] value still lies in the fact that she is beautiful to look at. Her seal skin – her very identity and self - is carelessly hanging down onto the floor, her nudity is something to be admired and 'tekkiligt' – desirable. Granted, the statue was meant to draw tourists and it has indeed fulfilled that purpose, as the northern islands have been thriving since the statue was revealed, it even being compared with the Little Mermaid in Copenhagen.⁴³⁹

⁴³⁷ Christensen (2017), p. 86, Árnadóttir, 'Kópakonán', p. 222-223.

⁴³⁸ Kinna Poulsen, 'Av øllum teim snekkjum, ið Norðhavið bar... ', *Listaportal* (Blog post) <<http://www.listaportal.com/tidindi/2014/8/1/av-llum-teim-snekkjum-i-norhavi-bar>> [Accessed August 2018].

⁴³⁹ Annika Christensen, 'The Female Body in Faroese Ballads', (Conference paper) *54th International Congress on Medieval Studies*, 9 May 2019, (Kalamazoo, MI: Western Michigan University, 2019).

The seal woman has served the intended purpose: It has become a tourist attraction and has provided a remote Faroese area with more life and more income. This is paramount for a lot of areas in the Faroe Islands, especially those which are removed from the more well-travelled roads in the Faroe Islands.⁴⁴⁰ On the other hand, the sculpture is a generic, nude woman that could have derived from any story, the characteristics of the Faroese version of the tale are effectively erased, which is the crux in the critique of the sculpture from, for example, Kinna Poulsen. However, tourism is necessary and vital for these smaller, more isolated places in the Faroe Islands. Although the infrastructure in the Faroe Islands is continuously improving, many places are still dependent upon ferries sailing between the islands.⁴⁴¹ Outside of the fishing industry, most places of work are centred on the larger towns, especially Tórshavn. This means that there are a lot of places that do not even have a shop close by that does not require driving. It is not economically feasible for a shop-owner to thrive if she is in constant competition with a big supermarket people prefer to go to. This means that for many, staying in places that are also inhibited by their infrastructure, it does not become a desirable place to live and the area will only be occupied by those fortunate enough to afford a holiday home there 'to get away from it all', not concerned about 'it all' being the very reason why some places are desolated in the first place. The sculpture of the seal woman, therefore, provides an example of how the Faroese tourism industry has to negotiate between marketing the Faroe Islands as attractive to visitors and the conflicts that might arise with the people living in the Faroe Islands.

5.6 Conclusion

This chapter has discussed and analysed different ways of imagining and constructing an image of the Faroe Islands, using folklore, legends and myths that ultimately make up the attraction of the Faroe Islands to visitors, and also the people living on the islands. That remoteness and harsh nature is attractive and fuels the myth about the Faroe Islands. This is again drawing on Barthes idea of

⁴⁴⁰ Which would be the majority of those living on any of the smaller islands in the Faroe Islands.

⁴⁴¹ Most of the larger islands (Streymoy, Eysturoy, Vágoy and Borðoy) are connected by sub-sea tunnels or bridges. Sandoy and Suðuroy are currently only reachable by ferry but are also expected to join up in this network within the next few years.

Myth, where there are ever-slipping signifiers that continue to create new meanings and new prospects of how people in the Faroe Islands view themselves and their country, and how they, in turn, are viewed by people from elsewhere: it is something that continues to develop within the given context.⁴⁴²

The use of heritage and the display of Faroese traditions in tourism campaigns does create the 'romantic aura' that Zuelow refers to, whilst perpetuating the exoticness of the Faroe Islands. There has not before been an in depth-analysis done on the Faroese tourism industry in how it relates to Faroese identity and representation. What this chapter has argued, is that exoticising the Faroe Islands as a place of 'unspoilt' and 'unexplored' perpetuates a nationalistic narrative where primitivism is apparent. In contrast to this, tourism is one of the biggest industries in the Faroe Islands, and the infrastructure and the hospitality industry has developed to account for this. The representation of the Faroe Islands as 'intet andet end som nogle høje Klipper, som opstige af det vilde Hav, næsten overbelagte med nogen tynd Jord' in the words of Lucas Debes in the 17th century, has seamlessly changed to 'Unexplored and Unspoiled' in a 21st-century tourism campaign

The sculpture of the seal woman is a case study that exemplifies how Faroese folklore, the rugged landscape, and the remoteness comes together to create an exoticised narrative of the Faroe Islands. Gaini argues that exoticism has characterised most portrayals of Faroese society.⁴⁴³ This chapter has in detail discussed self-exoticisation of the Faroe Islands in the tourism industry, but it also has to be acknowledged that self-exoticising is also a response to trends in tourism. That these strategies of self-exoticisation have been beneficial to small, more remote villages in the Faroe Islands, for example in Mikladalur with the seal woman. Seen from a critical point of view, the seal woman represents expressions of naturalistic, National-Romantic essentialism. But from an empirical standpoint, her banality has proven to reinvigorate an area that might have otherwise died out.

⁴⁴² Barthes, 'Myth Today', p. 145.

⁴⁴³ Gaini, 'Cultural Rhapsody in Shift', p. 132.

To conclude this chapter, representation and identity is a complex issue when looking at them in relation to Faroese tourism. As will also be discussed in chapter 6 and 7, there are conflicting agendas at play. On the one hand, there are the remnants from nationalistic ideals fostered in the 19th century that still affect Faroese self-representation. On the other hand, it is also responding to the expectations from visitors, audiences and so forth that expect a level of exoticism from the Faroe Islands, be it in the form of tourist experiences or music.

6. Faroese Ballads and Popular Music: Coming to terms with Representations, Identity and Globalisation

‘A society without music has never been discovered’.

Lucy Stokes⁴⁴⁴

Music has long been recognised to have social significance. Theodor Adorno frequently argued for its role in hegemonic control of the masses in a capitalist society, where he argued that the ‘seductive power of the charm survives only where the forces of denial are strongest: in the dissonance which rejects belief in the illusion of the existing harmony.’⁴⁴⁵ Drawing on Adorno’s words, Karl Spracklen pushes the argument further by saying that even though ‘popular music is produced for the consumption of the masses, ensuring docile obedience in the workplace and the city’, there is another side of the coin, namely that ‘popular music spaces are sites of leisure: leisure forms, practices, identities and behaviours.’⁴⁴⁶ Given this position, the study of popular music in the Faroe Islands in this thesis adheres to a framework that considers a critical, ethnographic and sociological, as well as a musicological approach. Therefore this chapter will use critical musicology as one point of reference, which according to David Beard and Kenneth Gloag is ‘a more self-critical, reflexive relationship [that] has developed within musicology’ and whose purpose is to ‘encourage an ever-greater number of approaches to the study of music and respond to work that had not yet been fully aligned with the emergent new musicology.’⁴⁴⁷ Phillip Bohlman also argues that it is

⁴⁴⁴ Lucy Stokes, ‘Music Education, Cultural Capital and Social Group Identity’, in M. Clayton, T. Herbert and R. Middleton (eds.), *The Cultural Study of Music: A Critical Introduction* (London: Routledge, 2003), pp 206-216.

⁴⁴⁵ Theodor Adorno, ‘On the fetish character in music and the regression of listening’, in *The Culture Industry*, J.M. Bernstein (ed.) (London: Routledge, 1991), pp. 29-60, p. 33.

⁴⁴⁶ Karl Spracklen, ‘To Holmgard... and Beyond’: Folk metal fantasies and hegemonic white masculinities’, in *Metal Music Studies*, vol. 1, No. 3 (2015), pp. 359-377, p. 362.

⁴⁴⁷ David Beard and Kenneth Gloag, *Musicology: The Key Concepts* (London: Routledge, 2016), pp. 54 and 55. For more on the concept of critical musicology, see Stan Hawkins, (ed.), *Critical Musicological Reflections: Essays in honour of Derek B Scott* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012), esp. Susan McClarey, ‘Evidence of things not seen: Histories, Subjectivities, Music’, pp. 21-39 and Lucy Green, ‘Musical identities, Learning and Education: Some Cross-Cultural Issues’, pp. 39-60. See also Giles Hooper, *The discourse of musicology* (London: Routledge, 2016), Jonathan D. Bellman, ‘Musical voyages and their baggage: Orientalism in music and critical musicology’, in *The Musical Quarterly* 94.3 (2011), pp. 417-438 and Fred Everett Maus, ‘What Was Critical Musicology?’, in *Radical Musicology*, 5 (2011), 20 pars. <http://www.radical-musicology.org.uk/special_critmus/maus.htm> [Accessed January 2020].

imperative to directly engage with the 'political nature of all acts of interpretation and with the political consequences of excluding for too long the musics of women, people of colour, the disenfranchised, or Others we simply do not see and hear.'⁴⁴⁸ Bohlman's words especially resonate with music being a form of protest and this chapter will briefly outline how music is used in promoting Faroese political independence and the use of ballads as a signifier for Faroese identity. Genre is another topic that can become problematic when reflecting on and writing about music.⁴⁴⁹ Although it is common to classify music according to genres, as I have also done in chapter 7, it is important to clarify that this classification can be challenged. As Frith writes:

Genre distinctions are central to how record company A&R departments work. The first thing asked about any demo tape or potential singing is what *sort* of music it is, and the importance of this question is that it integrates an inquiry about the music (what does it sound like) with an inquiry about the market (who will buy it). The underlying record company problem, in other words, how to turn music into a commodity, is solved in generic terms. Genre is a way of defining music in its market or, alternatively, the market in its music.⁴⁵⁰

In short, the concept of 'genre' is not necessarily relevant when talking about the materiality of music (the sounds, harmonies, etc.) but illustrate the place in which certain music-forms has on the global music market and in the various discourses on popular music.⁴⁵¹ Drawing on an international music scene as well as inspiration from ballads indicates a fusion between the creation of identity and collective Faroese heritage. Turino argues that

identity involves the *partial* and *variable* selection of habits and attributes that we use to represent ourselves to ourselves and to others as well as those aspects that are perceived by ourselves and by others as salient.⁴⁵²

It is here popular music in the Faroe Islands an interesting avenue to explore. In addition to the official parameters that surround the Faroese ballad heritage - education, governmental funding and research - there are also different ways in which the ballads are part of both an identity-related exploration of heritage, and

⁴⁴⁸ Phillip Bohlman, 'Musicology as a Political Act', in *Journal of Musicology*, 11/14 (1993), pp. 411-436, pp. 435-436

⁴⁴⁹ Spracklen (2015), p. 360.

⁴⁵⁰ Simon Frith, *Performing Rites: Evaluating popular music*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), pp. 75-76.

⁴⁵¹ Marcus Breen, 'Making music local', in *Rock and Popular Music*, Tony Bennett, Simon Frith, Lawrence Grossberg, John Shepherd and Graeme Turner (eds.) (London: Routledge, 1993), pp. 66-82, p. 67.

⁴⁵² Turino, p. 101-102. Italics in original.

are part of creating an outward-facing image of the Faroe Islands and its culture: What does it take to make heritage and traditions part of popular music and how does that music portray itself to the world?

6.1 The Faroe Islands and the rest of the world: Creating local music using international networks

Much of the popular music produced in the Faroe Islands today makes use of similar topics as the ballads or even includes the ballads themselves. Gaini argues that the Faroese youth post-2000 has a renewed interest in the Faroese past, the people that lived there then and the events that took place in older Faroese society.⁴⁵³ Global issues of climate change and environmental awareness, as well as the blooming Faroese creative industries, are what 'puts the Faroe Islands on the map', but at the same time they are located on the periphery and are unspoilt by the damage that is usually associated with large industrial activity and the advancements in technology. This tension is expressed particularly well by Hannis Martinsson, the fictional detective in Jógvan Ísaksen's crime-novel *Walpurgis Tide*:

I felt just as at home with American rock as I did with the Faroese chain dance. Sometimes more so. In a different way, in any case. Maybe I'm not a real Faroeman? Or maybe that's what being a proper Faroeman is?⁴⁵⁴

The quote accurately describes the mixture of ballads and popular music that is present in Faroese society. That it is not about either-or, but the inclusion of both the local and the international.

Musicians and artists in the Faroe Islands have a long tradition of venturing out into the world and participating in networks that have a far and wide reach.⁴⁵⁵ This is partly because of necessity, as many have sought further education and work abroad. The Faroe Islands have only one University and although the supply and diversity of courses offered by Faroese educational institution have vastly improved over the last years, there is still a process of 'venturing out' for a large part of the

⁴⁵³ Gaini (2008), p. 72.

⁴⁵⁴ Jógvan Ísaksen, *Walpurgis Tide*, transl. by John Keithsson (London: Norvik Press, 2016), p. 11.

⁴⁵⁵ This is common for a lot of small communities, for example musicians in Iceland, thrive on the international network. See for example Nich Prior, 'Spatiality, Sociality and Circulation: Popular Music Scenes in Reykjavík', pp.74-85 and Tony Mitchell, 'A Transnational Bedroom Community in Reykjavík', pp.135-151, both in *Sounds Icelandic: Essays on Icelandic Music in the 20th and 21st Centuries*, Þorbjörg Daphne Hall, Nicola Dibben, Árni Heimir Ingólfsson and Tony Mitchell (eds.) (Sheffield: Equinox, 2019).

Faroese youth. In her study, Erika Anne Hayfield makes this very telling observation about the ‘venturing out’ aspect for young people in the Faroe Islands:

The young people in this study grow up being part of a culture of migration, actively constructing and reconstructing their futures. [...] Therefore, moving away is for these youngsters not just about going to a more urbanised area. It is central to their life trajectory in becoming informed, experienced and older. Whilst developing a transnational perspective, Faroese youngsters have a clear idea of what it means to be Faroese abroad. Strong social ties are vital in utilizing social capital, which is significant whilst abroad but also to facilitate preparation of reintegration to the homelands.⁴⁵⁶

This means that there is a level of mobility that is common for a lot of people growing up in the Faroe Islands. Of course, not everyone decides to move abroad for education, but it is nevertheless something that generally characterises the Faroese youth. This is further reflected in Faroese music-making, as Joshua Green argues that the sort of movements of people and sound recordings between countries and continents are not uncommon for Faroese musicians.⁴⁵⁷ Green also notes that there is a ‘growing importance for the small languages and cultures of the “Nordic peripheries” as symbolic resources in the globalized music market.’⁴⁵⁸ These mobile networks that Faroese musicians use in order to improve, promote and even create their music, is an example of music-making under the terms of a globalised music market, as Fabian Holt writes that globalisation involves increased mobility and connectivity.⁴⁵⁹ At the same time, however, this globalised and dynamic market also fosters issues regarding belonging (cultural and/or national) and ‘increased socio-economic complexity’, as Holt argues.⁴⁶⁰ Caroline Bithell illustrates a similar issue in her book *Transported by Song: Corsican voices from oral tradition to world stage*, where Corsican musicians balance ‘local and cosmopolitan frames of reference’, whilst also relating their music to their traditional counterpart:

⁴⁵⁶ Erika Anne Hayfield, ‘Exploring transnational realities in the lives of Faroese youngsters’, in *Nordic Journal of Migration Research*, 7(1), (2017), pp. 3-11, p. 9. For more on this see Firouz Gaini, *Miðlar, Mentan og seinmodernitetur: Ein antropologisk lýsing av færeyskum ungdómi* (Tórshavn: Faro University Press, 2008), especially pp. 95-108, where Gaini in-depth discusses the educational system in the Faroe Islands and the process of seeking education outside of the islands. See also Jóan Pauli Joensen, ‘Higher Education in the Faroe Islands’, in *57 Nordic Journal of International Law* (1988), pp. 305-311.

⁴⁵⁷ Joshua Green ‘From the Faroes to the World Stage’, in Fabian Holt and Antti-Ville Kärjä (eds.) *The Oxford Handbook of popular music in the Nordic countries* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), pp. 111-130, p. 116. See also Atli Káráson Petersen, *Traces of musical heritage in Faroese popular music*, MA thesis (Iceland Academy of the Arts, 2017).

⁴⁵⁸ Green (2017), p. 116.

⁴⁵⁹ Fabian Holt, ‘Introduction: Music in a Globalizing Region’, in *The Oxford Handbook of popular music in the Nordic countries*, Fabian Holt and Antti-Ville Kärjä (eds.) (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), pp. 1-32, p. 2

⁴⁶⁰ Holt, p.2.

Many resented any notion that, by exploring new directions, they were betraying the tradition. For them, tradition was not something fixed, timeless, and sacrosanct, the product of some mythical, impersonal “folk” inhabiting the proverbial mists of time, but a process always in movement, to which each generation makes its own contribution.⁴⁶¹

This chapter will explore the discourse of Faroese music-making in relation to identity-building, the utilisation of global networks, as well as discussing the importance music has had for Faroese culture. Several things need to be considered here. One is that maintaining these networks requires financial capital. The second is that issues regarding identity might affect the motivations of musicians. Jocelyne Guilbault writes that cultural and national identity-building promoted through local music – as in opposition to international music – is largely based on two different perspectives; one being that the motivation for identity-building ‘has come from a reaction linked with the fear of losing cultural identity in the face of worldwide homogenisation’ and the other that this motivation is ‘an opportunity to redefine and promote local identity’.⁴⁶² These are to a certain extent quite different sets of motivations, as one is governed by fear of loss and the other seeks to enhance and/or change what is already present and confirmed. However, these motivations are simultaneously interlinked since both indicate that there is a tendency to define a local identity by using music to set itself apart. These two perspectives, as outlined by Guilbault, indicate that there are underlying issues regarding the formation of local identity within the greater global context. Many Faroese musicians have taken advantage of global networks during their career, ‘driving their forms of “Island music” far beyond their horizons and onto the world stage, while still keeping one foot firmly planted on their own soil.’⁴⁶³

Certain bands and events have been instrumental in altering the Faroese music scene. Some of these are used as case studies in this chapter. One of these is the band Harkaliðíð which was founded in the late 1960s and played contemporary folk music derived from the revival of the folk genre that was most prominent in

⁴⁶¹ Caroline Bithell, *Transported by Song: Corsican Voices from Oral Tradition to World Stage* (Plymouth: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 2007), p. 166-167.

⁴⁶² Jocelyne Guilbault, ‘On Redefining the “Local” Through World Music’, in *Ethnomusicology: A Contemporary Reader*, ed. by Jennifer C. Post (London: Routledge, 2006) pp 137-146, p. 138.

⁴⁶³ Green (2017), p. 126.

the US.⁴⁶⁴ They were the first Faroese band to appropriate ballads to a music genre and started the discussion on using ballads in popular music during the 1970s. The other case study is the event *Free Føroyar* in 2000 and the band *200*. It was here that Faroese nationalism in music became prevalent and music became important for identity-building in the Faroe Islands. For example, the use of ballads in popular music got revived and issues of national and cultural identity became important points for Faroese music-making and the promotion of Faroese music abroad.

The thesis does acknowledge that there were a lot of things happening on the Faroese music scene between the 1970s and 2000, also relating to identity and nationalism. However, the particular focus on the 1970s and the early 2000s is particularly due to the emergence of ballads in popular music. Other important bands and events relating to broader Faroese musical identity have been documented in other recent literature.⁴⁶⁵

6.2 Repurposing ballads in the 1970s: Harkaliðið

The Faroese band Harkaliðið were some of the first to combine the Faroese ballad tradition with an international music genre. Harkaliðið appropriated a selection of Faroese ballads to folk music (for example ‘Ólavur Riddararós’ and ‘Grindavísan’) and added instruments, increasing the tempo to make the ballad fit within a folk-rock framework.⁴⁶⁶ The band initially consisted of five members, Annika Hoydal, Jógvan Telling Joensen, Kári Mouritsen, Jógvan Dahl and Jaspur Petersen, and has since 1969 made eight albums, including *Harkaliðið* from 1971 that included Faroese ballad being performed alongside musical instruments. The band received significant attention for this, and this was mostly negative as Harkaliðið were accused of ‘ruining’ the Faroese ballad tradition and ‘destroying the step in the Faroese (ring) dance’ (forkomað stevinum í føroyska dansinum) because of the changes in rhythm and tempo in the songs.⁴⁶⁷ Critics claimed that changes in the rhythm and tempo of the ballads repurposed by Harkaliðið, would influence how

⁴⁶⁴ For more on the popularity of country music in 60s USA, see Bill C. Malone and Tracy Laird, *Country Music USA* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2010 [1968]), p. 287.

⁴⁶⁵ See for example Hans Egholm, K. L. Hansen, U.L. Hansen, N.U. Dam, *Føroyska Rokksøgan: Frá frummrokki til altjóða tónleikapallin* (Tórshavn: Bókadeild Føroya Lærarafelags, 2016).

⁴⁶⁶ Egholm et al. (2016) p. 138-139.

⁴⁶⁷ Egholm et al. (2016), p. 138.

people would perform these ballads in a ring-dance, thereby changing the way the ballads were traditionally performed in the ring-dance.⁴⁶⁸ Former ring-dancing society member Marjun Berg said in the interview with that she remembered when Harkaliðið's LP came out, and she agrees with the criticisms – not that they would ruin the Faroese ring-dance, but that they were 'ruining the ballads' (oyðiløgdu kvæðini) they were appropriating to their folk music.⁴⁶⁹ It affected how people performed the ballads, with the tempo and rhythm being off. The criticisms were about the preservation of the ballads and ring-dance, and these overlooked the ingenuity and creativity of repurposing the ballads.

This was, however, recognised by a lot of listeners. The songs by Harkaliðið are still listened to and played today. Harkaliðið responded to a trend in the Faroese music scene that was fuelled by a desire to define contemporary Faroese culture, as many young people in the 1970s felt alienated from the Faroese ballad tradition. Hansen points out that even though dancing societies have always taken care to include children in the ring-dance, the category of young people have always been somewhere in between: Not belonging with the older dancers and not with the children.⁴⁷⁰ That young Faroese people as a sub-group had been drifting away from the ballads and ring-dancing for some time at this point can be gleaned from what Kristian Blak et al. write about the post-WW2 ring-dance in the Faroe Islands:

The young in particular often show a lack of interest. This is why it was difficult in the first 10-20 years after the Second World War to organize public Faroese dancing. Competition from modern dancing grew, and young people preferred modern dancing to Faroese dancing.⁴⁷¹

The inclusion of ballads in Faroese music-making showed that the ballads had potential to provide creative inputs and encourage a different engagement with the ballads. Instead of preservation and continuation of a tradition, there could be a more dynamic and diverse engagement with the ballads as musical inspirations.

⁴⁶⁸ Egholm et al. (2016), p. 139.

⁴⁶⁹ Annika Christensen, *Interview with Marjun Berg* (Tórshavn: 2015).

⁴⁷⁰ S. Hansen, p. 72-73.

⁴⁷¹ Kristian Blak, Eyðun Andreassen, Marianne Clausen, Séan Galvin, Helga Jacobsen and Sharon Weiss, *Traditional Music in The Faroe Islands* (Tórshavn: Føroya Skúlabókagrunnur, 1996), p. 15.

6.3 Re-thinking the Danish-Faroese relationship through music: Punk, identity and Loysing

After Harkaliðið, it took some time before ballads came back into Faroese popular culture, and became prominent after events that took place in the early 2000s. As a response to the political turmoil in the 1990s with an economic crash and a curtailed referendum on independence from Denmark, Faroese musicians organised a group called *Tónleikarir fyri Loysing* (Musicians Supporting Independence) and organised the event *FREE FØROYAR* (Free the Faroe Islands).⁴⁷² The event included performances by several Faroese bands and musicians, public speeches and comedy entertainment.⁴⁷³ The gathering had one clear purpose: to awaken feelings of Faroese nationality and national belonging among the Faroese public and advocate for independence from Denmark. Egholm et al. write that the concerts were ‘reindyrkaðar propagandakonsertir’ (pure propaganda concerts), which cannot be disputed as the phrase ‘Nokk er kúgað, trampað og knúlva! FREE FØROYAR!’ (‘Enough with the oppression, trampling and beating! FREE THE FAROE ISLANDS!’) was one of the slogans for the event and the organisers emphasised this in the promotional material.⁴⁷⁴ The event was not received positively by all, as journalist Rúnar Reistrup expressed in the newspaper *Sosialurin*:

Ístaðin fyri at lata tiltakið koyra sum eina vanliga konsert, og so geva áhoyrarunum nakrar bitar av lættsvølgiligum fullveldisargumentum og eitt glas av konsentreraðari propaganda, bleiv tað, sum á Free Føroyar plakatumum bleiv lýst sum agitatióin og propaganda, til útspilling og niðurgerðing av dønum og annars øllum, sum ikki eru fult samd við teimum mest víðgongdu tjóðveldisfólkunum. Onkur føroyskur andstøðuleiðari bleiv skýrdur landasvíkjari, og so var tónalagið lagt.⁴⁷⁵

Instead of letting the event run like a normal concert, and give the audience some small bites of easily digestible arguments for independence and a glass of concentrated propaganda, what was advertised on the Free Føroyar posters as agitation and propaganda, turned out to be the slandering and humiliation of the Danish and everyone that did not agree with the most fundamentalist of those who want independence. Some Faroese person from

⁴⁷² Egholm et al. (2016) p. 302

⁴⁷³ The youth-division of the Faroese independence party (Tjóðveldið) hosted a concert called Free Føroyar in 2018. The event was only publicised on their Facebook page where they are most active < <https://www.facebook.com/events/perlan/free-føroyar/155818931888784/> > [Accessed January 2020].

⁴⁷⁴ Egholm et al., p. 303

⁴⁷⁵ Rúnar Reistrup, ‘Føroyskir kjaftar og danskar pylsur’, in *Sosialurin*, 16th July 2001. Cited in Egholm et al. (2016), p. 303.

the Opposition party was deemed a traitor, and that set the precedence for the event.

Although the ‘slandering and humiliation’ of the Danish government and the Faroese politicians (and others), who supported the Danish/Faroese political relationship was what set the tone for the event, it was presented in a way that used humour and tongue-in-cheek music lyrics to do so.

200, a Faroese punk-rock band that began performing in 1997, was one of the most vocal bands performing at the *FREE FØROYAR* event when it came to opposing the union between the Faroe Islands and Denmark. Comprised of Niels Arge Galán (lead vocal and guitar), Mikael Blak (bass) and Uni Árting (drums), the 200’s music was described as ‘punkrokkur við Elvis-rødd og hvøssum, speirekandi politiskum tekstum’ (punk-rock with an Elvis-voice and mocking, political lyrics). It pushed the boundaries and refused to present ‘easily digestible arguments’ and ‘a glass of concentrated propaganda’.⁴⁷⁶ One of their perhaps most well-known songs ‘Sambandsgimpurin’⁴⁷⁷ compares those who are in favour of the Danish-Faroese relationship to the submissive character in BDSM roleplay.⁴⁷⁸ The song ‘Vissi tú ikki ert við upp á loysing’ is made up of the same sentence being repeated over and over: ‘Vissi tú ikki ert við upp á loysing, so ert tú skítiklikkaður’.⁴⁷⁹ This is perhaps the crudest song, as it states that ‘if you are not in favour of independence, you are an idiot’. The song ‘Um 50 ár fer alt hetta her at vera líkamikið’ refers back to the events taking place in the Faroe Islands in the late 19th century, where they say that ‘Tað eru nú liðin 120 ár síðani sjálvstýrisrørslan í Føroyum tók seg upp. Og líka frá byrjan hava vit verið noyddir til at berjast á tveimum hermótum’.⁴⁸⁰ (120 years have now past since the independence movement started in the Faroe Islands. And ever since the beginning, we have been forced to battle on two fronts). 200 reiterated the National-Romantic language used during the late 19th and early 20th century when separating from Denmark was first initiated. ‘Jóannesar Táttur’ is a short song written in Danish, criticising politicians who, in 200’s opinion, pander to the Danish government:

⁴⁷⁶ Egholm et al. (2016), p. 304.

⁴⁷⁷ It does not translate well into English but the word describes a person that is a slave/underling to the Danish government. It is an intended stab at Sambandsflokkurin, the political party that supports the union between the Faroe Islands and Denmark.

⁴⁷⁸ 200, ‘Sambandsgimpurin’, *200%* [CD] (Tórshavn: Tutl, 2001), see also Egholm et al. (2016), p. 305.

⁴⁷⁹ 200, ‘Vissi tú ikki ert við upp á loysing’, *200%* [CD] (Tórshavn: Tutl, 2001).

⁴⁸⁰ 200, ‘Um 50 ár fer alt hetta her at vera líkamikið’ *200%* [CD] (Tórshavn: Tutl, 2001).

Ja, vi er ikke færinger
Vi er allesammen danskere
Vi kan ikke klare os selv

Yes, we are not Faroese
We are all Danish
We cannot take care of ourselves

By using the Danish language in such an ironic way, 200 managed to play with the language issue that arose in the Faroe Islands in the late 19th century and with the fact that Danish is still a mandatory language for all school pupils to learn.⁴⁸¹ The title of the song refers back to the Faroese ballad tradition (even though the song itself does not). The word *táttur* was explained in chapter 1, saying that it can be used to describe a short text, but it can also be used to describe the short or jocular Faroese ballads that were composed to make fun of or shame the subject of the ballad (usually a person or group).⁴⁸²

By using music, humour and jocular ‘stabs’ at Faroese politics and the political situation in the Faroe Islands at the beginning of the millennium, Faroese identity and the cultural separation from Denmark was made explicit. Thus it is clear that ‘tjóðskaparrørslan’ (the national movement) in the Faroe Islands has in recent decades been promoted through music and performances.⁴⁸³

6.4 Conclusion

This chapter has argued that the significance of the ballads remains visible in the contemporary adaptations of Faroese balladry, as the rootedness of belonging to the Faroe Islands remains central. Philip V. Bohlman argues that national music ‘reflects the image of the nation so that those living in the nation recognise themselves in basic but crucial ways’.⁴⁸⁴ The ballads in their traditional form do indeed represent a distinctive Faroese connection, but different things are happening when this tradition is reimagined and repurposed.

⁴⁸¹ 200, ‘Jóannesar Táttur’, *200%* [CD] (Tórshavn: Tutl, 2001). The title could refer to Faroese politician Jóannes Eidesgaard, who during the late 1990s and early 2000s was a ‘fólkatingslimur’, a Faroese representative in discussions with the Danish government.

⁴⁸² Wylie and Margolin, p. 165, Egholm et al., p. 302.

⁴⁸³ S. Hansen, p. 95.

⁴⁸⁴ Philip V. Bohlman, *Focus: Music. Nationalism and the Making of the New Europe* (London: Routledge, 2011), p. 59.

In the Faroe Islands, the appropriation of ballads in contemporary Faroese music and the merging of Faroese heritage with international influences, have been spearheaded by innovative and idealistic people. Thomas Turino writes in his book *Music as Social Life: The Politics of Participation* that 'coming to know oneself and grappling with personal and social identity are central to activities of life that are especially intense during young adulthood'.⁴⁸⁵ As the culture one is exposed to and raised in is an integral part of the creation of one's identity as a young person, it is significant that this new way of listening to and performing the ballads is perceived most positively by the younger generations. Of course, the people that were young when Harkaliðið came on the Faroese music scene, were not young when the *Free Føroyar*-event took place. But it is important to note that in both these instances, the innovation and thinking in new ways were spearheaded by the youth as a subgroup of the Faroese population.

Musicians, if they want to achieve illustrious fame and fortune, have to adhere to the demands of the global music market. This means that the 'locality' of an artist is largely a fluid definition:

What is produced locally is determined by international market demand. ... [The] local is now equated with the different not by reference to local histories or traditions but in terms of a position in the global market-place. ... [We] no longer live in a world in which the 'local' can stand for community, security and truth. It describes rather the setting for our shared experience of rootlessness and migration, for the constant movement of capital and labour, of signs and sounds.⁴⁸⁶

Since Simon Frith wrote the above, the internet and sharing sites such as YouTube have made the distance between musicians and audiences even smaller, while in turn, the desire for the 'authentic' exoticism has grown, as discussed in the previous chapter about Faroese tourism.

The discourse of identity-building in Faroese music has therefore included grappling with traditional Faroese heritage and activities, as well as negotiating the influences of the Faroese political situation. This has had an impact of Faroese culture, identities and politics. These events have also influenced the

⁴⁸⁵ Turino, p. 94.

⁴⁸⁶ Simon Frith, 'Popular music and the local state', in *Rock and Popular Music – Politics, Policies, Institutions.*, T. Bennett, S. Frith, L. Grossberg, J. Shepherd and G. Turner (eds.) (London: Routledge, 1993), pp. 14-24, p. 23.

representation of Faroese music and identity to the wider world, as well as the Faroe Islands themselves. The incorporation of the ballads, their heritage, performance and narratives into Faroese popular culture shows that ballads are part of a much more complicated, dynamic and communal activity that has had an immense significance for Faroese cultural identity. To classify the different, contemporary interpretations of the ballads as pop- or folk music, which Sólfinn Hansen suggests we do, is too simplistic.⁴⁸⁷ Post-2000, there has been a shift in Faroese music-making, that is influenced by ideas of self-representation, similar to what was discussed in chapter 5. Romanticism and exoticism are prevalent in Faroese popular culture. This will be further explored in the next chapter, where various music genres and artists interpret the ballads in different ways and provide different cultural and musical expressions.

⁴⁸⁷ S. Hansen, p. 78.

7. From Doom, to Folk, to Viking: Exploring Faroese Music and its Relationship to Heritage and Exoticism

The Faroese ballads have long been part of Faroese heritage activities and have inspired music-making in the Faroe Islands. Therefore, it is not surprising that contemporary Faroese musicians have engaged with the ballads and have managed to make them part of the Faroese music scene. There are especially two areas of music in which the ballads have emerged in the Faroe Islands, namely folk music and heavy metal. These areas have to be viewed within their own historical and cultural context, and as generating new cultural texts as well as interpreting the ballads and, to some extent, Faroese folklore and myths.

This chapter discusses several genres within Faroese music which have a long history in defining identities, cultural, national and individual.⁴⁸⁸ The bands and musicians that will be discussed in this chapter are part of different genres. Hamferð and Týr are metal bands, but their sound and style are very different from each other. Hamferð is described as a Doom-metal band and Týr as a Viking metal band. In the same way, Eivør and Valravn are folk/electronic musicians, these also vary greatly in their approach to Faroese ballads, heritage and music-making. The prevalent genres here are metal, punk and folk/electronic music and given that each of these has such a long history and complex discourse which cannot be given due attention in this small space, these genres will be discussed within a Faroese context, focusing on cultural identity, global networks and (self-) representation.⁴⁸⁹

⁴⁸⁸ Christensen, (2019), pp. 118-119.

⁴⁸⁹ For a more detailed exploration of Nordic music and its implications of race and sexuality, see Stan Hawkins, 'Masculinity, race and transculturalism in a Norwegian context', pp. 295-310; Benjamin R. Feitelbaum, 'Rap, Reggae, and white Minoritization', pp. 345-363, both in *The Oxford Handbook of popular music in the Nordic countries*, Fabian Holt and Antti-Ville Kärjä (eds.) (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), Eva Fock, 'With the background in the foreground-Music among young Danes with immigrant backgrounds', in *Young 7.2* (1999), pp. 62-77, and Eva Fock, *Mon farven har en anden lyd?: strejftog i 90'ernes musikliv og ungdomskultur i Danmark*. (Copenhagen: Museum Tusulanum Press, 2000).

7.1 Images of Faroese heritage in Doom Metal: Hamferð

Although both are defined as heavy metal music, Doom- and Viking metal have different characteristics. Doom-metal is a distinctive sub-genre of heavy metal and Green defines it as being 'a sub-genre most easily distinguishable by its relatively slow tempos, which may even dip into dirge-like paces'. The genre is influenced by early Black Sabbath and has a much 'heavier' sound than other metal sub-genres, as it is bass-heavy, has a preference for low pitch, and clean (in cases almost operatic) vocals.⁴⁹⁰ As a subject matter, Jonathan N. Piper mentions it has a 'thematic focus on mortality and weakness'.⁴⁹¹

Hamferð is a Faroese heavy metal band that became known when they won Wacken Metal Battle in 2012. This was the first time a Faroese band had participated in the competition that included forty other countries, including Canada, Mexico, South Africa, Japan and Denmark.⁴⁹² What is significant about *Hamferð*'s participation in the Metal Battle contest, is that they represented the Faroe Islands and not Denmark, which is usually the procedure when it comes to a Faroese act participating in international music competitions.⁴⁹³ In winning the competition, *Hamferð* won a record deal, and although they ended up rejecting it, the notice they received by winning the Battle began their road to being very successful on an international level. According to Egholm et al., *Hamferð* was part of a heavy metal movement that developed on the Faroese music scene in the post-millennial years, spearheaded by bands such as Týr (Folk/Viking metal) and Sic (Thrash metal).⁴⁹⁴

Hamferð began their musical endeavour in 2008 when founder John Egholm (guitar) began creating music with drummer Remi Johannesen. The duo was later joined by Theodor Kapnas (guitar), Ísak Petersen (bass), Jón Aldará (vocals) and

⁴⁹⁰ Green (2013), pp. 167-168. See also Jonathan N. Piper, *Locating experiential richness in doom metal*, PhD Thesis (UC San Diego, 2013), <<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/7bq7387s>> [Accessed January 2020], esp. pp. 33-38, M. Selim Yavuz, Samantha Holland & Karl Spracklen, 'A descent into dark leisure in music', in *Annals of Leisure Research* 21(4), (2018), pp. 391-394, and, M. Selim Yavuz, 'Delightfully depressing": death/doom metal music world and the emotional responses of the fan', in *Metal Music Studies* 3(2), (2017), pp. 201-218.

⁴⁹¹ Piper, p. 1. See also pp. 22-37.

⁴⁹² Egholm et al. (2016), p. 346

⁴⁹³ Faroese musicians have several times participated in e.g. Eurovision, but have always participated as representatives for Denmark.

⁴⁹⁴ Thrash metal is characterised by increased tempo, aggressive performance and has incorporated elements of hardcore punk.

Esmar Joensen (keyboard). The band capitalises on their Faroese heritage as a vehicle for doom-metal imagery as their website says:

Hamferð [Ham:fer]; a Faroese term for the living images of sailors appearing before their loved ones.

Multitudes of hardships, tempestuous weather, often woeful isolation, superstitious influences, being at the mercy of the elements... The historical past of The Faroe Islands is where the unique and daring atmospherics of Hamferð are designed through solitary, poetic native lyricism and forward-thinking doom metal.⁴⁹⁵

From the outset, there is an emphasis on the mythologisation of the Faroe Islands and its history. 'Superstitious influences, being at the mercy of the elements' is set in connection with 'solitary, poetic narrative lyricism'. There is a sense that Hamferð's music is intrinsically linked with the mythological Faroe Islands, and not used as a source of creative, artistic inspiration. For Green, Hamferð 'make a very conscious effort to imbue their music with a sense of Faroese-ness' as they draw inspiration from Faroese history and folklore, and also are 'immediately identifiable as Faroese by virtue of the exclusive use of the Faroese language in compositions and performances'.⁴⁹⁶ In reiterating Roland Barthes concept of mythologies, Hamferð's music is laden with symbolic representations of Faroese-ness and meaning is created within a contextual framework of the native, the superstitions and the harsh landscape of the Faroe Islands.⁴⁹⁷ Hamferð get a lot of their inspiration from experiences with nature, death and the supernatural in a bleak setting where darkness and fog are prominent. One prominent subject is life in the Faroe Islands when travelling the mountains and living off the sea brought harsh conditions.⁴⁹⁸ Hamferð's lyrics and sound are inspired by pre-modern Faroese mythology and landscape. These stories are told through the brutal tunes of Doom metal, juxtaposed with lead singer Jón Aldará strong, clear vocals that easily shift between being almost angelic to a death growl.⁴⁹⁹

⁴⁹⁵ 'Biography' <<http://hamferd.com/bio>> [Accessed September 2018].

⁴⁹⁶ Green (2013), p. 167. Green in interview with lead singer John Áki Egholm.

⁴⁹⁷ Barthes, 'Myth Today', p. 99.

⁴⁹⁸ This is a theme explored by many Faroese authors, for example William Heinesen's novel *Nóatún* (1938).

⁴⁹⁹ A death growl (or simply a growl) is a vocal style (an extended vocal technique) usually employed by death metal singers but also used in other heavy metal styles, such as metalcore. Death growls distort the vocals, making the sound aggressive and emphasises the harshness of the vocals.

Hamferð also adapted the Faroese psalm, *Harra Guð títt dýra navn og æra* to doom metal.⁵⁰⁰ *Harra Guð títt dýra navn og æra* is a Faroese translation of a Norwegian psalm written by theologian and poet Petter Dass (1647-1707).⁵⁰¹ The song is on Hamferð's first album *Vilst er síðsta fet*, which was released in 2010.⁵⁰² The band performed this track in a church in Tórshavn in 2013. Green writes that 'Hamferð is also the Faroes' only doom metal band [...]. A type of metal that was both new to the Faroese scene and strongly inspired by the often oppressive and dreary weather and geography of the islands themselves.'⁵⁰³ Hamferð recorded their music video for the song 'Deyðir Varðar' live during the solar eclipse in the Faroe Islands in March 2015, a rare natural spectacle. With the Atlantic Sea, the tall mountains and the eclipse in the background, Hamferð performs the song as the landscape gets seeped into complete darkness and finish as the sun rears its head again from its cover.⁵⁰⁴

This is illustrated in the band's second album *Evst* (2013), which is compiled of six tracks that together tell the story of a father and a son who venture up to the mountains, to be trapped there by fog. The father falls asleep and when he wakes, his son is gone. In 'Evst', Hamferð illustrates how the fog can cause people to be led astray, as well as cloaking their tracks: 'Køld er henda nýggja náttin [...] einki sæst og/einki merkist/gráa ljósið veitir onga troyst'⁵⁰⁵ (Cold is this new night [...] Nothing to be seen / Nothing to be felt / The grey light provides no comfort'. During his search, the father comes into contact with the mythological creature from Faroese folklore, *huldufólk*, grey elvish people that are believed to be living under large rocks in the outfields in the Faroe Islands. These creatures are also to be found in Icelandic folklore. Huldufólk have a complex relationship to humans, because they are described as heathen in most of the folktales and ballads, and it is this that mainly causes the conflict between them and humans.⁵⁰⁶ The album

⁵⁰⁰ Egholm et al. (2016), p. 348

⁵⁰¹ There is also a Danish translation, which likely is the one that was used in the Faroe Islands before it was translated into Faroese by Jákup Dahl (1878-1944).

⁵⁰² Hamferð, *Vilst er síðsta fet* [CD] (Tórshavn: Tutl, 2010).

⁵⁰³ Green (2013), pp 167-168.

⁵⁰⁴ Hamferð 'Deyðir varðar' at YouTube channel *hamferdofficial*, <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=feR12pQ8dXc>> [Accessed August 2018].

⁵⁰⁵ Hamferð, 'Evst', *Evst* [CD] (Tórshavn: Tutl, 2013).

⁵⁰⁶ V.U. Hammershaimb, 'Huldufólk', in *Færøsk Anthologi Vol. I* (Copenhagen: S. L. Møllers Bogtrykkeri, 1947 [1891]), p. 327.

narrates how unforgiving the mountains can be, as the father finds out from the *huldufólk* that his son has fallen off a cliff and died. The mythological creatures are not seen as evil or the reason for the son's misfortune, as is similar to the folktale narratives: The greatest purveyor of death and misery is the harsh Faroese landscape. The importance given to the cairn ('varði') in Hamferð's song, refers back to a time when roads were sparse in the Faroe Islands and people travelled across the mountains. The cairns were used (and are still used today) to guide people through the mountain landscape, especially in fog, so when the father cannot see any of them he rightfully despairs. This means that he cannot find his way and is lost.

Hamferð are capitalising on a distinctive 'localness' as they solely record and perform in Faroese. They also manage to reimagine Faroese stories and folklore. It is wrong to jump to the conclusion that Hamferð's re-imaginings are a form of fakelore. Instead, it has to be considered as the artist's creative prerogative to draw on and be inspired by stories that then get rewritten and reimagined.⁵⁰⁷ As Guilbault argues, there are underlying issues regarding the formation of local identity within a global musical context, especially in terms of responding to the needs of a global market, and remaining local at the same time.⁵⁰⁸ Therefore these images of Faroe Islands and the use of the Faroese language has ensured that while Hamferð are, 'driving their forms of 'Island Music' far beyond their horizons and onto the world stage' they, musically, also ensure that they keep 'one foot firmly planted on their own soil.'⁵⁰⁹ Hamferð's representation of the Faroe Islands is a constructed version that is based on a primitivistic view of the Faroe Islands, which is mediated through 'forward-thinking doom metal'. Green's argument above also iterates the fact that Faroese musicians can easily adopt or construct an identity imbued with a sense of authenticity and mythologisation using these value-laden concepts of the Faroese landscape, the obscure language and the stories of pain and death.

⁵⁰⁷ Dundes, p.16.

⁵⁰⁸ Guilbault, p. 138.

⁵⁰⁹ Green (2017), p. 126.

7.2 Adapting Faroese ballads to Folktronica: Eivør and Valravv

In 2004, David Smyth, a journalist for the London Evening Standard, made one of the earliest references to folktronica, when he said that this was music ‘that samples snippets of old, acoustic instruments and feeds them through a computer to create instrumental songs that are simultaneously cutting-edge and warm and familiar. It is a human sound made by machines, and while it may not be number one any time soon, its influence is wide-ranging’.⁵¹⁰ The concept of folk music is associated with music that is produced within a community, while at the same time bearing shared characteristics of traditionality. Phillip V. Bohlman writes that the

transmission of folk song from individual to community, from oral to written tradition, unfolded according to the principles of history and history writing. With folk song as a body of fundamental texts it was inevitable that those principles would acquire global significance.⁵¹¹

Based on Johann Gottfried Herder’s term *Volkslied* (folk-song) from the 1770s, the term ‘folk’ in relation to music is based on the discourse developing in the time after the Enlightenment, ‘which increasingly situated music, history, and politics within the borders of nations spreading across the world.’⁵¹² Timothy J. Cooley writes that ‘the concept of folk music is a European invention’ and argues further that ‘the concept of folk music reflects ways of organizing thought about European cultural practices primarily by Europeans themselves’.⁵¹³ Considering Cook’s arguments, it is therefore impossible to say that ‘Folk’ as understood by many today is simply music emerging from the local community: It has emerged within a specific context and specific historical and cultural discourse.⁵¹⁴ Ivana Medić argues that folktronica as a genre, emerged out of this discourse, especially when adjusting

⁵¹⁰ David Smyth, ‘In Electrifying Folk; Folktronica, New Folk, Fuzzy Folk - Call It What You Will. Laptops Are Replacing Lutes to Create a Whole New Sound’, in *London Evening Standard*, (London, April 2004). <<https://www.questia.com/newspaper/1G1-115890322/electrifying-folk-folktronica-new-folk-fuzzy-folk>> [Accessed January 2020]

⁵¹¹ Phillip V. Bohlman, ‘Johann Gottfried Herder and the global moment of world-music history’. In P. Bohlman (Ed.), *The Cambridge History of World Music* (Cambridge University Press, 2013), pp. 255-276, p. 255.

⁵¹² Bohlman (2013), p. 255.

⁵¹³ Timothy J. Cooley, ‘Folk music in Eastern Europe’, in Phillip V. Bohlman (Ed.), *The Cambridge History of World Music* (Cambridge University Press, 2013), pp. 352-370, p. 352 and 353.

⁵¹⁴ It is also worth mentioning that this is the concept of folk music developed out of the Herderian tradition. There are non-European traditions of local music from several communities. For more on this see the other chapters from Phillip V. Bohlman (Ed.), *The Cambridge History of World Music* (Cambridge University Press, 2013) for writings on Korean, Argentinian and Indian music traditions, as well as the chapter on a much wider geographical area of South Asia. See also M. Stokes, ‘Globalisation and the Politics of World Music’, In M. Clayton, T. Herbert and R. Middleton (eds.) *The Cultural Study of Music: A Critical Introduction* (London: Routledge, 2003), pp. 297–308.

the perhaps dated ‘folk music’ for a younger audience.⁵¹⁵ Valravn and Eivør both have adapted Faroese ballads and folklore to folktronica, albeit these musicians have presented themselves and their music in different ways. There is an emphasis on an exoticness that draws on the Faroe Islands as a treasure trove of ancient lore and wisdom for Valravn, and as a primitive land ruled by nature, as in the case for Eivør. Exoticism in music and music-related regalia (CD cover-art, music videos, etc.) is by no means a new thing. In 1917, the term ‘exotic’ was defined by amateur musician and professional music critic Douglas Charles Parker as something which ‘signifies something foreign and that it is the opposite of indigenous.’⁵¹⁶ The Faroese landscape and language as it is presented through Faroese productions (music, film, theatre production, art, etc.) are mediated as being embedded within the artistic output from the Faroe Islands. Faroese heritage and history are therefore perceived as being physically inscribed upon the landscape, intertwined with the spoken and written Faroese word. Terms like ‘Nordicness’ and ‘Borealism’ have in recent years been associated with the music and artistic productions from the North Atlantic and Scandinavian region. ‘Borealism’ in this case refers to the exoticisation of the North, which includes Scandinavia and the North Atlantic countries (the Faroe Islands, Iceland, Greenland, and also Finland). ‘Nordicness’, Micheal Fjellsøe and Sanne Krogh Groth argue:

To a large extent, it is an open signifier, as concepts of Nordicness can be associated with either something dark, cold and obscure or something related to light, brightness and the aurora borealis. [...] It was disseminated through society by means of printed and later mass media and subsequently defined through acts of passive or active identification: through discourse, private and public activities and, at times, large, highly publicised and symbolic events.⁵¹⁷

As discussed in chapter 1, the concept of *Nordicness* is closely related to Kristinn Schram’s discussion of Borealism, which in her words is ‘the signification, practice and performance of the ontological and epistemological distinction in power

⁵¹⁵ Ivana Medić, ‘Arhai’s Balkan Folktronica: Serbian Ethno Music Reimagined for British Market’, in *Serbian Musical Identities within Local and Global Frameworks: Traditions, Changes, Challenges* (no. 177004 /2011– 2014/) pp. 105-127, <http://dais.sanu.ac.rs/bitstream/handle/123456789/3611/Ivana_Medic_-_Arhai_s_Balkan_Folktronica_Serbian_Ethno.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y> [Accessed February 2020].

⁵¹⁶ Douglas Charles Parker, ‘Exoticism in Music in Retrospect’, in *The Musical Quarterly* Vol. 3, No. 1 (Jan., 1917), pp. 134-161, p. 134.

⁵¹⁷ Micheal Fjellsøe and Sanne Krogh Groth, ‘Nordicness’, in *Scandinavian Music: A complex question*, in *The Nature of Nordic Music*, Tim Howell, (ed.), (London: Routledge, 2020).

between the North and the South'.⁵¹⁸ Drawing on Schram's concept of *Borealism*, Green argues that 'musicians are often actively involved ... in the co-construction of the exotic ideas about how their music will be received internationally.'⁵¹⁹

There is also a combination of the primitive and the modern, which will be explained further using examples from both Valravn and Eivør. Their music makes use of re-traditionalisation of Faroese folklore and ballads, but represent it through electronic music. The way that Valravn and Eivør reimagine Faroese traditions and folklore will be explained in more detail in the next sections.

7.2.1 Valravn: Faroese musical identity developed in Denmark

Valravn was a Danish/Faroese band that was comprised of five members: Anna Katrin Egilstrøð, Juan Pino, Christopher Juul, Søren Hammerlund and Martin Seeberg.⁵²⁰ Valravn based their music on older musical traditions from the 'Nordic area', including Scandinavia, Iceland and the Faroe Islands. The band presented their style as *folktronica*, a sub-genre of electronic music that juxtaposes folk music with electronica, a popular style of music deriving from techno and rave, but has a more ambient, esoteric, or cerebral quality.⁵²¹ Valravn were known for their combination of this electronic sound with the use of medieval-style instruments, 18th-century folk songs and ballads. The name of the band is taken from Danish folklore where the 'Valravn' is a raven that appears in several folk-ballads (*folkeviser*).⁵²² The band were active from 2005 to 2013, so they came on the scene in the midst on the era in which Faroese ballads and heritage began featuring prominently on the Faroese music scene. Valravn adapted ballads to their musical repertoire, including *Ólavur Riddararós* and *Harra Pætur og Elinborg*.⁵²³

These reinterpreted ballads alongside Valravn's sound are very different from the ballads as they are performed during the ring-dance, especially with the

⁵¹⁸ Schram (2011), p. 99.

⁵¹⁹ Green (2017), p.113.

⁵²⁰ Hammerlund, Seeberg, Pino and Egilstrøð formed a band named Virelai after the end of Valravn. Virelai focuses on Danish music inspired by the medieval period, including using instruments from the period.

⁵²¹ Tony Verderosa, *The Techno Primer: The Essential Reference for Loop-Based Music Styles* (Milwaukee, WI: Hal Leonard, 2002), p. 28.

⁵²² See for example 'Valravnen', in *Danmarks Folkeviser i Udvalg*, Svend Grundtvig (ed.), (Copenhagen: P. G. Philipsens Forlag, 1882), pp. 247–252 and Evald Tang Kristensen, *Danske Sagn: Som De Har Lyd I Folkemunde* (Copenhagen: Nyt Nordisk Forlag Arnold Busck, 1980), p. 132.

⁵²³ Valravn, *Valravn* [CD] (Christopher Juul, 2007).

addition of electronic music that underpins these performances. There is a fragment of the ballad tradition as it is represented in the lyrics, but the reinterpretation of the ballad through this type of music allows for an additional engagement. Lead singer of Valravn, Anna Katrin Egilstrøð said in an interview:

Orsøkin til at vit halda tað vera spennandi at fáast við elligamla norðurlenska tónleikin, er, at søgurnar snúgva seg um frumformar og kenslur, ið eru tær somu í dag sum fyrri 500 árum síðani. Tað er eisini so ómetaliga nógv kraft í gamla tónamálinum og tískil er tað bara ein spurningur um, hvussu tað kann gerast tónlistarliga viðkomandi fyri folk í dag.⁵²⁴

The reason we think it is exciting to engage with the old northern music is that the stories are about primal needs and emotions that are the same today as they were 500 years ago. There is also such extreme power in the old sound and therefore the only question remains is how we can make it musically relevant for people today.

Egilstrøð is here echoing the purpose of retelling this part of heritage; that to have it as part of an every-day, living culture it has to be adapted to current situations, experiences and life. This quote also suggests that there is something timeless and almost ethereal at play, a form of essence that binds the contemporary to the past. There is again the idea of the primitive and simplistic, where there is an uncritical consumption of an idealised past. But there is also a sense of Chesnutt's 'refolklorization' discussed in chapter 1, where there is a nostalgic desire for the romanticised ideals of the past, expressed in 19th-century folklore collections.⁵²⁵ The ballads are here used as a way to create the narratives of 'primal needs and emotions' through the stories. Even though it is highly unlikely that a Faroese person today would have any of the challenges and issues a person from the 16th-century Faroe Islands, it is described as an unproblematic parallel.

Egilstrøð's voice has been compared to that of Icelandic singer Björk, where the tones of the singing are equally important to the musical composition to the instruments. Nicola Dibben writes of Björk's voice that 'her wide range of timbres includes a breathy singing voice...shouting, whispering, and a sound between singing and speaking' and that Björk's Icelandic heritage is characterised by the 'rolled "r"s' when she performs in English.⁵²⁶ Egilstrøð's voice bears a lot of

⁵²⁴ From an interview with Anna Katrin Egilstrøð in an article in *Dimmalætting* 6th March 2008, cited in Egholm et al. (2016), p. 344.

⁵²⁵ Chesnutt (1992), p. 258.

⁵²⁶ Dibben, (2013), p. 102.

similarities and in the same way, enhances her Faroese accent when performing in Danish. As discussed in the section of Hamferð, using a language that is obscure but bears similarities to the more well-known Nordic languages such as Icelandic, Norwegian and Danish, appeals to audiences that enjoy the consumption of these pan-Nordic narratives, however stylised they might be.

Valravn have also used Danish *folkeviser* (folk ballads) in their music, for example ‘Jeg drømte mig en drøm I nat’ (I dreamt a dream last night), from the album *Valran*, which is considered the oldest Nordic folk ballad with written musical notations.⁵²⁷

Drømte mig en drøm i nat
om silke og ærlig pæl
bar en dragt så let og glat
i solfaldets strålevæld
nu vågner den klare morgen

I dreamt a dream last night
Of silk and fine fur
Donned a dress so light and smooth
In the glory of the sun
Now awakens the bright morning

Using what the members of Valravn have referred to as the ‘traditional’ music associated with Scandinavian, Faroese and Icelandic heritage, was a conscious choice, fuelled by a desire (or need) to keep in touch with one’s roots in a world that has become a place of angst and rootlessness, as Egholm et al. write:

Limirnir í bólkinum vóru sannførdir um, at lykilin fyri at kunna finna seg til rættis í einum alsamt meira fjølmentarligum heimi finst í okkara upphavi. Tað var snøgt sagt neyðugt at kenna seg sjálvan og sínar røtur, fyri at kunna rúma og sleppa undan óttanum fyri øllum, ið var fyri framman.⁵²⁸

The members of the band were convinced that the key to finding one’s place in an increasingly multi-cultural world was to be found in our origins. Simply put, it was necessary to know oneself and one’s roots in order to comprehend, and avoid the anxiety about everything that lies ahead. This was a band of young people that were convinced that the process of ‘getting to know oneself’ lies within the engagement of heritage, while at the same time they were taking that heritage and bringing it into their own contemporary experience.

⁵²⁷ See Svend Nielsen, *Dansk Folkemusik: en indføring i den traditionelle musik i Danmark* (Copenhagen: Dansk Folkemindesamling, 1991).

⁵²⁸ Egholm et al. (2016), p. 343.

There is a fusion between the past and the present taking place in this music, as well as bringing what is considered to be 'traditional' forward in a new guise, and it is within this sphere that they establish both a cultural and musical identity through the use of the term 'origins'. Whether it is a claim for authenticity or a genuine belief in the romantic ideals of primitivism and re-folklorisation, Valravn were consistent in their use of traditional music, although this was more constructed as a hot-pot of Nordic musical traditions.

A ballad that is included on Valravn's album *Valravn* is 'Ólavur Riddararós', which has also been adapted to heavy metal music by the Faroese band Týr.⁵²⁹ Týr's music is based on heavy metal and their interpretation of 'Ólavur Riddararós' adheres to the heavy drums and guitar riffs that characterises the genre, whilst Valravn's approach is based on electronic sampling while maintaining the clear vocals of the original ballad.

'Ólavur Riddararós' tells the story of a young knight, Ólavur, who the day before his wedding wants to go for a ride in the mountains. His mother proclaims that if he does not stay at home, he will die a gruesome death. Ólavur, not believing his mother's superstitions, rides out and meet a beautiful elven maiden. When Ólavur tries to go back home in time for his wedding, the elven maiden poisons him and he dies. Even though Valravn and Týr have a different musical approach to the ballad, they have both chosen similar parts of the original ballad that comprises of 39 stanzas.

Valravn's song begins with a 15-second instrumental introduction, with guitar and a heavy, fast tempo.⁵³⁰ From the ballad, Valravn have chosen selected stanzas that narrate Ólavur's encounter with the Elf maiden. While Týr's version includes the prophecy by Ólavur's mother⁵³¹, Valravn's narrative is shorter and the song ends when the elf maiden gives Ólavur the poison:

Hon skonkti honum í drykkjuhorn
kol og smiður við
har fór í tað eitukorn

⁵²⁹ Týr, 'Ólavur Riddararós' on *Eric the Red* [CD] (Tutl, 2003). The ballad is registered as CCF 154 A in *Corpus Carminum Færoensium* and TSB A 63 in *Types of the Scandinavian Ballads*.

⁵³⁰ The song is available on YouTube: Valravn, 'Ólavur Riddararós', < <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iEqYOKdJWOE> > [Accessed April 2020].

⁵³¹ Stanzas 1,3,4 and 6.

Ungi kallar, kátir kallar, gangi upp á gólv
Dansí lystilig.⁵³²
She filled him a drinking horn
with coal and smith
in it went a grain of poison
Young lads, happy lads, step up on the floor
dance merrily

Valravn have here focused on the encounter with *huldufólk*, and the point in the ballad where Ólavur Riddararós meets his demise.⁵³³ As mentioned earlier, *huldufólk* are an important part of Faroese folklore, as they symbolise the (often supernatural) connection with nature and the tension between Christian and non-Christian societies. As I have argued elsewhere, being able to seamlessly change between human and non-human forms, *huldufólk* are often described as alluring and beautiful but are, at the same time, also cunning, very strong and versed in the arts of magic. Once they transform into anything else than beautiful women they become the intended antagonists of the stories, and the *huldukona* very rarely, if ever, gets a happy ending.⁵³⁴ The elven maiden in 'Ólavur Riddararós' is, therefore, both supernatural and the undoing of Ólavur, as he drinks her poison and dies.

Much of Valravn's music focuses on the supernatural and has its basis in Faroese and wider Scandinavian folklore about magic and supernatural creatures.⁵³⁵ Valravn interpret the text of 'Ólavur Riddararós', whilst also sampling the rhythm and harmony of the ballad with the use of musical accompaniment.⁵³⁶ About music, Beard and Gloag write that 'the act of reading, or, in the context of music, listening – involves tracing echoes and reflections of other texts. [...] and contributes to the understanding of the fluidity of the musical work'.⁵³⁷ Here it becomes about the relationship between the different forms of musical influences (ballads and contemporary, electronic and/or heavy metal music) that evolve through the different interpretations of 'Ólavur Riddararós'.

⁵³² Stanza 25.

⁵³³ See Christensen (2017), p. 79-81.

⁵³⁴ Christensen (2017), p. 79.

⁵³⁵ See for example 'Kom alle væsener' from the album *Valravn* (2007), 'Kelling' and 'Seersken' from the album *Koder på Snor* (2009).

⁵³⁶ For more on the early theoretical work on 'intertextuality', see Julia Kristeva, 'Word, Dialogue and Novel', in *The Kristeva Reader*, T. Moi (ed.) (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986), pp. 34-61, and Roland Barthes, 'The Death of the Author', in *Image Music Text* (London: Fontana Press, 1977), pp. 142-148.

⁵³⁷ Beard and Gloag, pp. 141-142.

The Faroese newspaper *Dimmalætting* wrote in 2008 about one of Valrav'n's performances that 'all of a sudden Tróndur í Gøtu and the American musician Moby did not seem that far apart' (bráðliga tóktist hvørki Tróndur í Gøtu ella amerikanski tónlistasnillingurin Moby serliga langt burturi).⁵³⁸ This connection the journalist makes between what is deemed 'traditional' Faroese music and international, contemporary music is what informs Valrav'n's music: Drawing together ballads, Faroese history, and the international music scene is clearly showing that these contemporary engagements with Faroese heritage are fused with more globalised and international popular music. It is here possible to again draw on Dorson and Dundes' arguments on fakelore, for as mentioned in chapter 1, the ballads are not necessarily authentic remnants of medieval Faroese traditions. But as Dundes also argues, 'if fakelore sells better than folklore, then it is fakelore which will be mass-produced for tourists and the export market.'⁵³⁹

Valrav'n's music was described by Egholm et al. as if 'fortíð, nútíð og framtíð hittust til tónlistarligt ting' (the past, present and future had a musical gathering).⁵⁴⁰ There is a recognition of the different mechanisms in play in Valrav'n's music, but instead of taking the discussion further on this, Egholm et al. accept the unproblematic presented her, instead of asking: Whose past is it?

The members of Valrav'n were (and still are) talented musicians, and they were also very conscious of their ability to draw on folklore and the 'authentic medievalism' of their sound as a selling point. Valrav'n's music is international, but it draws on an idealised Faroese cultural narrative that is stylised and where all the problematic issues of re-traditionalisation and folklorisation are buried under phrases such as 'knowing one's roots'. Valrav'n is, therefore, an example of how the use of ballads and other traditional music, can for musicians be an attractive selling point, as well as a pool of inspiration to draw from. Their music and self-representation in the media also illustrate how Faroese (hi)stories can be presented as something that is both exotic and authentic.

⁵³⁸ Egholm et al. (2016), p. 344.

⁵³⁹ Dundes, p. 15.

⁵⁴⁰ Egholm et al. (2016), p. 343.

7.2.2 Eivør: 'Internationally indigenous' Faroese music

Eivør is a Faroese singer and one of the most prominent musical exports in the Faroe Islands. She refers to her music as folktronica, same as Valrav. By combining acoustic instruments and folk singing with the sound of electronica, it creates a modern sound, but at the same time deeply rooted in the tradition of folk music.

Even though *Eivør* has travelled widely in musical sounds, there has always been a sense of the local in her works, either through videos recorded in Faroese nature settings, the topic of her lyrics or the cover of her albums. On her first album, *Eivør Pállsdóttir* (2000) the cover was a picture of *Eivør* in Faroese national costume.⁵⁴¹ *Eivør* has been known to experiment and try different sounds, but always with a reference to Faroese/Nordic imagery and heritage, either in sound or visual performances. *Eivør* is white, has long blond hair (often braided) and draws on the elvish imagery in her flowing dresses and bare feet, creating associations with the goddesses in Norse mythology and how they are portrayed in contemporary popular culture.⁵⁴²

Eivør's music is accompanied by performances that accentuate her image. One example is the concert *At the Heart of the Selkie*, performed at the Nordic House in Tórshavn in January 2016.⁵⁴³ As well as being inspired by the Faroese ballads, folklore and oral traditions from the Faroe Islands, the project also included singing traditions derived from Denmark.⁵⁴⁴ The project was spearheaded by Faroese singer/songwriter *Eivør*, along with writer Marjun Syderbø Kjælnes, composer/arranger Peter Jensen, the Danish National Vocal Ensemble and the

⁵⁴¹ *Eivør*, *Eivør Pállsdóttir* [CD] (Tórshavn: Tutl, 2000).

⁵⁴² The illustrations of Norse goddesses in popular culture varies greatly from how they were portrayed in medieval texts. An example is the goddess Frigg. In *Pórr's Throne Room* by Olaus Magnus (1490-1557), Frigg is portrayed as a warrior with bow and sword <<https://myndir.uvic.ca/doc.htm?id=OlaMag-HisDeGentSept-1555-151&find=&kwld=FrGg01>> [Accessed August 2020]. In the 2019 video game 'God of War', Frigg/Freya is portrayed as a beautiful witch, living in a secluded garden where she heals the wounded. <<https://godofwar.fandom.com/wiki/Freya>> [Accessed August 2020].

⁵⁴³ Peter Jensen, *Eivør Pállsdóttir*, DR Big Band, The Danish National Vocal Ensemble, *At the Heart of the Selkie* [CD] (Tórshavn, Tutl, 2016).

⁵⁴⁴ 'At the Heart of the Selkie', <<http://attheheartofaselkie.com/#about>> [Accessed December 2017]. This included the use of the Kingo-psalms. These psalms were written by Thomas Kingo (1634-1703) and arrived in the Faroe Islands in the 17th century. Although they are in Danish, the Kingo psalms are a significant part of Faroese musical heritage as they have long been part of church-life which constituted another area that has influenced musical culture in the Faroe Islands. 'The unique Kingo-song' it says on the website, 'is part of the soundscape that takes us back to an island community of the past'. For more on Thomas Kingo and his influence on psalms and singing in Denmark and the Faroe Islands, see Erik A. Nielsen, *Thomas Kingo: Barok, enevælde, kristendom* (Copenhagen: Gyldendal, 2010) and Erik Norman Svendsen, *Thomas Kingo: Salmer og samtid* (Copenhagen: Lindhardt og Ringhof, 2019).

Danish Radio Big Band. The music has since been released as a compilation by Faroese record label Tutl.⁵⁴⁵

Dánjal av Rani wrote about the concert that the audiences heard 'ótamda gangin av havinum við grýtutu norðurlensku strendurnar' (the untamed noise of the ocean around the stony beaches of the north) and that Eivør 'júst var risin upp úr havinum eins og Kópakonan' (rose out of the ocean just like the seal woman).⁵⁴⁶ As with Hamferð and Valravn's music, there is an uncritical acceptance that the effort of the musicians, is something that is connected to them being Faroese. There is a level of self-mystification and self-exoticisation that takes place here. Dibben notes something similar in her study of Björk, namely that 19th-century Romanticism and the idea of the creative genius 'springing forth from nature, unsullied by artifice or by commerce'.⁵⁴⁷ There are also additional parallels to be drawn here with Faroese music-making and Dibben's analysis of Björk:

Björk's artistic output articulates ideas of nature marked by the specific socio-historical circumstances of their production in late 20th-century Iceland. [...] The idea of nature articulated in Björk's output is shaped by contemporary tensions between nationalist imaginings of Iceland, and its industrial, capitalist modernity.⁵⁴⁸

Dibben also argues that the relevance of these nationalistic tropes (musical talent as inspired by and expressive of nature) for Björk's music is 'unsurprising, given her exposure to nationalist literature and art in Iceland'.⁵⁴⁹ It is here it is possible to draw very similar parallels between Björk and Eivør. Eivør has throughout her career expressed her deep appreciation of the Faroese oral tradition and the influence of both the ballads and folktales are very present in her work. In an interview with *Kulturmagasinet Fine Spind*, Eivør talks about how much the ballads and traditional Faroese music impacted her music, influenced by her father and great grandfather who would *kvøða* ballads for and with Eivør since her adolescence. This fuelled an interest that went beyond just performing ballads, as she would seek out people to perform ballads, psalms and songs for her and that she then recorded. Eivør reiterates this activity in the interview:

⁵⁴⁵ Eivør, Various Artists, *At the Heart of the Selkie* [CD] (Tórshavn: Tutl, 2016).

⁵⁴⁶ Dánjal av Rana, 'Eivør er Kópakonán', article on IN.fo, 14th October 2016, <<http://www.in.fo/news-detail/eivoer-er-kopakonan/>> [Accessed January 2018].

⁵⁴⁷ Dibben, p. 55.

⁵⁴⁸ Dibben, p. 55.

⁵⁴⁹ Dibben, p. 55.

Jeg havde en lille optager med og optog dem mens de sang salmer, kvad of viserfor mig. Det som fangede min nysgerrighed var egentlig ikke selve sangene, men måden de sang dem på. De sang helt frit og improviseret. Ingen sang den same vise på same made. De sang deres egen version, og på den made blev sangen deres sang. Det er noget jeg har taget med mig på min vej og den tone og sang er dybt rodfæstet I mig er på den made et slags indgangspunkt.⁵⁵⁰

I had a small tape-recorder with me and recorded them while they sang psalms, ballads and short ballads for me. It was not, in particular, the songs themselves that captured my interest, but the way they sang them. They sang completely free and improvised. No one sang the same ballad in the same way. They sang their own version and this way the song became completely their own. That is something I have brought with me on my journey and this kind of sound and song that is rooted deeply within me is a form of starting point.

Similarly to Björk, Eivør paints a picture of artistic essentialism that is presented as a natural part of her growing up in the Faroe Islands. There are these idealised imaginings of a past, where everyone sat around improvising ballads. Similarly to Hamferð and Valravn, the Faroese heritage is constructed as something that naturally influences and shapes the music of these contemporary artists. The music produced by Eivør, along with her image as a performer, is based on her engagement with this interest in Faroese culture and the ballads. In 2004, Eivør won an award for 'putting the Faroe Islands on the map in a positive way with her songs'.⁵⁵¹ So not only is Eivør a celebrated artist in her own right, but she is also considered a positive representation and marketing tool for the Faroe Islands. Although her music and visual aesthetic are heavily rooted in her *Faroese identity*, Eivør also utilises an unspecified *Nordicness* as an international artist. As Kimberley Cannady argues, the exoticisation and the marketing of the Nordic is prevalent in Eivør's music.⁵⁵² Here the term 'Borealism' becomes relevant as Schram argues that it is a specific form of exoticising the North through art, music, food, etc., as

⁵⁵⁰ Marie Nyeng, 'Stemmen fra nord', in *Kultur Magasinet Fine Spind*, 31st January 2017, <<https://finespind.dk/index.php/artikler-og-billedserier/328-portraet-af-eivor-sangerinde-fra-faeroerne-aarhus-2017>> [Accessed February 2018].

⁵⁵¹ A brief description of Eivør and her music is in Tony Mitchell, 'New Zealand Glimpsed through Iceland: Music, Place and Psychogeography', in *Musicology Australia*, 35:1 (2013), pp. 41-66, p.54. <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/08145857.2013.761099?casa_token=LovHk8G_fW8AAAAA%3ACj6RxzZlbfIAV_Nyh4U-GxQpD_9cZgTDoLC-3eKzDsh4XHwRRhtkYTU7tMO7qhoGFHIM4ROrakA> [Accessed February 2020].

⁵⁵² Kimberly Cannady, 'Echoes of the colonial past in discourse on North Atlantic popular music', in *The Oxford Handbook of Popular Music in the Nordic Countries*, F. Holt, and A. V. Kärjä (eds.) (2017), pp. 203-218.

discussed earlier in chapter 6.⁵⁵³ But there is also a form of interlocking of national identities at play, because Eivør also, through her music and style, emphasises being both Faroese and situating herself in relation to other National-Romantic identities.⁵⁵⁴ For Eivør, this combination has been part of her sound and image, as Egholm et al. write in *Føroyska Rokksøgan*:

Eivør kann og vil ikki setast í nakran tónleikabás. Hon hevur ferðast kring allan sjónarringin tónleikaliga. Frá rokki til fólkatónleik, frá jazz til klassiskan tónleik. Sum ein kameleón hevur hon skift ham og lit eftir umhvørvið og hugalagi. Hon letur til at grynna í øllum hesum. Hon ferðast lætt og heimligt ímillum allar hesar tónleikasjangrur. Seinnu árin tykist hon tó í størri mun at hava funnið sína tónleikagrein.⁵⁵⁵

Eivør cannot and will not be restricted into a musical box. Musically, she has travelled all over the world. From rock to folk, from jazz to classical. Like a chameleon, she has changed her appearance and colour according to her environment and mood. She seems to be in shallow waters no matter what. She easily traverses through all these different music genres and seems at home in all. She has in later years, however, seemed to mostly have found her musical shelf.

Although Egholm et al. remain uncritical of Eivør's ability to 'change her appearance and colour', this quote illustrates how seamless this transition can seem and how it helps construct a narrative of Eivør as an artist. Eivør uses this fusion of Irish, Canadian and Faroese influences to create an image that is deeply rooted in traditional and the indigenous, and most importantly, an image that can be recognised around the world both as exotic and 'indigenous' at the same time. It is a form of cherry-picking identity, but one that is influenced by what Dibben refers to 'authentic author image' – that is, the artist as an authentic, natural creative genius – and how this author image functions within the contemporary music industry.⁵⁵⁶ There are similarities here with the way Týr appropriate popular culture, pan-Nordic Viking identity in their performances. There is a multitude of identities and nationalisms at play, but are somehow centred on the narrative of Faroese heritage.

Eivør also performs a lot in English as well as other Nordic languages, Icelandic, Danish and Norwegian. Her music is readily available to a large audience.

⁵⁵³ Schram (2011), p. 310.

⁵⁵⁴ Burke (2011).

⁵⁵⁵ Egholm et al. (2016), p 362.

⁵⁵⁶ Dibben, p. 55.

She has released two albums in Faroese that also have an English counterpart: *Mannabarn / Human Child* (2007) and *Slør* (2015) / (2017). These illustrate that although Eivør's connection with the Faroe Islands remains central for her image as an international musician, she can seemingly apply this 'rootedness' to whichever language she chooses to perform in. The *Mannabarn / Human Child* release from 2007 is described in the discography as being 'Eivør's venture into Celtic folk and pop influences'.⁵⁵⁷

Her album *Slør (English version)* (2017) is described as an 'English-translated re-imagining of her Faroese-sung 2015 album release of the same title'.⁵⁵⁸ These two albums contain very ordinary and common Faroese experiences. The songs describe rain and fog, whilst drawing on folklore and the magical. Portraying the banal as something mystical and otherworldly, while at the same time an everyday experience. Marie Nyeng from *Kulturmagasinet Fine Spind* writes that

For Eivør er sproget i lige så høj grad et instrument som hendes stemme og hendes tromme [...]. Eivør er vokset op på Færøerne, hvor folkemusikken ligger allerhøjeste grad stadig i live, og hvor man altid er tæt på nature og havets rasen.⁵⁵⁹

For Eivør the language is just as much an instrument as her voice and her drum [...]. Eivør grew up in the Faroe Islands where folk-music is still very much alive and where one is always close to nature and the rumble of the ocean.

Nyeng argues that Eivør's use of language becomes a method to convey her lyrics and permeates her performance. At the same time, Nyeng also mentions the Faroese nature, often characterised by extreme weather and rocky landscape, and alludes to there being a connection between this and the Faroese musical scene, as well as Eivør's music. This is again a reiteration of the arguments above, that this 'natural genius' that comes from being Faroese is something that is inherent in the artist. With the *Slør* albums, Eivør intentionally sought to emphasise her experience from being born and growing up in the Faroe Islands, as she expressed in an interview:

Slør is very much about my roots - I just really wanted to go home, be back in the old environment. There was something exhilarating about being back at

⁵⁵⁷ Eivør, 'Mannabarn', <<http://www.eivor.com/album/mannabarn/>> [Accessed February 2018].

⁵⁵⁸ Eivør, *Slør* [CD] (Tórshavn: Tutl, 2015).

⁵⁵⁹ Nyeng.

the heart of where I came from as a person and an artist, all the while realising how many things inside me had changed.

There are similarities between how Eivør chooses to represent herself in this interview, with the interviews given by Valravn: There is an emphasis on the constructed and reimagined origin of being Faroese. This connection can also be seen in comparing Eivør and Hamferð, especially in relation to the romanticisation and mystification of the Faroese landscape and environment. Eivør's lyrics draw on similar subjects to those by Hamferð: the fog, the harsh weather and the imagery of Faroese nature and the people living in it. There might not be anything more closely associated with the Faroe Islands than mist and fog, as it is a usual occurrence that roads, towns and mountains are partially hidden in a grey shroud.

On her *Slør* album, Eivør has a song called 'Mjørkaflókar', in English 'fog banks'. Although it is not a literal translation, 'fog banks' includes the same description of how the fog comes in over Faroese villages and how it turns all the different colours into a spectrum of greyness.⁵⁶⁰

The fog becomes an example of the mystification of the Faroese landscape and environment. In Hamferð's song 'Evst', this is expressed by the fog separating people from each other:

gráa ljósið veitir onga troyst
brátt sá eg teg ei
The grey light provides no comfort
Suddenly I could not see you

Another example is Eivør's song 'Gangi í Tokuni' ('Into the Mist') illustrates the eerie feeling of wandering in a place thick with mist, where shapes are blurry, shadows surround you and the mist can conceal dangers.⁵⁶¹ Although their musical style is different, Hamferð and Eivør are utilising images and narratives that are fostering a mythological and almost supernatural image of the Faroe Islands.

Like Valravn and Hamferð, Eivør achieves this image of being both mysterious and rooted in Faroese culture by being explicit in the way she connects

⁵⁶⁰ Eivør, 'Mjørkaflókar', *Slør* [CD] (Tórshavn: Tutl, 2015).

⁵⁶¹ This song was used for a psychological experiment where the verdict was: "Into the Mist" was not experienced as having any strong emotional quality at all, even though it featured very rough synthesiser sounds. Instead, it achieved its highest rating on the emotion *fear*. The study is detailed here: Hauke Egerman, 'Compose yourself: The Emotional Influence of Music', *York Music Psychology Group*, <<https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/dfff/714dcdb387d576cc6004329e7ec9a0c1b531.pdf>> [Accessed February 2020].

herself to her Faroese roots. Like Hamferð, the Faroese language is an integral part of Eivør's image, with her often being compared to the Icelandic singer Björk, who is an important part of discussions of Icelandic music.⁵⁶² She also draws on multiple influences, with her Irish Sean-Nós singing style, mixed with Canadian Inuit throat singing and beating on her shamanic frame-drum while being barefoot. An artist who is easily identified as an influence on Eivør's sound is Tanya Tagaq, an artist which practises 'katajjaq', a Canadian Inuit throat singing style.⁵⁶³ One thing to note here is that Eivør has never explicitly said her influences come from these areas, but it is evident from her music and her appropriation of style that there has been some cherry-picking of musical traditions that are associated with other, marginalised, othered or peripheral communities where these musical traditions have remained part of the local heritage.⁵⁶⁴ Atli Kárason Petersen writes about Eivør that

[people] from outside the Faroes may, because of their lack of knowledge, fail to connect Eivør with the Faroese musical tradition, but they may yet sense her musical expression as something else, something that creates an association of ethnicity, something old and ancient.⁵⁶⁵

However, as the Faroese language has become such an integral part of Eivør's performance, it affects how she is received abroad when performing in English.⁵⁶⁶ Eivør has been successful in creating an image and sound that is both local and internationally recognisable, and as much as she is complicit in portraying this image of herself, she also gives the media what is expected of her: a glimpse into the mystery that is Faroese culture.⁵⁶⁷ This form of self-exoticism and promotion of

⁵⁶² The comparison between Eivør and Björk even led to Tony Mitchell saying that just 'as Björk has become the face of Iceland, Eivør has become the face of the Faroe Islands', whilst at the same time calling the Faroe Islands 'a remote Icelandic outpost'. See Tony Mitchell, p. 52.

⁵⁶³ For more on the artist, see Tanya Tagaq's website <<http://tanyatagaq.com/about/>> [Accessed September 2018].

⁵⁶⁴ See for example Sophie Stévançe, 'From Throat Singing to Transcultural Expression: Tanya Tagaq's Katajjaq musical signature', in *The Routledge research companion to popular music and gender* (London: Routledge, 2017), pp. 48-62, Helen Kelly-Holmes and Sari Pietikäinen, 'Commodifying Sámi culture in an indigenous tourism site', in *Journal of Sociolinguistics* 18/4 (2014).

<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/josl.12092?casa_token=Oti1NETYXlkAAAAA%3AGKA7BS8phMOW9CpM5MYXCnWMc-z1ycZIL78NzxFkxb7MR4qa2NOE-MxPPiaDg88VjNzDDcC_Zc> [Accessed February 2020].

⁵⁶⁵ Atli Kárason Petersen, *Traces of Musical Heritage in Faroese Popular Music*, Master's dissertation (Iceland Academy of the Arts, 2017), p. 6.

⁵⁶⁶ Paul Mardles, 'Eivør: Slør review – pleasant but faceless', in *The Guardian* 28th May 2017,

<<https://www.theguardian.com/music/2017/may/28/eivor-slør-review-lost-in-translation-trollabundin-poet-randi-ward>>

[Accessed March 2018]. In a Guardian review of Eivør's album *Bridges*, the reviewer notes that the English songs 'strips Eivør of mystique, leaving her sounding like countless other singers whose vaguely trippy music is pleasant but faceless', and only has praise for the track 'Trøllabundin', which is performed in Eivør's 'native tongue'. It is evident that her Faroese-ness is what intrigues this Guardian reviewer about Eivør.

⁵⁶⁷ An example of this is in an interview with Tamara Hinson (also in the Guardian), where Eivør talks very little about her music, but acts more as a tourist information clerk trying to promote everything from Faroese food, birdlife, bars and music festivals: 'Singer Eivør in the Faroe Islands', in *The Guardian*, 10th April 2015, <<https://www.theguardian.com/travel/2015/apr/10/eivor-singer-faroe-islands-music-festivals-food-drink>> [Accessed March 2018].

her Faroese heritage as something that is both mystic and natural, emphasises Dibben's notion that the influence of late 20th-century nationalism and the capitalist notion of the global music industry shapes musician's musical identities and how they represent themselves. Some of these forms of self-representation can be problematic, especially considering the way which Eivør indigenouslyness is based on fusing identities from marginalised groups.

7.3 Ballads and Faroese Viking Metal: Týr

In February 2016 early on a Saturday, lead singer of the Faroese band Týr Heri Joensen had agreed to provide an interview for this project. In the preceding days, the British town of York had hosted the Jorvik Viking Festival, an annual event that is the largest of its kind in Europe.⁵⁶⁸ Týr was due to perform during the festival later that evening, at the local music venue Fibbers, along with the bands Darkest Era and Aloeswood. Arriving in at the venue where the interview was to take place, Ye Olde Starre Inne, the majority of the people there looked like they were either there for the Viking festival or to attend the concert with Týr: Viking-related symbols around necks and on T-shirts (Thor's hammer, runes), tattoos and the fact that they were at the (supposedly) oldest pub in York (which I had seen as a fitting setting to talk about Faroese ballads and Viking-inspired metal music). What immediately stood out was that if these initial assumptions were true, Viking enthusiasts and fans of heavy metal often share a certain 'look'; that they can be easily recognised as a group that somehow stands out with their symbols and accessories. These assumptions were to some extent confirmed when Heri Joensen walked into the pub and the majority of the clientele were staring at him, while slightly nudging the person next to them. It was evident that Týr are well known and have a solid fan base in the north of England. Although international fans might not be familiar with the Faroese ballads, they have heard them through Týr's music. As well as being part of an obscure tradition on a small archipelago in the North Atlantic, the ballads are also part of a recognised and popular heavy metal repertoire.

⁵⁶⁸ Jorvik Viking Festival, <<https://www.jorvikvikingfestival.co.uk/about/>> [Accessed August 2018].

Viking metal is located firmly within the discourse of Vikings in popular culture.⁵⁶⁹ Viking metal developed as a sub-genre within the context of folk metal, where the use of imagery and symbolism deriving from the image of the Viking and the Norse world defines the style, aesthetics and content of the music. Steve Ashby and John Schofield describe Viking metal as being: '[one] of many that fall within a complex web of genres and subgenres [...]. The geography is also shifting, although a clear focus remains in the 'Nordic' Scandinavian countries where there is also a long tradition of extreme metal.'⁵⁷⁰ Viking metal is complex, as it lends itself to an ambiguous categorisation of several musical styles and itself has several overlaps with other established categories, for example, pagan metal and black metal.⁵⁷¹ Ashby and Schofield relate Viking to pagan metal as being 'grounded firmly in the pre-or counter-Christian (but not anti-Christian) past, and based on versions of historic events as described amongst historic, archaeological or folkloric sources'.⁵⁷² Nikolas Sellheim writes that in Viking metal 'the "north" is once again used as a sphere of imagination: northern mythology is paired with a depiction of Viking life as it might have been'.⁵⁷³ The image of the sea-faring Viking that travels wide, enters into glorious battles and feasts in the halls of gods after his death is an image that has long been perpetuated through various forms of media.⁵⁷⁴ There is a certain style, behaviour and geography attached to the symbolism of the Viking, rooted in Scandinavia and the other Nordic countries. However, this image has been adopted by bands all over the world, indicating that Viking symbolism is much further reaching. This section, therefore, argues that in relation to Týr and their use of Faroese ballads, the label Viking metal draws on a pan-Scandinavian/Nordic

⁵⁶⁹ See Svanberg, p. 11-17 and pp. 197-204.

⁵⁷⁰ Steve P. Ashby and John Schofield, "Hold the heathen hammer high': Representation, re-enactment and the construction of 'pagan' heritage', in *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, 21(5), (2015), pp. 493-511, p. 497.

⁵⁷¹ See Ashby and Schofield for a more in-depth discussion of metal genres and their overlaps. See also Matthew P. Unger, *Sound, Symbol, Sociality: The Aesthetic Experience of Extreme Metal Music* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016) (esp. pp. 17-25), Jeremy Wallach, Harris M. Berger, and Paul D. Greene, (eds.), *Metal Rules the Globe: Heavy Metal Music Around the World* (London: Duke University Press, 2011), especially Ross Hagan 'Musical Style, Ideology and Mythology in Norwegian Black Metal' pp. 180-199 and Deena Weinstein 'The Globalization of Metal', pp. 34-61.

⁵⁷² Ashby and Schofield, p. 497, Keith Kahn-Harris, *Extreme metal: Music and culture on the edge*, (Oxford: Berg, 2006) and Robert Walser, *Running with the Devil: Power, gender and madness in heavy metal music* (Hanover: Wesleyan University Press, 1993).

⁵⁷³ Nikolas Sellheim, 'Black and Viking metal: How two extreme music genres depict, construct and transfigure the (sub-) Arctic', in *Polar Record*, 52 (2015), pp. 509-517, p. 513. For more on the Viking-age and religion, see for example Anders Hultgaard, 'The religion of the Vikings' (pp. 212-218), and Margaret Clunies Ross 'The creation of Old Norse mythology' (pp. 231-234), both in *The Viking World*, Stefan Brink and Neil Price (eds.) (Oxon: Routledge, 2008).

⁵⁷⁴ Ashby and Schofield, p. 495.

representation, and not so much on the ballads themselves being part of the Viking symbolism.

Heri Joensen has from a young age had an interest in the ballads – the stories, how they are performed and Faroese ring-dance. This initial interest, as with Eivør, came from listening to the ballads being performed. His interest largely came from home, listening to performances and participating in them himself, in addition to having ballads as a school subject. ‘Eg plagdi at sita framman fyri útvarpinum og lurta efti teimum’ (I used to sit in front of the radio listening to them), Heri Joensen told me, after talking about his early interest ballads.⁵⁷⁵ The idea to combine Faroese ballads with heavy metal first came to Heri Joensen when he heard Per Frost’s rendition of *Fuglakvæði* accompanied by an acoustic guitar in 1996.⁵⁷⁶ Joensen immediately thought it easy to combine his interest in ballads with his musical pursuit in heavy metal.

Týr participated in the music competition Prix Føroyar in 2001 with their rendition of the well-known Faroese ballad, ‘Ormurin Langi’. Apart from only a selection of the stanzas being included, the lyrical content remained the same and the rhythmical style of the performance remained in tune with how the ballads are traditionally performed. What made it stand out was that this was the first time that a Faroese ballad, so well-known and associated with traditions in the Faroe Islands, was accompanied by guitar solos, fast drums and a singular voice thundering on stage. Týr is a unique example, as they quickly added the ballads as part of their musical signature in the Faroe Islands, so they remain the only band on this end of the spectrum, who draw on the ballads in so much detail and with such consistency.⁵⁷⁷ Adaptations of ballads and Faroese material constitutes a small part of the music produced by Týr, but it is especially these tracks that have received the most attention in the Faroe Islands. The song ‘Ormurin Langi’ is based on a ballad composed by Jens Christian Djurhuus (1773-1853). Said to be the first poet to write in Faroese, Djurhuus was known for writing poems expressing views against the ruling Danish authorities in the Faroe Islands at the time. Translated as ‘The Long

⁵⁷⁵ Annika Christensen, *Interview with Heri Joensen* (York: 2016).

⁵⁷⁶ Egholm et al. (2016), p. 339.

⁵⁷⁷ Christensen (2019), p. 117, Green (2013), p. 129.

Serpent', the ballad tells the tale of King Olav Trygvasson's ship by the same name and the Battle of Svolder c.999. The ballad 'Ormurin Langi' is 85 stanzas long, with a four-line refrain between each. Týr's song follows the original narrative in the sense that the main events reiterated in the ballad are represented in the heavy metal rendition, including the opening stanza and the refrain:

Viljið tær hoyra kvæði mítt
Vilja tær orðum trúgva
Um hann Ólav Trygvason
Hagar skal ríman snúgva.⁵⁷⁸

Will you hear this ballad of mine
Will you believe my words
About Ólav Trygvason
Whom this ballad is about.

Týr's version consists of only ten stanzas and a refrain between each. Both versions make use of the opening line 'Viljið tær hoyra kvæði mítt' ('Will you hear the ballad of mine?') and an introductory stanza/verse. This situates the text strongly within the tradition of Faroese ballad-composition, as the majority of the Faroese ballads make use of similar lines to begin the story: beckoning the listeners and other singers to pay attention to the story that is about to be told. Týr have only included a selection of stanzas from the ballad, and therefore the narrative of the song changes. Týr's 'Ormurin Langi' revolves mostly around the interaction between Ólav Trygvason and his archer Einar, and it is through these two characters Týr present the battle of Svolde, which Trygvason lost. Týr's 'Ormurin Langi' focuses on the visual aspects of the ballad: The image of Einar coming down from the mountain, with his bow in hand, adds a visual element to the story for Týr's audience. Both the ballad and Týr's song end with the final stanza/verse:

Nú skal lætta ljóðið av
Eg kvøði ei longur á sinni;
Nú skal eg taka upp annan tátt;
Dreingir leggi í minni!

Now this tune will quiet down
I shall no longer chant;
Now I will begin another;
Boys, remember this!

⁵⁷⁸ Týr, 'Ormurin Langi', *How Far to Asgaard* [CD] (Tórshavn: Tutl, 2002).

By beginning and ending the song with the same lines as the ballad, Týr's 'Ormurin Langi' follows a similar narrative structure, albeit in a more condensed form. Adapting the ballad to heavy metal music does, of course, change it: The rhythm, harmony and style of singing adhere to the musical genre and is recorded, whilst a ballad performed in a ring-dance always changes slightly depending on who is performing and where it is performed.⁵⁷⁹

On Týr's debut album, *How far to Asgaard* (2002), 'Ormurin Langi' was the only song that was an adaptation of a ballad and performed in Faroese, whilst their second album *Eric the Red* (2003) featured adaptations of two Faroese ballads, 'Regin Smiðjur' and 'Ólavur Riddararós'.⁵⁸⁰ Heri Joensen explained that 'Ormurin Langi' was initially an experiment that was not supposed to see the light of day, but the popularity of Týr's first 'metal ballad' led to the ballads becoming a source of inspiration for more of Týr's music. After their performance and then their first album, 'Ormurin Langi' became one of Týr's signature songs in the Faroe Islands and was also well received in Iceland. Later albums included several other ballads, including 'Sinklars Vísa' (*Land*, 2008), 'Ellindur bóndi á Jaðri' (*The Lay of Thrym*, 2011) and 'Grindavísan' (*Valkyrja*, 2013).

With their incorporation of ballads, Týr's music has a distinctive Faroese locality, as well as being internationally recognised.⁵⁸¹ The ballads serve as sources of artistic inspiration because Týr have also used these sources to reimagine and rewrite ballads and folk-stories.⁵⁸² An example of this is 'Tróndur í Gøtu' from the 2009 album *By the Light of the Northern Star*.⁵⁸³ Tróndur í Gøtu is one of the central characters in *Føroyingasøgu* (the saga of the Faroe Islands) and one of the central narratives from the saga concerns the social and cultural changes that happened in the Faroe Islands as it was converted to Christianity.⁵⁸⁴ This part of the Faroese saga has been reimaged in Týr's bio:

The profession of the Christian Faith or Decapitation: This was the choice given by Sigmundur to his Faroese Viking compatriot Tróndur í Gøtu. And so

⁵⁷⁹ Christensen (2019), p. 124.

⁵⁸⁰ Týr, *Eric the Red* [CD] (Tórshavn: Tutl Records, 2003).

⁵⁸¹ Mark Deeks, 'Nordic Heavy Metal as a Representation of Place', in *Heavy Metal Generations*, A. Brown and K. Fellezs (eds.) (Leiden: Brill, 2012), pp. 49-63, p. 49.

⁵⁸² Green (2013), p. 128.

⁵⁸³ Týr, 'Tróndur í Gøtu' on *By the Light of the Northern Star* [CD] (Napalm Records, 2009).

⁵⁸⁴ Robert K. Painter (transl.), *The Faroe-Islander Saga* (Jefferson: McFarland & Co, 2016), p. 82.

it was that in 999 A.D., the Christianization of the small “Faroe Islands” began, casting a veil of oblivion over the ancient Scandinavian gods and only leaving the relics of forgotten heathenry buried deep within the Christian ritual. Or so it was believed...⁵⁸⁵

Týr’s ‘Tróndur í Gøtu’ imagines a Viking chieftain who is versed in magic and can predict the outcome of the future and where the persecution from the Norwegian King in the form of Christian conversion is seen as an invasion.

This song is not based on a particular ballad but uses references to other well-known ballads.⁵⁸⁶ The refrain has been used in other ballads, for example, *Belfjóna* (CCF 41). ‘Tróndur í Gøtu’ evokes similarities to other Faroese ballads but manages to tell a story where Tróndur remains the central character, even though it is usually Sigmundur that is the protagonist. The story about Sigmundur and Tróndur from *Føroyingasøga* also features in many of the Faroese ballads, for example, *Sigmundar kvæði nýggja* (CCF 216 A and B). In this song, it is not just the lyrical content, but also the rhythm that is similar to ballad performances.

When a ballad is performed in a ring-dance, the whole narrative is performed by the dancers. A member of a dancing society that agreed to be interviewed for this project, says that when there is a battle or a monster needs to be defeated, it is illustrated in the vigour and excitement of the dancers. In Týr’s music, the performance of the ring-dance is replaced with another form of collective movement. However, Joshua Green recounts in his *Music Making in The Faroe Islands* that Týr’s music has influenced the contemporary practise of Faroese ballad performance, including the ring-dance, as dancers will appropriate Týr’s style:

At least one dancer [Faroese ring-dance] explained to me that the popularity of Týr’s reinterpretation of Faroese traditional songs [ballads] has meant that many young people, being more familiar with Týr’s metal versions, tend to mimic Týr’s style, and thus sometimes sing notes only intended for the *skipari*.⁵⁸⁷

⁵⁸⁵ Metal Blade Records, ‘Týr: Biography’ <<http://www.metalblade.com/europe/artists/tyr/>> [Accessed September 2018].

⁵⁸⁶ The ballad *Tróndarkvæði* (Tróndur’s ballad) exists, but this has not been used in Týr’s song. Instead, a lot of the phrases from *Geyti Áslaksson* (CCF 30 A) are used.

⁵⁸⁷ Green (2013), p. 75.

In Týr's songs, it could be argued that the lead singer takes on the role of a *skipari*, but people are also singing along. In this setting, the 'metal ballad' behaves differently to the traditionally performed ballad in how it is reproduced and consumed.

Sonja Johannesen, who is a member of the Faroese ring-dancing society *Dansifelagið í Havn*, is herself intrigued by contemporary adaptations of the ballads, but she adds that it is important that there simultaneously is a 'respect for the ballads' (*virðing fyri kvæðunum*) and that they should not be rendered ironically or mockingly.⁵⁸⁸ This seems to be the general consensus amongst the people that took part in the interviews for this study. The musicians and cultural practitioners that work with the ballads and reinterpret those using contemporary media in the Faroe Islands are very aware of this and their interest in the ballads is also based on a form of reverence for this part of Faroese heritage. Sonja Johannesen further says:

Tá Týr framførir eitt vælkent kvæði (til dæmis *Ormurin Langi*) á konsert í froyum, so kemur eitt sindur av tjóðskaparkensluni framm, fólk syngja við, onkur byrjar at sláa ring. Tad er tann kenslan sum man fær av at tad er froyiskt og man fólir ein vissan stoltleika, bæði tá man dansar og á konsertum hjá Týr – men tad eru helst ymiskar upplivingar⁵⁸⁹

When Týr perform a well-known ballad, for example, *Ormurin Langi* at a concert in the Faroe Islands, a bit of the national feeling/pride [*tjóðskaparkensluni*] is present, people sing along, some will begin to ring-dance. It is the feeling of it being Faroese and you feel a sense of pride, both when you dance [participating in the ring-dance] and at Týr's concerts – but it is definitely two different experiences.

Týr have never claimed that what they do is write ballads, instead, they adapted it to their own sound and style. Extensive research and listening to different ring-dance performances are part of the work that goes into Heri Joensen's work and it is to create a piece that reflects Týr's engagement with the Faroese ballads. The interest in Faroese ballads will, of course, be affected by adapting them to

⁵⁸⁸ Annika Christensen, *Interview with Sonja Johannesen* (Tórshavn: 2015).

⁵⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

contemporary music forms, As Heri Joensen argues, Týr are with their music 'awakening an interest in younger people for the ballads - a section of the young people that otherwise would not have this interest'.⁵⁹⁰ These contemporary formats fitted in with the music and the culture the youth was engaged with and they started to pay attention to this part of traditional Faroese heritage, which might not have been so readily available to them.

As well as engaging with the local, contemporary Faroese music that features the ballads often also draws upon more internationally established images of Nordic and Viking mythologies. 'Hold the Heathen Hammer High' is another song from Týr's album *By the Light of the Northern Star* and plays upon the 'traditional' indicators of Viking metal expressing opposition (or resistance) towards Christianity, where 'heathen hammers' and being 'true to your forefathers' is expressed in the lyrics.⁵⁹¹

There is little to indicate exactly what form of religion was practised in the Faroe Islands before Christianity, so Týr's image of a non-Christian Faroe Islands is derived from a more popular view of a pan-Scandinavian Viking era.⁵⁹² The song is a battle cry, where the listener is encouraged to 'hold the heathen hammer high' to protect the past and to stay true to what the forefathers have experienced. 'Hold the Heathen Hammer High' is written and performed in English, so it reaches a wider audience and adheres to a more generalised perception of cultural Viking mythology. 'Hold the Heathen Hammer High' clearly evokes the cultural and historical memory of a place where certain beliefs and traditions were obliterated with the arrival of Christianity and there is a call to battle in preserving the traditions of the past. Green argues that Týr 'have come to fully embrace the Viking label by employing iconography typically associated with a sort of pan Scandinavian Viking era'.⁵⁹³ It is evident that this is not just the case for the Faroe Islands, but it does fit in with the stories and the mythical symbolism used in Týr's music. Although Týr have publicly stated that they are not participating in any pagan

⁵⁹⁰ Jayne MacLeod, 'Faroe Dance', *Ealtainn*, documentary, 16.12.14 23:00 (BBC Alba: 2014).

⁵⁹¹ Týr, 'Hold the Heathen Hammer High', *By the Light of the Northern Star* [CD] (Napalm Records, 2009).

⁵⁹² Annika Christensen 'Pre-Christian Religion in the Faroe Islands: The Faroese Ballads', in *Pre-Christian Religions of the North*, John S. McKinnell (ed.) (Turnhout: Brepols, 2021 (expected))

⁵⁹³ Green (2013), p. 133.

religions, the images and traditions of the Viking era are emphasised in the phrase ‘your forefathers’ as symbolism for a wider representation of Scandinavian popular cultural history.⁵⁹⁴ Whether or not any of Týr’s (or the audience members) forefathers were actually Vikings is not relevant here, it is about engaging with the popular culture narrative that the whole of the (white) North are descendants from Viking. There is a form of primitivism at play here. This primitivism manifests itself in the idea that there is a shared characteristic and a form of essentialism, passed through from the Viking era to today. But in heavy metal music, this is a form of reproduced and romanticised primitivism that is filtered through to audiences that consume this primitivism in the comfortable setting of music-listening.⁵⁹⁵

There are also ways in which this engagement with Nordic heritage has caused controversies. Týr have been criticised for furthering extremist right-wing and fascist ideologies due to their visible display of symbols relating to Norse mythology and Viking mythology. In an interview with Metal Discovery, Heri Joensen says:

Yeah, that came out of thin air. It was based on the ‘Ragnarok’ album that they thought we were Nazis because there’s runes in our logo and we sing about leaders, führers, and followers, and that was enough for some people to call us Nazis! And, for me, that came out of thin air.⁵⁹⁶

The fact that the band saw this as ‘coming out of thin air’ does indicate the lack of political awareness that exists amongst artists on the contemporary music scene.⁵⁹⁷ Often there is a notion of remaining ‘non-political’. Hoad and Whiting write that ‘the valorising of the “North” in metal discourse draws on the symbols of particular ethnic traditions to give historicity and local meaning to white identity’ and that this particular rhetoric used in Nordic/Viking metal is displaying a ‘claim to ethnic exclusivity’, whether intentional or not.⁵⁹⁸ Týr’s song ‘Shadow of the Swastika’ from *The Lay of Thrym* is a clear response to these accusations, where the band heavily protest against them.⁵⁹⁹ The song is both a rejection of the things promoted by

⁵⁹⁴ Metal Underground, *Interview with Tyr at Metalheim*, November 2011,

<<http://www.metalunderground.com/interviews/details.cfm?newsid=73479>> [Accessed July 2017]

⁵⁹⁵ Robert McParland, *Myth and Magic in Heavy Metal Music* (Jefferson: McFarland & Co. Inc., 2018), pp. 82-83.

⁵⁹⁶ Metal Discovery, *Interview with Týr*, <http://www.metal-discovery.com/Interviews/tyr_interview_2012_pt2.htm> [Accessed September 2018].

⁵⁹⁷ See Ashley Walsh ‘Viking Heritage: The Creation of a Personal and National Identity through History and Metal’, in *Heavy Metal Generations*, A. Brown and K. Fellezs (eds.) (Leiden: Brill, 2012), pp. 65-76.

⁵⁹⁸ Hoad and Whiting.

⁵⁹⁹ Týr, ‘Shadow of the Swastika’, *The Lay of Thrym* [CD] (Napalm Records, 2011).

extremist right-wing groups, while at the same time also publicly stating that they refuse to be part of that narrative. Here the 'sins of the father' have no bearing, whilst this was the opposite case in *Hold the Heathen Hammer High*. If strength, 'a blackened blade' and 'heathen heart' is an inheritance from the proverbial forefathers in *HtHHH*, their sins need to be inherited too. In an interview with Metal Underground in 2011, guitarist Terji Skibenæs said they wrote the song as a response to the accusations they had received and Gunnar H. Thomsen added 'so this is a big fuck you to them!'.⁶⁰⁰

For Týr to claim that they exist outside the political position this paradigm of whiteness, the promotion of masculinity and rejecting this kind of criticisms is highly problematic considering that Týr are a group of white men singing about heathen hammers, führers, violence and conquering lands.⁶⁰¹ Some groups and individuals use similar mythologies and symbolism of the (white) Nordic Viking to promote extremist views on ethnic homogeneity in the Western countries, where 'whiteness' as Kristín Loftsdóttir and Lars Jensen argue, 'can be seen as including certain privileges where individuals can "afford" to forget their own skin colour and position of power'.⁶⁰² Furthermore, given the current right-wing climate that is circulating in the media and politics in Europe and elsewhere, there is no point claiming that racism and bigotry is a thing of the past, as it is rooted deep in cultural constructions of race that do not and have not simply dissipated and that are currently used by anti-immigration parties and extremist groups.⁶⁰³

Moberg writes that 'metal culture is also marked by its high degree of humour and self-irony, its fondness for exaggeration, spectacle and over-the-top theatrics'.⁶⁰⁴ It is therefore crucial to consider how bands engage with the imagery

⁶⁰⁰ Metal Underground, *Interview with Týr at Metalheim 2012*,

<http://www.metalunderground.com/interviews/details.cfm?newsid=73479> [Accessed September 2018].

⁶⁰¹ Hoard and Whiting write that the post-1980s extreme metal scene 'laid far more stress on historical context, national identity and notions of ancestry, and, crucially, a sense of extremity and isolation'.

⁶⁰² Kristín Loftsdóttir and Lars Jensen, 'Nordic Exceptionalism and the Nordic "Others"', in *Whiteness and Postcolonialism in the Nordic Region*, ed. by K. Loftsdóttir and L. Jensen (Surrey: Ashgate, 2012), pp. 1-12, p. 7. See also, Elisabeth Stubberud, and Priscilla Ringrose, 'Speaking images, race-less words: Play and the absence of race in contemporary Scandinavia.' *Journal of Scandinavian Cinema* 4.1 (2014), pp. 61-76. National Socialist black metal (also known as NSBM, Aryan black metal or Neo-Nazi black metal), is a political philosophy within black metal music that promotes Nazism or similar ideologies. See Mattias Gardell's *Gods of the Blood: The Pagan Revival and White Separatism* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003). Bands that identify as NSBM include Finnish *Goatmoon* and the German band *Absurd*

⁶⁰³ Loftsdóttir and Jensen, p. 5-6.

⁶⁰⁴ Marcus Moberg, 'Popular Culture and the "Darker Side" of Alternative Spirituality: The case of metal music', in *Scripta Instituti Donneriani Aboensis*, [S.l.], v. 21 (January 2014) pp 130-148, p. 137.

<https://ojs.abo.fi/ojs/index.php/scripta/article/view/371> [Accessed August 2018].

and the 'stories' that are being performed here. The image of the pre-Christian Norse world in Týr's music intersects with the use of ballads in illustrating a specific narrative. Týr are fusing two seemingly very different types of music (ballads and heavy metal), and they manage to weave a story that is rooted in Faroese heritage that draws on its Norse connections and presents it through the international media of heavy metal. Colin A. McKinnon argues that

metal certainly embraces and celebrates mythologies of various kinds, but it is also possible to think of metal itself as a kind of mythology. It has its origins, its apocryphal and oft-repeated stories, and its characters, themselves frequently spoken of in terms of 'epic' vocabulary as 'legends', 'heroes', 'gods' and 'warriors'. Indeed, many metal musicians may sometimes be portrayed as such, especially 'warriors', in photographs, through postures, dress, tattoos, gestures or expressions ... in addition to persistent warrior-like themes throughout the music and album artwork.⁶⁰⁵

It is in this way that Týr's interpretation of Faroese ballads has found its fit within the heavy metal genre, as battles, warriors and epic tales are a major part of the repertoire. It fits in with the more popular notion of Viking metal, where these elements seem to be reoccurring. It is also worth noting, the terminology used to describe music and bands can add to the problematic nature, as Deeks points out:

Given the prevalent use of the term Viking metal, there continues to be a disproportionate amount of focus on bands from the Nordic region, ignoring the contribution of bands from other geographical areas. Whilst Nordic metal bands continue to have a significant role in terms of representing national identity, it is unhelpful to suggest that these bands are the only protagonists.⁶⁰⁶

The symbolism appropriated by Týr and other Viking metal bands can in this sense be problematic as Viking imagery in contemporary culture is interpreted in many different ways and by different groups and for various agendas. As Shamma Boyarin et al. argue:

The problem of the construction of national identity through metal lies, therefore, not in the vindication of a certain cultural heritage itself, which can be enriching for both the metal scene and the corresponding cultural community, but in the necessity to examine each case individually to ascertain if identity is being used in an inclusive – I sing about my cultural heritage

⁶⁰⁵ Colin A. McKinnon, 'Metal and Comics: Strange Bedfellows?', in *Heavy Metal Studies and Popular Culture*, ed. by Brenda G. Walter, Gabby Riches, Dave Snell and Bryan Bardine (London: Palgrave MacMillan, 2016), pp. 189-208, p. 190.

⁶⁰⁶ Mark David Deeks, 'National Identity in Northern and Eastern European Heavy Metal', PhD thesis (Leeds: University of Leeds, 2016), p. 210.

because I want to share it with you – or an exclusive – I sing about my cultural heritage because it is better than yours – manner.⁶⁰⁷

Although the Faroese ballads draw on narratives associated with Medieval Scandinavia, they are not well known outside of the Faroe Islands and specialised (e.g. academic) circles. In repurposing the ballads in this way, they can, however, be conflated with the wider symbolisms ascribed to the Viking metal genre. Heavy metal, Viking symbols or being a white Faroese person are in themselves not problematic but quickly becomes so when claims are being made that one can exist outside of the political implications they carry. The significance Týr's music has for the Faroese audiences can therefore be remarkably different for their audiences outside of the islands. Without knowledge of Faroese history and heritage, the ballad adaptations serve as indicators of Scandinavian heritage, illustrating the medieval history of an obscure place illuminated through popular perceptions of Viking symbolism.

The combination of local heritage and the more international sound of heavy metal was something that was a new addition to music in the Faroe Islands. Although Týr argue against their music being a continuation of the Faroese ballad tradition, their music does enter into a form of collective cultural memory of the Faroese ballad tradition.

7.4 Conclusion

This chapter has discussed and analysed in detail the repurposing of ballads, Faroese identity and self-representation in popular music, using Faroese musicians and bands as case studies. This is something that has previously received little attention. If Faroese musical identity has been discussed, it is seldom that the use of ballads or Faroese folklore has been critically analysed. This chapter illustrates the complex layering of representation and identity in Faroese music-making, and how this is translated to audiences both in the Faroe Islands and the rest of the world. As this chapter has shown, music-making cannot easily be detangled from the exoticisation of the Faroe Islands in general, as discussed in chapter 5. At the

⁶⁰⁷ Shamma Boyarin, Annika Christensen, Amaranta Sagar García and Dean Swinford, 'The Politics and Poetics of Metal's Medieval Past', in *Medievalism and Metal Music Studies: Throwing down the Gauntlet*, Ruth Barratt-Peacock and Ross Hagan (eds.) (Bingley: Emerald Publishing, 2019) pp.71-80, p. 73-74.

same time, as discussed in chapter 6, musicians from the Faroe Islands and other small areas have to make use of international networks in order to prosper.

The music by Hamferð, Týr, Eivør, and Valravn are good examples of this engagement with the exoticness of the Faroe Islands and how it translates to a global music market. The examples that have been discussed here indicate a specific trend in Faroese music: An elaborate engagement with the past that is being used to negotiate the present. As I argue in a previous article, 'Týr's Faroese metal music combines [Faroese] history with the application of Nordic/Scandinavian medieval history, which has created a specific narrative around the Vikings as the common denominator for the region.'⁶⁰⁸ This is in part drawing on Christopher Partridge's work *The re-enchantment of the West*, where he notes that how people engage with popular culture can often function as a locus for identity formation and community.⁶⁰⁹ Jan Nederveen Pieterse writes:

Modernisation has been advancing like a steamroller, erasing cultural and biological diversity in its way, and now not only the gains (rationalization, standardization, control) but also the losses (alienation, disenchantment, displacement) are becoming apparent. Stamping out cultural diversity has been a form of disenchantment of the world.⁶¹⁰

The recurring image of 'Nordicness' in metal music and popular music, in general, coming from the Faroe Islands, utilises certain imagery that ties in to a sense of 'authentic belonging'.⁶¹¹ However, it is also an expression of how musicians respond to a need from audiences to represent authenticity and the exotic. As discussed in chapter 5, the Faroese tourism industry responded to this need by representing the Faroe Islands as 'unspoilt', so it indicates that there is also a need for Faroese musicians to utilise a similar strategy when on the global music market. There is also the controversy such music might conjure, especially since nationalism and promotion of Nordic heritage are often associated with far-right groups and

⁶⁰⁸ Christensen (2019), p 115.

⁶⁰⁹ Christopher Partridge, *The re-enchantment of the West Vol 1: Alternative Spiritualities, Sacralization, Popular Culture and Occulture* (London: T&T International, 2004).

⁶¹⁰ Jan Nederveen Pieterse, 'Globalization and Culture: Three Paradigms', in *Reading in Globalization*, George Ritzer and Zeynep Atalay (eds.) (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), pp. 309-318, p. 309. My own emphasis.

Pieterse's use of 'disenchantment' refers to the cultural rationalisation in modern society. The term was used by Max Weber to describe the character of modernized, bureaucratic, secularized Western society in his publication *Die protestantische Ethik und der Geist des Kapitalismus*, originally published in 1905: Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, Richard Swedberg (ed.) (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2009).

⁶¹¹ Catherine Hoad and Samuel Whiting, 'True KvlT? The Cultural Capital of "Nordicness" in Extreme Metal', in *M/C Journal: A journal of media and culture*, 20.6 (2017) <<http://www.journal.media-culture.org.au/index.php/mcjournal/article/view/1319>> [Accessed July 2020].

movement. These songs do perhaps conjure up some sort of authenticity by being performed in a language that is closely related to Old Norse and Icelandic, and that fits in with the fantasy of the style created by Hamferð, Eivør, Valravn and Týr. It is therefore important to consider how their music is perceived by audiences and perhaps also how their music fits into the wider spectrum of popular music and their mainstream appeal.

8. Conclusion: Exploring Ballads as Popular Culture and Heritage in Contemporary Faroese Culture

The majority of the literature and studies on ballads in contemporary Faroese culture has either focused on their significance as literature and folklore or focused on their origin and their ties to a medieval Faroe Islands.⁶¹² As a cultural activity, they have been a companion to the Faroese ring-dance or figured on the periphery of Faroese popular music. This thesis has put the ballads as a focal point for analysing and understanding the construction of contemporary Faroese cultural identity. Past work that has linked to ballads to Faroese identity has often taken an uncritical and nationalistic stance that has been critically examined throughout the thesis. It has been evident that when talking about the ballads in Faroese culture, it has been necessary to also examine identity, nationalisms, representation and community building. Through education, dancing societies, tourism and popular music, the ballads permeate many aspects of the creation and continuation of Faroese cultural identity.

As shown in chapter 1, the existing literature has effectively mapped the history of the ballads and the emergence of the ballads as heritage through methods of National-Romantic ideals being idealised. The ballads have since then perpetuated as examples of explicit nationalism being perpetuated throughout the 20th century, The engagement with ballad collection during the 19th century indicated that the scholarly work on ballads expressed a naturalistic image of the Faroe Islands as an individual society with their own language, traditions and values, while at the same time connecting them historically with Scandinavia and rest of Northern Europe. This was especially through the works of Hammershaimb, Grundtvig, Bloch and Lyngbye.

⁶¹² Andreassen and Marnersdóttir, p. 9, Andersen-Vinlandicus, p. 129-131, Andreassen (2018), p. 151.

The importance of the ballads as Faroese culture has continued to be portrayed as an essential part of Faroese culture, which, as Sólfinn Hansen argues, can be under threat of external influences.⁶¹³ This thesis has suggested a more nuanced and critically informed view, which takes its basis in critically analysing ballads in education, ring-dancing societies, tourism and in popular music. This is in particular as a cultural studies approach that centralises experience as the focus for analysis.⁶¹⁴

The use of ethnography has only been applied to ballads in very few instances, in Opielka's work on dancing games and her study of *skiparir*.⁶¹⁵ This work has, however, taken basis in the ring-dance, and not the ballads. As discussed in chapters 3 and 4, Faroese schools and ring-dancing societies have a much deeper involvement and higher impact on contemporary ballad traditions in the Faroe Islands, so it makes sense that using interviews allows for a more nuanced understanding of ballads in everyday settings. The ethnographic studies of ballads in Faroese schools and dancing societies have provided this thesis with a critical and varied view of ballads in areas of everyday life that has not been examined before. Analysing the case studies, for example, Hoyvíkar skúli and Frískúlin showed that the ballads can be a creative tool in teaching pupils history and language, but also in teaching them how to engage and embody the story of the ballads, particularly through the ring-dancing, which both schools said was valuable for teaching motor skills and facilitating social interaction between the pupils. The interviews allowed for a more in-depth exploration of how teachers see their role in teaching ballads and ring-dancing, and the challenges that can arise. This was especially relevant for the inclusion of pupils that, for example, do not speak Faroese or do not have the motor skills to participate in the ring-dance.

The creation of community and facilitating a social environment is important for the dancing societies, as all the society members interviewed for the thesis highlighted the social aspect of participating. However, the interviews also indicated a deeper engagement with nationalism than first anticipated. As

⁶¹³ S. Hansen, p. 9.

⁶¹⁴ See for example Pickering (2010) and Hall (1997)

⁶¹⁵ Opielka (2011 and 2018) and Green (2013 and 2017).

discussed in chapter 4, dancing societies are conscious of their role in continuing the Faroese ballad tradition, as both Ung í Dansi and the Copenhagen-based society Fótatraðk explicitly mention this as being part of their engagement with the ballads and ring-dance. So there is still a remnant of the ballads being part of a nationalistic narrative of Faroese heritage that has been uncritically linked with Faroese identity.

These nationalistic tendencies were also visible in looking at Faroese tourism in chapter 5. Exoticisation of the Faroe Islands, its culture, traditions and people, informs most tourist campaigns. In examining Anderson's concept of 'imagined communities' in relation to Barthes' concept of 'myth', it becomes possible to analyse the different layers of cultural identity-making. As discussed in chapter 5, Barthes argues that myth is created based on contextual connotations between cultural objects and signifiers.⁶¹⁶ But taking it a step further, the representation of Faroese culture in tourism is more complicated. There is a conflict between the primitivistic representation of the Faroe Islands as 'unspoilt', 'unexplored, and therefore also uncomplicated compared to the modern world, and the modern society of the Faroe Islands, characterised by state-education and global capitalism. The conflict is not so much an actual conflict for Faroese people but is a conflict of self-representation that is interesting to have examined. In the Faroese tourism industry, this conflict is presented through tourism campaigns that allow visitors the unspoilt tranquillity of the exotic, whilst at the same time also offer the luxuries of modern society. The implications here is that because the Faroe Islands are so small, this form of self-exoticisation has become a selling point for Faroese artists and musicians going abroad.

As discussed in chapter 7, the musicians in the case studies all used a form of self-exoticisation to establish themselves as Faroese artists abroad. By using the ballads, Faroese history and images of a Faroese past, the music exemplifies what Bithell identified, namely that '[t]oday's music-makers have become agents of their own transformation [...]. Yet many of today's singers preserve a particular relationship with music and music-making, one that is both visceral and esoteric.'⁶¹⁷

⁶¹⁶ Barthes, 'Myth Today', pp. 93-149.

⁶¹⁷ Bithell, p. 261.

The popularity of bands such as Hamferð, Týr, Eivør, and Valravn, indicates that there is more widespread interest in music that is portrayed as being deeply rooted within a tradition. Green indicates that engagement with ballads and Faroese heritage is a way for Faroese musicians to create a musical identity on a global market.⁶¹⁸ But as I argue in chapter 7, there is a much more nuanced stance to be taken on this. Although the Faroese-labels functions as a way to market musicians as something unique, there is also this expectation that Faroese musicians going abroad are representatives of the Faroe Islands. In the case of Icelandic singer Björk, Nicola Dibben argues that concepts of cultural nationalism shape the way artists represent and exoticise themselves.⁶¹⁹ There are parallels to be drawn between Dibben's observations, and the analysis from this thesis, namely that music-making becomes an equal form of Faroese representation as to the tourism campaigns. Although this thesis has argued for a form of self-exoticisation, motivated by the musicians and the ideas of cultural identity permeating Faroese tourism, an expansive study of audience engagement (what do international audiences expect from a Faroese musician/band?) would be a possible direction this research could move towards.

Interviews with members of dancing societies and school teachers offered a unique insight into the experiences of an everyday engagement with ballads. These interviews serve as a pool of information that can continue to inform research on ballads and Faroese culture. The stories offer an approach to qualitative research on Faroese ballads that has otherwise been minimal. But as I conclude in chapter 3 and 4, these insights offer valuable narratives for understanding the experience of engaging with Faroese ballads. However, given that the teachers and the society members are acting as gatekeepers of their respective schools and societies, one has to be aware that perhaps not everything gets said and things are intentionally left out. This means that the interviews can be researched in more depth in a deeper narrative analysis for future projects.

⁶¹⁸ Green (2013 and 2017).

⁶¹⁹ Dibben, pp. 54-55.

Most of the studies of Faroese culture are based on observations and ethnographic studies from the 1980s and 1990s.⁶²⁰ This thesis is therefore one of the few studies of ballads in 21st-century Faroese culture, especially having the ballads as the focal point for analysis. Furthermore, this thesis is an exploration of intangible heritage in 21st-century Faroe Islands. This thesis examined preservation and continuation of heritage and tradition in relation to the UNESCO Convention of Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003) in chapter 2 and also how heritage and traditions are negotiated in the Faroese tourism industry in chapter 5. When viewing the ballads as intangible heritage and part of Faroese tradition, I agree with Bithell when she argues that

labelling something as traditional can be as much a statement of significance or distinctiveness as a statement of historicity. To define something as traditional today is, above all, to make a statement about how it relates to a sense of identity.⁶²¹

Bithell argues that the concept of tradition is ambiguous and can change according to how people engage with tradition. Even though the ballads are often defined as being 'stereotyp í strukturi og sniðið, og at skaldskapur av hesum slag er ikki serstakliga opin fyri nýgerðum og broytingum' (stereotypical in structure and design, and that poetry of this type is not especially open to changes), this thesis argues that the ballads are a dynamic part of Faroese culture.⁶²² By examining the concepts of intangible heritage and cultural identity in relation to a tradition that is dynamic and malleable, it allows for a critical analysis of ballads as both tradition and heritage.

8.1 Where to next: Future avenues to explore

8.1.1 Identity formation in small communities

Instead of making the association between the ballads and certain social/cultural groups, ballads are negotiated within the complex structures that make up contemporary Faroese culture and society. Jørgen Ole Bærenholdt writes:

The political practices inherent in this Faroese disposition are physical, social and cultural at the same time. They are embedded in the long history of the

⁶²⁰ For example Gaffin's *In Place: Spatial and Social Order in a Faroe Islands Community*; Nauerby's *No Nation is an Island: Language, Culture and National Identity in the Faroe Islands*, both from 1996; Andreassen's *Folkelig Offentlighed: En Undersøgelse af kulturelle former på Færøerne i 100 år* from 1992.

⁶²¹ Bithell, p. xxxvi.

⁶²² S. Hansen, p. 9

village community, physically preserved, socially performed and culturally made into the history narrative of the 'folkish' Faroese public, a narrative also performed by the intellectual elite in its obsession with culture and its potential continuity [...]. The history of the formation of a Faroese society – its history back and forth – is thus unfinished.⁶²³

Bærenholdt specifically draws attention to the type of 'village' community that characterises the Faroe Islands and its social and political identity. The Faroese identity is very much embedded within this narrative, which makes the idea of community such an important aspect of identity formation on the islands.

Alexandra Jaffe writes that 'the village' as a social and linguistic-cultural space 'is used as a metaphor for general aspects of island identity, in particular, an intense attachment to a place which is remote and particular'.⁶²⁴ There are clear parallels between the Corsican example Jaffe mentions and the Faroese one, especially her definition of 'micro-regions', in which people define themselves in accordance with a specific region, but also in relation to the surrounding regions.

By looking at how the Faroese ballads still permeate contemporary Faroese culture, it becomes possible to illustrate how small communities engage with a heritage that has become a unique signifier for Faroese identity. Since the new millennium, it has become increasingly pertinent to consider how advancements in technology have allowed for almost instant transportation of information, affecting how people travel and interact with each other across languages and cultures, and how communities work towards developing their own unique identity amidst all this. Here it is important to consider the geographical, political and linguistic implications, where island community building and identity formation works under different parameters. As illustrated in Chapter 1, the Faroe Islands have been subjected to outside rule since the first settlement in the pre-Viking era and have been part of the Norwegian, then later Danish kingdoms ever since.⁶²⁵ So although they share a lot of historical and linguistic similarities with Iceland, for example, there are more indicative parallels to be drawn with other island communities. Jaffe says about the Corsican community that there is a form of umbilical cord

⁶²³ Bærenholdt, p. 85.

⁶²⁴ Alexandra Jaffe, *Ideologies in action: Language politics on Corsica* (Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 1999), p. 37.

⁶²⁵ Jóhansen, (1971), pp. 147–157, Arge et. al., p. 597, Edwards et. al., p. 67.

connecting the location and the people and writes ‘departure is never separated from return.’⁶²⁶ Paradoxically, it might seem, Green writes:

Island communities, the Faroe Islands included, have been (and continue to be) intensely interwoven with essential networks of off-island interactions that define island life just as the island’s internal physical, social and cultural features do.⁶²⁷

There is this contrast between being very much connected to the local community, which in turn is defined by the networks created elsewhere and the importance of these networks for Faroese music production.⁶²⁸ With the discussions of the image of the island as an attractive place for tourism as discussed in chapter 5, the island for its inhabitants also has to negotiate the departure/return issue.⁶²⁹ Moving away and returning is what defines a lot of small communities, especially those, like the Faroe Islands, that are located geographically distant from larger countries.⁶³⁰

‘Útlongsulin er stórur, men heimlongsulin er líka sterkur’ (The longing to be abroad is strong, but the longing for home is equally strong), Gaini writes and continues by saying:

Tað útlenska ævintýrið, ið víðkar sjónarringin hjá ungdóminum og gevur høgt mettt minni fyri lívið, er næstan altíð avmarkað til nakrar mánaðir ella nøkur ár. [...] Talan er í stóran mun um lívsskeið, eitt slag av skiftissiði, ið skal geva ein mentanarlígan og sýmbolskan kapital at njóta gott av seinni av lívinum.⁶³¹

The overseas adventure that increases the young peoples’ perspectives and gives a treasured memory for life, is almost always limited to a few months or years. [...] It is a predominately a life-lesson or rite of passage, with the purpose of providing cultural and symbolic capital one can enjoy later in life. Two of my interviewees were Faroese but had lived and studied in Denmark, and they said ‘av tí at man er í Keypmannahavn blívur man meira tjóðskaparligur’ (You become more nationalistic when you are in Copenhagen), which illustrates these conflicting desires of going abroad, with returning ‘home’. The engagement with one’s local culture seems to intensify when being abroad for long periods.⁶³²

Drawing on Ronström’s concept of heritage production, there is a clear distinction

⁶²⁶ Jaffe, p. 53

⁶²⁷ Green, (2013), p. 196.

⁶²⁸ Green (2017), p. 116.

⁶²⁹ This also figures in the way a community sees itself and is not exclusive to tourists or people that do not live in these places. But in Deleuze’s words, the island embodies a certain fantasy. See Deleuze, p. 9-10.

⁶³⁰ Jaffe, p. 69.

⁶³¹ Gaini (2008), p. 159.

⁶³² Gaini (2008), pp. 157-158.

between how smaller communities or island communities produce and utilise heritage.⁶³³ For the Faroe Islands, the ballads are deeply rooted within the ‘tradition’ mindscape but perhaps more for some than for others. The ballads and the Faroese ring-dance have their roots within the Faroese community but are at the same time both a tangible and imagined part of Faroese culture.⁶³⁴ In relation to Gotlandic tourism, Ronström notes that there are downsides to the increased tourism in small communities, where the inhabitants can risk ‘[finding] themselves employed as a kind of live role players, playing themselves as islanders in one of the worlds’ biggest open-air museums’.⁶³⁵ Adam Grydehøj writes that ‘inheritance emanates not from sites and objects themselves but the complex webs of cultural history contextualising them.’⁶³⁶ He argues further that the production of heritage as an industry has to consider these ‘complex webs’ if these initiatives are to prove successful.

This creates a framework for viewing cultures in small communities and contemporary formations of identity. Outside forces have, to some extent, influenced how musicians and the tourism industry and people, in general, have grappled with being attached to the local, whilst also being part of wider networks, so it is pertinent to also consider in more depth how the various relationships and networks are governed. Small communities are very much reliant on the relationship with their surrounding communities, but it is also much more complex than that. This illustrates that when discussing identity formation, whether national, individual or communal, it is important to consider the various aspects of how this formation is governed.⁶³⁷

8.2 Ballads as contemporary culture (and the future of ballad research)

The intention for this projects was always to be a set of building blocks, on which future work can continue to build on, shape or interpret in a myriad of ways. Given

⁶³³ Owe Ronström, ‘A different land: heritage production in the island of Gotland’, in *Shima*, 2 (2008), pp. 1–18, p. 2. <<https://www.shimajournal.org/issues/v2n2/c.-Ronstrom-Shima-v2n2-1-18.pdf>> [Accessed February 2020].

⁶³⁴ ‘Imagined’ is here again referring to Benedict Anderson’s concept of ‘Imagined communities’, and the ballads being part of a larger, communal narrative about what it means to be Faroese and to be brought up in a Faroese context.

⁶³⁵ Ronström, p. 15.

⁶³⁶ Adam Grydehøj, ‘Uninherited heritage: tradition and heritage production in Shetland, Åland and Svalbard’, in *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, 16:1 (2010), pp. 77–89, p. 84. <https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Adam_Grydehoj/publication/230667767_Uninherited_Heritage_Tradition_and_Heritage_Production_in_Shetland_Aland_and_Svalbard/links/09e41502b74f07f38000000/Uninherited-Heritage-Tradition-and-Heritage-Production-in-Shetland-Aland-and-Svalbard.pdf> [Accessed January 2020].

⁶³⁷ Turino, p. 93–94.

that the Faroese ballad tradition is dynamic and diverse, the approaches to studying it within a societal context have to be equally dynamic and diverse. There are trends in using ethnographic approaches as both this thesis and Opielka's work with ballad *skiparir*, are indicative of.⁶³⁸ Relying explicitly on a Nationalistic approach carries connotations that are associated with cultural extremism, fascism and racism, where groups seeking to subjugate others use similar strategies, but for a different gain.⁶³⁹ It is therefore vital that future ballad research is consciously aware of this, not to generate excuses or refrain from even studying it, but to acknowledge that these factors are influential and very much relevant in the current political and cultural climate.⁶⁴⁰

As an area of research, therefore, there are continuous developments taking place that will define how future researchers will approach these questions. The ballads are utilised and promoted as part of Faroese tourism and heritage industry, and through dancing societies, schools and the several archives and publications, the ballads are thoroughly preserved and disseminated for future generations. What then becomes interesting, is the continued production of Faroese ballad heritage. The Faroese tourism industry is growing and it is therefore impossible at this stage to conclude what future effects it will have on Faroese traditions and heritage. Although given that the 'unexplored' and exotic has always been a point of interest for tourists, it is possible to surmise that these things will have ongoing relevance for Faroese tourism. It is therefore especially interesting if future qualitative studies that have their basis in ethnographic, as well as historical inquiry, can offer a more nuanced perspective on the Faroese ballad tradition.

These new ways of engaging with the ballads that have received prominence over the past two decades should not be viewed as just a modernisation of the ballads or the Faroese ballad tradition, but as an interplay between Faroese traditions and the influences of international popular culture. The engagement with ballads in contemporary Faroese culture is neither an organic, nor

⁶³⁸ Opielka (2018).

⁶³⁹ Christensen (2019), pp. 117-119, and Boyarin et al., p. 79.

⁶⁴⁰ I have also discussed the issue of racism and sexism in relation to studying the 'North', in the conference paper 'Whiteness and Masculinity: The 'North', in Faroese Heavy Metal Music', *Norse in the North: Concerning Connections* (University of York, 2019).

a natural development of the Faroese ballad tradition. It is the work and creative output of a lot of individuals, fused with remnants of 19th-century National-Romanticism, contemporary self-exoticism, and just a little bit of heavy metal.

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Appendix 1: *Fruntatáttur* - two stanzas with English translation

Nólsoyar Páll (1803)

1. Vísuna eina vil eg kvøða,
hvørki um fýrkantað ella runt,
ikki um aðra grein at røða,
uttan um gentur, sum klippa frunt.

3. Sikem var so prúður ein glunti,
hansara ráð var illa unt,
Dína hann fiblaði, best henni unti,
tóast hon hevði ikki klipt sær frunt.

English translation:

1. I will now this ballad sing
Neither about square or round
Not about virtues or vices
But about the girls with fringes

3. Sikem was an attractive lad
His body desired by many
He sought to seduce Dinna
Even if she did not have a fringe.

Appendix 2: Svabo's Comparison between Faroese, Icelandic and Danish

Printed in Jens C. Svabo in *Indberetninger fra en Reise I Færøe 1781 og 1782* (København: C.A Reizel, 1976) p. 266. English translation is my own.

Faroese: Ge^an Morgun! Gud signi tee! | | Kve^at eru Ørindi tujni so tujlja aa Modni? Ee ali me^ar til Útire^urar; Kvussu eer Vegri? Kvussu eer atta? Te^a eer got enn, men Ee vajt ikkji kvussu te^a viil teaka see upp me^uti Deï. Viil tú ikkji fe^ara vi? Naj! Kvuj taa? Tuj Ee vanti me^ar ajnkji aa Sje^unum, o te^a eer betri á fe^ara e^at Seji

Icelandic: Góðan morgun! Blessi þig Gud! Hver eru erindi þín svo tíðliga (tímanliga) at morgni? Eg ætli mer til útróðrar. Hversu er vedrit? Hvat er áttin? Þt er gott enn (þá), en eg veit ecki, hvernin þat vill taka sig upp móti deginum. Villt þú ecki fara med? Nei! Hví þá? Því eg vænti mer einkis af sjónum, og þat er betra at fara at saudum (fenu)

Danish: God Morgen! Gud velsigne Dig! Hvad er dit Ærende saa tidlig i Dag? Jeg tænker paa Fiskerie. Hvordan er Vejret? Hvad er Vinden? Det er endnu got, men jeg veed ikke hvordan det vil blive mod Dagningen. Vil Du ikke følge med? Nej! Hvorfor da? Jeg venter ikke at fiske Noget, og det er bedre at see til Faarene i Udmarken.

English: Good morning! God bless you! What are your errands so early in the morning? I plan on going fishing. How is the weather? What is the wind like? What of the direction? It is good so far, but I do not know how it will be like later in the day. Do you want to come along? No! Why not? I do not expect to get anything, then it is better to go check on the sheep in the field.

Appendix 3: The Ballad in Faroese Art Exhibition (2015)

Listasavn Føroya (The Faroese National Art Gallery)

William Heinesen (1900-91). Av gulli voru axlabond/
Of Gold were the Bands across her Shoulders. 1956
Olja á útskorið masonitt, 122 x 202 cm (høvuðstavla)
Tórshavnar Kommunuskúli.

William Heinesen (1900-91): Hann sá standa fyri sær/
He saw standing in front of him. 1956
Olja á útskorið masonitt, 122 x 254 cm (høvuðstavla)
Tórshavnar Kommunuskúli

William Heinesen (1900-91): Tað søgdu honum vildi fuglar/
Thus spoke the wild Birds. 1956
Olja á útskorið masonitt, 122 x 254 cm (høvuðstavla)
Tórshavnar Kommunuskúli

William Heinesen (1900-91): Guðrun gongur í grasagarð/
Guðrun walks in the Garden. 1956
Olja á útskorið masonitt, 122 x 512 cm (høvuðstavla)
Tórshavnar Kommunuskúli

William Heinesen (1900-91): Drekarbardagin/ The Dragon Fight. 1957
Vatnlitir, tusj og litkrit, 60 x 50 cm.
Privatogn

William Heinesen (1900-91): Drekarbardagin/ The Dragon Fight.
Pappírsklipp, 58,5 x 51 cm
Privatogn

Janus Kamban (1913-2009): Dansiringur/

The Chain of Dance. 1956

Bronsa, h. 51 cm

BankNordik, Tórshavn

Janus Kamban (1913-2009):

Føroyskur dansur/

Faroese Dance

Terracotta, 32,50 x 50 cm

Privatogn

Edward Fuglø (1965): The Seagull Has Landed, detail. 2012

Akrýl á lørift, 200 x 850 cm

Skúlin við Ósáanna, Klaksvík

Astri Luihn (1949): Ballads and knitting Patterns, 1-18. 2015. Akrýl á træ,

18 x (42,5 x 42,5 cm)

Ogn Astri Luihn

Astri Luihn (1949): Tað søgdu honum vildi fuglar/

Thus spoke the wild Birds. 2015.

Akrýl og sverta á á útskornari linoplátu, 60 x 50 cm

Ogn Astri Luihn

Astri Luihn (1949): Ert tú har enn? 1-2/

Are you still here? 1-2. 2006

Akrýl og sverta á lørift, 230 x 190 cm

Ogn Astri Luihn

Astri Luihn (1949): Jesus á Glitrarheiði/ Jesus on the Glittering Heath. 2006. Acrylic

and ink on canvas, 120 x 120 cm

Listasavn Føroya

Samuel Joensen-Mikines (1906-79): Føroyskur dansur/ Faroese Dance. 1944. Olja á lørift, 144 x 190 cm

Listasavn Føroya

Olivur við Neyst (1953): Føroyskur dansur/ Faroese Dance. 1986

Olja á træ, 56,5 x 84,5 cm.

Privatogn

Olivur við Neyst (1953): Dansur/ Dance. 1999

Olja á lørift, 100 x 120 cm

Listasavn Føroya

Ingi Joensen (1953): Aftur dansurin/ After the Dance. (1992-2015)

Inkprint, 90 x 135 cm.

Ogn Ingi Joensen

Axel Emil Krause (1971-1945): Dansiringur í roykstovuni.

The Chain of Dance in the *Roykstova* (Smoke Room/ Old Kitchen). (1904)

Olja á lørift, 85 x 126 cm

Tórshavnar kommuna

Appendix 4: Faroese stamps with ballad motifs



Figure 1: Harra Pætur og Elinborg (1982) Posta.

Figure 2: Skrímsla (1986)

Posta. Artst: Bárður Jákupsson

Artist: Bárður Jákupsson



Figure 3: Føroyskt kvæði - Brúsaþekki
(1994) Posta. Artist: Bárður Jákupsson



Figure 5: Europa 1981: Føroyskur dansur (1981) Posta. Czesław Slania engraved

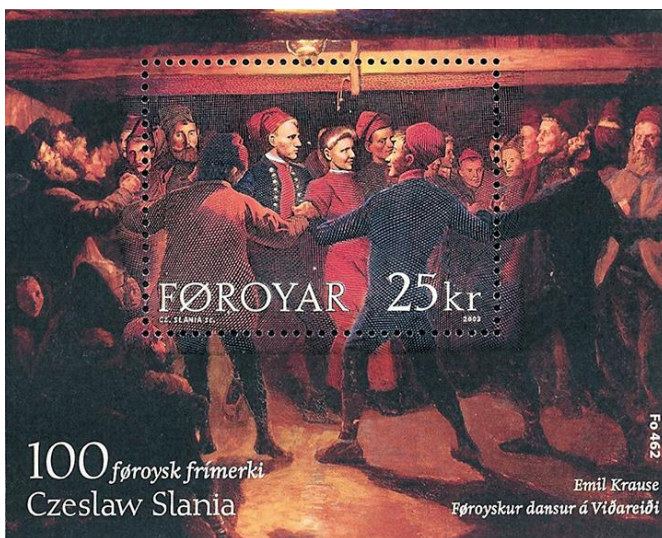


Figure 4: Slania nr.100 (2003) Posta. Czesław Slania engraved. Artist: Emil Krause

Appendix 5: Interview notes

Participants:

The people interviewed varied in age and occupations. The age range was roughly between 20 and 70, and participants were equally distributed between male and female. All participants spoke Faroese or Danish.

Number of people interviewed: 18

Location: The Faroe Islands: Tórshavn, Klaksvík and Sundalagið.

Languages: Faroese and Danish

Rationale:

Since this study only seeks to provide a small insight into people's engagement with the ballads, only people who actively engage in practices involving ballads (scholarly interest, members of dancing societies, teaching the ballads in schools, musicians) were invited to partake. During the recruitment, the focus was on approaching people and institutions that fitted in with the particular target group. As the fieldwork was dependent upon being in the Faroe Islands it was spread over the course of several trips. To access potential participants, the first point of call was to get in touch with organisations that could forward my request to their members or contacts. Each one of the participants that is part of this study has different experiences and opinions and by allowing for a multitude of views all juxtaposed to each other creates a more nuanced and less constrictive look at how the ballads function within contemporary Faroese society and exemplify how people engage with them. This approach is also reflected in the open-ended interview questions. My (vocal) involvement was kept to a minimum and I was conscious of trying not to interrupt, even if the conversation went slightly off-topic or there were long pauses. One main reason for this is that I experienced in one of my first interviews that it was very valuable to talk around the subject before getting to the crux of the matter, allowing a varied and multi-dimensional answer to the questions. The participants also frequently said interesting and valuable things that would not have been included otherwise. This was a feature that influenced the structure of the interview process

Interview Questions:

The interview question set consisted of 10-15 questions or prompts that allowed for an open conversation about ballads that remained slightly guided.

The first questions were more of a personal nature, asking about the participants' personal interest and the history behind it (for example 'Do you remember when you first heard/read ballads? Can you tell me a bit about it?') This initial question allowed for a moment in which it was not just about gathering information from the participant, but as a moment where we could share and discuss our introduction to the ballads and how that experience formed our later commitment. The rest of the questions can loosely be defined within five key areas:

1. Participants' personal interest in the ballads. Besides the introductory question, the participants were asked to explain in little more detail about what shapes their interest in the ballads and were, for example, asked 'What is your favourite ballad and why?', 'How do you learn or study ballads – do you prefer to read or listen to them?'
2. The experience of performing the ballads, either as dancer, musician, actor and so on. For members of dancing societies, these questions revolved around dance performances and discussing how it as a collective performance shapes the experience of the ballads. For musicians, these questions revolved around the very act of re-writing or performing a ballad shaped their experience. Teachers for example were asked how the act of teaching a particular ballad shaped their experience of listening to or performing it in other contexts.
3. The perception of how Faroese ballad tradition has changed over time. This was dependant on many factors, so the initial question was for example 'How long have you been a member this dancing society/band/troop?' and then discuss the possible changes that have occurred during that particular period.
4. Perceptions and opinions about ballads being reworked in other media. This was a question only presented to those who do not work on reinterpreting the ballads, as I was interested in seeing how others who engage with the ballads on a more

traditional level reacted to this. These questions revolved mostly around the participants' subjective thoughts on the matter so for example 'What are your thoughts on contemporary music performances involving the ballads?' and to get them to reflect onto the Faroese ballad heritage, 'How do you see this impacting on the tradition of ballads and ballad performances?'

5. Anticipating the future of ballads in Faroese culture. This last area of questions allowed the participants to reflect on their engagement with the ballads and provide their voice as to how they see the ballads shaping Faroese culture and muse on how that might change over time. The questions consisted of simple prompts like 'what do you think the state of ballads will be in 10-20 years? The participants were also asked 'how, in your opinion, are the ballads being maintained/preserved in everyday practises?' as I was also interested in seeing how they viewed the current acts to preserve and promote the Faroese ballad tradition, either through their personal practice or through Faroese institutions, for example by schools or governmental bodies.

Appendix 6: Ólavur Riddararós (ballad)

CCF 154 A, TSB A 63

1 “Hvørt skalt tú ríða,

Ólavur mín?

- kol og smiður við -

í lofti hongur brynja tín.”

- Ungir kallar, kátir kallar,

gangið upp á gólv, dansið

lystilig!

2 “Eg fari mæð á heiði,

ta villini hind at veiða.”

3“Tú fert ikki at veiða

hind,

men tú fert til tína

leikalind.

4 Hvít er tín skjúrtan, væl

er hon tvigin,

í blóði verður hon av tær

drigin.

5 Hvít er tín skjúrtan, væl

er hon skorin,

í blóði so verður hon

aftur borin.”

6 Ólavur snúðist síni

móður frá:

“Gud gevi ikki ganga, sum
mæð er spáað.”

7 Ólavur ríður eftir

bjørgunum fram,

fann upp á eitt elvarrann.

8 Ólavur ríður eftir

bjørgunum fús,

fann hann á eitt elvarhús.

9 Út kom eitt tað

elvarfljóð,

flættað hár á herðar dró.

10 Út kom ein av

elvunum tá,

flættað hár á herðar lá.

11 “Ver vælkomin, Ólavur

Riddararós,

tú gakk í dansin og kvøð

for os!”

12 “Tú tarvt ikki flætta

títt hár for meg,

eg eri ikki komin at biðja

teg.”

13 “Ert tú ikki komin at

biðja meg,

eg havi ikki aktað at eiga

teg.”

14 “Eg kann ikki meira hjá

elvum bó,

í morgin skal eg mítt

brúdleyp snó.

15 Eg kann ikki longur hjá

elvum vera,

í morgin lati eg mítt

brúdleyp gera.”

16 “Vilt tú ikki meiri hjá

elvum bó,

sjúkur skalt tú títt

brúdleyp snó.

17 Vilt tú ikki longur hjá

elvum vera,

sjúkur skalt tú títt

brúdleyp gera.

18 Hvat heldur vilt tú sjú

vintur liggja sjúk,

ella vilt tú í morgin liggja

lík?

19 Hvat heldur vilt tú sjú
vintur liggja á strá,
ella vilt tú í morgin til
moldar gá?”

20 “Tveir eru kostirnir,
hvørgin er mjúkur,
ilt er at liggja leingi
sjúkur.

21 Fyrr vil eg í morgin
liggja lík,
enn eg vil liggja sjú vintur
sjúk.

22 Fyrr vil eg í morgin til
moldar gá,
enn eg vil sjú vintur liggja
á strá.”

23 Hon bar fram eitt
drykkjugar,
eiturkomið í tí var.

24 Hon bar fram eitt
drykkjusteyp,
eiturkornið í tí fleyt.

25 Hon skonkti honum í
drykkjuhorn,
har fór í tað eiturkorn.

26 Tann fyrsta drykkin, ið
Ólavur drakk,
hans breiða belti um
hann sprakk.

27 “Hoyr tú, Ólavur fríði,
tú kyss meg, áðrenn tú
ríður!”

28 Ólavur studdist við
saðilboga,
hann kysti ta moy av
lítlum huga.

29 Hann kysti hana so
mjúkan,
hon sveik hann so sjúkan.

30 “Tú sig tíni móður, tá
ið tú kemur heim,
tín foli snublaði um ein
stein.”

31 Ólavur heim í garðin
fór,
úti hans móðir fyri
honum stóð.

32 “Hví ert tú so følin, hví
ert tú so bleik,
sum tú hevði verið í
elvarleik?”

33 “Mín kæra móðir, eg
sigi tær sann,
mín foli snublaði um ein
stein.

34 Tí eri eg følin, tí eri eg
bleik,
í gjár var eg í elvarleik.

35 Tí eri eg følin, tí eri eg
[sum] bast,
í gjár var eg í elvarlast.”

36 Ólavur vendist til
veggin brátt,
hann doyði langt fyri
midnátt.

37 Har komu av tí búda,
trý lík, tey vóru so prúda.

38 Tað fyrsta var Ólav,
tað annað hans vív,
tað triðja hans móðir,
hon læt sítt lív.

39 Tað fyrsta var Ólav,
tað annað hans moy,
- kol og smiður við —
tað triðja hans móðir, av
sorg hon doyði.

- Ungir kallar, kátir kallar, gangið upp á gólv, dansið lystillig!	"Vilt tú ekki meira hjá álvum vera, kol og smiður við sjúkan skal eg títt brúdleyp gera"	Braided hair on shoulders lay Young lads...
Valravn's version:		"Be welcome Olaf Knightrose with coal and smith come to the dance and sing for us" Young lads...
Ólavur ríður eftir bjøgunum fram kol og smiður við fann hann upp á eitt álvarann ungir kallar, kátir kallar, gangið upp á golv dansíð lystillig	"Fyrr vil eg í morgin til moldar gá, kol og smiður við enn eg vil sjeý vetur liggja á strá." Ungir kallar...	("I can no longer stay with the elves for tomorrow I will wed")
Út tá kom eitt tað álvafljóð, kol og smiður við flættað hár á herðar dró Ungir kallar...	Hon skonkti honum í drykkjuhorn kol og smiður við har fór í tað eitukorn Ungi kallar... English translation: Olaf rides along the mountains with coal and smith He came upon an elven house Young lads, happy lads, step up on the floor dance merrily	Will you no longer stay with the elves with coal and smith Sick I shall make your wedding (?)
"Ver vælkomin, harra Riddararós, kol og smiður við kom og dans og kvøð fyri os" Ungir kallar...		I would rather be buried tomorrow with coal and smith Then lie ill for seven winters Young lads...
("Eg kann ekki meira hjá álvum vera, í morgin lati eg mítt brúdleyp gera")	Out came an elven maiden with coal and smith	She filled him a drinking horn with coal and smith

in it went a grain of poison	Fann hann upp á eitt álvarann	-Kol og smiður við Í morgin lati eg mitt brúðleyp gera
Týr's version:	-Ungir kallar, kátir kallar, gangið upp á gólv	Ungir kallar, kátir kallar, gangið upp á gólv
Hvørt skal tú riða, Ólavur mín	Dansið lystilig	Dansið lystilig
Á lofti hongur brynja tín	Út kom eitt tað álvafljóð	
Tú fer ikki at veiða tað hind	-Kol og smiður við Flættað hár á herðar dró	Hvat heldur vilt tú sje vetur liggja á strá
Men tú fer til tína leikalind	Ver vælkominn Ólavur Riddararós	-Kol og smiður við Ella vil tú í morgin til moldar gá
Hvít er skjúrtan, val er hon tvigin	-Kol og smiður við Tú gakk í dans og kvøð fyri oss	Hon skonti honum í drykkjuhorn
Í blóði verur hon av tær drigin	Ungir kallar, kátir kallar, gangið upp á gólv Dansið lystilig	-Kol og smiður við Har fór í tað eiturkorn
Ólavur snúðist síni móður frá	Tú tarvt ikki flætta títt hár fyri meg	Ungir kallar, kátir kallar, gangið upp á gólv Dansið lystilig
Gud gevi ikki ganga sum mær er spáa	-Kol og smiður við Eg eri ikki komin at biðja teg	Ólavur studdist við saðilboga
-Ungir kallar, kátir kallar, gangið upp á gólv Dansið lystilig	Ungir kallar, kátir kallar, gangið upp á gólv Dansið lystilig	-Kol og smiður við Hann kysti tá moy av lítlum huga.
Ólavur ríður eftir bjørgunum fram		
-Kol og smiður við	Eg kann ikki meira hjá álvum vera	English translation:

Where are you going, Olaf your armour hangs in the attic	dance merrily Olaf rides along the mountains -with coal and smith He came upon an elven house	I can no longer stay with the elves for tomorrow I will wed What would you rather, lie ill for seven winters or be buried tomorrow
You are not going to hunt for deer you are going to your mistress	Out came an elven maiden Plaided hair on shoulders lay	She filled him a drinking- horn in it went a grain of poison
White is your shirt, well has it been washed It will be taken of you in blood	Be welcome Olaf Knightrose come to the dance and sing for us	Olaf leaned on the saddlebow -with coal and smith as he reluctantly kissed the maiden
Olav turned away from his mother God grant that it does not go as it has been foretold	You need not plaid your hair for me I have not come to ask for you	Young lads, happy lads, step up on the floor dance merrily
Young lads, happy lads, step up on the floor		