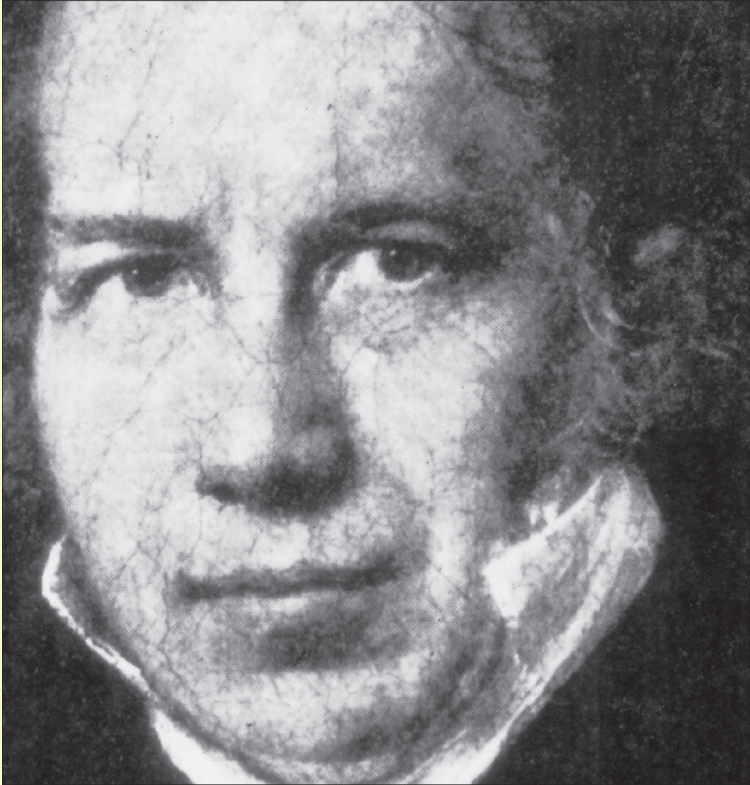


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# Grundtvig Studier 2019

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Fagfællebedømte artikler og ph.d.-præsentationer

## Praising the Pagan Gods: N.F.S. Grundtvig's Civil Religious Poetization of the Pagan Past

*Sophie Bønding*

N.F.S. Grundtvig is widely regarded as a founding father of the modern day Church of Denmark and of the Danish nation. Yet, the structural isomorphism (or parallelism) of his reflections concerning community-formation and social cohesion in the Christo-religious and the national-secular spheres of his authorship has received little scholarly attention. Applying the scholarly concept of “civil religion” as a heuristic tool, this article argues that Grundtvig’s use of Old Norse mythology in the secular sphere of Danish communal life was significantly influenced by religious modes of thinking and by exegetical strategies acquired through his theological education and pastoral office. Focusing on the *Brage-Snak* lectures (1844), this article argues that Grundtvig treated Old Norse mythology as “civil religious” scripture by expounding and actualizing it in relation to current secular affairs through a typological strategy of exegesis. Thereby, he hoped to initiate a “civil religious” awakening through which Old Norse mythology would become part of Danish oral culture and be cultivated as the root of collective self-awareness. In these terms, Grundtvig attempted to channel from Old Norse mythology a world view and an ethos that were authentic to the people, and the *Brage-Snak* lectures as performances can be seen as attempts to make world view and ethos merge and spill over into every-day life.

The twin interests of church and nation in Grundtvig’s authorship are well known. His ambitions for religious and national revivals are widely

recognized and part of the general scholarly discourse on Grundtvig.<sup>1</sup> As a religious reformer, he denounced the text-centred focus of contemporary university theology and, in his visions for educational reform, he exhibited similar disdain for fixation on the written word. Instead, he wanted to build the Christian church community and the secular national community upon the “living word.” In the church- and nation-oriented spheres of his authorship, Grundtvig reflected on how to establish community and communal identity and how to foster social cohesion. Yet, despite points of convergence between his twin interests of church and nation, the structural isomorphism (or parallelism) of his reflections on community formation in the two spheres has not received much scholarly attention. Thus, the present article aims to shed light on an area of Grundtvig research that, although not entirely neglected (Baunvig 2013; 2014), deserves further scholarly attention.

In what follows, I focus on Grundtvig’s ideas about and initiatives towards introducing Old Norse mythology as the foundation of a Danish secular, national community. While it has been noticed that Grundtvig’s ideas about history and his treatment of historical material were significantly influenced by Christian frames of interpretation (Malone 1940; Vind 1999; Auken 2005), and while Old Norse mythology has been regarded as a crucial part of his historical construct (Holm 2001), the religious flavour of Grundtvig’s utilization of Old Norse mythology remains insufficiently studied (although touched upon by Baunvig 2014). In this article, I examine Grundtvig’s treatment of Old Norse mythology through the lens of the scholarly concept of civil religion – especially as defined by Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1762) and Robert N. Bellah (1967). This perspective can help identify and clarify religious assumptions and modes of thinking that underlie Grundtvig’s use of Old Norse mythology in the national sphere. Thereby, it can help clarify the structural isomorphism of Grundtvig’s use of Old Norse mythological material in the national sphere and his use of biblical material in the churchly<sup>2</sup> sphere. It is argued

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<sup>1</sup> This is evident from a wide range of scholarly works, including Malone (1940), Lundgreen-Nielsen (1997), Baunvig (2013), Korsgaard (2018), and Holm (2019).

<sup>2</sup> The term “churchly” is a direct translation of the Danish “kirkelig” which means “pertaining to the church.” Grundtvig advocated a non-confessional State Church that allowed for different denominations, or confessional groupings, within the overarching churchly community (Lyby 1993; Holm 2012).



that Grundtvig's treatment of Old Norse mythology can adequately be described as an attempt at a civil religious awakening. It can also be argued that Grundtvig sought to introduce Old Norse mythology as "civil religious scripture," which could form the bedrock of the secular, national community insofar as it was actualized and, thereby, vitalized among the Danes as a living symbolic repertoire and a narrative story world.

At the outset, it should be emphasized that the concept of "civil religion" is an etic category, a heuristic scholarly tool. Therefore, I do not suggest that Grundtvig would have used this concept to designate his ideas about and ambitions for the Danish national community, had it been available to him.<sup>3</sup> Nevertheless, it is a useful conceptual tool for analysing what Grundtvig did with Old Norse mythology. Thus, this article is a religio-historical contribution to what is known as the "mythological" branch of Grundtvig research, as especially represented by literary scholars Flemming Lundgreen-Nielsen (1965; 1980; 1994; 2018) and Sune Auken (2005; forthcoming). In addition, this article aims to strengthen the connection between the "mythological" branch of study and branches focused on Grundtvig's ideas about the Danish people, nation, and state (Lundgreen-Nielsen 1980; 1992; 1994; Damsholt 1995; 2003; Vind 1999; Møller 2014; Baunvig 2013; 2014; Hall, Korsgaard & Pedersen, ed. 2015).<sup>4</sup>

### Empirical focus and historical context

This article is focused on the mid-nineteenth century, beginning in 1832 with *Nordens Mythologi* which was Grundtvig's first prose publication to express ideas about the significance of Old Norse mythology for the founding of the Danish national community.<sup>5</sup> The textual focus is on *Brage-Snak* from 1844 which presents the same view of mythology as

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<sup>3</sup> Grundtvig was familiar with Rousseau's *Du Contract Social* (1762) where the concept *religion civile* was coined. But the scholarly concept as developed in the modern Study of Religion was, obviously, unknown to him.

<sup>4</sup> Other important contributors to the "mythological" branch of study are Helge Toldberg (1946; 1950), Kaj Thaning (1963), Andreas Haarder (1983), and Ægidius (1985).

<sup>5</sup> I do not regard 1832 as a radical break in Grundtvig's practices of interpreting Old Norse mythology. As Auken notes, *Nordens Mythologi* (1832) is simply the

defined in *Nordens Mythologi* (1832), but which, due to its genre, offers especially interesting perspectives into how Grundtvig used Old Norse mythology. Whereas *Nordens Mythologi* (1832) outlines theoretical views of Old Norse mythology and presents interpretations of central myths and mythological figures, *Brage-Snak* (1844) is a collection of manuscripts from a series of public lectures. While *Brage-Snak* does explicate Grundtvig's theoretical views of mythology, it more tellingly puts his treatment of the material into practice and demonstrates how it can be actualized and vitalized in the present.<sup>6</sup>

Grundtvig believed that Old Norse mythology offered a solution to pertinent challenges facing Danish society in his day. In both spheres of his authorship (the churchly and the secular), he reacted to the individualization, differentiation, and secularization of the modern age;<sup>7</sup> in fact, these processes seem to have determined and necessitated the very split of his authorship into two spheres. In other words, Grundtvig was a thinker of secularization. To use Max Weber's terms, Grundtvig accepted that in modern society, religion and secular affairs would come to constitute two different spheres of rationality (Weber 2002 [1919]). This occasioned him to reflect on the foundation of secular society now that it could no longer be founded on confessional Christianity. Thus, the present study is concerned with Grundtvig as a theorist of secular community formation (cf. Korsgaard 2004; Damsholt 1995; 2003; Baunvig 2014).<sup>8</sup>

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point where Grundtvig brings his theoretical exposition of Old Norse mythology to align with his poetical practices since 1815 (Auken 2005, 299, 529-530).

<sup>6</sup> For an introduction to *Brage-Snak*, including a discussion of its genre and the relation between the lectures as text and as events, see Bønding (2017). For the public lecture as a genre in Grundtvig's works, see Baunvig (2014).

<sup>7</sup> The challenge of the modern age to the formation of national communities was, of course, a Europe-wide phenomenon, see below.

<sup>8</sup> Thaning (1963) and others (cf. Nielsen 2002) have understood Grundtvig as a theologian of secularization. I agree that Grundtvig as a thinker of secularization was concerned with adapting Christianity to the modern age but want to stress that this seems (at least primarily) to be predicated on a level-headed acceptance of secularization as an unavoidable fact. Space does not allow me to pursue this any further, nor can I treat Thaning's disputed thesis about this secularizing motion in 1832 to constitute what Thaning has termed Grundtvig's existential break with himself. For an attempt to test Thaning's thesis through digital methods, see Baunvig & Nielbo (2017).

In more concrete terms, Grundtvig accepted the collapse of Christian monoculture as an inevitable fact. This collapse meant that neither the Danish monarchy nor the State Church could maintain its status as an incontestable societal institution. The monarchy was being challenged by ideas about democratic constitutions, and the State Church was losing authority as Christianity was no longer accepted as the obvious pre-condition for human existence. New common frames of reference were needed (Bønding 2018; forthcoming). In addition, the French Revolution (1789-1799) loomed large in Grundtvig's writings as an intimidating lesson that had to be remembered when preparing Danish society and the Danish Church for the new age. Revolutionary currents still running through Europe, especially visible in the revolutions of the 1830s (and again in 1848), served as reminders of the urgency of reform (Nevers 2011, 65-93).<sup>9</sup> As the following sections demonstrate, Grundtvig responded to that urgency by seeking to introduce Old Norse mythology as the foundation of a Danish cultural community, and he attempted to vitalize it as a symbolic and narrative universe that could provide a new frame of reference and a source of social cohesion for the socially and geographically heterogeneous Danish population.<sup>10</sup>

### Gods and myths as poetical creations

In *Nordens Mythologi* (1832), Grundtvig proposed that the Christian-religious and the human-secular dimensions of human life belong to distinct spheres. He singled out Old Norse mythology as an important material that, on the one hand, contained a key to understanding human life as

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<sup>9</sup> Grundtvig's scepticism about democracy is well-known (Lundgreen-Nielsen 1998; Nevers 2011; Korsgaard 2015). Around 1849, the public was generally sceptical about democracy which was associated with revolution and societal disintegration (Nevers 2011), only a small group of people (connected to the Hippodrome movement) saw democracy as a positive phenomenon (Nygaard 2011). Still, it was generally accepted that a constitutional government that would result from the constitutional debate would contain a democratic element (Møller 2014, 543).

<sup>10</sup> Behind this formulation lies Ove Korsgaard's demonstration that Grundtvig's lifetime saw the transition from an age of estates to an age of "the people" (Korsgaard 2004; 2015).

a universal phenomenon and, on the other hand, was crucial for understanding the particular Nordic way of life (Thaning 1963).<sup>11</sup> This proposal re-evaluated the status of pre-Christian paganism, at least of its conceptual content, while rejecting its ritual dimension.

In the broader European (and Danish) perspective, Grundtvig was by no means alone in this positive re-evaluation of the pre-Christian past. From Germany to Estonia, Norway, and Britain, cultural “influencers” of the time (re)invented the pre-Christian pasts of their respective national communities in an attempt to create a sense of legitimacy and autonomy and/or to underpin emancipatory ambitions. Indeed, mythography largely constituted a form of nation building (Shippey 2005; Leerssen 2016). This cultural climate included a general discursive shift whereby traditional negative stereotypes of barbaric pagans were transformed to positive images of Europe’s indigenous populations, as their pre-Christian world views came to be interpreted as expressions of primeval national characters (cf. Halink 2017, 479; Zernack 2018). The search for national authenticity singled out the categories of vernacular mythology and language as the primary links to the peoples’ primordial pasts. Mythology and language were therefore labelled as individual peoples’ authentic mode of self-articulation and invoked as anchors for the new national communities under formation. This was a Romantic paradigm, profoundly influenced by Johann Gottfried Herder (1744-1803), not least by the idea of *das Volksgeist*, a people’s collective spirit (e.g. Herder 1792; Leerssen 2013, 2018; Liamin 2018). As regards the establishment of mythology as a national category, it was Grundtvig’s contemporary Jacob Grimm (1785-1863) who became the major European trendsetter with his *Deutsche Mythologie* in 1835 (published after Grundtvig’s *Nordens Mythologi* in 1832 but well before *Brage-Snak* in 1844; a second edition of *Deutsche Mythologie* followed in 1844). This work was widely disseminated and widely read – undergirded by Grimm’s encouragements to intelligentsia across Europe to establish their own national mythologies (Shippey 2005; Halink 2018).<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> By presenting this as a matter of consensus, I do not mean to disregard the many critics of Thaning’s thesis that point to continuity in Grundtvig’s thinking across the year 1832 (for a brief overview, see Auken 2005, 58-62).

<sup>12</sup> In retrospect, it is clear that Grimm attempted to establish a new Romantic paradigm in comparative mythology as a counterpart to the revolutionary New Philology, which by this time was well established, seminally influenced by

Grundtvig, along with like-minded contemporary Danes, fiercely opposed German appropriation of Old Norse mythology which the Danes themselves had appropriated as Danish and Nordic heritage. Grundtvig was, nevertheless, inspired by the same Romantic ideas, seeing Old Norse mythology as a vital mode of articulation of the spirit of the people.<sup>13</sup> Thus, with the Romantic paradigm amounting to outright “mythomania” (Halink 2018) on a Europe-wide scale, the imagological battle over claim to “the North” as a transnational concept and over Old Norse or Germanic mythology as cultural heritage constitutes a tacit backdrop to this article (see Shippey 2005; Leerssen 2016; Grage & Mohinke 2017; Halink 2018). While Grundtvig’s concern for establishing a collective Danish identity cannot be separated from this international battle, the focus of this article is his concern for defining the in-group among the members themselves or, in other words, to create a sense of a “we” as a relevant and meaningful category.

The *Brage-Snak* lectures, given in 1843-1844 and published in 1844, constitute a privileged entry-point for an exploration of Grundtvig’s attempt to create a Danish cultural community. In these lectures, Grundtvig argued against a number of his proclaimed enemies but his main adversaries were advocates of a scholarly, rationalist approach to mytholo-

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Grimm’s own *Deutsche Grammatik* (Shippey 2005; Halink 2018). This New Philology is not to be confused with the much more recent so-called “new” or “material” philology that has formed part of contemporary philology since the 1990s (Nichols 1990; see also Driscoll 2010).

<sup>13</sup> Even Rasmus Rask (1787-1832), who did not share his contemporaries’ Romantic sentiments, took their side in the Danish-German battle, sharing the view of Old Norse mythology as Scandinavian heritage (Blom 2013; forthcoming). Lundgreen-Nielsen (1983) has explored the influence of Romanticism on Grundtvig’s view of Old Norse mythology (also Auken 2005, 15-45). Lundgreen-Nielsen understands the Romantic influence on Grundtvig as a row of isolated points of contact with specific Romantic thinkers (Herder, Fichte, Schilling, among others) scattered throughout Grundtvig’s mythological works. He concludes that Grundtvig was inspired by Romanticism as a literary and philosophical trend in his youth but later distanced himself from it. However, he briefly indicates a post-1832 acceptance of central Romantic ideas as part of a general cultural current (Lundgreen-Nielsen 1983, 41). It is this broader cultural current, also inspired by Herder, that I wish to draw attention to. On the distinction between a narrow and a broad Romanticism, see Baunvig (2013, 29-36).

gy.<sup>14</sup> The first lecture included a number of introductory remarks where Grundtvig laid out his approach to mythology, making it clear that he did not believe in the gods:

of course I believe as little in the gods and goddesses of Greeks and Northmen as in those of the Egyptians and the Chinese; but I can see that all the gods and goddesses that people have created, have their living basis in the people and in the mouth of the skald that created them; they therefore hover vividly [Danish *levende*: ‘alive’] before my eyes, ... so, to me, the myths of the peoples are the most vivid expressions of their highest thoughts, their deepest feelings, and their clearest sight, their base-poetry or the prophecy-song, which was sung by their cradle.<sup>15</sup>

Grundtvig understood pagan gods and myths about them as products of human imagination – poetic creations specific to each individual people whose collective thoughts, feelings, and visions they expressed. The myths of a people were their “base-poetry” [Grund-Poesi], their authentic self-articulation. He imagined the people as a collective entity and saw their mythology as rooted in their collective past (“sung by their cradle”).<sup>16</sup> Moreover, he emphasized the rootedness of myths in an oral mode of communication (stemming from the “mouth of the skald” and “sung” to the people). We shall return to this below.

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<sup>14</sup> Grundtvig’s adversaries often remain unnamed, but a major representative of this view was Finnur Magnússon (1781-1847) (Bønding; forthcoming).

<sup>15</sup> jeg troer naturligviis ligesaalidt paa Grækens og Nordboers som paa Ægypters og Chinesers Guder og Gudinder; men jeg kan see, at alle de Guder og Gudinder, som Folk har skabt, de havde deres levende Grund i det Folk og den Skjalde-Mund, der skabte dem, derfor svæve de mig levende for Øine, ... saa Folkenes Myther er mig de livligste Udtryk for deres høieste Tanker, dybeste Følelser og klareste Blik, deres Grund-Poesi eller Spaadoms-Visen, der blev sunget for deres Vugge (1844, 9).

<sup>16</sup> Scholars have thoroughly described Grundtvig’s views of phylo- and ontogenetic development of individual peoples and connected those views to his understanding of universal history (Vind 1999; Baunvig 2013, 65-67). These views of Grundtvig’s largely match general understandings of *Völker* reaching back to Herder (e.g. 1792, cf. above).

Grundtvig further presented his understanding of Old Norse mythology as a figurative, poetic language, having two functions: it could work as an artistic language and, far more importantly, it could serve as a key to self-awareness.

Not only will their natural image-language in the present age<sup>17</sup> be an artistic language which they can use, just as vivid and merry as the German and the scholastic languages are dead and boring, but they [the people] will also be able to mirror themselves in it with all their natural dispositions and desires, virtues and vices, and learn from it what all peoples are now lacking yet cannot live without, knowledge about themselves, about their distinctive human life, which in order to flourish, must first and foremost be continued.<sup>18</sup>

The Nordic people had its own unique life. This life had a telos and in order to reach this telos, the people had to orient themselves towards their mythology, which, as a poetic image-language, bore a potential for self-identification. It contained information about who they truly were, what their dispositions and desires, virtues, and vices were. Through it, the people could attain knowledge about themselves. Thus, Old Norse mythology was a guide for the people's collective self-development in tune with its inherent nature. The life of the people had a destined trajectory that was currently broken and had to be mended in order for the people's life to unfold and flourish (Bønding 2018; forthcoming).<sup>19</sup> This is why, Old Norse

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<sup>17</sup> *Vidskabs-Tiden* (*Vidskab* meaning philosophy) is one of the terms Grundtvig used for the time in which he lived, cf. his understanding of universal history (Vind 1999).

<sup>18</sup> ikke blot vil deres *naturlige Billed-Sprog* være dem i Vidskabs-Tiden et *Konst-Sprog*, ligesaa livligt og lysteligt, som det *Tydske* og *Skolastiske* er dødt og kiedsommeligt, men de vil kunne speile sig deri med alle deres naturlige Anlæg og Attraaer, Dyder og Lyder, og deraf lære, hvad nu alle Folk fattes og kan dog igrunnen ikke undvære, Forstand paa sig selv, paa sit eiendommelige Menneske-Liv, der, for at klare sig og kronas, maa fremfor Alt virkelig *fortsættes* (1844, 9).

<sup>19</sup> Grundtvig shared this understanding of the present as deficient with nation builders all over Europe at the time (cf. Smith 1997; Leerssen 2016). His understanding of mythology as a source to the essence of the people is clearly influenced by Romantic ideas reaching back to Herder.

mythology needed to be propagated among the entire Danish population – through folk-enlightenment.

This understanding of mythology is consistent with Grundtvig's theoretical exposition in *Nordens Mythologi* (1832), where he separated Old Norse mythology from the sphere of religion. Mythology did not contain any religious truth but was a poetic expression of an authentic Nordic outlook on life; the myths and the mythological agents in them were attestations of how Nordic peoples once understood their world and their place in it. As poetic articulations of a collectively held world view, Old Norse mythology could be viewed as an anthropological rather than a theological matter, and as such it did not clash with Christianity (Auken 2005, 489-491).<sup>20</sup>

### Old Norse mythology as civil religious scripture

The Danish historian Michael Böss notes that scholarly examinations of Grundtvig's ideas concerning the Danish people are rarely explicitly founded in theory (Böss 2013, 57). This article aims, therefore, to bring theoretical depth to our understanding of Grundtvig's use of Old Norse mythology as a means to establish a cultural community among the Danish population. The concept of civil religion is a useful heuristic tool that can help us grasp the religious flavour of Grundtvig's utilization of Old Norse mythology. It is an analytical category connected to concerns of national cohesion and the legitimacy of the state. The concept of civil religion first entered modern political thought in Jean-Jacques Rousseau's *Du contrat sociale* [The Social Contract] from 1762. Addressing the relation between religion and state in a modern religiously pluralistic society, Rousseau argued that religion was fundamental to securing the order of

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<sup>20</sup> Grundtvig was not unique in this separation of mythology from religion; this distinction had been the prevalent (although not uncontradicted) understanding among European intelligentsia since P.H. Mallet's *Historie de Dannemarc* (1763 2nd ed.) where, in vein of the enlightenment, pre-Christian Nordic myth was classified as poetry and treated separately from expositions of pre-Christian Nordic religion (Zernack 2018, 260). Nevertheless, in his early mythological writings (until 1810), Grundtvig did attribute a confessional dimension to Old Norse mythology as the remains of Nordic paganism.



the state. As traditional organized religion (Christianity), in his opinion, only led to strife and oppression, he advocated a *religion civile* separate from organized religion and consisting of a set of sentiments, convictions, and commitments formulated in dogma that calls for “the existence of the powerful, intelligent, beneficent, prescient, and provident Divinity, the life to come, the happiness of the just, the punishment of the wicked, the sanctity of the social contract and the laws” (Rousseau 1997 [1762], 150-151).<sup>21</sup> The purpose of this civil religion was to secure social cohesion – the loyalty of subjects towards the state and towards each other. Alongside this civil religion, Rousseau left room for individual religious sentiments as a private matter, as long as they did not interfere with the unifying sentiments of the entire society. He found inspiration in the unity of pagan religion and government in ancient societies (notably in ancient Greece), although he understood paganism itself to be founded on error (Rousseau 1997, 147).

While Rousseau coined the phrase *religion civile*, Robert N. Bellah introduced the concept of civil religion as a heuristic tool in his seminal article “Civil Religion in America” (Bellah 2006 [1967]). He transformed Rousseau’s concept, emphasizing a Durkhemian understanding of religion by defining civil religion – like any other religion – as “a collection of beliefs, symbols, and rituals with respect to sacred things and institutionalized in a collectivity” (Bellah 2006, 233).<sup>22</sup> In other words, civil religion, according to this definition, consists of beliefs, symbols, rituals, and things understood as sacred (i.e. set apart and forbidden)<sup>23</sup> which a community holds in common, as well as an institution in which the community is anchored. Bellah analyzes a number of central political speeches and describes how a civil religious consciousness – a “form of religious self-understanding” (Bellah 2006, 225) – has developed in the United

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<sup>21</sup> Along with these positive dogmas, Rousseau also formulated one negative dogma: “intolerance” because it was “a feature of the cult we have rejected.” (1997, 151). He emphasized that civil and theological intolerance were inseparable, because “[i]t is impossible to live in peace with people one believes to be damned; to love them would be to hate God who punishes them” (1997, 151).

<sup>22</sup> Bellah’s definition of religion is based on that of Durkheim (1995 [1912], 44).

<sup>23</sup> According to Durkheim, “sacred things” are simply “things set apart and forbidden” (Durkheim 1995, 44), that is, separate from other (profane or ordinary) things because they are ascribed special significance (Durkheim 1995, 33-44).

States since the Colonial Period. This religious self-understanding is, according to Bellah, first visible in a clear tendency to interpret the history of the American people on the basis of biblical archetypes, perceiving the Colonial Period in terms of an Old Testament by construing America as a new Israel and interpreting the Civil War in light of the New Testament, for example, by regarding Abraham Lincoln as a saviour (Bellah 2006). Secondly, Bellah argues that this civil religion (serving “as a genuine vehicle of national religious self-understanding” (Bellah 2006, 233)) expresses the idea that the nation has a manifest destiny. And thirdly, he emphasizes that God figures as an important symbol in the political speeches, serving to secure support in specific political situations. However, this is not the god of any specific confessional religion (Christian or Judaic) but simply one who “is actively involved in history, with a special concern for America” (Bellah 2006, 232).<sup>24</sup> Bellah concludes that

behind civil religion at every point lie biblical archetypes: Exodus, Chosen People, Promised Land, New Jerusalem, and Sacrificial Death and Rebirth. But it is still genuinely American and genuinely new. It has its own prophets and its own martyrs, its own sacred events and sacred places, its own solemn rituals and symbols. (Bellah 2006, 245)

On the basis of a reading of Grundtvig’s *Mands Minde* [Within Living Memory] lectures, given in 1838 (and published in 1877), and with reference to Rousseau and Bellah, Katrine Baunvig has suggested that Grundtvig’s ambitions for creating a Danish community rooted in the history of the motherland can be understood as an attempt at a civil religious awakening (Baunvig 2014, 80-81, 87-88). She argues that in *Mands Minde*, Grundtvig clearly perceives Danish history as divided into two periods, structurally matching the division identified by Bellah in American civil religious thought. The first is an “Old Testament period,” a mythical period conceived of as a Nordic Old Testament period, as known from Old Norse mythology, while the second is a historical “New Testament

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<sup>24</sup> Bellah comments that the “God of the civil religion is not only rather ‘unitarian,’ he is also on the austere side, much more related to order, law, and right than to salvation and love. Even though he is somewhat deist in cast, he is by no means simply a watchmaker God. He is actively interested and involved in history, with a special concern for America” (Bellah 2006, 232).

period,” starting with the abolition of the Adscription in 1788.<sup>25</sup> Thus, Baunvig argues that in *Mands Minde*, Grundtvig treated the history of the Danish people as a civil religious gospel and that his folk-enlightenment project had the purpose of awakening the people to an interest in these two historical periods (Baunvig 2014, 87-88). In addition, Baunvig also highlights Grundtvig’s tendency to speak about his folk-enlightenment project in religious terms as “the joyous news” (i.e. gospel) [den glædelige Nyhed] (Grundtvig 1877, 338; Baunvig 2014, 81).

Baunvig’s arguments are convincing. The religious flavour and connotations of Grundtvig’s treatment of Danish history are conspicuous. However, as *Mands Minde* is primarily concerned with contemporary history (i.e. the period 1788-1838), Grundtvig does not pay focus to Old Norse mythology in this text. Therefore, Baunvig bases her claim that Grundtvig understood Old Norse mythology as an Old Testament of the North on a reference to Auken (2005, 332-335, 563-619). Baunvig’s conclusion is valid, but there is more to be said, especially about Grundtvig’s treatment of Old Norse mythology as civil religious scripture and his attempt to actualize and vitalize it as a means to foster social cohesion.

Again, the *Brage-Snak* lectures (1844) constitute a fruitful vantage point for deeper understanding of the role Grundtvig carved out for Old Norse mythology. In *Brage-Snak*, Grundtvig unmistakably treated Old Norse myths as a form of scripture: he treated them as parables that he could expound in the present just as a pastor expounds Christian scripture in a sermon – a practice that Grundtvig qua his pastoral office was well-versed in. In the lectures, Grundtvig acted as a civil religious pastor before his audience in the lecture hall, just as a pastor would before his congregation in a church. The entire setting of the *Brage-Snak* lectures – if viewed as performances – emulates the ritual setting of the church sermon. Moreover, his exegeses of myth represents a mixture of two subgenres of homilies – the congregational homily and the revival homily. These points of similarity closely match Baunvig’s observations about how Grundtvig used modern history in *Mands Minde* (Baunvig 2014, 86-88). Thus, Grundtvig treated

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<sup>25</sup> The abolition of adscription by decree of 20 June 1788 was the hallmark of a number of agrarian reforms issued by The Great Agricultural Commission (1786-1816) between 1788 and 1800. It ended the prohibition imposed on young men in 1733 which forbade them to move away from the estate where they were born. Adscription was effectually phased out and ended by 1800 (Holmgaard 1999).

Old Norse mythology as civil religious scripture, and he expounded it in relation to secular affairs, just as he would expound biblical material in relation to Christian affairs.

In his treatment of Old Norse mythology as civil religious scripture, Grundtvig was clearly influenced by traditional practices of biblical exegesis. In his 2001 study of Grundtvig's reverberation poems [efterklingsdigte] in *Dannevirke* (1816-1819), Anders Holm argues that Grundtvig's view of history is significantly influenced by typological or figural biblical exegesis which treats events, persons, or statements in the Old Testament as prefigurations or foreshadowings of events, persons, or statements in the New Testament. The typological mind-set reflected in this mode of interpretation is not focused on historical events as connected by causality but as mirroring each other in new forms. It is a prophetic view of history governed by providence (Holm 2001, 23-32). Holm argues that Grundtvig transferred this hermeneutical practice to his interpretation of history, understanding events in the history of Denmark (sometimes mythological events) as hermeneutic points of reference that could illuminate or explain events and matters of the present, while these, in turn, were understood as renewals and explanations of these past events (2001, 131).<sup>26</sup> Holm refers to this practice as Grundtvig's "biblically founded, typological view of history" [bibelfunderede typologiske historiesyn] (Holm 2001, 136).

To Holm's point it should be added that Grundtvig drew inspiration for a typological approach in the medieval text corpus – the sources through which he studied Old Norse mythology. The typological mode of thinking figures prominently in many of these texts, as their medieval Scandinavian authors attempted to reconcile the pre-Christian paganism of their ancestors with their own Christian worldviews and to link "the pre-Christian history of the North to its Christian sequel" (W. Weber 2001, 149; see also Clunies Ross 2005, 121-124).<sup>27</sup> Grundtvig likely found in-

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<sup>26</sup> Holm draws on Erich Aurbach's seminal essay "Figura" (1959 [1944]) which explores the emergence of the figural mode of interpretation in the writings of the church fathers (especially Tertullian and Augustin) and its development throughout the Middle Ages.

<sup>27</sup> Typological thinking gained prevalence throughout the eleventh century but was likely older. It was fundamental to the continued utilization of pre-Christian mythology and images in medieval texts, including the homiletic genre, just as it

spiration for a typological approach to history not least in the writings of Snorri Sturluson and Saxo Grammaticus, both of whom applied this form of thinking and who were both learned Christians (on Snorri, see Clunies Ross 2005, 121-124; on Saxo, see Skovgaard-Petersen 1987). In *Nordens Mythologi* (1832), Grundtvig praised Snorri's "Prologue" to *Edda* as being "among the most brilliant things written about myths" [Noget af det mest Genialske, der er skrevet om Myther] (Grundtvig 1832, 179).<sup>28</sup>

In *Brage-Snak*, the typological view of history is ubiquitous. Grundtvig clearly employed a biblical template of the Old and New Testament, discerning between Nordic antiquity on the one hand (as attested in Old Norse mythology and Nordic legendary history) and contemporary affairs on the other hand. Throughout the lectures, he made typological connections between the two time periods. He regarded his own time (since the end of the eighteenth century) as containing certain breakthroughs; it was the beginning of a bright future for the Danish community. He described it as a new time of deeds, heralded by a "new" or "reborn" time of skalds.<sup>29</sup>

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guided the interpretation of pre-Christian elements in visual art in the Christian period (Clunies Ross 2005, 123; Gschwandtler 1990).

<sup>28</sup> In his prologue, Snorri stipulated the theoretical basis of his approach to pre-Christian mythology and the pre-Christian gods using a combination of different learned frames of interpretation prevalent in the European Middle Ages (cf. Mats Malm 2018). On Grundtvig's enthusiasm with Snorri, see Auken (2005, 493); Lundgreen-Nielsen (2018, 11).

<sup>29</sup> Thus, *Brage-Snak* is not concerned with how Old Norse mythology prefigured Christianity but how it prefigured matters in the secular sphere. Grundtvig touched on the mythology's prefiguration of Christianity in other texts, e.g. in *Haandbog i Verdens-Historien* [Handbook in world history] (1833-1843) where he contended that the pre-Christian mythology of the Saxons could fertilize the ground for the coming of Christianity among them. He explained that a people who had worshipped Thor, the slayer of the Midgard Serpent and fought for Valhöll, would readily accept the story of Christ who smashed the serpent's head and created a new paradise for his followers (Grundtvig 1836, 226; see also Auken 2005, 536-539). This resonates with a general trend in the Romantic, nativist paradigm of nineteenth century nationalism of viewing pre-Christian, ethnic religions as national Old Testaments that reflected the spiritual constitution of the people and that had naturally made way for Christianity when the time had come (cf. Halink 2017).

In the North a new time of deeds has begun which will explain the old deeds of the Æsir and their kinsmen far better than I am able to do; the best and most certain omen for this is the new time of skalds which has [already] begun.<sup>30</sup>

In Grundtvig's view, the (civil religious) awakening had begun, and his contemporary poets – whom he understood as revitalizations of ancient skalds – played a significant role. Grundtvig credited Heinrich Steffens (1773-1845) as a crucial contributor to the reintroduction of Old Norse mythology to Denmark, a process that Grundtvig poetically described as “Idun's homecoming” [*Idunnes Hjemførelse*] (1844, 109). Moreover, Grundtvig referred to his close friend B.S. Ingemann (1789-1862) as a “skald of Danes” [*Dane-Skjald*] (1844, 373) whose poetic oeuvre was a good “omen for the future of Denmark and the North” [Varsel for *Danmarks* og *Nordens* Fremtid] (1844, 374). Thus, Grundtvig understood the poetry of his time to show great potential, although it had yet to reach its zenith (1844, 335). He spoke about Ingemann's poems about Ogier the Dane [Holger Danske] as something which “as if fallen from the sky, will once again revive the memory about the folk hero and proclaim his homecoming” [som faldet ned fra Skyerne, igien opliver Mindet om Folke-Helten og melder hans Hjemkomst] (1844, 374). The religious flavour of the wording here is hard to miss.<sup>31</sup>

### Social cohesion: Rousseauian top-down and Durkheim bottom-up

In addition to the civil religious elements identified so far – namely Grundtvig's use of religious terminology, his use of the biblical template of the Old and New Testament, and his use of an interpretational strategy obtained from bible exegesis – a paramount argument for the civil

<sup>30</sup> i Norden er født eller dog undfanget en *Daadstid* paany, der, langt bedre end jeg kan, vil forklare Aserne og deres Ætmænds gamle Bedrifter, derfor er vist nok den gienfødte *Skjaldetid* det sikkreste, saavel som det bedste Forvarsel (1844, 110-111).

<sup>31</sup> This bifurcation of Danish history does not contradict Grundtvig's tripartite division of universal history into Antiquity, Middle Ages, and New Year's Time [*Oldtid*, *Middelalder*, and *Nyaarstid*]; the two models serve different purposes.

religious character of Grundtvig's vision for the Danish community is his emphasis on Old Norse mythology as a means to foster social cohesion and provide moral underpinnings for the Danish community.

A central function of civil religion is to elevate questions of the legitimacy of the state above everyday political disputes (Warburg 2013, 13); the centrality of this function is evident in Rousseau's reflections on the *religion civile* and in Bellah's analysis of civil religion in America. Since Bellah's 1967 article, an entire sub-field of studies of civil religion has emerged.<sup>32</sup> Studies often employ an analytical distinction between two dimensions of civil religion: what they term a Rousseauian top-down and a Durkheimian bottom-up dimension. The top-down dimension is termed after Rousseau's idea about the content of *religion civile* as formulated by and primarily communicated through the state apparatus in order to impart certain morals and sets of values to its citizens. Conversely, the bottom-up dimension reflects what can analytically be termed a Durkheimian understanding of religion, viewing civil religion as rooted in the community and reflecting communal values that are expressed by the community in religious terms (cf. Hammond 1980; Cristi 2001, 114-136; Warburg 2008, 168-170; Warburg 2015, 610-611). The top-down and the bottom-up dimensions both point to civil religion as an integrative factor in the community, and the two dimensions can be seen as complementary ideal types (Warburg 2008, 170; 2015, 611) and not as contradictory forces.<sup>33</sup> As emphasized by Margit Warburg, the top-down perspective must

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<sup>32</sup> For useful overviews and discussions, see Cristi (2001, 47-89); Stewart (2005); Cristi & Dawson (2007); Warburg (2015). The concept of civil religion is subject to theoretical debate, not least concerning the question of whether a transcendent point of reference (i.e. a trans-empirical dimension) is a definitional requirement for civil religion or whether a purely functionalistic definition suffices – an issue that concerns the concept of religion in general (cf. Jensen 2019). In relation to Grundtvig this question is, however, of lesser interest, as he did operate with such a reference, primarily to the spirit of the North but also to God.

<sup>33</sup> In some studies, the distinction between the top-down and the bottom-up dimensions is somewhat blurred, e.g. in Bellah (1967). Marcela Cristi has attempted to clarify the relation between the two dimensions by describing them as situated at different ends of a spectrum (Cristi 2001, 10-13, 237-242). However, I here follow Margit Warburg, who has argued that the dimensions should rather be placed as complementary dimensions in a system of coordinates, meaning for example that a strong (Rousseauian) top-down dimension does not necessarily

be mixed with the bottom-up perspective in order for a civil religion to persist (Warburg 2013, 46). Thus, the two dimensions are useful analytical categories when examining civil religions across the globe and across time. For example, Bellah's concept of civil religion encompasses both dimensions. On the one hand, he understands civil religion as reflecting the communal values of the American people, while, on the other hand, he uses presidential speeches as his empirical basis for the study – building on the Durkheimian assumption that the speeches reflect the communal values of the American people (Warburg 2015, 610).

Both dimensions are evident in Grundtvig's visions for the Danish community. His writings reflect an understanding that the formation of a national community had to involve both top-down and bottom-up processes. The community needed to be rooted in (what he understood as) the people's authentic collective traditions, their authentic self-articulation. But channelling the people's inherent sentiments and values required top-down measures, including folk-enlightenment institutionalized in the Danish school system, but national festivals that celebrated central events in the collective life of the people were also important – such as the king's birthday and the anniversary of the Battle of Copenhagen.<sup>34</sup> In other words, Grundtvig found that, in order to build popular enthusiasm, top-down measures were needed to communicate to the people what their

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entail a weakening of the (Durkheimian) bottom-up dimension (Warburg 2015, 611). It must also be noted that while civil religion can serve as an integrating factor, the demarcations it involves will inevitably also carry a potential for exclusion. This is a point of tension in any identity construction.

<sup>34</sup> That Grundtvig saw national festivals as important is clear not least from the many texts he produced on such occasions. An example is *Sang i Anledning af Hans Majestæt Kongens høie Fødselsdag den 28de Januar 1839* [Song for the occasion of His Majesty the King's birthday on 28 January 1839] (1839a). The 28 May celebrations, marking the anniversary of the introduction of the advisory assemblies, is another example. These celebrations were initiated by different groups of (civil) society. Already on the eve of Frederik VI's rescript of 28 May 1831, celebrations took place among students in Copenhagen, and on the following day the city was illuminated. From 1832 and until 1849, where the Constitution was passed, annual celebrations included ever larger social circles, including the larger provincial towns (Adriansen 2003, I, 212-214). In 1839, the day was celebrated in the newly started Danish Society [Danske Samfund]. For the occasion, Grundtvig wrote his famous "Konge-Haand og Folke-Stemme" [King's hand and people's voice] (Grundtvig 1839c; reprinted in Grundtvig 1843).



inherent traditions, sentiments, and values were; they needed to become familiar with their mythology. His *Brage-Snak* lectures can be understood as an initiative in this direction, although they were Grundtvig's own initiatives and not part of state-managed education.<sup>35</sup>

Civil religion is an analytical category that we can use to understand the role of myths, symbols, and rituals in society. It is not a label used by members to self-identify as members of a civil religion. In practice, civil religious affiliation is expressed through a sense of belonging, typically by referring to traditions by saying that “this is what we always do” or “my parents taught me this” (Warburg 2013, 8-9; my translation). Thus, civil religion is an embedded part of the culture and traditions of a community and not consciously recognized as civil religion.

The differences between the top-down and the bottom-up dimensions of civil religion can be clarified by their structural similarities to the two types of religion which Jan Assmann has termed primary and secondary religion (Assmann 2006).<sup>36</sup> Primary religions are not consciously recognized as religion by their members, but are understood simply as tradition and as an integral and unquestioned part of the order of the world – much like civil religion. By contrast, secondary religions are understood by their members as one possible option among several alternatives – but the only true option! – thus entailing a willful affiliation.

Moreover, primary religion is particularistic in focus and not occupied with disseminating its views across territorial borders. It is oriented towards securing the well-being of the community in this life, maintaining the religious, political, and social order of the world. Secondary religions, on the other hand, are missionary in outlook and include the idea of an otherworldly, transcendent reality that constitutes an important point of

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<sup>35</sup> Grundtvig seems to have understood his public lectures as models for the type of lectures needed in public education (Baunvig 2014).

<sup>36</sup> A range of different typologies of religion exists. The two types conceptualized here as primary and secondary religion are sometimes termed “ethnic religion” and “universal religion of salvation”, respectively (see Z. Smith 1996; Jensen 2019, 33-52; Schjødt 2013, 29-32). These types are, of course, ideal types. In Assmann's taxonomy, the most critical difference on which the other differences rest is the emergence of canonical scripture – without it there can be no dogma, no distinction between true and false belief (Assmann 1996; 2006).

focus for religious practice.<sup>37</sup> Thus, secondary religion (as an ideal type) is formulated as a program of religious teaching and uses a set of tools to sustain and propagate itself, such as canonical scripture, dogma, creeds, prayer books, and catechisms (Assmann 2006). We may note that while Rousseau found inspiration in the unity of religion and politics in ancient societies (i.e. in primary religion), the tools of secondary religion are the kinds of civil religious tools that he envisioned as relevant to instil moral values in the citizens.

Primary and secondary religion, further, differ with regard to their principal type of religious specialists. While primary religion is concerned with keeping the right order of the world (including society) by ritual means, secondary religion is focused on expounding its canonical scripture to make its teachings ever relevant in the changing present. This calls for interpreters and preachers, and the mark of the good interpreter/preacher is that “his sermon is taken to heart, that is, by the translation from text to practical life” (Assmann 2006, 127). In his attempt to unite the Danes into a cultural community, Grundtvig drew on elements pertaining to both types of religion, the particularistic, this-worldly focus of primary religion, and the teaching and dissemination tools pertaining to secondary religion, notably those of scripture and the sermon which actualizes it.

A further question begs to be asked concerning Grundtvig’s utilization of Old Norse mythology: why did he, as a pastor of the Danish State Church, point to Old Norse mythology rather than to the Christian world

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<sup>37</sup> Although secondary religions have arisen in opposition to the existing religious and social order in their specific milieus, their ascetic distancing from worldly attachments proved unsustainable in the long run, prompting them (in order to persist) to develop into hybrid religions in the sense that they absorbed and developed ideas and practices belonging to or characteristic of primary religion. Secondary religions, on the one hand, reject the known world as fundamentally bad, false, evil, and full of suffering while, on the other hand, they embrace it as mostly good and beautiful. Grundtvig’s theology is an excellent example of Christianity’s hybrid quality, not least when he in his famous hymn “Nu falmer skoven trindt om land” [Now the woods fade across the lands] (written in 1844 – the same year as *Brage-Snak*) lets the congregation (whom the song is intended for) collectively thank God “for the harvest here and the harvest there” [For høsten her og høsten hist]; God is praised for plentiful harvest, now secure in the barns, but also for the eternal summer by God’s side in Paradise that awaits members of the congregation at the end of their lives.

of ideas as a unifying frame of reference for the Danish population? This question is especially pertinent because multiple studies of contemporary civil religion, not least civil religion in the Nordic countries, study events where confessional religion plays a role in celebrations of the nation, for example when representatives of the Danish Folk Church are brought into the political arena. Often studies point to an overlap between civil religion and the Lutheran majority churches in the North (see Warburg 2015 and references therein). A plausible answer is that Grundtvig understood the time when the Danish state could rest on a confessional religious foundation to have passed. As emphasized above, he seems to have understood a secularizing split between the political and the churchly spheres as inevitable. It is clear from his writings about the relation between state and church (e.g. Grundtvig 1834; 1839b) that he understood the multi-confessional make-up of the Danish population in the modern age as an inescapable fact that called for new institutional arrangements.<sup>38</sup> In other words, the Christian world of ideas was too narrow to serve as a unifying frame of reference because not all Danes were Christians and because those who were belonged to different denominations and different factions, meaning that their understanding of the Christian world of ideas differed.

But, at the same time, there is reason to suggest that Grundtvig understood the Christian world of ideas as too broad due to its universalistic scope to serve as a national marker of identity. In *Den danske Stats-Kirke upartisk betragtet* [The Danish State Church impartially considered] (1834), he writes that Christianity had, in a historical perspective, secured

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<sup>38</sup> In *Den danske Stats-Kirke upartisk betragtet* [The Danish State Church impartially considered] (1834) and in *Tale til Folke-Raadet* [Speech to the people's council] (1839b), Grundtvig argued for a non-confessional State Church that would constitute an economical and judicial framework around "free", independent congregations of different confessions. This would secure room for the different factions within the State Church that already existed. Significant steps towards achieving this freedom was the dissolution of the "parish tie" [Sogne-Baad] which would allow laity to join a congregation of their choice (outside the parish in which they lived) and also allow the clergy to minister outside their own parishes (Grundtvig 1834; 1839b; see also Tullberg 2016). In 1847, Grundtvig argued that "traditional" Christians like himself needed to do their utmost to stay inside the State Church, but he anticipated that they would eventually have to break free (Grundtvig 1847). For a discussion of the three main positions in Danish church politics between 1839 and 1855, see Holm (2012).

a supra-national unity by being present in different nations although expressed through their vernacular tongues. He stressed that this unity did not make the peoples lose their distinctiveness and independence, and that it even helped their kings to gain their crowns (Grundtvig 1834, 13). In addition, when properly practiced, Christianity was beneficial to the state, as it helped produce good, altruistic citizens (Grundtvig 1834, 14-16, 56-61). However, it appears clear that while allowing the nations to retain their distinctive character, Christianity could not set one people or nation apart from others and, therefore, could not promote their national-particularistic outlook. In light of Grundtvig's views on Old Norse mythology presented above, I contend that Grundtvig understood Old Norse mythology to do just that: set the Nordic and the Danish peoples apart from others. Thus, the Nordic mythological material offered itself as a Goldilocks choice, just right in scope to provide an anchor of and a marker for national identity. As a symbolic repertoire and narrative story-world it could be shared by all Danes, regardless of religious confession.

But while American presidents repeatedly referred to God as a way to endow American society with transcendent value, thereby tying the individual to society (Bellah 2006), Grundtvig pointed to "the spirit of the North" as a transcendent entity serving as the guarantor of Danish society.<sup>39</sup> Grundtvig envisioned the spirit of the North as a transcendent entity permeating the Nordic people(s), an entity in which all individuals participated, thus connecting them across generations, social hierarchies, and geography. This spirit was pre-Christian in nature (and therefore pagan); it was separate from the Holy Ghost, existing independently of it and independently of Christianity though not in opposition to either (Auken 2005, 494).<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> This does not mean that he did not understand Denmark and the Danes as chosen by God (e.g. Mørk Andersen 2003, 74).

<sup>40</sup> The ontological status of the spirit of the North is a complex matter that cannot be pursued here. Helge Grell has addressed this at length (1988), and Sune Auken more briefly (2005, 494-505).

## “Geertzian” moods and motivations

Through his exegetical treatment of Old Norse mythology as a civil religious Old Testament, Grundtvig sought to actualize and vitalize it in the present. It was his ambition that once this material was propagated among the population, it would help the people get in touch with their natural dispositions (e.g. Grundtvig 1844, 9, 331). He envisioned that Old Norse mythology could be used to instil emotions, inspire values, and spur actions. This dimension, of what I term Grundtvig’s civil religious mythology project, can fruitfully be explored with reference to Clifford Geertz’ definition of religion as

(1) a system of symbols which acts (2) to establish powerful, pervasive, and long-lasting moods and motivations in men by (3) formulating conceptions of a general order of existence and (4) clothing these conceptions with such an aura of factuality that (5) the moods and motivations seem uniquely realistic. (Geertz 1973, 90)

This functional definition (like those of Durkheim and Bellah) avoids concepts of the supernatural and focuses on religion as a cultural phenomenon. The central points are that religion influences people to feel and act in certain ways and that it does so by formulating conceptions of an all-encompassing world order, a sense of how things really are and ought to be (about what is “really real”). Geertz subsumes these two mutually enforcing dimensions of religion as *ethos* and *world view* – a group’s (or a people’s) *ethos* being their moral and behavioural inclinations (values, attitudes, temperaments, emotions, and aesthetic style) and their *world view* being their conceptual ideas of the world (their concept of nature, of self, of society).<sup>41</sup> Thus, what we can call a “Geertzian” perspective on religion is concerned with how religion as a cultural phenomenon plays a crucial role in constructing social reality and influences people’s everyday lives (Geertz 1973).

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<sup>41</sup> Both dimensions are public in the sense that all culture is public (Geertz 1973, 3-30). Thus, ideas, values, acts, and even feelings are cultural artefacts, determined by the culture in which they are embedded.

I contend that, like other religions, the civil religion Grundtvig aimed to establish as the foundation of Danish secular society (although he did not himself use this terminology) was comprised of an authentic Nordic world view and an authentic Nordic ethos which were mutually reinforcing. Grundtvig wanted to awaken compelling moods and motivations by offering conceptions of the order of the world that would, in turn, undergird these moods and motivations.

Grundtvig was clear about the status of these civil religious conceptions of the world as poetic creations and assured his *Brage-Snak* audience that he did not believe in the pagan gods (as we have seen), but emphasized the value of Old Norse mythology as living, poetic speech

even though it is always wrong to believe in something you have created yourself, whether it be termed a god or a dwarf or a philosophical system, it was wise of our fathers to create for themselves both gods and goddesses, giants and trolls, elves and dwarves for the purpose of living speech about all that performed greater actions than they themselves could comprehend.<sup>42</sup>

In this passage, Grundtvig reflected on Old Norse mythology as an expression of what can be termed “natural religion”, although in an innovative version. By “natural religion” I refer to the explanatory model used by medieval writers – for example by Snorri in his “Prologue” to *Edda* – in order to explain Old Norse gods and myths as the result of the pre-Christian Northmen’s ability through reason to understand the world as governed by a divine power (see also Malm 2018). Grundtvig’s explanation differs from the prevalent version of natural religion on an important point, as he placed emphasis not on reason as the source to spiritual insight, but on the Northmen’s ability through their poetic sensibilities to recognize the existence of a higher (spiritual) power.<sup>43</sup> By classifying mythology as

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<sup>42</sup> skiondt det altid er galt at troe paa hvad man selv har skabt, enten det saa kaldes en Gud eller en Dværg eller et filosofisk System, saa var det dog klogt af vore Fædre, at de skabde sig baade *Guder* og *Gudinder*, *Jetter* og *Trolde*, *Alfer* og *Dværge* til *levende* Tale om Alt, hvad der udrettede større Ting end de *selv* kunde *begribe* (Grundtvig 1844, 100).

<sup>43</sup> What can be termed “natural religion” also figures in enlightenment thinking, where we find the idea that religion sprung from natural human sentiments that

poetry, Grundtvig had circumvented the question of the veracity of myth, deeming it poetically true rather than factually true.<sup>44</sup> Thus, Old Norse mythology was teeming with mythic agents, objects, places, and events that, to his mind, were all poetically true in the sense that they constituted a poetic (fantastic) story-world that had a profound effect on the Northmen (Bønding; forthcoming).<sup>45</sup>

Belief in a spiritual reality was the central question of Grundtvig's sixteenth lecture, "Valhal og Folkvang" [Valhöll and Folkvang]. He tackled the question of Old Norse mythology's status as belief or superstition. The battle, as he saw it, was not between pre-Christian Nordic paganism and Christianity but between belief in a spiritual reality and non-belief. Grundtvig proclaimed that he would

much rather profess to what is referred to as the old warriors' superstition than to that which has long been referred to as "enlightenment," for the simple reason that so-called superstition was after all a "genuine belief," while so-called enlightenment is clearly a false explanation.<sup>46</sup>

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were rooted in "the individual's sense of gratitude to the deity for the beauty of his environment in the natural world rather than from rational thought alone" (Clunies Ross 2018, 25).

<sup>44</sup> For a discussion of the aesthetic dimension of Old Norse mythology and its contra-present function as a fantastic, enchanted universe, see Bønding (forthcoming).

<sup>45</sup> Thus, Grundtvig's innovative version of "natural religion" does not contradict his so-called "Mosaic-Christian outlook" [Mosaisk-Christelige Anskuelse] which he proposed in his preface to *Nordens Mythologi* (1832) on the basis of his separation between religious faith and outlook on life. He felt that this outlook could be shared by "true" Christians and "naturalists, with spiritual insight" [Naturalister, med Aand], the latter being those naturalists capable of acting in the interest of the spirit (Nyborg 2012, 121-123). Thus, he saw a possible common ground from where Christians and certain naturalists could work together to save the life of the Danish and Nordic peoples in the face of cultural crisis. For discussions of the "Mosaic-Christian outlook," including many different views, see Thaning 1963; Vind 1999; Pedersen 2005; Nyborg 2012 and references therein.

<sup>46</sup> langt heller bekiende mig til hvad man kalder de gamle *Kæmpers Overtro*, end til hvad man længe har kaldt og endnu kalder "*Oplysning*", og det af den simple Grund, at den *saakaldte* Overtro var igrunden en "ægte Tro", men den *saakaldte* Oplysning er aabenbar en *falsk* Forklaring (1844, 233).

Thus, “genuine belief” was belief in the existence of a spiritual reality – an intangible, invisible, and imagined poetic reality that was, nonetheless, “really real” to the ancient Northmen. The ancient Northmen were right to believe in Valhöll because, as a collectively imagined place (a virtual reality), it had a genuine impact on them, imbuing them with power and courage (Grundtvig 1844, 234). Grundtvig hoped that it would come to have a similar effect on his contemporary countrymen and encourage them to face the challenges of the present. In order to achieve this, it was important to reintroduce the pre-Christian Nordic Otherworld as a poetic reality to the Danes in his present.

The crux of the matter here was the question of secular, spiritual life – or to use the more accurate Danish term *åndsliv* (or the German *Geistesleben*). Grundtvig claimed in *Brage-Snak* that there was more to human life than what was visible to the eye and tangible to the hand, even in the secular sphere of life; in other words: there were supra-human and inter-human forces at play. He expressed this anthropologically by emphasizing that “man has a double world, one shared with animals but the other with the gods” [*Mennesket... har en dobbelt Verden for sig, den Ene tilfælles med Dyrene men den Anden med Guderne*] (Grundtvig 1844, 28). He termed these two worlds “Aandens Verden” [the world of the spirit] and “Haandens Verden” [the world of the hand]. Humans participate in both and, without heed to the spiritual world, they would be only biology, and no culture. This point was a criticism against contemporary “disenchanting” or rationalizing concepts of mythology. Without a spiritual dimension imbuing reality with collective symbolic meaning, Valhöll would be reduced to “bacon and mead” [*Flæsk og Miød*] (Grundtvig 1844, 233) and humans to cultureless animals. Thus, Grundtvig identified the metaphysical or supra-biological dimension of human life as crucial for the social cohesion of human groups. It was what bound them together in a community.<sup>47</sup> As already mentioned, the metaphysical, transcendent

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<sup>47</sup> This point also resonates with Grundtvig’s understanding of the human being as both “divine sparkle” [*Guddoms-Gnist*] and “dust hut” [*Støv-Hytte*] (1844, 28), although here expressed in terms which he found suitable for the secular domain. It resembles the concept formulated in 1912 by Émile Durkheim about the “double human”, *homo duplex* – biology and culture, individual, physical being and social, metaphysical being. The latter according to Durkheim “represents within us the highest reality in the intellectual and moral [i.e. cultural] realm



entity that he placed as a guarantor of secular, spiritual life among the Northmen was the spirit of the North.

It seems reasonable to see these anthropological reflections as proto-sociological in nature and as related to the secularizing relegation of religion to its own societal sphere. To Grundtvig, the social cohesion of Danish society depended on the Danes' ability and willingness to acknowledge that there was a supra-biological/metaphysical dimension of reality, even as concerned secular affairs. If the Danes did not begin to cherish Old Norse mythology, it would have dire consequences for Danish society. Old Norse mythology contained an authentic world view (conceptions of the order of the world) and an authentic ethos (values, attitudes, etc.), and the Danes needed to cultivate both.<sup>48</sup>

Grundtvig aimed to (re)vitalize Old Norse mythology as a living symbolic repertoire and narrative story-world. He believed that its use in "living speech" could, on the one hand, invigorate the collective spirit of the people and, on the other hand, channel the invigorating power of this spirit. Thus, it was imperative that Old Norse mythology not only be used typologically as civil religious scripture but become part of oral culture. People needed to take the mythology into their mouths, so to speak. Thereby, the mythic beings like the *æsir* and the *einherjar* would come to life "in living history" [*i den levende Historie*] (1844, 240) and immortalize the Nordic forefathers (who were models for emulation) through memory. This vitalization into oral culture needed to take place on a daily basis (1844, 240); only when the ancestors were remembered and thanked in daily speech and song would the people be bound together in loving community (1844, 240). Thus, Grundtvig wanted the people to realize that "Thor is still alive and drives [his chariot] in the heavens with his hammer raised" [*Thor lever endnu og ager i Sky, med Hammeren iveiret*] (1844, 332).

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that is knowable through observation: I mean society" (Durkheim 1995 [1912], 15-16). On the similarities between Grundtvig and Durkheim and between their ideas about the formation of human communities, see Baunvig (2013; 2015).

<sup>48</sup> Geertz' position is constructionist, and so he does not share Grundtvig's essentialist views. However, Geertz' concept of culture does, indeed, seem to be inspired by Herderian cultural relativism, which, in a transformed form, has found its way into American anthropology. Importantly, Herder's relativism, although essentialist in nature, did not have chauvinistic connotations (cf. Halink 2018, 27).

It was therefore no coincidence that Grundtvig saw poets or skalds as the heralds of the new future. To Grundtvig, Brage still lived in Adam Oehlenschläger who, in his poetry, secured the legacy of Nordic heroic life, and Grundtvig hoped that someone of the younger generation would take over and continue “the Valhöllian stroke of the harp” [det Valhaliske harpeslag] (1844, 108). Grundtvig treated the skalds as the bearers of the mythological tradition, the cultural specialists who secured its persistence. He considered himself one of them (1844, 208) – part of the skaldic (civil religious) elite whose obligation it was to propagate knowledge about Old Norse mythology and lead the people towards (civil religious) awakening. Yet, his role in the *Brage-Snak* lecture hall moves beyond that of poet.<sup>49</sup> As already emphasized, he took on the role of civil religious priest, presenting his audience with a poetic universe, claiming that it bore witness to a spiritual reality that was crucial for the well-being of the cultural community. He actualized the myths and vitalized Old Norse mythic beings through his exegetical interpretations.

Grundtvig’s treatment of Old Norse mythology in the communal setting of the *Brage-Snak* lecture hall resonates with Geertz’s understanding of religious rituals as the places where ethos and world view coincide, where a fusion of what people want to do and what they feel they ought to do takes place. From the ritual gathering, the moods and motivations as well as conceptions of the world carry over into the rest of society and give the people’s everyday life its unique characteristics (Geertz 1973, 112–118).<sup>50</sup> As demonstrated by Baunvig, Grundtvig placed great emphasis on the importance of collective, physical gatherings – such as a Christian congregation gathering in a church or an audience gathering in a lecture hall – as the central place where communities establish and maintain themselves (Baunvig 2013; 2014; 2015).<sup>51</sup> This was the case, too, for the

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<sup>49</sup> For a discussion of Grundtvig’s self-perception as a poet in a long row of poets through history, see Jørgensen (2018).

<sup>50</sup> Geertz is clearly inspired by Durkheim’s notion of the effervescent ritual gathering (Durkheim 1995).

<sup>51</sup> The connection to his famous 1825 “matchless discovery” [mageløse Opdagelse] (Grundtvig 1825) is conspicuous and far from trivial. This discovery, presented in revelatory terms, refers to Grundtvig’s understanding that the foundation of the Christian church was not the Bible and biblical exegesis but the congregational community, its liturgical practice and the collective, oral articulation of the creed.

“half-pagan gatherings” [halv-hedenske forsamlinger] (1844, 52) of *Bra-ge-Snak*. Just as a Christian congregation at a church service identifies with the Christian conceptual universe, with each other, and with previous generations of Christians (Baunvig 2013, 87-89), Grundtvig seems to have hoped that the collective, secular (or civil religious) gatherings in the lecture hall would help the participants identify with the Nordic conceptual universe, with each other, and with previous generations of Northmen – and Danes in particular. In Geertzian terms, this identification would let the fusion of ethos and world view carry over into their everyday lives.

### Civil religious community – State, church, and king

The examination has showed that by using the concept of civil religion as a heuristic tool, we can gain interesting new insights into Grundtvig’s ideas about and ambitions for the use of Old Norse mythology to establish a Danish national community. Grundtvig was a thinker of secularization in the sense that he saw the churchly-religious and the secular-national spheres as necessarily distinct. Nevertheless, his ideas relating to the secular-national sphere were significantly influenced by underlying religious assumptions and modes of thinking.

The structural isomorphism between the way he thought about the churchly-religious and the national-secular spheres indicates that, like Rousseau, Grundtvig found significant inspiration in institutionalized, organized religion. He used the tools that he was conversant with through his theological training and office as a pastor: religious scripture, exegetical strategies, and oratory techniques. Further, in both spheres, he placed emphasis on physical gatherings and on the importance of nourishing the collective, “otherworldly” conceptions and keeping them alive among the members. The parallelism of the two spheres seems partly predicated on the facts that, first, he was rethinking both spheres simultaneously (although perhaps the secular sphere came into focus later than the churchly

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The Christian church was first and foremost founded on the physical congregation of human bodies that performed collective ritual acts (Baunvig 2013) and on the oral form of communication rather than the written.

sphere) and, second, he grappled with the same basic questions in both spheres: how to establish communities and communal identities and secure social cohesion.<sup>52</sup> Just as the church community was institutionalized in (the various congregations of) the State Church, Grundtvig wanted the secular (civil religious) community to be underpinned by public education as well as collective gatherings and collective celebrations of important events in the history of the people, for example the king's birthday.

Concerning the secular sphere, Grundtvig understood Old Norse mythology as the source of the people's authentic ethos which rested on the (re)vitalization and cultivation of their authentic world view. His ambitions for what is here termed a civil religious use of Old Norse mythology rested on a need to establish a new symbolic foundation for Danish society in the face of political upheaval. It is well-known that Grundtvig was a royalist who only reluctantly accepted the age of the monarchy to be drawing to an end (Damsholt 2003; Korsgaard 2015). Interestingly, *Mands Minde* from 1838 (1877) was occupied by the question of a constitution and the relation between people and king, expressing Grundtvig's well-known ideal of harmony between "King's hand and people's voice" [Konge-Haand og Folke-Stemme] with the king as the actual political power holder (Grundtvig 1839c, reprinted Grundtvig 1843; cf. Damsholt 2003, 44).<sup>53</sup> But, in 1844, *Brage-Snak* showed little interest in these questions. This difference might be due to the empirical focus of the two series of lectures: current history and ancient mythology and history, respectively. But as *Brage-Snak* was in actuality more concerned with the present than with the past, its lack of interest in the question of king and constitution is striking.

Grundtvig's main concern in *Brage-Snak* was to bring the Danish people in touch with their true collective self, a matter which he found pressing. What needed to be avoided was the temptation to make radical changes in conflict with the inherent nature of the people for the purpose of improving the state, as had been done in the French Revolution. Such changes

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<sup>52</sup> As emphasized by Baunvig, Grundtvig seems also to have taken note of the positive forces of revolutionary gatherings when developing his ideas about the church congregation (Baunvig 2015). In this sense, inspiration between the churchly and the secular spheres goes both ways.

<sup>53</sup> The phrase was the title of a song, written for Danish Society [Danske Samfund] and published in *28de Maj i det Danske Samfund* (1839c; 1843).

would only lead to ruin and decay (1844, 270). It was necessary that the voice of the people be directed in the right direction (cf. Korsgaard 2015, 200-201). Although the figure of the king was not a central theme in *Bra-ge-Snak*, Grundtvig referred to the king as a symbolic figure, central to the collective identity of the people. He posited that the funeral of Frederik VI made the people vividly recall the story of the legendary Danish king Frode Fredegod, whose reign Grundtvig understood as a poetic image of the Danish Golden Age. The king was not highlighted for his political role but as a focal point for the crystallization of collective ideas and collective identity, undergirded by the Nordic mythological and legendary material. It could be said that the Nordic civil religious scripture endowed the king, as a symbolic figure, with civil religious status.

In retrospect, it is clear that Grundtvig was not alone in pointing to the king as a symbolic focal point for the Danish cultural community, as what can be termed a civil religious symbol. On 22 September 1857, eight years after the passing of the Danish Constitution and thirteen years after *Bra-ge-Snak*, a large civil religious ritual took place in Jelling with King Frederik VII at its center. Frederik VII, “the giver of the Constitution” who had since 1849 become increasingly alienated from the center of power in Copenhagen, was welcomed in Jelling with cheers and banners, receiving homage from the gathered crowds of local farmer families, local pastors, politicians, and students from the local teachers’ college. The festivities included a procession onto the historical mounds, speeches, and communal singing, all of which invoked the connection between King Frederik and the ancient kings of Jelling back to Gorm the Old. Thus, Frederik was venerated as a symbol of both state and nation, supported by priests who acted as ritual specialists. The unique status ascribed to Jelling as the place where monarchy, Christianity, and ancient history merged made it a fitting civil religious ritual site (Perlt & Vinding 2013).

Frederik VII had ceded his political power in 1849, but by this act, the figure of the king was left open as a symbol to which new collective meaning could be attributed (Perlt & Vinding 2013). This new collective meaning drew upon a combination of historical and Christian symbolism which served to underpin the collective identity and social cohesion of Danish society. Contrary to what Grundtvig seems to have envisioned, the civil religious sentiments that came to undergird Danish society in the

years after the Constitution were rooted as much in Christianity and the Danish monarchy as in Old Norse myths.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> Lundgreen-Nielsen has termed Grundtvig's attempt to introduce Old Norse mythology as a national symbolic language in poetic and every-day use a failed experiment, indicating a number of explanations, notably the preference among the cultured public for Classical mythology and the fact that the general public around the mid-nineteenth century was more oriented towards political newspapers than towards poetic literature about the golden national past (Lundgreen-Nielsen 1994), all compelling explanations. Yet, even if Grundtvig did not succeed in revitalizing Old Norse mythology the way he intended, he contributed (along with other Romantic cultural actors) to directing focus towards the national past as an important point of orientation for Danish communal identity. It is also worth noticing that the ceremony in Jelling in 1857 attests to the importance of collective festivals and national symbols, drawn from the collective cultural heritage that could imbue the community with a sense of togetherness and belonging.

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# Grundtvig and John Wesley – A Study of Convergence in Their Theologies

*Jørgen Thaarup*

John Wesley (1703-1791) and Nicolai Frederik Severin Grundtvig (1783-1872) were two very influential theologians, Wesley in eighteenth-century Anglican England and Grundtvig in nineteenth-century Lutheran Denmark.<sup>1</sup> They became reformers of the Protestant concept of Christian thinking within their respective contexts of church and society. Wesley's theological ideas and ecclesiastical initiatives have spread internationally, forming and influencing new churches, schools, hospitals, and universities in many countries. Grundtvig's ideas have inspired theological and pedagogical understanding not only in Denmark but also, more broadly, in Scandinavia and internationally.

Wesley's and Grundtvig's numerous publications resemble the writings of other Christian theologians of their own traditions and contexts. But Wesley and Grundtvig also resemble each other in their specific aspects of theology and in their sources of inspiration. It is not difficult to see Wesley as an Anglican theologian of his time because his works demonstrate the influences of Arminianism and Puritanism, two strong theological forces within the Anglican tradition. Grundtvig, as a Lutheran theologian, is likewise a product of his own place and time. His writings bear the marks of old Lutheran orthodoxy and German Romanticism, a known influence on the Lutheran church of Denmark. In a number of themes, however, we find similar sources and convergent traits in the theologies of Wesley and Grundtvig (Thaarup 2016, 565).

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<sup>1</sup> This article is a presentation of the results of the PhD dissertation: *Kristendommens Morgenstjerne. Konvergerende teologiske træk med baggrund i østlig tradition hos John Wesley og NFS Grundtvig*, Göteborg 2015.

## Convergence theologies

This article focuses on Wesley's and Grundtvig's convergence theology about what Christ has done for us. The idea of convergence is used in ecumenical studies to define the similar character and parallel thinking in different confessional theologies. Convergence should not be confused with consensus or congruence. Consensus occurs when theologies agree on exactly the same meaning, while congruence occurs when theologies have the same content and form. Convergence differs from these because it develops when theologies from different confessional backgrounds approach one another and move together in the same direction. Convergence theologies may never merge, but they move towards the same focal point on or behind the horizon.

The common source behind Wesley's and Grundtvig's theologies – the basis for their convergence – is a set of ideas and thoughts found among a group of Greek Church Fathers. Wesley and Grundtvig are not inspired by the same Church Fathers, but they both draw upon the tradition of Early Eastern Antiquity. Wesley's list of sources from the Eastern church includes Polycarp, Ignatius, Macarius, Gregor of Nyssa, Ephraem Syrus, Clement of Alexandria and the Apostolic Constitution. Grundtvig often draws from Irenæus and the *Leiturgikón*. In 1855, he translated and published Irenæus's *Adversus Haereses V* with the Danish title "Om Kiødets Opstandelse og det evige Liv"<sup>2</sup> and the liturgy of the Old Orthodox Church, the *Leiturgikón*, which he found in the Danish Royal Library in Copenhagen (Kjærgaard 2003, 227). Grundtvig learned about Irenæus and many of the patristic fathers by reading Eusebius' Church History.<sup>3</sup>

Another common source behind Wesley's and Grundtvig's theologies is the influence of Anglo-Saxon Christian culture, as identified in the writings of Bede and in Old English poetic manuscripts (Christensen-Görans-

<sup>2</sup> Unpublished list *Kirkefædre i Grundtvigs Værker*, Grundtvig Centeret, Vartov, shows that Grundtvig quoted *Om Kiødets Opstandelse* 65 times in three books, 69 times in 19 books, and an unknown number of times in his sermons.

<sup>3</sup> Grundtvig's knowledge about Irenæus and Christian Antiquity via *Eusebius' Church History*, see Grundtvig *Haandbog i Middelalderens Historie*, 1836/1862, 38-50. Grundtvig's reading of Justinus Martyr, Polycarp and Ignatius we find in Grundtvig *Om Christendommens Sandhed* 1826-27, see *US IV*, 646-647, 693-694.



son 1969, 1, 262-281). Wesley mentions the Celtic-Anglo-Saxon culture as the part of “Christian Antiquity,” from where he took inspiration for his reformatory work. The Celtic-Anglo-Saxon theologian and historian Bede is mentioned several times in Wesley’s writings. Wesley also recognizes the Eastern Church praxis of the Christian Year and the Easter celebration which were continued in England after the introduction of Latin Western Christianity, and he uses Bede as a source for his arguments (*CL* 3, 3-16; 13, 8-11). Grundtvig is very interested in Anglo-Saxon culture because the first and original Christian mission in Scandinavia was Anglo-Saxon, not Roman. Grundtvig’s translations and use of early medieval English texts strongly marked the central parts of his theology.

It is possible to find sources that Wesley and Grundtvig directly use when treating some theological themes, because they identify their sources by name. Sometimes, commentaries themselves announce connections with sources and traditions, especially those represented by several Greek theologians. When Wesley writes that he studies Macarius, Ephraem Syrus, Bede, the Apostolic Constitution, and Clement of Alexandria, there is a direct indication of connection. When Grundtvig studies the writings of Irenæus, Bede, the Exeter Book, and the *Leiturgikón*, he signals connections. But often there are no indicated sources, only the content of the theology they are teaching. The obvious similarities between Wesley’s and Grundtvig’s theologies appear when they are evaluated against the background of the Eastern tradition. Some dominant thoughts of Eastern theologies have influenced Wesley and Grundtvig, marked their theologies, and formed their special characters.

In this article, we will see that Wesley interprets Christ’s deeds as victories over the powers of Death, evilness, and corruption. These victories are the basis for human liberation and healing – an interpretation often found in the Eastern tradition (Link Ed. 1988, 78). Wesley refers to Christ’s deeds as a ransom and redemption – an interpretation gathered from his reading of Irenæus, Clement of Alexandria, Origen, and The Apostolic Constitution. Grundtvig reflects on a number of texts from the Anglo-Saxon as found in the poetry of the Junius and Exeter Book Manuscripts and the writings of Bede, to interpret the Eastern explanation of Christ’s death and resurrection. Grundtvig’s emphasis on Eastern theology via the Celtic-Anglo-Saxon inspiration is further supported by the inspiration Grundtvig found in the Greek *Leiturgikón*.

## Context shapes the focus on Eastern Christian tradition

Wesley and Grundtvig stood against theological Deism and Rationalism. Wesley's showdown with Deistic thinking in 18th century England parallels Grundtvig's showdown with 19th century Rationalistic theology in Denmark. They regarded Deism and Rationalism as unrestrained, unscientific, and unorganized fantasies. And they found them unacceptable as guiding ideological frames, due to their rejection of given authorities to determine theories. Wesley and Grundtvig similarly critiqued them as, "castles in the air" and "Luft-Kasteller" (*WW* 23, 419:20-29; *DV* 3, 203-204, 235).

Immanuel Kant is subject to their critic. For Wesley and Grundtvig, the empirical approach to reality is the only way to the true knowledge and, especially, the experienced reality we find in history.

Wesley and Grundtvig have a remarkable theology of history as a mirror and a key to understand the present time. History gives us values and fundamental knowledge about the world and ourselves. Only history can help us find the meaning in life. New Testament texts, for example, have authority because of their place in history as a collection of people's experiences with their God; the New Testament was a collection of interpretations of the people's experiences of God's actions.

Wesley and Grundtvig's shared critique of theological Deism and Rationalism caused them to turn to history to find the knowledge needed to reform and renew Christian thinking for modernity. Christian antiquity was a valuable resource because in that time Christianity was not compromised by its close link to power in Europe. Wesley saw the Constantine state-church union as the main reason for the corruption of Christian institutions and officials. Grundtvig criticized the Latin era and culture, and he believed that the "Romans" spoiled much in Europe, including Christianity, multiple times. With their critique of contemporary ideologies and their knowledge of historical theology, it is understandable why Wesley and Grundtvig look to early Christian Antiquity and the Greek Church Fathers to find inspiration for the reformulation of the essence of Christianity.

## Themes inspired by Early Greek theology

In my dissertation *Morningstar of Christianity* [*Kristendommens Morgenstjerne*], I explain how Wesley and Grundtvig are inspired by different sources from the Early Greek theology. The themes are: 1) Dynamic anthropology, 2) The God who is reaching out, 3) The Fall or Original sin, 4) What Christ has done for us, 5) Two-sided conditions of divine-human relationship, 6) Salvation understood as growth, 7) and The Holy Trinity. And I analyze their answers to two questions. First, how did they understand the reconciling ministry of Christ? And second, what was the logical meaning of Christ's death and resurrection?

### Wesley's view of Christ's fight against corruption, death, and Satan

Christians assert that God gives salvation to people because of Christ's sacrifice.<sup>4</sup> Christ's ministry and his reconciliation between God and the world – these comprise the foundations upon which the theology is dependent. Other themes within Christian teaching depend directly on atonement. The word "atonement" is an interpretation of what Christ has done for people and for their salvation (Aulén 1930; Meistad 1992, 89-91). The rationale is that the relationship between God and the world is broken because of sin which prevents human beings from reestablishing a good relationship with God. Because of that only God's initiative and His actions can form the world's relationship with God. These actions are seen in the incarnation in Jesus Christ and his death and resurrection. The inner logical explanation of how God's initiative and acts through the life and death of Christ can lead to the reestablishing of the good relationship with God is not clear (González 1989, 50-64).

The History of Christian Thoughts shows a number of hypothesis with different motives and priorities that determine the total understanding (Link Ed. 1988, 77-79; Richardson 1965). Among the Greek Fathers, e.g. Irenæus and Clement of Alexandria, we find the metaphor of Christ that his death was a ransom paid (lutron = to pay for prisoner's liberation) for humankind to free them from evil. Origen is specific in his use of Christ

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<sup>4</sup> The Nicene Creed, Faith and Order Paper no. 153, 1991, 10.

as a ransom; he indicates that the ransom is paid to the devil to pay for the prisoners' freedom (González vol. 1, 1987, 222-225). Wesley often uses the metaphor that Christ by his death gives a ransom, but he never follows Origen's theory that the ransom is given to a devil or that a devil has any authority to set prisoners free. Even though Wesley doesn't dwell on the details of the exchange, he is constant in his explanation that Christ's death and resurrection constitute a ransom that leads to liberation (*WW* 12, 33-35). The action of Christ leads to human liberation from destruction and evil powers and to restoration, first, of a relationship with God and, second, of the human nature that was damaged by the power of sin. Christ's redemption reestablishes the relationship with God dramatically. Christ's death and resurrection are the crucial parts. Christ's adversaries are corruption, the power of death, and the devil. Christ fights and defeats His adversaries. Through Christ, the triune God fights against the adversary, and as the one God is triune, so is the adversary with the names Death, corruption, and the devil as its three parts. We find a fight-and-victory motive in Wesley's understanding of Christ's actions on our behalf. Christ is triumphant. After the victory, death, corruption, and the devil exist in chains. The victory overshadows the fight, and resurrection takes dominion over his suffering, pain, and death on the cross. The whole action of Christ is a complete action of the triune God in Wesley's theology (Collins 2007, 99-10; Link Ed. 1988, 78).

In the *Christian Library*, Wesley quotes a long extract from Macarius' Homilies where the atonement of Christ is explained through a typological use of the lamb in the Exodus text and the meaning of the dove in the sacrificial act of the Temple.<sup>5</sup> It differs from what the Eastern tradition proposes (Wesley 1754, note to Exodus 12:3; Wesley 1745, 11). The understanding of Christ's death and resurrection mentioned in this text is the same, if compared to the ideas of Irenæus and other Eastern church fathers.<sup>6</sup> The action of God is completed, the claim of justification is broken, humanity has been liberated, and sins have been atoned by Christ through his death and resurrection (*CL* 1, 149-150).

<sup>5</sup> Notes to Numbers 6:11 f. and Leviticus 16:21.

<sup>6</sup> Ephraim Syrus and Gregor of Nyssa about Christ's fight in Hell and victory over the devil.

A major question remains: How can Christ's death and resurrection lead to the reestablishment of the good relationship with God and cancel the harmfulness of sin? For Wesley, the answer is the key to interpretation. From Tertullian and Cypress to Augustin to Anselm of Canterbury, we find a tradition of interpretation where forensic aspects dominate and where judicial terms and principles play a major role (Aagaard 1994, 40). Because of sin, in this tradition, all human beings are guilty in the eyes of God. Guilt separates humanity from God. Moreover, when God is just and fair, He maintains the whole world with His justice. And Christ performs the action that is the foundation for human beings to be justified and freed from guilt. Anselm develops this forensic interpretation in his work *Cur Deus Homo* which includes the explanation that Christ, as a human, performs his act of salvation in relation to God (Lindroth 1935, 1-156. See also Link Ed. 1988, 78). In this forensic understanding of atonement, it is important to have a complete, inviolate principle of justice, but the act of God is broken because God the Father and God the Christ face each other in the act of reconciliation. It is in His capacity as a human being that Christ is sacrificed on the cross, and Christ's offering is received by God the Father (Anselm 1090/1978, 114-127; Radler 1988, 44-47, 182-227). Wesley adopted this interpretation of the act of atonement from the Moravians and the Puritan Calvinistic both in and outside the Anglican Church.

The principle of justice is the major motive in this thinking, especially in his interpretation of Christ's acts. Christ's deeds are important for reconciliation of God and the world, and Christ is the one who leads to the reconciliation. Wesley describes the act of Christ as a fulfillment of reconciliation, but he never claims that those actions should have a deputy role for human beings, so that Christ takes on his shoulders the anger and punishment that God intends for mankind (Deschner 1960, 152-175). Wesley scholars agree that for Wesley Christ's compensation for human beings is important, but Wesley doesn't support the idea that Christ collected credits to be transferred to human beings.

Wesley does not believe that God's attitude towards human beings should be affected by a sacrifice. With reference to the Old Testament text about Abraham's sacrifice of Isaac, Wesley holds that even though God effected Abraham prepare for the sacrificial act, God was not interested in the sacrifice itself, only in Abraham's attitude (Wesley 1765, note to Gene-

sis 22:12). After He tested Abraham, God didn't require a sacrifice, and he has not ever since. Likewise, Wesley turns against the understanding that the elements of suffering and punishment should have any positive effect on the God-human relationship (*WW* 4, 8:12-9:2). Christ doesn't need to atone for man's sins to make God willing to forgive and show human beings His mercy. God's nature is forgiving and merciful, and God's love overrules his justice in many situations without any other consequences. It is therefore God himself, not mankind, who breaks his justice. When Wesley speaks about Christ's deeds as a punishment, he means that Christ assumes the consequences of human sinfulness, corruption, and death, regardless of the inevitable death of the human body. Christ's deputy deed consists in voluntarily living a human life in its fullness from birth to death. By suffering and dying on the cross, God challenges corruption, death, and the devil through Christ. Through the resurrection of Christ, corruption, death, and the devil are totally defeated, and all their might and power are destroyed. Christ takes the penalty of sin upon himself (Maddox 1994, 95-97). It is not God's punishment, because God doesn't punish anyone, and it is not the devil's punishment, because the devil doesn't have the power to punish.

Using fight-and-victory terminology and forensic terminology, Wesley writes about Christ's deeds for humans through death and resurrection (Deschner 1960, 118-126; Collins 2007, 165-173). Fight-and-victory terminology appears when Wesley explains salvation as a showdown between sinful corruption and individual sanctification and growth. Forensic terminology appears when Wesley explains salvation as justification and a showdown between sin and guilt. Wesley holds that, in principle, justification and sanctification are two different but inseparable things, like two sides of a coin (Lindström 1946, 83-104).

The relationship between Wesley's use of fight-and-victory terminology, on one side, and his use of forensic terminology, on the other, has been subject to many studies. Outler understands Wesley's thinking as a cross between Latin-Western and Greek-Eastern traditions:

... behind this Latin tradition lay the balancing, deepening influence of Greek Catholic spirituality (with its distinctive pneumatology that Wesley embraced wholeheartedly), with roots that run from Ignatius of Antioch through Irenaeus and Clement of Alexandria, to Macari-

us, Gregory of Nyssa, Ephrem Syrus, and the great Eastern liturgies (Outler in *WW* 1, 36).

From Outler's perspective, Wesley's theology belongs to the Western tradition, but with strong elements added from the Greek-Eastern tradition. When it comes to Wesley's use of the fight-and-victory motive, Outler claims that "these metaphors . . . tend to outweigh the forensic ones that had dominated Western tradition since Anselm" (Outler in *WW* 1, 80). Ecumenical theology has bolstered this perspective of Wesley's dependency of the Eastern tradition. In Grundtvig, we will find that the fight-and-victory trope is also strong.

### Victory and triumph

To Wesley, the incarnation of Christ means that God not only became human in Christ's birth and life, but He also took upon himself the figure of sinful human beings. This understanding does not mean that Christ is sinful or has a sinful nature, but that he lives on earth under the conditions and consequences of sin. Incarnation in itself, when it is understood as an incarnation into sinful mankind, becomes a matter of accepting the punishment and penalty of sinful human beings. The consequences of sin are formulated in words of guilt and punishment which lead to the corruption of nature and death. Christ's death and descent into Hell is the necessary consequence of the incarnation. Without dying and descending into Hell, God would not have completely taken upon the sinful human figure in its fullness. When Christ's death and resurrection are seen as the deeds through which God reconciles the world with himself, Christ's words on the cross, "It is finished!" become an answer to the completion of both the incarnation and the atonement. When addressing incarnation and atonement, Wesley uses a fight-and-victory imagery (Collins 2007, 87-969).<sup>7</sup> In accounts of Jesus's birth, life, and teachings, Wesley finds a battle against evil powers and all that destroy human life in the world. The fight is against a triune enemy of God and mankind. The final victory

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<sup>7</sup> Allchin 1989, 117, on Wesley's "Christus Victor motif in speaking of the atonement".

happens with the death and resurrection of Christ. The death of Christ completes God's atonement and unites God with sinful mankind. It is a victory over corruption, death, and the devil whose strongest weapon, death, is meant to exact total destruction for Christ, but it doesn't. It is only an apparent victory because Christ, who is Life itself, cannot be defeated by the death, and he overcomes its power. The apparent victory of evil becomes its defeat, while Christ's defeat becomes his opportunity to show that he is the Lord of Life, and he is victorious. The outcome of Christ's death and resurrection is therefore, according to Wesley, victory over corruption, the death, and the devil.

Wesley sees victory every time the power of corruption, death, and the devil are broken in human beings and the world. It is in the description of human conversion, justification, regeneration, and sanctification that Wesley lifts up his perspective of Christ's victory and explains what salvation means. Because the Christian Gospel is an offering of salvation in Christ given to human beings in every present time, not only in the future somewhere, the victory of Christ will begin to take over in the life of human beings who are becoming Christian, and in the world, where, "Your Kingdom come and your will be done." Wesley strongly expresses motif of victory when he preaches on what it means to be a Christian and how Christianity influences different communities and the world. The eschatological reality in which God has defeated all evil and will recreate all that is hurt and corrupted begins to break through. It is called realized eschatological perspective (Williams 1960, 191-198). Collins summarizes Wesley's understanding in this way:

... the victory motif of conquering sin, death, Hell, and Satan as playing out not simply at the cross, but also in the ongoing transformation of human hearts in the context of the church, as Christ comes, judges, and then finally reigns without a rival. So important is this sanctifying work in believing hearts, in which grace is underscored and in which Christ holds sway, that Wesley envisions no eschatological fulfillment apart from it. In other words, it is precisely as Christ subdues all things to himself and utterly casts out all sin that everlasting righteousness is brought in – a righteousness that is not only the desire of the church but also the very perfection of the kingly role (Collins 2007, 113).



Wesley describes Christ's victory over the powers of evil as a victory in this world. It follows that victory over the power of the devil and evil is linked to the cross and the resurrection of Christ and not to a future fight in the afterlife. Wesley insisted that Christ's deeds are planted in this historical world and that the Christ-versus-evil battleground is this world. It is also because of his understanding of Hades and Hell. Wesley follows the Apostles' Creed which states that Christ, after his death and burial, descended to the place, where the dead people are. He went *descendit ad inferna*.<sup>8</sup>

The incarnation of Christ means that Christ becomes human and lives life as sinful people do, all the way to death and into the innermost of death. The place where the dead people are during the time before the morning of the resurrection is Hades, corresponding to the Apostles' Creed's "inferna." Christ comes to Hades, "... Hades where the souls of wicked men reside" (*WW* 4, 8:13-14). Wesley follows, however, the understanding that Hades is a land of the dead where the dead souls reside until the morning of resurrection, when they are to be united with their resurrected bodies before continuing into the new and recreated world (*WW* 4, 8:8-9:15). Hades is like an antechamber or forecourt to Hell and Paradise, and it is not identical with Hell (Collins 2007, 319). The idea that Christ descends into Hades, to the land of the dead and the antechamber to Hell where the dead souls reside, can be found in Wesley's writings (*WW* 4, 189:27-30).

In his sermon on the biblical text on the rich man and Lazarus, Wesley asks if a resurrected person could testify in a way that might impact the lives of the living. Wesley writes that the answer is Christ himself, because He is the one who has returned in his resurrection from the land of the dead.

Christ's fight and victory over death and the power of the devil happen on cross, in his time in Hades, and the resurrection. Wesley's conviction that Christ doesn't reside in Hell is also stimulated by the words of Jesus to another condemned man on the cross when He says, "Today shalt thou be with me in Paradise,"<sup>9</sup> and by Peter in his Pentecostal preaching, Acts 2:27, where it is said – mirroring David's prophecy about Christ's death – "For thou wilt not leave my soul in Hades, neither wilt thou suffer thy Holy One to see corruption" (Wesley 1754, notes to Acts 2:27). Christ is a ransom that leads to liberation; Christ defeats the power of death and

<sup>8</sup> According to *Book of Common Prayer*, Art. Rel. III, 685.

<sup>9</sup> Luke 23:43.

leads prisoners to freedom (Wesley 1754, notes to 1 Peter 3:18-20).<sup>10</sup> Even though Wesley did not fully follow the ideas in the Eastern pictorial interpretation of the atoning deeds of Christ, his words and formulations bear the clear marks of this thinking (Aulén 1930, 78 ff.).<sup>11</sup>

Wesley understands that Christ's descent into Hades meant that Christ preached salvation for people in the land of death.<sup>12</sup> That Christ shall "not leave [his] soul" in Hades is not the same as His not visiting Hades. Grundtvig draws the same line for his understanding as Wesley does of Christ in the land of the dead by stating several times that Christ was a guest in Hell.<sup>13</sup> Christ does not belong to Hell, and even though he was there and fought a battle, it was as a guest, on his way from before to after. However, Wesley imagines how Christ descended into Hades and preached there in the hymn "Jesu, thy blood and righteousness" (*WW* 7, 309:37-311:443) which was rewritten in Danish as "O Krist, dit blods, din retfærd's magt" (*Salmer & Sange* 2006, 612-613).<sup>14</sup>

The effect of Christ's fight and victory is often formulated in figurative language about prisoners' liberation and His victory over evil, corruption, death, and the devil. Often, as scholars focus on the messages of triumph and victory in the Gospel, attention turns to who or what Christ is fighting against and what the battle is about (*WW* 7, 140). The dying Lord is fighting a battle for humanity, and during this battle, He is victorious. That is the reason why God is worthy of all praises for what he, in his mercy, has done for all human beings (*WW* 7, 141). Victory means that people can look back at their former states as prisoners and slaves. Because of the victory, they are set free from pain and have left death, Hell, grief, and suffering behind (*WW* 7, 141).<sup>15</sup> Death is swallowed by life itself. It is a result of Christ's descent and ascent. Thus, it is for all people to whom the victory of Christ is a new paradigm for life and a foretaste of the coming Paradise.

The fight-and-victory motif is found in many sermons and hymns. One of the hymns, Wesley's "Head of thy church triumphant" (Wesley 1745

<sup>10</sup> See also: *WW* 4, 16:19-17:29.

<sup>11</sup> See also: Wesley, 1737, 46-47, no. VIII.

<sup>12</sup> The Gospel of Peter 10:42.

<sup>13</sup> See *GSV* 1.2, 474: "Guds Søn haver Helvede gjæstet!" and Grundtvig 1865, 45: "... en Giæst, Kommet fra de Dødes Rige."

<sup>14</sup> Danish text P.H. Larsen (1877-1958).

<sup>15</sup> See also Wesley (1779/1876), 666.

1847, 239-240), was known by Grundtvig in 1836, when he rewrote it in Danish, “Seier-Kirkens Høvding bold” (*GVS* 2, 630-631). One final example of Eastern Greek terminology used by Wesley is the Wesleyan hymn “Our Lord is risen from the dead” (Wesley, 1779/1876, no. 557), another hymn Grundtvig rewrote in Danish in 1837 and published with the title “Vor Frelser opstod fra de Døde” (*GVS* 2, 484-485).<sup>16</sup> One of Wesley’s most widespread Easter hymns, “Christ, the Lord, is risen today,” speaks about the redemption of Christ, His “triumph”, and “victory.” He mocks Hell, death, and the grave because they have lost (Wesley 1779/1876, 652-653).<sup>17</sup>

### Grundtvig: Christ’s fight against sin, death, and the great Tyrant

Throughout Grundtvig’s authorship, we find evidence that Grundtvig, to a great extent, follows Eastern Greek thinking about the interpretation of what Christ has done for us. Aulén talks about the classic atonement hypothesis where Christ is understood as the one who won victory over the powers of corruption and death, in contrast to the Latin and forensic atonement hypothesis where focus is on law and justice (Aulén 1930, 38-69; 141-171; Bjerg 2002, 116). In his early authorship, Grundtvig edited and published the periodical *Danne-Virke* where his Easter play, *Paaske-Lilien*, was first printed. In the play, Grundtvig lets the angels sing on Easter morning at the grave:

The Dragon is bonded,  
 Death has lost its Sting,  
 The Lion has won,  
 Life is the lot for the Believers  
 (...) Defy the bond of the Grave and the tricks of the Satan  
 (...) Offer mockery to the Grave and defy the Dead!<sup>18</sup>

<sup>16</sup> See that Grundtvig in note on page 484 refers to Wesley.

<sup>17</sup> *Salmer & Sange* (2006), no. 168, 236-237.

<sup>18</sup> “Dragen er bundet, Døden har mistet sin Brod, Løven har vundet, Liv er de Troendes Lod. (...) Trods Gravens Baand og Satans List ... Byd Graven Spot og Døden Trods!” (*DV* II, 317-318; 321).

The dragon, death, and Satan represent the opponent whom Christ, the Lion (*GVS* 1.2, 630-631),<sup>19</sup> has conquered by binding him and holding the rope of the grave. Through these actions, the believer has access to life and can defy death and mock the grave. In very few words, Grundtvig gives his explanation of Christ's suffering, death, and resurrection by using Eastern thought and not the Latin forensic terminology.

The words used in description of Christ's attributes are about victory and conquering and especially stating that Christ is a hero. The description of Christ's suffering and death frames those events as heroic deeds that demanded a lot from Christ, but also gave him the total victory.<sup>20</sup> One of Grundtvig's Christmas hymns, "The choir of God's angles are singing delectable together,"<sup>21</sup> explains the purpose of the newborn Christ by saying that He "Is our hero and our Lord" who has come to the world "In [God's] image" to recreate "Us again."<sup>22</sup> The heroic deed of Christ is seen as taking place during his whole life and not limited to the drama of suffering, crucifixion, and resurrection. Christ's deeds are the foundation of salvation, offered to all people, so that the image of God may be recreated in believers. In other hymns, Grundtvig views salvation as forgiveness of human sin.<sup>23</sup>

Human life, too, is a battle. During that battle, the knowledge of Christ's victory is a resource; faith in Him gives believers the confidence needed to give them victory in their fights and battles. The story of Christ ends in a way that includes death, and death is not understood as a final end, but as the opening to a new era. Every living human being faces the end of life eventually, but the end is also an open door to something new. According to Grundtvig, Christian "awakening"<sup>24</sup> allows people of faith

<sup>19</sup> Rev 5:5b. Gen 49:9.

<sup>20</sup> In 1826, Grundtvig writes: "... Jesu Selv-Opoffrelse paa Korset, som den store Helte-Gjerning, hvormed han frelste os, saa Troen derpaa er Overgangen fra de Dødes Rige til de Levendes Land" (*US* IV, 486).

<sup>21</sup> *GSV*, 4.1, 249: "Guds Engle i Flok! Synger liflig i Kor."

<sup>22</sup> "vor Helt og vor Herre", "i Billede sit", "os paany".

<sup>23</sup> Grundtvig in *Om Christendommens Sandhed* 1826-1827: "... det var ikke for sin egen, men for sine Troendes Skyld, vor Jesus døde, og at denne Hans Død var Vilkaaret for den Synds-Forladelse vi i vor Troes-Bekjendelse ophøie (...) at Christi, Guds Søn, frivillige Død (...) kan udvirke hans Troende Synds-Forladelse!" (*US* IV, 630).

<sup>24</sup> "opvaagnelse."

to live, borrow, and take over the end of life from Christ. They borrow from His death and resurrection and make His end of life their own story. This is “the hope” of the “incorruptible,” and it is open to everything He has “prepared to us.”<sup>25</sup>

Grundtvig’s most concentrated and complete interpretation of Christ’s deeds for humanity can be found in his sermons. Here, he focuses on the idea that the Father and the Son are united and driven by love to “atone [for] the sin of the World” and to overcome the great tyrant, death, and break the deadly chains that bind all people. This act of the unified Father and Son is an invitation to all people to access life, now and everlasting.<sup>26</sup>

Grundtvig uses fight-and-victory terminology to describe people who are living sinfully and facing death because of it. He calls them prisoners of death, evil, and the Evil One. Christ himself was never a prisoner of neither anything nor anyone. He accepted the conditions of a human life with the purpose of destroying the powers of corruption.<sup>27</sup> There are many results of Christ’s deeds for us, but the greatest is our liberation and victory. He is the one who conquered, and he offers the spoils of victory to human beings.<sup>28</sup>

Grundtvig easily combines Old Testament images of Jahwes fighting with New Testament images of Christ’s battle. Jahwes descended to

<sup>25</sup> Grundtvig *Den christelige Kamp* 1825: “... vi skal kun glæde os over Seiren, Jesus vandt, da Han førde Liv og Uforkrænkelighed igjen for Lyset, da Han i Graven, hvoraf Han seierrig opstod, beredte os (...) en glad Opvaagnelse (...). Ja, dette store, uforkrænkelige Haab, det er den Salighedens Hjelm, der holder de Christnes Hoved opreist under Kampen (...)” (*US IV*, 439).

<sup>26</sup> Grundtvig *Om Kiødets Opstandelse og det evige Liv* 1855, about “Tyranniets Tid.” (Grundtvig 1855, 87). See also *GVS* 1.2, no. 254, 483-484, about the fallen Tyrant. Grundtvig *Prædikener i Vartov*, vol. 2, 169-170.

<sup>27</sup> “Han som havde reddet Andre af Dødens Vold, kunde umuelig selv blive dens Rov (...) thi jeg har Magt til at sætte Livet til og tage det igjen, (...) det var for at løskiøbe os der Alle som Syndere, var Dødens Fanger, har han selv forklaret sin frivillige Død, forklaret den af det, kun for os dunkle, men i sig selv evig soleklare Dyb, hvis Navn er *Kiærlighed*” (*GPV II*, 169).

<sup>28</sup> Grundtvig *Om den sande Christendom* 1826: “... vor almægtige Skyts-Aand, og med vor usynlige Konge, der knuser Konger som Leerkar, og rører ved Bjergene, saa de henflyde som Vox for Hans Ansigt, og vidner, at den almægtige Jord-Drot ogsaa er den Himmel-Drot, vi i ham tilbede! (...) thi Seiren er vundet, Riget er frelst, mens vi sov, af Ham, der ikke slummer men vaager altid over Israel (...) da vi herefter (...) levende tage Deel i Hans Kamp og Seier” (*US IV*, 550).

Mount Horeb to meet with Moses<sup>29</sup> or the peoples in the days of Jeremia<sup>30</sup> who were like broken vessels. Grundtvig's hymn "Daniel in the Lions' Pit"<sup>31</sup> reflects the theme of Christ's death and resurrection. In the same way, "The angels of God" bound "The gabs of the Lions," as did the "Savior in the Snake-Garden," and in contrary to "the Sinful-Nature's Order," He didn't "Dissolve." Therefore, "The friends of Jesus" are able "this Evening (...) smile at the Death," because they "Shall arise shining in the dawn."<sup>32</sup> The battle and the victory are connected to the Easter drama; Good Friday and Easter Morning are the exponents of God's victory over the powers of destruction and corruption. Grundtvig's use of other stories of God's battles and victories gives his presentation a cosmic and overall inclusive character.

Grundtvig uses another Old Testament image in his Easter hymn "Remove the black Cross from the Grave"<sup>33</sup> where he compares the resurrection of Christ with the Phoenix bird<sup>34</sup> who dies but arises again from its own ashes. He says, "Palm-Bird for an ash jar! Praise songs for painful sighs" and continues connecting the human resurrection with the likeness of the wings of the Phoenix that are growing out again, "Growing of the Bird-Wings of the Soul!"<sup>35</sup> He also writes, "Like the Sun-Bird you will be young again!"<sup>36</sup>

Grundtvig's ideas of Christ as the hero and the one who redeems those living under the conditions of death are developed strongly in Grundtvig's description of what happened to Christ during the three days between his death on Good Friday and his resurrection on Easter Morning. He writes,

<sup>29</sup> Deut 4:11-12. Psalm 97:5.

<sup>30</sup> Jeremias 19.

<sup>31</sup> "Daniel i Løver-Kulen" (*GVS* 1.2, no. 307, 566-567).

<sup>32</sup> "Guds engle", "Løvers Munde", "Frelseren i Orme-Gaarden", "Syn-Naturens Orden", "Opløsning", "Jesu Venner", "i Kveld ad Døden smile", "Skal i Gry opstaa med Glands."

<sup>33</sup> "Tag det sorte Kors fra Graven," *GVS* 4.1, no. 124, 155-157.

<sup>34</sup> Job 28:18, LXX Ps 92:13, 1 Clement 25:1-5. Grundtvig recognizes that in Ps 103 the Phenix bird has been an eagle, but the Phenix motif is still behind. See Grundtvig 1840, 16. See *WW* 7, 155:13-16, for Wesley's use of the Phenix motif.

<sup>35</sup> "Palmefugl for Askekrukke! Frydesang for hule sukke", "Voxer Sjælens Fuglevinger!", "Sol-Fuglen lig, bliver ung du igjen!" (*GVS* 4.1, no. 124, 155; no. 147, 278).

<sup>36</sup> *GSV* 1.1, no. 64, verse 3, 155.

“He has ransomed you among the slaves of Hell.”<sup>37</sup> This understanding of ransoming unfolds in major figurative language on the mythological drama between good and evil. The fight is going on behind the visible world.<sup>38</sup> These insights do not change: The logical understanding of the cross remains a riddle that only a faithful believer can solve.

The phrase in the Apostolic Creed, “Descended to the dead,” *descendit ad inferna*, refers to Christ’s movement to the place where the dead gather after the soul and body are separated. Grundtvig has, like Wesley, many considerations about how Christ’s presence in the underworld can be understood.<sup>39</sup> Christ doesn’t arrive as a damned person and, even though he took upon himself the sin and the guilt of the world, he was innocent. He doesn’t arrive as a gleeful person who can prove His own innocence and victory to the damned persons so they can see what they have missed because of their lack of faith. Grundtvig turns against the understanding that Christ is a victim or judge; instead, He comes voluntarily and to save. As part of the reflections, Grundtvig muses on the differences between Hades, the land of the Dead, Hell, and Paradise. Christ descends into the place where the Evil One is powerful. Only there can he fight the great opponent and proclaim liberty to those imprisoned there, those who have faith in him as their savior (*CP* III, 176-195).<sup>40</sup>

Throughout Grundtvig’s authorship are descriptions of Christ’s descent and ascent.<sup>41</sup> Christ is the hero because of his death and interment and because, through his resurrection, he was victorious and able to free prisoners in his triumphant march.<sup>42</sup>

<sup>37</sup> “Løskjøbt har Han dig blandt Helvedes fanger,” *GVS* 1.1, no. 64, verse 3, 155.

<sup>38</sup> Grundtvig *Søndags-Bogen*, sermon on Matt. 28:1-10: “... hvad der virkelig skedte paa Jorden, da Herrens Engel foer ned fra Himmelen, oplukkende med Kongens Nøgel den forseglede Dør mellem de Dødes Rige og de Levendes Land, fordi Livets Fyrste, som ved en Feiltagelse, var kommet til at ligge i Dødens Lænker, som da nødvendig maatte sprænges” (*US* V, 217).

<sup>39</sup> “... han ogsaa nedfoer til det Under-Jordiske, (...) opholdt han sig tre Dage i de Dødes Rige” (Grundtvig 1855, 104-106, 105).

<sup>40</sup> Sermon IX *Christi Nedfart til Helvede* 1. Petersbrev 3:18-22.

<sup>41</sup> Grundtvig *Ved Tusindaars-Festen* 1826: “Guds egen Søn, o glem det ei! Gik til de Dødes Rige, Kun for at du, paa Livets Vei, Til Lysets Hjem kan stige!” (*US* IV, 744).

<sup>42</sup> Grundtvig in *Søndags-Bogen*, sermon on Acts 2:1-11: “Helten, der kommer seierrig tilbage fra de Dødes Rige, førende Døden og Helvede med sig i Lænker

Christ's fight in the land of the dead leads believers to understand that evil has been overcome. Evil has two faces: Death and corruption. They are explained as phenomena, but they are also personified. In this way, the opponent of Christ has the character of both a personal and evil power. The clearest personification of evilness is found when Grundtvig describes the fight as a duel with allusion to the duels found in the Bible. Grundtvig writes, "The Hero who won the victory and bound the Strong one took the armor he was depending on, plundered his Palace and shared the loot with his friends!"<sup>43</sup> Likewise, Christ's battle is seen as the fulfillment of the promise made to mankind after the fall that the offspring of the woman "Shall crush the Head of the Snake, but you shall be bite in your heel."<sup>44</sup>

The suffering and the fight are portrayed dramatically, but Christ's victory, triumph, and heroic exit after the fight are prioritized.<sup>45</sup> Even though the pain and death that occur on Good Friday is comprehensive, and the battle in the land of the dead is crucial to explanations of what Christ has done for us, the total dominant perspective is found in Grundtvig's interpretation of the resurrection on Easter morning. He writes, we "welcome you with the crown of victory, in the Light of the battle in the hidden place...Welcome to the plain place, away from Shadow Land in

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(...) naar vi kun har den Tro, at Død er Syndens Sold, men det evige Liv Guds Naade-Gave i Christo Jesu, vor Herre, og jeg tør vel mene, at Herrens Opstandelse staaer ei i større Glands for noget Menneske-Øie, end for Unger-Svendens, hvem Døds-Tanken vakde af hans søde Drømme om Jord-Livets Herlighed, eller hvis Hjerte vaandede sig under Følelsen af Verdens-Livets Tømhed, naar han under sine stille Betragtninger faaer Syn paa Helten, der kommer seierrig tilbage fra de Dødes Rige, førende Døden og Helvede med sig i Lænker, og udstrækkende sin milde Haand med Livets Brød og med Salighedens Kalk, til Muldets Frænder i Græde-Dalen!" (USV, 209).

<sup>43</sup> Allusion of Matt 12:29: "... den Helt der overvandt og bandt den Stærke, tog hans fulde Rustning, som han forlod sig paa, udplyndrede hans Palads og deelte Byttet med sine Venner!" (GPV 2, 171).

<sup>44</sup> Genesis 3:15. Grundtvig *Om Kiødets Opstandelse og det evige Liv* about Christ as the "Snake-Crasher": "skal sønderknuse (Slangens) dit Hoved, men du skal sønderknuse hans hæl" (Grundtvig 1855, 71-75).

<sup>45</sup> "See, at denne Fader-Kiærlighed og til denne Gienløsningens Helte-Gerning gav Han sin eenbaarne Søn, den heltmodige Løve og det taalmodige Lam, som knuste Slangens Hoved (...)" (GPV II, 253).



the Depths!”<sup>46</sup> The pain, death, and struggle are always seen from the retrospective of the victory in the resurrection.

Compared to Grundtvig’s pictorial and metaphoric language on the motif of fight and victory, Wesley’s language is plainer and more muffled. This is not because Wesley is inarticulate or imprecise, but because Grundtvig is more emotionally powerful and uses so many expressions taken either directly from the old Greek liturgy and Fathers or from the Celtic-Anglo-Saxon poems.

### Death and Hell in chains

Grundtvig’s study of other sources influenced by the Eastern Greek fathers catalyzes his own writings. In his work on *Beowulf*, after Thorkelin’s edition of the poem appeared in 1815, Grundtvig shows in his commentary on the poem that he understands it through a Christian lens where the heathen events are structured and put into a providential framework. There are several levels of meaning in this poem. Beowulf – Grundtvig calls him Bjovulf – defeats the evil powers, and the poem is “a great Pictorial Word (...) the Word is, as Scripture teaches, and as we now are able to understand, the highest and deepest Expression of the Revelation of Life, and this whole Story must be understood as the Words coming to Fight and Victory.”<sup>47</sup> Grundtvig understands that *Bjovulf’s Drape* is a “Fundamental-story” or an “Epos” that dominates and gives the patterns for other stories and imaginations. Christianity has shown by its worldwide popularity that it has a powerful influence on other cultures and mythologies. Bjovulf’s fight and victory are, in this perspective, a reproduction of the Christian, “Fundamental-story” on the fight and victory of truth (Grundtvig 1875, 96).

Grundtvig understands the life of Christ on Earth as the Word made flesh, and Grundtvig sees the event as an image of the fight and victory

<sup>46</sup> “Velkommen seierkronet, I lys fra Slag i Løn (...) Velkommen paa det Jævne, Fra Dybets Skyggedal!” (*GPV* II, 175).

<sup>47</sup> *GPV* II 273: “et stort Billed-Ord (...) Ordet er, som Skriften lærer, og som vu nu kan fatte, det høiste og dybeste Udtryk for Livets Aabenbarelse, og den hele Historie maa betragtes som Ordets Kamp til Seier.”

of truth. Spiritually understood, the event has created the only true epic in history.<sup>48</sup>

Grundtvig is convinced that Cædmon or someone closely related to him was the poet of *Bjovulf's Drape*. This conviction may have stimulated Grundtvig's interest in the Anglo-Saxon Christianity which, in part, compelled him to journey to England three times between 1829 and 1831. During those visits, he learned more about the writings of Cædmon, Bede, and Cynewulf and texts of the Exeter-Book, e.g. the *Messiaden*.<sup>49</sup> Knowledge of these writings gives Grundtvig an even more clear understanding of what Christ has done, "For us all and for our salvation."<sup>50</sup>

The most coherent depiction of Christ's descent into the land of the dead and what happened there is found in "Ragna-Rok" where Grundtvig retells "Cædmon's Hymn" from Bede's *Ecclesiastical History of the English People*.<sup>51</sup> The connection from Grundtvig to Cædmon to Bede<sup>52</sup> to Anglo-Saxon Christianity in England is also the connection to the Eastern and Greek Christian Antiquity (Heatt 1983, xxviii, xxxvii) from where we have knowledge about Christ's death and resurrection. The story is presented as a mythological battle between God and the devil, between life and death, and between Christ and Satan. Grundtvig takes inspiration from Eastern and Greek thinking when he writes about Christ's fight against the powers of Hell and how Christ empties Hell, freeing the prisoners and leading them back to Paradise. Grundtvig's first great hymn on Christ's descent to the land of the dead is "I kveld blev der banket paa Helvedes Port,"<sup>53</sup> a twenty-verse narrative poem. He writes, "The herald was strong" when he knocked "on the gate of Hell" and announced to "the dragons of Hell" that he has come to trample "on lizards and drag-

<sup>48</sup> *Om Bjovulfs Drape*: "Christi Liv paa Jorden, Ordets Vandring i Kiød, er en Begivenhed, der ikke blot afbilder, men indeholder Sandheds Kamp og Seier, og som synes, aandig beskuet, at maatte frembringe det eneste sande Epos, der i Historien lader sig Skabe" (DVII, 275).

<sup>49</sup> See Bradley 1998.

<sup>50</sup> WCC, Faith and Order paper no. 153 (1991), 10.

<sup>51</sup> Noack, 1983, 68-72. See DVII, *Om Bjovulfs Drape*, 277. See also Allchin in *Grundtvig-Studier* 2001, 31-40.

<sup>52</sup> Bede Venerabilis (ca. 672-735). Christensen-Göransson I 1969, 268-269.

<sup>53</sup> GSV 1.2, no. 243, 471-474. Grundtvig's note on page 471: "Efter Angel-Sachsen hos Cædmon." "Knocking on the door of Hell tonight." See also Kjærgaard 2003, 225-227.

ons” and to crush “the viper-Snake” and “the wolf of Hell.” His arrival wakes up all the prisoners and, “at that moment the Sun of Heaven was shining in Hell.” “Our Savior” calls, “Adam, where are you?” Then, “Eve” appears, and the couple has conversations about what went wrong, and why they ended up in Hell. “Now, from Hell [goes] the Lord,” together with “a Crowd” of those he has found in Hell. The hymn says, “The Devil now falls ten-thousand miles into the deepest place” and only “Death was sitting in Hell” left behind, when “our Savior, innocently crucified,” triumphantly returned, and the doors of Hell were closed when “the Son of God . . . stood up on the third Day” after he had “visited Hell!”<sup>54</sup>

Grundtvig understands Christ’s deeds as acts of liberation and redemption; Christ intends to give freedom to as many as possible. These sentiments are found in another hymn of Grundtvig’s from 1837; it is a rewriting of Montgomery’s “O Spirit of the Living God”<sup>55</sup> as “Du, som gaaer ud fra den levende Gud.”<sup>56</sup> Verse six of the poem states that the triune God is behind an act of salvation that redeems all.

In the poem “I Kveld blev der banket paa Helvedes Port,” Grundtvig rewrites the story of Christ’s descent, His preaching to the prisoners, and His victory over death and the devil. Noack adds the headline “Storm of Hell” to a section of the poem that Grundtvig thinks is written by Cædmon.<sup>57</sup> Noack assigns the next section of the *Messiede* the header the “ascension to Heaven.”<sup>58</sup> Grundtvig was so inspired by these sections of

<sup>54</sup> “Herolden var stærk”, “paa Helvedes Port”, “Helvedes Kryb”, “paa Øgler og Drager”, “Hug-Ormen”, “Helvedes Ulv”, “da skinnede i Helvede Himmerigs Soel”, “vor Frelser-Mand”, “Adam, hvor er du?”, “Eva”, “min Søn og min Herre”, “Fra Helvede steg nu den Herre”, “en Skare”, “Titusinde Mile end dybere ned sank Djævle”, “Død sad i Helved”, “vor Frelser, uskyldig korsfæstet”, “Guds Søn”, “opstod paa den tredje Dag”, “Helvede gjæstet!”

<sup>55</sup> *Hymns and Psalms* 1983, no. 322. James Montgomery (1771-1853). Methodist from Scotland, editor and hymn writer.

<sup>56</sup> *GSV* 1.2, no. 360, 625-627. Grundtvig’s note on page 625: Montgomery’s “O Spirit of the Living God” imitated. See also *NFS Grundtvigs Kirke-Salmebog* no. 227. Grundtvig’s knowledge about Montgomery’s hymns is from his travel in England 1829-31, see Kjærgaard 2003, 300. See also Balslev-Clausen’s article in *Grundtvig-Studier* 1983, 42-67.

<sup>57</sup> “Helvedstorm.” *GSV* 2, no. 132, 382-384 verse 2: “Frelseren laa i sorten Jord,” verse 3: “Han i Gravens Land, Stormede Dødens Taarne.”

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.* “Himmelfart.”

the *Messiade* that he wrote the hymn “Kommer sjæle, dyrekiøbte.”<sup>59</sup> He understood that *Cynewulf* was behind this section of the *Messiaden*.<sup>60</sup> This hymn, in eight verses, focuses on Christ’s ascent. Our “Savior, the Creator of the World and the Judge of the World” is like a “Redeemer of the string of death and all the Devil’s Fright and Cruelty.” Christ comes “victoriously from the deepest place.” “The Souls who have a high price,” those who “before [were] lost, but now are found,” are now whole “Redeemed (...) People.” He “came from Hell” and “[ascended] from the Valley of Lamentation” to Heaven where the “welcome-song from the army of heaven” received “Him and many millions, [who were] paid for with His blood.” Grundtvig provides a coherent narrative about ascension from Hell to Paradise, beginning on Good Friday and continuing until the Ascension Day of Christ.<sup>61</sup>

We find the same understanding in Grundtvig’s hymn “To the home of Dead our Hero descend.”<sup>62</sup> The Lord is “our Hero,” who “descend[s] into Hell to overthrow the throne of death” and “defeat[ed] the strong enemy’s mockery.” Christ is also called “a preacher with the language of spirits,” who appeals to the faith of the prisoners. Now he is on his way “in triumph out of Hell” and frees “deeply happy prisoners” to follow Him “from Hell to Paradise.” Nobody asks, “What do we understand?” Everyone declares, “Our faith, only the Lord’s and our own!”

<sup>59</sup> *GSV* 1.2, no. 244, 474-475. Note: Af den Angelsachsiske *Messiade* i Exeter-Bogen. Kjærgaard 2003, 262, *Kynewulf, Messiade*, ca. 800 AC. See also *NFS Grundtvigs Kirke-Salmebog* no. 214. “Come, the Souls, who have a high price.”

<sup>60</sup> Noack 1983, 101-104.

<sup>61</sup> “Frelser-Mand, Verdens Skaber og Verdens Dommer”, “Løseren af Dødens Band og Alle Djævlens Skræk og Gru”, “Seierrig fra Dybet”, “Sjæle, dyrekiøbte”, “Før fortabte, men fundet nu”, “Folk”, “igienløste”, “Kom fra Hel”, “Stigende fra Jammer-Dale”, “Himmel-Hærens Velkomst-Sang”, “Ham og mange Millioner, Dyrekiøbte med Hans Blod” (*GVS* 1.2, no. 244, 474-475).

<sup>62</sup> “Til Helvede vor Drot nedfoer.” *GVS* 1.1, no. 47, 127-128: “Our Hero descend into Hell:” “vor Drot”, “nedfoer til Helvede”, “at styrte Dødens Trone om”, “Neddæmp den stærke Fiendes Spot”, “En Prædikant paa Aanders Sprog”, “vor Herres Nadfart Præk”, “Fra Helved i Triumf”, “Fanger sjæleglad”, “Fra Helvede til Himmerig”, “hvad vi forstaae!”, “vor Tro, Kun Herrens og vort Eget!”.

In a later hymn, “Til Dødningshjem vor Drot nedf’or,”<sup>63</sup> Grundtvig repeats the theme that “the savior is a preacher” to those “imprisoned” and to those who “before the candle of Christianity was lightened” were in “the gentile darkness,” or those worried Christian people who needed comfort, for “in the land of death, even the Word of Life has found its Way and Voice.”

Along with his Anglo-Saxon sources and contemporary sources, Greek liturgy provided Grundtvig with inspiration for descriptions of the deeds of Christ. Scholars have called this inspiration Grundtvig’s Greek Awakening.<sup>64</sup> Grundtvig’s studies of the Greek liturgy and his attention to the Eastern Greek atonement hypothesis stand behind his hymns.<sup>65</sup> The clearest reflection of a classic Eastern Greek atonement hypothesis appears in “Today the Hell is Moaning and Groaning”<sup>66</sup> In this hymn, Death and Hell ask questions that are answered by those who, after the resurrection, have seen the fight and victory of the “Divine Man.” In “Helten, som os hjalp af Nød,”<sup>67</sup> Grundtvig writes that “the Hero” forces Death to withdraw. Hell is given several names like “the Snake-Pit” where “the Dark Hero” has his nest. Grundtvig alludes to Biblical parables about the lost coin and the lost sheep<sup>68</sup> to explain that the Hero “eagerly looked for” and “searched high and low” for “his penny and his sheep.” The image of “the strong giant (...) caught in his own nets” is taken from the fowler-net metaphor used by Gregory the Great in a later version of Gregory of Nyssa’s hook metaphor with the same meaning; “the Snake,” now caught, has to be stripped of his “Helmet and Breastplate-Armor.” “The Son of Mary” has “Plundered Satan’s Fortress” and “Shared the Plunder with the People.” The whole drama seems as if it takes place in present time because

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<sup>63</sup> *GVS* 5.2, no. 209, 356-357. Written 1860-1862. “Frelseren er Prædikant”, “i det store Fangenskab”, “Før Christendommens Lys blev tændt”, “I Hedenskabens Mørke”, “At i de Dødes Rige, Dog Livets Ord fandt Vei og Røst.”

<sup>64</sup> See Thodberg 1983, 180-184.

<sup>65</sup> Elbek 1960, 23, 59-69, 149.

<sup>66</sup> “I Dag sukker Helved og klager.” *GSV* 1.2, no. 218, 441-443.

<sup>67</sup> *GVS* 1.2, no. 229, 451-452: The Hero helped us out of distress.

<sup>68</sup> Luke 15:1-10.

the risen one is “waving to us with the sign of victory,” as we celebrate the victory.<sup>69</sup>

Grundtvig wrote the hymns “The Angle like a lightning”<sup>70</sup> and “The Lord wake up of sleep”<sup>71</sup> while he studied the *Leiturgikón* Easter liturgy. Both reflect on the Death of Christ from the perspective of the resurrection. Death has fled from him (“Death from Him has escaped”) because of “great things, our God has done for us (...) in the land of the Dead.” Christ left “the Cave” when “He raised himself in glory” and took “Adam’s fallen stock” from death because “the caves he emptied.” The hymn says that “Christ is risen from the Dead,” and “Hell is exploded.” “In his death Christ has tread on the neck of Death” and “is risen from the Dead” for “each and every mortally Human Being,” here and now.<sup>72</sup>

The theological development found in Grundtvig’s poetry parallels what is found in his preaching during the same period. In his Easter Day sermon of 1837, he uses the fight-and-victory motif to express his understanding of Christ’s deed, but he also describes the resurrection as an event taking place in current time.<sup>73</sup> The resurrection is something always present. In the congregational celebration of Easter is the cosmic drama of resurrection, regeneration, and restoration of what is broken.<sup>74</sup>

Returning home after his last journey to England in 1843, Grundtvig writes “Easter morning quenches the thirst of sorrow,”<sup>75</sup> a nine-verse hymn about “the Lord’s” fight against “Darkness” and “The Dead.” Now,

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<sup>69</sup> “Helten”, “Orme-Gaard”, “Mørkhjelms-Drotten”, “Flittig opsøgte”, “med Lys og Lygte”, “sin Penning og sit Faar”, “Den Jette stærk”, “Fanget i sit eget Garn”, “Slangen”, “Hjelm og Brynje-Særk, Plyndret blev hans Bolig”, “Kvindens Sæd, Marias Søn”, “Deelde Byttet blandt de Smaa”, “Vinker til”, “os med Seiers-Tegnet” (*GVS* 1.2, no. 229, 451-452).

<sup>70</sup> “Engelen som Lynet”, *GSV* 1.2, no. 221, 445. Note: Et Græsk Paaske-Vers.

<sup>71</sup> “Herren af Søvne opvaagned”, *GSV* 1.2, no. 219, 443-444.

<sup>72</sup> “Døden for Ham rømde”, “det er stort, Hvad vor Gud har gjort”, “I de Dødes Rige”, “Hulen”, “Herlig Han opstod”, “Adams faldne Kion”, “Gravene Han Tømde”, “Christus opstod fra de Døde”, “Helvede sprængdes”, “Han i sin Død traadte Døden paa Nakke”, “Budskab fra Old til Old”, “Christus opstod fra de Døde”, “hvert dødeligt Menneske”, “Han Reiser dem op fra de Døde” (*GSV* 1.2, no. 221, 445, and no. 219, 443-444).

<sup>73</sup> Thodberg 1983, 182.

<sup>74</sup> *GSV* 3.2, no. 176, 330-333.

<sup>75</sup> “Paaske-Morgen slukker Sorgen” (*GVS* 3.2, no. 258, 503).

the battle is won, because “the Deliverer is Risen.” He is “our Redeemer,” who “would bleed for us.” Now, “Hell is crying, Heaven is rejoicing,” for “dead is Death.” The strong character of present time is found in the present tense of the last verse: “The Lord we meet, the Lord we meet in new Praise singing!” when “up we rush” together with him.<sup>76</sup>

Many other poetic examples of the theme of Christ’s descent to human life and then to Death could be mentioned. It is a strong theme in Grundtvig’s theology. In his history writing, too, Grundtvig put Christ’s descent and victory into the context of Christian missionary work. Christianity was the most important new thing Ansgar brought to the North (Grundtvig 1865, 39; 41; 44-45).

Questions emerge from Grundtvig’s emphasis on themes of Christ’s descent, fight, and victory. Will this understanding of Christ open the doors for conversion after death? Is this understanding of Christ a violation of the claim of justice and righteousness? These questions aroused critique of Grundtvig’s theme of Christ’s descent into the land of Dead and his preaching for the prisoners. Pietistic groups claimed that, in the moment of death, people faced judgement and were either sent into punishment in Hell or to eternal happiness in Paradise. Many regarded Grundtvig’s interpretation of Christ as undermining the claim of conversion to Christ here, now, and before death. This question alone caused the long distance between Grundtvig-inspired groups and revivalist groups. It caused several schisms (Lindhardt 1978, 72;127). And it is evident that Grundtvig’s Eastern inspired understanding of atonement is in conflict with what he understands from Western inspired theologies. Very few of his hymns that have the fight-and-victory motif were published in authorized Danish hymnbooks. On the other hand, Grundtvigian congregations emphasized this theme by following the praxis from Grundtvig’s Church in Vartov and using the Danish phrase for the Apostolic Creed’s *descendit ad inferna*, instead saying that Christ “descended into Hell.”<sup>77</sup> Grundtvig may have heard the translation “descended into Hell” in Wesley Chapel in London where he was a visitor, because Wesley used the same

<sup>76</sup> “Herrens”, “Mørket”, “Døden”, “Redningsmanden er opstanden”, “vor Forsøner”, “vilde bløde for os”, “græder Helvede, Himlen sig glæder”, “død er Døden”, “Herren vi møde, Herren vi møde med Lovsang ny!”, “vi”, “op vi fare” (GSV 3.2, no. 258, 503-505).

<sup>77</sup> “Nedsteget til Helvede.”

translation and recommended “into Hell” in his Sunday Service in 1784 (Wesley (1784/1992)). The possibility for conversion after death in Wesleyan theology is not linked to the theme of Christ’s descent into the land of the dead, but to the theme of salvation in relation to the grace a person has received (Thaarup 2016, 339-340).

To Grundtvig and to Wesley, Christ’s deeds caused the total defeat of corruption, emptiness, death, and the Devil. The good news is liberation for human beings, the opportunity for human beings to go from a life under the dominion of death to a life under the dominion on resurrection, and a life under the conditions of regeneration. In Grundtvig’s terminology, the way is opened from death and the land of the dead to the land of the living.<sup>78</sup> Like Wesley, Grundtvig speaks about eschatological reality as something happening now. The land of the living is the condition Christian people enjoy now, instead of waiting on a coming good from a distant future. Grundtvig’s understanding is called “realized eschatology.”

### Wesley and Grundtvig in final discussion on the theme of Christ’s deeds for us

Wesley’s writings feature an extended interpretation of Christ’s deeds as victories over the powers of death, evil, and corruption. His victory is the basis for human beings’ liberation and healing – an interpretation often found in the Eastern tradition (Link 1988, 78). Wesley talks about Christ’s deeds as ransom and redemption, language recognizable from written sources that Wesley studied, like the writings of Irenæus, Clement of Alexandria, and Origen or found in *The Apostolic Constitution*. When Wesley uses the offering motif, he means an offering of liberation like the one found in Exodus; it is not a guilt offering, but an offering as ransom for liberation. Wesley finds support in this use of the offering motif in Makarios and in *The Apostolic Constitutions*.

Grundtvig uses a number of texts from the Anglo-Saxon tradition to connect to the version of the fight-and-victory motif in the Eastern interpretation of Christ’s death and resurrection. For Grundtvig, the Anglo-Saxon tradition was a midway station between Eastern theology and

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<sup>78</sup> *CP III*, 179: “De levendes land.”



Nordic Christianity. He was directly inspired by the dramatic interpretation of Christ's battle with the powers of Death and corruption in the Anglo-Saxon tradition. The fight, victory, and liberation motif found its way from Eastern theology via the Anglo-Saxon inspiration into many of Grundtvig's texts, just as he reused metaphors from Gregory of Nyssa and Gregory the Great.

Wesley and Grundtvig both use more than one interpretation of the atonement (Richardson 1965, 77-90). Wesley says that Christ is the one who has given salvation to sinful human beings, and Christ's sacrifice has an objective value for God's acceptance of human beings which is a way to understand atonement as being in harmony with Anselm's forensic satisfactions hypothesis. Likewise, Grundtvig's contemplative and empathic description of Christ's suffering and death is very much in harmony with Abelard's subjective hypothesis of the atonement. A narrow and limited forensic understanding is not possible for Wesley and Grundtvig, just as the Eastern tradition would never focus only on the forensic dimension of the atonement.

The elements found in Wesley's and Grundtvig's theologies parallel and their convergent thinking do not represent identical theologies. However, common sources in Eastern Greek theology draw the two influential theologians in the same direction, and common sources for inspiration show their ecumenical theological perspectives.

### The Morningstar of Christianity

As mentioned above, my dissertation, *The Morningstar of Christianity*,<sup>79</sup> analyzes seven themes where Wesley and Grundtvig show inspiration from the Eastern Greek tradition in their theology. This common source of inspiration makes their theologies converge. A further study of the parallel thinking found in Wesley's and Grundtvig's theologies can be found in my post-doctoral dissertation, *Enlightened and together with friends we are talk*.<sup>80</sup> In this study, the comparison is done first on the background on both the Deistic theology in England and the Rationalistic theology in

<sup>79</sup> Kristendommens Morgenstjerne.

<sup>80</sup> "Med venner i lys vi tale."

Denmark which Wesley and Grundtvig fought when they developed their new European version of Protestant thinking.

### Abbreviations

- CP I-III      *Christelige Prædikener eller Søndags-Bog*, 1859-1860, vol. I-III, Copenhagen, Schönberg.
- DVI-IV      *Danne-Virke: et Tidsskrift af N.F.S. Grundtvig* (1816-1819), vol. I-IV, Copenhagen, A. Schmidt.
- GSV 1.1.-5.2.      N.F.S. Grundtvig (1982-1984), *Sang-Værk til Den Danske Kirke, Samlet udgave*, Copenhagen, Gads Forlag.
- GPV 1-VIII      Holm, J., Glenthøj, E. & Thodberg, C. (ed.) (2003-2007), *Grundtvig Prædikener i Vartov*, vol. 6, Kirkeåret 1843-44, Copenhagen, Vartov.
- USI-X      Begtrup, H. (ed.) (1904-1909), *N.F.S. Grundtvigs Udvalgte Skrifter*, Copenhagen, Gyldendal.
- CL 1-50      Wesley, J. 1749-55, *Christian Library*, vol. 1-50, Bristol.
- WW 1-27      Wesley, J. (1975-2015), *Works. The Bicentennial Edition of the Works of John Wesley*, vol. 1-27, Oxford & Nashville, Abingdon.

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# Grundtvig som stridsmand og polemiker

*Vanja Thaulow*

Denne artikel er baseret på ph.d.-afhandlingen *Herrens Stridsmand. Retorisk kritik af N.F.S. Grundtvigs teologiske polemik i perioden 1810-1825*. Afhandlingen er en undersøgelse af Grundtvigs polemiske retorik i den såkaldt 'bibelkristne' periode af forfatterskabet, særligt årene 1810-1815. Undersøgelsen angår både den polemik, der findes på tværs af genrer, og den egentlig polemiske genre stridskriftet, som har været noget overset i forskningen. Jeg har valgt at udforme undersøgelsen som en retorisk analyse og kritik, fordi det moderne retorikfag har et stort og udviklet begrebsapparat, som er velegnet til at analysere de elementer, der er på spil i polemiske tekster: forfatterens selvfremsættelse, publikums-konstruktion, argumentation og stil.<sup>1</sup> Nærmere bestemt er undersøgelsen foretaget som en række retoriske nærlæsninger af udvalgte værker. Jeg kan hverken udfolde den retoriske teori eller mine nærlæsninger her i artiklen. Jeg kan blot opsummere resultaterne af mine undersøgelser, og de tegner et noget andet billede af Grundtvig end den rummelige kirke- og landsfader, han er kendt som. Grundtvig optrådte i denne periode som 'herrens stridsmand' og som en domsprofet, der søgte indflydelse på sit læsepublikum ved hjælp af postulerende og polemisk-provokerende retorik. I de personlige pennefejder, Grundtvig var involveret i, opførte han sig ikke blot polemisk, men decideret eristisk. Han gik ind i og ud af en debat overbevist om, at han selv havde ret. Hans mål var ikke at overbevise (eller lade sig overbevise) af gode argumenters vægt, men simpelthen at besejre sin modstander eller ligefrem udgrænse denne socialt.

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<sup>1</sup> Der findes ikke mange eksempler på egentlige retoriske analyser i Grundtvig-forskningen. Det mest omfattende studie er amerikaneren Paul Merville Larsons disputats fra 1942 med titlen *A Rhetorical Study of Bishop Nicholas [sic!] Frederick Severin Grundtvig*. Larsons forskningsinteresse var Grundtvig som taler, og som sådan var han et barn af sin tid. Den amerikanske videnskabelige retorik var nemlig i denne periode især optaget af store mænds taler. Sidenhen er retoriikkens genstandsområde blevet udvidet betragteligt. Et nyere dansk studie med en retorisk tilgang til Grundtvigs forfatterskab er antologien *Ved Lejlighed. Grundtvig og genrerne*, hvor forfatterne undersøger Grundtvigs genrebrug både litterært og retorisk (Auken og Sunesen (red.) 2014).

## “Krigsmand af Princip”

Man skal ikke have læst mange af Grundtvigs værker fra perioden 1810-1825 for at bemærke, at han førte en meget gennemgribende og aggressiv polemik imod sin ‘vantro’ samtid i almindelighed og de rationalistiske teologer og præster i særdeleshed. Han reagerede kraftigt på enhver tendens i samtiden til at ophøje menneskets fornuft eller følelse på bekostning af troen og kritiserede såvel rationalismen som den romantiske filosofi. Grundtvigs polemiske adfærd hang sammen med hans teologiske tænkning i denne periode. Efter sin krise og omvendelse i 1810-1811 regnede han kristendommen for absolut og ufravigelig sandhed. Hans teologi var strengt bibelsk og præget af især profetbøgerne, Johannesevangeliet og Johannes’ Åbenbaring. Grundtvigs opfattelse af virkeligheden var som følge heraf dualistisk og hans syn på verden og mennesket meget negativt. Han havde desuden en stærk bevidsthed om tidernes ende og dommedag, hvilket gjorde al hans tale meget akut. Han så det som sin opgave at vidne om kulturens og troens forfald og revse folket for at få dem til at omvende sig, før det var for sent. Han ville tvinge folk til øjeblikkelig afgørelse for eller imod sandheden.

Grundtvigs polemik mod omverden udsprang af denne særlige form for kristentro og især af hans stærke kaldsbevidsthed. I 1811 aflagde han som bekendt præsteløftet (egl. den latinske præsteed fra *Kirkeritual* 1685), og han tog især passagen om at bekæmpe falske lærdomme meget alvorligt.<sup>2</sup> For Grundtvig var polemikken en funktion af kaldet og af præsteløftet. Han forsikrer således flere steder om, at han ikke strider af lyst, men striden er hans “Kalds og Embeds Lov” (Grundtvig 1815b, 1637), og han er mere “Krigsmand af Princip end af Natur” (Grundtvig 1877, 480).<sup>3</sup> Flere steder legitimerer han sin polemik ved at henvise til præsteløftet. Grundtvig anser altså striden for nødvendig og det teologiske had – *odium theo-*

<sup>2</sup> Passagen om at bekæmpe falske lærdomme var formuleret noget skarpere i præsteeden fra 1685 end i det senere præsteløfte fra 1871. Præsterne skulle aflægge ed på, at de ville ‘fly og afsky’ den lære, der står Gud imod, idet de ønskede “hellere mit Blod at maatte udgyde end falske og afsindige Lærdomme at skulle bifalde” (*Danmarks og Norgis Kirke-Ritual. 1685-1985*, 190).

<sup>3</sup> Man kan nu nok ikke komme udenom, at Grundtvig også var polemisk af natur. Larson skriver i sin konklusion: “By nature he was aggressive, vigorous and deeply conscientious” (1942, 324).



*logicum* – for uomgængeligt. Hans kristendomsforståelse må bestemmes som ret radikal, når han i *Om Polemik og Tolerance* hævder, at intolerance er en vigtig kristen værdi (Grundtvig 1941), og når han i prædikenen *Den christelige Kamp* opfordrer sine medkristne til at nære “et aandeligt, et himmelsk, et sandhedskiærligt Had” til Guds fjender (Grundtvig 1825b, 12).

Med inspiration i bibelsteder som 2 Tim 2,3 og Ef 6,11-17 ser Grundtvig i denne periode sig selv som en herrens stridsmand, der kæmper med Guds ord som våben. Han henviser ofte til Hebr 4,12, der siger, at Guds ord er “skarpere end noget tveægget sværd [...] og er dommer over hjertets tanker og meninger”, og han bruger netop Bibelen til at dømme sin omverden. Han ser det som præstens opgave at “lade Herren dømme” og “udsige hans Ords Domme” (Grundtvig 1941, 100). Som Helge Toldberg har formuleret det, optræder Grundtvig i disse år som “det skaanselsløse talerør for ecclesia militans” (1950, 31 f.). Hans forbillede i denne rolle er først og fremmest Martin Luther, som han ofte omtaler som stridsmand (fx Grundtvig 1815b, 1639), og hvis polemiske retorik, han lovpriste: “Ingen talde skarpere end Morten Luther” (Grundtvig 1814b, 26).<sup>4</sup>

### Den polemiske retorik på tværs af genrer

Den teologiske polemik i forfatterskabet 1810-1825 kan inddeles i to hovedformer. Der er dels den ‘brede’ polemik, som består i en almen kritik og revselse af tidsånden og præstestanden, og som optræder i mange forskellige genrer; dels den personlige polemik, som udfolder sig i pennefejder, særligt i den genre, som Grundtvig kaldte “Feidebrev” eller “Stridsskrift”.

Med hensyn til den brede polemik kan det konstateres, at man kan finde polemiske udfald i stort set alle genrer i perioden 1810-1825, selv i en subskriptionsindbydelse.<sup>5</sup> Jeg har undersøgt nogle af de mest polemiske og konfrontatoriske værker, nemlig hans dimisprædiken *Hvi er Herrens*

<sup>4</sup> Grundtvig opfattede som bekendt sig selv som en ny Luther i Norden: “Kald mig i Spot kun Lutherlil! / Jeg skal til Navnet svare” (Grundtvig 1812c, 10).

<sup>5</sup> I subskriptionsindbydelsen til en prædikensamling, som Grundtvig påtænkte at udgive i 1812, er der således en tydelig brod mod præster, som ikke prædiker bibelsk, hvad der efter Grundtvigs opfattelse er “den eneste kristelige” prædikemåde (Grundtvig 1812a, 1).

*Ord forsvundet af hans Hus?* fra 1810, den i samtiden utrykte landemodetale "Om Polemik og Tolerance" fra 1814 og historiebogen *Kort Begreb af Verdens Krønike i Sammenhæng* fra 1812 (herefter *VK* 1812). I et utrykt manuskript i Grundtvig-arkivet kan man finde nogle ret interessante udtalelser om sidstnævnte værk. I en replik til Christian Molbech om, hvorvidt en historiebog må være teologisk og polemisk i sit anliggende, skriver Grundtvig: "naar Man kalder den [*VK* 1812] en theologisk Polemik (et Stridsskrift for *Lærdomme* Guds Ord) da har Man netop fundet det Navn jeg ønsker hvert Skrift fra mig maatte bære med Føie".<sup>6</sup> Her har vi altså en form for programmerklæring for forfatterskabet i disse år. Alle værker, uanset genre, er i hensigten en form for teologisk polemik. Denne hensigtserklæring stemmer godt overens med det, som mine retoriske analyser af værkerne viser.

Det første påfaldende træk ved de værker, jeg har nærlæst, er, at Grundtvig konstruerer den retoriske situation, herunder *exigence* (det påtrængende problem, som han søger at løse), næsten ens i alle sine tekster.<sup>7</sup> Det overordnede problem er hver gang, at tiden er 'vanartig', og at kristentroen er ved at gå til grunde. Grundtvigs intention er tilsvarende at vække folket til tro og eftertanke, ja, ligefrem at 'frelse' dem, ved at pege på den vantro og det store hovmod, som findes i tiden. Tanken er, at når folk først indser,

<sup>6</sup> Fasc. 161.1. i Grundtvig-arkivet, betitlet "Indledning", blad 2v. Udkastet er formentlig fra foråret 1813. Ordet "Lærdomme" er streget ud i kladden.

<sup>7</sup> Begrebet 'den retoriske situation' stammer oprindeligt fra Bitzer (1997/1968), som ville gøre op med tanken om, at det er taleren og dennes persuasive intention, som er den primære kilde til retorisk aktivitet. Trangen til at overbevise opstår if. Bitzer ikke ud af den blå luft, men en tale eller en tekst opstår som reaktion på en bestemt situation. Den retoriske situation er if. Bitzer bestemt af tre elementer: det påtrængende problem (*exigence*), som taleren eller forfatteren ønsker at afhjælpe retorisk; det publikum, han ønsker at påvirke (*audience*), og de retoriske vilkår, han er underlagt (*constraints*). Bitzer er sidenhen blevet korrigeret af bl.a. Vatz (1973), som indtager et mere konstruktivistisk synspunkt. If. Vatz kan man ikke tale om, at den retoriske situation foreligger som en objektiv observerbar kendsgerning, men situationen er noget, der skabes i talerens fortolkning af omstændighederne og formidling af disse. Når jeg ovenfor skriver, at Grundtvig konstruerer den retoriske situation på en bestemt måde, er det altså, fordi jeg tilslutter mig Vatz' synspunkt. *Exigence* er ikke noget, der foreligger i situationen, men noget, forfatteren *ser* i situationen.

hvor galt det står til, vil de omvende sig og gå ind i kampen for sandheden (se fx Grundtvig 1813, 24).

Til sit formål optræder Grundtvig i forskellige roller (*personae*) over for sit læsepublikum. Ud over rollen som herrens stridsmand er det især rollen som domsprofet, han benytter. Flemming Lundgreen-Nielsen konkluderer i *Det handlende ord* (1980), at Grundtvig måske havde en følelse af at være "profetisk forkynder som GTs seere" (883). På baggrund af de retoriske analyser kan der svares med større overbevisning: Grundtvig konstruerer helt gennemført en profetrolle at tale ud fra. Især VK 1812 er stærkt præget af profet-retorik. Hermed menes ikke primært, at Grundtvig spår om fremtiden (det gør han indimellem), heller ikke, at han optræder som en særligt privilegeret gudelig fortolker af profeternes tale (det gør han ofte), men især, at han optræder som dommer over samtiden på samme måde, som de gammeltestamentlige profeter gjorde. De gammeltestamentlige skriftprofeters funktion bestod ikke primært i at spå om fremtiden, men i at dømme og revse den vantro samtid. De varslede dom over samtiden, både over folket og over enkeltpersoner (typisk magthavere), og optrådte som Guds vidner mod folket. Det er præcis det, Grundtvig gør i VK 1812.<sup>8</sup>

Med en selvfremsættelse som profet tildeler Grundtvig sig selv en særlig taleposition. Som profet har han en ophøjet status og en særlig viden om, hvordan alting hænger sammen. Han er nærmest en alvidende gudelig fortolker. Desuden kan han som en liminal figur, der befinder sig på kanten af samfundet, tillade sig at revse folket. Profetrollen har den fordel, at den giver legitimitet til kritikken af samfundet og af navngivne personer. Fordi kritik er en fast del af profetens virke, behøver den, der taler som en profet, ikke at forklare eller forsvare sin ret til at ytre kulturel og politisk kritik. Hvis publikum accepterer taleren i rollen, vil de også acceptere kritikken.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>8</sup> If. Grundtvigs brug af ordet 'dixi' i flere tekster fra denne periode. Det alluderer til profetudtrykket "dixi et salvavi animam meam" (en sammenskrivning af 1 Mos 19,17 og Ez 3,19 i Vulgatas version). Ordret betyder det 'jeg har talt og frelst min sjæl', men i den gammeltestamentlige sammenhæng har det en mere omfattende betydning i retning af 'nu har jeg talt (dvs. advaret jer), og jeg har ikke noget ansvar, hvis I ikke vil rette jer efter, hvad jeg har sagt'.

<sup>9</sup> Det skal nævnes, at Grundtvig selv afviste at være en profet (bl.a. over for H.C. Ørsted, som havde kritiseret ham for at tro, at han var en 'af Gud indblæst pro-

Beslægtet med profetrollen er ‘parrhesiasten’, dvs. en person, der kan sige alt, og som ikke er bange for at tale magthaverne imod, uanset hvilke konsekvenser det måtte få.<sup>10</sup> En ‘parrhesiast’ taler sandhed med stor frimodighed, kraft og selvsikkerhed, alt imens han løber en stor personlig risiko. Sådan fremstiller Grundtvig ofte sig selv. Han iscenesætter sig selv som en uforfærdet ‘djærv’ forkynder, der i en farlig tid tør tale en ildehørt sandhed til samtiden. Han vil gerne fremstå som ‘den modige taler’, der tør tale tidens dominerende og magtfulde teologer midt imod, og han var vitterligt også modig, idet hans personangreb jo ikke var uden risiko. *Trykkefrihedsforordningen* 1799 satte grænser for, hvad der kunne trykkes.

Den sidste rolle, der skal nævnes her, er rollen som martyr. Da Grundtvig i 1814-1815 var blevet træt af ikke at blive hørt og taget alvorligt, fandt han ind i martyrollen. Han klagede over at blive forfulgt og blive regnet for “den Ringeste blandt Sjællands Præster” (Grundtvig 1941, 104). Martyrollen brugte han til at pege på modstandernes ondskab og gøre sig selv til offer. Samtidig stadfæstede denne konstellation hans identitet som særligt udvalgt og kaldet, idet han tog den manglende succes som forkynder som et tegn på, at han virkelig var et sandhedsvidne.

Grundtvigs brug af disse forskellige roller som hhv. stridsmand, profet, parrhesiast og martyr bidrager til at sætte ham selv i centrum og i scene som en uomgængelig person i samtiden, én, man er nødt til at lytte til. Selvfremstillingen er efter min mening noget af det mest interessante ved Grundtvigs forfatterskab. Flemming Lundgreen-Nielsen har brugt begrebet “selvsymbolik” om hans særlige selvforståelse og selvfremstilling og vist, at Grundtvig ikke lod sig kue af modgangen i 1810-1815, men fortsat tænkte store tanker om sig selv og den rolle, han havde at udfylde

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fet’), men man skal jo ikke altid tage en forfatters ord for pålydende – faktisk er det en topos i profetisk retorik, at man skal understrege, at man *ikke* er en profet. Der er nok ikke nogen efterbibelske forfattere, som vil hævde at være profeter på linje med Bibelens profeter – det ville være hovmodigt – men det forhindrer ikke, at man kan tale og agere *som* en profet.

<sup>10</sup> ‘Parrhesia’ er et omdiskuteret begreb i såvel filosofiske som retoriske kredse. Foucault har behandlet det indgående i sine sidste forelæsninger, udgivet under titlen *Fearless Speech* (2001). Han ser på sin vis begrebet som værende i opposition til retorikken, idet han forstår parrhesia som det modsatte af velformet og strategisk tale, mens Walzer (2013) viser, at parrhesia ikke er “artless”, men “highly rhetorical”. Parrhesia bruges ofte netop strategisk med et persuasivt sigte.

i Danmark: Han forstod sin eksistens og sit virke som *tegn* for en snarlig gennembrydende åndelig fornyelse i Norden (1980, 885-892).<sup>11</sup>

Grundtvigs tekster rummer ud over den ovennævnte selvfremsstilling også en bestemt publikumskonstruktion, med et moderne retorisk begreb 'the second persona' eller 'det indskrevne publikum' (Black 2013/1970). Det indskrevne publikum er forfatterens tekstinterne konstruktion af publikum, dvs. en model af, hvad skribenten ønsker, at hans faktiske publikum skal være eller blive. Det indskrevne publikum i Grundtvigs tekster fra 1810 til 1825 er først og fremmest en gruppe mennesker, som vil acceptere ham i rollen som profet og redskab for Guds ord. De er gudfrygtige folk, som vil adlyde 'sandhedens enlige stemme' i skikkelse af Grundtvig. De vil indvillige i at underordne fornuften under troen, og de vil uden videre tage såvel Bibelens som Grundtvigs ord for gode varer (det er, hvad Grundtvig indirekte forlanger, når han postulerer i stedet for at argumentere for sine synspunkter, mere herom nedenfor). Det indskrevne publikum er ydmyge mennesker, som frygter Guds dom, og som derfor er modtagelige over for advarende og irettesættende tale. At dømme efter reaktionerne på Grundtvigs tekster var der ikke mange blandt det faktiske publikum, som kunne identificere sig med dette publikumbillede.

Det er påfaldende, at der i Grundtvigs tekster er indbygget en meget asymmetrisk relation til publikum, uanset om han henvender sig til de værste fjender, 'rationalisterne', eller de mere velvillige læsere, de 'gam-meldags' kristne. Han er den, der kender verdens rette sammenhæng og kristendommens sandhed, og publikum er nødt til at give ham ret. Han tiltaler publikum i imperativer og truer dem med dom og straf, hvis de ikke tilslutter sig den rette tro og kampen for Guds sandhed. I et brev til Christian Molbech fra 1826 beskriver Grundtvig sin holdning til publikum i 1810'erne med følgende ord: "Jeg vilde som en *luthersk* Munk ikke med Haandens men dog med Mundens Vaaben tvinge Verden til ei blot at synes, men at være christelig" (Grundtvig og Molbech 1888, 140). Han

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<sup>11</sup> Jf. *Paaske-Lilien*, hvor den ringeagtede bondeblomst står som et symbol både på opstandelsestroen og på Grundtvig selv: "Vinter-Storm og Hagl og Regn / Suser, bruser over Jorden, / Men jeg stander som et Tegn / For en Blomster-Tid i Norden" (Grundtvig 1817, 325).

søger indflydelse på sit publikum ved hjælp af det, man kan kalde ‘retorisk tvang’.<sup>12</sup>

Kigger man nærmere på argumentation og stil i Grundtvigs polemiske tekster, mærker man også disse ‘tvingende’ træk ved hans retorik. Argumentationen er præget af tre forhold. For det første er egentlig argumentation ofte fraværende. Mange af Grundtvigs udsagn og fortolkninger er postuler. Han udtaler sine private meninger og domme, *som om* de var universelle sandheder. Kendetegnende for ham er udsagn som:

- “Det er soleklart, at ...” (fx 1815a, 60; 1825a, 36)
- Det er “upaatvivlelig vist” (1813, 66)
- “Jeg veed jeg har Ret ...” (1813, 5)
- “jeg veed, det er Sandhed” (1812b, XIX)
- “Er dette nu soleklart, som det jo unægtelig er ...” (1866/1827, 258)

At Grundtvig postulerer på denne måde, hænger højst sandsynligt sammen med hans forståelse af at være Guds talerør og profet. Profeten udsiger budskaber, der skal tages for pålydende, han argumenterer ikke.<sup>13</sup>

For det andet er argumentationen struktureret omkring modsætninger. Det var en præmis for Grundtvig, at der eksisterer et uophæveligt modsætningsforhold mellem Gud-Djævel, sandhed-løgn, godt-ondt, lys-mørke, og at disse størrelser nødvendigvis måtte bekæmpe hinanden. Når

<sup>12</sup> Udtrykket ‘retorisk tvang’ er min oversættelse af James McCroskeys begreb *coercive power* (2006, 102 f.). Ifølge McCroskey findes der fem måder, hvorpå man som taler eller skribent kan søge indflydelse på sit publikum. Man kan true med straf (*coercive power*) eller lokke med belønning (*reward power*); man peger på den ret, man har til at tale i kraft af sin rolle eller sit embede (*legitimate power*); man kan slå på sin viden og kompetence (*expert power*), eller man kan spille på den relation, man har til publikum (*referent power*). Det er min vurdering, at Grundtvig i perioden 1810-1815 benyttede sig af en kombination af den tvingende og retmæssige magt, som faktisk er de to typer, McCroskey advarer mod at bruge: “A source must be very careful when employing coercive or legitimate power. Receivers tend to resent both and want little to do with sources who employ them” (103).

<sup>13</sup> Larson når til samme konklusion i sine analyser af den ældre Grundtvigs taler: “One explanation of the confidence he placed in simple assertion was that he felt himself only a mouthpiece for making known the word of God” (1942, 330).

han hos tænkere som F.W.J. Schelling og H.C. Ørsted stødte på andre synspunkter som at 'Gud udvikler sig' eller 'der er harmoni i verden', så beskyldte han dem for at sammenblande tilværelsens modsætninger og mente at kunne sætte dem på plads ved hjælp af "Modsigelsens Grundsætning" (kontradiktionsprincippet), der siger, at man ikke på samme tid kan bekræfte og benægte et udsagn. Hans argumentation for grundsætningen kan fx lyde sådan her:

Sandt kan ikke være Løgn, og Løgn ikke Sandhed, fordi Sandhed er Sandhed og kan ikke blive Løgn uden allerede at være det. Løgn kan ikke blive Sandhed, thi den maatte da tilintetgiøre sig selv, erklære sig selv for Løgn, være sig selv og ikke være det (Grundtvig 1813, 46 f.).

Grundtvig forsøgte ofte at fange sine modstandere i selvmodsigelser for så at bringe modsigelsens grundsætning på banen som en trumf, der fejrer alle andre argumenter og synspunkter af bordet. Mod den praksis må man indvende, at modsigelsens grundsætning kun fungerer som et tvingende bevis inden for logikkens domæne, ikke inden for retorikken og dialektikken. I det naturlige sprog, som vi benytter, når vi diskuterer holdninger og værdier, er sætningen ikke logisk tvingende på samme måde. I nyretorikeren Chaïm Perelmans argumentationsteori henregnes brugen af kontradiktionsprincippet således til de *kvasilogiske* argumenter (Perelman 2005/1977, 91-119). Kvasilogiske argumenter ligner formelle ræsonnementer (logiske eller matematiske), men de adskiller sig fra den strenge formelle demonstration ved, at de altid forudsætter tilslutning til den tese eller det skema, som tillader argumentets anvendelse. Modsigelsens grundsætning forudsætter tilslutning til et strengt dualistisk skema, og princippet kan altså ikke bruges som et uimodsigeligt gendrivelsesmiddel mod folk, der ikke deler den dualistiske opfattelse. En kvasilogisk argumentation er ikke demonstration i logisk forstand, men fordi den *ligner*, kan den give indtryk af at være uantastelig. Når Grundtvig anvender modsigelsens grundsætning, låner han altså af den prestige, der er ved streng logisk tankegang, og forsøger at få argumentationen til at fremstå uimodsigelig.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>14</sup> Det er klart, at kontradiktionsprincippet har tiltalt Grundtvig, fordi det passede til hans dualistiske tankegang, men det er samtidig påfaldende, at han gør et *logisk* princip til sin kæphest, da han jo grundlæggende tager afstand fra det, der hører til logikkens domæne: matematikken, fornuften, de 'kløgtige' beslutninger.

For det tredje har Grundtvigs argumentation ofte en stærk emotionel appel. Han benytter bl.a. autoritetsargumenter, som siger, at noget er sandt, fordi det står i Bibelen, eller fordi Luther har sagt det (etosappel), og han bruger motivationsargumenter, som truer og motiverer med frygt for dom og fortabelse (patosappel). Grundtvig benytter sig i det hele taget meget af både etos- og patosappel og knap så meget af logosappel (sml. Larson 1942, 189, 329).

Også Grundtvigs stil er præget af patos. Han benytter sig hyppigt af overdrivelser, som provokerer, krasse martialske metaforer og sygdomsmetaforer, der virker skræmmende, og i det hele taget mange emotionelt ladede udtryk. Stilen er desuden meget dramatiserende: Han går helt tæt på læseren ved i rigt mål at benytte sig af apostrofe, retoriske spørgsmål og imperativer, gerne efterfulgt af et eller flere udråbstegn. Et eksempel på brug af patos og apostrofe kan hentes i dimisprædikenen, hvor Grundtvig taler den unge, hovmodige prædikant med ordene:

o saa bæv dog tilbage for den rystende Sandhed, at den Bedrøvedes Suk og den Trøsteløses Jammer, den Fortvivledes Skrig og den Døendes Angest vil komme over Dig, vil anklage dig for den Almægtiges Trone, og du, du skal da skiælvende raabe: falder over mig, skiuler mig I Høie, og I Bierge, for den retfærdige Dommer! (Grundtvig 1810, 23).

De ovennævnte træk ved stilen samt Grundtvigs brug af emfase, dels i form af mange gentagelser, dels typografisk ved en meget omfattende brug af fremhævelsesmidlet spatiering, er udtryk for, at han forsøger at yde en kraftig påvirkning og styring af læseren. Stillejet i de polemiske passager er ofte højt (han vil bevæge),<sup>15</sup> og den stiltype, der anvendes i angrebene og advarslerne, kan med den klassiske retoriks begreber karakteriseres som voldsom og streng (Hermogenes 1987) eller med moderne begreber som polemisk og provokerende (Klujeff 2012).

Den grove stil har også en etosappel, idet den skal vise, at Grundtvig taler og i det hele taget agerer i Luthers ånd. Med stilen "performer" han

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Han tilslutter sig jo grundlæggende de mere romantiske værdier som det konkrete, det originale, historien, og her passer logikken ikke særlig godt ind (om argumentation ud fra romantiske vs. klassiske værdier, se Perelman 1979).

<sup>15</sup> Jf. Ciceros inddeling af stillejer i den lave, den mellemste og den høje stil, hvis funktion det er hhv. at belære (*docere*), underholde (*delectare*) og bevæge (*movere*).



sin lutherske identitet, og det virkede faktisk på visse dele af publikum. Præsten Victor Bloch skrev, at Grundtvigs kombination af hårde ord og brændende iver gør ham til “en ægte Broder til Luther” (1840, 237). Det skal nævnes, at stilen i disse polemiske tekster ligger ret langt fra det, der ofte omtales som den typiske grundtvigske stil, nemlig den jævne, gemytlige, lave stil (jf. fx Albeck 2006, 105).

Sammenfattende kan det siges, at Grundtvig med sin polemiske adfærd i årene 1810-1815 gang på gang overskred genrenormerne. Han anvendte de undersøgte genrer – prædikenen, landemodetalen og historiebogen – væsentlig mere polemisk, end samtidens normer tilsagde. Han var godt klar over, at han var grænseoverskridende, i hvert fald i retrospektiv. I det tidligere nævnte brev til Molbech skriver han, at han ved sit forsøg på at tvinge verden til at være kristen “gjorde Vold paa alle Former” (Grundtvig og Molbech 1888, 140). Samtiden reagerede da også ofte med forargelse på hans værker, og han fik flere sager på halsen. Dimisprædikenen førte til en omfattende klagesag og en irettesættelse af Grundtvig ved rektor ved Københavns Universitet Thomas Bugge, der bemærkede, at Grundtvig røbede “en forfængelig Attraa efter at vække Opsigt” (citeret efter Nielsen 1889, 111). Talen “Om Polemik og Tolerance” førte til et alvorligt sammenstød med biskop Friederich Münter og endnu en irettesættelse, og kun fordi talen forblev utrykt, undgik Grundtvig den helt store storm. Endelig mødte *VK* 1812 massiv kritik fra den kulturelle elite og gav anledning til flere pennefejder.

### Stridsskriftet – en overset genre

Stridsskriftet er en oplagt genre at undersøge nærmere, når man interesserer sig for polemik.<sup>16</sup> Det er ellers en genre, som er blevet stedmoderligt behandlet i forskningen, formentlig af flere grunde. For det første føler

<sup>16</sup> Når betegnelsen ‘stridsskrift’ er valgt her frem for betegnelser som ‘pamflet’ eller ‘kampskrift’, er det for det første, fordi ‘stridsskrift’ er den betegnelse, Grundtvig selv bruger. Han taler således om “kirkelige Stridsskrifter” (Grundtvig 1840, 649), “aandelige Strids-Skrifter” (Grundtvig 1999, 587) og “personlige Strids-Skrifter” (Grundtvig 1827b, 51). For det andet er det, fordi stridsskriftet indgår i en personlig polemik om et emne og således er smallere og mindre politisk-agiterende end pamfletten og kampskriftet.

mange et ubehag ved polemisk retorik. Lige siden antikken har polemiske genrer som fx invektivet været betragtet som brud på de retoriske normer. Polemisk retorik og smæderetorik regnedes ikke for forbilledlig, men snarere foragtelig pga. sin heftige entusiasme og mangel på kunstfærdighed.<sup>17</sup> For det andet er der mange, der mener, at stridsskrifternes lejligheds karakter gør dem uinteressante uden for deres kontekst (jf. Rohner 1987, 10). Den påtrængende nødvendighed, der oprindeligt var omkring en polemik, kan ikke altid mærkes på tidlig afstand, og polemiske tekster har dermed svært ved at overleve deres oprindelige retoriske situation. Stridsskriftet, både det litterære og det teologiske, synes af ovennævnte årsager at være en genre uden megen kulturel prestige. Når jeg alligevel finder stridsskrifterne interessante, er det, fordi der er meget på spil, ikke kun i forhold til forfatterens ære, men også i forhold til den sag, der diskuteres. Sagen er på en måde *mere* påtrængende i polemiske end i andre mere systematiske genrer, og selvom et polemisk diskussionsklima ganske vist kan være giftigt, kan det faktisk også være frugtbart, da det virker igang sættende på publikum. Polemik og provokation konstituerer et engageret og reflekteret publikum og giver en livlig debat.<sup>18</sup>

Genren 'stridsskrift' er ikke let at definere, selv retoriske ordbøger kvier sig ved det,<sup>19</sup> men man kan sige så meget, at det er en pjece eller mindre afhandling, som indgår i en polemisk meningsudveksling mellem to personer. Det er en *reaktiv* genre, idet forfatteren til et stridsskrift typisk reagerer på en anden tekst, det kan være en artikel, anmeldelse el.lign. Forfatteren åbner enten offensivt eller defensivt. Enten anklager han en person, fordi denne har givet udtryk for en position, som han er imod, eller også forsvarer han sig mod et angreb, det kan være en faglig kritik

<sup>17</sup> Jf. at Aristoteles i sin gennemgang af den epideiktiske genre fokuserer på lovtalen frem for dadelitalen. Han finder det ikke nødvendigt at gennemgå dadelitalen i detaljer, da dens teknik blot består i at vende lovtalen på hovedet (Aristoteles 2007, 68-76). Dadelitalen er 'lovtalens sorte tvilling' (Roer og Klujeff 2011, 15).

<sup>18</sup> Marie Lund Klujeff, som forsker i stil, argumenterer således for, at provokerende stil både har en benign og en malign side. Engagement og aktivitet er de positive resultater af provokation, mens det på negativsiden tæller, at engagementet fremmes i et sammenstød med andre centrale værdier i offentlig debat, nemlig tolerance og anerkendelse af andres meninger (Klujeff 2012).

<sup>19</sup> I artiklen "Streitschrift" i *Historisches Wörterbuch der Rhetorik* kaldes genren således en kategori, der er "schwer faßbar".

eller en personlig fornærmelse, som han ikke vil sidde overhørig (Khorasani 2009, 123).<sup>20</sup>

Stridsskriftet er i udgangspunktet personligt, idet forfatteren skriver til en navngiven person, men man skal være opmærksom på, at denne ikke er den egentlige modtager. Han eller hun skal snarere forstås som et polemikobjekt. Den egentlige adressat er læsepublikummet, som er dem, der skal påvirkes. Selvom det brede læsepublikum ikke altid adresseres direkte af forfatteren, er det dem, som er de primære modtagere. Det er dem, skribenten er ude på at vinde over på sin side og evt. ophidse imod modstanderen. Fordi en polemisk tekst på denne måde er henvendt både til en navngiven person og et bredt publikum, kan man tale om, at kommunikationen ikke er dialogisk, men trialogisk (Stenzel 1986; Jørgensen 1995).

Stridsskriftet kan siges at være en blanding af alle de tre klassiske aristoteliske genrer: Der er træk af den *deliberative* genre, idet der er en sag, man ønsker at drøfte, og evt. noget bestemt, man vil opnå i fremtiden. Der er træk af den *forensiske* genre, idet man skiftevis anklager modparten og forsvarer sig selv, og endelig er der træk af den *epideiktiske* genre, idet man dadler sin modstander på en måde, så man 'fremviser' sin retoriske kunnen (jf. Aristoteles 2007, 42). Grundtvig er selv inde på dette, når han siger, at et stridsskrift er lagt an på både at overbevise, gendrive og forbitre (Grundtvig 1865, 419). I den retoriske genreteori siger man, at en genre udspringer af et socialt behov og har en bestemt funktion (Miller 1984). Stridsskriftets funktion er at give parter, der er uenige, mulighed for hver især at udtrykke deres synspunkter, ytre kritik af modparten og tage til genmæle imod beskyldninger. Det overordnede mål for en pennefejde er altså ikke, at de to modparter bliver enige, men at holdninger bliver markeret og fronter trukket op, sådan at (læse)publikummet kan tage stilling og eventuelt vælge side. Dertil kommer så underholdningsværdien. Det kan være forbundet med nydelse og skadefro at overvære den kamp på liv og død, der udspiller sig i en polemik (Felman 1979, 188; Stenzel 1986, 3).

Hvad angår selve debatformen i en polemisk meningsudveksling, er der grundlæggende to fremgangsmåder:<sup>21</sup> Der er den saglige debatform, hvor man søger at opnå publikums tilslutning vha. argumenter, svarende

<sup>20</sup> Der kan også være tale om et stedfortrædende forsvar, hvor forfatteren føler sig kaldet til at forsvare en anden person eller en institution.

<sup>21</sup> For en mere omfattende gennemgang af forskellige typer polemik, se Dascal (2004; 2010).

til retorikkens ideal om deliberation, dvs. rådslagning. Der gælder en hel række normer og uskrevne regler for den saglige debatform, bl.a. de helt grundlæggende regler, at udsagn skal være sande; at man skal begrunde sine udsagn; at den, der kritiserer, skal løfte bevisbyrden (*onus probandi*), og at man bør undgå fejlslutninger og personangreb (argumenter *ad hominem*).<sup>22</sup>

Den anden debatform er den eristiske.<sup>23</sup> Den adskiller sig fra den deliberative debatform på flere punkter. Hvor den deliberative er dialogisk-argumenterende, er den eristiske mere agiterende og evt. også diffamerende. Den eristiske debattør er mere optaget af at promovere sine egne meninger og af at nedgøre modparten end af at føre egentlige argumenter i marken. Debatten ses som en kamp, man går ind i for at vise, at man har ret, og for at vinde over sin modstander. Den eristiske debattør har egentlig ikke et ønske om at lytte til den anden. Hans position er fastlåst og lukket af for alt udefrakommende. I stedet for saglige argumenter – eller i supplement til disse – vil eristikeren benytte det, Arthur Schopenhauer i den posthumt udgivne afhandling “Eristische Dialektik”<sup>24</sup> har kaldt ‘kneb’ eller ‘kunstgreb’. De mest almindelige ‘kneb’ er følgende:<sup>25</sup>

- At overdrive eller generalisere modstanderens synspunkt
- At tirre modstanderen, så han fremstår tåbeligt vred
- At aflede diskussionen, at tale udenom
- At drage falske følgeslutninger
- At latterliggøre modstanderen over for publikum – *argumentum ad auctores*
- At påberåbe sig autoriteter

<sup>22</sup> Disse normer er, hvad en forskergruppe, som har kortlagt normerne for lærde kontroverser i det moderne Europa (1600-1800) på baggrund af et omfattende empirisk materiale, har kaldt en ‘common sense-teori’ om kontroverser. Mere udførlige lister over normerne kan findes hos Fritz (2008, 111 f.) og Khorasani (2009, 129).

<sup>23</sup> Ordet eristik kommer fra det græske ἐρις, som dels er navnet på splidens gudinde i den græske mytologi, dels betyder strid, skænderi og kappestrid. Tilsvarende betyder adjektivet ἐριστικός at være ivrig efter at skændes.

<sup>24</sup> På dansk udgivet under titlen *Kunsten altid at få ret* (Schopenhauer 2006).

<sup>25</sup> Dette er blot 10 af de i alt 38 kneb, Schopenhauer (2006) oplister.

- At erklære sig ude af stand til at forstå modstanderens argumenter, hvorved man insinuerer, at han er fuld af vrøvl
- At bruge værdiladede ord
- At sætte modstanderens synspunkt ind i en forhadet kategori
- At blive personlig, fornærmende, krænkende, grov – *argumentum ad hominem*

Disse 'kneb' regnes for illegitime i en saglig diskussion.

### Grundtvigs teologiske stridsskrifter

De teologiske stridsskrifter, jeg har nærlæst, er dem, der indgik i Grundtvigs fejder med hhv. Christian Molbech (1813), H.C. Ørsted (1814-1815) og H.N. Clausen (1825). Der er kun plads til at beskrive fejderne ganske kort her og derefter opsummere resultaterne af analyserne.

Striden med Molbech angik historiesyn og historieskrivning. Molbech kritiserede Grundtvig for, at hans historieskrivning i *VK* 1812 var for teologisk og polemisk. Han fandt, at *VK* 1812 var en upassende form for genreblanding: "Ved sin halv historiske, halv polemiske Natur, ere [den] ingenting Heelt" (Molbech 1813, 13). Ifølge Molbech måtte en historie slet ikke være polemisk – enten fortæller man, eller også disputerer man. Han siger til Grundtvig: "At Historie og Polemik ere heterogene Ting, synes det, som du ikke vil vide af" (1813, 14). Grundtvig forsvarede sig først i *Kronikens Gienmæle*, derpå fulgte flere små polemiktekster og private breve, og resultatet blev, at de to skiltes som uvenner. De talte ikke sammen de næste 13 år.

Striden med H.C. Ørsted berørte flere emner, bl.a. Grundtvigs person, forsvarlig brug af Bibelen, forholdet mellem religion og videnskab og spørgsmålet om, hvorvidt Schellings filosofi var forenelig med kristendommen. Anledning til striden var Grundtvigs udgivelse af *En mærkelig Spaadom, ogsaa om Dannemark efter en gammel Haandskrift* (1814a). Det var et dokument bestående af en samling af Bibelens spådomme om Antikrist, som Grundtvig havde fundet i sin fars efterladte papirer. Grundtvig fik i sin udlægning spådommene til at passe på Napoleon. H.C. Ørsted anmeldte spådomsskriftet anonymt og skrev, at Grundtvigs eksegese var helt forrykt, og at han var en fjende af fornuften og en falsk profet ([Ørsted] 1814a). Grundtvig svarede straks med stridsskriftet *Hvem er den fal-*

*ske Profet?* (1814b) og senere med *Imod den lille Anklager* (1815). I disse to tekster kritiserede han bl.a. naturvidenskaben for at lede væk fra religionen, og han insisterede på, at videnskaben skulle tjene troen.

Striden med H.N. Clausen angik kirkesynet og indledtes med Grundtvigs angreb på Clausen i *Kirkens Gienmæle* i 1825. Grundtvig pegede på det paradoksale i, at Clausen regnede Bibelen for kirkens grund og norm, samtidig med at han forholdt sig historisk-kritisk til den og i visse dele satte spørgsmålstegn ved dens ægthed. Grundtvig fandt i stedet den sikre grund for kirken i trosbekendelsen. De fleste Grundtvig-forskere har læst *Kirkens Gienmæle* med en interesse i Grundtvigs formulering af den kirkelige anskuelse,<sup>26</sup> og på længere sigt blev det da også formuleringen af kirkesynet, der fik teologisk relevans, men Kaj Baagø har ret, når han skriver, at eftertiden har tillagt *Kirkens Gienmæle* en positiv betydning, det slet ikke havde i samtiden (1958, 56). Når man undersøger tekstens situation og retorik, så fremstår *Kirkens Gienmæle* ikke som en saglig præsentation af den kirkelige anskuelse. Det er derimod Grundtvigs polemiske intention med teksten og dens ditto form, der påkalder sig opmærksomhed. Grundtvig udfører to centrale talehandlinger med *Kirkens Gienmæle*: Han erklærer højtideligt H.N. Clausen for en "falsk Lærer" (dvs. kætter), og han opfordrer myndighederne til at indføre et "Tolerance-Edikt", sådan at det blev muligt at udelukke Clausen af statskirken, uden at det ville få borgerlige følger. Det var dét, Grundtvig ville opnå med udgivelsen af *Kirkens Gienmæle* i 1825. Clausen nægtede som bekendt at svare Grundtvig og gik i stedet rettens vej for at få ham dømt for injurier.

Mine analyser af de ovennævnte stridsskrifter har vist, at Grundtvigs debatform er af den eristiske type, hvilket egentlig blot er en konsekvens af hans absolutte standpunkt i trosspørgsmålene. Han går ind og ud af fejderne overbevist om, at han har ret. Han er ikke modtagelig for modstanderens indvendinger, og der er således lukket af for dialog på forhånd. Grundtvig benytter sig også ofte af de ovennævnte kneb eller kunstgreb som fx overdrivelser, udskiftning af stridsspørgsmålet og brug af værdis-

<sup>26</sup> Pontoppidan Thyssen mener fx, at den formelle polemik ved *Kirkens Gienmæle* 'overskyggedes' af Grundtvigs nye kirkesyn (1983, 230), og Nørager Pedersen skriver, at selve angrebet ikke har nogen interesse, det har kun den position, hvorudfra det føres (1980, 306).

ladede ord. Det er faktisk noget, som Ørsted påtalte flere steder.<sup>27</sup> Især Grundtvigs fordrejninger irriterede Ørsted så meget, at han i sit stridsskrift *Imod den store Anklager* valgte at lade polemikkens tidligere akter genoptrykke som en del af skriftet, forsynet med linjetælling, sådan at han kunne referere præcist til, hvem der tidligere havde sagt hvad, og det derved kunne blive tydeligt for læserne, at Grundtvig havde fordrejet hans udsagn (Ørsted 1814b).

Ud over de argumentative 'kneb' benytter Grundtvig sig af forskellige andre polemiske strategier i sine stridsskrifter som fx antitetisk opbygning og etablering af en stærk modsætning mellem sig selv og modstanderen. Han er selv den gode og fredelige kristne (*vir bonus*), mens modstanderen er aggressoren (*vir malus*).<sup>28</sup> Grundtvig bruger flere steder den bibelske analogi, at han er David og hans modstander Goliat. Derved fremstiller han modstanderen som en fjende, det er legitimt at bekæmpe. Indimellem tyer Grundtvig også til skældsord og *ad hominem*-argumenter. Det gør han især i angrebet på H.N. Clausen, som han kalder en kætter, løgner og falsk lærer, og hvis teologi han omtaler nedsættende som "Griller", "Daarekiste-Snak" og "Vrævl", som det ligefrem koster "Overvindelse at afskrive [dvs. gengive]" (1825a, 45, 41, 13). Clausens tro er "naragtig" og hans synspunkt generelt et "latterligt Sværmerie" (18, 20). Han er en tåbelig rationalist, som stræber efter at blive "Selv-Eier i Selvmodsigelsens grændseløse Rige" (1). Kritikken af Clausen i *Kirkens Gienmæle* er så personlig og nedsættende, at skriftet nok bedst kan beskrives som en mellemting mellem et stridsskrift og et smædeskrift. Clausen fik da også efterfølgende rettens ord for, at der var tale om "fornærmelige Udladelser".<sup>29</sup>

Alle de tre fejder, jeg har undersøgt, er desuden præget af en eskalationslogik. Indlæggene blev flere og flere, og de blev længere og længere. Grundtvig var ikke den, der neddrolede en strid, men tværtimod den,

<sup>27</sup> Ørsted omtaler disse manøvrer som "Kunstgreb" og "Spring" (1814a, 192) eller "Kneb" og "Udflugter" (1814b, 122, 123).

<sup>28</sup> I fejden med Ørsted beskriver han fx, hvordan Ørsted er udrustet med farlige våben ("med gloende Jern i Haand, stævner han mod mig, og siger det frit, han vil indbrænde Skiændsels Mærke i min Pande, han spænder sin Bue af Jern og ryster sit Kaagge, saa det gnistrer af de gloende Pile"), mens det eneste, Grundtvig selv har at kæmpe med, er Guds ord, tro og håb (Grundtvig 1814b, VI f.). Det er med andre ord en ulige kamp mellem fysisk magt og ånd.

<sup>29</sup> Domsafsigelsen er optrykt hos Dam (1999).

der søgte konfrontation igen og igen. Det var også altid ham, der fik det sidste ord i pennefejderne (i hvert fald den offentlige del af dem). Han blev ihærdigt ved med at tage til genmæle, mens hans modstandere før eller siden trak sig. Fejderne endte aldrig med forbrødring, men førte til brud hver gang.

Som genre er stridsskriftets funktion, som nævnt, at give folk mulighed for at ytre kritik af en sag eller person eller tage til genmæle. Grundtvig gjorde flittigt brug af genren, men han anvendte den mere eristisk, end normen tilsagde, bl.a. med mange personangreb. Han anvendte genren til at smæde og *udgrænse* sin modstander, tydeligst med H.N. Clausen, på hvem han ligefrem begik et karaktermord.<sup>30</sup>

### Samlet vurdering af Grundtvigs polemiske retorik

Min undersøgelse har vist, hvor gennemsyret af polemik Grundtvigs tekster var i perioden 1810-1825. Den polemiske tendens slår igennem i nærmest alle genrer, og det er ikke bare Grundtvigs stil, der er polemisk, det er hensigten, selvfremsættelsen, relationen til publikum, strategierne, argumentationen osv. Det er simpelthen hele tankegangen og fremgangsmåden, der er polemisk.

I retorikfaget er der tradition for, at man i en analyse og kritik også tillader sig at vurdere retorikken i de tekster, man undersøger. Retorik er grundlæggende et normativt fag med en holdning til, hvad der er god og dårlig retorik. De kriterier, man normalt bedømmer ud fra, går på, om retorikken er passende til emnet og formålet; om den er effektiv, dvs. om den overbeviser publikum eller i det mindste opnår en vis grad af tilslut-

<sup>30</sup> Kenneth Burke, som er én af den moderne retoriks fædre, er bl.a. kendt for at definere sprog som symbolsk handling (1969, 42 f.). Forstået som symbolsk handling er *Kirkens Gienmæle* ikke alene et 'kættermageri', som Grundtvig selv kaldte det, men et symbolsk drab. Grundtvig ønskede inderligt et opgør med rationalismen, og i *Kirkens Gienmæle* angreb han "den første Rationalist, der vovede sig i Marken" (Grundtvig 1871, 383), og gjorde ham til syndebug. I en kladde til *Kirkens Gienmæle* formulerede Grundtvig det sådan, at hvis Clausen ikke kunne bevise sin arveret til kirken, måtte han "nøjes med en lille Kjætter-Begravelse i Kirkehistoriens Baggaard" (citeret efter Brandt 1877, 723). Grundtvig blev efterfølgende klar over, at omgivelserne stemplede ham som en "Mand-Draber" pga. *Kirkens Gienmæle* (Grundtvig 1827a, 39).



ning eller identifikation; og endelig om retorikken er redelig, dvs. om den er etisk forsvarlig.

Min vurdering er, at den polemiske stil, som Grundtvig benyttede i mange af sine tekster, *til dels* kan siges at være passende ift. emnet og formålet. Når man vil vække opmærksomhed, udtrykke indignation og animere folk til akut at tage stilling til en sag, så er provokation og polemisk stil et godt middel til at engagere folk (Klujeff 2012). Det afgørende for, om man bliver hørt og taget alvorligt, er imidlertid, om man holder den rette balance. Går man for vidt og overskrider normerne ved at blive *for* brutal, kan man ikke opretholde en høj etos, men diskvalificerer sig selv som taler eller skribent. Samtidens reaktioner viser med al tydelighed, at Grundtvig gik for vidt.

Grundtvigs polemiske retorik var også kun delvist effektiv i perioden 1810-1825. Han fik folks opmærksomhed, men han fik ikke overbevist ret mange om, at de skulle tilslutte sig hans kamp for den gammellutherske tro. Han formåede ikke at finde og bruge de midler, der kunne overbevise.<sup>31</sup> Med et udtryk af retorikeren Edward Corbett (1969) er Grundtvigs retorik ikke den åbne hånds retorik, men den knyttede næves.<sup>32</sup> Hans retorik er uforsonlig, og han anvendte tvingende sproglige midler i stedet for at søge tilslutning og identifikation. Corbett siger følgende om den begrænsede effekt af 'den knyttede næves retorik': "Shouts, threats, obscenities do gain attention. Whether they elicit conviction or action from anyone not already committed to the speaker's point of view is another matter" (1969, 295). Det er lige præcis det, der er situationen for Grundtvig i 1810-1825. Med sin polemiske retorik fik han opmærksomhed, skabte sensation, solgte en masse eksemplarer af sine skandaleskrifter og blev i en vis forstand berømt og berygtet, men han opnåede ikke tilslutning til

<sup>31</sup> Netop sådan defineres retorikken hos Aristoteles: Retorik er "den kunnen, der sætter os i stand til at mønstre de mulige overbevisende momenter i et givent stof" (2007, 33). *Persuasio* var nøglebegrebet i den antikke retorik, mens moderne retorikere som Chaïm Perelman og Kenneth Burke er bevidste om, at man ikke altid kan overbevise sit publikum helt og aldeles. For dem består retoriikkens opgave i at søge identifikation med tilhørerne og opnå deres tilslutning (i større eller mindre grad).

<sup>32</sup> Udtrykkene 'den åbne hånd' og 'den knyttede næve' stammer oprindeligt fra filosofen Zenon, som anvendte dem om stil. Corbett (1969) giver udtrykkene en drejning, når han lader dem stå for en aggressiv, provokerende retorik vs. en imødekommende, forsonlig retorik (Jørgensen 2009, 133).

sine synspunkter fra andre end dem, der var enige med ham i forvejen, og i den forstand var han ikke en dygtig retoriker. Det lykkedes ham ikke at bevæge den mere modvillige del af publikum i retning af sin egen overbevisning.<sup>33</sup>

Hvad angår den polemiske retoriks redelighed, må det konkluderes, at Grundtvig havde svært ved at holde sig til en saglig debatmåde. Især i de personlige fejder anvendte han uredelige midler som overdrivelser, urimelige generaliseringer, fordrejninger af modstanderens synspunkter og skældsord. Med sine mange og intense personangreb overskred han normerne, men det skal retfærdigvis siges, at hans modstandere også gjorde det indimellem. Ingen af dem kunne sige sig fri for at ty til *ad hominem*-argumenter i fejderne, selvom de var enige om, at det var forkert. Som Grundtvig siger i en lille fejde fra 1809: "Jeg holder mig *til* Mandens Bog / Og holder mig *fra* Bogens Mand, / Undtagen *der* hvor Bog og Mand / Ei længere adskilles kan" (1809, 517). I praksis lykkedes det sjældent at holde mand og bog adskilt særlig længe ad gangen.

### Kristen stridsmand – et oxymoron?

Spørgsmålet om den polemiske retoriks etiske forsvarlighed bliver sat på spidsen i en kristen sammenhæng. Den kristne stridsmand er en kendt kirkehistorisk figur, men ikke desto mindre kan man stille spørgsmål ved, om rollen er forenelig med kristen etik, for den kristne polemiker dyrker jo alle de modsatte værdier og principper af kristendommen: hån, fjendskab og latterliggørelse frem for ydmyghed og broderkærlighed. Som flere af Grundtvigs samtidige påpegede over for ham, er den polemiske adfærd svær at forene med fx Bjergprædikenen, som ingen plads levner for aggression, hverken i ord eller handling (jf. især Matt 5,21-26.39).

Når Grundtvig taler om at være herrens eller Jesu Kristi stridsmand, refererer han direkte eller indirekte til 2 Tim 2, men det er, som om han har

<sup>33</sup> Det 'uretoriske' ved Grundtvig stemmer sådan set godt med den afstandtagen fra retorikken, som man møder enkelte steder i hans tekster. Han vendte sig således imod den "konstlede Veltalenhed" hos Christian Bastholm (1812b, 338) og erklærede i *Bibelske Prædikener* (1816), at en prædiken ikke bør være et "Veltalenhedens *Konstværk*" (IX). Han tog tilmed afstand fra de "tomme Rhetor-Vendinger", der måtte være at finde i hans egen dimisprædiken (XXXII).

glemt at læse kapitlet til ende, for der følger en række formaninger, som burde være nok så vigtige og styrende for den kristnes adfærd:

Hold dig fra de tåbelige og hidsige diskussioner; du ved, at de kun fører til stridigheder, og *en Herrens tjener skal ikke strides med nogen*. Han skal være venlig mod alle, være en god lærer og finde sig i ondt. Han skal *med mildhed* irettesætte dem, der siger imod” (v. 23-25, mine fremhævelser).

Jeg mener, at der er grund til at være kritisk over for Grundtvig i skikkelsen af herrens stridsmand, både hvad angår hans teologi og hans polemiske fremgangsmåde. Hans teologi i perioden 1810-1825 er problematisk, både fordi den rummer mere lov end evangelium, og fordi den har karakter af at være en skråsikker påstandsteologi, man ikke kan diskutere med.<sup>34</sup> En retorisk tilgang til teologien giver en bevidsthed om, at sandheden ‘i sig selv’ ikke er nok. Den kan ikke bare postuleres, hvis man gerne vil opnå tilslutning hos sit publikum. Også teologer må argumentere for deres synspunkter og bibeltolkninger og forsøge at gøre det kristne budskab persuasivt over for det konkrete publikum. Det er ikke nok at råbe det ud fra tagene, hvis det skal have effekt.<sup>35</sup>

Den polemiske fremgangsmåde er, som nævnt, generelt problematisk, fordi den ikke er særlig effektiv, og fordi den nemt slår over i en uredelig form for kommunikation, men i en kristen kontekst er det største problem nok, at den er utroværdig. Det er ganske enkelt ikke troværdigt at forkynde Guds kærlighed og frelse vha. hadefulde tale og trusler. En grov og hadsk tone diskrediterer den sag, man hævder at tjene (Timms 1995, 113).

### Fra stridsmand til landsfader

Læser man Grundtvigs tekster fra perioden 1810-1825, står det klart, hvor konsekvent polemisk og nærmest fanatisk han var i denne periode, og hvor alene han af den grund kom til at stå i samtiden. Grundtvigs polemiske

<sup>34</sup> Jf. Jan Lindhardts artikel “Den principielle påståelighed” (1997), som kritiserer den teologiske tendens til påstandsretorik.

<sup>35</sup> Dette er hovedsynspunktet i David Cunninghams bog *Faithful Persuasion. In Aid of a Rhetoric of Christian Theology* (1991).

fremfærd fik store konsekvenser for hans liv. Dimissagen var medvirkende til hans psykiske sammenbrud i 1810-1811, og den generelle uvilje mod ham fik ham hele to gange til at nedlægge sit præsteembede i hhv. 1815 og 1826. Især kom *Kirkens Gienmæle* til at koste ham dyrt, da han som følge af injuriedommen blev underlagt censur. Grundtvigs polemik må derfor betegnes som et tveægget sværd i den forstand, at han sårede mange med det, men det ramte også ham selv. Hans angreb gav bagslag og ødelagde hans omdømme.

På den baggrund rejser der sig et oplagt spørgsmål, nemlig: Hvordan endte Grundtvig som historiens sejrherre? Hvordan gik han fra så udtalt en outsiderposition, som han havde i 1810-1825, til at blive 'mainstream' og sidenhen ligefrem anset for nationens fader? Hvordan kunne han tabe stort set alle de slag, han udkæmpede i årene 1810-1825, og alligevel vinde krigen? Vandt han mon frem på grund eller på trods af sin polemik? Jeg vurderer, at hans polemik hjalp ham et stykke vej, idet den var med til at gøre ham berømt. Den gav ham et navn – noget, han havde eftertragtet siden sine unge dage som digter. Han ville, koste hvad det ville, være berømt, og da han oven på sagen med Clausen og embedsnedlæggelsen skrev sit *Litteraire Testamente*, konstaterede han tilfreds: "min Pen har virkelig gjort mig navnkundig i Norden" (1827a, III). Men mere end at skaffe opmærksomhed kunne polemikken ikke. Når Grundtvig senere vandt så stor tilslutning, som han gjorde, skyldtes det, at flere forhold ændrede sig. For det første forlod han den dualistiske kristendomsforståelse, som polemikken udsprang af, og indså, at strid ikke var den rigtige vej frem. Der skulle andet til "at oplive den Christne Menighed end Penne-Feider eller Høiesterets-Domme" (1871, 384). For det andet begyndte han – motiveret af sine egne vanskeligheder under censuren – at arbejde for frihed i kirken i stedet for at forsøge at tvinge en bestemt form for kristendom igennem. Han blev ganske enkelt mere rummelig med tiden, især fra 1830'erne og frem. Endelig har den apologetiske Grundtvig-fortolkning og -formidling også spillet en rolle i hans 'milde' udbredelse. Hans tilhængere har mere eller mindre bevidst frasorteret, nedtonet og omfortolket den polemiske side af forfatterskabet.

Selvom Grundtvig blev mildere med alderen, forlod den polemiske tilbøjelighed ham nu aldrig helt. Polemikken var ikke lige stærk gennem hele forfatterskabet, men den varede livet ud, og selvforståelsen som herrens stridsmand forblev også intakt. Så sent som i 1867 skrev han:

Thi til Stridsmand er jeg baaret,  
 Og til Stridsmand er jeg skabt,  
 Dertil Gud mig har udkaaret,  
 Ingen Strid jeg end har tabt.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Citatet stammer fra en kladde til et længere digt med overskriften “Mit Levnetsløb”, her citeret efter Høirup (1951, 17).

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# En udeladelse

*Flemming Lundgreen-Nielsen*

Grundtvigs *Nordens Mythologi eller Sindbilled-Sprog historisk-poetisk udviklet og oplyst*, 1832 – et afgjort hovedværk i forfatterskabet – læses nok indtil nu helst i Holger Begtrup's udgave i *Nik. Fred. Sev. Grundtvigs Udvalgte Skrifter*, V, 1907. Originaltrykket i antikva af hele teksten fra 1832 ligger komplet affotograferet flere steder på internettet og kan snart også ventes digitalt fra Grundtvig Centeret i Vartov under Aarhus Universitet forsynet med data, indledning og kommentarer.

Begtrup's gengivelse af Grundtvig-tekster i nytryk i årene 1904-1909 regnes normalt med rette for pålidelig. Men en tilfældig mekanisk ord-søgning med andet sigte har afsløret, at Begtrup i *Udvalgte Skrifter*, bind V, side 535, udelader det sidste selvstændige afsnit i Grundtvigs kapitel "Urdas og Mimers Kilder". Det omfatter 14 linjer med i alt 118 ord og 16 tegn.

Udeladelsen meddeles ikke nogen steder i Steen Johansens *Bibliografi over N.F.S. Grundtvigs Skrifter*.<sup>1</sup> Grundtvig nævner selv i sit kapitel, at dets indhold kunne placeres andetsteds i hans fremstilling, men de linjer, Begtrup skærer fra, er ikke af Grundtvig selv flyttet ind i hans egen forudgående behandling af Mimers kilde som fuld af "al Kløgt og Vidskab eller Mande-Vidd" (*US* V, 534) og bevaret som "Erfaring" (535), og de forekommer heller ikke senere i hans kapitel om Mimer og Heimdal (*US* V, 670-675). Udeladelsen er uomtalt i Begtrup's særdeles knappe udgi-

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<sup>1</sup> Steen Johansen anfører i sin bibliografi, at 1870-teksten er "et optryk af 1832-udg." (I, 1948, 288), men korrigerer siden sig selv med en karakteristik af små formelle rettelser, der nok skyldes Svend Grundtvig (IV, 1954, 49-50).

verkommentarer (*US V*, 376-377 og 767).<sup>2</sup> Måske er der andre lignende tilfælde. Ingen har vist nogensinde gennemlæst *Nordens Mythologi*, 1832, i hele *US V*-teksten og sammenlignet den side for side med det oprindelige førstetryk.

Det udeladte sidste afsnit i kapitlet lyder således i 1832-trykket, side 248:

Læseren kan nu formodenlig sige sig selv, hvorvidt *Odin* trængde til en Drik af Mimers Kilde, og i alt Fald skal jeg siden sige min Mening derom; men her maa det være Nok at anmærke, baade hvor naturligt det var, at Folk, hvis Poesi var aldeles historisk, ogsaa löftede historisk Vidskab til Skyerne, og tillige at Mytherne om Urdas og Mimers Kilder sammenföie sig, for vore Öine, til det önskeligste Sind-Billede paa den store, hele Menneske-Livet giennemgribende Sandhed, at det er Poesien der giver os den aandelige Anskuelse af Livet, og at det er en tilsvarende Erfaring der skal forklare det, eller med andre Ord, at det er de *Poetiske Folke-Færd's Levnets-Löb* der skal forklare det ægte Menneske-Liv.

Hele dette afsnit er også medtaget på side 217 i 1870-optrykket af *Nordens Mythologi*, 1832.<sup>3</sup> Forlaget er i begge udgaver J.H. Schubothé i København (fra 1828 ledet af Søren Langhoff, fra 1862 til 1877 af dennes søn), men trykkeriet er ændret fra Thiele til G.S. Wibe. Steen Johansen understreger sikkert med rette, at Svend Grundtvig som den selvfølgelige sekretær for sin fader, da synet svigtede ham i de sidste leveår, også forestod denne udgave (*Grundtvig-Studier 1951*, 77).

Det har for resten altid været distraherende, at Grundtvig i 1832 på titelbladet til *Nordens Mythologi* kalder den meget større og indholdsmæssigt grundigere og anderledes fremstilling for "Anden omarbejdede Udgave" i forhold til *Nordens Mytologi*, 1808. Trods det fælles stof er der ingen over-

<sup>2</sup> Begtrup beretter (*US V*, 767), at han, da trykningen (dvs. satsfabrikationen) var nået til og med *US V*, 544, fik Grundtvigs håndskrift til originaludgaven i hænde, der så kunne benyttes ved resten af korrekturen. Det kan følgelig ikke vedrøre *US V*, 535.

<sup>3</sup> 1870-trykket har dog i afsnittet rettet "trængde" til "trængte" og "*Levnets-Löb*" til "*Levnetslöb*" samt slettet to kommaer og indsat to nye.

lapning mellem de to bøgers tekst.<sup>4</sup> Fortale og fremstilling fylder i 1808 227 tryksider, mens den tilsvarende i 1832 kommer op på 659 tryksider; begge har oktavformat. Og 1870-bogen kommer derpå forvirrende nok til verden som “Tredie Udgave” på 606 sider.<sup>5</sup> Begtrupps udgave i 1907 bliver således en 4. udgave, hvad der dog ikke skiltes med nogen steder.

Hvorfor Begtrup fjernede disse 14 linjer, vides ikke fra ham selv. Hans egne tre bøger fra årene 1899, 1900 og 1901 undersøger på sammenlagt 485 sider Grundtvigs religiøse liv og den deraf følgende teologi og praktiske kirkelighed i perioden 1810-1825 frem til dansk kristendoms tusindårsfest for Ansgar i 1826.

Men en forklaring kan voves. Det fraskårne afsnit handler nemlig hverken om teologi, kirkehistorie eller kristentro. Dets hovedtanke er, at netop Nordens folk specialiserer sig i poesi, der er ægte historisk, og det kan medføre en agtelse for den historiske videnskab og resultere i undersøgelser, der tilvejebringer nye indsigter.

Dette er en definition, der ses hos Grundtvig allerede i 1809 i nogle da utrykte manuskriptsider.<sup>6</sup> Her skriver han, at “ethvert Folks ældste Poesi er historisk” (7r), og at “Poesien stedse i de gamle Tider fremtræder som Historiens eneste Organ” (7r). Den er derfor rettelig kendt som “Livets Blomst” (7v). Henrich Steffens’ berømte filosofiske indledningsforelæsninger i november-december 1802 har i den 4. forelæsning udtrykket, at “Livet er en Plante, og alt det skiønneste og herligste i Verden er dets Stilk og Blade og Bæger – men Kierlighed er alle Blomsters guddommeligeste Blomst”. I sin 8. forelæsning spørger Steffens retorisk: “og hvad er Poesi-

<sup>4</sup> Steen Johansen anser 1832-bogen for at være “et helt nyt arbejde, der i formen intet har tilfælles m. 1808-udgaven” (*Bibliografi over N.F.S. Grundtvigs skrifter*, I, 1948, 40).

<sup>5</sup> 1870-udgaven har fået tilføjet et nyttigt 2-spaltet navneregister på s. 563-586. Desuden er der sandsynligvis ved Svend Grundtvig realiseret en yderst lempelig ortografisk afpuddning af teksten (jf. Steen Johansen i *Grundtvig-Studier* 1951, 77).

<sup>6</sup> Se det komplette tryk i Flemming Lundgreen-Nielsen: *N.F.S. Grundtvig – skæbne og forsyn. Studier i Grundtvigs nordisk-romantiske dramatik*, København, Gyldendal, 1965, 172-175 (fra Grundtvig-arkivet, Fasc. 164.2, 5r-7v). Vedrørende den modne Grundtvigs tanker om historieskrivning kan Bent Christensen: *Omkring Grundtvigs Vidskab*, Gads Forlag, København, 1998, takket være en tæt registrering af mange kategorier betragtes som en grundbog på området. Den her angivne udeladelse er ikke opdaget.

en andet, end den høieste Spidse, det ædelste Blomst, af Tiden selv?” og fortsætter med at betegne det antikke Grækenlands herligste periode som “hele Historiens uforvisnelige Blomst”.<sup>7</sup>

I 1809-manuskriptet skriver Grundtvig dog også, at “Al Poesi stræber da at fremstille Guddommens Aabenbaring i Rummet og Tiden, men utallige ere de Gestalter, hvorunder dette Ene kan fremtræde” (7r). Ordet “Poesi” er således et sprogligt udtryk, der fra hans pen har en kraftigere åndelig betydning end en sproglig sammensætning som “digtekunst” eller en afledning som “digtning”. Han konkluderer sammesteds i 1809, at poesien “ligesom den løfter Digtningen over det indskrænkede Liv, stedsse maa yttre sig som en Tone fra det Høiere, der minder Jordens Børn om det tabte Guds Billede og dens som Alts Slægtskab med det Evige” (6r).

Men noget sådant skrev Grundtvig overhovedet ikke i det afsnit, der er forsvundet i Holger Begtrup's 1907-optryk af *Nordens Mythologi*, 1832. De 14 linjer er måske fjernet i al stilhed, fordi udgiveren med sin viden om Grundtvigs tro fandt deres indhold for verdsligt.

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# Anmeldelser

## Højskolesangbogen i dansk

*Aage Jørgensen*

Kasper Lezuik Hansen og Mette Møller Jørgensen: *Højskolesangbogen i dansk*. Dansk lærerforeningens Forlag, Frederiksberg 2018. 144 sider.<sup>1</sup>

Den foreliggende undervisningsbog omhandler den danske af alle bøger, *Højskolesangbogen*, for så vidt som den fokuserer på nogle af sangbogens temaer med henblik på, hvordan tekster placeret i dem bidrager til forståelsen af dansk identitet og forskydningerne i den gennem de århundreder, som sangbogen dækker. Af de mange temaer fokuseres på aften- og kærligheds- samt på landskabs- og storbyangene – og tværgående og mest tungtvejende på salmerne. N.F.S. Grundtvig figurerer adskillige steder i bogen, men først og fremmest har han fået sit eget kapitel.

Første kapitel er helliget sangbogens aftensange, de, hvor solnedgangen åbner for refleksion over tilværelsens mørke sider, og de, hvor den åbner for indsigt i en skønnere verden. Thomas Kingos “Den klare sol går ned” minder os nøgternt om, at vi skal dø, mens Johannes Johansens “Du som har tændt millioner af stjerner” spreder lys i vort indre mørke. Midtvejs forsikrer Christian Richard os i “Altid frejdig, når du går” om, at Fader-

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<sup>1</sup> Jf. udgiverne, “Danmarks vigtigste digtologi, eller hvorfor man bør undervise i Højskolesangbogen”, *Dansknøter*, 2017, nr. 4, 24-27.

vor, altså gudsfortrøstningen, kan holde mørket nede og ude. De tre tekster findes også i *Den Danske Salmebog*.

“Danske landskabsdrømme” hedder det næste kapitel, der på basis af et spinkelt materiale anskueliggør, hvordan skiftende tiders digtere har konstrueret og fortolket landskabet på baggrund af f.eks. skiftende politiske forhold – for nu slet ikke at tale om den tradition, som man overtager og broderer videre på. Ganske vist anfører bogen, at f.eks. nationalsangens yndige land er der forlods og “blot” genkendeliggøres “ved hjælp af en allerede kendt form, nemlig det maskuline og det feminine i forening” – landet står med hærdebrede bøge og bugter sig pigeligt i bakke, dal! Det omtales ikke, at Oehenschläger oprindeligt leverede 12 strofer og først efterhånden kom på det rene med, hvad der *ikke* fungerede, en lærerig proces at følge, om man vil forstå, hvad fædrelandsdigtning egentlig er og fordrer. I øvrigt holder nationalsangen sig på sjællandsk jord, mens Mads Hansens “Jeg ved, hvor der findes en have så skøn” snarere henviser til den fynske natur som identifikationsramme. De norske fjelde afskrev Grundtvig jo med “Langt højere bjerge”, og den jyske brune hede var det kun Blicher, der insisterede på som fødestavn.

Kapitlet om kærlighedssangene er centreret om Grundtvigs “Det er så yndigt at følges ad” til belysning af (fordommen om) “den rigtigste kærlighed”, den i romantikkens tankegang solidt forankrede forestilling om, at “kærligheden mellem mand og kvinde i ægteskabet [er] den samme som troens kærlighed mellem mennesket og Vorherre”. Denne forestilling relativiseres med henvisning til den barokke Kingo, der uden at få sved på panden mægtede at skelne mellem Guds-kærligheden og den evidente sanselighed i “Candida”-digtet – samt til flere moderne poeter, som har turdet se bort fra heteronormativiteten (f.eks. Jens Rosendal i “Du kom med alt det der var dig”). Kapitlet griber til sidst endnu længere bagud, til folkevisen med “Harpens Kraft” som eksempel; her er normaliteten jo det ud fra slægtshensyn arrangerede bryllup, som imidlertid udfordres af den ustyrlige seksualitet. Endelig omtales “En yndig og frydefuld sommertid”, som kaldes en folkevisse, selvom den har andre formelle træk; det overlades til læserne at fundere over, “hvilken type kærlighed digtet udtrykker”, og man kan jo så håbe, at den præpietistiske tone vil bringe dem på sporet af, at “rosen” måske (som f.eks. hos Brorson) er den elskværdigste af alle.

Kapitlet “N.F.S. Grundtvig” kommer efter sagens natur vidt omkring, med afsæt i “Velkommen i den grønne lund”, hvis danskhed måske lidt

for ubetænksomt associeres med nationalisme. Sangen opfordrer rigtignok folket til selvfejring, men var det at synge på dansk "i datidens spændte politiske klima en politisk ytring i sig selv"?<sup>2</sup> Skolesynet, næste punkt på dagsordenen, får man et godt indblik i gennem samlæsning af et klip fra *Skolen for Livet* og sangen "Er lyset for de lærde blot". Og hvad angår kristendommen, tyr bogen til en sammenligning mellem Thomas Kingos "Far verden, far vel", som ganske vist ikke står i *Højskolesangbogen*, og Grundtvigs "O kristelighed". Det kors for tanken, at den danske folkekirke er en statskirke, klares ved, at troen som hjerteangivende angiveligt mægter at unddrage sig statsindblanding. Og vores "glade kristendom" bringes vi til forståelse af via det, der indeholdes i slagordet "Menneske først, kristen så". Hvor Kingos verden er bedragerisk som skrogis, er Grundtvigs jo et sted, hvor vi i livstræets skygge kan nyde velsignelsens kalk.

Det femte kapitel er grundtvigsk betitlet, "Giv mig, Gud, en salmetunge", men tilgodeser de tre øvrige i det klassiske salmestkor. Af Kingo bringes tre af morgensangene fra 1674 i spil til belysning af ortodoksiens bastante grænsedragning mellem mennesket og den Gud, der sidder med alle esserne, og som optakt til en belysning af opblødningen i 1700-tallet via den pietistiske inderlighed, det intimt nære gudsforhold, som fra tid til anden kan krænge over i vammelsød følelsspornografi. Det sker ikke i Brorsons "Den yndigste rose", der eksempelanalyseres, selvom den vel egentlig er ret let at gå til. At rosen ligervis som tidslernerne har torne, halvklares med en henvisning til torne kronen som lidelsenssymbol. Med "Mit hjerte altid vanker" kommer vi tættere på et jeg, der med sine længselssukke vil lokke frelseren i hjertet ind.

Kapitlet "Storbyen" er, ikke specielt indlysende, tænkt som basis for et samarbejde mellem dansk og samfundsfag. Her ses teksterne, en flok digte om København o. 1930,<sup>3</sup> netop som københavnske og i øvrigt med teoretisk forankring hos den tyske sociolog Georg Simmel, hvis vekselvirkningsbe-

<sup>2</sup> Man husker, at Peter Hiort Lorenzen 11. november 1842 talte dansk og vedblev dermed, men jo i den slesvigske stænderforsamling, der var tysksproget. I "den grønne lund", dvs. Suserup Lystskov ved Mern, hvor Grundtvig-sangen første gang blev sunget (28. maj 1843), kunne sproget selvfølgelig ikke provokere nogen.

<sup>3</sup> Dengang var hovedstaden ene om æren; siden har Aarhus som bekendt markedsført sig som "verdens mindste storby".

greb kan pege mod både fællesskabsoplevelsen og ensomhedsfølelsen. De tekster, som behandles, er velkendte: Poul Henningsens “Byens lys”, Sven Møller Kristensens “Sangen om Larsen” og Jens August Schades “Man ser en virksom by”.

Generelt savnes et udblik over *Højskolesangbogens* historie og forholdet til selve højskoletraditionen. Litteraturlisten omfatter forunderligt nok ikke Karl Baks *Højskolesangbogens historie. Et bidrag til den grundtvigske folkehøjskoles historie*, 1977. Det pointeres ganske vist indledningsvis, at sangbogens udgaver dels har ladet sig påvirke af det faktiske “forbrug”, og dels har påvirket dette gennem optagelse af nye tekster – uden at det er gået ud over den klassisk-kanoniske grundstamme. Men bogen holder sig i hvert fald til 18. udgave, 2006.<sup>4</sup>

Det nævnes også begyndelsesvis, at læsningerne vil fokusere på metaforikken. Metaforbegrebet forklares som udtryk for et forhold mellem “målområde” og “kildeområde”. Den kinglyske omtale af menneskets krop som “en ormesæk” (der hver morgen opstår og i tidens fylde vil genopstå) giver anledning til følgende formulering: “Lige så naturligt som en metafor, hvor aftenmørket er kildeområde for målområdet død, bliver det ‘at vågne næste morgen’ kildeområde for målområdet genopstandelse og evigt liv.” Der må være en mindre firkantet måde at sige det på! Ormesnakken genkommer i forbindelse med “Den yndigste rose”, der som nævnt analyseres, og vel at mærke under overskriften “Brorson – når ormen gnider sig op ad Guds bukseben”. Barok bramfrihed modstillet pietistisk sleskhed.

Salmetyngden i bogen kunne have givet anledning til en refleksion over forholdet mellem *Den Danske Salmebog* og *Højskolesangbogen*, gerne med særligt fokus på Grundtvig-teksterne. I al korthed forholder det sig således, at Grundtvig indtager førstepladsen begge steder, i salmebogen med 163 numre (ud af i alt 791)<sup>5</sup> og i sangbogen med 86 numre (ud af i alt 572). Fællesmængden udgør 69 numre. På de følgende pladser i salmebogen finder man Brorson og Kingo med henholdsvis 113 og 82 numre, og på de følgende pladser i sangbogen finder man Ingemann og Jeppe Aakjær med henholdsvis 23 og 18 numre.

<sup>4</sup> 1. udgave kom i 1894. 18. udgave (2006) indeholder 572 sange, samme antal som 17. udgave (1989), men 166 er nye. I skrivende stund forbereder et seksmandsudvalg med fhv. højskoleforstander Jørgen Carlsen i spidsen en ny udgave.

<sup>5</sup> Til de 163 originale Grundtvig-salmer følger sig 90 oversættelser/bearbejdelser.

Digte bliver jo ikke sange, før teksten finder en melodi, som så at sige passer til den. Denne problematik belyses i et afsluttende kapitel, udarbejdet af Chr. Westergaard med henblik på et undervisningssamarbejde mellem dansk og musik. Ved indgangen til kapitlet bringes et foto af den berømte penneprøve (tekst og melodi) i *Codex Runicus*-håndskriftet af *Skånske Lov*, som regnes for at være Nordens ældste folkeviseoptegnelse: “Drømdæ mik æn drøm i nat / um silki ok ærlik pæl [kostbart tøj]”. En sang er det knap nok, men meningen er vel at pege på den banalitet, at højskolesangen har rødder “så gamle som musikken selv”. På højskolen bidrager sangen mest til at “løfte i flok”, i anden sammenhæng måske til at “holde en takt”. Melodien, pointerede Johannes V. Jensen, kan være tekstens halve lykke, hvis den ellers, med Carl Nielsens jævne ord, slutter om den som en handske. Men den generelle samspilssnak kan meget vel blive luftig og vidtløftig. På det konkrete niveau inddrages flere melodier til Grundtvig-tekster, bl.a. Nielsens til “Påskeblomst, hvad vil du her”.

Det ville have været naturligt, om bogen havde bragt et foto af *Højskolesangbogen* med Niels Skovgaards omslagstegning af harpespilleren, der musicerer for Holger Danske, og det tilhørende, på det sidste i krænkel-sesdebatten så voldsomt omtalte, Kai Hoffmann-citat “Den danske sang er en ung, blond pige”, evt. med en tilføjet oplysning om, at det tidligere var Ingemann-citatet “Det var de danske skjalde, der sang”, som indtog pladsen.

Det anføres i indledningen, at det var den aarhusianske teolog og filosof Jørgen Bukdahl, som lancerede metaforen, at højskolesangen udgjorde et remtræk til virkeligheden. Undervisningsministeriets Sorø-møde 2007 blev afholdt under overskriften “Skolen for livet – remtrækket til virkeligheden”, og Bertel Haarder, den daværende minister, var med sin højskoleforankring selvfølgelig på det rene med, at udtrykket *ikke* stammede fra universitetsmanden Jørgen K. Bukdahl, men fra dennes far, højskolemanden, den berømte Askov-lærer Jørgen Bukdahl.<sup>6</sup>

På side 100 læser man, at Grundtvig-salmen “De levendes land” i *Højskolesangbogen* kaldes “O kristelighed”. Der er nu forskel! “De leven-

<sup>6</sup> Udgiverne anvender ganske vist metaforen i en anden citatsammenhæng: Højskolesangen er “et remtræk, som forbinder højkultur [finkultur] med folkelig kultur” (5; uden kildeangivelse). Ifølge Finn Slumstrup, “Jørgen Bukdahl og det folkelige åndsliv”, i Else Marie Bukdahl (red.), *Jørgen Bukdahls skrifter og tanker*, 2015, 49, er “remtræk til virkeligheden” et fast Bukdahl-udtryk; jf. også side 92.

des land”: 1824, trykt 1883, salmebogens nr. 561, med titlen “Jeg kender et land”, 13 strofer. “O kristelighed”: 1824/1853, salmebogens nr. 321, 7 strofer.

Bogen er smukt illustreret, men især om de illustrationer, der adskiller kapitlerne, gælder, at forbindelsen med teksterne er løs. Hvorfor f.eks. lige netop østrigske Egon Schieles “Omfavnelsen” som optakt til kapitlet “Kærlighedssange”? Hertil kommer, at illustrationsoplysningerne nogle steder er urimeligt sparsomme. Et par eksempler: Donna Grethen-illustrationen side 50 er udateret; det kunne have været oplyst, at hun residerer i Berkeley i Californien, og at der er tale om en variation over Gay Pridebevægelsens flag, først brugt i forbindelse med Manchester Pride, 2001. Det på side 57 gengivne Hans Nikolaj Hansen-maleri til “Harpens Kraft” er heller ikke dateret, men det ville have været en hjælp, om kunstnerens årstal (1853-1923) var blevet oplyst. Dateringen af Carl Thomsens tegning på side 99 til B.S. Ingemanns *Morgensange* er forkert; den lavtflyvende engel er ikke som sangene fra 1837, men fra en 1889-udgave med titlen *Morgen- og Aften-Sange*.

Indledningen pointerer, at man ved at synge fra *Højskolesangbogen* ud over at føle sin identitet *forankrer* den i et folkeligt fællesskab. Velgørende er det, at den folkelige fællesskabsfølelse ikke hænges op på en national følelse eller en nationalistisk ideologi (som jo meget let kan blive fællesskabskrænkende). Et foto af maratonsangen ved Vartov Kirke antyder forresten, at også andre, f.eks. ungdomskulturelle, fællesskabsfølelser kan være i spil. Eller måske er der blot tale om svigtende koncentrationsevne?

Bagved skimtes en pædagogik med mindelser om den sorte skoles snarere end om højskolens med anvisninger af typen: “I skal arbejde i matrixgrupper”, “Sæt jer i grupper af tre”, “Sæt jer sammen parvis”, “Lav en analyse og fortolkning” osv. Der er opgaveformuleringer, arbejds spørgsmål og forslag til videre arbejde. Eleverne skal læse, finde, lave, undersøge, diskutere osv.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Af egentlige fejl er der få: “allen stund” (76) har notemærke, men ikke note; “salmetulange” (85 ff.); “en svale ej tør lede” (97) fordrer forklaring: “turde = behøve at”; “enkelthed” (100) > enkelhed.

## Bibeloversættelse som selvhjælp

*Jesper Høgenhaven*

Jette Holm, Helge Kjær Nielsen og Ruth Østerby: *Nypagts-Bogen. Grundtvigs nytestamentlige oversættelser*. Skrifter udgivet af Grundtvig-Selskabet XLI, Fønix 2018: Palmeserien 11, 288 sider, 250 kr.

Grundtvigs indsats som oversætter af oldnordiske og angelsaksiske tekster er velkendt og tilskrives en central plads i hans biografi og værk. Mindre kendt er hans arbejde med at gengive bibeltekster. Det er ikke så sært; for Grundtvigs bibeloversættelser er for størstedelen aldrig blevet trykt, men foreligger kun i manuskriptform. En undtagelse er de oversættelser af nytestamentlige tekststykker, som ledsager Grundtvigs prædikener. Det er en af disse Grundtvig-oversættelser fra *Christelige Prædikener eller Søndags-Bog* (1827-1830), der fik en nedladende bemærkning med på vejen fra Kierkegaard i *Philosophiske Smuler*:

Men skulle en saadan triumpherende Generation, der drager gennem Livet med Sang og Klang, som Du siger, og hvorved Du, hvis jeg ikke husker fejl, erindrer mig om et ikke ubekendt Genies burschikose og ølnordiske Oversættelse af et Bibelsted, skulle den virkelig være troende?

Grundtvig havde her gengivet nogle ord fra Ef 5,19: "saa der hos Eder er Sang og Klang af Hjertens-Grund for Herren". Faktisk er denne gengivelse af den nytestamentlige tekst kendetegnende for Grundtvigs bestræbelse på som oversætter at skabe et kraftfuldt og prægnant dansk udtryk, der lige præcis fanger "klangen" i originalteksten og formidler den videre i en ny sproglig kontekst.

Det er særdeles fortjenstfuldt, at Holm, Kjær Nielsen og Østerby med denne udgivelse trækker denne lidt underbelyste side af Grundtvigs arbejde frem. Det sker først og fremmest i form af en samlet offentliggørelse af Grundtvigs oversættelser af tekster fra Det Nye Testamente, hvoraf langt de fleste her trykkes for første gang.

Bogens indledende afsnit, der sætter bibeloversættelserne ind i en biografisk ramme, præsenterer en ganske overbevisende tese om den rolle, det nytestamentlige oversættelsesarbejde synes at have spillet i Grundtvigs liv. På et tidligt tidspunkt (1815-16) giver Grundtvig udtryk for, at han har til hensigt at kaste sig ud i en samlet dansk bibeloversættelse, et projekt, han imidlertid senere opgiver, antagelig fordi han fandt sine egne hebraiskkundskaber utilstrækkelige. Hvad de nytestamentlige oversættelser angår, viser det sig, at de først og fremmest er udarbejdet i tre adskilte perioder, nemlig i tidsrummet 1810-1820, i 1844 og endelig i 1853. Og her peger indledningen på, at Grundtvig på et tidspunkt under sin dybe krise i 1810-11 får det råd af en læge at fordybe sig i oversættelse som en måde at håndtere sin nedtur. Og i hvert fald når man går frem til 1853, kunne det se ud til, at her var et mønster, der gentager sig i Grundtvigs liv. I sommeren 1853, hvor Grundtvig opholder sig hos hustruen, Marie Toft, på Rønnebæksholm, gennemlever han igen en periode med tungsind og energiforladthed; og det giver god mening at se hans arbejde med nytestamentlige oversættelser i dette lys; og en tilsvarende sammenhæng kan der argumenteres for, hvad angår foråret 1844. For Grundtvig ser det med andre ord ud til at have været en form for terapi eller selvhjælp at oversætte Det Nye Testamente til dansk, en overlevelsesstrategi, som han griber tilbage til flere gange i sit liv.

Som forfatterne er inde på, stiller det naturligtvis Grundtvigs nytestamentlige oversættelser i et særligt lys. De er således næppe blevet til med henblik på offentliggørelse, eller de er i det mindste kun ufærdige forarbejder og må bedømmes på disse forudsætninger. Grundtvig vender i flere tilfælde tilbage til de samme bibeltekster og gengiver dem ofte ganske forskelligt, hvad der tyder på, at ord og udtryk i høj grad er noget, der kommer til ham i selve processen med at oversætte. Denne procesorienterede arbejdsform passer godt til oversættelsesarbejdets karakter af selvhjælp i Grundtvigs egen kamp for afklaring og åndelig lindring.

Det er selvfølgelig stadig relevant at se, hvordan Grundtvig går til den græske tekst, og hvilke sproglige og stilistiske virkemidler han benytter sig af for at bringe tekstens indhold til udtryk på dansk. I et udførligt tredje afsnit (efter den biografiske indledning og Grundtvigs tekster) får vi en sproglig vurdering af Grundtvigs oversættelser set i forhold til den samtidige danske bibeltradition, ikke mindst den reviderede oversættelse af 1819. Generelt viser Grundtvig sig som en selvstændig og forholdsvis



frit arbejdende oversætter. Mest traditionsbunden er han i de tidlige gengivelser af perikopetekster i prædikensamlingerne, om end *Søndags-Bogen* (hvor Ef 5,19 altså indbragte ham Kierkegaards hån) her skiller sig ud med sine friere, undertiden mere parafraserende gengivelser. Man kunne på forhånd have forestillet sig, at ændringen i Grundtvigs bibelsyn omkring 1825 og hans “mageløse opdagelse” ville have afsat et tydeligere præg i hans måde at oversætte på; men det ser ikke ud til at være tilfældet. Det er ikke sådan, at Grundtvig påviselig bliver friere eller mindre tekstnær efter dette tidspunkt. Derimod havde Grundtvig sit eget syn på den nytestamentlige tekstkritik: I en artikel fra 1837 gjorde han gældende, at den eneste forsvarlige nytestamentlige tekst var den, der fandtes i Complutenserbibelen, og at denne derfor måtte foretrækkes frem for “textus receptus”; og han var særdeles kritisk mod J.J. Griesbachs tekstudgave fra 1827 (se også Jette Holms artikel i *Grundtvig-Studier* 2017). Det er da også Complutenserbibelens tekst (eller “Alcala-teksten”), han generelt lægger til grund for sine oversættelser.

Forfatterne har med bogen her gjort både Grundtvig-forskningen og studiet i dansk bibeloversættelsehistorie en solid tjeneste, som de har ære af.

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## Public Theologian *avant la lettre*? N.F.S. Grundtvig as Historian and Politician

*Ulrich Schmiedel*

*The Common Good: N.F.S. Grundtvig as Politician and Contemporary Historian*, translated by Edward Broadbridge, edited by Edward Broadbridge and Ove Korsgaard, Aarhus: Aarhus University Press, 2019.

In a footnote to the conversations collected in the immensely influential compilation *The Power of Religion in the Public Sphere*, Charles Taylor makes a striking statement about secularity: “Were Martin Luther King’s secular compatriots unable to understand what he was arguing for when he put the case for equality in biblical terms?”<sup>1</sup> Criticizing Jürgen Habermas’s suggestions about the significance of translations for post-secular societies, Taylor is not convinced by the terms of the debate about secularity. Translations are needed between two different languages, but what if there is neither a clear nor a convincing difference between religious and non-religious language? Was King, arguing religiously, difficult to understand for secular people? Would Immanuel Kant have been easier to follow? Was Kant, arguing non-religiously, difficult to understand for non-secular people? Would King have been easier to follow? As Taylor puts it, “Would more people have got the point had he invoked Kant?”<sup>2</sup> Taylor’s footnote points to the increasingly interdisciplinary field of public theology. Public theologians are interested in the significance of theology for the public sphere. If theology impacts the private and the public life of people inside and outside churches, they argue, it can contribute to the common good, even in secular or post-secular societies. As far as I can ascertain, Nikolaj Frederik Severin Grundtvig (1783-1872) is neither analyzed nor assessed in debates about public theology, although he was – as

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<sup>1</sup> Charles Taylor, “Why We Need a Radical Redefinition of Secularism,” in Judith Butler, Jürgen Habermas, Charles Taylor, and Cornel West, *The Power of Religion in the Public Sphere*, ed. Eduardo Mendieta and Jonathan Van Antwerpen (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011) 34-59, here: 58 fn. 13.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

I would like to suggest in this review – a public theologian *avant la lettre* who could help to re-define the terms of the debate.

The series “N.F.S. Grundtvig: Works in English” consists of five collections of Grundtvig’s writings in English translation. *The School For Life: N.F.S. Grundtvig on Education for the People* (volume 1) started the series with Grundtvig’s writings on education, well-known all over the world. Selections of his poetic (volume 2) as well as his theological (volume 3) and his philosophical (volume 5) writings have followed – with the historical and political writings collected in *The Common Good* (volume 4) couched between his theology and philosophy. *The Common Good* starts with Grundtvig’s “Lectures on Contemporary History,” before it surveys the development of his political vision and his political views in three phases: from 1830 to 1848, from 1848 to 1864, and from 1864 to 1872. The conclusion on “Grundtvig’s Political Legacy” showcases how Grundtvig’s reflections have been invoked and interpreted in politics inside and outside of Denmark until today.

The editors, Edward Broadbridge and Ove Korsgaard, have taken Grundtvig’s lectures on contemporary history as a point of departure because these lectures form and inform his politics. “Denmark, the Most Fortunate Land in the World” points to the center of Grundtvig’s politics: his country. In his account of Grundtvig’s life, Korsgaard argues that Grundtvig positions his political philosophy between “liberalism” and “idealism” by comparing Denmark’s history to the histories of a number of European nations since the French Revolution (28). Given that Grundtvig was a self-admitted Anglophile who travelled to the United Kingdom again and again, liberalism has the pole position in his thinking. (In “England as a Model,” he mentions his “‘Anglomania’ – or in broad Danish – ‘gone mad about England’” (120).) Although neither a “Germanophile” nor “Germanophobic,” Grundtvig treats idealism more critically because “the German philosophers [...] do not much care about how things hang together [...] in the sensual world”; they are only interested “in the *idea* of them, meaning in their own heads” (63). Of course, Grundtvig trades in clichés about the cultures of countries here, but what these clichés highlight is that his history is contextualized internationally rather than nationally. Although his reflections center on Denmark, he regards Denmark from the perspective of the world as much as he regards

the world from the perspective of Denmark. Through his history, Grundtvig shapes the contours of his political philosophy.

Korsgaard compares Grundtvig to the leading lights of European and American political philosophy, culminating in a thought-provoking comparison to Alexis de Tocqueville. Although they write about two different and distinct countries, both study the public sphere in a socially, politically and economically advanced society, while coming from a privileged position at home. Both philosophers are stunned by what they see. Korsgaard points out that “England was in the midst of the industrial revolution, which only made its presence felt in Denmark after Grundtvig’s death [...]. So, in crossing the North Sea, he was in a sense taking a step into the future, into a social process which was to change the world” (29). The future, however, provokes fascination and frustration. While the one philosopher, writing about the US, is impressed by the equality of people (and not so much by their freedom), the other philosopher, writing about the UK, is impressed by the freedom of people (and not so much by their equality). Indeed, equality was not what Grundtvig found in England, which is why he criticized the House of Lords for preventing the UK from implementing equalizing reforms. Korsgaard makes a convincing case for the similarity of the two philosophers, in particular their shared concern for “the people.” He surveys semantic shifts in “the people” in Scandinavia, stressing the significance of Grundtvig for the shift of “*folkelig*” from the domestic to the non-domestic, namely “the national.” According to Korsgaard, “Grundtvig is without doubt the single person in Denmark who has contributed most to giving the concept of ‘a people’ its modern meaning” (37). The consequences of this shift are spelled out in the development of Grundtvig’s views about the monarchy that move his thinking from a more hierarchical concept (king above people) to a more horizontal concept (king as people):

As you know, gentlemen, I am a dyed-in-the-wool royalist! If you were not aware of this before, I hope that you have nevertheless learned through my talks on history that I do not belong to the extremists, who would make gods of their kings and would sacrifice their peoples at the altar. I only call that man a true king who [...] would make sacrifices for his people and would listen to their voice as his best counsel. (164)

The thread running through the political philosophy that Grundtvig develops in his analyses and assessments of history is a search for “the spirit of the people,” particularly his own Danish people, in the aftermath of the French Revolution – the dawn of democracy in Europe. Korsgaard argues that Grundtvig wanted to know what went wrong with the Revolution. Why did it end up in terror? Arguing for a reformist rather than a revolutionary approach to politics, he answers that “freedom is like fire” (63). Freedom has to be embedded in a public sphere that stresses “the common good” (64). For Grundtvig, such embeddedness requires education: “We need to be far better educated than we are at present regarding ‘the common good’” (64). His well-known proposal for a People’s High School in Sorø, then, is also a consequence of his political philosophy. Through education, the Danes could and should learn to be Danes, thus working towards the common good of the Danish people.

The contours of Grundtvig’s political philosophy shaped his political practice. As mentioned above, the editors have divided Grundtvig’s political practice into three phases. Grundtvig had no patience for the reactionary restoration of Europe after the Treaty of Vienna in 1815. According to Korsgaard, Grundtvig found it “boring” (175), so his political practice begins with the break-up of the restoration that led to democratic uprisings across Europe. From 1830 to 1848, Grundtvig reflected on the requirements for freedom in the state, both nationally and internationally. He concentrated on connections between internal and external freedom, insisting that neither one’s heart nor one’s head can be free, if one’s body is not. As a consequence, Grundtvig became a staunch critic of slavery. Offering striking observations on the significance of “the Negro Question” for Haiti (219), he worked for the abolition of slavery, both theoretically and practically. This work led him to be critical of England’s slave trade because slave owners were compensated by the state, using the people’s – the taxpayers’ – money. “Can I then admire this ‘magnanimity?’” Grundtvig asks (220).

In 1848, Grundtvig became a practical politician. Given the turn towards democracy in Denmark, the phase from 1848 to 1864 was characterized by his reflections on “the people,” including constitutional rights and restrictions to the power of the king. Grundtvig’s “‘Of the people’ is our watchword (1848)” is a captivating poetic condensation of the concept of the people, interesting both for how he does and for how he does not define it:

“Of the people” is our watchword  
through the land from top to toe!  
Something new is in the making,  
even simpletons must know! (230)

These verses point to Grundtvig’s conception of what could be called the “constructedness” of any people – a conception that Korsgaard connects to Benedict Anderson’s concept of “imagined communities” (39). Grundtvig asks,

What does “of the people” mean?  
Does the nose or mouth distinguish  
how a “people” can be seen?  
Does a buried people’s marrow  
lie concealed in some long barrow,  
or behind the broom and plough  
in each coarse and lumpish brow? (230)

These questions could be read as a critique of racial(ized) constructions of “the people” that work through appeals to blood and biology. Instead, Grundtvig defined the people through language:

Of a “people” all are members  
who regard themselves as such,  
find their mother-tongue sounds sweetest  
and their fatherland love much. (230)

Danish, then, was central to Grundtvig’s philosophical and practical approach to politics. The language of the people served a double function: it was descriptive (allowing Grundtvig, the philosopher, to study his people) and prescriptive (allowing Grundtvig, the politician, to shape his people). These functions work together. The speech “Why does N.F.S. Grundtvig want to be in Parliament?” (1848) makes clear that his election to parliament would mean that Danish would have to be spoken there. Grundtvig was aware of language as a cultural and social boundary marker, internally and externally. “The learned gentlemen come rushing in with their foreign jargon,” claiming “that whoever does not know their ‘abracadabra’ cannot

join in any talk on matters of state! So if the Danish language alone could be spoken in Parliament [...], you would all see this as a good deed for city and country folk alike” (239). Language, then, is a tool to empower people.

Prussia’s defeat of Denmark in 1864 (which led to the unification of Germany under Prussian predominance in 1871) had a significant impact on Grundtvig’s politics from 1864 to 1872. The loss of land that came with the defeat rekindled the debates about the constitution, Denmark’s “Basic Law.” In the Upper House, Grundtvig resumed his practical politics, again showing his position as a politician of the people. Korsgaard argues that Grundtvig saw himself as someone who speaks for the people because he was of the people – a claim that many spokesmen of the upper class found impossible (338). Grundtvig’s last speech in parliament summed up his political philosophy and practice in characteristic prose:

I am well aware that the learned members smile, if not laugh, at all such predictions and have often called me ... “Mr. Fortune-teller” – and sometimes even “Mrs. Fortune-teller”! However, I also know that although we speak of “telling fortunes” when we make a certain prediction about the future, there is great difference between how one predicts. I have never made predictions on the basis of the lines on a hand [...], but only on the basis of the information we can all gather by taking good note of the nature [...] of a people, of the course of history, and of the signs of the times. The learned seldom turn their attention to such observations, but I have been doing so from my youth onwards. (349)

Taken as a whole, then, *The Common Good* showcases Grundtvig’s political philosophy in action. Theologians know of Grundtvig as a foundational figure for the school of thought that came to be called Scandinavian creation theology. The founding fathers of this school – Knud Ejler Løgstrup, Regin Prenter, and Gustaf Wingren – went back to Martin Luther, yet indirectly rather than directly, *through* Grundtvig.<sup>3</sup> Theologians who work in the trajectory of Scandinavian creation theology today focus on

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<sup>3</sup> See Niels Henrik Gregersen, Bengt Kristensson Uggla and Trygve Wyller, “Reconfiguring Reformation Theology: The Paradigm of Scandinavian Creation Theology,” in *Reformation Theology for a Post-Secular Age: Løgstrup, Prenter, Wingren and the Future of Scandinavian Creation Theology*, ed. Niels Henrik Gregersen,

systematics and ethics, spelling out the significance of theology for contemporary life, both outside and inside churches. *The Common Good* allows them to trace why the founders of Scandinavian creation theology were interested in the public in the first place. Historically, the impact both of theology on the public sphere and of the public sphere on theology in Scandinavia can be traced by taking Grundtvig as a point of departure. In Germany, the doctrine of the two kingdoms – God reigning with two hands, one churchy hand and one not-so-churchy hand, so to speak – that was developed by Lutheran theologians, has been blamed for the lack of theological resistance against the totalitarian interpretation and terrorist instrumentalization of “the people” in the 1930s. But Scandinavia has a different and distinctive story to tell. As Korsgaard argues, “The concept took a very different path in Denmark, thanks not least to Grundtvig” (45), who suggested a democratic rather than a dictatorial semantics of “the people.” Through “his insistence that in the last resort the aim of all *folkelighed* was universal” (45), he articulated a criticism of the Germans who “equated the particular with the universal,” which led to “the expansive and exclusive nature of German nationalism” (46). Systematically, then, Grundtvig’s politics presents a compelling case study in public theology. What runs through the political philosophy and the political practice presented in *The Common Good* is a concern for the common good that draws on all available sources, theological and non-theological. Grundtvig, then, could be considered a public theologian *avant la lettre*.

However, his public theology is not a bilingual theology that translates the religious into the secular or the secular into the religious. Grundtvig speaks not with two tongues – a religious one (understood only inside churches) and a non-religious one (understood only outside churches) – but with *one*: his mother tongue, Danish. What *The Common Good* suggests, then, is that the terms of the debate about secularity have to be redefined. Of course, Grundtvig worked and wrote in a context where church and culture converged. Lutheranism characterized both the church and the culture of Scandinavia. Yet what might be hidden here is the treasure of a theology that allows scholars to reflect on the secular *as* the religious and the religious *as* the secular in view of theology’s public and political rami-

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Bengt Kristensson Uggla and Trygve Wyller (Göttingen: Vandenoek & Ruprecht, 2017), 11-34.



fications. *The Common Good* should be required reading for anyone interested in the role of religion in politics, precisely because religion comes up only indirectly rather than directly – subcutaneously, so to speak.

Although I run the risk of sounding like the pedantic Germans that Grundtvig mocks – “Gentlemen, in most places people work for a whipping! And in Germany, they think hard work is a virtue that should be pursued for its own sake. Indeed, they think they become ‘purer’ the less [...] pleasurable their work is!” (121) – I would suggest that information about the rationale for the selection of Grundtvig’s writings would have been helpful for scholarly engagements with his work. Moreover, the pedantic (German) scholar would have benefitted from more footnotes expressing and explaining the Danish words that Grundtvig employs, precisely because Broadbridge’s translation is so excellent and elegant that one forgets that it is not the original. Broadbridge transformed long and long-winded sentences – Grundtvig’s “torturous prose” featuring sentences that “approach 300 words” (165) – into an English full of verve!

In the conclusion of *The Common Good*, titled “Grundtvig’s Political Legacy,” Korsgaard traces the use of Grundtvig in politics, both from the left and from the right. He points to a speech by Barack Obama, then President of the United States, linking Martin Luther King to the legacy of Grundtvig. In this speech, Obama suggests that Grundtvig’s plans for a People’s High School

spread, including here to the United States, where Dr Martin Luther King, Jr., was a student at Highlander Folk School in Tennessee [...]. I might not be standing here were it not for the efforts of the people who participated in the Highlander Folk School. (356)

Obama, then, puts Grundtvig into the footnote by Charles Taylor that I mentioned above: “Were Martin Luther King’s secular compatriots unable to understand what he was arguing for when he put the case for equality in biblical terms?” Grundtvig’s historical and political writings might allow scholars, theologians and non-theologians alike, both to ask and to answer Taylor’s question by redefining the terms of the debate.

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## Grundtvigs død

*Lasse Stein Holst*

I de seneste år er salget af korte, let læste bøger steget markant. Hos internetboghandlen Saxo er salget af populærvidenskabelige, populærøkonomiske og populærfilosofiske titler – eller som de kaldes i engelsktalende lande: *brainy books* – steget fra 1.495 forskellige titler i 2013 til 7.934 i 2018.<sup>1</sup> I Danmark satte Aarhus Universitetsforlag trenden i gang, da de i 2012 udgav det første bind i serien *Tænkepauser*, hvor forskere skriver om alt fra religion og krig til onani, for bare at nævne et par af de seneste emner. Forskernes benspænd er, at de kun har 60 sider at folde sig ud på, for mere skal der ikke til – hvis man skal tro seriens engelske hjemmeside – for at forstå de resultater, som de har brugt flere år på at nå frem til, “Condensed and written in words we all understand. No footnotes, no references and no academic nonsense”.<sup>2</sup> Tænkepausernes popularitet har sat en bølge af populærvidenskabelige serier af korte bøger i gang, f.eks. Informations Forlags *Moderne Ideer* og Bibelselskabets *Håndbibliotek*, og i 2017 lancerede Aarhus Universitetsforlag en ny serie: *100 danmarkshistorier*. I løbet af otte år vil forlaget udgive 100 bøger a 100 sider i “små og overkommelige bogbidder”, hvor forskere fortæller i “et lettilgængeligt sprog om danmarkshistoriens vigtigste begivenheder og tematikker”.<sup>3</sup> Jes Fabricius Møllers bog *Grundtvigs død* fra 2019, der er genstand for denne anmeldelse, er bog nummer 19 i serien.

Møllers udgangspunkt for at skrive *Grundtvigs død* er dels en anerkendelse af Grundtvigs store betydning, dels “en iagttagelse af, at hans betydning ofte over- eller fejlvurderes” (11).<sup>4</sup> Overvurderingen og fejlvurderingen af Grundtvigs betydning for samfundet kommer ofte til udtryk i en

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<sup>1</sup> Morten Madsen: “Vi vil have små, kloge bøger”, Information 28. september 2018.

<sup>2</sup> <https://unipress.dk/bogserier/reflections/>.

<sup>3</sup> <https://unipress.dk/bogserier/100-danmarkshistorier/>.

<sup>4</sup> Henvisninger til Jes Fabricius Møllers *Grundtvigs død*, Aarhus Universitetsforlag, Aarhus 2019, angives herefter i parentes i brødteksten.

række almindeligt accepterede sandheder som f.eks. "I Danmark regnes Grundtvig traditionelt for at være en af demokratiets fædre ..." (34), og Møller evaluerer i sin bog disse sandheders gyldighed ved at undersøge, om der kan findes belæg for dem i Grundtvigs egne tekster og udsagn. Halvvejs i bogen flytter Møller fokus fra Grundtvig til Grundtvigs tilhængere, grundtvigianerne, og tager deres betydning for samfundet under kritisk behandling. Her er det ikke en almindeligt accepteret sandhed, der er udgangspunktet, men en indflydelsesrig hypotese i grundtvigianisme-forskningen. Til sidst i bogen aktualiserer Møller sin forskning ved at se på, hvordan Grundtvig stadigvæk i dag bliver taget til indtægt for alskens synspunkter og brugt til diverse formål. Spørgsmålet er, om denne ambition kan foldes ud på bare 100 sider, eller om de nødvendige forenklinger betyder, at væsentlige detaljer og nuancer må lades ude?

For at alle læsere skal kunne følge med, indleder Møller bogen med en kort biografisk skitse i afsnittet "Den gamle" og en introduktion til "en håndfuld" af Grundtvigs ideer. Møller forklarer Grundtvigs kirkelige anskuelse, hans tanker om folkelig dannelse, om religions- og trykkefrihed og om danskhed på en tilstræbt objektiv og letforståelig måde, der tager Grundtvigs tanker og ideer alvorligt. Møller har en fin bevidsthed om sin modtagergruppe; historiske og teologiske begreber som "Luthers skriftprincip", "den lærde skole" og "sognebåndsløsningen" bliver løbende forklaret, og kapitlet fungerer i sig selv godt som en kort introduktion til Grundtvig som teologisk og politisk tænkner. Dog afviger det introducerende afsnit om højskolebevægelsen, som burde være placeret i det følgende kapitel om "Grundtvigs betydning".

Afsnittet om højskolen er skrevet ud fra iagttagelsen af, at Grundtvigs betydning på dette område ofte overvurderes. Et af problemerne ved at bestemme Grundtvig som ophavsmand til højskolen er ifølge Møller, at hans tanker om uddannelsessystemet ikke var nye. 1830'ernes skolepolitiske debat var domineret af spørgsmålet om, om der var behov for de nye offentlige realskoler, der lagde vægt på undervisning i realfag som matematik, naturfag og de levende sprog, som et alternativ til de lærde skolars undervisning i klassikere og døde sprog. Møller citerer et svar fra Grundtvig til mæcenen Peter Larsen Skræppenborg, der i 1854 ville donere en sum penge til højskolen og derfor bad Grundtvig om at beskrive sine planer: Højskolen skulle være

en Friskole for de Voxne, og at den skal stræbe baade at vække, nære og klare en højere Betragtning baade af Menneskelivet i Almindelighed og af det danske Folks og Dannemandens Menneskeliv i Særdeleshed, end man sædvanlig møder (27).

Møllers udlægning, at “der næsten ikke er sagt andet, end at han håbede på, at den ville blive bedre end andre skoler”, er en anelse for lakonisk. Grundtvig siger flere originale ting i citatet: for det første at det skal være en friskole, sandsynligvis i betydningen en uafhængig privatskole som supplement til de statslige undervisningsinstitutioner. For det andet at den skal være for voksne. Grundtvig betoner flere steder, at det ikke er barndommen, der er den egentlige skolealder, men ungdommen – og her altså voksendommen.<sup>5</sup> Og for det tredje hentyder Grundtvig i citatet til, at skolens opgave er at vække den enkeltes (den voksnes) interesse for sin placering i menneskelivet i almindelighed og det danske folks menneskeliv. Som andre steder giver han altså her udtryk for sit ideal om “en fuldstændig menneskelig Oplysning”, der tager højde for sammenhængen mellem det individuelle, det folkelige og det universelle, hvor højskolens opgave altså i særdeleshed er at tage sig af den folkelige oplysning.<sup>6</sup>

Det ganske vist lidt uklare citat, Møller vælger at fremhæve, repræsenterer dog ikke Grundtvigs højskoletanker særlig godt. I et afsnit om højskolen, der er placeret i et introducerende kapitel om Grundtvigs ideer, havde det været på sin plads at udlægge et skrift som *Bøn og Begreb om en Dansk Høiskole i Soer* fra 1840, hvor Grundtvig er noget mere konkret i forhold til sine tanker om opbygningen af uddannelsessystemet og planerne for en reform af Sorø Akademi. Den folkelige højskole skulle ikke erstatte universitetet, men de to institutioner skulle fungere ved siden af hinanden: Samtidig med at Grundtvig udviklede sine tanker om den folkelige højskole, gav han i 1839 i skriftet *Om Nordens videnskabelige Forening* udtryk for sine visioner om et fællesnordisk universitet i Gøteborg, og forskellen mellem den folkelige højskole og den videnskabelige højskole (universitetet) lå i, at

<sup>5</sup> Ove Korsgaard: “Grundtvigs oplysningstanker – om at knytte bånd og løse knuder” i *Grundtvig-Studier 2000*, 154.

<sup>6</sup> Mere herom i op. cit., 156.

det Videnskabelige har alt det Timelige til Gienstand, med Oplysning og Klarhed til sit nærmeste Maal, det Populære eller Folkelige har derimod kun det Nærværende til Gienstand med Brugbarhed og Virksomhed til nærmeste Maal.<sup>7</sup>

Hans konkrete forslag er altså, at man har en skole, som tager sig af den folkelige dannelse, og en skole, der tager sig af den videnskabelige. I skriftet kommer han med flere konkrete forslag til, hvordan den videnskabelige højskole skal udformes, som dog ikke skal udvikles videre her. I *Bøn og Begreb om en Dansk Højskole i Soer* fremsætter han flere konkrete forslag til, hvordan Sorø Akademi skal reformeres til en folkelig højskole. Den skulle først og fremmest ophøre med at være en del af Københavns Universitet og afskaffe latinundervisningen, studentereksamen og filosofikum.<sup>8</sup> Centralt i skriftet er også Grundtvigs pædagogiske begreb om “den levende vekselvirkning”, som man kan undre sig over, at Møller ikke omtaler i et afsnit om Grundtvigs højskoletanker. I afsnittet om “Den folkelige dannelse” skriver Møller ganske vist om Grundtvigs historisk-poetiske skoleideal – som jo grunder på vekselvirkningen mellem fortid og nutid – men de mere lavpraktiske tanker om vekselvirkningen mellem lærer og elever og eleverne imellem omtales ikke. Det pædagogiske princip blev ellers helt konkret blandt andre steder foreslået i skriftet fra 1840: Grundtvig ønskede

en Oplysnings-Anstalt nemlig, hvorved Folket efterhaanden vaagnede til Selv-Bevidsthed, og hvor Lederne lærde ligesaameget af Ungdommen, som den af dem, en saadan levende Vexel-Virkning og indbyrdes Underviisning, hvorved der lagdes Bro over det svælgende Dyb [...] mellem hardtad hele Folket paa den ene, og Dets Ledere og Lærere, med en Haandfuld saakaldte Dannede og Oplyste, paa den anden Side.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>7</sup> N.F.S. Grundtvig: “Om Nordens videnskabelige Forening” i *Brage og Idun, et nordisk Fjerdingsårskrift*, 1. årgang, 1. halvbind, København 1839, 11-59, 52 (citeret efter *Grundtvigs Værker*).

<sup>8</sup> N.F.S. Grundtvig: *Bøn og Begreb om en Dansk Højskole i Soer*, Wahlske Boghandlings Forlag, København 1840, 9 (citeret efter *Grundtvigs Værker*).

<sup>9</sup> Op. cit., 18.

Ifølge Grundtvig ville oplysningen kun lykkes, når “Talen bliver til en Sam-Tale, deels mellem Gamle og Unge, og deels mellem de Unge indbyrdes”.<sup>10</sup> Som modbillede stod en undervisning, hvor læreren begik “den Sædvanlige Skolemester-Feil, at ville proppe selv i Børn, end sige da i Ungersvende, Alt hvad man veed, og især det Tørreste og mest Ufordøielige”, og hvor professorerne “har nogen anden Hensigt med deres Forelæsninger end at holde dem”.<sup>11</sup>

Møllers konklusion på afsnittet om højskolen er, at man ikke kan sige, “at Grundtvig skabte højskolebevægelsen i Danmark. Man kan heller ikke sige, at han var en drivende kraft i pionerfasen. Han havde ikke engang kontrollerende indflydelse på den skole, som bar hans navn.” (32) Han har mange gode argumenter, som fører frem mod konklusionen: Som antydnet ovenfor mener han ikke, at Grundtvigs ideer var hverken originale eller handlingsanvisende (26). Dertil viser en nøjere undersøgelse af folkehøjskolernes historie, at Grundtvigs personlige indflydelse var meget begrænset i højskolernes tilblivelse: Rødning Højskole (grundlagt 1844) var økonomisk afhængig af opbakningen fra de nationalliberale, så forstanderen gik stille med dørene med sin grundtvigianisme; Grundtvig gav heller ikke skolen den store opbakning, og dens program endte med at indeholde meget få grundtvigsk inspirerede elementer (28). Heller ikke de øvrige af 40’ernes og 50’ernes højskoler havde den store gavn af Grundtvigs ideer: Uldum og Hindholm Højskole var f.eks. præget af praktiske fag som landbrug, regning og tysk sprog, og det hed sig simpelthen, at bønderne ikke ville have den store gavn af Grundtvigs dannelsesidealer: “thi hvor meget Grundtvig end elsker det Ringe, det reent Folkelige, saa er han vistnok kun skikket til at være Lærer for det Ypperste” (29), lyder det fra en af grundlæggerne. Et interessant bevis på, at den grundtvigske folkehøjskole end ikke var realiseret i hans samtid, er et gavebrev fra 1853, hvormed en gruppe tilhængere donerede en pengegave, som skulle bruges til at grundlægge en højskole. Brevets ordlyd tyder på, at man i samtiden endnu ikke regnede Grundtvigs drøm for realiseret:

Vi nære den Fortrøstning at den kan blive en god Begyndelse til et Værk, hvoraf De endnu i Deres Livs Aften maa kunne see glædelige

<sup>10</sup> Op. cit., 20.

<sup>11</sup> Op. cit., 24.

Frugter, og at Samtid og Efterslægt vil bygge videre paa denne Grundvold til Guds Ære og det Fædernelands Bedste, De tjente i Kærlighed (31).

I en artikel fra 2016 har Møller defineret, hvad han forstår ved virkning: en idé, der omsættes til handling.<sup>12</sup> Et kriterium for, at man kan tale om, at en person har haft en virkning på samfundet, er, at man kan dokumentere, at personens idé er blevet overført til handling.<sup>13</sup> Møllers beviser for, at Grundtvigs ideer om højskolen ikke umiddelbart blev overført til de første højskoler, er overbevisende. Det havde dog klædt bogens ellers meget kloge komposition, hvis et skrift som *Bøn og Begreb om en Dansk Høiskole i Soer*, som heller ikke fik den ringeste betydning i sin samtid, men som rummer en række originale og konkrete ideer og forslag både til uddannelsessystemets og folkehøjskolens opbygning, var blevet fremlagt og taget alvorligt i det introducerende kapitel (“En håndfuld ideer”), og at deres umiddelbare (og altså manglende) virkning så var blevet behandlet i det følgende kapitel om “Grundtvigs betydning”.

Afsnittet om højskolen samt de to første afsnit i næste kapitel om “Grundtvigs betydning” (“Demokrati” og “Velfærdsstaten”) er en revideret version af Møllers glimrende artikel om “Grundtvigs betydning for samfundet”, trykt i *Grundtvig-Studier* i 2015. Afsnittene om demokratiet og velfærdsstaten er struktureret på samme måde som afsnittet om højskolen: De tager udgangspunkt i en almindelig accepteret sandhed om Grundtvigs betydning på de anførte områder og undersøger gennem en nærlæsning af Grundtvigs skrifter, om der er hold i dem. Og det er der sjældent – tværtimod siger Grundtvig flere steder det stik modsatte af, hvad han siden er blevet taget til indtægt for.

I afsnittet om demokratiet fremdrager Møller to sjove eksempler på, hvordan Grundtvigs betydning er blevet fejlvurderet. To vers af digtet “Langt højere Bjerger” fra 1820 er ifølge Møller ofte blevet citeret af tilhængere af velfærdsstaten: “Og da har i Rigdom vi drevet det vidt, / Naar Faa har for meget og Færre for lidt” (40). Møller fremhæver et eksempel fra 1848, hvor Grundtvig i *Danskeren* citerer sine egne vers:

<sup>12</sup> Jes Fabricius Møller: “Grundtvigs betydning for samfundet” i *Grundtvig-Studier*, København 2015, 106.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

i Danmark, hvor Selveiernes Antal er godt i Tiltagende, og hvor de store Fabriker Gud skee Lov! er faa, vil det ikke falde vanskeligt at redde Selvhaves Liv, afskaffe al anden Forsørgelses-Ret end den indbyrdes mellem Forældre og Børn, og at indføre saa stor en Nærings-Frihed, at det kan gaae, som der staaer i Visen: Faa har for meget og Færre for lidt (41).

Vejen mod idealet, at få har for meget og færre for lidt, nås altså gennem næringsfrihed og selvforsørgelse, ikke gennem omfordeling af midlerne til fordel for de svageste. Versene er altså et eksempel på, at en sætning, et vers, en bid af Grundtvigs skrifter og udsagn kan pilles ud af sin oprindelige kontekst, sættes ind i en ny og bruges til hvad som helst. Skolehistorikeren Thorstein Balle kaldte det for “grundtvigske diskursmarkører” (11).

Møller fremhæver et andet sjovt eksempel på, hvordan et citat kan ændre betydning gennem sin receptionshistorie. Som argument for, at Grundtvig ikke kan betegnes som velfærdsstatstilhænger, peger Møller på, at han i sin tid var imod forslaget om retten til statslig forsørgelse (41). I stedet foreslog han, at:

Der skal, saavidt muligt, sørges for, at fattige Gamle, Syge og forladte Børn kunne finde offentlige Tilflugtssteder, og selv de fattigste kunne have Adgang til folkelig Oplysning og Dannelse (41).

Passagen er ofte citeret med et komma for meget mellem “fattige” og “Gamle”, så det med Møllers ord “kan læses, som om både fattige og gamle skulle have understøttelse” (41).<sup>14</sup> Men det var altså kun de fattige gamle, der skulle det.

Møllers evne til at fremdrage sjove og farverige eksempler til at underbygge sin argumentation er beundringsværdig. Dog kunne afsnittet godt være nuanceret en smule til fordel for dem, der bruger Grundtvigs vers som et billede på velfærdsstaten. For eksempel kunne man have omtalt en artikelserie i Information fra 2008 med titlen “Langt højere bjerge”. I serien spurgte Informations journalist seks politikere om, hvad Grundtvigs digt sagde dem i dag. Politikerne kunne bruge digtet til vidt forskellige ting: For Per Stig Møller gav det udtryk for, at “Danmark altid har været

<sup>14</sup> Eksempler gives i Møller 2015, 109.



en del af verden og engageret i verden”,<sup>15</sup> mens Søren Krarup fik det modsatte ud af det, nemlig at det “er en understregning af fællesskabet, at vi som danskere – det er nemlig ikke globalt, men som danskere – skal hjælpe hinanden”.<sup>16</sup> På trods af politikernes forskellige tolkninger af teksten er der ingen af dem, der tror, at Grundtvig gik ind for velfærdsstat eller demokrati. Selv Svend Auken, der – som Martin Andersen Nexø – mener, at Grundtvigs vers om, at vi i rigdom har drevet det vidt, når få har for meget og færre for lidt, måske er “den smukkeste måde at udtrykke velfærdssamfundets fordelingspolitik på”, er bevidst om digtets historiske kontekst:

Nu var Grundtvig jo selv en arg modstander af velfærdssamfundet og prøvede i forbindelse med Grundloven i 1849 at få fjernet alle hentydninger til fattighjælp og socialforsorg og så videre. Han var den velbøjede bondes prælat. Men alligevel rammer han i sætningen netop det, at vi i Danmark ser os selv som ét land med ganske få medlemmer af en egentlige overklasse, en meget bred middelklasse – og så er der nogen, vi gerne vil hjælpe. Det er meget smukt ramt.<sup>17</sup>

Selv om Grundtvig ikke var velfærdsforkæmper, og selv om Svend Auken ikke mangler historisk bevidsthed i den henseende, kan Grundtvigs vers altså godt bruges som et smukt billede på velfærdsstaten.

Halvvejs i bogen – på side 49 – flytter Møller sit fokus fra Grundtvigs tanker og skrifter til hans tilhængere, grundtvigianerne. På de foregående sider har det, som vist, været Møllers metode at tage udgangspunkt i en almindeligt accepteret sandhed. På de følgende sider tager Møller udgangspunkt i en indflydelsesrig hypotese i Grundtvig-forskningen: P.G. Lindhardt argumenterer i sin bog om *Vækkelser og kirkelige Retninger i Danmark* fra 1951 for, at vækkelsesbevægelsernes opblomstring var en del af moderniseringsprocessen i den sidste halvdel af 1800-tallet. Ifølge Lindhardt passede de religiøse vækkelser godt til den troende i sekulariseringens tidsalder. Med tiden spaltedes vækkelserne i to, en (indre)missionsønsk og en grundtvigsk bevægelse, og det er Lindhardts hypotese, at den

<sup>15</sup> Christian Lehmann: “Med hjerterne løve ved løve”, Information 6. august 2008.

<sup>16</sup> Christian Lehmann: “Vi vil os til guder ej grunde”, Information 22. juli 2008.

<sup>17</sup> Christian Lehmann: “Hvor få har for meget og færre for lidt”, Information 4. august 2008.

enkelte troendes tilhørsforhold til enten den ene eller anden bevægelse var bestemt af økonomiske og sociale forhold: Askese, mådehold og forsagelse fra fristelser passede godt til den fattige småbonde og fisker, mens den livsglade og livsnydende grundtvigianisme passede godt til den velhavende gårdmand.

Møller nuancerer Lindhardts hypotese og gendriver den delvist med flere meget kloge og overbevisende argumenter, samtidig med at han – i hvert fald et godt stykke ad vejen – har en bevidsthed om sin bogs målgruppe og undgår, at det bliver kedeligt for lægfolk. På bedste populærvidenskabelige vis forsøger han at gøre sin bog vedkommende ved at trække på en personlig historie. Han lærte som barn i skolen, at den egn øst for Kalundborg, hvor han voksede op, var formet af den grundtvigianske bevægelse. Der fandtes og findes stadigvæk en friskole, en højskole, en valgmenighed og en brugs. Alt sammen noget, vi i dag er tilbøjelige til at opfatte som konkrete resultater af Grundtvigs ideer – eller i hvert fald af Grundtvigs tilhængeres bedrifter. Og folket på egnen betragtede da også sig selv som “en frugt af den åndelige og materielle overskudskultur, som havde sit ophav hos Grundtvig” (59). Men da Møller for et par år siden skulle holde et foredrag i en lokalhistorisk forening, læste han op på sin egnshistorie og opdagede, at det bestemt ikke kun var grundtvigianere, der havde været de drivende kræfter i opbygningen og udviklingen af dens lokalliv. Det viste sig nemlig, at det var den missionske præst Vilhelm Beck, der var “egnens åndelige dynamo” (63). Mange af de handlekraftige mænd, der kom til egnen i 1800-tallet og var med til at drive samfundet, blev påvirket af Beck. Oprettelsen af andelsmejerier, friskoler, brugsforeninger, en landboforening, en sygekasse, en sparekasse og en valgmenighed kan altså alt sammen tilskrives drivkraftige mænd, som bekendte sig til den missionske bevægelse (60). P.G. Lindhardts hypotese om, at samfundet blev drevet frem af drivkraftige grundtvigianere, er altså i dette tilfælde punktvis modbevist, mens grundantagelsen om, at der er en sammenhæng mellem vækkelsesbevægelserne og moderniseringsbevægelsen, forbliver holdbar: “Det er interessant, at det dybe engagement i samfundslivet, den kristelige vækkelse og den rationelle landbrugsproduktion optrådte samtidig hos de centrale personligheder, uafhængig af om de var grundtvigske eller missionske” (61). Eftertiden fik altså med tiden slettet Indre Mission fra erindringen og den overleverede lokalhistorie, i takt med at befolkningen

på egnen øst for Kalundborg begyndte at opfatte sig selv som frugt af den grundtvigianske bevægelse.

Bagsiden af *Grundtvigs død* opsummerer bogens sidste kapitel, "Billedet af Grundtvig". Den har påtrykt et fotografi taget ved Anker Jørgensens begravelse i Grundtvigskirken april 2016, hvor folk stod klar med de røde faner, da kisten blev båret ud af kirken. Grundtvigskirken er ét blandt mange af de mindesmærker, som Møller kalder "ukontroversielle projekter" (83). 50 år efter Grundtvigs død var alle enige om, at Grundtvig havde været så betydningsfuld, at han fortjente at blive hyldet med et monument: "Grundtvig udviklede sig til et nationalt ikon, fordi alle kunne finde noget hos ham, som de kunne lide" (83). Men som Møller flere steder i bogen har vist og konkluderet, er der belæg for at kalde Grundtvig "liberal om en hals", ligesom man kan kalde ham konservativ, "fordi han i virkeligheden ikke ønskede sig ændringer" på det fordelingspolitiske område (42). Men belæg for at kalde ham demokratisk pioner eller sammenligne hans politik med en socialdemokratisk fordelingspolitik findes der ingen af.

Hovedformålet med *Grundtvigs død* lader til at være at dekonstruere myter om Grundtvig. I det afsluttende kapitel, hvor Møller også viser, hvordan præsident Obama brugte Grundtvig til at smigre den danske regering og befolkning under et besøg i Danmark i 2016, definerer han myten som en opdigtet, men meningsfuld og retningsgivende fortælling, der – selv om den er opdigtet – er sand, så længe folk tror på den (95-96). Hvis "en misforståelse eller sågar en direkte løgn accepteres af tilstrækkelig mange, får den sit eget liv og sin egen betydning." Dette kalder Møller for "kulturel placeboeffekt" (96). Man kunne også kalde det *fake news*. Og med sin afdækning af misforståelserne – overvurderingerne og fejlvurderingerne – af Grundtvig lever den korte populærvidenskabelige bog således op til de mest jublende optimisters forhåbninger til genren som f.eks. internetboghandlen Saxos direktør, Jørgen Balle Olesen, der udtaler sig om den markante stigning i salget af populærvidenskabelige bøger til Kristeligt Dagblad: "Folk har brug for at få dybere indsigt, fordi vi lever i en verden fyldt med fake news, fragmenterede informationsstumper fra sociale medier og en total overvældende strøm af data."<sup>18</sup>

<sup>18</sup> Morten Madsen 2018.

I sin bog om videnskabsformidling og populærvidenskab fra 2002 skriver ph.d. i videnskabsteori Søren Brier, at den populærvidenskabelige tekst skal søge “at bygge bro mellem livsverden og den videnskabelige verdens praksis og abstrakte ræsonnementer” og “integre den videnskabelige viden og dens konsekvenser på en forståelig måde i modtagerens verdensbillede”.<sup>19</sup> *Grundtvigs død* bygger tydeligvis på et grundigt stykke forskningsarbejde, som Møller formår at formidle videre til den læge læser gennem velvalgte, sjove og vedkommende eksempler i et letforståeligt sprog. Bogen kan tilmed læses som et oplysningsprojekt med et demokratisk potentiale, idet den træner læseren i at afkode og gennemskue brugen af “Grundtvig” i den offentlige debat. Dog virker bogen flere steder en anelse for forenklet – hvad der givetvis er svært at undgå i en genre, der fordrer knaphed og netop forenkling. For eksempel gør Møller sig lidt skyldig i at miskende Grundtvig som skolepolitisk tænkner. Og andre steder benytter han sig af lidt vel lakoniske konklusioner og generaliseringer.

Det var en stor fornøjelse at læse bogen. Dog havde jeg læst det meste af den før, da den bygger på Møllers to tidligere tekster om Grundtvig, *Grundtvigianisme i det 20. århundrede* fra 2005 og “Grundtvigs betydning for samfundet” fra 2015. Længere passager fra disse tekster er gentaget ordret i *Grundtvigs død*, hvilket ikke er noget problem i sig selv, da flertallet af bogens potentielle læsere sandsynligvis ikke kender de to tidligere arbejder i forvejen. Men det havde været på sin plads at angive i en note, at bogen var baseret herpå.

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<sup>19</sup> Søren Brier: *Fra fakta til fikta. Videnskabsformidling og populærvidenskab i underholdningens tidsalder*, Akademisk, København 2003, 178-179.

## Hartvig Nissen som grundtvigianer

*Jes Fabricius Møller*

Merethe Roos, *Hartvig Nissen. Grundtvigianer, skandinav, skolemann*, Cappelen Damm Akademisk 2019, 282 sider.

“Der er Faa eller Ingen i vort Land, der i den Grad har viet sit Liv til et utrætteligt Arbejde i Skolevæsenets Tjeneste som nys afdøde Rektor ved Kristiania Kathedralskole Ole Hartvig Nissen. Lige fra 1843, da han begyndte sin pædagogiske Virksomhed, til sin Død har han i Tale og Skrift belyst de forkjelligste Spørgsmaal i saavel det højere som lavere Skolevæsen, samlet Forarbejderne til den Plan for Skolens Ordning, som han havde gjort til sit Livs Opgave at gennemføre, og nedlagt Frugterne af et rigt pædagogisk Livs Erfaring.” Således lød indledningen til en subscriptionsindbydelse til en udgave af Nissens skrifter, som også blev trykt i danske aviser (her gengivet efter *Dagbladet* (København) 21. sept. 1874.). Nissens praktiske virke begrænsede sig til Norge, men han var ved sin død et kendt navn i hele Skandinavien, dog nok mere i Sverige end i Danmark.

Hartvig Nissen (1815-1874) var præstebarn fra Trøndelag, blev dimitteret fra Trondhjems lærde skole til Det Kgl. Frederiks Universitet i Christiania, hvor han studerede filologi. I 1838 rejste han på et stipendium til København, hvor han antagelig opholdt sig til midt i 1840. Hjemme i Norge igen måtte han opgive en videnskabelig karriere, og fra han tog filologisk eksamen i 1843, vendte han hele sin opmærksomhed mod pædagogisk virksomhed, først med annoncering af en skole, der skulle forene real- og latinskolens fagsammensætning. Samme år besøgte han Sorø Akademi. I resten af sin karriere forenede han praktisk skolevirksomhed med et pædagogisk forfatterskab og tillidsposter i både foreningslivet og ved Kirkedepartementet. Ved sin død var han en af norsk skolelivs mest indflydelsesrige skikkelser. Nissens liv er velbeskrevet i litteraturen (han er også biograferet i Salmonsens Konversationsleksikon, 2. udg.), og det er den almindelige antagelse, at han modtog væsentlig påvirkning til sit senere virke under sit studieophold i København, mest fra sin lærer J.N. Madvig, der som kultusminister reformerede den lærde skole i 1850.

Skønt Madvig selv var klassisk filolog, søgte han at styrke de naturvidenskabelige fag på de klassiske sprogs bekostning.

Heroverfor opstiller Merethe Roos den interessante hypotese, at Nissen var påvirket af Grundtvig, og at Christopher Bruun derfor får konkurrence som Grundtvigs væsentligste profet i Norge. Nogen direkte eller personlig kontakt med Grundtvig kan Roos ikke finde. Nissen befandt sig i København, mens Grundtvig holdt sine "Mands Minde"-forelæsninger. Der er ingen dokumentation af, at Nissen var blandt tilhørerne. Roos nøjes med noget besværgende at skrive, at der "er all grunn til å tro at Nissen fulgte disse forelesningene" (15), en antagelse, der gentages et par gange (63, 66 og 67), hvad den ikke bliver mere dokumenteret af. Men det må jo indrømmes, at den har sandsynligheden for sig. Et noget mere håndfast vidnesbyrd om en forbindelse ville man have kunnet opnå ved at studere Det Kongelige Biblioteks udlånsprotokoller for de år, da Nissen var i København. Desværre er protokollerne for både 1838 og 1839 bortkommet, og af de relativt mange udlån af Grundtvig i 1840 er ingen til student Nissen. Til gengæld brevvekslede Nissen med Frederik Barfod, med hvem han stod på venskabelig fod. Er der en forbindelse til det grundtvigske, er den formidlet gennem hans engagement i skandinavismen, som Roos dokumenterer.

Mere substantielt søger Roos at vise ligheden mellem Nissens skoletanker og Grundtvigs. Blandt andre Dag Thorkildsen har været inde på det samme. Metodisk er påstand om påvirkning ved hjælp af påvisning af lighed en lidt vanskeligere øvelse, ikke mindst i Grundtvigs tilfælde, fordi hans pædagogiske ideer ofte er formuleret i noget mere generelle vendinger og dermed også fortolkningsåbne. Det gør det på den ene side vanskeligt at påvise lighed, og på den anden side vanskeligere at afvise, at der skulle have fundet en påvirkning sted. I spørgsmålet om religionens rolle i undervisningen indtog Grundtvig dog et egentligt særstandpunkt, idet han afviste, at troen kunne være en læresag. Om kristendommens status i skolen skrev Nissen således:

Den første Betingelse for, at Skolen skal kunne medvirke kraftig til at styrke sine Lærlinges Religjøsitet er, at den selv er gennemtrængt af en christelig sædelig Aand. Denne skal ikke fræmtræde i hyppige og moralske religiøse taler; thi derved vil Opdrageren maaske netop modarbejde sin Hensigt; men Skolens hele Virksomhed og dens Læ-

res Forhold til Eleverne og til hverandre indbyrdes bør bære den christelige Kjærligheds Præg (100).

I dette ser man en helt klar påvirkning fra Grundtvig, mener Roos. Det er rigtigt, for så vidt Nissen i dette citat læst i sin samtidige kontekst gav udtryk for en nedtoning af den direkte forkyndelse. Men spørgsmålet er, om dette ikke også kan tages som udtryk for den almindelige opfattelse i tiden – uden for vækkelserne – at sand kristendom først og fremmest ytrede sig i det sædelige liv. Skal man endelig pege på en mulig dansk påvirkning i den retning, skulle det være Martensen snarere end Grundtvig. Men der er nok snarere tale om en gængs borgerlig kristendom anno dazumal.

Et større sammenfald med Grundtvigs ideer finder man i Nissens tanker om sprog og folkeånd (83 f.) og dermed modersmålets betydning for undervisningen. Her står Roos på fastere grund. Hun peger også på påvirkningen fra Madvig, idet Nissen også lagde vægt på fremmedsprogenes betydning og den rækkefølge, i hvilken de introduceredes for disciplene.

Skal man pege på en sammenhæng mellem Nissen og Grundtvig, som Roos ikke gør meget ud af, er det ikke ligheden i tanken, men i erfaringen. Som Nissen begyndte Grundtvig som filolog med videnskabelige ambitioner, men måtte på et tidligt tidspunkt søge sit udkomme som lærer for børn og unge, og han var, som Holger Berg understreger det i sin indledning til *Historisk Børnelærdom* (1829) på grundtvigsværker.dk, en noget mere rutineret praktiker, end man normalt giver ham æren for. Han underviste som ung på det dengang moderne Schouboeske Institut og var gode venner med realskolebestyrer Mariboe (se Else Riisagers indledning til *Morgensange* (1833) på grundtvigsværker.dk). Nissen refererede i øvrigt direkte til Mariboe i en diskussion om pigers skolegang (97 f.). Endelig må det ikke glemmes, hvad Roos da heller ikke gør, og retfærdigvis indrømmes, at Grundtvig fra 1841 var direktør for Dronning Caroline Amalies Asylskole i Kronprinsessegade, om end Roos placerer den i Nørregade (51). Det er imidlertid bemærkelsesværdigt, at der er så relativt svag en sammenhæng mellem Grundtvigs erfaringer og kundskaber på den ene side og hans skoletanker på den anden.

Han var en fremragende latiner og beherskede moderne engelsk nok til at fungere som tolk, da Elizabeth Fry besøgte Danmark. At han kunne tysk, var en selvfølge. Men alligevel spiller hverken de klassiske eller moderne hovedsprog nogen rolle i hans programmatisk skoleskrifter. På den

ene side er det interessant, at han ikke gjorde sig selv til målestok for sine idealer, men på den anden er der tale om en påfaldende ufølsomhed over for egne erfaringer. Grundtvig burde om nogen vide, hvor nyttigt det var at beherske fremmedsprog. I denne sag havde Nissen et lidt kraftigere remtræk til virkeligheden og derfor også en noget større indflydelse på det offentlige skolevæsen.

Roos præsenterer sine resultater redeligt og åbent. Denne anmelder er som antydnet ikke overbevist af hovedtesen. Det gør ikke undersøgelsen mindre interessant, fordi den også lægger sine præmisser åbent frem og kvalificerer den fortsatte diskussion af Grundtvigs betydning. Og så trækker det jo bestemt ikke ned, at vi hermed får en opdateret introduktion til en af norsk skolevæsens væsentligste skikkelser.



# Meddelelser fra Grundtvig-Selskabet

*Jes Fabricius Møller*

Årsmødet 2018 havde højskolernes 175-års jubilæum som tema. Det foregik den 29. november i Vartovs store sal. Jes Fabricius Møller talte om Grundtvigs betydning og især hans indirekte betydning. Hans Henrik Hjermitsev gav et rids af udviklingen i højskolernes idégrundlag i det 20. århundrede, og hvordan Grundtvigs tanker om livsoplysning og historisk-poetisk dannelse blev løbende nyfortolket og fra 1970'erne nogle steder kastet på møddingen til fordel for new age-selvudvikling, ideer om socialistisk samfundsomvæltning og senest åndløs eliteidræt. Rasmus Kolby Rahbek belyste, hvordan grundtvigske nøglebegreber som livsoplysning, det historisk-poetiske, demokratisk dannelse og forpligtende fællesskaber bliver forstået af elever og lærere på højskolerne i dag. Fremmødet var meget tilfredsstillende, og diskussionen god.

Ved den efterfølgende generalforsamling skete der ingen ændringer i styrelsens sammensætning, dog blev Henrik Yde suppleant. På styrelsens foranledning vedtog generalforsamlingen en vedtægtsændring, således at § 11 fremover lyder: "Regnskabet følger kalenderåret. Det revideres af en revisor, som vælges af årsmødet. Genvalg kan finde sted." At selskabet ikke længere skal bekoste en registreret revisor, er en væsentlig lettelse på budgettet. Thorstein Balle blev valgt som revisor. I repræsentantskabet er der sket udskiftning, idet Theodor Jørgensen er afgået ved døden, mens Johannes Adamsen og Therese Bering Solten blev valgt ind. Ved et efterfølgende styrelsesmøde konstituerede styrelsen sig med Jes Fabricius Møller som formand, Ingrid Ank som næstformand, Anders Holm som sekretær og Hans Henrik Hjermitsev som kasserer.

Endnu engang lykkedes det den omhyggelige og ihærdige redaktion af Grundtvig-Studier at sende et læseværdigt årsskrift på gaden med to fag-

fællebedømte artikler og flere småstykker og anmeldelser. Styrelsen takker redaktionen for det meget store arbejde, der er blevet lagt i at fastholde årsskriftet som platform for publicering af den nyeste Grundtvigforskning og samtidig gøre det læseværdigt for en bredere kreds.

Igen i år bidrog selskabet til planlægningen af fejringen af Grundtvigs fødselsdag i Vartov, hvor der var arrangement for børn, Grundtvigbyvandring ved Ingrid Ank og mini-seminar om Niels og Joakim Skovgaard med oplæg af Kathrine Svanum Andersen og Rasmus Jensen.

Selskabet bidrog til Foreningen af Folkehøjskoler i Danmarks International Folk High School Summit, 23.-28. september 2019, hvor selskabets styrelse stod for oplæg om Grundtvig og folkehøjskolernes historie på Grundtvigs Højskole i Hillerød samt byvandring i Grundtvigs København og besøg i Grundtvigs Mindestuer i Udby.

Ved indledningen af finanslovsforhandlingerne i efteråret 2019 stod det klart, at regeringen i overensstemmelse med det erklærede ønske om at omprioritere forskningsmidler til fordel for den grønne omstilling ikke havde til hensigt at forlænge bevillingen til Grundtvig-Centeret. Det måtte der naturligvis reageres på, og efter at oplysningen om denne prioritering blev videreformidlet til Kristeligt Dagblads redaktion, bragte avisen historien på forsiden den 31. oktober og som tophistorie flere af de følgende dage, og det førte til, at bevillingen til centeret igen fandt plads i finanslovsudkastet. Interessen for Grundtvig er heldigvis også blandt politikerne usvækket. Styrelsen takker alle, der har bistået Grundtvig-Selskabet i dets virke, samt selskabets knap 200 medlemmer for deres støtte til Grundtvig-Selskabets arbejde med "at fremme studiet af N.F.S. Grundtvig, hans virke og hans stilling i åndslivet i og uden for Danmark".

## English summaries / Danske resuméer

### Praising the Pagan Gods: Grundtvig's Civil Religious Poetization of the Pagan Past

*Sophie Bønding*

“Thor lever endnu og ager i Sky”: Grundtvigs civilreligiøse poetisering af den hedenske fortid

N.F.S. Grundtvig betragtes ofte som både kirkefader for den danske kirke og grundlægger af den danske nation. Hans sideløbende interesse for fællesskabsdannelse og social sammenhængskraft i det kirkelig-religiøse fællesskab og i det nationalt-sekulære fællesskab er alment kendt og del af en forskningsmæssig diskurs om Grundtvig. Alligevel er paralleliteten i hans tænkning omkring de to sfærer generelt underbelyst. Formålet med nærværende artikel er at kaste lys over dette. Under anvendelse af det religionsvidenskabelige begreb civilreligion samt forskellige religions-teorier vises det, hvordan Grundtvigs ambitioner for og konkrete brug af nordisk mytologi i den nationalt-sekulære sfære af dansk samfundsliv var afgørende influeret af underliggende religiøse antagelser og tænkemåder. Dette kommer til udtryk blandt andet i Grundtvigs udlægninger af nordisk-mytologiske fortællinger og figurer ved hjælp af eksegetiske strategier hentet fra bibelsk eksegesi. Med fokus på *Brage-Snak*-forelæsningerne (1844) argumenteres der for, at Grundtvig behandlede nordisk mytologi som et slags “civilreligiøst helligskrift” ved at udlægge og aktualisere mytologien på samtidsanliggende, der havde med den sekulære sfære at gøre. Således synes Grundtvig at have forsøgt at skabe, hvad man kan kalde en “civilreligiøs vækkelse” med det formål at lade nordisk mytologi indgå som en del af danskernes levende, mundtlige kultur efter den overbevisning, at det ville indsætte nordisk mytologi som fundamentet for en kollektiv selvbevidsthed og et dansk-nationalt fællesskab. Som led heri synes *Brage-Snak*-foredragene som rituelle begivenheder at have udgjort konkrete forsøg fra Grundtvigs side på at vække en autentisk dansk verdensanskuelse og et autentisk dansk etos i den forsamlede flok, således at

disse kunne smelte sammen og få indvirkning på deltagernes samfundsliv i dagligdagen.

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## Grundtvig and John Wesley – A Study of the Convergence in Their Theology

*Jørgen Thaarup*

Grundtvig og John Wesley – En undersøgelse af de konvergerende træk i deres teologi

Artiklen handler om de konvergerende træk, man finder hos John Wesley (1703-91) og N.F.S. Grundtvig (1783-1872) – to markante fornyere af reformationens teologi i perioden 1740-1850. Tesen er, at det er forbindelsen til den antikke østlige teologi og liturgi, som kan forklare de konvergerende træk. Artiklen behandler dog kun et enkelt ud af ni temaer fra afhandlingen *Med venner i lys vi tale* (andet oplag 2020), hvor sammenligneligheden er tydelig, nemlig: "Hvad Kristus har gjort som grundlag for menneskets frelse." Inspirationen fra den østlige teologi hentes for Grundtvigs vedkommende i Irenæus' skrifter og den græsk ortodokse liturgi, mens Wesley trækker på Makarios Homilier, Efraim Syreren og den *Apostolske Konstitution*. Fælles var de dog om inspiration fra Exeterbogen, Beda og den østlige liturgi, som angelsakserne fortsatte med at bruge lang tid efter latiniseringen af kirken i Britannien og giver yderligere forklaring på de konvergerende træk.

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## Grundtvig som stridsmand og polemiker

*Vanja Thaulow*

Grundtvig as Polemicist and “Warrior of God”

The article summarizes the main points from the PhD thesis, titled *Warrior of God. Rhetorical Criticism of N.F.S. Grundtvig's Early Polemical Writings on Theology (1810-1825)*. The study has been carried out as a series of rhetorical close readings of selected polemical works (sermons, speeches, history writing, and pamphlets) with special focus on the author's self-representation, audience construction, argumentation, and style. The analyses show that Grundtvig's early works are marked by a self-representation as a prophet of doom, a *parrhesiast*, and a “warrior of God.” Grundtvig speaks from an exalted position, almost from God's perspective. This position results in an asymmetrical relationship to the audience. He treats readers as if he can force them into thinking and believing in a certain way. Characteristic of his argumentation is the use of postulates, arguments from authority, and motivation by fear. In personal polemical encounters, Grundtvig even proceeds in an eristic manner, resorting to stratagems such as arguments *ad hominem*. His style can be described in classical terms, as asperous and vehement (cf. Hermogenes' *On Types of Style*) and, in modern terms, as polemical and provocative. The study concludes that Grundtvig's sermons, speeches, and scientific works are extraordinarily polemical in the years 1810-1825. Audiences' reactions clearly show that he violated genre conventions time and again. Most people reacted with shock and indignation to his hate speech. Grundtvig's polemical style attracted a lot of attention – some of his books became regular *succès de scandale* – but he did not convince many people of his views. Later in his life, Grundtvig changed strategies. He took leave of the strict biblical and dualistic theology and realized that engaging in controversies would not contribute to his overall aim which was the religious revival of the Danish people. His belligerence subsided but never disappeared completely.

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## En udeladelse

*Flemming Lundgreen-Nielsen*

### An Omission

This article discusses why in *Udvalgte Skrifter (Selected Writings)* volume 5 (1905), in his edition of *Nordens Mythologi (Norse Mythology)* 1832, Holger Begtrup omitted the last fourteen lines of Grundtvig's brief chapter on "The springs of Urda and Mimir." Begtrup's edition is otherwise excellent and reliable. It is suggested that Begtrup deleted this particular concluding section praising secular world history because he might have missed a Christian line of religious reasoning in it.

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