

Grundtvig and the War that changed Danish Identity

By Hans Kuhn

Grundtvig and Kierkegaard stand out today as the two giants of Denmark's intellectual history in the 19th century. Kierkegaard's impact has been on an international, Grundtvig's on a national scale. Both were at odds with the prevailing cultural, religious, and intellectual climate of the society they were born into. Kierkegaard was 42 when he died; Grundtvig was in his 60ies before he became a national figure. The First Slesvig War of 1848-50 made him into that.

In Grundtvig's mind, the Danes needed to leave the optimistic dualism of bourgeois Biedermeier culture with its mild hedonism and its smoothing over of conflict behind and commit themselves to a religious and national renewal, becoming both God's chosen people and a bastion of Nordic purity. This would also mean a social and educational upheaval; not the urban middle classes, but the common people on the land were the true embodiment of Denmark, and not Latin but Old Norse should be the linguistic wellspring of education. At the end of the 1830s, things began to look up for him. The personal censorship he had been subjected to for eleven years was lifted, his monumental collection of hymns, *Salmer og aandelige Sange*, appeared, in Vartov he got his own pulpit from which »det levende ord« could be dispensed, he was invited to give his personal view of history at Borchs Kollegium in the *Mands Minde* lectures of 1838, and as a result, his fans organised themselves into *Danske Samfund*, a forum to which much of his poetic production of the following decade was directed. Still, his constituency, so to say, was a band of converts, and his voice was not part of the mainstream conversation. Sophisticated Copenhagen society – e.g., the Heibergs, his near-neighbours in Christianshavn – thought him uncouth and fanatical, and the Liberals, agitating for a constitution and popular representation, were not interested in a religious revival. Grundtvig's ideal was folkelighed, not democracy; he was comfortable enough with the enlightened absolutism of Enevælde, and although he was a member of the constitutional assembly of 1848-9 and later, intermittently, of parliament, party politics with its negotiations and compromises was not for him. Yet, from the 1850s onward, his voice was heard, and the teachers' colleges and especially the folk high schools springing up all over the place amplified it.

His mouthpiece during the emotionally turbulent war years was *Danskeren*, a weekly of 16 pages he wrote, practically single-handedly, between March, 1848 and December, 1851, a mixture of articles and poems, and it is especially the latter that made their mark. One of his closest disciples, the teacher P. O. Boisen, who had issued a songbook for *Danske Samfund* in the early 1840s and had married Grundtvig's daughter Meta in 1847, issued *Nye og gamle Viser af og for det Danske Folk* in 1849, expanded and revised in 1850 and going from strength to strength during the following decades; the tenth edition appeared in 1875. It was printed cheaply, without music, and in a format easily slipping into a soldier's pocket. It became very popular, being distributed even by people such as H. C. Andersen, not by any description a Grundtvigian; including its later editions, an estimated 70,000 copies were printed, an enormous number in relation to the size of the Danish population at the time. It is worth looking at these songs which served to carry Grundtvig's vision of Denmark to people who would otherwise never have heard of him and who absorbed these texts in emotionally charged situations of strong bonding.

The topicality of the collection is evident from the way it is organised; the aim is to boost the morale of the singers, to chronicle events in the war, and to provide an outlet for both negative and positive emotions. The first section, comprising 17 songs, is called *Krigen 1848, med et Forspil*, this prelude being three Grundtvig poems of a historical nature, which he had written earlier. The first two were based on Saxo, whom he had translated around 1820, first 'Bjarkemaal', a rousing call to arms from the times of King Rolf Krage, the second 'Folke', about a messenger who thanked for the royal gift of a golden cup by drinking a cup of his own blood in battle; the third, 'Niels Ebbesen', was about a 14th c. Jutish nobleman who had slain a Holsten count; in Grundtvig's popular poem from 1844 a symbol of Danish resistance against German encroachment. The remaining 14 poems of this section were immediately related to the outbreak and the first year of the war. Seven were Grundtvig's, previously published in *Danskeren*, six were by other poets, including H. C. Andersens 'Den Frivillige'; there was no poet at the time who did not contribute to the flood of patriotic outpourings the war released. The following section, *1849*, comprises only 12 songs; a third of them are Grundtvig's own. The third section, *Fædrelandssange*, features 31 songs of a more general patriotic nature; Grundtvig's share, 13, constitutes more than one third, while his friend Inge-

mann is represented by six songs. Then we have 14 songs called *Gammel-Viiser*; they reflect the Grundtvigians' ambition to revive the old ballads, which were seen as a national treasure. Nine of these were taken from Gr's anthology *Danske Kæmpeviser til Skole-Brug* published in 1847, where he rewrote traditional material very freely, and one is a reworking of the 'Elverskud' ballad by his son Svend. The last twelve songs of the collection are called *Smaa-Sange*, and they represent the basically non-political guldalder song tradition ranging from Stub, Ewald and Thaarup in the 18th century to Gr's contemporaries Oehlenschläger, Heiberg and Ingemann; here we find another of Svend Grundtvig's folksong adaptations, »Det var en Lørdag Aften«, which has remained popular until this day. This unideological section included no songs by Grundtvig père. The songbook was an obvious success, for already in the following year Boisen published a second edition which almost doubled its size; the new songs could also be bought as a separate supplement by those who owned the first edition. The material on »Krigen 1849« was increased by one third, and 13 new pieces commemorated events of the third and final year of the war; of these, 8 were by Grundtvig père and one by Grundtvig fils. In the expanded section of general patriotic songs there was only one additional Grundtvig song, one commemorating the adoption of a constitution in 1849. There was now a number of songs by Liberal student activists, especially Carl Ploug; Grundtvigians and Liberals were finding each other under the common banner of nationalism. The *Gammel-Viser* were now called *Kæmpeviser* (the term Gr had always used) and the apolitical *Smaa-Sange* are simply entitled *Andre Sange*. A new section is called *Kamp- og Leir-Sange samt lystelige Smaavisser*; here we find some popular light-hearted war songs as those by Recke but also some jocular songs and dialect songs, reflecting the surging interest in folklore and regionalism which paralleled middle-class enthusiasm for the *landsoldat*, the common conscripted soldier from the countryside. The desire to make a war-time songbook for soldiers into a family songbook is even more evident in a new section of children's songs. With the war coming to a close, it was no longer a matter of inspiring the soldier in the field, but of imbuing the whole family with a vision of the Danish nation, and this aim was more likely to be reached if along with the ideological songs you also provided popular non-political songs.

The post-war editions need not concern us here but a short glance at the later fate of the book may be called for. The third edition of 1852 comprised 153 songs, to which another dozen were added in 1856. A separate collection of 100 melodies was published in 1852, expanded in 1858 and 1867. As the text book threatened to become too unwieldy, a separate *Tillæg* was published in 1861 and later, with a new collection of melodies appearing in 1862. The text supplement contained 71 new songs, only four of them new Grundtvig songs. The Second Slesvig War of 1864 boosted the demand for patriotic songs anew; the 7th to 9th editions appeared in 1866, 1868 and 1870, when the Franco-Prussian War kindled hopes for a revenge. But now other songbooks in the true Grundtvigian spirit were available, starting with Køsters *Et Hundrede Danske Sange* af 1865, Køster and Schrøder's *Digte og Sange for danske Højskoler* of the following year and a spate of similar enterprises, which were to lead to *Folkehøjskolens Sangbog*, still going strong today.

It is hardly an exaggeration to say that Treårskrigen was a godsend for Grundtvig, creating conditions where his gospel of a national renewal of religious intensity would find a much larger audience than before, so that his message could be carried on in peace time in folk high schools and teachers' colleges and wherever Danes gathered to sing, which even today they do much more readily than their fellow Scandinavians and their neighbours to the south.

Grundtvig, even though a prodigious producer of hymns (about a third of the hymns in the Danish Church's hymnbook are from his hand), was not predestined to become a writer of popularly accepted songs. Any conscript could understand Faber's »Den gang jeg drog afsted«, where a farmer's son says goodbye to his parents and his girl-friend and explains why he has to shoulder the rifle rather than steer the plough: Danes don't want to be bossed around by strangers who bark at them »Halt's Maul!«. Gr's mind was so filled with religion, history, mythology and ballads that he found it hard to be concise and intelligible to the uneducated. A typical example is '*Jubelaaret 1848*', published in the third number of *Danskeren* on 5/4/1848. It goes on for 50 stanzas, 350 lines in all, and had, in view of its length, little chance of ever being adopted as a song. It reflected a number of topical concerns: the death of King Christian VIII on New Year's Day and the accession of his populist son Frederik VII; the tensions in Slesvig; Gr's hopes for Northern unity and for a Nordic high school in Sorø, which Christian VIII had sanctioned in his last few days,

his views on conscription, his expectation that Denmark's winter (which he saw beginning after the time of Christian IV in the 17th century) was now over and a new Northern light was dawning. The song ends with an expression of his long-held belief that language consciousness was the centrepiece of national self-assertion; the last three lines read: »Om end tysken ter sig nok saa spansk, / Bliver du kun ved at tale dansk, / Tyskland ej med dig sig skal 'forganske'«; this ad-hoc translation of German *ergänzen* is to embody the physical, but even more the spiritual threat by a neighbour linguistically dominant in the Duchies. But all this is overlaid with allusions to symbolic figures from history and mythology; »Danmarks Havfru fin«, also called »Mindesangens taarefavre Dise«, is in conversation with Odin and pours him »Mjød og Vin« (st. 23). The spiritual, as against the military, threat from the south is expressed in terms of Balder being killed by Loke's machinations (st. 9): »Truer ikke mer end Jærn og Staal / Misteltenen Danmarks Tungemaal, / Til en Graad, som den ved Baldersbaalet!« Yet this was one of the seven mostly anti-German stanzas that appear in Køsters songbook of 1865, a year after the Second Slesvig War, and in some later Grundtvigian songbooks; Christian Barnekow wrote music for it the second collection of his *Fædrelandshistoriske Sange* in 1875. No wonder Grundtvigian folk high schools had to teach Northern mythology for such material to make sense.

In the same number of *Danskeren* Grundtvig had a poem of 11 stanzas called 'Dansk Krigssang', later re-named 'Den danske Løvinde', inspired by the lions in the Danish coat of arms. Heraldic fantasies are a strong element in his political poetry, here »Anguls-Løven«, the British lion, is in the first stanza asked to jump across the sea to support the Danish lioness. The imperial eagle of Germany offered itself as an animal embodiment of the enemy and is used as such in st. 7 in a vision of future reinvigoration: »Naar da Nordens Løver [the united Nordic countries] hæve / sig med Brøl i Sky, / da skal ej for Ørne bæve / Skovens Due bly«. Gr's mental image of DK was strangely self-contradictory: He wished to revive the slumbering Viking spirit of combative manliness, when Danes had ruled the waves and built empires like that of Canute. At the same time he had a strong conviction that both the Danish nation and the Danish language were feminine, innocent and gentle, compared to their more aggressive neighbours. This has given Danes a tendency to see themselves as victims of history, admittedly on a lesser scale than their neighbours, the Poles. But back

to the Danish lioness! Elsewhere in the poem, the enemy is a »lindorm«, a dragon and its brood, which takes up the old motif of the lion as the noblest against the snake as the meanest animal. The Danish lioness and her offspring have been transformed by a rune spell so they look and sound more like cattle, and only a »Skjoldmø«, a shield maiden or Valkyrie, and »Modersmaalets Aand fra Harpebunden«, the spirit of the native language from the bottom of the harp (st. 6), can disenchant them. »Pigebørn af Dannekvinder« as the true keepers of the mother tongue, unspoiled as they are by the baneful influence of higher education in the form of 'the black schools' of the European Gymnasium tradition, and possibly the poets who learn from the unspoiled girls, have the task of reawakening the dormant heroic spirit. Heady stuff, and hardly material to inspire the foot-soldier, but as it was written in the same metre as »Danmark dejligst Vang og Vænge«, the second most popular patriotic song in 19th century Denmark, Boisen had a go at it. He took the first two stanzas and st. 7-8, with a vision of reawakened lion strength and a picture of Danish nature in spring and summer, with wheat symbolizing the islands and rye and heather Jutland, and he had Grundtvig supply a connecting stanza where the references are more direct, with the Germans and King Frederik being mentioned, although Holsten appears only under its heraldic guise of nettles: »Fredrik og hans danske Svende / ingen Nælder brænde!« (Let no nettles sting Frederic and his Danish followers). In this five-stanza form it was published, together with a five-stanza reduction of »Danmark dejligst« so that users would remember the melody, as a separate publication and was adopted in *Nye og gamle Viser* as no 7 in the 1848 section.

In the following number of *Danskeren*, on 12/4/1848, Gr published a text of more manageable proportion, seven 8-line stanzas entitled 'Dansk Svanesang'. The title itself indicates that Gr was worried: the song now written might well be Denmark's swan song both in political-military and in linguistic terms, and he ends the poem by letting »Fløjte-Fuglen«, which takes here the place of the melodious dying swan, invoke the mythical hero Holger Danske, as Ogier le Danois one of Charlemagne's knights, whom Ingemann had made popular through a song cycle published in 1837: »Moder din er stedt i Nød. / Kom dog, Holger Danske!« Before that, we get a heavy dose of mythological history, beginning with the shield maidens, whose birthplace is said to be Denmark, making four appearances; two of these referring to the Danes as »Skjoldmø-

Stammen«. The second stanza states categorically »Vreden Tysker fra Arildstid / i Sønder var Danmarks Plage«. There were not many historical examples of Danes fighting Germans as first the pirating Slavic Wends and then the Swedes had been the arch-enemies through most of Danish history, but Grundtvig had two such figures he returned to frequently in his poetry: Niels Ebbesen, mentioned before, and the more mythical Uffe hin Spage who, according to Saxo, had saved his blind father Vermund, a Jutish king, by defeating the son of a Saxon king in single combat; Oehlenschläger had elaborated the story in a long poem in 1805, and Grundtvig had retold it in 1815 in *Jyllands Rimkrønike*.

Grundtvig optimistically assumed that readers would not only recognise Uffe and Vermund, to whom we shall return, but also the magic sword *Skræp*, with which the Saxon usurper was defeated (»Synger *Skræp* nu aldrig mer / Holger Danskes Vise«). The third stanza opens with the words »Danevirke og Danebod / er hellige danske Minder«, and these, the line of fortifications between the rivers Eider and Slien in Slesvig and its presumed builder, the 10th century Queen Tyre, who on the Jelling Stone is called *Danebod*, »Denmark's betterment«, were certainly more easily recognised than *Vermund* and *Skræp*. In the central fourth stanza of the poem Grundtvig returns to his central concern, the mother tongue as the essence of nationhood; he declares: »Fædreland uden Modersmaal / er Hjærte foruden Tunge«, and he makes up a corresponding fictional song of triumph for the Germans: »Danmarks Tunge rev jeg ud, / stumt er Danmarks Hjærte«. The theme of the intimate connection of language and fatherland is further elaborated in the following two stanzas; st. 6 opens with the words »Danevirke og Danebrog/de smelte i Munden sammen«, *Danebrog* being the Danish flag said to have fallen from the sky during a Crusading battle in Estonia and turning a threatened defeat into victory. Much is also made of the linguistic similarity of *Daneman*, a Dane, and *Dannemand*, a man of honour: language itself made it clear which side of the conflict was the honourable one. This poem, being not only shorter but less disparate in content and imagery than the two previous ones, had the additional advantage of being in the same metre as Grundtvig's hymn to the mother tongue published in 1838, »Moders Navn er en himmelsk Lyd« which, thanks to *Weyse's* and *Rung's* melodies, had entered the songbooks of the 1840s. Although the song seems very much the expression of a momentary concern that proved to be unfounded, it remained in use for a surprisingly long time, thanks to being identified with a popular me-

lody; it still appeared in *Folkehøjskolesangbogen* in the 1920s, years after the northernmost third of Slesvig had returned to Denmark as Sønderjylland and saving the Danish language was no longer an issue.

A week later, on 19/4/1848, he returned to Vermund and Uffe in a poem entitled ‘Slesvig-Dansk Minde-Sang’, now in a more folksy vein, without archaic words and obscure allusions, ten four-line stanzas of simple narrative, humorous in places, describing old King Vermund sitting on the bank of the River Eider and awaiting the outcome of Uffe’s duel, here with two Germans, to make it even more heroic. The outcome is uncertain, for Uffe is the typical fairy tale hero, the dumb son who in the end proves to be the only one up to the task at hand, and if the Germans win, the father will end his life rather than submitting to the Saxons. But although he cannot see, he can recognise the sound of his sword *Skræp*, like birdsong and like lightning, and before long, »nu Tydskerne begge laa døde som Sild«, and the farmers carry Uffe on their arms to the throne, »og Dannemark jubled fra Hav og til Hav«. The last stanza contains the application to the present: »Saa gik det ved Eider i ældgammel tid, /for lang er med Tydsken vor Trætte, /og der immer saa, naar os Lykken er blid / med Tydsken vi komme tilrette!« Historian though he was, Grundtvig did not hesitate to twist history to his ends and to claim German/Danish enmity as something that had always existed and was, so to say, ordained by fate.

It was this last stanza that allowed Boisen to put this text among the 1848 war poems, and its advantage was that it could be sung to a popular melody used for a martial song from 1801, »Saa kæmped de Helte af anden April«, originally composed by Kunzen for a royal birthday piece, *Festen i Valhal*, in 1796, but for decades only remembered as a war song. »Kong Vermund den gamle, af Alderdom blind« enjoyed great popularity throughout the century, although the topical last stanza gradually came to be omitted, and could still be found in *Folkehøjskolesangbogen* after the Second World War. The first clash between the superior Danish troops and the Slesvig-Holstein »rebels« at Bov, north of Flensburg, went well for the Danes; they occupied Flensburg and a few days later the city of Schleswig, which made Grundtvig break out in a triumphant ‘Dansk Seier-Sang’ in seven 6-line stanzas with a five-line refrain subtly varied from stanza to stanza. Nature is invited to join in the jubilation. The Nordic lions reappear (»Op at brøle, i Nordiske Løver! / Sønderriver den Preusiske Røver!«), and in the refrain, Thor is invoked (»Tordner i Sky! / Sving din Ham-

mer med Gny!«). The contrast between the two sides is as between heaven and hell; st. 2: »Der er Splid, der er Oprør i Leiren, / der er Helved i Tydskernes Land; / her er Himlen med Lykken og Seiren, / for vi enes hver eneste Mand«). In st. 4 we find the picture of the good-natured Danes having had to put up with arrogant Germans: »Længe Tydsken os traadte paa Nakken, / for vi er af de gæstmilde Folk, / al hans Pral har vi taalt, hvad er Takken? / Skam og Spot og Forræderenes Dolk!« The only thing the Danes are fighting for is peace and freedom, and the poem ends »Hvilen er sød, / Liv er bedre end Død! / For Livet og Freden vi seired!«

This piece of self-congratulation was printed separately around 17 April and again, now with a melody, in the *Danskeren* issue of 16 May. When Boisen the following year included it as Nr. 11 of his collection, he could refer to three melodies by Møller, Fenger, and the Norwegian Lindemann. But in the fourth edition, it was dropped. It appears in another wartime songbook but does not seem to have had an afterlife in later publications. The Danish troops may have taken the words »Hvilen er sød« too much to heart, for the rebels, who in the meantime had been strengthened by troops from Prussia, mounted a surprise attack on Slesvig on Easter morning 24/4; the Danes had to beat a hasty retreat, and subsequently the Germans occupied all of Jutland and demanded a huge war contribution, to be paid within ten days; Gr's pessimistic vision in 'Dansk Svane-Sang' seemed about to be fulfilled. But it did not come to that, because Russia pressured its Prussian ally into evacuating Jutland and limiting its support to the Duchies.

The song commemorating the loss of Schleswig which lasted was Plougs »Paaskeklokken kimed mildt« with a suggestive Faroese melody. Grundtvig's own song is modelled on an earlier elegy of his on the young naval officer Willemoes who died in 1808, »Kommer hid, I Piger smaa«, which had become very popular with Weyse's melody. Grundtvig's song was first published separately under the title 'Det danske Paaske-Ofte', subsequently in *Danskeren* as 'Dansk Trøste-Sang', as Nr. 16 in Boisen's collection and in 1872 in another Grundtvigian anthology, *Historiske Sange* by Nutzhorn and Schrøder. The reason for its limited success may have been the conflicting symbolism of its imagery – the Danish soldiers are both lions and sacrificial lambs while the Germans remain eagles – and a fusion or confusion of politics and religion which came natural to Grundtvig but maybe not to a majority of his country-

men; I quote as an example the beginning of st. 3: »Altid i det høje Nord / skal nu Danevirke / æres som et Alterbord / i vor Moders Kirke« and the last one: »Danevirkes Offerlam! / Løver ej des mindre! / Ja, I dufte sødt for ham, / som ser helst det indre / og hos ham i Fredens Havn / Eders Moder har til Navn / Himmelens Veninde!« It must have been this song which made Jørgen Holmgaard write in vol. 6 of *Dansk Litteratur Historie*: »I Grundtvigs frodige Fantsidannelse har ‘Danmark, vor Moder’ som ‘Himmelens Veninde’ avlet børn med Vorherre, og danskerne er simpelthen de ‘kongebørn’, som er kommet ud af denne himmelske akt« (p. 48).

Lamb and lion are also a theme in ‘Holger Danskes ny Vise’, which appeared in the same issue of *Danskeren*, on 3/5/1848. It opens with a picture of an idyllic country inhabited by good-natured people but with an arrogant neighbour who believes in brute strength and force. Mother Denmark does not have a large army but a crowd of sons ready to sacrifice everything for her (»Millioner de opveje«, Grundtvig claims rather optimistically), and a little angel, »blid og barneglad« who hums »Sværde kan jeg døve / danne om et Lam til Løve, / laane danske Barnesjæle / Heltens Mod og Mæle« – and it ends with the enemy taking fright when he realises that Holger Danske, whose existence he had doubted »med sit skarpe Vid«, has been resurrected in the lambs now turned into lions. This song was reprinted in another 1849 songbook, *Sange for det unge Danmark*, and it reappears in Køsters *Et Hundrede danske Sange* of 1865 but was left out by Boisen and hence seems to have had a limited life.

As Nr. 14 Boisen printed a song from the same month which had been published separately twice, once as a text with melody and once under the title *Norden mod Tyskland* together with a talk Grundtvig gave in *Danske Samfund* on 9/5/1848. It consists of seven 8-line stanzas, lines 5-8 being a different refrain for the German and the Danish side. The basis of the poem is two auditory perceptions, a dark rumbling on the ground indicating that the Germans put on their seven-mile boots and are ready to run up through Jutland all the way to Skagen, and a storm-like exhilarating sound in the air indicating not only Danish but Scandinavian resistance. This vertical difference of air and ground is exploited by associating it with heaven and hell; I quote the ‘German’ refrain in stanzas 1-2 and 5: »Det rumler ved Elben, det rumler ved Rhin, / det rumler i Frankfurt og midt i Berlin: / fremad for Tyskland, fremad for Tyskland / i Helvedes Navn!«. The Danish refrain implies a Nordic solidarity that was tangible

in the First Slesvig War but never became as strong as the Danes had hoped: »Det bruser paa Sletten, paa Bjærg og i Dal, / det bruser fra Sarpen og Gøte-Kanal: / pak jer fra Danmark! pak jer fra Danmark! / for Himmelens Skyld!«. The Danes are again credited with »Skjoldmø-Arme« (st. 4), and while the language of the song on the whole is straightforward, even humorous, a bit of Nordic mythology creeps in st. 7: »I Norden er det dybe Grund, / den rette Mimers-Kilde / der bølger gennem Øresund / og skaber Aasyn milde«. The melody to be used for this song is said to be by »Magister Boisen«, P. O. Boisen's brother who had taken a Master's Degree in Arabic literature and who provided melodies for four other Grundtvig war poems in the 1850 section of the second edition. '»Fremad!« og »Pak Jer!«' was also printed in *Sange for det unge Danmark*, but does not seem to have spread beyond that.

Grundtvig published more than 150 poems in *Danskeren* during the period of the war and the year after, almost all devoted to either commemorating events in the war – especially, the few Danish military successes such as the breaking of the siege of Fredericia in July, 1849, or the Battle of Isted, after the Prussians had withdrawn their support for the Slesvig-Holsteiners, in July, 1850 – or to building up Danish or Nordic consciousness. Space will not allow to go into these; it seemed to me more important to look at Grundtvig's output during the first few weeks of the conflict because it set a pattern for the many pieces he wrote subsequently, e.g. 'Nydansk Bjarkemaal' in May, 1849, where the animal impersonations of the two sides are not lion and dragon but swan and dragon (»Tydskeren raser vild / imod Svanevangen, / Lindormen sprudler Ild / imod Fuglesangen« st. 2), and Thor's hammer Mjølner is brought into action to protect »Dannekvinden« against »Jettens Røverhaand«, but where we also find an image that presupposes the industrial revolution (»Norden Aand i Hjerte-Skjulet, / han er Drivehjulet!« st. 6); Boisen, bending the chronology, makes it Nr. 5 of the 1848 section.

Many of these poems, tied as they were to the anxieties, hopes and triumphs of the day, had a limited lifespan even as songs, but some not only made it into the songbooks of the late 19th and the 20th century but are still discussed today. I will mention just one other early poem published in *Danskeren* of 24/5/1848, while all of Jutland was under German occupation; its title is 'Til Danmark'. and it contrasts the loveliness of spring all around with the depressed mood of the Danes. Its purpose is to inspire confidence by telling them that God, called »den

gamle af Dage«, will be their protection; each of the seven stanzas ends reassuringly with the words »end lever den gamle af Dage« or a variation of them. The advantages of this poem as a message to the common people are that it is not weighed down with mythology or legendary history and that there is none of the aggressiveness of most of his war poems, though the Germans are clearly marked as God's enemies in st. 2 when Grundtvig addresses »Fæderlandet« with the words »Sort ser det ud, / men almægtig er Gud, / dine Fjender til Lands / er og Fjenderne hans, / de er Fjender ad Sandhed og Retten, / de er Fjender ad Kjærligheds-Ætten, / de har alle det værste tilbage, / thi end lever den gamle af Dage«. Instead, the images are of Danish nature in spring surrounded by the blue sea, of the song of nature and of human song, of heavenly blessing (Zerlang speaks of an implied erotic relationship between God and the Danish soil) and of »Lykken«, which is both good luck and happiness, bound to return to the innocent Danes. And for once, Gr's prophetic stance seemed to be vindicated immediately; the day after the text was published, the German troops evacuated Jutland.

Martin Zerlang, who devotes four pages to the poem in *Dansk Litteratur Historie* vol. 6, 172-175, sees it as a key example of »det grundtvigianske 'hertesprogs' form og indhold«, og Flemming Lundgreen-Nielsen, who affords it equally much space (pp. 126-129) in vol. 3 of *Dansk identitetshistorie*, calls it »Danskerens måske berømteste digt«. But its career only took off in 1864, for it was written in a dactylic/anapaestic metre with lines of unequal length that did not readily lend itself to being sung to a standard melody. Only when Nutzhorn, the musical father of *Folkehøjskolesangbogen*, wrote two melodies to fit it just before the Second Slesvig War, it got a chance to spread. The song was printed as a broadsheet for the troops, and subsequently it entered the songbooks and, with it, a larger public's consciousness.

The 19th century saw itself as rationalist, but in reality it was a great period for mythmaking: social myths (Marxism is a prime example), religious myth (the flowering of new churches and sects bears testimony to that) and, especially, national myths (my countrymen's image of the Swiss as innocent and fearless mountain herdsmen like Wilhelm Tell is one of them). Grundtvig was only one of many mythmakers, but thanks to his imagination, his power of language and his singlemindedness a more influential one than most of them.

Denmark had for centuries, in population, language, trade and civilisation, been a bridge between the North of Europe and the German-speaking countries on the Continent. Grundtvig and his followers succeeded in persuading a majority of Danes to see themselves as a Northern bastion against encroaching Germans in the south; and German occupation in World War II did its part to reinforce such ideas. Yet more than half a century after that, other countries occupied at that time do not seem to have the problems with accepting their German neighbours that the Danes have; witness the outcry when Axel Springer bought a Krøyer painting, or Danish paranoia about German-owned cottages in Jutland as against the Swedes' relaxed attitude to Danish-owned cottages in Skåne, Halland and Småland. »Yes, but that's not the same thing!« a lot of Danes would say; which is simply a confirmation of the continued effectiveness, after a century and a half, of Grundtvig's message. 'Luft ud efter Grundtvig' was the title of a krønike by Jan Bunkenborg in *Politiken* last year (6/3). Some of his statements may sound exaggerated, e.g. »Hitlers 'filosofi' om det ariske menneske modsvarer ganske af Grundtvigs opfattelse af det nordiske menneskes overlegenhed«; but the mere fact of such an article appearing shows how powerful Grundtvig's influence has remained – thanks to the chance he was given by the outbreak of the First Slesvig War. – When it comes to myths in the narrower sense of Nordic mythology, his effect was shorter-lived. Mythology has given names to steamers and insurance companies but got no deeper hold of the mind, divorced as it was from living traditions, from monuments or identifiable places, or works of literature, art or music that became part of an educational canon, despite valiant efforts – in that respect a German, Richard Wagner, stole the show. As to Grundtvig's claim that the Danish nation has a special relationship with God, it is doubtful that many Danes, living in a country as de-Christianized as the rest of Europe, would take it seriously today. Whether Danes generally identify with their language as the essence of nationhood more passionately than other linguistic communities of similar size with bigger neighbours, is not something I would venture to guess, the pervasive Big Brother, as elsewhere in Europe, now being English.